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The Trauma of Stalinism Narrated in Varlam T. Shalamov's Kolymskie Rasskazy: Missiological Implications for Contemporary Russia

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ABSTRACT

THE TRAUMA OF STALINISM NARRATED IN VARLAM T. SHALAMOV'S KOLYMSKIE RASSKAZY: MISSIOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS FOR CONTEMPORARY RUSSIA

by

Yuri N. Drumi

Adviser: Rudi Maier
ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

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Title: THE TRAUMA OF STALINISM NARRATED IN VARLAM T. SHALAMOV'S KOLYMSKIE RASSKAZY: MISSIOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS FOR CONTEMPORARY RUSSIA

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Stalinism and the punitive system of the Gulag left an indelible stamp on the entire social matrix of Russia. Because of the multidimensional and multigenerational nature of the trauma of Stalinism, Russian society retains the label of a traumatized culture. This dissertation explores the significance of this phenomenon for contemporary Christian mission in Russia.

The narratives of Varlam T. Shalamov's Kolyskie rasskazy provided an empirical (based on sensory evidence) inquiry into the reality of enormous sufferings experienced by the inmates of the Kolyma Gulag. Holy Scripture, on the other hand, provided the theological (faith-based) inquiry into the causes and implications of those
sufferings. This study demonstrates that the traumatic microcosm of Shalamov's characters belongs to the larger cultural world—namely, the macrocosm of everyday Stalinism.

A biblical-theological assessment of Stalinism reveals that once a totalitarian system of pseudo-religious theocracy was established, the result was a culture demoniacally infected by the worldview of Marxism-Leninism. Being not just a sociopolitical system, but a state of mind, Stalinism resulted in legitimization and institutionalization of a culture of lawlessness and death.

The method of socio-textual interaction, utilized throughout this study, set forth a certain conception of Christian mission based on the commitment to liberation, healing, and transformation as envisioned in the Nazareth Manifesto of Jesus (Luke 4:16-21). At the heart of this approach to mission lies the Lukan imagery of a God who has compassion on "the poor" (the traumatized), who enters their dysfunctional oikos, casts out its demons, and calls humans to join Familia Dei.

The following three missiological strategies should be considered essential to the reality of post-Soviet society. First, the profoundly countercultural power of the worship service needs to be channeled toward healing the worshippers. Second, just as Jesus chose the family/household as both the social structure and spatial location for His ministry, so too the contemporary church-in-culture must consider this approach as her modus operandi. Finally, political participation suitable to the healing ministry of the Russian Christian community should be understood in terms of both creating an externally focused self-awareness and practical involvement in the life of the polis.
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A Dissertation
Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

by
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April 2008
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A dissertation presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy by

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Моим маме и братьям, а также памяти моего отца — посвящаю
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Preface

Varlam Tikhonovich Shalamov (1907-1982), a Gulag survivor, a unique and, regrettably, underappreciated twentieth-century Russian author in the field of camp literature, asserts that "the camp theme is an immense theme in which can be easily

1The word "Gulag" is an acronym, meaning Glavnoe Upravlenie Lagerei, or Chief Camp Administration which was part of NKVD (People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs). Additionally, it designates the entire system of Soviet slave labor itself, in all its forms and varieties that produced the whole conglomerate of camps: labor camps, punishment camps, criminal and political camps, women's camps, children's camps, and transit camps. See Anne Applebaum, Gulag: A History (New York: Anchor Books, 2003), xv, xvi.

2The first time Varlam Shalamov was arrested on February 19, 1929, for his participation in underground publication and distribution of Lenin's so-called testament (zaveshchanie). In this document the leader of the Russian Revolution gave negative characteristics to Stalin and other top leaders of the Bolshevik Party. As a result of this arrest, Shalamov was convicted and sentenced to three years of forced labor to be served in Vishera (Northern Urals) concentration camps. See Varlam T. Shalamov, Собрание сочинений в четырех томах (Collected works in four volumes), comp. Irina P. Sirotinskaia (Moscow: "Khudozhestvennaia literatura," "Vagrius," 1998), 4:151,182.

3In his afterword to The Gulag Archipelago, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn says that he had suggested to Varlam Shalamov that he become a coauthor of the book, but he declined. Also, in
accommodated five such writers as Leo Tolstoy and a hundred such writers as Solzhenitsyn. The immensity of the reality of Stalinism manifested itself above all in mass dying and killing in the network of Soviet concentration camps. In fact, the very nature of Stalinism cannot be comprehended without addressing the punitive heritage of the Gulag and Dal'stroi (The Far East Trust) as its "cornerstone." Stalinism not only affected the camp survivors, but left its indelible stamp on the Soviet social matrix as a whole. The Stalinist Gulag provided a "framework in which the tendencies that were at work in the society as a whole reached their grim perfection." The multidimensional and multigenerational trauma that was experienced by the entire Soviet population under duress of communism had been too frequent, too severe, too long-standing, and too institutionalized, which is why Russian society will never be the same and for decades to come it will retain the label of a traumatized culture. What is the significance of all of this for contemporary Christian mission in Russia?


4Varlam Shalamov, Новая книга. Воспоминания, записные книжки, переписка, следственные дела (New book: Memoirs, notebooks, correspondence, trials), comp. Irina P. Sirotsinskaia (Moscow: Eksmo, 2004), 918. Henceforth, this source will be designated as NB.


Background to the Problem

Christian mission springs from the very nature of the triune God (John 20:21-22; Luke 3:21-22).⁹ God is intimately connected with His creation and seeks its ultimate transformation according to the primeval plan.¹⁰ When the "Word became flesh" (John 1:14), the Missio Dei became a historically rooted reality as never before. From the inception of His mission until it was accomplished on the cross, Jesus Christ encountered hostile forces that were embodied not only in the religious establishment of His day, but also in the cultural, socio-political, and economic structures. Because the Messiah entered the historical scene when humanity was "in bondage under the elements of the world" (Gal 4:3b), it is no surprise that He was under constant attack from the forces of evil that finally climaxed at His crucifixion. Neither of the major events such as Christ's crucifixion and resurrection nor the teachings of Jesus, His prayers, miracles, exorcisms, and healings can be interpreted correctly until they are interpreted as acts of spiritual warfare.¹¹ As Arthur Glasser puts it, "demonological-eschatological motifs are at the very core of all that Jesus said and did."¹²

The personal encounter of God with the powers of darkness laid the foundation of what Christian mission has become since then, namely, the gracious movement of God toward the world (John 3:16) and toward the lost (Luke 9:56; 15; Matt 18:11). This

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⁹Unless otherwise specified, from here on I will use the New King James Version (NKJV). For the sake of smoothness of the narrative, in my rendition of the biblical texts the italicization of the capulative verbs and/or auxiliary words of the NKJV will not be retained.


¹¹Gregory A. Boyd, God at War: The Bible & Spiritual Conflict (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997), 180.

mission of reconciliation was confirmed when God re-entered the earthly realm by sending the Holy Spirit upon the church during Pentecost (Acts 2). Thus God anchored His mission in human history, culture, and language. Through this event of momentous spiritual and cultural significance, God reversed the curse that befell the builders of the Tower of Babel (Gen 11:1-9) and turned it into a blessing for all peoples on earth (Gen 12:3; cf. Acts 2:5, 8-11; 3:25; Rev 5:9-10).13

To participate in the mission of God14 requires the recognition of culture, an encounter with culture, and an understanding of culture. Christian mission requires that the church attend to "each and every context in which it finds itself"15 and "bridge the [biblical] text's initial context with today's contexts of mission."16 Thus the church interfaces the core assumptions, values, and allegiances of people in a specific missional context with the themes from biblical revelation. And as one explores the meanings of a particular culture (in this study the post-Soviet culture) one will certainly come upon basic concepts that are central to that culture's worldview. Since history plays such a prominent role in shaping one's perception of reality, in the context of contemporary Russia the task of looking at the country's recent history becomes a missiological imperative.

The Soviet era of Russian history (1917-1991) has definitely become one of the most significant factors in the development of Russian culture for the twentieth as well as for the twenty-first century. Bolshevism broke into Russian existence "on the grandest scale, affecting all areas of life, all spheres of human endeavor."\(^{17}\) In October 1917, Russia made a cultural break with its past and entered the era of "a small apocalypses of history."\(^{18}\)

The entire old state machinery was to be completely destroyed in accordance with theoretical guidance provided by Karl Marx and implemented by Vladimir I. Lenin.\(^{19}\) The whole country, with a forced optimism, headed toward the "radiant future" of "justice and social equality" in anticipation of the world proletarian revolution. To achieve this new social order, mass deception, violence, and state-sponsored terror became the key methods employed by a handful of men who usurped political power. As the head of the Bolshevik secret police, F. E. Dzerzhinsky wrote to A. V. Eiduk on 31 May 1918, his envoy in Tver: "There is nothing more effective than a bullet in the head to shut people up. Experience has shown me that you only need a small number of people like that to turn a whole situation around."\(^{20}\) This basic premise was shared by most if not all the leaders of the October Revolution.

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\(^{19}\)"We have seen," says Lenin in *State and Revolution*, "what Marx means—that the working class must shatter, break up, blow up . . . the whole state machinery." Vladimir I. Lenin, *State and Revolution* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1978; reprint, International Publishers, 1932), 89.

Karl Marx, the major theoretician of the new social doctrine, expressed his view on violence and assassination as the justifiable means to achieve the dominion of Communism. He asserted that "history is the judge—its executioner, the proletarian." A loud tribute to violence sounds at the end of the *Communist Manifesto*: "The Communists disdain to conceal their views and aims. They openly declare that their ends can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions." Karl Marx, the aging founder of modern socialism, did not change his view on the issue and as late as January 1879 confirmed that bloodshed is inevitable because without it "no great movement has ever been inaugurated." In 1917, on the eve of Russia's October Revolution, Lenin reinforced this position in a pamphlet titled *State and Revolution*. He emphasized: "The necessity of systematically fostering among masses this and just this point of view about violent revolution lies at the root of the whole of Marx's and Engels' teaching."

It was expected, therefore, that the Bolsheviks would cast aside virtually all ethical norms, legal guarantees, and rights common to all humankind and "launch a

the state-sponsored violence that burst upon the historic scene of Russia is expressed in the following words from *Krasnaya Gazeta*, the organ of the Red Army, the sentiment written immediately after the attempt upon the life of Lenin and assassination of M. Uritsky, head of the Petrograd Cheka (Bolsheviks' secret police), on 30 August 1918: "Without mercy, without sparing, we will kill our enemies in scores of hundreds. Let them be thousands, let them drown themselves in their own blood. For the blood of Lenin . . . let there be floods of blood of the bourgeoisie—more blood, as much as possible." Applebaum, 9.


22 Ibid., 107.

23 H., "Interview with Karl Marx," interview by H. (London, 18 December 1878), *The Chicago Tribune* (January 5, 1879), [n.p.].

systematic program of extermination of real and potential opponents."\textsuperscript{25} Lenin's maxim—"the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat is . . . power that is unrestricted by any laws"\textsuperscript{26}—determined the course of the country for years to come. Nicholas Berdyaev, a well-known Russian philosopher, emphasized that it was the October Revolution that poisoned Russia with vindictiveness and "made her drunk with blood."\textsuperscript{27} As subsequent events demonstrated, people were to be sentenced not for the crimes they had committed, but for who they were.\textsuperscript{28} And since any sort of violence becomes inevitable "when dealing with creatures, formerly considered human, who are suddenly shown to be poisonous to the body politic,"\textsuperscript{29} the Soviet state began changing people's perceptions of each other. "To wipe out an infection"\textsuperscript{30} (be it bourgeoisie, kulaks, saboteur, Trotskyites, religious believers, dissenters, intellectuals, etc.) was considered to be a revolutionary


\textsuperscript{27}Nicholas Berdyaev, \textit{The End of Our Time}, trans. Donald Attwater (London: Sheed & Ward, 1933), 131.

\textsuperscript{28}Applebaum, 6. According to Fyodor Stepun, prominent Russian philosopher and sociologist in émigré, "Lenin's Marxism conceives of sinfulness before the State not as an action conflicting with law and precept, but as a specific quality of being." What follows, therefore, is that "the death penalty is not a punishment of the guilty, but a liquidation of those who are utterly harmful and inimical, though really innocent because absolutely unfree and capable of no development." Fyodor Stepun, \textit{The Russian Soul and Revolution}, trans. Erminie Huntress (London: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1936), 115-16.


\textsuperscript{30}Ibid.
virtue rather than a crime against humanity. Once in power, the Bolsheviks established a culture of terror, extrajudicial executions, and death.

The most ambitious task set by the Soviet power had to do with the all-out remaking of Russian identity from inside out and producing a Homo Novus. This illusory thinking generated a belief that those who had the "wrong" social origin could be re-shaped to become decent builders of a new society. It was thought that especially the upper classes needed to be re-made and become suitable for serving the needs of the lower classes—workers, economically destitute peasants, and artisans. And a break with the past for professional criminals, thieves, and murderers might best be achieved by forcing them into labor camps.

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31 As Riegel observes, "Lenin's frank use of biological metaphors to stigmatise and dehumanise the 'enemies of the people' as harmful insects, parasites, vermin and germs reveals his eschatological dream of creating a sanitised body of a future socialist society by means of revolutionary terror." Klaus-Georg Riegel, "Marxism-Leninism as a Political Religion," *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions* 6, no. 1 (June 2005): 107.

32 According to Sluka, "A culture of terror is an institutionalized system of permanent intimidation of the masses or subordinated communities by the elite, characterized by the use of torture and disappearances and other forms of extrajudicial 'death squad' killings as standard practice. A culture of terror establishes 'collective fear' as a brutal means of social control. In such a system, there is an ever present threat of repression, torture, and, ultimately, death by anyone who is actively critical of the politicoeconomic status quo." Jeffrey A. Sluka, "Introduction: State Terror and Anthropology," in *Death Squad: The Anthropology of State Terror* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), 22-3.

33 Not least because of the impact of Nietzscheanism, the Soviet ideologists of the early Stalinist era created a powerful myth that ordinary human beings could become super-humans, self-sufficient makers of their own lives. Starting from the late nineteenth century and especially after the October Revolution, a vulgarized type of Nietzscheanism became an important undercurrent of the Russian culture. As Mikhail Agursky suggests, "Together with Russian nationalism and other components, it was no less important than that society's overt Marxist ideology, whose implementation it helped to shape." Mikhail Agursky, "Nietzschean Roots of Stalinist Culture," in *Nietzsche and Soviet Culture: Ally and Adversary*, ed. Bernice G. Rosenthal (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 282-83. See also Igal Halfin, "The Rape of Intelligentsia: A Proletarian Foundational Myth," *The Russian Review* 56 (January 1997): 90-109.

34 The first coercive labor camps were established as early as the summer of 1918. The number of prisoners in them and in concentration camps grew from around 16,000 in May 1919 to more than 70,000 in September 1921. See Nicolas Werth, "The Red Terror," in *The Black Book*.
was to transform an ordinary human into a *Homo Sovieticus* able to "believe in the incredible, to endure the unbearable, to love things people normally hate."  

Stalin declared 1929 as the "great turning point" and the beginning of the First Five-Year Plan which would change the whole social order from a predominantly peasant and backward society into a modern industrial nation. The new policy of social, political, and moral reform *through labor*, implemented on a large scale, would mass produce the New Man. It was officially declared that the forced-labor camps under the vigilance of the secret police would change the "internal content" of the prisoners.  

_of Communism_, 80. During the subsequent two decades, the population of the Gulag grew significantly. As of 1 January 1949, within the system of Ministry of Internal Affairs there were 67 self-dependant corrective-labor camps having about ten thousand camp (sub)divisions and centers and 1,734 labor settlements in which there were 2,356,685 prisoners of which 1,963,679 were able-bodied. Of all the inmates 55.8 percent were between the ages of 17 and 30 and 22.1 percent were women. See Galina Ivanova, "Гулаг: государство в государстве" (Gulag: A state within a state), in Советское общество: возникновение, развитие, исторический финал (Soviet society: Origins, development, historic finale), ed. Yuri N. Afanas'ev, 2 vols. (Moscow: RGGU, 1997), 2:233.

The term *Homo Sovieticus* was coined by the Soviet satirist Alexander Zinoviev. According to him, this new social identity "is generated by the conditions inseparable from the existence of a Communist (Socialist) society. He is the carrier of that society's principles of life. He preserves its intra-collective relations by the very nature of life he leads." Alexander Zinoviev, *Homo Sovieticus*, trans. Charles Janson (Boston, MA: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1982), 196. Throughout this study, however, I will follow Fitzpatrick's way of using this notion, not in the original sarcastic sense but as a useful anthropological concept designating a set of characteristics peculiar to identity, mind-set, and behavior of the individual shaped by the Stalinist (Soviet) system. See Sheila Fitzpatrick, _Everyday Stalinism: Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s_ (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 229.


As the group of authors stated in their infamous book on Belomor Canal, "Experience has almost made the Chekists engineers, and has taught the engineers the Chekists' style of work." Maxim Gorky, L. Auerbach, and S. G. Firin, eds., _Belomor: An Account of the Construction of the New Canal between the White Sea and the Baltic Sea_ (New York: Harrison Smith and Robert Haas, 1935), 326.
On the other hand, such socioeconomic measures as collectivization,\textsuperscript{38} dekulakization,\textsuperscript{39} and industrialization were designed to provide an economic breakthrough, but also to provide an environment for breeding a new, socialist species of men and women.

The designated state agency responsible for the implementation of the radical social engineering was the Chief Political Administration, a state institution that eventually became a state within the state and controlled not only the State's internal security, but also its economic sector and various means of communication and transportation. One of its central branches, the Chief Administration of Corrective-Labor Camps, will probably forever retain its initial acronym: GULAG. As Ivanova has pointedly observed, "These five letters were to become an ominous symbol of life on the brink of death, a symbol of lawlessness, convict labor, and human helplessness against tyranny. They gave a name to an entire country of camps and colonies populated by millions of Soviet people living and working there against their will."\textsuperscript{40}

The most oppressive form of communist dictatorship lasted from 1929 until the death of Stalin in 1953. During this era, the socio-political, economic, and cultural system was "a double anathema, killing tens of millions . . . and impoverishing most except those

\textsuperscript{38} According to the conclusion of Viola, "the collectivization of Soviet agriculture was a campaign of domination that aimed at . . . the internal colonization of the peasantry. Domination was both economic and cultural. Collectivization would ensure a steady flow of grain—tribute—into the state's granaries and coffers. It would also enable Soviet power to subjugate the peasantry through the imposition of vast and coercive administrative and political controls and forced acculturation into the dominant culture. . . . [It was] a war of cultures." Lynne Viola, \textit{Peasant Rebels under Stalin: Collectivization and the Culture of Peasant Resistance} (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 44.

\textsuperscript{39} From the Russian word \textit{raskulachivanie}, a term used by the Bolsheviks to designate the practice of forcibly taking away the basic properties, including the land and livestock, of the well-to-do peasants.

\textsuperscript{40} Ivanova, \textit{Labor Camp Socialism}, 25.
in the inner circle. Although Stalinism as a political system ceased to exist with the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, its legacy did not evaporate. On the contrary, it left a deep mark on the national identity of the people living in the vast expanses of the Russian Federation that has emerged from the shadow of the broken Soviet empire. The legacy of Stalinism impacted the very core of the Russian cultural identity and to this day remains a significant factor.

**Purpose Statement**

This study proposes to examine the moral and psychosocial impact of Stalinism on human beings as described in *Kolymskie rasskazy* (Kolyma tales) by Varlam Shalamov. How did the universe of evil embodied in the Kolyma death camps affect the inmates? What was the impact of Stalinism on the worldview and everyday life of the Soviet citizenry? How has the firsthand literary and historical testimony found in the writings of Shalamov contributed to shaping the answers to these questions? And, what are the missiological implications for dealing with a culture that was so profoundly affected by Stalinism?

**Scope of Study**

The Soviet Gulag has been reflected in various literary works of camp survivors and has generated an impressive body of literature which fostered a spiritual, intellectual,
and social resistance to Stalinism.\textsuperscript{42} The subject matter of this genre of literature was life and death as experienced in the forced-labor camps. A corpus of literary works, memoirs, and notebooks, produced by the survivors to immortalize those who died in the Gulag, was labeled by literary critics as "camp literature." These memories remain as a powerful witness of the state's enormous crimes by presenting pictures of how survivors' psyches were bent and destroyed by the camps. To study this literature is one of the most genuine ways to uncover the mysteries and peculiarities of the national psyche of people affected by Stalinism. Such a task, though painful, is a prerequisite in the development of a missiological paradigm for post-Soviet Russia.

Traditionally, literature has played a highly significant role not only in shaping the national identity of Russian/Soviet people but also in providing deep insights into different worldview aspects of their culture. Thus, dealing with the literary texts of Shalamov, this "art out of hell,"\textsuperscript{43} is a legitimate means to further our understanding of the traumatic legacies of Stalinism and the Gulag as its monstrous institution.\textsuperscript{44} The rationale for this approach agrees with Shalamov's own admission that every tale of his \textit{Kolymskie rasskazy} is "a slap in the face of Stalinism."\textsuperscript{45} In other words, his testimony

\textsuperscript{42}As Fackre points out, "The right to tell one's own tale is a weapon of the marginalized in the struggle against their cultural captors or a preserve of identity in a world of uniformity." Gabriel Fackre, "Narrative Theology: An Overview," \textit{Interpretation} 37 no. 4 (1983): 347. For a thorough analysis of this phenomenon of resistance to Stalinism, see Dariusz Tolezyk, \textit{See No Evil: Literary Cover-Ups and Discoveries of the Soviet Camp Experience} (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999), and Mikhail Geller, \textit{Концентрационный мир и советская литература} (The world of concentration camps and Soviet literature) (Moscow: "MIK," 1996).


\textsuperscript{44}As Stevan Weine points out, "In literature, evocations of the psychological, the ethical, or the historical are less dependent upon ideology or theory and in that way are perhaps closer to life." Stevan Weine, \textit{Testimony after Catastrophe: Narrating the Traumas of Political Violence} (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2006), xx.

\textsuperscript{45}NB, 836. All of Shalamov's works are presented in the footnotes without his surname.
serves as a powerful source of knowledge about the various moral and socio-psychological dynamics that govern the universe of a confined culture.

Evidence suggests that "just as Auschwitz has come to stand for the Nazi extermination camps as a whole, so Kolyma remains fixed in the imagination of the Soviet peoples as the great archetype of the sinister system." Nearly seventeen years spent by Shalamov in the basin of the Kolyma River constituted unique material for his literary work, primarily for the creation of Kolymskie rasskazy that has come to be known as "some of the darkest pages of world literature." The wretched existence of the camp inmates that was shared by Shalamov is why his descriptions may be legitimately analyzed as a "sample of a regularity [that] may well turn out to be literally true of some of the multimillion martyrs." In fact, in his testimonial art is found one of the most successful attempts not only to conceptualize the Gulag experiences but also to describe their aftereffects on the social fabric of the Soviet society at large. Therefore, the traumatic microcosm, so thoroughly structured by Shalamov, becomes a departure point to explore the moral and socio-psychological macrocosm of the entire network of the forced-labor camps and, to a lesser degree, of the entire Soviet culture.

As a missiological dissertation, this research will look beyond the mere empirically observable realms of human history and consider events experienced during

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47 Kline, "Novaja proza," 126.


49 As Applebaum pointed out, "In Stalin's Soviet Union, the difference between life inside and life outside the barbed wire was not fundamental, but rather a question of degree" (Applebaum, xviii-xix).
the Soviet era in conjunction with Holy Scripture and its two-kingdom theology. The notions of the demonic and the powers of "darkness" (Eph 6:12) have always played "a central role in defining Russia's literary tradition." Many Russian writers have alluded to Stalin in their picture of the demonic ruler "to highlight the nature and origins of his evil and to evoke the enormous sufferings he caused." Therefore, the analysis of *Kolymskie rasskazy* must include a discussion of the issue of the demonic power reflected in Soviet culture.

**Methodology**

Because of the complexity of the subject matter, this dissertation will utilize tools from the humanities (literature, theology, and history) and social sciences (social psychology and political science). In light of the proposed topic, each of these branches of learning has something to contribute to the overall investigation. However, this research is primarily of a missiological nature. As "an academic study of the missionary dimension of the Christian faith" missiology uses many of the social sciences and utilizes them to build a missiological paradigm for a specific culture. The methodological approach of this dissertation is to conceptualize the psycho-cultural legacy of Stalinism from the standpoint of various disciplines, thus pursuing the goal of creating a panoramic

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50For an overview of the biblical teaching on the subject, see Boyd, *God at War*, 184-91. As the author comments on a number of passages, "In New Testament terms the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan are correlative concepts. The former can be understood to be expanding only as the latter is diminishing. This is precisely why healings and exorcisms played such a central role in Jesus' ministry." Ibid., 184.


53Oborji, 42.
view of the Soviet past, which equally belongs to both empirical reality and the realm of theological (philosophical) knowledge. I propose to avoid a strict separation between a value-free scientific endeavor and value-laden theological investigation. By its very nature, missiology bridges the compartmentalization of knowledge that exists between the sociopolitical and spiritual dimensions of human reality.

The second chapter of this study begins with an examination of the ethical and religious aspects of Shalamov's worldview as expressed in his autobiographical writings, primarily but not exclusively in his correspondence, diaries, notebooks, and memoirs. The basic premise for this methodological step is that behind one's literary works there must be a core of values, beliefs or disbeliefs, and propositional truths about God (His existence or non-existence, His nature and moral attributes, etc.), man, and the world. The hypothesis of this work is that the moral thrust of the biblical Decalogue (Exod 20; Deut 5; cf. Matt 19:18-19 and Mark 10:19) appears in most of Shalamov's 147 stories and sketches (ocherki). Although in a hidden pattern, the Ten Commandments underlie the religious-ethical core of Kolymskie rasskazy.54 Thus it is appropriate to analyze the writer's stories through the prism of this fundamental expression of the Divine moral standard.

It seems important to consider how Shalamov's personality was shaped during his formative years spent in the familial circle of a Russian Orthodox priest, Tikhon Nikolaevich Shalamov. The contradictions and complexities of Shalamov's outlook on life were formed during the days of his boyhood and further complicated by the years of...

54Shalamov believed that moral principles constitute the essentials of the human soul. It was in ethical values in which he saw "the only authentic criterion of art." NB, 146, 690. As will be demonstrated in the second chapter of this study, the Decalogue creates the ethical backbone of Shalamov's magnum opus.
his imprisonment. This part of the research is significant because it helps to conceptualize Shalamov’s comprehensive description and in-depth analysis of human decay as recounted in *Kolymskie rasskazy*.

While the second chapter of this dissertation focuses on the microcosm of Stalinism as expressed through the imagery of *Kolymskie rasskazy*, the third chapter closely analyzes the Stalinist macrocosm from socio-psychological and theological viewpoints. I will address such questions as who was *Homo Sovieticus* and what political, ideological, and socioeconomic forces produced this phenomenon. This exploration into the cultural meaning of *Homo Sovieticus* is not intended to discuss exhaustively the theme of Russian national identity. Rather, an attempt will be made to understand the Soviet legacy as it reverberates in contemporary Russian culture. Furthermore, the third chapter will provide a biblical-theological assessment of Stalinism as the driving ideological force of Soviet culture. This assessment attempts to set forth a culturally meaningful missional theology, that is, a missiological response to the trauma that has been bequeathed to the present-day citizenry of Russia.

The fourth chapter presents the main missiological thrust of the dissertation and discusses a healing aspect of the gospel of Jesus Christ as a means to deal with the moral and socio-psychological scars caused by Stalinism. To that end, the two-volume work of Luke (Luke-Acts) will be utilized as a reference point to build a missiological paradigm for contemporary Russia. However, Luke’s Nazareth pericope (Luke 4:16-30), with
special emphasis on vv. 16-21, will be closely examined as "the foundational stone of his [Luke's] gospel." 

Thus this dissertation shares the main characteristics of a narrative missiology and as such looks at "the storied interaction of form [story], content [gospel] and context [history and culture]." It also integrates community story (Soviet history) and canonical story (the narrative of Luke-Acts). In this respect, Kolymskie rasskazy is considered to be a story of the trauma of Stalinism, that is, a story of Russian community and its wound; the narrative of Luke-Acts, on the other hand, is considered to be a story of healing. I therefore assume that entering deeply into the setting of God's story of healing is not only a matter of understanding the scriptural story of Jesus of Nazareth but also a matter of being with those who were traumatized, entering into their story, living with them, and becoming part of their story.

Limitations and Delimitations

In this research, only Russian and English sources are used. Literary studies on Shalamov have been written in other languages, but the lack of access does not allow

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56 A narrative missiology derives its meaning from narrative theology, the latter being "discourse about God in the setting of story" and "the decisive image for understanding and interpreting faith." Fackre, 343. See also Van Engen, 65-8.


60 See for example, Aïda Balabane-Hallit, L'écriture du trauma dans Les récits de la Kolyma, de Varlam Chalamov (Paris: Harmattan, 1999); Anna Razny, Literatura wobec
their inclusion in this dissertation. Furthermore, it is not my intention to develop a psycho-therapeutic methodology to deal with the post-Soviet mind and soul. Neither is it the aim to present a new concept of Christian social teaching applicable in contemporary Russian society or to create a strategy to proselytize Russia. Rather, the task is to develop a healing ministry that would be based on the narrative of Luke-Acts, informed by the political and psycho-social history of the Soviet Union and applicable in the context of a long-term Christian mission in the post-totalitarian culture of Russia.

**Definition of the Terms**

According to the latest trends in Soviet studies, the description of Stalinism has moved beyond the conventional definition which was understood in terms of a political system, and has come to include a cultural system.

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61 For example, the Russian Orthodox Church, at her 2000 Sacred Bishops' Council, adopted "The Basis of the Social Concept," a document which set forth "the basic provisions of her teaching on church-state relations and a number of problems socially relevant today" (http://www.mospat.ru/index.php?mid=180, accessed Nov. 2, 2007). A significant advance in creating an externally focused awareness of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Russia has been made by publishing a book on social teaching of the church. See Viktor P. Krushenitsky, ed., Основы социального учения Церкви Христиан Адвентистов Седьмого Дня в России (The foundations of social teaching of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Russia) (Zaokski, Tula Oblast: Istochnik Zhizni, 2003).

62 Stevan Weine rightly warns against naïve optimism in dealing with traumatized cultures when he says that "societies that experience cultural trauma from political violence do not shed violence easily. At best, culture change is a process and a long-term project." Weine, 139.

a civilization, and a way of life. In addition, this dissertation follows Sheila Fitzpatrick's usage of terms Stalinist and Soviet as overlapping concepts where the former represents both "a maximalist version of the latter and its defining moment." The term culture will be utilized not as a humanistic concept but as a socio-anthropological construct meaning, in its broadest sense,

that which is socially rather than genetically transmitted. It is that which children learn by virtue of their being brought up in one group rather than another, and, in its totality, it is that which distinguishes one human group from another. To human culture belong language, customs, morality, types of economy and technology, art and architecture, modes of entertainment, legal systems, religion, systems of education and upbringing . . . everything, in other words, by virtue of which members of a group endow their activities with meaning and significance.

To expand this definition further, the Stalinist political system will be considered as a powerful mentality-shaping and value-creating cultural force.

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66 Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism*, 4. According to Fitzpatrick, the term "Stalinism" means not only an ideology and/or a political system. It may stand as "a shorthand for the complex of institutions, structures, and rituals that made up the habitat of Homo Sovieticus in the Stalin era. Communist Party rule, Marxist-Leninist ideology, rampant bureaucracy, leader cults, state control over production and distribution, social engineering, affirmative action on behalf of workers, stigmatization of 'class enemies,' police surveillance, terror, and the various informal, personalistic arrangements whereby people at every level sought to protect themselves and obtain scarce goods, were all part of the Stalinist habitat." Ibid.
Another key term of this study is mission. I will follow a modified form of Van Engen's definition.\textsuperscript{68} mission is the people of God intentionally crossing barriers from the pulpit to the poor, from church to household, from dogma to trauma, to proclaim by listening, speaking, and doing the coming of God in Jesus Christ. This task is achieved by means of the church's participation in God's mission of compassion, healing, and restoration of His image in people, reconciling them to Him, to themselves, to each other, and to the world, delivering them from bondage to the totalitarian past, teaching them to live according to the Ten Commandments and faith in Jesus, and gathering them into the church through repentance and obedience to Jesus Christ by the work of the Holy Spirit with a view to the transformation of the world as a sign of the second coming of Jesus Christ. Thus mission is understood as genuineness of the Christian faith lived out in the post-Soviet context.

For Varlam T. Shalamov's magnum opus, I will employ the following abbreviations: \textit{CW}, \textit{KR}, and \textit{KT}, with \textit{CW} standing for \textit{Collected Works}\textsuperscript{69} which contain all six cycles of \textit{Kolymskie rasskazy} (\textit{KR}). The English translation \textit{Kolyma Tales}\textsuperscript{70} by John Glad will be footnoted as \textit{KT}. If a story is not found in Glad's translation I will provide my own translation which will be footnoted as \textit{CW} followed by the title of the story.

\textsuperscript{68}Van Engen, 26-7.
\textsuperscript{69}See p. 1 of this introduction.
CHAPTER 2

ANALYSIS OF HUMAN DECAY IN VARLAM SHALAMOV'S

KOLYMSKIE RASSKAZY

Introduction

This chapter examines the moral and psychosocial universe of the Kolyma camps' inmates as rendered by Shalamov in KR. The first section of this chapter addresses Shalamov's moral outlook on life as it was shaped during his formative years spent in the familial circle of his parents. The intention of this investigation is to explore the formation of young Varlam's religious and moral worldview as influenced by his father Tikhon Nikolaevich, a Russian Orthodox priest, and his mother, Nadezhda Aleksandrovna. The key sources for this study are Shalamov's autobiographical tale The Fourth Vologda (1968-1971)\textsuperscript{1} as well as his notebooks, diaries, and correspondence.

The second section of this chapter examines the scope of dehumanization that plagued the victims of the arctic hell at Kolyma. Since I believe that the biblical Decalogue (Exod 20; Deut 5) underlies the religious-ethical core of Shalamov's corpus of 147 stories and sketches, the structure of the dehumanization process will be analyzed against the background of the Ten Commandments given by God to Moses. Shalamov stated the irrefutable fact that human existence becomes a nightmare if the basic moral-ethical norms are smashed by the pressures coming from the complex interactions

\textsuperscript{1}CW, 4:1-148.
between an oppressive state machinery, a criminal world, severe natural environment, and human depravation. To support this thesis, a number of stories taken from each of the six cycles of KR will be analyzed against the background of the basic moral creed of the Judeo-Christian religion.

How were people dehumanized in the Kolyma death camps? How was the process of their moral decay structured? Why was the moral breakdown of the inmates so comprehensive? Were there any exceptions? What does Shalamov mean when he writes that "in Kolymskie rasskazy there is nothing that would not be an overcoming of evil, a celebration of good"? Finally, what does he mean when he says that "the camp . . . is the imprint of our lives. . . . [It] is like the world at large"?

Religious-Moral Worldview of Varlam Shalamov

The claim that there is a certain religiosity in KR may sound highly ambivalent to anyone who is familiar with a number of Shalamov's explicit and seemingly unambiguous statements about his disbelief in God. However, it is quite clear from his correspondence and other literary works that God did play an important role in his reflection on his as well as millions of others' deeply tragic life experiences. Furthermore, there are some assertions made by Shalamov both in prose and in poetry that can be interpreted as pro-religious and pro-Christian. This is not to say that Shalamov was a "Christian" or a "believer" and accepted the ontological status of both God and the devil. Neither are there sufficient grounds to think the opposite and consider Shalamov's

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3"There Is No One to Blame in the Camp," CW, 4:263.
thoughts on the transcendental nature of evil to be mere psychological or cultural metaphors.\textsuperscript{4} As Kline concludes, "it would be a mistake . . . to search for extremely clear-cut truths about Šalamov's character. He was a man of many contradictions, many which he never resolved for himself."\textsuperscript{5}

Regardless of how one categorizes Šalamov in terms of his (dis)belief, one thing is clear: His is a complex worldview resulting from the chain of tragedies in his personal as well as creative life. Paradoxically, Šalamov's literary works have a basic moral core that cannot be explained in the absence of religiously structured thinking.\textsuperscript{6} A considerable number of his sayings, observations, and insights are very religious in nature, thus exposing him as an (un)conscious adherent to the key ethical tenets of the Christian faith.

The other reason why the claim about Šalamov's religiosity may seem rather controversial is the mystery associated with the issue of faith, something that is often only evident to God. Šalamov's literary works seem to identify him as a person who went through the process of doubting God, arguing with Him, and even repudiating His very existence. On the other hand, he eventually validated the truth that moral life and works of common decency are of higher value than either a religion diluted with hypocrisy or a militant atheism penetrated by the demonic. This ethical stance by Šalamov echoes the Sermon on the Mount in which Jesus says, "Not everyone who says

\textsuperscript{4}For example, Frantsishek Apanovich believes that Šalamov utilized the image of Trinity as a "cultural symbol" in order to expand artistic semantics of his writings. See Frantsishek Apanovich, "Сошествие в ад: образ Троицы в 'Кольмских рассказах'", Shalamovskii Sbornik 3 (2002): 129.

\textsuperscript{5}Kline, "Novaja proza,", 44.

\textsuperscript{6}See a similar conclusion in Evgenii Shklovskii, "Жажда совершенной правды" (The thirst for the complete truth), Shalamovskii Sbornik 1 (1994): 201. Cf. Irina P. Sirotinskaia,
to me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven" (Matt 7:21).

Rationale for Disbelief

The autobiographical tale The Fourth Vologda as well as other memoirs and notes plays a very important role in reconstructing Shalamov's worldview. Because he was writing these works toward the end of his life, Shalamov incorporated many of his memories into them. And yet he was very selective, choosing episodes that were undoubtedly the most important ones for him. Perhaps, because of the traumatic nature, some of the events, especially those that took place in his early childhood and youth, must have made very deep and lasting impressions upon his consciousness.  

At the end of The Fourth Vologda, Shalamov repeats time and again that he lost faith in God when he was about six years old. By his own admission, it happened "little by little," because "in the growing complexity of my family life there was not a place for God in my consciousness. And I am proud that from ages six to sixty I did not resort to His help either in Vologda, or in Moscow, or in Kolyma." In his story entitled "Unconverted" (1963), the authorial persona states rather bluntly, "I do not have religious

"Варлам Шаламов: взгляд в будущее" (Varlam Shalamov: A look into the future), Shalamovskii Sbornik 3, 57.

7 As Shalamov once wrote, "Besides heredity, I believe in childhood. It is in early childhood that the traits of one's character are recorded; those traits which in the following years will be merely polished, downplayed or intensified are drawn, carved, [they] become neater while keeping the character at large unchanged." NB, 585.

8 CW, 4:145, 6.

9 Ibid., 4:146.
feeling"—a thought he repeated nearly verbatim in a letter to N. I. Stolyarova (1965): "I am a man who does not have religious feeling though I recognize its usefulness in terms of public and personal morals." Less than two years before his death, he wrote, "I am not scared to leave this world, although I am a complete atheist."

The above examples of the writer's straightforward confessions about his disbelief in God are not by any means exhaustive; nevertheless, they are sufficient to explain why there is a strong temptation to identify Shalamov as an atheist or at least agnostic writer. Some critics go further and label him as one of the harshest critics of Christianity. However, to get a deeper insight into the rationale for his disbelief one should examine the earlier statements against the background of the writer's traumatic family experiences which seem to have played a key role in making his worldview so controversial.

From his writings it becomes clear that Shalamov was severely and repeatedly traumatized by his own father, an Orthodox priest, during his childhood and the

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10 CW, 1:237.
11 NB, 735.
12 Ibid., 358.
13 For instance, Timofeev asserts that "there is no God in artistic system of Varlam Shalamov." Lev Timofeev, "Поэтика лагерной прозы. Первое прочтение 'Колымских рассказов' Варлама Шаламова" (Poetics of camp prose: The first reading of Kolyma Tales by Varlam Shalamov), Oktiabr' 3 (1991): 193.
14 As Shalamov asserted, "I am not convinced either in goodness or falseness of the world." NB, 887.
15 For instance, the literary critic Andzej Koval'chik believes that Shalamov's understanding of hope is very close to that of Tadeusz Borovskii and presents itself as one of the bitterest criticisms of Christianity in the twentieth century. See Francishek Apanovich, "Философская проблема в прозе В. Шаламова" (The philippic against force: Concerning one philosophical problem in the prose of V. Shalamov), Shalamovskii Sbornik 2 (1997): 171.
beginning of adolescence. The experiences were so painful that they made a deep and lasting impression on his sensitive psyche. He states,

I am sixty. I am proud that during my whole life I did not kill by my own hand a single living being, particularly from the world of animals. I did not destroy any bird's nest, I did not know how to catapult, [and] I did not hold in my hands a hunting rifle or any other gun.

This led to the deep conflict with my family, alienated me from my father and made me, strangely enough, religiousless (bezreligioznym).\textsuperscript{16}

Shalamov goes on to speak of his father's knife, "How I hated . . . this steel knife, a steel white penknife with two edges and a screwdriver. I did not take the knife to keep it as a souvenir of my father when he died in 1933."\textsuperscript{17} Among other images of his father that stayed in his memory for his whole life was the killing of a pike:

[We] caught a big fish, a pike, and I thought that now it would be released back into the river. . . . The pike got out on the sand and began thrashing around getting closer to the water by every leap!

But . . . the honor of the murder belonged to [my] father.

[My] father jumped and grasped the hailing pike by the head, put his fingers . . . into <gills>, [and his] knees pressed the bright body of the fish to the sand; father snatched a penknife from his pocket.\textsuperscript{18}

In \textit{The Fourth Vologda} Shalamov describes how his older brother Sergei\textsuperscript{19} would come back from hunting with "whole boats of [shot] ducks. . . . And I hated all this."\textsuperscript{20} This is why Shalamov could not look "without hysteria"\textsuperscript{21} at the photos of his father the hunter, taken while he was a missionary in the Aleutian Islands. In one of his notes, made

\textsuperscript{16}NB, 31.
\textsuperscript{17}Ibid., 31.
\textsuperscript{18}Ibid., 32.
\textsuperscript{19}As Tikhon Nikolaevich had put it, Sergei was "Nimrod of the family, its physical force." Ibid., 361. According to the biblical account, Nimrod was "a mighty hunter before the Lord; therefore it is said, 'Like Nimrod the mighty hunter before the Lord'" (Gen 10:9).
\textsuperscript{20}\textit{The Fourth Vologda}, \textit{CW}, 4:46.
\textsuperscript{21}NB, 253.
between the 1960s and 1970s, there is a sarcastic and rather symbolical reference to his father: "As every decent vampire would have it, the teeth of the father were in full order." 22 Toker suggests that "killing of animals was part of the peasant practice and had little to do with his [Shalamov's father] faith, though his calling may have been contaminated in his son's eyes." 23 Young Shalamov might have expected from his father a higher ethical standard, especially because of his peculiar holy calling. Beyond his reluctance to participate in hunting and boyish games, Shalamov admits: "I did not hear from my father anything but longstanding sneers." 24 This radical opposition to violence committed against animals by his father contributed to Varlam's disbelief in God in his early childhood. 25

Reflecting on his father's cruelty toward animals, Shalamov wrote:

My father's hunting skills shocked me.
And this is one of the reasons why I lost faith in God.
In my childish Christianity animals occupied a place before people. 26
I did not show much interest in church rites.
My faith in God was never passionate or firm, and I easily lost it—as Gandhi [lost] his caste cord, when it rotted by itself.
The dramas of fishes, she-goats, [and] swine thrilled me much more than church dogmas, and not just dogmas. 27

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22 NB, 360.
23 Leona Toker, Jerusalem, e-mail to Yuri Drumi, Berrien Springs, 28 February 2006.
24 CW, 4:56.
25 Ibid., 4:45.
27 CW, 4:120.
These images explain why he was so harsh in his comments about his father: "I understood very late that I do not love [my] father"\textsuperscript{28}, "my father was a man of conceit—a progressive church red-tape-monger (sluzhbist)."\textsuperscript{29} In a 1968 notebook entry Shalamov says that his father's prayer was "the prayer of an atheist,"\textsuperscript{30} which echoes a comment made in 1967 that his father's attitude to the church was "highly indifferent."\textsuperscript{31} Shalamov's retrospective view was that his father was a ruthless man who did not live in accord with the faith he professed: "My father was an absolutely worldly man,"\textsuperscript{32} "a man . . . worldly to the very marrow of his bones,"\textsuperscript{33} and "being a positivist to the very marrow of his bones, he did not believe in any prophesies."\textsuperscript{34} Perhaps these and other similar experiences predetermined a break with his father's religion. In the post factum debate with his father, Shalamov stated somewhat angrily: "You believed in God—I will not believe in Him, I have not believed for a long time and will never learn [to do so]."\textsuperscript{35}

In the story "The Cross" (1959) which belongs to the third cycle of KR, \textit{The Artist of the Spade}, Shalamov vividly depicts how his family's Christianity had lost its former meaning. He recounts how his father when facing an approaching famine did not hesitate to put the golden pectoral cross "face down" on the floor and with an axe cut it into

\textsuperscript{28}NB, 311. Cf. another statement: "The main thing for the father was a career, a success—in any party, in any area" (361).
\textsuperscript{29}Ibid., 253.
\textsuperscript{30}Ibid., 314.
\textsuperscript{31}Ibid., 32.
\textsuperscript{32}CW, 4:47.
\textsuperscript{33}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{34}Ibid., 4:18.
\textsuperscript{35}Ibid., 4:141.
pieces, in order to take the gold the next day to the local shop of the Trade Syndicate and exchange the gold pieces for food. But before the father cut the cross into pieces he said "Is god [sic] really in it?" Shalamov's mother first tried to prevent her blind husband from carrying out his plans, but when he eventually succeeded in his efforts, she got her eyeglasses on and carefully examined the axe. She was looking for the golden grains left on its edge. One may conclude that not only the young Varlam but also his aging parents broke away from conventional Christianity because of the increasing pressures of life.

At the same time, there are evidences that Shalamov did not make an irrevocable renunciation of his belief in God. In *The Fourth Vologda* he argues like a man who holds Christian faith in high esteem. For instance, he reflects on God's transcendental greatness when he writes that "I can understand an ascetic, a prophet listening to the voice of the Lord in the wilderness. But turning to God for worldly advice and asking God's advice for others in order to hand over grace, this was alien to me and did not evoke either respect, or a desire to imitate." In light of this passage alone, it is clear that despite all of Shalamov's traumatic experiences in his childhood he did not reject the Christian faith per se, but he did repudiate a certain form of it that was embodied in the personality of his father. Religion in which there was a place for violence was not acceptable to him in any form or in any guise. On the contrary, a philosophy of non-violence became an

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37 Shalamov's father turned blind after the death of his son Sergei. See *ibid.*, 4:46.
indispensable part of his view of what Christian religion should be in terms of daily ethics. To further understand his worldview it is necessary to look at some of his sayings about God, religion, and the ethical dimension of faith.

Rationale for Belief

A somewhat different picture appears when one is reading Shalamov's accounts about his mother, Nadezhda Alexandrovna. He describes her as quiet, humble, and yet strong and deeply spiritual. Married to an imperious and ambitious man, she was doomed to an existence full of suffering and humiliation. Her life was "trodden down" by a man who never took her into consideration. Young Varlam was deeply touched by his mother's patience and gentleness as he observed her daily struggles guiding a family with five children, and this is why whenever he talks about her, he does so with rare sympathy, compassion, and adoration. His intimate tie to his mother led Shalamov to believe that he had inherited from her those spiritual qualities that his father lacked.

[My] mamma had experienced a typical Russian woman's fate. Mamma had entirely dedicated herself to the interests of the father. . . . Mamma was able, gifted, energetic, beautiful, and superior to the father precisely in terms of her spiritual qualities. Mamma had spent her life in torments and died as an ordinary priest's wife unable to break away from the chains of family and family life.

40 However, it would be too simplistic and unfair to the memoirs of the writer to view the interpersonal relationships of his parents in terms of black-and-white logic. For example, in the story "The Cross" (1959), Shalamov draws a touching picture of genuine love and care that existed between his father and mother during the time when troubles befall the family in the 1920s. Yet in his late-life reflections, Shalamov seems to demonize his father and idealize his mother.

41 CW, 4:47.
42 Ibid.
43 Ibid., 3:431-32.
44 Ibid., 4:47.
As far as Christianity is concerned, his mother had "her own, eschatological, highly peculiar teaching about the end of the world," and Varlam would listen to it with "extreme attention, simply with pity and pain." The following words clearly show not only how strong his love for his mother was, but also how pious and holy she was: "I am not a bishop or a priest. But I would like to canonize my mamma." These were not just words. There is a moving scene in his memoirs when he describes how he washed his mother's feet in warm water (at that time she was very sick and could hardly move), kissed them, and she began crying. His deep attachment to her is also evident in the fact that while in exile in the forced labor camps of Vishera in the Northern Urals, whenever he received a letter from her he would cry. He retained this uncommon affection towards his mother till the end of his life. Nadezhda Alexandrovna was attached to him as well and had wanted him to study at a Theological Seminary. Perhaps she saw certain qualities in him that would qualify him for such a vocation.

At the age of sixty he felt her invisible presence as a kind of moral reference point. Referring to his childhood, Shalamov tells a story about one tragically unhappy family who lived next door. He recalls how a drunken husband would verbally abuse his wife, how he would publicly beat her severely, and, after having thrown her on the ground, would trample on her:

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\begin{align*}
{45} & CW, 4:47. \\
{46} & Ibid. \\
{47} & Ibid. \\
{48} & NB, 32; cf. CW, 3:431-32. \\
{49} & "June," CW, 1:511; cf. NB, 253. \\
{50} & CW, 4:39.
\end{align*}
\]
I was standing by the house watching the scene through the door's chink. My heart was beating. Behind the back I had heard my mother's breathing. Rozhkov turned the wife out of doors, ran her down and gave her hell. "I do not want you to become like this," my mamma said. "And I have not become like this, mamma!" wrote Shalamov approximately 50 years later.¹⁵¹

This reconstruction of Shalamov's family background, albeit limited,¹⁵² helps explain the complexity and ambiguity associated with his religious worldview.¹⁵³ Two opposing forces seem to have played a role in forming his outlook during his childhood and youth. On the one hand, the secular religion of his father, an ambitious man with a domineering mind-set, while on the other hand, Shalamov's worldview was influenced significantly by the humble devout life of his mother. According to his earnest conviction, his mother embodied genuine Christian faith with its spirit of non-violence, selfless service, and self-sacrificial love—ideals Shalamov highly valued throughout his life. A third force that shaped his character was literature, which Shalamov devoured in

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¹⁵¹ CW, 4:131.

¹⁵² I have intentionally omitted Shalamov's post-camp family background which, in my view, played a less significant role in the issues of his faith in God than the experiences that occurred during his formative years. At least the writer did not leave us any clear evidence to think otherwise. Nevertheless, as Kline believes, post-Kolyma impacts may explain another important characteristic of his personality—a loss of faith in humanity. As she puts it, "The bitterness with which Shalamov was ultimately to perceive the camps was a result of the events of his post-camp [family] life." Laura Kline, "The Trauma of Coming Home," unpublished manuscript, p. 6.

¹⁵³ There is also another view on the problem of Shalamov's atheism as it relates to the abrasive relationships between him and his father. Looking from the standpoint of psychoanalytical theory, Bol'shev hypothesizes that young Shalamov suffered Oedipus complex. This phenomenon, he asserts, explains both authorial cynicism about humans as utterly depraved beings and his rejection of God as a raison d'être of the universe. A. O. Bol'shev, Особенности автобиографизма в русской прозе 50—70-х годов XX века (Исповедально-автобиографические произведения Б. Пастернака, В. Шаламова, Ю. Домровского в свете психоанализа) (The characteristics of autobiographism in Russian prose of the 1950s-70s: Confessionary-autobiographic works of B. Pasternak, V. Shalamov, Y. Dombrovsky in light of psychoanalysis)
his childhood and youth. But it seems that literature had a far less important impact on his religious outlook than did his family, especially his interpersonal relationship with his parents. He once admitted as late as 1968 that "only social interactions (obshchenie s zhyvymi lud'mi) hurt me most, and I do not remember any book which, in spite of my impressionability, hurt me more in the years of my childhood or youth."\(^{54}\)

Varlam Shalamov as a Religious Thinker

Most of twentieth-century Russian history was impacted by massive social upheavals such as the October Revolution, the Red Terror, the Civil War, famine, forced collectivization,dekulakization, industrialization, and the Great Terror which plunged tens of millions of people into an abyss of enormous suffering and despair. But the most emblematic feature of that century was the concentration camp.\(^{55}\) Shalamov was dragged into the Kolyma death camps to witness and experience an "immense flood of evil never seen in previous ages and millennia."\(^{56}\) As an intellectual who survived nearly seventeen years in the Kolyma camps, he was seeking to understand his own experiences as well as those of his camp inmates, something that was nearly impossible. It was almost imperative for him to include God in his camp experience reflections. Moreover, as an

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\(^{54}\)NB, 828.


\(^{56}\)Timofeev, 190.
existentialist writer\textsuperscript{57} he could not avoid discussing the theme of the Divine in his writings. A few statements are worth citing which will reveal him as a religious thinker.

In a letter to Boris Pasternak dated 20 December 1953, Shalamov comments on the main ideas and heroes of \textit{Dr. Zhivago}. The following passages show how deeply he was interested in issues of Christianity.

Nobody affirms aloud what has been agitating the human soul for thousands of years, what has been responding to [its] innermost thoughts. The best minds of humankind and certainly the most genius artists have formulated a language for intercourse between man and his best inner essence. This language was formulated by Christ's apostles and later by such writers as John Zlatoust [Chrysostom], who were able to control all the mysteries of the human soul—throughout the millennia. I used to read the texts of liturgies, the texts of the divine Easter services, [the texts] of the Week of Passion and I was astonished by their power, depth, [and] artistry—by the great democratism of that soul's algebra. But its roots went back to the Gospel, [it] grew out of it, [and] leaned against it.

. . . And how can any literate person move away from the issues of Christianity? And how is it possible to write a novel about the past without clarifying one's relation to Christ?\textsuperscript{58}

And how shall I now live—[a man] who saw the divine services on the pure snow, without chasubles and stoles, [performed] from memory among five-hundred year old larches, facing East for the altar which was randomly calculated, with black squirrels fearfully watching the taiga worship from the branches?\textsuperscript{59}

I like so many parts of the book \textit{[Dr. Zhivago]} that it is difficult to name the best one. Nevertheless I suppose that it is the piece from Vedeniapin's notebook—about Rome and Christ. I have recopied this wonderful piece for myself, and I will learn it by heart. And there is something else I would like to add to this: when the soldiery or militarists begin to rule over the world, I am pained by the thought that if this continues in the same way—there will be a third [sic] advent and the history of the new, second Christianity will begin. In Christianity itself everything has to do with advent, with the appearance of God in everyday life (vyavlenii Boga v byt).\textsuperscript{60}

\textsuperscript{57}M. Berutti, "Экзистенциалистские позиции в лагерной prose Варлама Шаламова" (Existentialistic positions in the camp prose of Varlam Shalamov), in \textit{Shalamovskii sbornik} 4 (1997): 53.

\textsuperscript{58}\textit{NB}, 419.

\textsuperscript{59}Ibid., 420.

\textsuperscript{60}Ibid., 422.
Christian ideas had deeply penetrated Shalamov's thinking. The notion of the advent of Christ was considered by him, at least at the time he wrote this letter, to be a powerful counteraction (in fact, a counterculture) to the dominance of evil and violence. As Shalamov comments on some other pages of Pasternak's novel, "Christianity was an offer of life to Man [sic], and not to society."61 From this and other passages it seems that the KR can be rightly called a weeping over the greatest loss a human being has ever experienced, a loss of self in the loss of God. In the vortex of tragic historical events people agonizingly found themselves face to face with absolute evil,62 that is, with God in absentia. And it was this experience of humanity falling into the abyss of godless existence that became a subject matter of Shalamov's magnum opus. As soon as Shalamov was released and returned from Kolyma, he envisioned a plan to tell the tale about the "martyrs who were not, who could not and who did not become heroes."63 But how could he do this if, by his own confession, it was impossible to write about the past "without clarifying one's relation to Christ?" In that sense, the KR might be considered his arduous task of clarifying his relationship to Christ and God.

In his letter to Sirotinskaia dated 23 July 1968, while speaking of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, he expressed his feeling that this sermon was "simply a conversation with friends, with children, with close acquaintances."64 In the same year he wrote in one of

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61NB, 424.

62According to Shklovskii, "the image of camp in the stories of V. Shalamov is an image of absolute evil." Evgenii Shklovskii, "Правда Варлама Шаламова" (The truth of Varlam Shalamov), Druzhba narodov 3 (1991): 256.


64NB, 830. Cf. a somewhat similar description of Christ in NB, 315.
his notebooks, "God does not need righteous people. They will manage to live without God. God needs repentant sinners."\textsuperscript{65} Probably one of his most powerful reflections on God is in his letter to Sirotinskaia (about 1971) in which he states: "We do not know what stands behind God, behind faith, but we clearly see—everyone sees—what stands behind disbelief. Therefore [there is] such a thirst \([tjaga]\) for religion, surprising to me, an heir of totally different principles."\textsuperscript{66}

From this statement it can be concluded that Shalamov was \textit{not} an atheist. But it is also important to point out that the closer he was to his final days, the more bitter his thoughts about God would become. In an unsent letter to Solzhenitsyn (1974), which is full of polemics, he accuses him of hypocrisy and says that by shouting, "I believe in God! I am a religious person!"\textsuperscript{67} Solzhenitsyn behaves as an unscrupulous man. In a letter to Julii Shreider written 1 September 1975 he goes so far as to ascribe the authorship of the Bible, Qur'an, and the New Testament to the devil.\textsuperscript{68} As quoted earlier, in late 1979 he admits: "I am not scared to leave this world, although I am a complete atheist."\textsuperscript{69}

There is no question, Shalamov was a deep religious thinker.\textsuperscript{70} Many of his statements about religion reveal positive attitudes toward Christianity and religious

\textsuperscript{65}NB, 313.
\textsuperscript{66}Ibid., 842.
\textsuperscript{67}Ibid., 377.
\textsuperscript{68}Ibid., 895.
\textsuperscript{69}Ibid., 358.
\textsuperscript{70}As far as his poetry is concerned, there are very many religious ideas and deep spiritual insights in it. It is clear that such poetic pieces, like, for example, "Аввакум в Пустозерске" (Avvakum in Pustozersk), which Shalamov believed was an autobiographical one, could hardly be produced by someone who had not been in dialogue with God, with higher truth, or who did not share at least the basic principles of religious freedom. See Mark Kachurin, "Все те же енега Аввакумова века: Аввакум Петров и Варлам Шаламов" (Same snow of Avvakum's age: 36
faith, though chronologically speaking, the dynamics of his faith moved toward disbelief. This can partly be explained by his rapidly and fatally deteriorating physical and mental health (he suffered dementia), as well as utter loneliness.

**Moral Reference Point of Kolymskie rasskazy**

In her article "Varlam Shalamov: In the Devil's Presence," Elena Mikhailik advances the idea that "the theme of interaction and interosculation of the totalitarian state, the criminal world, and the evil forces, clearly stated in Kolymskie rasskazy, deserves . . . serious and detailed examination." The purpose of the following section of the dissertation is to explore this complex theme, rightly identified by Mikhailik, as coming from interaction between political science, criminology, and theology (demonology). Shalamov was able in his writings to combine all three and produced a grim masterpiece, a first-hand testimony, a rare and powerful document unmasking Stalinism as the monstrous force that dominated an entire epoch in the history of Soviet Russia.

"This Is My Soul"

The KR consists of six cycles. Each of the cycles was designed with its own structure and order within the whole. The first cycle, which bears the same name as the

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71Cf. NB, 512.

main work, was written between 1953 and 1956 while Shalamov was in exile in Kalinin Province. The second cycle, *The Sketches of the Criminal World*, was written in 1959. The third and fourth cycles, *The Left Bank* and *The Artist of the Spade*, were finished in the mid-1960s. The fifth cycle, *Resurrection of the Larch*, was finished in the late 60s. Finally, *The Glove, or KT-2 [KR-2]*, was almost completed in the early 1970s.

In terms of their literary novelty, Shalamov categorizes *KR* as a "new Russian prose." This "new prose" he defines not as "the prose of a document but the prose of an ordeal borne out as a document." He claims that every story is "an absolute authenticity" and "the truth of the living life." As Kline observes, "With very few exceptions he wrote his stories about events of which he had first-hand knowledge, and would return mentally and emotionally to his experiences when he wrote, as if transcribing an artistic vision." At the same time, as an example of documentary prose *KR* can be read not only as a testimony of crime but also as a literary work. This means that the characters are highly representative and function as pointers to and symbols of a bigger reality than what appears on the surface of the narrative. Shalamov created "an intermediate between artistic and nonartistic discourse." The border between the real and bizarre is blurred. The reader is not just invited to get new information about

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73 NB, 921.

74 Ibid., 845. Translated by Leona Toker.

75 Ibid., 838.

76 "About Prose," CW, 4:368.

77 Kline, "'Novaja proza,'" 222-23.

78 Toker, *Return from the Archipelago*, 124.

factographic, historically verifiable data, but plunged, as it were, into the plot without any possibility to remain a bystander and avoid moral response to the interpenetrating dilemmas presented by the text. Thus, Shalamov's stories function not only to inform but also to transform the reader, regardless of his emphasis that genuine literature must be free from moralistic notions.

One of the biggest achievements of Shalamov's literary genius is that his truth was not only ruthless toward evil, but also constructive and compassionate toward human individuals.\textsuperscript{80} Shalamov told the truth as he saw it, and his moral sense was equally important in his vocation of writing and in his ethical outlook on life in general.\textsuperscript{81} Shreider has rightly defined the prose of Shalamov as a "philosophical exploration into the nature of human beings."\textsuperscript{82} The Kolyma death camps turned out to be places where "any human being could be transformed into any form of being."\textsuperscript{83} It is precisely this transformation Shalamov describes in detail in his magnum opus. As he claims, in KR he examines "some psychological regularities that arise in a society where attempts are made to dehumanize human beings. These new regularities, new phenomena of the human spirit and soul arise under conditions that must not be forgotten, and the recording of some of these conditions is a moral imperative of every person who has been in Kolyma."\textsuperscript{84}

\textsuperscript{80}Valerii Esipov, "Норма литературы и норма бытия" (The norm of literature and the norm of being), Svobodnaia Mysl' 4 (1994): 50.
\textsuperscript{81}Ibid., 43 (italics in the original).
\textsuperscript{82}Yulii Shreider, "Секрета нет" (No secret), Znanie—Silà 6 (1991): 83.
\textsuperscript{83}Yuri Leksin, "Вне всего человеческого" (Beyond everything human), Znanie—Silà 6 (1991): 75.
\textsuperscript{84}NB, 757. Translated by Leona Toker.
Shalamov rejected the "therapeutic approach" peculiar to memoir writing. He believed that "a writer has to reopen his old wounds in conjuring up the bad old times." As a result, his writing experience was like a return to the Kolyma death camps to relive the tortures once again. He confesses that he would speak out and shout all of his stories. While writing, he could not stop weeping, and "only later, [when] finishing a story or a part of it, I wipe away the tears." Toker emphasizes that "only the near-completed work, fermented near the threshold of consciousness, would be put down on paper." Hence the stories' narrative sobriety, sparse use of vocabulary, and factual precision are all utilized as devices reminiscent of a pantomime. Kline suggests that through his experience of writing KR, Shalamov "made himself into a window to the past and to the suffering he witnessed and endured personally." At times he describes this process in nearly Eucharistic terms. "It is my own blood that has cemented [certain] phrases of Kolymskie rasskazy," says the writer. He continues, "This [KR] is my soul."

By the end of his life, however, Shalamov doubted the significance of his work. To see his stories sitting in drawers (napisannye v yashchik), without any chance to get

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85 Toker, Return from the Archipelago, 156.
86 NB, 838.
87 Ibid., 847.
88 Toker, Return from the Archipelago, 155.
90 Laura Kline, Ann Arbor, e-mail to Yuri Drumi, Berrien Springs, 25 July 2005.
91 "About Prose," CW, 4:368.
92 NB, 839.
93 Ibid., 145-46.
them published in the Soviet Union, was an extra cost Shalamov had to pay for his life ambition. Some of the stories, however, were smuggled abroad and four of them were published as early as 1966. Then new publications (without the authorial permission) appeared in Russian periodicals in the West in the 1960s and 1970s.\textsuperscript{94} When Shalamov learned about his randomly selected and oddly published stories, he protested and wrote his infamous letter to \textit{Literaturnaia gazeta}, published 23 February 1972. In the letter the writer stated that "the problematics of \textit{Kolymskie rasskazy} have been removed by life a long time ago."\textsuperscript{95} Regardless of this seeming renunciation of his major literary work, he continued to write \textit{KR} for at least one more year.

Shalamov never claimed that his stories in \textit{KR} have a common plot\textsuperscript{96} though he considered them to be a cohesive whole. These stories are "achronic" and "linked together in the cycles by theme."\textsuperscript{97} However, the questions arise: What is that theme? What does the voice of a prisoner want to convey to his readers and listeners? And if there is an overarching theme, there should probably be an "archnarrator." Kline has put the problem this way:

\begin{quote}
In terms of character, biography, physical appearance and point-of-view there is little distinction between most of the characters in \textit{Kolymskie rasskazy}. This lack of distinction points to the existence of a theoretical "archnarrator," who encompasses the attitudes, expectations and experience of the majority of the characters, on the
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{94}\textsuperscript{\textsuperscript{94}}Michael Nicholson, "Открытие, которого он не знал" (A discovery he did not know), \textit{Shalamovskii Sbornik} 1 (1994): 212.

\textsuperscript{95}\textsuperscript{\textsuperscript{95}}Irina P. Sirotinskaia, "О письме в 'Литературную газету'" (Concerning the letter to the \textit{Literaturnaia gazeta}), \textit{Shalamovskii Sbornik} 1 (1994): 106.

\textsuperscript{96}\textsuperscript{\textsuperscript{96}}NB, 920. Mikhailik points out that "Shalamov could not describe the camps in terms of conventional categories of tempo and subject, because in this case one of the basic characteristics of camp universe would be lost, namely its killing irrationality." Elena Mikhailik, "Варлам Шаламов в контексте литературы и истории" (Varlam Shalamov in the context of literature and history), \textit{Australian Slavonic & East European Studies} 9, no. 1 (1995): 40.

\textsuperscript{97}Kline, "Новая проза,'" 283.
one hand, and who himself has been fractured by physical and psychological abuse, on the other. In fact, *Kolymskie rasskazy* can be seen as an attempt to reconstruct this archnarrator, or at least gather the pieces of his psyche, pieces which cannot be put together, but which form a sort of mosaic in the text, a testimony to trauma, anguish, and loss of self.\(^98\)

In a letter to Sirotinskaia in 1971 Shalamov emphasizes that a genuine writer must be a "judge, and not an apprentice,"\(^99\) and through this process he "gives the final formula, a verdict."\(^100\) In line with these high standards for writers are Shalamov's own confessions made in a notebook in 1972, that all the murderers in *KR* bear their real names.\(^101\) It is difficult to disagree with the writer who claimed that his every tale was "a slap in the face of Stalinism,"\(^102\) a ruthless exposure of systemic evil institutionalized and ritualized in the Kolyma death camps. Mikhailik shows that "in the context of *Kolymskie rasskazy* the camp world is identified not only with devil's possessions but with the devil himself."\(^103\) She states that "we may speak of the continuous—either direct or indirect—presence of [the] devil in all the corners of the camp universe of *Kolymskie rasskazy*, on all levels of the text."\(^104\) The Kolyma death camps, Mikhailik concludes, were an "incarnation of Absolute, Universal evil."\(^105\)

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\(^98\) Laura Kline, "Narrative Perspective in Varlam Shalamov's *Kolymskie rasskazy*," unpublished manuscript, 10-11.

\(^99\) *NB*, 840.

\(^100\) Ibid., 838.

\(^101\) Ibid., 342.

\(^102\) Ibid., 836.

\(^103\) Mikhailik, "Varlam Shalamov: In the Devil's Presence," 203.

\(^104\) Ibid., 213.

If his stories were not only "retrospective explorations of the semiotics of camp experience," but also "constituted acts as accusation, judgment, acknowledgement, mourning, [and] restitution," Shalamov must have had a certain ethical basis for these acts. As far as textual evidences of the existence of such a basis are concerned, biblical allusions in the KR are countless and run through virtually all the stories. On a subtler level, however, the "metaphysical vision that is implicit in Shalamov's work" is of a moral nature and emerges from the central moral values ingrained in Judeo-Christian religion.

Metanarrative of *Kolymskie rasskazy*

After he had completed working on the KR, Shalamov repeatedly returned to it in his reflections, especially in correspondence, diaries, and notes. It is unambiguously clear from these sources that he considered the moral decay (rastlenie) of human beings to be an overarching theme of his stories. In a number of statements Shalamov explains his literary compositions. According to his assessment in a letter to Sirotinskaia of 1971, "[In KR] people are portrayed in a state which is highly important and which has not been described before, [namely] when a human being comes to a condition close to beyond-humanness. My prose is a fixation of what little remained in man. What is that little? Is there a boundary to that little, or it is death, both spiritual and physical, that lies beyond

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107 Cf. NB, 723.
that boundary? In a letter to A. A. Kremenskii in 1972, Shalamov speaks about *KR* not only as a "new Russian prose," but also as a verbal "photograph of the death camps." That snapshot shows that "man turned out to be much worse than it was imagined by Russian humanists of the 19th and 20th centuries, and not only by Russian humanists.—Why hide this? *Kolymskie rasskazy* speak exactly about this." Then he continues:

I don't see any reason to exclude the theme of the camps from the literary raw material of a contemporary writer. On the contrary, it is precisely in the camp theme that I see the expression, reflection, perception, [and] witnessing of the main tragedy of our time. And the tragedy is about how people, educated for generations on humanistic literature . . . have so easily [*pri pervom zhe uspekhe*] come to Auschwitz, to Kolyma. This is not only a Russian mystery, but, apparently, a universal question.

Finally, in the author's well-structured document, entitled *What I Saw and Understood in the Camp* (1961), are very radical thoughts on the morally destructive effects that the forced-labor camps had upon prisoners as well as personnel. He writes: "I am convinced that the camp is a totally negative school, even an hour mustn't be spent there—this would be an hour of depravation. The camps never gave anything good to anybody, and they could not. The camp depraves both prisoners and civilians."
In order to speak so strongly and convincingly about moral decay in the Stalinist death camps, Shalamov must have had a clear moral reference point that would serve him as a criterion for distinguishing good from evil, in spite of the fact that he makes a considerable number of statements that seemingly point towards ethical relativism.\(^{116}\) In fact, the main reason why Shalamov succeeded in portraying the death camps as a sort of anti-society, a negative reality which caused the moral fall of individual human beings and led to "an unhedged relativization of conventional morality,"\(^{117}\) was precisely because he had an unbending ethical backbone at the core of his agnostic worldview.

The *KR* makes such a lasting and indelible impression on the reader not only because its author used certain literary techniques but also because he held a steadfast moral position. Shalamov plunges the readers of *KR* into a cathartic experience\(^{118}\) thus making them feel disgust for Stalinism and the criminal world as one of its offshoots. By writing *KR* the way he did, Shalamov actually conveyed the idea stated by the apostle Paul some nineteen centuries before: "I would not have known sin except through the law" (Rom 7:7b). In the mouth of Shalamov this truth would be stated like this: "I would not have known the 'vile science' of evil except through the moral feeling dwelling within me."

\(^{116}\) In his stories Shalamov would often speak of the "shift of all and any of the [moral] scales" (*smeshchenie masshtabov*). See *CW*, 1:495, 519, 531, etc.; 2:275, 293, 297, 304, 316, etc.; see also a letter to F.A. Vigdorova of 16 June 1964, *NB*, 723. Time and again the writer would repeat that he and other camp prisoners crossed the borders of "good and evil, warmth and cold" ("The Glove," *CW*, 2:293), that he and other prisoners were "outside of truth, outside of lies" ("Sententious," *CW*, 1:358).

\(^{117}\) Toker, "Varlam Shalamov's Kolyma," 158.

\(^{118}\) Elena Volkova, "Парадоксы катарсиса Варлама Шаламова" (The paradoxes of catharsis of Varlam Shalamov), *Voprosy filosofii* 11 (1996): 45.
"Po desyati zapovedyam" (According to the Ten Commandments)

In her memoirs, Sirotinskaia tells the story about how she first met Shalamov on the second of March 1966. She came to ask him if he would give his manuscripts to the Central State Archive of Literature and Art. Also, after she had read his tale, "Typhoid Quarantine," Sirotinskaia was very eager to meet the author whom she considered to be a "new prophet" who must have known the answer to her agonizing question: How shall one now live? When Shalamov was asked this question his immediate reply was: "According to the Ten Commandments." Sirotinskaia was a bit disappointed by this answer and inquired: "Is that all?" To which Shalamov added his own "eleventh commandment": "Thou shall not teach thy neighbor."

Even if this event had never occurred, there would still be valid reasons to consider some points of contact between the Decalogue as the main moral creed of Judeo-Christianity and KR.

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119 Irina Sirotinskaia, "Долгие-долгие годы бесед" (The long-long years of talks), in Shalamovskii sbornik 1 (1994): 111.

120 By his insistence on the "eleventh" commandment Shalamov probably sought to distance himself from a particular stream of Russian literature that "interferes in other people's business, directs other people's destinies, expostulates about issues on which it does not understand anything, while it has no right to poke into moral problems, to condemn, while it knows nothing and does not wish to know anything." See "Galina Pavlovna Zybalova," CW, 2:319, cited from the translation done by Leona Toker, "Target Audience, Hurdle Audience, and the General Reader: Varlam Shalamov's Art of Testimony," Poetics Today 26, no. 2 (Summer 2005): 294.

121 Given to the Israelites after they were set free from Egyptian bondage (the ancient Gulag), the commandments became the crucial value-creating source for the recently born nation. Numerous other laws, statutes, and rules stemmed from it, thus regulating various areas of their religion, morality, civil order, marriage and family institutions, international affairs, etc. Since Judaism and Christianity are primarily "behavioristic" faith traditions, these moral codes regulate the totality of their interpersonal relationships and provide an absolute standard for distinguishing both good and evil in societal and personal behaviors. The Decalogue is binding because it was given by God, "the parent of all humanity." The significance of the Decalogue is clear from the fact that it was written on the stone "with the finger of God" (Exod 31:18; Deut 9:10), it was "the
The Decalogue describes God's ideal of what human life must be like individually and communally, in relation to the Creator and His creation, primarily to one's fellow humans. *KR* bears witness to the reversal of that ideal, namely how the male and female inmates of the Kolyma camps experienced the full range of moral and psycho-social degradation and disintegration. If the Decalogue is a clear-cut path to being human, *KR* is a testimony to the men and women who could not retain their humanity and simply ceased to be humans. Above all, the Decalogue addresses interpersonal relationships.

Shalamov, too, did his description of the arctic hell primarily in behavioristic terms, that is, as "the lethal and humiliating slave labor amid the system of relationship that corrupts individuals and pushes aside moral barriers." Furthermore, there is every reason to believe that human dignity and worth as a bedrock principle of the Ten Commandments and Shalamov's strong adherence to ethics of non-violence have certainly much in common.


123 Shalamov believed that the biggest crime in the world is to weigh upon somebody else's will. See *NB*, 827.
Shalamov lived in the home of practicing Orthodox parents. Although he experienced a somewhat complex relationship with his father, he nevertheless held to the basic moral values embedded in the Christian religion. His sensitivity toward moral issues was beyond doubt. This moral legacy sharpened his perception of the painful experiences endured in Kolyma and contributed to making his descriptions of the hellish camp so powerful. As Petrochenkov has pointed out, the determinant of Shalamov's artistic thinking (khudozhestvennoe soznanie) is Christianity, and outside of it his stories cannot be understood. Second, while in the Kolyma camps, Shalamov went through the unspeakable. His experience of descending into the hell of human decadency made him a witness of what men and women become when the basic principles of the Decalogue are abolished. It is reasonable, therefore, to look at some of Shalamov's stories through the prism of the Ten Commandments to analyze the parameters of dehumanization that are unfolded in the pages of KR.

A Human among Humans

One of the ways to classify the Ten Commandments of Exod 20 (cf. Deut 5) is to divide them into two parts. The first part, the theological commandments 1 to 4, structures Divine-human relationships, whereas the second part, the social

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124 According to Shalamov, moral principles constitute the essentials of the human soul (NB, 690). He asserts that in the KR there is nothing that would not be an overcoming of evil, a triumph of good (CW, 4:362). In line with this evaluation is his thought that it is the ethical value that constitutes "the only authentic criterion of art" (NB, 146).

125 Valery V. Petrochenkov, "Шаламов и мировая культура" (Shalamov and the world culture), Shalamovskii sbornik 3 (2002): 97.
commandments 5 to 10, regulates the social dimension of human life. The fourth
commandment (the Sabbath commandment) is in the middle of the Decalogue and shares
both dimensions. Jesus summarized the meaning of "all the Law and the Prophets" by
saying that there are two great commandments. The first one is, "You shall love the
LORD your God with all your heart" and the second one is, "You shall love your
neighbor as yourselves" (Matt 22:37-40; cf. Mark 12:28-31). Later the apostle Paul re-
emphasized Jesus' point by asserting that "love is the fulfillment of the law" (Rom 13:10).

The reason my analysis begins with the second part of the Decalogue is because
in the context of KR as well as in the biography of Shalamov it seems more consistent to
consider the visible before the invisible, that is, the metaphysical world. In order to
reflect on the hidden spiritual realm of God and His relation to human beings (and vice
versa), one must begin with an accurate description of what a human being was in
relationship to another human in the confinement of the Kolyma camps. Perhaps this
approach of taking the reverse order—from the consequences to the causes—has
something in common with Shalamov's description of the camps where all kinds of moral
scales were fatally shifted.

The fifth commandment

"Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land
which the LORD your God is giving you" (Exod 20:12).

This is a unique commandment, "the first commandment with promise" (Eph 6:2),
which marks the transition from obligations of Israel toward their God to their obligations

toward one another. The commandment considers family as the primary social unit and prescribes that parent-child relationships be based on the same principles as those between God the Creator and human beings the creatures. The word "honor" comes from the Hebrew root kabod, meaning "to be heavy."  

When used in relation to God and His attributes, it is usually translated as "glory." The idea is to convey the notion of importance and significance of parents, their "weightiness" as ones giving life to and having authority over their offspring. It follows therefore that God as the Parent and the parental status of father and mother are interrelated. By dishonoring their parents, human beings dishonor God. If a father or mother is treated without honor, their children earn a communal curse (Deut 27:16; cf. Exod 21:15). A child who curses his parents is to be executed (Exod 21:17; Lev 20:9). On the other hand, it is the parents' responsibility to teach their children the Law of God (Deut 6:6-7) and "bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord" (Eph 6:4). To live long days upon the Lord's land was a much more attractive perspective than to prostitute daughters as harlots thus causing "the land [to] fall into harlotry, and . . . become full of wickedness" (Lev 19:29).

Before looking at some passages from the KR through the prism of the fifth commandment, it seems important to sketch some of the social transformations during the peak of Stalinism that related to the family as a basic social unit.

From the official propaganda and the top secret documents on forced

127 Schlessinger and Vogel, 170.
128 Freedman, 69.
129 Schlessinger and Vogel, 139.
130 Ibid.
collectivization, it becomes very clear that in the new social and economic course there was little, if any, space left for basic values, common to all mankind, such as marriage and family. Here are just a few examples illustrating Stalinism in action. "To cut off youth from the parents" was considered to be an important political objective aimed at the radical and irretrievable break with the old social structure. To this end even special barracks for the children of deportees were built with a member of the Komsomol appointed to propagandize them.

Political prisoners in particular suffered severe restrictions. Years of deprivation of freedom in remote places of confinement and, what was more painful, without the right of correspondence significantly worsened the chances to be with one's family even mentally. But in those instances when even limited correspondence was allowed, the outgoing letters of the prisoners were censored and often did not reach their addressees.

The notorious order no. 00447 of 30 July 1937 issued by Nikolai Ezhov, then head of NKVD, delivered yet another blow at the institution of family. According to the order, children of political convicts ("counter-revolutionaries") ages one to three years old were subject to placement in children's homes and day nurseries within the structure of the People's Commissariat of Public Health, and children between ages three and fifteen were

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132Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn points out that "if a son was arrested with his father . . . or a wife together with her husband, the greatest care was taken to see that they did not meet at the same camp. And if by some chance they did meet, they were separated as quickly as possible." Solzhenitsyn, 2:152-3.

133From Ukraine and Byelorussia alone in 1930 there were 112,828 families or 550,558 people banished to live in the northern regions of the USSR only because they were considered to be kulaks. See Kozlov, The History of Stalin's Gulag, 5:136.
to be sent to children's homes that were part of the People's Commissariat of Education.\textsuperscript{134} In her research, Emma Mason, referring to Jacques Rossi, writes,

The forced relocation of children in the camps was planned and executed like an actual military operation so that the mothers were taken by surprise. Usually it was done in the middle of the night, but it was rare that the heart-wrenching scenes, where crazed mothers threw themselves upon the jailors and the barbed wire fences, were avoided. The compound could shudder for a long time with the mothers' howling, while camp discipline and labour productivity dropped noticeably.\textsuperscript{135}

How did this policy of the State to drive a wedge between generations echo in \textit{KR}? In "The Resurrection of the Larch," there is a passage that reflects on the ominous atmosphere in Moscow of the 1930s. Shalamov speaks of "quartering, breaking on the wheel a husband, a brother, a son, a father who would inform on each other, betray each other."\textsuperscript{136} This reflection might have been rooted in Valerii, Shalamov's older brother publicly renouncing his father, an Orthodox priest.\textsuperscript{137}

\textsuperscript{134}Kozlov, \textit{The History of Stalin's Gulag}, 1:279. In utter disregard to the principle that parents and children are not to be punished for each other's misdeeds (Deut 24:16), the wives and other family members of "traitors to the motherland," of "an enemy of the people," of "an individual who was subject to repression" were subjects to interrogations, legal proceedings, imprisonment, and/or exile to the camps. See Jacques Rossi, \textit{The Gulag Handbook: An Encyclopedia Dictionary of Soviet Penitentiary Institutions and Terms Related to the Forced Labor Camps}, trans. William A. Burhans (New York: Paragon House, 1989), 36.

\textsuperscript{135}Emma Mason, "Women in the Gulag in the 1930s," in \textit{Women in the Stalin Era}, ed. Melanie Ilić (Wiltshire, UK: Palgrave, 2001), 144. According to Eugenia Ginzburg, the Kolyma camp inmate appointed as camp kindergarten instructor, children born in prison or in camp were "difficult children": "Thirty-eight infant neurotics, some high-stung and overexcitable, others subdued and silent. Some were painfully thin and pale, with blue rings around their eyes; others had grown disproportionately fat from a diet too rich in carbohydrates and deficient in vitamins. They were difficult collectively and difficult individually." Eugenia Ginzburg, \textit{Within the Whirlwind}, trans. Ian Boland (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1981), 215.


\textsuperscript{137}\textit{The Fourth Vologda}, \textit{CW}, 4:37. Cf. Margarete Buber, \textit{Under Two Dictators}, ed. Edward Fitzgerald (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1951), 14. This dire panorama of the paranoid societal climate prevailing in the country cannot fail but remind one of the truths of Jesus predicting how a brother will "deliver up brother to death, and a father his child; and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death" (Matt 10:21; cf. 24:10 and Mark 13:12).
Another notorious example was Pavlik Morozov\textsuperscript{138} who probably inspired many to emulate his "exploit" and write denunciations against their own parents.

As the lead article in \textit{Pravda} of 20 December 1937 stated, "Every honorable citizen of our country considers it his duty to assist NKVD organs."\textsuperscript{139} According to Fitzpatrick, "it was not uncommon during the Great Purges for the school-age children of arrested 'enemies of the people' to be forced to repudiate them orally in public at school or Komsomol meetings."\textsuperscript{140} As Clark explains,

Stalinist society expected of its citizens extraordinarily far-reaching allegiance to the state. The rationalization for this attachment was found in the analogy between the entire Soviet state and a "family" or "tribe." Soviet citizens were urged to jettison their sense of family based on real blood relationship and to replace it with a higher one based on political kinship. In support of this ideology writers and speakers provided an inexhaustable [sic] supply of real or mythic examples of people who renounced their own kin in favor of the new society.\textsuperscript{141}

Upon his return from Kolyma and following the reunion with his family, Shalamov soon discovered that they betrayed him "lock, stock, and barrel" (s potrokhami).\textsuperscript{142} This probably left an impression on how he portrayed the grievous sin

\textsuperscript{138}It is a well-known fact that throughout the Soviet period a boy called Pavlik Morozov (1918-1932), who denounced his father to the authorities and then was killed by his grandfather and cousin, was mythologized as a Soviet martyr, an ideal informer. Ihanus observes that "statues of Pavlik Morozov were erected in order to educate the people, and especially children, in the fine art of denunciation: inform on everybody, even on your own parents. Even today, when most of the Soviet propaganda monuments have been destroyed, a lot of statues of Pavlik Morozov have stood the test of time, appealing to the Russian mentality." Juhani Ihanus, \textit{Swaddling, Shame and Society: On Psychohistory and Russia} (Helsinki: Kikimora Publications, 2001), 118.

\textsuperscript{139}Cited by Rossi, 250.


\textsuperscript{142}NB, 255.
of renunciation of parents by their children. In the story "The Apostle Paul," Shalamov describes the godly Lutheran pastor Frisorger who was separated from his only daughter and sent to Kolyma probably because he was German\(^{143}\) or because he was a Christian believer. Hard work, extreme cold, malnutrition, and inanition had done their work that he shared with many other camp inhabitants. As a result of such maltreatment, Frisorger could no longer recall the name of Jesus' twelfth apostle. This "big sin" and an "unforgivable mistake" caused him to cry "tears of shame."\(^{144}\) At the same time Frisorger had diligently kept the picture of his daughter through six years of incarceration. "The yellow, cracked photograph was lovingly framed with a piece of colored paper."\(^{145}\) After evening prayers he would "lie down on his cot . . . take out his daughter's photograph, and stroke the colored border."\(^{146}\) This was his "mission of memory,"\(^{147}\) a moral imperative of a father to his only daughter. Camp hardships were relatively tolerable until the day when a package arrived. It contained "an official document with a request to show convict Frisorger (crime, sentence) his daughter's declaration. A copy of the declaration was enclosed. In it she wrote briefly and simply that she was convinced her father was an enemy of the people and that she renounced him and requested that her relationship to

\(^{143}\)On 25 July 1937 an order no. 00439 was issued by the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs that prescribed repressions against German subjects suspected of espionage against the USSR. Four years later on 27 August 1941 Lavrentii Beria issued order no. 001158 about expulsion of Germans from Povolzhje, Saratov, and Stalingrad Provinces. See Kozlov, *The History of Stalin's Gulag*, 1:267, 455.

\(^{144}\)"The Apostle Paul," *KT*, 52.

\(^{145}\)Ibid., 54.

\(^{146}\)Ibid., 55.

\(^{147}\)The phrase "mission of memory" was borrowed from the article by Matt F. Oja, "Shalamov, Solzhenitsyn, and the Mission of Memory," *Survey* 29, no. 2 (125) (Summer 1985): 62-9.
him be regarded as non-existent."\textsuperscript{148} She did not shed tears or feel any remorse or shame for what she did, but she knew the language of officialdom, which she coolly used in her letter of renunciation. Being intolerant of such sadism the narrator "crumpled the declaration . . . and tossed it into the open door of the heated stove."\textsuperscript{149}

Another story, "A Child's Drawings," demonstrates how the black hole of the camp destroyed the beauty of childhood, the world of fairy tales. The story recounts prisoners who after work noticed a large heap of garbage—"something we could not afford to ignore."\textsuperscript{150} Beneath the garbage the narrator saw a blue school notebook with carefully colored pages. It belonged to an unnamed child who lived somewhere not far from the camp and who could see the barracks through the window of his house. As the drawings indicated, the notebook's owner would read Russian folk tales to create a perfect world in his pure imagination. In reality, however, the only world this child knew, though in the distance, was that of the camps. The writer shows how the Russian fairyland was intricately combined with another Russian "dreamland," that of the gray camp zone:

\begin{quote}
The northern hunt was on, and a toothy German shepherd strained at a leash held by Prince Ivan . . . Prince Ivan wore a military hat that covered his ears, a white sheepskin coat, felt boots, and deep mittens. Prince Ivan had a sub-machine gun slung over his shoulder. Naked, triangular trees were poked into the snow.

The child saw nothing, remembered nothing but the yellow houses, barbed wire, guard towers, German shepherds, guards with sub-machine guns, and a blue, blue sky.\textsuperscript{151}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{149} Ibid., 56.
\textsuperscript{150} "A Child's Drawings," \textit{KT}, 77.
\textsuperscript{151} Ibid., 79.
Shalamov intentionally includes in this tale an ancient northern legend about God "who created the taiga while he was still a child." Later, however, when God grew up, he "grew bored with his former child's world and he threw snow on his former child's world . . . and went south for ever." A school notebook thrown on the garbage pile, "beneath a twisted rag that looked like human intestines," symbolized nothing but a massive betrayal of childhood per se by the oppressive system created by adults. The blue sky remained in the child's memory as a dream that might have been.

 Victims of promiscuous sexual relations, babies often would be born in the camps only to die. And this was a lucky outcome when considered against the camp scale of moral values. "Did the children die?" asked the narrator to a nurse's aide of the camp hospital. "This is your luck, Nina." But even when such children survived, it was not uncommon for them to be bought and sold into conditions of devastating starvation: "For a loaf of bread mothers would bring their daughters to the camp command." In his sketch called "Sergei Esenin and the World of Thieves," Shalamov presents an account on the unsophisticated ethics of blatari (hardened professional criminals). "Blatar' does not think of children at all; in his morals there are no obligations . . . binding him with his

153Ibid., 79. This is probably how Shalamov conveyed the idea that neither his own childhood would ever return to him nor would he ever be able to play with his own year-and-a-half-old daughter whom he left in the crib when he was arrested and did not see her for seventeen years.
154Ibid., 77.
155"Marcel Proust," CW, 2:139.
156"Vishera," CW, 4:162.
'descendants.' Who will his daughter be—a prostitute, a thief? Who will his son be—it does not matter to him whatsoever."\textsuperscript{157}

Human existence in Kolyma camps erased all family ties. The moral paradigm shift was radical as the instincts for bread or power trampled on the honor and responsibility of parenthood and set the children adrift. Childhood was betrayed and turned into hell.

The sixth commandment

"You shall not murder" (Exod 20:13).

The sacredness of human life is anchored in the fact that it was created by God. On the other hand, the departure from the Creator's design brings desacralization and destroys the primeval status of humanity.

When God "breathed into" the first man's nostrils "the breath of life" (Gen 2:7), a vital link was established between humanity and the Creator. And since male and female were created "in the image of God" (Gen 1:27), human life is more than human life. It springs from God and returns to Him (Eccl 12:7). What follows is that "since the human gift of life is endowed with the spark of divinity . . . to take another life wrongfully can be . . . viewed as the murdering of something divine."\textsuperscript{158}

The Hebrew Bible distinguishes murder from killing.\textsuperscript{159} A more accurate translation of this commandment should be, "You shall not commit homicide."\textsuperscript{160} In other

\textsuperscript{157}See the story "Sergei Esenin and the World of Thieves," \textit{CW}, 2:90.
\textsuperscript{158}Schlessinger and Vogel, 177.
\textsuperscript{159}Freedman, 111.
\textsuperscript{160}Ibid.
words, it "applies to first-degree murder, that is to say, murder with malice or foresought." 161

Toker indicates that the "main communicative function of documentary prose is to provide evidence for the history of crime." 162 Needless to say, KR by its very nature is a document providing a chilling account of a history of murder. Not only the first cycle of KR but the entire collection of stories is a "book of the dead." 163 And the death is not understood as an "event," it is "everydayness." 164 In fact, death became the basis of artistic composition in the KR as a whole. 165 Within the confinement of the Far East Trust it was a culture of death that became its main feature. Shalamov symbolically articulated this view when he wrote, "A wooden tag attached to a leg [of the deceased prisoner] is a sign of culture." 166 Violeta Davoliūtė holds that this statement possibly suggests an anthropological reading: "a tag on the leg is a method of identifying the dead that is particular to his [Shalamov’s], twentieth-century." 167

161 Freedman, 111-12.


Eugenia Ginzburg, a Kolyma Gulag survivor and writer, recalls distinctly a thought she had grown accustomed to while being in the camp: "Everyone I met who was not a fellow prisoner had only one aim: to torture and to kill." Eugenia S. Ginzburg, Journey into the Whirlwind, trans. Paul Stevenson and Max Hayward (New York: A Helen and Kurt Wolf Book, 1967), 361.

165 Timofeev, 183.

166 "Graphite," CW, 2:108.

167 Violeta Davoliūtė, "Testimony from the Poetics of Place to the Politics of Memory" (Ph.D. diss., University of Toronto, 2004), 101.
Shalamov describes this murderous reality in three subcategories: (1) moral murder, which involved attitudes and conditions humiliating to a person's dignity, whether he was alive or dead; (2) physical murder as direct acts of violence and brutality caused by malnutrition, work beyond one's strength, and extreme cold; and finally, (3) acts of self-mutilation and suicide as a kind of self-defense and escape tactic in the conditions of hopelessness and helplessness.

**Devaluation of human life and dignity.** One can barely find anything in Shalamov's descriptions of the Kolyma camps that would not be morally scandalous, dishonorable, and devastating to the dignity of human beings. Survival instincts had a far more tenacious grip on the inmates than humanistic values.¹⁶⁸ "Fantastic realism"¹⁶⁹ — this is how Shalamov defines the abyss of evil in which the camp inhabitants were thrown by unknown forces of physical and moral destruction. As Mikhail Geller comments, "at Kolyma, fantasy became everydayness."¹⁷⁰

The story "Berries" illustrates how the devilish tactics to tempt in order to murder were successfully implemented by the guard Seroshapka. He marked a prohibited "zone"


¹⁶⁹See the sketch "The Glove," *CW*, 2:279, 286. "Fantastic realism" is a significant definition which can probably be understood as a hammer blow to the concept of socialist realism as an "officially sanctioned theory and method of literary composition prevalent in the Soviet Union from 1932 to mid-1980s." *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (CD edition, 2003). Another equally legitimate interpretation of this phrase has to do with the demonic nature of the death camps as one of the outcomes of the Russian Revolution. See Fyodor Stepun, "Религиозный смысл революции" (Religious meaning of the revolution) in *Сочинения* (Writings) (Moscow: Rosspein, 2000), 392-94.

which he knew very well that one of the dokhodyag (the down-and-outers) would cross and get killed. Actually, his purpose was to get an unnamed protagonist (Shalamov?). Instead, another prisoner, Rybakov, who during the rest periods was gathering berries in a tin, crept toward the berries on the wrong side of the hanging markers. The guard pulled the trigger for the "infringement." Rybakov was shot immediately, without any warning shot. This "enjoyment of power" was abundantly present in the Kolyma camps: "enjoyment in the fact that the other is at your mercy, a fact you can prove to yourself by making him suffer or . . . by affording him some pleasure." Such attitudes toward the camp prisoners allowed the regime to make a deadly game of life and dignity.

A similar picture of the violation of one's dignity through temptation by bread is found in many of Shalamov's stories, such as "A City on the Hill" and "Captain Tolly's Love." Both stories portray how a piece of bread would be put on the table and how a dokhodyaga would take it only to be accused of "theft" and beaten ruthlessly as an entertainment for the watching prisoners:

When it got warmer, in the spring, the white nights began, and they started playing a terrible game in the camp cafeteria called 'bait-fishing'. A ration of bread would be put on the table, and everyone would hide around the corner to wait for the hungry

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171 As Applebaum explains, the dying were called dokhodyagi, from the verb dokhodit', "to reach" or "to attain." This term from the camp slang refers to the starving-to-death camp inmates who "suffered from the diseases of starvation and vitamin deficiency: scurvy, pellagra, various forms of diarrhea." Applebaum, 334-35.

172 Just as it was in the biblical Garden of Eden, berries in the story are a forbidden fruit yielding death, whereas guards assumed the role of camp gods, the arbiters of the inmates' destinies. See Elena Mikhailik, "Варлам Шаламов: рассказ 'Ягоды': Пример деструктивной прозы" (Varlam Shalamov's story "Berries": An example of the destructive prose), Shalamovskii sbornik 4 (1997): 80.

173 Todorov, 181.

174 This dehumanizing practice was a total perversion of the idea expressed in the Divine commandment to leave the edges of the field for the poor to harvest (Lev 19:9; 23:22; Deut 24:19).
victim to approach, be enticed by the bread, touch it, and take it. Then everyone would rush out from around the corner, from the darkness, from ambush, and there would commence the beating to death of the thief, who was usually a living skeleton. I never ran into this form of amusement anywhere except at Jelhala. The chief organizer was Dr Krivitsky, an old revolutionary and former deputy commissar of defense industries. His accomplice in the setting out of these terrible baits was a correspondent from the newspaper Izvestia—Zaslavsky.175

"This was quite human heartlessness," says Shalamov, "a feature showing how far a human being had gone from an animal."176 In the camps people were reduced to a state where such common virtues as honor and decency were either totally eradicated or moved to a different plane. The "fantastic realism" of the Kolyma camps killed the humanness within people and caused the desacralization of humanity as the crown of God's creation.

For instance, Shalamov recalls an incident in a hospital "when an orderly, who was not yet an orderly and was simply helping out, was assigned to shave a newly arrived group of women. The administration was amusing itself by assigning men to shave women and women to shave men."177 In the camps where "shame was too human of an emotion" to have178 inmates would quickly lose any kind of concern for privacy. To a large degree they simply ceased to be humans. For instance, there was neither the sense of shame nor awkwardness nor remorse, but the bare anatomy of urination and defecation179—both by the prisoners and that done with the prisoners.180 The detachment

180In his The Gulag Archipelago, Solzhenitsyn drew a comparison between the Gulag system and the sewage disposal system and built the whole chapter on this metaphor (1:24-92).
with which the writer describes this "excremental assault" is an additional testimony to the extent human beings were forcibly degraded behind the barbed wire of the Kolyma camps. The brutal reality was able, within weeks, to turn people into walking skeletons, so that they became the slag and dregs of camp society: "Something must have changed in their skulls [for ever]. They're culls, rejects." When cargo ships with prisoners were coming with a new contingent they would "belch a new portion of people." The writer did not just use metaphors when he confessed: "We were the weakest, the worst, the hungriest. We were the human trash."

It was "normal" in the conditions of the Kolyma camps for the criminal convicts to have somebody from the intelligentsia scratch their heels while telling romantic narratives. As the title of the story "The Snake Charmer" suggests, the criminal world was considered to be the underworld of the devil (criminal convicts were like young snakes, offshoots of the devil), and the only way to appease them was to do something in accordance with their base morals. And yet Shalamov does not seem to condemn Platonov, the "novelist" in the story, for what he was doing. Rather, the writer "bears witness and pays a tribute to a fallen friend." At the same time, Shalamov vehemently

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\(^{181}\)Pres, 57.

\(^{182}\)"Quiet," \emph{KT}, 440.

\(^{183}\)"The Pain," \emph{CW}, 2:164

\(^{184}\)"Quiet," \emph{KT}, 435. According to Ginzburg's neat characterization, at Kolyma not people died "like flies," but "it was truer to say that flies died like people." \emph{Journey}, 388.

\(^{185}\)In the book \emph{Man Is Wolf to Man} Bardach tells the same story about himself. The difference, however, is that he did not consider this story-telling practice as something below his dignity, whereas Shalamov resolutely refused to do that.

condemns humanism as a deceptive philosophy of life: "Captain Schneider was a German communist who had been active in the Comintern, spoke beautiful Russian, was an expert on Goethe and an educated Marxist theoretician. . . . He climbed up on the shelf, folded back the edge of the blanket, sat down, and put his hand under the blanket to scratch Senechka's heels." There is an important detail in this story. When Schneider started doing this humiliating business, Andreev, Shalamov's alter ego, "walked slowly to his place. He had no desire to go on living." This reveals Shalamov's harsh criticism of humanism and communism as its ominous offspring.

There was another trait of camp life destructive to human dignity: the way prisoners had to go through the bathhouse. This "ritual" was designed to torture the convicts: a bath day that was not a day off, overcrowded cloakrooms, lack of hot water, a disinfection chamber that would destroy clothes by burning through them, etc. But the worst was that it was virtually impossible to get one's own clothes after they had been through the disinfection chamber: "I felt a strange and terrible pity at seeing adult men cry over the injustice of receiving worn-out clean underwear in exchange for dirty good underwear. Nothing can take the mind of a human being off the unpleasantnesses that comprise life."

In the universe of the camps the dead were also denied any dignity. Chronically starving prisoners would go to the camp graveyard, open a grave and drag the low-quality

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187 "Senechka" was a generic nickname for the criminal convicts' chiefs.
189 Ibid., 161.
190 "In the Bathhouse," KT, 341.
camp-issued underwear from a corpse in order to exchange it for a piece of bread or
tobacco. Just as in the story "On Tick" a woolen sweater was considered by the
criminals as something more valuable than human life, so a shirt and underwear were
considered more precious than any dignity supposedly associated with a dead body.
Toward the end of his story, Shalamov, in a few colorful touches, describes the night the
event took place. He reveals that everything that occurred was not on this side of life, but
somewhere in another world, in the world of "fantastic realism": "The blue light of the
rising moon fell on the rocks and the scant forest of the taiga, revealing each projecting
rock, each tree in a peculiar fashion, different from the way they looked by day.
Everything seemed real but different than in the daytime. It was as if the world had a
second face, a nocturnal face."^192

A similar picture can be found in "Epitaph," when a dying person is considered to
be already dead: "'He's finished,' said Denisov, his [Roman Romanovich's] neighbor. 'His
foot rags are in good shape.' Agilely, Denisov pulled the boots off the dying man's feet
and unwrapped the green footcloths that were still quite wearable. 'That's how it's done,'
he said, peering at me in a threatening fashion. But I didn't care."^193 There seemed to be
nothing unusual in keeping a dead body a couple of days in the barrack plank bed just for
the sake of the extra ration of bread for those who were still alive: "They 'wrote him off'
two days later. For two days his inventive neighbors managed to continue getting his bread ration. The dead man would raise his hand like a puppet."\textsuperscript{194}

The cases of cannibalism were numerous and were not considered to be the worst crime.\textsuperscript{195} By far the worst thing that could be done to the dead was a criminal law forcing those who wanted to join their "underworld" to leave a "signature" on the as yet warm body.\textsuperscript{196} There were two "procedures" which had to be performed on the dead—attaching a plywood tag to the left shin ("a sign of cultural advance") and filling out a special form for gold teeth.\textsuperscript{197} As far as the second practice was concerned, Shalamov observes:

It had always been that way in Kolyma, and the reports in Germany of teeth removed from the dead bodies of prisoners surprised no one in Kolyma.

Certain countries do not wish to lose the gold of dead men. There have always been reports of extraction of gold teeth in prisons and labor camps. The year 1937 brought many people with gold teeth to the investigators and the camps. Many of those who died in the mines of Kolyma, where they could not survive for long, produced gold for the state only in the form of their own teeth, which were knocked out after they died. There was more gold in their fillings than these people were able to extract with pick and shovel during their brief lives in the mines.\textsuperscript{198}

After these "procedures" were performed, the naked bodies of the dead would be thrown into a pit and covered with stones. By Kolyma ethics, where "the law was the taiga, the bear was the prosecutor," this kind of burial was an adequate tribute to the dead.

To avoid unnecessary formalities, a guard could cut off the hands of killed escapees rather than carrying the entire body back to the camp: "The dead man's fingers were supposed to be dipped in printer's ink, of which employees of Archive No. 3 had an

\textsuperscript{194}"Cherry Brandy," \textit{KT}, 75.
\textsuperscript{197}Cf. Rossi, 22.
enormous supply. This is why the hands of the killed escapees were cut off—it was easier to put two human palms in a military pouch than transport an entire body, a corpse for identification." One of the measures to prevent escapes was to put boxes with the shot escapees next to the vakhta (guardhouse) so that everybody could see them. This too deprived people, albeit dead, of any human dignity. Another story, "The Parcel," demonstrates that in the value of human worth and dignity does not exceed "the lump of dirty rugs on the floor."

Hard labor beyond one's strength was another source of slow moral and physical degradation. Only one function of the individual is recognized in the camp, and that is work. Often it would be under the conditions of extreme cold of the Kolyma region, "the Siberia of Siberias." It was not something extraordinary for the prisoners of the Gulag to have twelve- to fourteen-hour work days without days off, to undergo


200See the story "Vishera" in anti-novel Vishera, CW, 4:166.


202Todorov, 159.

203According to the order of 21 December 1933 issued by the head of the Far East Trust prisoners were to stop working outside only if the temperature went down to 45 degrees Celsius (in the area from Nagaev-Magadan up to 152th kilometer of Kolyma highway) and 55 degrees from the 152nd kilometer up to the gold mines. A.S. Navasardov, "Система интенсификации и стимулирования труда заключенных в Северо-востоке (1932-1937 гг.)" (The system of intensification and stimulation of the prisoners' labor in the North-East Camp [1932-1937]), in Кольма. Дальстрой. Гулаг. Скорбь и судьбы: материалы научно-практической конференции 13-14 июня 1996 г. (Kolyma. The Far East Trust. Gulag. Grief and fates: Proceedings of the conference, 13-14 June 1996) (Magadan: Severny Mezhdunarodny Universitet, 1998), 47-8.


205According to documents, the newly appointed head of The Far East Trust, K. A. Pavlov, in his order of 11 June 1938, permitted camps to work prisoners up to 16 hours a day. In an order of 14 September 1938 he demanded: "Cut down the lunch break to 20-30 minutes, and postpone lunch until evening after work. Instead of lunch a hot course or a snack with hot tea . . .
physical abuse by the guards or brigadiers, not to mention malnutrition.\textsuperscript{206} Even the sixty-year-old men, tubercular patients, heart sufferers, and the legless were sent to the gold mines.\textsuperscript{207} No wonder Shalamov considered forced labor to be equal to death,\textsuperscript{208} meaning not only physical death but also the death of man \textit{in} man.

The most shocking crimes were taking place in the special camp zone called \textit{Gelhala}, which was designed as a penal camp and as such appeared to be nothing short of hell. The crimes committed there clearly demonstrated the total irrationality and destructiveness of the camp world to human dignity and morals. Hardly anywhere else can one find one-armed invalids who were made to trample down the snow in order to clear roads for other people and trucks\textsuperscript{209} or two camp warders who would take every man who did not have the physical strength to work and throw him down a hill.\textsuperscript{210} The man would roll down about three hundred meters, and if he did not stand up and go to work, he would be tied to the scraper, and then the horses would drag him about a

\textsuperscript{206}Inmates who fulfilled 100 percent of their norm received 800 grams of bread per day. Those who failed—and the majority of prisoners fell into this category—found their rations proportionally reduced. For every 10 percent reduction in output, they got 100 grams of bread less per day. The same approach applied to other food items. See Nordlander, 157.

\textsuperscript{207}"Riva-Rotchi," \textit{CW}, 2:447.


\textsuperscript{209}"The Businessman," \textit{KT}, 320.

\textsuperscript{210}See "A City on the Hill," \textit{CW}, 2:179. This is probably an allusion to Jesus' words: "A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden" (Matt 5:14b). Since the preceding part of this verse reads, "You are the light of the world," it could be that by introducing this allusion Shalamov actually meant that the camp of \textit{Gelhala} was the darkness of the world.
work, he would be tied to the scraper, and then the horses would drag him about a kilometer to the pit-face. It is therefore understandable why part of Shalamov's moral creed was to view forced physical labor as a curse and "the worst crime in Kolyma." As far as "honest work" is concerned, Shalamov is unambiguously clear: "The only ones who call for honest work are the bastards who beat and maim us, eat our food, and force us living skeletons to work to our very death. It's profitable for them, but they believe in 'honest work' even less than we do."

The other aspect of the "fantastic realism" of Kolyma was the malnutrition of the convicts. The formula for starvation was very simple and well-programmed: being fed depended on productivity:

Here, right before Paustovsky's eyes, there took place an enormous experiment in the corruption of human souls, an experiment that was to be repeated throughout the country and which would well up in a fountain of blood in 1937. This experiment was the newly developed system of labor camps with its "reforging" of human souls, food rations, workdays dependent on work accomplished, and the practice of prisoners guarding each other.

It is commonplace in KR to speak about people who were partially or totally denied food because they did not meet the production targets. The use of starvation as "one of the main instruments of discipline and torture" was widespread; it killed countless numbers of people. Many of the camp inmates who had experienced nutritional dropsy

\[^{211}\text{NB, 273.}\]
\[^{212}\text{Ibid., 159.}\]
\[^{213}\text{"Dry Rations," KT, 41.}\]
\[^{214}\text{"Mister Popp's Visit," KT, 477-8.}\]
\[^{215}\text{"The Third-class Triangulation," "Doctor Jampol'skii," "Athenian Nights," etc. See CW, 2:329-35, 254-61, and 405-14 respectively.}\]
\[^{216}\text{Toker, "Kafka's 'The Hunger Artist',' 281.}\]
"forever ceased to be people." Shalamov recalls: "It was the conduct of these hungry people that was most terrible. Although they might seem normal, they were half mad." All those who were starving would see the same dreams of "loaves of rye bread that flew past us like meteors or angels," and lucky beggars among them enjoyed eating machine grease as if it were butter. In the story "Courses" the writer speaks of the hospital patients who were given expired human blood to drink, and this too was normal. The hunger was as permanent as permafrost; a starving man could eat even a frozen raw pig.

It is clear therefore that malnutrition was a slow but sure means of transforming humans into creatures hardly identifiable as humans. They would only instinctively react to the external world, because although they were biologically alive, they were dead spiritually, socially, and morally.

**Physical murder.** Brutal beatings, which the NKVD had elevated to a vile science and art, the throwing of men into the punishment cells, and physical murder were an unalienable part of the Kolyma nether world. In many of Shalamov's stories there are numerous scenes of violence featured in camp life. Immediately after the introductory tale "Through the Snow" is the story "On Tick," which opens with the theme of the

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218"An Epitaph," KT, 306  
219"Dry Rations," KT, 43.  
220"Lend-Lease," KT, 278.  
221"The Courses," CW, 1:471.  
222"Vaska Denisov, Kidnapper of Pigs," KT, 99.
tyranny of criminals over the rest of the camp contingent. Toker observes that "the most shocking thing in 'On Tick' is . . . the matter-of-fact way in which the murder is presented."224

The horror of the murders committed by the guards was felt and reacted to even by the dog.225 The death of a woman at the hands of the investigator Shtemenko226 is no more disgusting than the scenes of violence against birds and animals: the beheading of a rooster by the drunken physician Andrei Ivanovich Sudarin,227 the killing of a pet dog by the criminal convicts,228 the hunting and stoning of a helpless squirrel,229 the shooting of a weasel being "in the last minutes of pregnancy,"230 etc. Sometimes physicians would use their skills just to unmask "malingers" and send them to the general work assignment (obshchie raboty), the cruelest punishment of all.231 Killing under cover of the white gown was the way they showed their loyalty to the regime.


223"Tamara the Bitch," KT, 65.


225"Hercules," CW, 1:129.

226"A Day Off," KT, 105.

227Although the story "Squirrel" does not belong to the camp literature in terms of the chronology of events described in it, thematically it undoubtedly fits well into the structure of the fourth cycle of KR, "The Resurrection of the Larch." See CW, 2:267.


The "crimes" for which convicts could be and were shot were often very arbitrary.\textsuperscript{232} The lists of those sentenced to execution had to be read in front of all the camp inhabitants—an ominous tradition "bracketed" by a flourish of the camp orchestra. According to Shalamov, it was "too frightful to be true."\textsuperscript{233} The murder of odious brigade-leaders was not uncommon especially because murder was something contagious.\textsuperscript{234} In the tale "The Green Procurator" Shalamov recounts a story of Corporal Postnikov whose cruelty and inventiveness knew no limits:

[He] shot and killed the prisoner with his Mauser, and it was decided not to drag the body back to the village but to abandon it in the taiga. . . .

Postnikov took an axe and chopped off both hands at the wrist so that Bookkeeping could take fingerprints. He put the hands into his pouch and set off home to write up the latest report on a successful hunt. . . .

That night the dead man got up and with the bloody stumps of his forearms pressed to his chest somehow reached the tent in which the convict-laborers lived. His face pale and drained of blood, he stood at the doorway and peeked in with unusually blue, crazed eyes. Bent double and leaning against the door frame, he glared from under lowered brows and groaned. He was shaking terribly. Black blood spotted his quilted jacket, his pants, and his rubber boots. He was given some hot soup, and his terrible wrists were wrapped in rags. Fellow prisoners started to take him to the first-aid station, but Corporal Postnikov himself, along with some soldiers, came running from the hut that served as the outpost.

The soldiers took the man off somewhere—but not to the hospital or the first-aid station. I never heard anything more of the prisoner with the chopped-off hands.\textsuperscript{235}

Besides the state with its oppressive penal system, the other source of deadly force was the criminal world of the camps. Its entire philosophy was expressed in two

\textsuperscript{232}"How It Began," \textit{CW}, 1:381.

\textsuperscript{233}Ibid., 1:386.

\textsuperscript{234}"May," \textit{CW}, 1:517.

\textsuperscript{235}"The Green Procurator," \textit{KT}, 378-9. Interestingly enough, in the ancient Israel "a slave could . . . be freed by running away. According to the Book of Deuteronomy, a runaway slave is not to be returned to its master. He should be sheltered if he wishes or allowed to go free, and he must not be taken advantage of (Deut 23:16-17)." Frymer-Kenski, 1007. Also, if a master destroyed the eye or tooth of his slave, male or female, the slave could go free (Exod 21:26-27)—an unheard-of privilege in the Gulag!
popular camp sayings: "You die today, and I die tomorrow"\textsuperscript{236} and "He who does not murder will be murdered."\textsuperscript{237} The state used criminals to suppress political prisoners and make their lives as miserable as possible. To this end it made a "concordat" with them by declaring thieves to be friends of the people while intellectuals were labeled enemies of the people. The murders often would be committed with unprecedented cruelty.\textsuperscript{238} The blatari (criminal convicts) had no better entertainment than "the sight of the death of a living being."\textsuperscript{239} It was their habit not just to kill those who dared revolt against them, but also to leave "signatures" on the dead bodies by piercing them with a knife. But before that those bodies would be trampled down and disfigured in every way possible.\textsuperscript{240} Shalamov reflects upon human nature which was weak and base, and concludes that it is power that corrupts people:

Power corrupts. The beast hidden in the soul of man and released from its chain lusts to satisfy its age-old natural instinct—to beat, to murder. I don't know if it's possible to receive satisfaction from signing a death sentence, but in this, too, there is doubtless some dark pleasure, some fantasy which seeks no justification. . . .

Power is corruption. The intoxication of power over people, irresponsibility, the willingness to mock, to degrade, to encourage all these things when necessary—all these are the moral measure of a supervisor's career.\textsuperscript{241}

Resistance to the sheer lawlessness of the criminal world in the camps virtually did not and could not exist, at least by the intellectual convicts. They were crushed by the camp reality and could never regain dignity and human worth:

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{236}"The Rogue Blood," \textit{CW}, 2:19.
  \item \textsuperscript{237}\textit{Vishera}, \textit{CW}, 4:193.
  \item \textsuperscript{238}"The Rogue Blood," \textit{CW}, 2:22.
  \item \textsuperscript{239}"Women in the Criminal World," \textit{CW}, 2:50.
  \item \textsuperscript{240}"The 'Bitch' War," \textit{CW}, 2:65-6.
  \item \textsuperscript{241}"Grishka Logun's Thermometer," \textit{KT}, 447.
\end{itemize}

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Everything he [the intellectual convict] valued is ground into the dust while civilization and culture drop from him within weeks. The method of persuasion in a quarrel is the fist or a stick. The way to induce someone to do something is by means of a rifle butt, a punch in the teeth.

... A blow can transform an intellectual into the obedient servant of a petty crook. Physical force becomes moral force.

The intellectual is permanently terrified. His spirit is broken, and he takes this frightened and broken spirit with him back into civilian life.242

It becomes clear that the whole attitude toward human life in the camps was totally opposite to God's pro-life imperatives. The forced-labor camps destroyed life both physically and morally, "leaving behind communal graves and punishment cells."243 No wonder Shalamov used the name of Moloch244 as a powerful biblical metaphor for the Kolyma camps245 or the state's production plan246 or even the daily roll-calls in terrible cold.247 Also, he utilized one more religious term to tell the story of his beatings: "It was then that one of my passions started,"248 says Shalamov alluding to Christ's passions. And the irony was that the beatings he had experienced—"hundreds of thousands of blows that I experienced daily, nightly"249—he described as a means employed by the commander "to make enemies presentable" (privodit' vragov v khristianskii vid). Also, in the story "Lend-Lease" he talks about a bloody camp mystery, the slaughter of people as

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246"My Trial," CW, 1:301.
248"Lesha Chekanov, or Abettors in Kolyma," CW, 2:327 (italics mine).
249"Grishka Logun's Thermometer," CW, 2:123
a sacrifice to the "red god." After the sacrament was over, not much was left: "just bare skeletons over which stretched dirty, scratched skin bitten all over by lice."\textsuperscript{250}

**Self-mutilation and suicide.** Since the convicts could barely endure the living conditions in the camps, such practices as feigning illness, self-mutilation, and suicide were not uncommon.\textsuperscript{251} In most cases, a self-mutilator would cut off three or four of his fingers on the left hand, right hand, or even both hands.\textsuperscript{252} Paradoxically, the self-inflicted injuries were acts indicating "love of life—a straightforward calculation of sacrificing a portion to save the whole."\textsuperscript{253} The practice became so widespread that the NKVD and its Main Camp Administration had to issue special orders either to prevent or minimize the practice.\textsuperscript{254} Shalamov himself tried to break his arm. In the autobiographical tale "Permafrost" he narrates how, as a medical assistant, he caused the down-and-out Leonov to hang himself. The last sentence of the tale—"and suddenly I understood that it was too late for me to study both medicine and life"—taken together with the title "Permafrost," leave the impression that he did not and could not repent of Leonov's death because his own soul was "frozen" and incapable of distinguishing between a malingerer and a hopeless man.

\textsuperscript{250}"Lend-Lease," *KT*, 281.
\textsuperscript{251}"In the Casualty Ward," "Weismanist," "Love Lessons." See *CW*, 1:190-93, 494-501, and 2:398-405 respectively.
\textsuperscript{252}Rossi, 379, 227-28.
\textsuperscript{253}Solzhenitsyn, 2:599.
\textsuperscript{254}See Circular no. 179 of 8 April 1943 issued by NKVD and Instruction of the 2\textsuperscript{nd} Department of the GULAG no. 9/146547 of 15 January 1949. See Kozlov, *The History of Stalin's Gulag*, 4:507 and 555, respectively.
\textsuperscript{255}"Permafrost," *CW*, 2:371.
Strangely enough, some of the stories were written exclusively to render homage to self-mutilators who had the will-power to either commit acts of self-infliction or commit suicide. In fact, those who shrank in the face of danger at the last moment earned the author's indignation. Highlighting this assertion are Shalamov's words, "The percentage of suicides among them [thugs and professional criminals] equals zero."

The decisive point when a person would make up his mind to commit suicide was when a prisoner realized that in the camps life had lost all meaning, or had become unendurable. Sometimes prisoners needed a little extra food only to find the strength to cross a prohibited area and be killed by a guard. As the authorial persona states in the story "Quiet," "And suddenly I realized that that night's dinner had given the sectarian the strength he needed for his suicide. He needed that extra portion of kasha to make up his mind to die. There are times when a man has to hurry so as not to lose his will to die." Shalamov treats such people with sympathy and deep compassion. For instance, the

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259 As Shalamov describes in the story "Dry Rations," "We were all tired of barracks food. Each time they brought in the soup in large zinc tubs suspended on poles, it made us all want to cry. We were ready to cry for fear that the soup would be thin. And when a miracle occurred and the soup was thick, we couldn't believe it and ate it as slowly as possible. But even with thick soup in a warm stomach there remained a sucking pain; we'd been hungry for too long. All human emotions—love, friendship, envy, honesty—had left us with the flesh that had melted from our bodies during their long fasts." See KT, 32.
260 "Quiet," KT, 442.
261 An enigmatic exception would be the conclusion of "Quiet": "As usual, we encircled the stove. But today was no one to sing any hymns. And I guess I was even happy that it was finally quiet." However, one has to take into account the interpretation given by Nathaniel Golden: "The songs are no longer needed, no prayers to God, just sufficient strength to perform his last feat. This meal is metaphorically his last supper, with the rest of the apostles sitting around the table. . . . The silence after the meal is therefore an ironic yet fitting tribute to the
title chosen by him to convey the story of another suicide is very noteworthy—"Seraphim." The character Seraphim is considered by the writer as a holy man and martyr. The denouement of another story, "Major Pugachov's Last Battle," is also filled with authorial solidarity.\(^{262}\)

Thus devaluation of human life, its reduction "to zero, to excrement,"\(^{263}\) was probably one of the most grievous crimes of Stalinism. Born out of terror, Stalinism was crushing millions of victims under the wheel of repression to ensure its further existence. Many times Shalamov saw the floods of blood shed by the "enemies of the people" and with the right of a witness he gave the most extensive description of man's departure from this basic principle: "You shall not murder."

The seventh commandment

"You shall not commit adultery" (Exod 20:14).

The creation story makes it abundantly clear that human sexuality is a gift of God (Gen 1:27). Its sacredness is determined by the high status both male and female shared when they were created in God's image. If taken in the larger context of the Pentateuch (Lev 18:6-23) this commandment prohibits immoral behavior among people of two groups: "one dealing with carnal associations among people closely related by blood (consanguinity), and the other governing the sexual behavior of persons related through sectarian. No one is singing around this (empty) fireplace." Nathaniel Golden, Varlam Shalamov's Kolyma Tales: A Formalist Analysis (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2004), 87.

\(^{262}\) "Major Pugachov's Last Battle," KT, 256.

\(^{263}\) Pres, 207.
marriage (affinity)." The commandment strictly prohibits homosexuality (Lev 18:22; 20:13) and bestiality (Lev 18:23; 20:15-16). The latter is punishable by death (Exod 22:18) just as is anal intercourse between males (Lev 20:13).

Jesus expanded the meaning and implications of this prohibition by pointing out that not only actions but one's inner thoughts are subject to this commandment (Matt 5:27, 28). Divorce is unlawful unless the issue of adultery is involved (Mark 10:11-12). Paul too highlights the sacredness of one's sexuality by reminding Christians that they are members of the body of Christ and therefore they are not to prostitute their new life by getting involved in acts of sexual impurity (1 Cor 6:15).

Shalamov's descriptions of the violation of this commandment expose the reader to one of the ugliest sides of the Kolyma universe. The authorial verdict is unambiguously clear: next to the life per se, it was marriage and human sexuality (primarily of women and ill-willed, broken men) that suffered the most from the social conditions of the Kolyma confinement. The forced social living was marked by overall defilement of sexuality as a sacred gift of God.

Shalamov points out that the cases when husbands would abandon their wives were more frequent than those of wives divorcing their husbands. The writer considers women to be morally superior to men and asserts that "no man has ever come out here to follow a convicted, exiled wife" whereas there were many instances of wives who

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265 There were cases, however, when male prisoners were gang-raped by the female prisoners. See Rossi, 516.
266 "Descendant of a Decembrist," *KT*, 184-99
267 "Captain Tolly's Love," *KT*, 327.
followed their husbands to Siberia. But there was nothing good waiting for them in Kolyma:

These wives had to resign themselves both to the cold and to the constant torment of following their husbands, who were transferred periodically from place to place. The wife would have to abandon the job she had found with such difficulty and move to an area where it was dangerous for a woman to travel alone, where she might be subject to rape, robbery, mockery. . . . Even without such journeys, however, none of these female martyrs could escape the crude sexual demands of the camp authorities—from the highest director to the guards, who had already had a taste of life in Kolyma. All women without exception were asked to join the drunken bachelor parties. Female convicts were simply commanded to: 'Undress and lie down!' They were infected with syphilis without any romancing or poems from Pushkin or Shakespeare. Treatment of convicts' wives was even freer.

The situation relating to professional criminals and women is yet another bloody page of KR. By the authorial admission, its "plot is inconceivable and yet real, it exists indeed, lives alongside us." The story "The Pain" is about a man named Shelgunov who was reared in the home of educated parents and "imbibed Russian culture with his mother's milk." Although his encounter with camp reality almost destroyed his faith in the innate goodness of man as taught by Russian humanist literature, he could not discern how deep was the pit of human moral corruption and how monstrously refined the criminals' cruelty might be. Therefore he agreed not only to be a storyteller (tiskat' rómany), but also to write love letters to the non-existent wife of a criminal. It turned out that those letters were sent to his wife, and her replies were read by Krol, the criminal

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268 "The Green Procurator," CW, 1:540. The same idea is repeated in the document "What I saw and understood in the camp" (NB, 265).
271 Ibid., 2:165.
chief, "dlia seansa."\textsuperscript{272} Shelgunov's fatal mistake was that he "believed the criminals and they made him kill his wife with his own hand."\textsuperscript{273} Upon receiving a false letter saying that he was shot, his wife threw herself under the train. No other outcome of Shelgunov's compromise with the criminal world could be expected, and the reason was that "the criminal is not supposed to experience any comradely or friendly emotion for his 'woman'. Nor is he supposed to have any pity for the object of his underground amusements. No justice can be shown toward the women of this world, for women's rights have been cast out of the gates of the criminal's ethical zone."\textsuperscript{274} Shalamov canonized this woman by saying that the picture of Marina "was superior to the icon [of the Virgin Mary]."\textsuperscript{275}

According to Shalamov, when the Kolyma region was chosen for the forced-labor camps, "no other women were there but prostitutes."\textsuperscript{276} Prostitution and promiscuity were common things, something almost unavoidable. Sexual abuse of children by the criminals too was not something extraordinary, but the author touches upon this only cursorily:

"The seduction of little girls is the perpetual dream of every thug. This dream does not always remain a mere dream."\textsuperscript{277}

\textsuperscript{272}Reading letters from someone else's wife was a common practice among the criminal convicts. This "performance" or "showing" would be done by the hardened professional criminals to generate lust in them ("Apollo among the Criminals," "A Washed Photograph," "The Pain," \textit{CW}, 2:76-86, 140-43, 163-70 respectively). Cf. Rossi, 385.


\textsuperscript{274}"Women in the Criminal World," \textit{KT}, 427.

\textsuperscript{275}"The Pain," \textit{CW}, 2:170.

\textsuperscript{276}"The Rain," \textit{CW}, 1:29.

\textsuperscript{277}"Women in the Criminal World," \textit{KT}, 427.
Both patients among the criminal convicts and doctors did not shrink from satisfying their lusts by using women as objects of sexual exploitation.\textsuperscript{278} All moral barriers were put aside and this resulted in the most inconceivable behavior.\textsuperscript{279} The status of a woman-prostitute was clearly defined by the criminal "ethical code": "a living object, used by the criminal on a temporary basis."\textsuperscript{280} Syphilis, gonorrhea, and other sexually transmitted diseases were often the cost for transient pleasure.\textsuperscript{281}

The gang-rape of a woman by a group of criminals was also a part of the Kolyma camps' "fantastic realism."\textsuperscript{282} Indeed, the cruelty, cynicism, and refinement of sexual crimes exceeded all bounds. The story of one criminal's amusement with a hungry prostitute\textsuperscript{283} was told by the author at least four times: in "City on a Hill," "Love Lessons," "The Rogue Blood," and in the letter to Pasternak of 8 January 1956. This

\textsuperscript{278}"Aneurism of Aorta," \textit{CW}, 1:286.
\textsuperscript{280}"Women in the Criminal World," \textit{KT}, 419.
\textsuperscript{281}"Marcel Proust," \textit{CW}, 2:139.
\textsuperscript{282}"The Green Procurator," "The Golden Medal," and "M. A. Blumenfeld." See \textit{CW}, 1:531-71, 2:200-26, and 4:247-55 respectively. Another Kolyma survivor, Janusz Bardach, describes the gruesome scene which took place on the slave ship heading to Magadan: "I lost count of how many women had been captured. Screaming could be heard farther and farther away in the hold. When the rapists ran out of women, some of the bulkier men turned to the bed boards and hunted for young men. These adolescents were added to the carnage, lying still on their stomachs, bleeding and crying on the floor. Hundreds of men hung from the bed boards to view the scene, but not a single one tried to intervene." Bardach and Gleeson, \textit{Man Is Wolf to Man}, 192.
\textsuperscript{283}Here is the thrust of the story which Shalamov heard from a carpenter who worked in the woman's camp: "There [in the camp] . . . was a rule—as long as I am having pleasure—she must swallow, eat a 'ration'. What she does not finish eating I take away. In the morning I would throw a ration on the snow, get it frozen, put it in my bosom and go. If she can not gnaw it up, one ration is enough for three women." \textit{NB}, 448.
points out how important the writer considered the episode to be and shows the "bottomless bottom" of human degradation under the conditions of Kolyma camps.

Just like lesbianism and bestiality, pederasty too flourished in the camps. Active homosexuals (often professional criminals) were treated with respect, whereas passive ones bore female names and were treated as "the lowest of the low." Shalamov asserts that "no discussion of women in the criminal world is complete without a mention of the vast army of 'Zoikas', 'Mankas', 'Dashkas', and other creatures of the male gender who were christened with women's names. Strangely enough the bearers of these feminine names responded to them as if they saw nothing unusual, shameful, or offensive in them." So not only had the "women's rights . . . been cast out of the gates of the criminal's ethical zone," but any and all human morals as well.

The eighth commandment

"You shall not steal" (Exod 20:15).

Within the context of the second tablet, next to the sacredness of family, human life and dignity, the Decalogue recognizes the inviolability of one's property. This can be a property of God (Josh 6:18; Mal 3:8-10; Acts 5:3) as well as of fellow human beings (Lev 19:13; 1 Kgs 21), including human life (Exod 21:15). If considered in absolute

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285 "The Rogue Blood" and "Love Lessons," see CW, 2:11 and 398 respectively.
286 Leona Toker, Jerusalem, e-mail to Yuri Drumi, Berrien Springs, 19 June 2006.
288 Ibid., 427.
terms, this commandment is "a prohibition of stealing of any kind under any circumstances."  

In Soviet Russia, after the revolution of 1917 the rights to privacy in general and private property in particular were almost totally denied. Protection of property of the "enemies of the people" did not exist at all. To pass from relative freedom in the "big zone" to absolute loss of freedom in the Kolyma camps meant for the prisoners a loss of "the whole of the cultural matrix which had previously sustained them." Time and again Shalamov shows how the inmates were regularly robbed by the state, by the criminals, by each other. Being himself a victim of this order of things, Shalamov says: "Besides louses I had nothing." In another story, "Prosthetic Appliances," the only thing that he had when he was required to turn over his personal belongings before being

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290 The returnees of Stalinist terror often referred to Soviet society "as the 'bol'shaya zona' (big zone), the 'malaya zona' (little zone) being the camps. Thus, even after release, they continued to think of themselves as inhabitants of a zone." Nanci Adler, "Life in the 'Big Zone': The Fate of Returnees in the Aftermath of Stalinist Repression," Euro-Asia Studies 51, no. 1 (1999): 5.

291 Pres, 182.

292 "My Trial," CW, 1:309. Although Shalamov's five-year sentence ended on January 12, 1942, he was not released. Moreover, on July 3, 1943, he was convicted by an NKVD military tribunal of anti-Soviet agitation. The twofold charge—praising Hitler's weaponry and calling Ivan Bunin a classic—was based on the accusations of the informers Krivitsky, Zaslavsky, and Shailevich (NB, 203). As archival data show, on 22 June 1943 Shalamov was sentenced to serve an additional ten years in the camps and to have five years of deprivation of rights. Those years were to be served in correctional labor camps according to paragraphs "a," "b," and "c" of Article 31 of the Penalty Code. The next line of the sentence reads that it was to be done "without confiscation of property from the convict because of the absence of it [property]" (za otsutstviem takovogo u osyshdennogo)." NB, 1027.
put into the camp's solitary confinement block, was his soul, a thing that he resolutely
refused to give up.293

And here is a verbal snapshot of his appearance as a down-and-outer: "The
representative looks me over—my torn pea jacket, a filthy buttonless shirt which reveals
a dirty body scratched bloody from louse bites, rags around my fingers, other rags tied
with string around my feet (in an area where the temperature drops to seventy-five
degrees below zero), inflamed hungry eyes, and an incredibly emaciated condition."294

Deprivation of the right to uncensored personal correspondence is another painful
story of Kolyma. Both letters to the prisoners and from them were subjected to
censorship,295 sent to NKVD archives,296 or even burnt.297 Another type of "censorship"
was committed by the criminal convicts: reading the letters of political prisoners for the
purpose of sexual self-satisfaction.298

According to Pres, "In the Soviet camps, stealing was nothing less than the way of
life."299 Shalamov's stories abound in examples illustrating this truth. Stealing was not an

294"The Golden Taiga," KT, 95. A somewhat similar picture is given by Primo Levi about
the Nazi camps: "Nothing belongs to us any more; they have taken away our clothes, our shoes,
even our hair. . . . They will even take away our name: and if we want to keep it, we will have to
find ourselves the strength to do so, to manage somehow so that behind the name something of
us, of us as we were, still remains." Primo Levi, Survival in Auschwitz, trans. Stuart Woolf (New
295"Tatar Mulla and Fresh Air," CW, 1:84.
296V.F. Lesniakov and V.S. Pan'ishin, eds., Исторические аспекты северо-востока
России: экономика, образование и колымский ГУЛАГ (Historical aspects of northeastern
Russia: The economy, education, and Kolyma Gulag) (Magadan: SVKNNII DVO RAN,
297"Bogdanov," CW, 1:418.
299Pres, 111.
exclusively male "business": women, too, were involved in it. Thugs exercised total control over the camp prisoners and when the opportunity occurred robbed them ruthlessly. Stealing "casually" was a "Kolyma tradition." The thieves had a peculiar philosophy of stealing. Shalamov described it as "a kind of vibration of nerves which brings together an act of stealing with an artistic act, with inspiration; they experience an initial psychological state of nervous agitation and enthusiasm which can not be compared with anything else by its allure, fullness, depth, and power."

If a prisoner had a piece of bread which he was saving for later, gangs of criminals would boldly take it away. Shalamov states that "robberies committed by the criminal convicts can be seen everywhere. Racketeering is legalized and does not surprise anybody." In the same sketch he makes a few more important statements about blatari (hardened criminals): "Thieves will steal anyway for this is their life, their law" and: "The camp administration settles accounts with thieves. Blatari are masters of life and death in the camp. They are always full, whereas the rest are hungry." In Shalamov's judgment, the criminal thief is outside of human morals. Regarding the crime of theft Shalamov states that "there is a mystical principle in that thirst of a Russian for theft. At

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300"Women in the Criminal World," CW, 2:40.
301See the stories "Tatar Mulla and Fresh Air," "On Tick," "The Parcel," etc.
304Ibid., 22.
305Ibid., 23.
306Ibid., 27.
307Ibid., 30. The same idea is stated in the document titled "What I saw and understood in the camp": "I understood that thieves are not human beings." NB, 265.
least [this is true] in the camp conditions, in the conditions of the North, in Kolyma conditions.\textsuperscript{308}

The state not only provided no protection against the robberies but itself acted no better than the most arrant thief. It was the state that often would confiscate from the convicts their last possessions. Shalamov powerfully describes one such scene of open robbery:

Everything was confiscated without any reports or records. Confiscated, and that was that! Indignation was boundless. I recalled how, two years earlier, civilian clothing had been confiscated in Magadan; hundreds of thousands of fur coats from hundreds of convict gangs that had been shipped to the Far North of Misery. These were warm coats, sweaters, and suits that could serve as precious bribes to save a life in some decisive hour. But all roads back were cut off in the Magadan bathhouse. Mountains of civilian clothing rose in the yard. They were higher than the water tower, higher than the bathhouse roof. Mountains of clothing, mountains of tragedies, mountains of human fates suddenly snapped. All who left the bathhouse were doomed to death. How these people had fought to protect their goods from the camp criminal element, from the blatant piracy that raged in the barracks, the cattle cars, the transit points! All that had been saved, hidden from the thieves, was confiscated in the bathhouse by the state.

How simple it all was! Only two years had passed, and now everything was being repeated. . . . 'There's no difference between the criminals who rob us and the government that robs us,' I said. And everyone agreed with me.\textsuperscript{309}

In their response to such gross injustice, the camp prisoners would steal from the state whenever the opportunity occurred. Pres has rightly put this, "In GULAG, cheating was universal."\textsuperscript{310}

The ninth commandment

"You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor" (Exod 20:16).


\textsuperscript{310}Pres, 108.
Technically, this commandment prohibits false testimony in a court of law. Telling the truth as one saw it was considered to be a foundation of the Jewish judicial system. As a member of the covenant community every Israelite had the basic right to be protected against the threat of false accusation. A single witness could not stand up against any man for any iniquity or for error—only "by the mouth of two or three witnesses the matter shall be established" (Deut 19:15). Perjury was prohibited above all. A false witness was to be punished with the same punishment "as he thought to have done to his brother" (Deut 19:18-19; cf. Prov 19:5). Moreover, to slay an innocent person would inflict the communal curse on the slayer (Deut 27:25).

From the time of Moses the ninth commandment has had a broader application, including spreading rumors and lying, which might cause people moral and other types of harm (Lev 19:16). Additionally, as the story about Jezebel, Ahab, and the vineyard of Naboth clearly illustrates (1 Kgs 21), subornation too was considered a gross sin punishable with death.

Two phenomena in the Kolyma forced-labor camps have come into direct conflict with the ninth commandment: informing and bearing false witness. Donosy (denunciations)—"the voluntary reporting of wrongdoing by other citizens to the authorities . . . a written communication to the authorities, voluntarily offered, that gives

\[311\text{Schlessinger and Vogel, 275.}\]

damaging information about another person"—exemplified the very reverse of Jesus' teaching regarding the correction of one's wrongdoings (Matt 18:15-20).

Contrary to the ninth commandment, the Soviet government set up stukachestvo (informing) as a politically expedient practice and widely used it throughout the Gulag Empire, including the Far East Trust. Prescribed by special orders and instructions, this practice was introduced as one of the most effective ways to control the minds and lives of the prisoners. According to some estimates, as of 1947 the secret-service network in the Gulag was composed of 138,992 fixed-post spies, stoolies (informers), and secret agents or 7 percent of the total population of the camps. Spying on fellow prisoners was considered to be "the main method of both disciplinary and administrative morals in general." Without having read documents from the NKVD archives, but having first-

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**Footnotes:**

313 Fitzpatrick, *Tear Off the Masks!*, 205 and 208 respectively. According to Fitzpatrick, there were two functions of denunciation, the surveillance and manipulation. The former implied the Bolshevik's Party concern for ideological purity of its members and central power's desire to have "eyes and ears" among the masses which would report local abuses of power by Soviet officials as well as keep watch on the activities of class enemies like kulaks and priests. The latter provided every citizen with direct access to the coercive apparatus of the state to be used for personal gain. People who would often write denunciations were notable for such psychic deviations as paranoid feelings of being persecuted, those who were obsessed with malice, compulsive busybodies, and "graphomaniacs (perhaps a peculiarly Russian type)." Ibid., 207 and 238.

314 In the Kolyma network of camps, the numerical proportion of stool pigeons to other convicts was one to ten. See Lesniakov and Pan'shin, 55.

315 See the order no. 44/21 of 2 February 1930 issued by the OGPU "About liquidation of kulaks as a class" (Kozlov, *The History of Stalin's Gulag*, 5:97); see also the Circular #211/EKU of 5 June 1931 issued by EKU OGPU (ibid., 2:89) and other documents.

316 Veniamin Iofe, "ГУЛАГ и его влияние на российское общество" (Gulag and its impact on Russian society), in *Богословие после Освенцима и Гулага и отношение к евреям и иудаизму в Православной Церкви большевистской России: Материалы международной научной конференции 26-29 января 1997 года, Санкт-Петербург, Россия* (Theology after Auschwitz and Gulag and attitudes to the Jews and Judaism in the Orthodox Church of Bolshevik Russia: Papers from the international scholar conference, St. Petersburg, Russia, January 26-29, 1997) (St. Petersburg: Vysshaja religiozno-filosofskaja shkola, 1997), 128.

hand knowledge of the situation within the camps, Shalamov correctly stated: "As is

known, in 1938 and later—until 1953 there were literally thousands of visits by thieves to

the camp administration with statements that they, the true friends of the people, must

inform on the 'fascists' and 'counterrevolutionaries.' This kind of activity was en

masse."\(^{318}\)

The psychological and social results of informing included the fear of being

betrayed, the total dissociation of prisoners (primarily political ones), and their complete

loneliness. Penetration by stoolies was "the surest and unfailing way to destroy the self-
defenses of the downtrodden and exploited."\(^{319}\) Additionally, it was used as a means of

getting even with those who might be considered personal enemies\(^{320}\) or gaining favor

with the camp administration.\(^{321}\) By enlisting stool pigeons and paying them for their

secret services, the camp command further corrupted the prisoners so that they would

easily report on each other "for praise, for a cigarette butt, for no reason at all."\(^{322}\) It was a

sure way to fill up the lists of convicts sentenced to death.\(^{323}\) Shalamov believes that

\textit{stukachestvo} is one of the features of the Russian national character.\(^{324}\) Hence, "as a rule,

all [the prisoners] spy on one another."\(^{325}\) They do that "from the very first days,\(^{326}\)

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\(^{319}\) Rossi, 407.

\(^{320}\) "Engineer Kiselev," \textit{CW}, 1:422.


\(^{322}\) "Typhoid Quarantine," \textit{KT}, 157.

\(^{323}\) "How It Began," \textit{CW}, 1:381.

\(^{324}\) "There Is No One to Blame in the Camp," \textit{CW}, 4:255.

\(^{325}\) "The 'Bitch' War," \textit{CW}, 2:63. Shalamov says that when he had a chance to become

acquainted with the list of the camp informants he found that it was a "striking case of squealing

scarcely thinking of what was true and what was false. The state and its penitentiary system encouraged this corrupting custom and "provided life for its secret agents, its stool pigeons, oath-breakers, and false-witnesses. This is their legal minimum.

During the two years before his first arrest in January 1929, Shalamov was a law student at Moscow State University. Perhaps this factor, as well as his inborn keen sense of justice, made him highly sensitive to all kinds of falsehood that became a virtually inalienable part of the Soviet penal system. The practice of deliberately giving false evidence was something common and in the order of things, especially in the Kolyma corner of the Gulag. In the story "Princess Gagarina's Necklace" Shalamov shows how effective the method of "organized confusion" was in making a person on trial say what was expected of him by the investigating agency. As far as camp commissioners were concerned, they did not disdain to use any means in order to have a disagreeable person imprisoned for an extra term, incarcerated in the black hole, or even sentenced to death: "He [Investigator Shtemenko] would diligently interrogate, hire false witnesses-slanderers for tobacco or a dish of soup by recruiting them among the hungry convicts. He would assure some of the state requirement for lies; he would threaten some, bribe others."

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326 NB, 169.
327 "Lesha Chekanov, or Abettors in Kolyma," CW, 2:323.
Shalamov's stories provide enough evidence to the fact that the Stalin judicial system often functioned according to the notion: "A true witness will not survive, and he who speaks truth will be put to death." As his autobiographical story "My Process" shows, to appeal his trumped-up case was something totally impossible. The legal abyss between the NKVD official Fyodorov and his permanent employee stool pigeons Krivitskii and Zaslavskii, on the one hand, and Shalamov, a *dokhodyaga* deprived of all civil rights on the other, was too wide for the latter to expect anything but judicial arbitrariness. The trial was staged all the way through: "I was sure of the severity of the sentence—to kill was a tradition of those years." In the story "The Glove," which is somewhat similar to "My Trial," the writer unambiguously states that the only truth during the whole process was "human meanness."

The tenth commandment

"You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor's" (Exod 20:17).

In a sense this commandment is unique because it addresses the inner being of humans, their motivation rather than action. Just as honoring parents (the fifth commandment) is vital to convey the meaning of the first four commandments, so the tenth commandment "presents the motivations behind the crimes, especially for

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333 "My Trial," CW, 1:310.
violations of commandments six through nine." It shows that God is concerned with the human heart (thoughts, desires, feelings) just as with the outward acts (1 Sam 16:7, 1 Kgs 8:39, 1 Chr 28:9, Heb 4:13). The ninth commandment prohibits benefiting oneself at the disadvantage of another and seems to imply that it is better to want than to lie, better to suppress lust than to steal one's innocence, better to hunger than to rob those who are hungrier, in a word, better to die than to sin. As a summary of the Decalogue, the tenth commandment admonishes one to believe in and trust God no matter what.

The basic premise for analyzing Shalamov's tales on the basis of this commandment is this: Since every camp prisoner was lacking virtually all material goods as well as non-material values, it is valid, therefore, to assume that everything was desired by everybody. But there were two opposing attitudes toward what was coveted. The first was to get it at the expense of somebody else, including a prisoner's life and dignity, that is, "to seek power and food at all cost." The second was an intentional preference to voluntarily suffer, and not ingratiate oneself with the powerful or get jobs that would demand bending the will of others. To be envious of somebody did not necessarily mean to get into his dirty business. There is virtually no story in KR in which the protagonist or other dramatis personae did not find himself in the moral complexity of the decision-making process. The scalpel of KR cuts very deeply into

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335 Freedman, 155.
336 "On Tick" and "The Tie." See CW, 1:8-13 and 97-103 respectively.
337 Toker, "Kafka's 'The Hunger Artist'," 281.
people's psyche, thus exposing the reader to their inner thoughts, motives, and finest inducements.

The question to ask is: What helped Krist, Andreev, and Golubev (all are Shalamov's main protagonists) to withstand the moral pressures involved in life behind the barbed wire of the Arctic death camps? Toker sums up Shalamov's moral creed saying that it was "faith in common human decencies; this faith would express itself in not harming another while pursuing one's own ends, not imposing one's own or the State's will on fellow prisoners, not losing one's inner autonomy, and, in particular, not collaborating with the surveillance apparatus massively present in prisons and camps."\(^{340}\)

It is clear, therefore, that it was firm moral determination that helped Shalamov to be unlike so many other prisoners, and this resolute determination took place precisely on the level of his thoughts, conscience, and will. Later he expressed his determination in the following creed:

I set a few binding rules for myself. First of all, I should not ask anything from the command and do any work given to me if it is morally pure enough. I should not seek the help of anybody, neither material, nor moral. I should not be an informer, a third ear.

I must be truthful—in those cases when truth and not lies is for the benefit of another man.

I must be equal to all—both great and small. And my personal acquaintance with the [camp] chief should not be more valuable than that with the lowest down-and-out.

I should not be afraid of anything and anybody. Fear is a shameful, defiling characteristic that is humiliating to a man.

I do not ask anybody to believe me, neither will I believe anybody.

As far as the rest is concerned, I should rely on my own intuition, on my conscience.\(^{341}\)

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\(^{341}\) "Vishera," *CW*, 4:182-83.
Shalamov never stated that he was writing *KR* to bring attention to the forgotten ethical obligations expressed in the Decalogue. The reference to his intuition and conscience, both of which were structured by his religious background, however controversial, can be considered to be a means of doing justice to the Law's timeless meaning and value. Shalamov's confession that the "only group of people that managed to behave slightly humanly in starvation and outrages were the religiozniki [lay persons]: sectarians—almost all and most of the priests" points in the same direction. Therefore, Shalamov's prose is not only documentary and profoundly psychological but it appeals to the readers' ethical judgments and tests their own moral creed. As Toker highlights,

The main communicative function of documentary prose is to provide evidence for the history of crime. Its aesthetic function involves 'staging' human experience in such a way as to set a testing ground for the ideas that led to crimes, or failed to prevent them, or were enlisted in the drawing of lessons. At the same time it involves staging human experience in a way that leads to processing and shaping attitudes to the material—attitudes of the author as well as of the reader. Attitudes are units of spiritual life that blend psychological drives and moral-ideological commitments. They are about the only aspects of life in concentration camps that can be understood and re-enacted by those who have not shared the experience. They precede the formation of ideas, exceed ideas in complexity, and lag behind them in their degree of crystallization. . . . Processing and transforming our own attitudes is what makes reading literature, including the best works of documentary prose, an ethical . . . experience . . . in the narrower, evaluative meaning of the world.\textsuperscript{344}

The analysis of *KR* on the basis of the second tablet of the Decalogue shows that as the quintessence of Stalinism the camp system empirically proved the biblical truth about the ultimate corruption of human beings living in a state of spiritual alienation from the Creator (Jer 17:9; Rom 1:26-32). Shalamov uncovered some of the regularities in the

\textsuperscript{342}NB, 264.

\textsuperscript{343}As the narrator says in the story "Bread," "Kolyma makes everybody a psychologist." \textit{CW}, 1:75.

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process of moral decay when humans have to give into powers that are much stronger than their own ethical principles. The level of one's humanness solely depends on his/her allegiance to the ethical precepts of the Decalogue, whether they are followed consciously or not. In those situations of utter need and despair, the only legitimate reinterpretation of those precepts would necessarily include not taking advantage for oneself at the expense of another sufferer. Often, if not always, a matter of choice determines one's moral appearance: that of a victim, a torturer, or a silent accessory to the crime (plus many shades in between the extremes of this rather simple spectrum). A man's true dignity depends on his resolute determination to keep the commandments at all costs, even to the point of mental and social death in the process of physical survival common to all the camp inmates. This determination could not be provided by humanistic values.

Due to the context of forced social living, apart from natural family ties, the Kolyma death camps comprised a type of anti-society in which basic family morals became non-applicable. This resulted in the fact that the family, both as an institution of God and a basic social unit, ceased to exist. The camps became social units completely controlled by the demonic. The practice of stealing a neighbor's possession, whether it was done by the state or criminals, worsened the misery of the most oppressed and helpless inmates of the camps. The departure from the second tablet of the Decalogue resulted in the physical, spiritual, moral, and social death of human beings: the changes it introduced into the human psyche turned out to be irreversible.

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344 Toker, "Testimony as Art," 252-53.
A Human before God

An examination of *KR* from the standpoint of the second part of the Decalogue requires looking at a more subtle aspect of Shalamov's work that seems to be invisibly present in its narrative texture. As a person who was reared in the house of an Orthodox priest living just in front of the city's largest cathedral, Shalamov knew well the Orthodox religion, history, traditions, rites, and holy days. His writings betray him as a religious thinker who utilized religious language with its numerous allusions to the biblical narratives to speak of the collapse of humanistic values in terms of apocalyptic images.

The Bible is unambiguously clear in identifying God with needy, suffering people (Matt 25:40; Acts 9:1, 5), and as such He always takes the side of the oppressed (Exod 2:23-25; Isa 58:1-12; Luke 4:18-19). Whatever is done by one human being to another in a sense is done to God Himself. Every crime committed against the followers of God is done to Him, for as the prophet says, "He who touches you touches the apple of His eye" (Zech 2:8; cf. Deut 32:10 and Ps 17:8). On the other hand, in every story of *KR* the voice of the narrator is the voice of the victim or a voice on behalf of the victims. It is not an accident that in some of the stories one of the authorial *alter egos* bears the name Krist, which equally alludes to both Christ and dialectical pronunciation of the Russian word *krest*, the cross. Since Shalamov wrote extensively about afflictions imposed on so many people, it seems legitimate to suggest that there is a *theological* dimension to the

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347 Apanowich, "Descending into Hell," 133.
Kolyma tragedy. It is assumed that a theological reading of KR will uncover certain
spiritual regularities that caused moral apostasy which plagued the inhabitants of the
Kolyma hell. The first four commandments of the Decalogue deal with crimes directed
against God: "the sin of apostasy being the most severe violation, idolatry next, then
blasphemy, followed by Sabbath violation." In the following examination the first four
commandments are a means to comprehend yet another side of Shalamov's "fantastic
realism."

The first and second commandments

After a short historical prologue—"I am the LORD your God, who brought you
out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage" (Exod 20:2)—the first
commandment reads: "You shall have no other gods before Me." The second
commandment is a detailed extension and specification of the first one: "You shall not
make for yourself a carved image—any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or
that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down
to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the
iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generations of those who
hate Me, but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My
commandments" (Exod 20:3-6).

Since the God of Israel claims to be the only true God (Isa 45:5), He alone is to be
worshiped. Faithfulness to God is part of the covenant relationship with Him. Worshiping

Freedman, 97.

Since the first and the second commandments are very close in their contents, they will
be treated under one subheading.
other gods is strictly forbidden. As the story with the golden calf clearly illustrates, religious idolatry is considered to be the grossest sin (Exod 32:1-20). In view of the pandemic nature of polytheism that was evident in the ancient Near East, these two commandments were indeed a "tall order . . . [that] met with limited success." The first commandment conveys the notion of the authority of one God, God the Deliverer from slavery. The second commandment specifies that God is a universal God who was "outside of our prior experience of having a god contained by form and name."

It would be too naïve to think that because of the aggressive, militant atheism that became a secular religion of the newly born Socialist State, these commandments lost their applicability. On the contrary, people were forced to change their allegiance from faith in God to faith in the Communist Party, Lenin, Stalin, a bright future, world revolution, and a pantheon of other gods. As Andrei Sinyavsky has put it in his analysis of Soviet civilization, "communism enters history not only as a new sociopolitical order and economic system, but also as a new great religion denying all others." Stalinism became the ultimate realization of the communist atheology. The temptations by bread and power endured by Jesus in the wilderness (Luke 4:1-13) were repeated times without number by the Kolyma death camps' inhabitants in their daily struggles for moral and physical survival. Each of them had to be tested for their ultimate allegiance. Most of them did not pass the test: nearly everybody found themselves in moral apostasy.

350 Freedman, 34.
351 Schlessinger and Vogel, 25.
352 Sinyavsky, 6.
In the sketch "About One Mistake of the Literature" Shalamov examines how a child and later a youth were introduced to the world of blatari (professional criminals). The further a person strays from common ethics, the more deeply he is intrigued by the romantic charm of that "underground order" and himself begins to deify (bogotvorit') the thieves, their seeming freedom, independence, and power. It is understandable, therefore, why a young peasant "agrees with their every word, is ready to carry out all their errands, speaks of them with fear and reverence." In the tale "By the Stirrup" the writer unmasks the spiritual degradation of people who lost much of their ethical core, which was imbued by humanist values:

This is an awful trait of the Russian character—humiliating servility, veneration for every camp chief. Engineer Pokrovskii is one of thousands who are ready for prayer, for licking the hand of the big boss.

Scholars, engineers and writers, intellectuals who have fallen into a trap (popavshie na tsep') are ready to fawn on any semiliterate. . . .

What is art? [What is] science? Does it ennoble a human being? No, no, and no. Neither art nor science gives a human being those negligibly positive qualities. It is something else that gives them a moral power, but not their profession, not talent.

All my life I have been observing the servility, groveling, self-humiliation of the intelligentsia, and as far as other groups are concerned, there is nothing to say.

People who had more goods or more power in the camps were considered to be gods and half-gods by those who had less or who were less influential: "A regular orderly's aide is a god . . . . [A] food distributor is a half-god, the master of the life and death for down-and-outers. I have always wondered at the age-old Russian need to have an obliging slave. For instance, nonpolitical prisoners consider a room orderly to be not a

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354"The Red Cross," KT, 413 (italics mine).
355"By the Stirrup," CW, 2:232.
356Ibid., 235.
room orderly but a god hiring a political prisoner for a cigarette, for tobacco, for a piece of bread. Even such powerful figures as Berzin, the head of Dal'stroi who virtually established the infrastructure of the Kolyma forced-labor camps, were sacrificed on the altar of the "red god" whom they had so passionately served all their lives: "The fates of Berzin and Tamarin are very similar. Both were serving the power and obeying the power. They believed in power. And the power deceived them." This outcome would repeat itself again and again in line with the idea to "liquidate the liquidators" when executioners became victims of the power structures that they themselves had established. And the striking thing is that there was no difference between them—the same fear, the same death. As the authorial persona observes, "I have seen people—many people—who had ordered the shooting of others and who were now themselves being killed. There was nothing but cowardice in them as they shouted: 'I'm not the one who should be killed for the good of the state. I too am able to kill.'"

By worshiping power, people worshiped nothing but their own base instincts: to be higher than others, to control others, to be executioner rather than victim. Power became a graven image to be venerated and idolized: "A camp supervisor learns to wield limitless power over the prisoners, he learns to view himself as a god, as the only authorized representative of power, as a man of a 'superior race.'"

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361 "The Red Cross," KT, 412.
But even if one could resist the temptation of power, one could hardly stand against the temptation of glory. In the sketch "The Rogue Blood" Shalamov tells the story of a medical doctor, Ivan Aleksandrovich, who did not bend to the criminals' threats, but when their absolute power appeared in the disguise of backslapping and compliments, it hypnotized him so that "his will became their will."\(^{362}\) Although the doctor could intellectually justify his behavior, it was a pseudo self-justification. This is a crucial point because it serves as a reminiscence of another "will exchange," that is, when Pilate succumbed to the pressures of the crowd and granted their demand (Luke 23:24) despite his personal conviction that Jesus was truly innocent. The consequence of that exchange is well-known: "The innocent Jesus heads for the cross and death, while a sinner goes free in his stead."\(^{363}\) As Shalamov pointed out in one of his notebooks, "Pilate could only tell lies quite intentionally, just as all the subsequent pilates."\(^{364}\) Was not that because the exchange of gods brought an exchange of wills, allegiances, and moral creeds?

The third commandment

"You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain" (Exod 20:7).

This commandment prohibits the use of God's name for "common or profane purposes, including cursing, lying, or in association with anything deemed unworthy of


\(^{364}\)NB, 338.
the divine name." If taken as a commandment that permits a "wide range of application, covering every dimension of the misuse of Yahweh's name," then it certainly applies to the world of the camps. To be a human but not living up to that name means taking the Creator's name in vain. In a narrower sense, if God forbids profane use of His name, He could hardly approve any foul language used by men or women who bear His own image and likeness. This is probably what lies at the basis of some biblical admonitions that deal with the purity of one's language (Eph 5:4; Jas 3:1-12). Although Jesus tied bad language to the sixth commandment (Matt 5:22), it is reasonable to consider it in the context of the third commandment as well. This applies to two things in KR: the use of the jargon of the criminal world and the practice of professional criminals to wear Christian crosses around their necks.

The moral corruption that Stalinism introduced into human souls had certainly impacted the language of the camp inhabitants. Foul language became the main means of communication among the prisoners as well as between them and the camp administration. In the 1920s the jargon of the criminal world came into fashion and became part of Communist political culture. One of the reasons why Russian poet

365Freedman, 49.
366Frymer-Kenski, 996.
367Sarna, 288.
368Fitzpatrick, *Tear Off the Masks!*, 35.
Sergei Esenin was "canonized" by the criminal world was that he managed to "put foul language into the poetry."  

The practice of reading love narratives to charm professional criminals' ears is a good example of how something that should be held sacred was suddenly profaned. Probably it was not by accident that while describing the ugliness of this practice Shalamov characterized it as "a religious obligation" and included it as part of the criminal's creed alongside playing cards, drunkenness, debauchery, robbery, escapes, and so-called courts of honor.  

Although Shalamov was reared in the house of an Orthodox priest who strongly prohibited the use of that kind of language, it unavoidably took root in his speech too. The writer admits, "My language was the crude language of the mines and it was as impoverished as the emotions that lived near the bones. Get up, go to work, dinner, end of work, rest, citizen chief, may I speak, shovel, trench, yes sir, drill, pick, it's cold outside, rain, cold soup, hot soup, bread, ration, leave me the butt—these few dozen words were all I had needed for years. Half of them were obscenities." But the interesting thing is how Shalamov interpreted that language. In one of his notebooks he calls thieves' slang "the vocabulary of Satan." He saw it as yet another means of moral corruption behind the barbed wire:

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370CW, 2:97.
371NB, 337.
373NB, 274.
[The young peasant] is anxious to adorn his speech with their slang; no member of either sex, convict or civilian, who has been to Kolyma has failed to carry away from Kolyma the peculiar slang of the criminals.

These words are a poison that seeps into the soul. It is this mastery of the criminal dialect itself that marks the beginning of the non-criminal's intimacy with the criminal world. 374

In "Typhoid Quarantine," Shalamov artistically sketched what can be called a clash of two languages, a clash of two cultures and two allegiances: "Everyone was extremely nervous and silent. Only Frisorger kept muttering something in German. 'He's praying, damn him . . .' Filipovsky whispered to Andreev." 375 Prayer in its juxtaposition to verbal abuses is one of the important themes in "The Apostle Paul," a story about the same hero, Frisorger, who was a man of prayer, a man who offended no one and spoke little, but prayed much.

Finally, a few words must be said about criminals wearing a cross around their neck. In the story "On Tick," which has many highly symbolic details Shalamov describes the appearance of the criminal Naumov. One of his key attributes was a cross:

Nothing blasphemous was intended in the cross. At the time all the thieves wore aluminum crosses around their necks; it was a kind of symbol, like a tattoo. 376

In the twenties the thieves wore trade-school caps; still earlier, the military officer's cap was in fashion. In the forties, during the winter, they wore peakless leather caps, folded down the tops of their felt boots, and wore a cross around the neck. The cross was usually smooth but if an artist was around, he was forced to use a needle to paint it with the most diverse subjects: a heart, cards, a crucifixion, a

374 "The Red Cross," KT, 413.

376 As Pluster-Sarno explains, the tattooed symbols are regarded by the thief "as real aspects of his life. This is the world in which the thief lives, it is his 'reality'. . . . The world of tattoos is one of symbolic sequences that are accepted as reality and which consequently shape the consciousness of the thief himself, because the tattoos are regarded by the thieves themselves as the effective constitution of the world of thieves, i.e. the fundamental law of thieves' society." Alexei Pluster-Sarno, "All Power to the Godfathers!", in Russian Criminal Tattoo Encyclopedia, [drawings] Danzig Baldaev, trans. Andrew Bromfield (London: Murray & Sorrell Fuel, 2006), 2:35.
naked woman. . . Naumov’s cross was smooth. It hung on his bare chest, partially blocking the tattoo which was a quote from Esenin, the only poet the ‘criminal world’ recognized.  

In Christian tradition the cross and crucifixion are signs of voluntary sufferings and utter humiliation. In the world of criminals it became a sign of superiority, power, and, most importantly, a sign of belonging to the underground order of thieves, to the realm of death. Therefore, a heart, cards, a crucifix, and a naked woman being tattooed on one’s skin were a kind of criminal semantic metalanguage, an iconography of Satan that symbolized their thievish culture. More inconsistent inequalities than these emblems could hardly be seen anywhere else. The humiliated and intimidated intellectuals regarded the criminals as “teachers of life” and “fighters for the people’s rights.” So the interpretation suggests itself: The world of professional criminals was the world of antichrists who came in the name of Christ (Matt 24:5). But in reality the criminals united in their underground order to do the will of their master who was a “murderer from the beginning” (John 8:44). Thus the symbols betrayed the very name they were intended to

378 A similar amalgamation of the criminal world and religious symbols is found in Bardach’s description of the professional criminal raping a young man: “His back was tattooed with shackles, chains, and the popular Soviet slogan “Work is an act of honor, courage, and heroism.” On both sides were trumpeting angels.” See Bardach and Gleeson, Man Is Wolf to Man, 125.  
380 "The Red Cross," KT, 413.
convey. As Toker put this, in the camps, "Christ is crucified every day. . . . And Judas betrays him every day, with kisses or blows."  

The fourth commandment

"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates. For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it" (Exod 20:8-11).

The meaning of this commandment is very rich and cannot be examined within the scope if this paper. Nevertheless, at least three points need to be mentioned about "keeping the Sabbath holy" as it relates to this study. First, the Sabbath commandment refers to the past, that is, to the very beginning of human history at Creation. It not only stands as a memorial to God's creation, but also as a sign of another historic event, the deliverance of the Israelites from Egyptian slavery (Deut 5:15). Second, it alludes to the future when the world will be re-created (Rev 21:5). Third, it intervenes in human routine to establish a weekly day for people to rest, to worship God, and by doing so, to never forget who they are and where they came from. As Neusner points out, "the Sabbath imposes itself upon the social order, the defining moment of society, in particular a social

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order that organizes itself around the days of the week. The Sabbath day is one of God's ways of restoring the divine image in the lives of His people (Ezek 20:20). As the following rationales for "keeping the Sabbath holy" indicate, one of the main features peculiar to this commandment was the mission of memory.

There were a number of important social regulations stemming from the fourth commandment. For instance, a Hebrew slave could free himself with money or be redeemed by his close relatives. Otherwise a slave and his children were to be released in the Year of Jubilee (Lev 25:47-55). A Hebrew slave was supposed to work no more than six years, and in the seventh year he could "go out free and pay nothing" (Exod 21:2; Deut 15:12). Moreover, he was to be provided liberally from his former owner's flock, threshing floor, and winepress. And the reason for that was stated very plainly: "You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God redeemed you; therefore I command you this thing today" (Deut 15:15).

Shalamov has never explicitly articulated his view on the meaning of this commandment. Implicitly, however, he has reflected extensively upon one's moral obligation to remember the victims of Stalinism and bear a witness against the crimes of the totalitarian regime, against "red slavery" and its masters. This aspect of memory is a clear-cut theme running through the narratives of KR. In a way, Shalamov's magnum opus is a call to remember the Sabbath with its unique passion for freedom, for human dignity, for spiritual culture, for the equality of human beings, for ultimate purpose in life.

382 Neusner, 78.
In *KR* the reader can find many stories of people who were totally disoriented in terms of time. In many cases prisoners were made to forget that they were human beings. Amnesia was a common phenomenon among the inhabitants of Kolyma. Being deprived of individuality was a painful process that turned the inmates into mere objects of the camp industry thus robbing them of any hope for a better future. The camp deprived them of their past—family and childhood simply ceased to exist for them.\(^383\) The main means used to achieve this was the virtually unlimited exploitation through slave labor, often without days off,\(^384\) without enough food, and in extremely severe conditions.

The German pastor Frisorger forgot the name of Jesus' twelfth apostle.\(^385\) An Orthodox priest forgot that it was Thursday and not Sunday when he celebrated the liturgy of John Chrysostom on the taiga snow.\(^386\) Another prisoner, a professor of philosophy from Leningrad, Igor Vasilievich Glebov, forgot his wife's name.\(^387\) The prisoners among the *dokhodyagi* did not feel time at all, they could not and did not think

\(^{383}\) Janusz Bardach, a survivor of the Kolyma death camps, pointedly describes the warped memory of a woman prisoner, Zina. Trying to visualize her family she portrays: "I have a hard time remembering my mother's face... I can no longer picture her laughing, talking, singing. The only memory I have of her is holding me while the NKVD officer held a pistol to her head. That's all I can see of her face—that terrified look. And my father, his face only appears as it did when he was arrested. I remember things we did as a family, my childhood, but I can't picture their faces. My mother had beautiful blue eyes, but I can't recall the shade of blue anymore... I think about my brother. I remember him so well, but I can't recall the happy years we spent together. My recollections are always tragic. My mother crying, my father begging. They don't look like my parents. They are strangers." See Bardach and Gleeson, *Man Is Wolf to Man*, 304.

\(^{384}\) There was a saying in Kolyma camps, "По субботам не работам, а суббота у нас каждый день!" ("We don't work on Saturdays, and every day is a Saturday for us!") Its origin is uncertain, but it appears that it was the criminals' motto showing their carefree life at the expense of sheer exploitation of the political prisoners.


\(^{386}\) "A Day Off," *KT*, 104.

further then a day ahead, and "three years, counted in Kolyma terms, were eternity." In "Dominoes" the narrator being in a state of sheer exhaustion states: "I could only pronounce words slowly and with difficulty, as if translating from a foreign language. I had forgotten everything. I didn't even remember what it was like to remember." This feature of distorted time perception became a "metaphor for the break-down of man's understanding of the world" and proved the "narrator's inability to reconstruct his experience according to traditional laws of narrative time and likewise his inability to fit the camp experience as a whole into traditionally-accepted notions of history."

There were two aspects of "mission of memory" as understood by Shalamov: memory as a "moral mission, a duty to historical truth" and as a "symptom of humanity." In other words, "he knows that he must remember because he has seen what it means to forget." Knowing that human memory is inclined to blot out the bad and retain only the good, the writer believed that there was nothing in the world worse than "to forget" the crimes of Stalinism. Furthermore, his testimonial works are an act of resistance to the criminal aberration of the totalitarian state whose memory "does not re-member, but rather dismember the dead." Deliberate forgetfulness is a crime, such as the voluntarily degraded memory of surgeon Kubantsev who would remember the

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390 Kline, "'Novaja proza'," 274.
391 Oja, 62.
392 Ibid., 68-9.
393 "Dry Rations," KT, 43.
394 NB, 449.
395 Davoliųtė, 100.
names of each of the convict orderlies, their gallant adventures and "which of the
convicts 'lived' with whom." He would not forget "the rank of every heartless
administrator," but forced himself to forget the steamship *Kim* which entered the port of
Nagaev with a human cargo—three thousand convicts. During the trip those prisoners
had mutinied. So the authorities decided to hose down all the holds, and this was done
when the temperature was forty degrees below zero.\(^{396}\) Shalamov concludes his tale with
the characteristic denouement: "Anatole France has a story, 'The Procurator of Judea'. In
it, after seventeen years, Pontius Pilate cannot remember Christ."\(^{397}\)

In a letter to Volkov-Lannit dated 13 April 1956, Shalamov says: "I do not want
to forget anything and I consider my destiny to be precisely this!"\(^{398}\) Interestingly, at the
end of this statement Shalamov put an exclamation mark. This recalls another story,
namely how passionately Father Peter, an Orthodox priest, would shout at the work
supervisor, insisting he erect a cross over the grave of "Aunt Polia" and write her name
and dates on the plate. But whereas the priest did this to immortalize her, the people
whom she used to serve so selflessly did not even show up at the funeral.\(^{399}\) For
Shalamov, to forget would mean to betray. Therefore, he committed his life to
remembering and writing. Regrettably, this was one of the reasons why he had to leave
his wife and daughter who did not share his intentions. A survivor of the Kolyma death
camps, he now became a voice for the thousands who did not survive that hell. This
"mission of memory" has been articulated by the writer in the story "The Train":

\(^{396}\) "The Procurator of Judea," *KT*, 175-76.

\(^{397}\) Ibid., 176.

\(^{398}\) *NB*, 593.
It was as if I had just awakened from a dream that had lasted for years. And suddenly I was afraid and felt a cold sweat form on my body. I was frightened by the terrible strength of man, his desire and ability to forget. I realized I was ready to forget everything, to cross out twenty years of my life. And what years! And when I understood this, I conquered myself. I knew I would not permit my memory to forget everything that I had seen. And I regained my calm and fell asleep.\textsuperscript{400}

\textit{KR} appears to be the author's tribute paid to the memory of all those who met their last days in the snowy graves of Kolyma. The stories Shalamov wrote immortalized the victims of Stalinism. Thus, the commandment to remember the Sabbath and the "Lord of the Sabbath" (Mark 2:28) took on a new meaning and was understood as the imperative to remember "martyrs who were not, who could not and did not become heroes."\textsuperscript{401}

\textbf{Conclusion}

The Ten Commandments can be considered Shalamov's moral reference point for his tales and sketches. The basic principles of the Decalogue, being internalized by the writer in his early childhood, provided him with the vital tool for measuring the values of good and evil. It would probably not be possible for him to condemn Stalinism so vehemently or to show the tragedy of human departure from what it means to be human without a clear set of ethical boundaries by which to distinguish humans from non-humans.

Describing the moral corruption of the prisoners in the Kolyma death camps, Shalamov depicted the forced moral apostasy of people. The state, the professional

\textsuperscript{399}"Aunt Polia," \textit{CW}, 1:96.
\textsuperscript{400}"The Train," \textit{KT}, 392-93.
criminals, and the harsh natural environment were responsible for the tragedy of moral depravation. Despite all the irrationality and seemingly fatal inevitability of what had happened in the Kolyma Gulag, the narrator repeatedly showed that this departure from a state of being human to the state of being non-human, something worse than animals and beasts, often, if not always, depended on one's choice either to victimize others or be a victim oneself, to kill others or be killed oneself, to steal from others or be robbed, to inform on others or be informed on. This shift in the moral scales of what was morally acceptable and what was not, created the world defined by the writer as "fantastic realism," where all the basic norms and principles had been turned upside down. In such circumstances a prisoner's willpower would be further weakened by the severe natural environment of the northeast of Russia, malnutrition, and the inadequate moral and spiritual backbone of most of the convicts. Inevitably this change in one's life and death priorities led not only to the destruction of relationships, but also caused either the separation of a man's physical life from his psyche or made the latter serve the former. This shift was often irreversible; the human was "abolished."402

It is important to note one more of Shalamov's observations that is rather subtly present in his camp exposé: the transfer of people's allegiance from God to gods has morally impoverished them and released virtually uncontrollable destructive forces from their base nature. This suicidal release led humans first to spiritual and then to physical death. Hence Shalamov's statement: "We do not know what stands behind God, behind

faith, but we clearly see—everyone sees—what stands behind disbelief."\textsuperscript{403} Thus Stalinism and the death camps, flourishing within this political and cultural system, were the natural result of people's erasing God from all human affairs. In this context, Stalinism is nothing but demonism because it legitimized and institutionalized a culture of death and lawlessness.\textsuperscript{404} Philosophically, the whole point of \textit{KR} can be summarized by the following observation of Nicholas Berdyaev: "Look at Humanism stripped naked and observe its nature, which appeared so innocent and good to another age. \textit{Where there is no God there is no man:} that is what we have learned from experience."\textsuperscript{405} Stalinism did not affect only the prisoners of the Gulag. Rather, the wide-scale phenomenon of lawlessness established itself in every corner and in every layer of Soviet society. As Nekrasova comments on Shalamov's story "Lend-Lease," the kingdom of the dead "expands its borders—from Kolyma to Moscow, to the Kremlin."\textsuperscript{406} Indeed, the camp was "a mirror of the world around it, magnifying what it reflected."\textsuperscript{407} The basic features of the Gulag subculture\textsuperscript{408} (that is, the subculture of coercion and confinement, state-sponsored violence, collectivism, and disrespect of an individual's life, dignity, and rights) penetrated the socio-cultural world of the Soviet citizenry and had a cancerous

\textsuperscript{403}NB, 842.
\textsuperscript{404}As Solzhenitsyn observes, "For half a century and more the enormous state has towered over us, girded with hoops of steel. The hoops are still there. There is no law." Solzhenitsyn, 3:525.
\textsuperscript{405}Berdyaev, \textit{The End of Our Time}, 80.
\textsuperscript{406}Nekrasova, 152.
\textsuperscript{407}Todorov, 159.
\textsuperscript{408}During the conference "The Gulag: Its History and Legacy," held at Harvard University Nov. 2-5, 2006, such metaphors and analogies as "porosity," "hybridity," "revolving door," "dystopia within dystopia," "small zone within the big zone," etc., have been frequently
effect on their minds and souls for generations to come. The system of socioeconomic and ideological compulsion generated a culture of violence, moral depravity, and multiple forms of psychosocial aberration. If considered in terms of its multigenerational effect, the phenomenon under consideration still reverberates in the present-day society as a whole. It is to the examination of Stalinism as trauma and the way of life of the Soviet citizenry that I turn to in the following chapter.

used by both participants and attendees to conceptualize the perplexingly contradictory phenomenon of the Stalinist Gulag and its relation to the Soviet society at large.
CHAPTER 3

STALINISM AS TRAUMA

Introduction

This chapter conceptualizes the traumatic impact of Stalinism on the psychosocial fabric of Soviet society. It is assumed that Stalinism not only caused trauma but itself was a phenomenon of rationalized, institutionalized, and long-sustained trauma-in-history. Hence, the Soviet theme in Russian national identity must be

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1 Originally, the word *trauma* (derived from the Greek *traumatizo*, meaning to wound) signified a blow or shock to the bodily tissues which caused injury. Later this medical concept was used to encompass the structures of the mind, taking on a special significance in psychology and sociology (Selma Leydesdorff et al., "Introduction: Trauma and Life Stories," in *Trauma and Life Stories: International Perspective*, ed. Kim L. Rogers et al. [London: Routledge, 1999], 1-9). Sociologist Kai T. Erikson indicates that trauma should be defined also as a broad social concept. As he puts it, trauma must be "understood as resulting from a *constellation of life experiences* as well as from a discrete happening, from a *persisting condition* as well as from an acute event." Kai T. Erikson, *A New Species of Trouble: Explorations in Disaster, Trauma, and Community* (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1994), 228. Stevan Weine, an American psychiatrist and scholar in the field of mental health and human rights, encapsulates the multidimensionality of trauma by proposing the concept of "cultural trauma." According to him, it refers to "changes in shared meanings and behaviors that come about as a consequence of traumatic events that impact social groups." Weine, 128.

Also, trauma involves a narrative dimension. As Cathy Caruth, a literary scholar puts it, "Trauma seems to be much more than a pathology or a simple illness of a wounded psyche: it is always the story of wound that cries out, that addresses us in an attempt to tell us of a reality or truth that is not otherwise available." Cathy Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University, 1996), 4.

2 According to Yael Danieli, "an individual's identity involves a complex interplay of multiple spheres or systems. Among these are the biological and intrapsychic; the interpersonal—familial, social, and communal; the ethnic, cultural, ethical, religious, spiritual, and natural; the educational/professional/occupational; the material/economic, legal, environmental, political, national, and international. . . . These systems dynamically coexist along the time dimension to create a continuous conception of life from past through present to the future." Yael Danieli,
examined primarily against the historical background of the Stalinist cultural revolution (late 1920s—early 1930s) and its aftermath as the main etiological factor which predetermined the nature, meaning, and legacies of the phenomenon known as Homo Sovieticus. Robert Service, a contemporary political scientist, asserts that "the sociology of new Russia has to be searched for in the old USSR" for "Russian citizens are living out what previously they lived within."\(^3\) However, the following exploration into some vital parameters of Homo Sovieticus is not intended to discuss them exhaustively; rather, the idea is to examine the Soviet imprint on the Russian national character in broad cultural terms.\(^4\)

Furthermore, this chapter bridges the missiological part of the research as a whole, dealing not only with the macrocosmic aftereffects of Stalinism socially and psycho-culturally, but also theologically, to place the problem of the Stalinist legacy in the framework of missional theology. August and especially December 1991 marked the point of socioeconomic and political departure from the Soviet past. Nevertheless, due to the three-generations-long dominance of Soviet totalitarianism over the way of life of Russian citizenry, the repercussions of Stalinism remain evident.

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4As has been pointed out, "Identity is not a 'thing' to be objectively described. It is a field of cultural discourse. It is each person's perception of themselves: as an individual, in relation to a group or groups, and by contrast with other individuals and groups." Simon Franklin and Emma Widdis, eds., *National Identity in Russian Culture: An Introduction* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004), xii.
Cultural Revolution in Stalin Russia

One is very unlikely to find another country in the modern world that underwent such large-scale geopolitical, socioeconomic, and cultural changes as did Russia in the last century. The making of Russian society into a Soviet society was one of the largest experiments ever undertaken in human history. Neither the pre-revolutionary years nor the post-*perestroika* decade have influenced the Russian individual's identity to the extent as the Soviet period (1917-1991). Within that Soviet period, however, the years 1929-1933 played a crucial role, for it was during the First Five-Year Plan and its aftermath that Soviet Russia took major efforts to modernize the backward economy and primordial social order. It was during those years, labeled by modern researchers as the "cultural revolution," that the sum total of Soviet institutions, structures, and rituals made up the habitat of *Homo Sovieticus*. Some historians believe that it was "the most

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5 China, North Korea, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Angola, Mozambique, Afghanistan, etc., are possible examples. As for China, the Cultural Revolution and the follow-up developments in that country involved more people but lasted a shorter timespan than in the former USSR.

6 Afanas'ev, 15-6.


8 *Perestroika* (literally meaning "reconstruction") is the Russian term for the wide-scale political and socioeconomic reforms introduced by Michael Gorbachev in 1987, then the Secretary General of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

9 As Moshe Lewin points out, "the scholar is astounded by the incredible intensity and scope of the transformation of society, not to speak of the bewildering effect those years had on contemporaries. This was a unique process of state-guided social transformation, for the state did much more than just 'guiding': it substituted itself for society, to become the sole initiator of action and controller of all important spheres of life." Moshe Lewin, "Society, State, and Ideology during the First Five-Year Plan," in *Cultural Revolution in Russia, 1928-1931*, ed. Sheila Fitzpatrick (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1984), 41.

traumatic decade in Soviet history.\textsuperscript{11} The question that needs to be explored is: What kind of socio-cultural identity was shaped during that epoch?

**Historical Background**

The first quarter of the twentieth century was marked by an unparalleled cluster of tragic events that did enormous damage to Russians. Russia's involvement in World War I (1914-1918), the October Revolution of 1917, and the Civil War (1918-1921) caused economic paralysis, famine, epidemics, and forced dislocation of great numbers of people and, in turn, resulted in social turmoil that almost caused a national collapse. According to some estimates, between the fall of 1917 and early 1922 the Russian population decreased by 12.7 million.\textsuperscript{12} Millions of \textit{besprizornyje} (orphaned, abandoned children) flooded the country.\textsuperscript{13} This social group fueled crime and its destitute members were struck by a wide array of socio-psychical problems "ranging from abysmal hygiene habits to severe psychopathic disorders."\textsuperscript{14} The trauma generated during the Civil War

\textsuperscript{11}Siegelbaum, "Introduction," 6.


\textsuperscript{13}By 1922 there were about 7.5 million \textit{besprizornikov} (homeless waifs) in Russia. See Wendy Z. Goldman, \textit{Women, the State and Revolution: Soviet Family Policy and Social Life 1917-1936} (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 59.

brutalized the population, shaped the culture of death, and laid the foundations for the future state-sponsored terror under Stalin.

Besides the enormous loss of human capital, there was another side to the post-revolutionary upheavals, namely, the mental health of the population. As described by Prozorov, a Soviet psychiatrist of that time, "no matter what group of the population is studied, at the present time [mid-twenties] everywhere one observes an extreme abundance of nervous and mental illness, deviations, dysfunctions." When the old social world was destroyed, the Soviet government's response to the challenge of social trauma was far from adequate. As an alternative to resolving the complexities of life in a post-revolutionary country, the upcoming cultural revolution proposed to re-make the fabric of society by means of political, ideological, economic, and physical coercion. As a result, for ordinary people the state-sponsored ideological fundamentalism, intolerance, misanthropy, and black-and-white thinking became a means of survival and a mode of existence.

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15 As Stéphane Courtois points out, the Civil War "instilled cruelty as the normal means by which people were to relate to one another." Stéphane Courtois, "Conclusion: Why?", in The Black Book of Communism: Crimes, Terror, Repression, ed. Stéphane Courtois et al., trans. Jonathan Murphy and Mark Kramer (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 744.

16 In my view, the way anthropologist Margaret Paxson comments on the personal narratives of the villagers of Solovyovo—"Death laced the corners of their stories"—may legitimately apply to the larger social-cultural context of Russia. Margaret Paxson, Solovyovo: The Story of Memory in a Russian Village (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2005), 29.


19 deVries, 407.
After several years of fierce inner-party discussions regarding the course of the country's future development, the year 1929 was announced by Stalin to be a "great turning point" and the beginning of the First Five-Year Plan. By this announcement, he sought to change the whole way of life—from a predominantly peasant, deeply patriarchal and backward culture, as judged by West-European standards, to a modern industrial nation. Apart from the fact that this process of societal transformation was impacted by the dictator's psychical distinctives, the whole society was to be "re-classed" according to the Bolshevik version of Marxism. It was nothing less than a war on the social order, a war on the way of life, a war with new gods and metaphysics. The restructuring of the entire state machinery impacted virtually every social class and every group of people. Rapid industrialization and urbanization, coupled with the forced-draft dekulakization and collectivization, produced such a social phenomenon that produced a perpetual state of emergency for the whole nation.

The culture of civil war, "a civil war within the civil war" in the time of the First Five-Year Plan became a reality primarily in the countryside. A new, somewhat whimsical social world was gradually but steadily emerging out of the Marxism-in-power philosophy of life.

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20 Juhani Ihanus observed that "in the middle of his web of death, Stalin was His Excellency the choreographer, the playwright, the dramaturgist, the traumaturgist, the director, the producer, and the mastermind. He predetermined the roles and scenes, turning his courtrooms into theaters of revenge, staging his show trials, and planning proper liquidation procedures. This hero's vengefulness and cruelty, perfectionist ambition and treacherous distrust, were to mask his intellectual, national and physical inferiority complexes." Ihanus, 119.

21 Fitzpatrick, Tear Off the Masks! 71-87.

Cultural Revolution Expressed Numerically

In pre-revolutionary Russia, the whole urban sector comprised no more than about 18 percent of the population. During the First Five-Year Plan alone, cities grew by 44 percent, almost as much as during the whole period of 1897-1926. Within five years, more than 10 million peasants moved into towns and joined the working class. Moshe Lewin provides a telling picture of how the proletariat grew from about 10 million in 1928 to 20.6 million in 1932, and then from 26.7 million in 1937 to 31.2 in 1940. The Moscow and Leningrad regions alone increased by 3.5 million new inhabitants during the First Five-Year Plan. The 23 million peasants who moved permanently to the cities during the 1930s constituted an unprecedented rural-to-urban migration in world history. The cities were ruralized within a few years and turned out to be barrack-room industrial centers. Accordingly, this process significantly worsened the crime situation in the major urban centers. As Gábor Rittersporn points out, "the migrants imported into the urban environment their habits, including easy recourse to violence that had been increasingly plaguing village life in the 1920s."

As far as the issue of gender is concerned, of the entire labor force the number of women employed by the state industrial enterprise rose from 24 percent in 1928 to 39

24 Ibid.
25 Ibid.
percent in 1940. Public childrearing was considered advantageous to that of family upbringing and the number of kindergartens and nursery-kindergartens increased from 2,537 in 1928 to 19,611 in 1932. In addition, by the late 1930s, in an atmosphere of upcoming war, the traditional notions of the feminine and masculine as well as conventional gendered division of roles and responsibilities underwent significant mutations. As Anna Krylova describes, "The image of a young woman as a sniper or a bomber pilot routing the enemy combined the conventionally incompatible: femininity and military prowess; the determination to kill and motherhood; courage and disciplined cold-bloodness."

Socioeconomic changes introduced by the cultural revolution were not accompanied by an increase in the purchasing power of the average worker. On the contrary, purchasing power did not rise above the 1928 level until the mid-1950s. Nearly all citizens were employed by the state; no other form of property or employment was allowed. The residents of the Soviet Union were subordinated to the totalitarian state and were treated accordingly—arbitrarily and ruthlessly, spurring the populace to maximum production with minimum resources.

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29 Ihanus, 65.
32 As Henry Dicks observed, "The people expect, and the élite satisfies, the image of operation of authority as severe, arbitrary, and fickle." See Henry V. Dicks, "Observations on Contemporary Russian Behavior," Human Relations 5, no. 2 (1952): 170.
In place of the declared abundance, the cultural revolution produced a culture of chronic shortages, which became a long-term habitat for *Homo Sovieticus*, a skilled hunter and gatherer of scarce goods and food in urban settings.\(^3^4\) Besides making people avid consumers, the behaviors and social patterns begotten by the chronic shortages "acquired an autonomous existence as a vital ingredient of Soviet culture."\(^3^5\) The reality of chronic shortages continued beyond the post-war decades marked by economic stagnation. As late as the 1970s and 1980s, it was quite normal not only for the citizens of Moscow region but even those living in provincial cities several hundred kilometers away to travel to the capital to buy basic food and goods, especially on the eve of big celebrations and significant family events.

This culture of shortages put extreme pressure on Soviet families. The interviewees of the Harvard Project\(^3^6\) described as the chief sources of frustration in the enjoyment of family life "lack of privacy because of inadequate housing; irritability of family members because of poor material conditions and anxiety over situations outside the family; lack of time to spend together because of excessive fatigue or because of the amount of time spent at work and shopping."\(^3^7\) This problem was found on all socioeconomic levels of the populace. Too often economic shortage disrupted family relationships; conversely, better material conditions provided a stronger basis for genuine


\(^{3^6}\)The Harvard Project is a series of studies based on surveys, interviews, and clinical examinations of ex-Soviet citizens who for various reasons left the country during World War II or after. Conducted largely in the USA, the Project revealed a number of cultural and psychosocial constants peculiar to *Homo Sovieticus*. See Bauer et al., *How the Soviet System Works*.

\(^{3^7}\)Bauer et al., 107.
interpersonal relations within a family. Another major problem, that of dekulakization and the forceful displacement of families, produced many orphans. But most tragically of all, as Siegelbaum observes, Stalinist discourse virtually replaced the small nuclear family with "the big (all-Union) one," which blurred "the distinction between metaphorical and blood relatives."

It is crucial to remember that the state's drive to build socialism was carried out under severe pressure coming from the secret police. The whole nation, including the party's top leaders, had to function in an atmosphere of continuous fear and terror. The Lubianka became the nucleus out of which the Soviet social monster ultimately developed. The maxim "I fear therefore I exist" became a measure of the state's efficiency, a deposit of social order, normality, and immutability.

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38Ibid., 109.
40Among the persons who were in the highest power echelon, but who did not avoid arrest and incarceration during Stalin's purges, were the wife of his chief private secretary, Aleksandr Poscrebyshev; the wife of the chairman of the Central Executive Committee of the USSR, Mikhail Kalinin; the wife of Marshal Budyonny, a hero of the Russian Revolution; the brother of Lazar Kaganovish, one of the key members of the post-purges politburo; the wife of Viacheslav Molotov, the head of the Council of People's Commissars (1930-1941) and foreign minister (1939-1949). Cynthia Hooper, "Terror of Intimacy," in Everyday Life in Early Soviet Russia: Taking the Revolution Inside, 74. Also, see Felix I. Chuev, Cто сорок бесед с Молотовым (The fourteen hundred conversations with Molotov) (Moscow: Olma-Press, 2000), 551.
41As has been demonstrated by the investigation of personality patterns of former Soviet citizens (undertaken in conjunction with the Harvard Project), any private action of an individual, whether deliberate or unintentional, could be considered as a willful undermining of the regime and as such could be punished severely. See Eugenia Hanfmann and Jacob W. Getzels, "Interpersonal Attitudes of Former Soviet Citizens, as Studied by a Semi-Projective Method," Psychological Monographs: General and Applied 69, no. 4 (1955): 34.
42The popular name for the headquarters of the secret police and affiliated prison in Moscow.
44Yuri Levada et al., Советский простой человек: Опыт социального портрета на
Fitzpatrick points out that the Soviet regime was "adept at making its own enemies, whom it then suspected of conspiracy against the state." An "enemy" was considered to be the possessor of the utmost negative characteristics, an incarnation of the infernal, devilish rudiments. Within two decades after the revolution, the system of stigmatizing and scapegoating of whole social classes as "socially dangerous" or "socially harmful" was rationalized and institutionalized. At first, it was carried out by the local soviets; in the early 1930s the practice was to be implemented under the authority of the secret police. This Bolshevik-style witch-hunt marked the ruling elite's social policy of re-classing the entire society, thus segregating and isolating entire groups of people. For example, the 1918 Constitution of the Russian Republic disfranchised entire groups from elections: persons using hired labor with the aim of extracting profit; persons living off unearned income; private traders and middlemen; monks, priests, and pastors of all denominations; former employees and agents of the Tsarist police, secret police, and special corps of gendarmes; and members of the former Imperial family, the House of Romanov.

rubеже 90-х (Soviet plain man: An experience of social imaging in the early 1990s) (Moscow: Mirovoi Okean, 1993), 82.


Stalin's cultural revolution changed the meaning of disenfranchisement. It was not a matter of voting rights but a denial of access to work, housing, education, medical care, a pension, and a ration card. Often the children of the disfranchised were affected too and could not study in the institutions of higher education. Among the people disfranchised during the 1920s and 1930s were even the most marginalized and economically destitute groups: the sick and elderly, petty and part-time traders, women, invalids, people who traded apples, seeds, hay, pudding, flowers, and pigeon feed, while the better-off traders knew how to circumvent the law. Besides the task of purging society of alien elements and creating a new commune, there was also an economic rationale to the disfranchisement policy. As Alexopoulos emphasizes, "by depriving a broad array of rights to millions of people, the state eliminated the need to supply a large segment of the population at a time of acute shortage."

Definitely a high point in social engineering was the notorious order no. 44/21 of 2 February 1930 issued by the secret police to liquidate the kulaks as a class. As of May 1930 alone, the number of people subjected to mass deportation to the North was 510,096, of whom 162,889 were adult men, 147,906 adult women, and 194,230 (close to 40 percent) children. According to some estimates, 281,367 deportees died in different

50 Ibid., 63-4.
51 Ibid., 29.
52 For the text of the order see Kozlov, The History of Stalin's Gulag, 5:97.
53 Lynne Viola, "Tear the Evil from the Root: The Children of the Spetspereselentsy of the North," in Studia Slavica Finlandia 17 (2000): 34. As the scholar observes, "The legacy of the exile experience for the child survivors of the mass peasant deportations of the early 1930s was guilt, discrimination, fear, and decades of silence. The legacy of those who did not survive largely crumbled into statistics, classified for decades and hidden from the world." Ibid., 62.
places of their exile between 1932 and 1934. Absurdity and brutality of collectivization were met with staunch resistance by the peasants, and the number of peasants involved in mass protests against collectivization grew from 109,486 participants in January 1930 to 214,196 in February, to 1,434,588 in March. Another form of resistance was *razbazarivanie* (self-dispossession), a reckless, irrational, spontaneous slaughter of the livestock that emptied villages of entire categories of farm animals. Moreover, a government-imposed famine followed on the heels of peasant confrontations with the authorities and struck the whole regions, particularly the Volga region, Ukraine, and Kazakhstan. A modern historian observes that "Stalin killed more Ukrainians than Hitler murdered Jews." Eventually, however, peasants did enter the collective farm, but "at the cost of its ruin."

The number of collective and individual letters of complaint (both anonymous and signed) mailed to the editorial boards of central and local newspapers as well as to party and state leaders and institutions increased dramatically. During the first months of collectivization Stalin received about 50,000 peasant letters of complaint. In the same period, Mikhail Kalinin, president of the Central Executive Committee of the Soviets, received about 85,000 letters and petitions. It has been estimated that Kalinin, this "all-union peasant elder," received an average of 77,000 a year between 1923 and 1935. In

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55 Ibid., 140.
56 Ibid., 70-1.
57 Applebaum, xix. In November 28, 2006, the Ukrainian parliament passed a law which declared the famine of 1932-33 (*golodomor*) a genocide against the Ukrainian people. The next day the law was signed by Viktor Yushchenko, the Ukrainian president.
58 Viola, *Peasant Rebels under Stalin*, 78.
59 Ibid., 92.
July 1935 alone, Krest’ianskaia Gazeta (The Peasants' Newspaper) alone received about 26,000 letters. Due to the fact that writing such letters often would be considered as counter-revolutionary activity, it was another way to resist the brutalities of collectivization.

As the Bolshevik government was waging war against its citizens, the practice of disfranchisement continued. According to Fitzpatrick, there were four million people plus their families, two million kulak deportees at the beginning of the 1930s, close to 300,000 "socially harmful elements" in the Gulag, almost a million "special settlers," and perhaps several hundred thousand more administrative exiles at the end of the 1930s. In such an atmosphere of perpetual fear many people concealed their social origin and thus misrepresented their identity. For many Soviet families the politics of deliberate forgetfulness was an everyday experience.

The massive migration of the rural population into the cities produced a tremendous housing crisis which became "a permanent feature of Soviet life, with families jammed for decades in tiny single rooms in communal apartments with shared kitchens and (if such existed) bathrooms." In Moscow the average living space was five-and-a-half square meters per capita in 1930 and just over four square meters in 1940.

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60 Siegelbaum, "Introduction," 7-8.
61 Ibid.
62 Fitzpatrick, Everyday Stalinism, 137.
63 Ibid.
65 Fitzpatrick, Everyday Stalinism, 6.
In other cities the living space was even less. A separate apartment or flat was a rare luxury enjoyed almost exclusively by the emerging class of the Party elite. Most of the population, living in rapidly growing cities, had to be content with barracks, dormitories, and sometimes even less than that. For example, in Magnitogorsk in 1938, 47 percent of all housing consisted of barracks. An additional 18 percent of the dwellings were mud huts, built over dugouts, made of sod, thatch, and scraps of metal by the inhabitants themselves. This scarce housing condition became fertile soil for aggressiveness and rudeness, common features of the mass psychology of Homo Sovieticus.

Lewin observes,

The inordinate and unanticipated growth transformed a strained housing situation into an appalling one, creating the specifically Soviet (Stalinist) reality of chronically overcrowded lodgings, with consequent attrition of human relations, strained family life, destruction of privacy and personal life, and various forms of psychological strain. All this provided a propitious hunting ground for the ruthless, the primitive, the blackmailer, the hooligan, and the informer. The courts dealt with an incredible mass of cases testifying to the human destruction caused by this congestion of dwellings. The falling standards of living, the lines outside stores, and the proliferation of speculators suggest the depth of tensions and hardships. Soon the cumulative results of such conditions were to cause widespread manifestations of neurosis and anomie, culminating in an alarming fall in the birthrate. By 1936, in fact, the big cities experienced a net loss of population, with more children dying than being born, which explains the alarm in government circles and the famous laws against abortion proclaimed in that year.

The state propaganda claimed that housing shortages during that period were a transitional phenomenon. But they were not. Beside the fact that between 1956 and 1965

66Ibid., 46.
67Ibid., 49.
about 108 million people nationwide moved into their apartments,\textsuperscript{70} even in the late 1980s, to make the nation enthusiastic about the party reforms, Gorbachev promised to provide individual housing for each Soviet family by the year 2000—a dream that never came true.

Soviet Ideology and Its Impact on the Populace

If ideology is a "sign" and the word is "the ideological phenomenon par excellence,"\textsuperscript{71} then, the cultural revolution in Soviet Russia was the revolution of signs and words, a battle over destroying previous meanings and creating new ones. The long-running millenarian project sought to create new myths in the making of Homo Sovieticus, the New Soviet Person. In the process the new political community was "purged of alien elements and staffed with loyal laborers who would willingly implement party directives."\textsuperscript{72} The ideological exploitation of language,\textsuperscript{73} literature, arts,\textsuperscript{74} sciences, and public festivals aimed at transforming the consciousness of the masses and the shaping of the new Soviet generation in such a way that it would be distinctly different


\textsuperscript{72}Alexopoulos, 18.

\textsuperscript{73}As Bescançon points out, the language of ideology was "a fusion of liturgical and scientific language. . . . Incapable of modifying the real according to its ends, unable to create another reality which conforms to what it has promised, its function is to evoke, in the magical meaning of the word, that is, to suggest the non-existent reality." Allan Bescançon, \textit{The Rise of the Gulag: Intellectual Origins of Leninism}, trans. Sarah Matthews (New York: Continuum, 1981), 284.

\textsuperscript{74}Visual methods for ideological indoctrination played a vital role in manufacturing the new mental universe. As Victoria Bonnell argues, "the purpose of political art, beginning with the 1930s, was to provide a visual script, an incantation designed to conjure up new modes of thinking and conduct, and to persuade people that the present and the future were
from that of the pre-revolutionary era. The cost of this social engineering was not relevant because humanity was not valued in itself but was as a brick in the grand construction site of socialism, a "raw material from which an aesthetically perfect man had to be sculpted."  

During the 1930s, people born between 1907 and 1917 were the main target group of the regime's all-out indoctrination by the Marxist-Leninist philosophy. The communist ideologues tried to engrain deeply anti-religious sentiment, utopian dreams of social transformation, collectivity at the expense of individuality, enemy complex, and anti-Western attitudes, the latter being an enduring feature of indoctrination in Soviet youth organizations. At the same time, starting from the late 1930s and especially during the years of the Second World War, the Communist Party hierarchy resorted to an ideological deployment of Russian national heroes, myths, and imagery. As


Dialectical and historical materialism was at the core of the Marxist-Leninist worldview. This philosophy considered religion to be an ideology of class enemy and therefore it had to be treated accordingly. Often the struggle against religious beliefs was carried out under the slogan, "The battle against religion is the battle for socialism." Daniel Peris, *Storming the Heavens: The Soviet League of the Militant Godless* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998), 99.

In his analysis of Marxism, Berdyaev highlights that Marx does not assign much value to human personality, discards the human and preaches hardness towards human beings. As a result, Communism turns out to be "the utter limit of social idolatry." Berdyaev, *The End of Our Time*, 39, 257.

As Levada points out, the enemy complex has been thoroughly elaborated and tested during the formation period of *Homo Sovieticus*. Levada et al., *From Opinions to Understanding*, 505.

Brandenberger convincingly argues, this shift to popularize the dominant ideology by pre-Marxist iconography meant "a pragmatic move to augment the more arcane aspects of Marxism-Leninism with populist rhetoric designed to bolster Soviet state legitimacy and promote a society-wide sense of allegiance to the USSR."  

Documents such as the diary of Stepan Podlubnyi prove how thoroughly the self-consciousness of young Soviet individuals was brainwashed by the Stalinist political system. A description of the mechanics used in brainwashing is contained in "A Concrete Guide to the Work of Training." Among the core values of the identity-to-be-produced were a total rejection of the spiritual (religious) dimension of life, radical collectivization of one's individuality, including inner thoughts and familial allegiances, and disciplined service to the state through self-sacrificing labor and by means of suppression of independent attitudes. It is believed that repression against individuals was "the very..."  

David Brandenberger, National Bolshevism: Stalinist Mass Culture and the Formation of Modern Russian National Identity, 1931-1956 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 4. As the scholar observes, the latent shift from the revolutionary ethos of the first two decades of Soviet Russia not only intensified russocentric themes present in the political creed of the multiethnic state back then, but resulted in "full-blown nationalist sympathies present within contemporary Russian society today." Ibid., 247.


Kassof, 186. See also Donald J. Raleigh, Russia's Sputnik Generation: Soviet Baby Boomers Talk about Their Lives (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2006), 321. Edwin Hullinger, the American journalist working in post-revolutionary Russia, observed as early as 1924, "To the outside, the Communist organization presents a unanimity of thought which has..."
essence of the repressive system of the Soviet power declaring unconditional and absolute primacy of the state over an individual." Anybody who fell short of surrendering their privacy and intimacy to the collective ego was regarded as deviant. Private life was viewed as bourgeois and therefore a dangerous and socially useless idea for the ideologues of *Homo Sovieticus*. Neither the *Philosophical Encyclopedia* published in the 1960s nor *The Dictionary of Ethics* that was reprinted six times between 1965 and 1989 had an entry on private life.

Stalin's ideologues sought and fought to provide an impressive picture of the Communist metanarrative, describing in glowing terms the world's steady movement toward the golden age with the USSR in the vanguard of the process. Their credo at that time was simple: There is no god but worldwide Communism, and Marxism-Leninism (Stalinism) is its prophet. Later on, under Nikita Khrushchev (1953-1964) and Leonid Brezhnev (1964-1982), the "Moral Code of the Builder of Communism" served as a supreme moral-ethical guide. In the absence of any intellectual opposition or alternative had few equals in history. From Lenin to the most ignorant Communist workman, one heard the same identical words, the same phrasology, the same brand of reasoning." He further asserts that the level of discipline among Party members was so high that "not even the Jesuit order in its prime imposed a more exacting discipline." Edwin W. Hullinger, *The Reforging of Russia* (New York: E.P. Dutton & Company, 1925), 89 and 87 respectively.

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84Iofe, 133.
worldview, the youth had to uncritically internalize even the most odious beliefs of officialdom.\(^{89}\) A crucial point of policy in the USSR was "to structure the individual's life in such a way that situations offering him a choice occur as seldom as possible."\(^{90}\) Even the educational system, which was supposedly there to encourage free intellectual inquiry, failed to recognize free, independent individuals. Regardless of its apparent achievements, Soviet education was a powerful tool to serve the state's long-term ideological purposes, including the manufacturing of ideologically loyal but intellectually enslaved citizens. As Inna Rogatchi vividly describes, "to submit, subordinate, submit!!!—for the Soviet form of life those are central words, and the ears of Homo Sovieticus \([sic]\) have been doomed to listen to them for his/her whole life."\(^{91}\)

One of the examples of such an approach relates to the issue of labor and its ideological significance. In the 1930s, self-sacrificial labor for the cause, in most cases coercive and underpaid, was not only idolized but considered to be the most important lever in the policy of *perekovka* (re-education, re-making) of men and women. They were expected "to reforge themselves by themselves"\(^{92}\) in the process of socially significant labor. Furthermore, in that grand process of social engineering the unrestricted use of violence and forced labor under the authority of the secret police was "mythologized,

\(^{89}\) Raleigh, 215.


\(^{92}\) Halfin, *Terror in My Soul*, 231.
institutionalized, and legitimized." The government saw social institutions as "a sort of assembly line for retooling a human product and turning out the new Soviet man." In fact, in the late 1930s the ambition of re-making people was replaced by the task of serially reproducing Homo Sovieticus, the "mass construction of the New Man," to use the formula of the infamous Aron Zalkind, an ex-psychoanalyst and prominent Party ideologue. As Todorov concludes, "Far more than any sadistic or primitive instincts, it is depersonalization, of the other and of oneself, that is responsible for totalitarian evil." The utopian anthropology of the Soviet ideologists permeated even psychoneurological science. The connection between the physiology of labor and the psychology of the laborer was well established. The Soviet neuroscience and psychological associations offered their help in the task of constructing the New Man. It was argued that "the mental health of workers and collectivized peasants was assured by their dedication to labor as a matter of honor, glory and heroism." Interestingly


94Katerina Clark, "Little Heroes and Big Deeds: Literature Responds to the First Five-Year Plan," in Cultural Revolution in Russia, 1928-1931, 192. As Katerina Clark indicates, "The central impulse behind the domestication of literature was to preserve its crucial function as generator and repository of myth." "Utopian Anthropology as a Context for Stalinist Literature," 180.

95Halfin, Terror in My Soul, 244.

96Aron Zalkind, cited in Etkind, 105.

97Todorov, 159.

98Halfin, Terror in My Soul, 231. As the authors of the infamous Belomor boasted, "Work in the U.S.S.R. has in reality become a matter of honour, a matter of glory, a matter of valour and of heroism. Over [the] entire country there is this new attitude towards work. Labour is no longer a hateful means of existence, but the rational expression of a happy life." See Gorky et al., 20-1.

99Halfin, Terror in My Soul, 235.

100These words belong to M. B. Krol, one of the top Party leaders on the "psychoneurological front," quoted in David Joravsky, "The Construction of the Stalinist

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enough, these words hung over the gates of each forced-labor camp thus sneering at the
prisoner's predicaments. But the prisoners treated those words with due contempt:
"Physical labor is neither the pride of nor the glory of man, but a curse." The
perekovka policy demonstrated its utter destructiveness. Those having experienced the
Gulag were taught the opposite—how to hate labor, disregard morality, and to be
indifferent to others' sufferings.

On a deeper socio-cultural level there was significant reason why the Bolshevik
project did not completely fail. Rather intuitively, not out of cold pragmatism, the
government's utopian slogans and coercive practices appealed to such deep-rooted
characteristics of the conventional (Orthodox) Russian culture as its eschatological and
apocalyptic otherworldliness. It was experienced at the everyday level through hostility
or indifference to the conditions of domestic life. Some researchers go even further,
attributing the society's aspiration toward passive conservatism, collectivism, and
imperialism versus active reformism and individualism to the apophatic principle of
Orthodox theology itself. The results of social engineering were devastating:

Psiche," in Cultural Revolution in Russia, 1928-1931, ed. Sheila Fitzpatrick (Bloomington, IN:

101 NB, 273.

(Moscow: Moscow University Press, 1996), 84.

Culture, 149-50.

104 Krista Berglund, "Apocalyptic and Nihilistic Russia? The Values of Imperial Russia
and the Russian Revolution in Nikolai Berdyaev's Interpretation of Dostoevsky's The Possessed," in
Imperial and National Identities, 222-3. However, as Brovkin highlights while speaking of the
working-class youth, the official praise of asceticism and denial of the private sphere in the-way-it-ought-to-be discourse did not accurately reflect reality "characterized by alcoholism, sexual
promiscuity, and defiance among working-class youth." Vladimir Brovkin, Russia after Lenin:
Psychiatrists used various terms to describe what they saw in their clinics and heard from their colleagues. Some spoke of mass neurasthenia, others of mass schizoidization, or the widespread appearance of autistic symptoms, or simply of "Soviet iznosnennost" (exhaustion, or premature aging). . . Whatever terms were used, there was general agreement on a great increase in the number of psychologically bruised and worn-out people, tending to shrink into themselves, to become apathetic, or to lose the capacity for work at an early age [to use the term coined by Dr. P. B. Gannushkin, "early acquired invalidism"].

Probably the most demoralizing consequence of the Bolsheviks' drive to restructure society was their almost utter disregard for human life, individuality and personal well-being. At least in part, this can be explained by "philosophical" respect for non-rationality and sacrifice for a higher ideal—a national feature long entrenched in Russian culture. Neither the inner psychic life of the individual nor one's feelings and emotions, let alone deep spiritual longings, were respected or acknowledged to have a legitimate dimension in the lives of Soviet women and men. The loss of life had little meaning if it could advance the communist cause. The expendability of individual human lives became the dominant reality of communist Russia. But the government's attempt to create the New Person brought the opposite effect: malignity and anomie that destroyed human psyches, mores, social relations, and identities.

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105 Joravsky, 113.
108 Bauer et al., 27.
109 As far as illegal economic activities are concerned, pilfering at work, black market, bribery, and other socioeconomic diseases became "a fixture of everyday life" closely intertwined with all spheres of Soviet society. See Vladimir Shlapentokh, Public and Private Life of the
caused sustained trauma, a "subtle daily traumatization," and generated such enduring traits as "discontinuity within the self" and "intergenerational void."

The Soviet social system damaged and corrupted both ordinary people and the ruling elite. Due to the circumstances experienced daily, abnormal life became a daily mode of existence for the whole Soviet populace. Conversely, "normal life" was not a statistical concept, but a mere ideal. Fatalism, indifference, and passivity instilled in people a sense that the individual was not and could not be in control of his/her own life. The basic concepts of good and evil were warped; the moral scales were fatally shifted.


110The term "subtle daily traumatization" was coined by a German psychotherapist Heike Bernhardt in his attempt to conceptualize the impact of the Communist system on East German childrearing practices after WWII. See Heike Bernhardt, "East Germany: Absorbing the Sins of the Fathers," in _Beyond Invisible Walls: The Psychological Legacy of Soviet Trauma, East European Therapists and Their Patients_, ed. Jacob D. Lindy and Robert J. Lifton (Lillington, NC: Edwards Brothers, 2001), 63.


112As revealed by the Harvard Project, the Soviet elite had special qualities distinguishing it from other forms of dictatorship. The most important of them are: suspicion of "foreigners" and their motives—to the point of pathology; loyalty to the chiefs and uncritical acceptance of the communist ideology; "conspiratorial mentality" manifested in the deviousness of behavior, the disposition to "read between the lines" and to interpret the acts of others at several different levels; caution as one of the basic features characterizing the mental climate among the ruling elite; "puritanical discipline" (or _manic denial_ as labeled by Henry Dicks) which makes family, recreation, and outside interests to be utterly subordinate to the demands of one's "mission"; emphasis upon analysis of opponent's psychology: the "new Soviet man" considers all life a world of conflict in which each actor or group of actors must seek to impose their will upon the situation. See Dicks, 170-1.

113Fitzpatrick, _Everyday Stalinism_, 219.

114Ibid.
The question needs to be asked: What kind of personal identity was shaped in the process of that gigantic uprooting of traditional culture and the imposition of a new social order in its place?

_Homo Sovieticus Described_

In 1936 the Supreme Council passed a new Constitution with Stalin declaring that socialism in Soviet Russia was a historical fact. However, regardless of the officially supported and widely circulated notion that the Soviet society was now classless and therefore without class antagonisms, people were atomized and felt divided from the ruling elite on political, economic, and moral grounds. As Fitzpatrick highlights, men's and women's attitudes toward the powerful elite were sharply divided by the dichotomy of "us" and "them" where "we" were insignificant and powerless people at the bottom of the social ladder and "they" were "the people who run things." The governmental policy to produce a coherent, self-conscious identity of the individual failed. Instead, as Anna Krylova points out, Soviet modernity produced an unsettled individual, men and women with destabilized relationships even to their immediate surroundings. Berdyaev makes a profound statement concerning the outcome of social engineering undertaken by the Bolsheviks: "If a man is . . . but an instrument in the economic process, then one must speak not so much of the appearance of the new man as of disappearance of man, that is

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116 Fitzpatrick, _Everyday Stalinism_, 222.

117 Anna Krylova, "Soviet Modernity in Life and Fiction: The Generation of the 'New Soviet Person' in the 1930s" (Ph.D. diss., Johns Hopkins University, 2000), xiv. As Natalia Altukhova, when interviewed in 2002 and asked about her ex-Soviet identity, stated: "Perhaps even now I don't have a clear sense of self. . . . I'm not sure . . . what shaped me when I don't understand who I am." Raleigh, 79.
to say, of the intensifying of the process of dehumanization. Man is deprived of the measurement of depth; he is turned into a flat two-dimensional being."\textsuperscript{118}

Although such qualities as loyalty to the Party and its ideology, iron discipline and self-sacrificing bravery, incessant vigilance and hatred toward the enemy from within and without impregnated public political discourse,\textsuperscript{119} not every citizen embraced them wholeheartedly. Rather, the identity of Homo Sovieticus was imposed on them.\textsuperscript{120} In fact, this kind of personality was not so much a totally "new" anthropological type as "a person totally accommodated to the Soviet reality, prepared to accept it as a non-alternative given."\textsuperscript{121} In other words, Homo Sovieticus became an undemanding, lowbrow consumer with simplified needs, a human being unaccustomed to thinking critically and responsibly.\textsuperscript{122} Such a person, nevertheless, had a sense of his exclusiveness and imperial mentality as compared to personality types of other social systems.\textsuperscript{123} He could not and did not perceive himself outside of an all-embracing ideological superstructure and was known for his readiness to accept the existing social order and political regime. Not every adult Russian exhibited all, or even necessarily any, of these traits. However, they could

\textsuperscript{118}Berdyayev, The Origin of Russian Communism, 182.

\textsuperscript{119}Fisher, 278.

\textsuperscript{120}Hoffmann, 219.

\textsuperscript{121}Levada et al., From Opinions to Understanding, 468.

\textsuperscript{122}Ibid., 470.

\textsuperscript{123}Bauer explains the character changes that took place in the Soviet citizenry after the Revolution, saying, "In contrast to persons who emigrated before or immediately after the revolution, the recent Soviet émigrés are more overtly disciplined and less spontaneous. They are more practical and less contemplative; more concerned with results and less with the means whereby they are gained. They are more manipulative and better extemporizers. Rationality is more prominent, and emotion less so. They are more militantly self-confident." Raymond A. Bauer, The New Man in Soviet Psychology (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968), 181-82.
be found frequently enough to make up the more or less typical patterns in the rank-and-file of the population.¹²⁴

The culture of Sovietism was notable for the split it produced within individuals. The incongruence between one's thoughts and words as well as between words and deeds demonstrated the effects of the social transformations carried out in the atmosphere of state-generated hypocrisies and lies. After an examination of the three levels of Soviet discourse (official propaganda representations, confidential communications, and private critical conversations around the "kitchen table"), Brovkin points out some typical personality disorders peculiar to Homo Sovieticus. According to him, "thinking one thing but saying something else" and "parading at every opportunity the official Communist representations as if they were one's own" were the key features of the new, sovietized generation.¹²⁵ In its turn, this phenomenon had an effect on the social mores of the Soviet citizenry, including their inclination toward a nonlegal type of mentality and behavior. Some scholars even suggest that Homo Sovieticus shared certain features peculiar to the criminal world.¹²⁶

Due to the massive social catastrophes and enormous suffering Soviet Russians experienced over the decades of Communism, their morality dropped and acquired the distinctive features of asthenic syndrome, that is, an inability and unwillingness to

¹²⁴Bauer et al., 135.
¹²⁵Brovkin, 223.
¹²⁶For instance, a rank-and-file Soviet citizen was assigned to ranked categories of power/status and "his initial relation with goods (by theft in the case of the bandits, by production in the case of ordinary people) was that of a temporary holder." Caroline Humphrey, The Unmaking of Soviet Life: Everyday Economies after Socialism (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002), 109.
apprehend others' sufferings, a desire to move away from them.\textsuperscript{127} Not surprisingly therefore, \textit{Homo Sovieticus} is notable for its "polycentric relativism,"\textsuperscript{128} a Soviet version of slyness since within such a state-created social context the syndrome of spying on one's family member, neighbor, or colleague was considered to be a morally legitimate practice of interpersonal relationships. Moreover, Lindy believes that "the fusing in the same person of the roles of being the one terrorized and of the informer, of being victimized and of persecuting others" is central to the psychopathological legacy of Communism.\textsuperscript{129} Thus, these characteristics if taken together with the notions of contradictoriness and ambivalence of the traditional Russians\textsuperscript{130} create an exceedingly eclectic and deeply traumatized psycho-social type of \textit{Gestalt}, the Russian personality-in-Soviet culture.

To summarize, \textit{Homo Sovieticus} was a complex and contradictory socio-cultural phenomenon throughout its existence.\textsuperscript{131} It evolved over the course of time and was itself "multidimensional."\textsuperscript{132} Out of the extreme historical and psycho-cultural complexities of the Soviet era appear certain defining characteristics peculiar to \textit{Homo Sovieticus}.

\textsuperscript{127}Levada et al., \textit{From Opinions to Understanding}, 527.
\textsuperscript{128}Ibid., 510.
\textsuperscript{129}Lindy, "Legacy of Trauma and Loss," in \textit{Beyond Invisible Walls}, 25. As Lindy further asserts, "Today the children and grandchildren of that father, his wife, daughter, and friend, even the secret police officer, make up the general population. They, too, are caught up in the legacy of trauma. Their modes of adaptation have been molded by two or three generations of survival in the ecology of terror." Ibid.
\textsuperscript{130}Dicks, 168-9.
\textsuperscript{131}Levada et al., \textit{From Opinions to Understanding}, 421.
Philosophically, the worldview of Homo Sovieticus can be characterized by utopianism and pseudo-religious dreams of social transformation. It was certainly a totalitarian and dictatorial worldview that held an iron grip on the entire population. The Marxian theory, when applied to the deeply patriarchal culture of Russia that was striving for social liberation culture of Russia, brought into being an ideology known for its secular millenarianism and aggressiveness. It was a human-implemented, inner-world eschatology that took extreme forms. The Bolsheviks' vision for an all-out cultural transformation was attractive by its seemingly humane promises but repulsive and destructive by its utter disregard for the fundamental values of human life, freedom, and individuality. Having no alternative, people absorbed an outlook that was counterproductive to their own well-being and sane development. In a masterly fashion the old traditions of Ivan the Terrible were "scientifically" fused with the basic premises of Marxism to produce a force that held its sway over the minds and souls of several generations of Russians. As a result of political and socioeconomic reforms in the 1990s, most Russians lost the communist worldview but were not able to gain a new one.

Socially, the Soviet person had a personality type leaning toward a community-oriented hierarchy of values. The notion of the collective was considered to be more significant than the individual self. The individual was defined primarily in its relation to the collective. The personal identity was either absorbed or replaced by the collective ego. This resulted in the destruction of a sense of personal responsibility, the value of independence, initiative, and enterprise. As Satter states, "The degraded condition of the individual is the root cause of Russia's systemic malaise."133

Shaped by a culture of totalism, *Homo Sovieticus* had to internalize time-serving attitudes to his immediate environment, including chiseling and window-dressing. If seen in the broader context, the low rating of the role of the human factor in societal development significantly worsened the crisis of the Soviet system and was one of the main causes of its ultimate collapse in 1991. The survival mechanisms often gave rise to conflicting ways of behaving: On the one hand, there was a fleeing from the over-supervision of the state into the shell of reserve; on the other, there was vigilance displayed for the sake of the cause of Communism. If one of the ways to describe traumatized people is to view them alternating between isolation and anxious clinging to others, then *Homo Sovieticus* is certainly a traumatized type of personality.

*Psychologically and behaviorally,* the Soviet experiment produced an unsettled personality type distinguished by a number of splits: being versus pretending, thinking versus speaking, speaking versus doing, victim and victimizer, being an informer and falling prey to somebody else's persecutions, etc. Thinking one thing but saying something else became characteristic of the sovietized generation. Yuri Levada calls this binary structure of consciousness a "phenomenon of doublethink"—a stable system of double standards which separates the criterion of "it-is-necessary" from the criterion "it-is-true." This phenomenon had a corrupting effect on the morals of the Soviet citizenry, including their inclination toward a non-legal type of mentality and

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136 Brovkin, 223.

137 Levada et al., *From Opinions to Understanding*, 409.
behavior.\textsuperscript{139} Because of the mass character of such phenomena, they were not always considered to be pathological. Furthermore, the enemy complex and fear engrained in the very soul of \textit{Homo Sovieticus} turned out to be a psychopathological constant that is still skillfully played by current ideologues.

\textit{Ethically,} the New Soviet Person is known for his "polycentric relativism"\textsuperscript{140} reinforced by apathy and indifference, inability and unwillingness to apprehend the sufferings of neighbors, and a wish to move away from them.\textsuperscript{141} This phenomenon marked the Russian culture not only during the communist era but in the period of economic reforms in the 1990s as well.\textsuperscript{142} Peoples' basic concepts of good and evil were severely warped and the moral scales shifted, resulting in crime, violence, corruption, and other social vices. More often than not \textit{Homo Sovieticus} was guided by considerations of short-term advantage rather than by a strong sense of law. This lack of respect for law is rooted in a culture that not only generated violence but itself was subject to victimization. Here lies the cause of tolerance for non-normative behavior and the present ineffectiveness of the state in its struggle against organized crime.

In the conclusion of her book about the social aspect of Stalinism, Fitzpatrick draws a telling picture of the species shaped by the cultural revolution. The wide range of practices of everyday life under Stalin included

"getting" goods legally and illegally, using patrons and connections, counting living space in square meters, quarreling in communal apartments, "free"

\textsuperscript{138}Levada et al., \textit{Soviet Plain Man}, 31.
\textsuperscript{139}Humphrey, 109.
\textsuperscript{140}Levada et al., \textit{From Opinions to Understanding}, 510.
\textsuperscript{141}Ibid., 527.
\textsuperscript{142}Satter, 204.
marriage, petitioning, denouncing, informing, complaining about officials, 
complaining about privilege, enjoying privilege, studying, volunteering, moving 
up, tumbling down, confusing the future and the present, mutual protection, 
self-criticism, scapegoating, purging, bullying subordinates, deferring to 
officials, lying about social origin, unmasking enemies, hunting spies, and 
many others. It was a life in which outward conformity to ideology and 
ritual mattered, but personal ties mattered even more. It was a life of random 
Disasters and manifold daily irritations and inconveniences, from the hours 
wasted in queues and lack of privacy in communal apartments to the endless 
bureaucratic rudeness and red tape and the abolition, in the cause of productivity 
and atheism, of a common day of rest. There were fearful things that affected 
Soviet life and visions that uplifted it, but mostly it was a hard grind, full of 
shortages and discomfort. Homo Sovieticus [sic] was a string-puller, an operator, a 
time-server, a freeloader, a mouther of slogans, and much more. But above all, he 
was a survivor.\footnote{Fitzpatrick, \textit{Everyday Stalinism}, 227.}

Fitzpatrick's closing remark is of particular importance because it implies an 
existence of certain transformations within one's psychic core—the very soul of self. To 
take a step further, it must be admitted that these transformations are of central 
significance in the process of casting light on the nature, meaning, and structure of 
psychological trauma caused by social pressures. Understanding the traumatic legacies of 
communism is a vital prerequisite for mapping a path for healing. And although it is 
generally true that everyday life under Stalinism was a much more complex phenomenon 
than to be reduced to the scheme of binary categories such as oppression and resistance, 
repression and freedom, the state and the people, official economy and black market, 
official culture and dissident counterculture, public self and private self, truth and lie, 
morality and dissimulation,\footnote{Alexei Yurchak, \textit{Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More: The Last Soviet 
Generation} (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), 5.} they can hardly be discarded as groundless. Moreover, 
many of the characteristics determining the nature of \textit{Homo Sovieticus} have survived the
dissolution of the Soviet project in 1991 and continue to play formative roles in present day Russian culture.

**Conceptualizing the Soviet Trauma**

An exploration of the social and psychological aspects of Soviet history is indispensable to any attempt to understand the traumatic legacies of Stalinism. However, such concepts as a *history as trauma*\(^{145}\) and Bowen's notion of "striking analogies"\(^{146}\) between regression in a family and regression in society offer additional tools to adequately explain the present-day culture of Russia. These concepts also contribute to creating a healing perspective for the post-Soviet society. Furthermore, in addition to the idea of Stalinism as psycho-cultural trauma, it is necessary, if one is to gain a fuller comprehension of the nature and meaning of that trauma, to canvass the subject of Stalinism and spiritual warfare.

**Soviet History as Trauma**

The massive calamities during the Soviet period have all contributed in one way or another to warping the society. Millions of Soviet citizens survived that apocalyptic century "without giving way to despair or debilitating neurosis."\(^{147}\) The multidimensional and multigenerational trauma experienced by the entire Soviet population under duress of communism has been too frequent, too severe, too long-standing, and too

\(^{145}\)Robert J. Lifton, "History as Trauma," in *Beyond Invisible Walls*, 213-223.


\(^{147}\)Merridale, "The Collective Mind: Trauma and Shell-shock in Twentieth-Century Russia," 47.
institutionalized. The basic structures of the cultural system as a whole were profoundly and repeatedly altered. As a result, Russian society will never be the same simply because a traumatized culture "can no longer go back to what it once was." How can this enormously complex reality of cultural trauma be conceptualized both in terms of psychohistory and theology?

A Brief Overview of the Concept of Psychohistory

Robert J. Lifton, a leader in the study of trauma and history in the twentieth century, together with his colleagues from the field of clinical and social psychiatry, has contributed to the understanding of psychosocial aftereffects of traumatic events that punctuated the twentieth century, including the history of Soviet Russia. Having compared survival of the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki to survival of other instances of massive death (Holocaust, Vietnam War, natural disasters, etc.), Lifton raised several questions. One of the most significant is about the general importance of the survivor ethos, or the degree to which an individual becomes "historically prone to the survivor's retained death imprint, to his death guilt and his psychic numbing (or desensitization to death-dominated images), and to his struggle for significance." As a result of the growing understanding of traumatic legacies caused by stress-related events, the American Psychiatric Association included the term PTSD

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148 Lindy and Lifton, 229.
149 deVries, 401.
150 Weine, 129-30.
(Posttraumatic Stress Disorder) in the third edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (1980).\textsuperscript{152} Thus a separate diagnostic category opened the door for research scientists to establish a conceptual framework for the issue of psychological trauma.\textsuperscript{153} Since that time and up to the present there have appeared more than 30,290 references in the on-line PILOTS database.\textsuperscript{154} As far as the multigenerational effects of trauma across the various victim/survivor populations around the world are concerned, the first comprehensive data examining trauma from a multidimensional and multigenerational perspective appeared in the 1998 International Handbook of Multigenerational Legacies of Trauma.\textsuperscript{155} Two years later, another important book, International Handbook of Human Response to Trauma, provided an evolving paradigm to reveal and treat the impact of trauma.\textsuperscript{156}

At the same time, scholars in various fields admitted that they did not yet fully know how to evaluate, measure, conceptualize, or even talk about wide-scale socio-historical trauma. As deVries states, neither culture, nor psychology or biology explain "the total picture over the period of time relevant for analysis—before, during, and after

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{152}John P. Wilson et al., "Treatment Goals for PTSD," in Treating Psychological Trauma \textit{& PTSD}, ed. John P. Wilson, Matthew J. Friedman, and Jacob D. Lindy (New York: Guilford Press, 2001), 3.
\item \textsuperscript{153}Lars Weisaeth, "The European History of Psychotraumatology," \textit{Journal of Traumatic Stress} 15, no. 6 (December 2002): 450.
\item \textsuperscript{154}The On-line PILOTS Database,” National Center for PTSD, 2007, http://www.ncptsd.va.gov/publications/pilots/index.html. This electronic index provides access to the worldwide literature on post-traumatic stress disorder and other mental-health consequences of exposure to traumatic events.
\item \textsuperscript{156}Arieh Y. Shalev, Rachel Yehuda and Alexander C. McFarlane, eds., \textit{International Handbook of Human Response to Trauma} (New York: Kluwer Academic, 2000).
\end{itemize}
the trauma." On the basis of his evaluation of a number of case studies, Lifton concludes that virtually every stress-related event in communist history, such as state-sponsored repressions, genocide, political tyranny, etc., has had multidimensional and multigenerational effects on the individuals. As he puts it,

What we are discussing here is on the order of a sustained catastrophe that never goes away, of threats, dangers, and pressures towards betrayal that become perpetual. The pressures are both acute and chronic, both individual and societal. For the individual person caught up in these traumatic historical forces, fear and pained ambivalence to the regime are transmitted from the moment of birth and before and extended throughout the life cycle.\(^1\)

The scholar further emphasizes that the traumatic events in the course of Communist history "caused radical breaks in personal experience and identity," which in their turn "led to troubled, impoverished, and a more dissociated self."\(^2\) In other words, "breaks without transmission" produced "dissembling and dissociation."\(^3\) This is why the traumatic aftereffects of Stalinism cannot and should not be removed from the individual stories. No sound therapeutic approach can be created without a thought-through awareness of both the traumatic events and their psychological consequences. Needless to say, missiology is not an exception to this rule and must take into account the full range of psychosocial aberrations engendered by a totalitarian culture.

**Taxonomy of Soviet Trauma**

There is always a temptation to make sweeping generalizations without providing solid factual basis when talking about Stalinism as trauma-in-history. Jacob Lindy meets

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\(^{157}\) deVries, 409.

\(^{158}\) Lifton, "History as Trauma," 213.

\(^{159}\) Ibid., 217.

\(^{160}\) Ibid., 217-20.
this challenge by listing concrete historical facts which definitely fall into the categories
of both traumatic events and traumatic everydayness. He identifies three waves of
violence and death that boiled throughout the twentieth century in the Soviet era: 1914-
1922 (WWI, October Revolution, Civil War, and Red Terror), 1926-1939 (rise of the
Gulag, collectivization, industrialization, famine, and Great Terror), and 1939-1945
(WWII). Each of these massive traumas swept tens of millions of people into the
vortex of unprecedented psychosocial pressure. What follows is Lindy's attempt to
suggest a taxonomy of Soviet trauma.

According to Lindy, a beginning typology of Soviet trauma and loss must
necessarily include seven large segments of the Russian population (survivor groupings):
The first segment is those who were victims or perpetrators in the culture of terror and
those who were involved in the internal spy network. Some were informed on without
their knowledge. Others experienced secret police interrogation, torture, and harassment,
and being forced to inform on others. Furthermore, there were those who experienced
long-term political imprisonment and suffered in the psychiatric gulag. The second
segment is those who were affected by the separation from relatives who disappeared
and/or were killed as a result of the practices mentioned above. The psychological
consequences of that separation were manifested in the arrested grief in the spouses of the
victims, in the arrested grief and identity-processing in their children and grandchildren.
The third segment consists of those who suffered from the forced displacements of
collectivization and industrialization such as the kulaks, who were forced out of their
agrarian settings while others were forcibly removed from their homes to accomplish the

161 Jacob D. Lindy, "Legacy of Trauma and Loss," in Beyond Invisible Walls, 13-32.
state's ends. The *fourth* segment is those suffering in the post-Soviet era: youth and adults who suffer from an identity crises and pensioners who suffer depression. The *fifth* segment is those who suffered in war: civilians caught in warfare, subjects of ethnic cleansing, refugees, and soldiers with PTSD. The *sixth* segment is those who suffered from natural disasters such as famine survivors, earthquake survivors, and nuclear accident survivors. The *last* segment consists of those people who had perpetrating roles: citizens performing their duty, camp guards, secret police operatives, and psychiatrists who confined dissidents.\footnote{Lindy, "Legacy of Trauma and Loss," 31.}

As of 2005, the generational proportions of Russia were as follows: People born before the October Revolution comprised about 4 percent of Russia's adult population; those born between 1920-1928—about 7 percent; between the end of the 1920s and 1943—21 percent; between 1944 and 1968—39 percent; and those born between 1969 and the beginning of the 1970s—28 percent of the adult population.\footnote{Yuri Levada et al., "Поколения XX века: возможности исследования" (Generations of the 20th century: Possibilities of study), in Поколенческий анализ современной России (A generational analysis of contemporary Russia), ed. Yuri Levada and Teodor Shanin (Moscow: New Literary Review, 2005), 41-4.}

The largest population group shares both the blows of the harshest time (the end of the Great Fatherland War [1941-1945], the significant food shortages of 1946, and the last decade of the brutal Stalin-era) and, on the other hand, the relative social tranquility that accompanied the rule of Khrushchev (1953-1964) and the beginning of Brezhnev's leadership.

A taxonomy of the Soviet trauma suggests there is no way to come to terms with the legacy of communism other than to speak out and tell one's personal story about the
traumatic past. Facing the past is an individually and socially significant task. If the traumatic past is denied, misunderstood, or untold it will "poison the present." The telling of stories of trauma is an imperative not only for an individual but for a family, group, nation, and society. Without this self-reflection and self-awareness, however painful and controversial the experience might be, there is no genuine continuity with and within one's self. As Sandra Bloom puts it, "by ignoring traumatic affect and memory we . . . create a psychic abscess that infects the rest of the person and subsequent generations." Conversely, to confront the past is in itself "an act of hope." 

In and of itself, facing one's past is a challenging mission, even more so for contemporary Russians. Most Russians seem to be either rejecting the idea of psychological damage caused by communism—personality split, unwarranted suspiciousness, mental distress, and trauma—or of having serious doubts. The idea of psychological trauma remains largely a foreign notion to them. Certainly, politics are involved in any discussion of the Soviet past; furthermore, since psychotherapy was

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164 Leydesdorff et al., 11.
165 Ibid., 17.
166 As it has been highlighted in the report "The New Post-Transitional Russian Identity," "The Soviet past will have a significant role in shaping the post-transition identity. It is not a period of time which can be conveniently forgotten, nor should it. . . . The current habit of cherry-picking icons and images from the past and incorporating them into the present is a notion that will not create a well-rounded identity. A full examination of the past—good and bad—is what is called for. People can learn as well from the darker parts of this history as they can from the great achievements." Khrushcheva and Hancox, 13.
167 Sandra L. Bloom, Creating Sanctuary: Toward the Evolution of Sane Societies (New York: Routledge, 1997), 68.
168 "The hope," Lifton continues, "lies in our belief that our joint effort can contribute, however modestly, to the continuous struggle required against systems that institutionalize trauma, betrayal, and self-betrayal. The struggle reflects our commitment to alternatives based on decency, trust, and genuine healing." See Lifton, "History as Trauma," 223.
169 Merridale, Night of Stone, 16.
basically anathema to the Soviet power, the consequences of this taboo are still felt today. An honest historical and psycho-cultural self-reflection can hardly find room in the context of growing Russian nationalism and chauvinism.

**Major Social Dimensions of Trauma**

In his overview of psychotraumatology, Professor Lars Weisaeth of Oslo University makes it clear that a framework for understanding trauma must include such dimensions as "the physical and intrapsychic; the interpersonal-familiar, social, communal; the ethnic, cultural, religious, spiritual; the educational, professional, occupational; and the material, economic, political, national and international." The following section will focus on three major social aspects of trauma: familial, societal, and individual. The first two are considered to function within the inter- and multigenerational context. The third aspect, closely related to the first two, relates to one's individual identity, psychic integrity, and continuity with the self.

**Familial aspect**

Psycho-social trauma transmits itself from generation to generation via the institution of the family. This generational transmission can lead to the most extreme psychological reverberations, including an intergenerational void that deprives the individuals of their social and personal identity. The intergenerational transmission of

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171 Lifton, "History as Trauma," 215.

172 If the past is denied or distorted, there can hardly be any hope for a better future. "To refuse to look without cynicism at the collective past, to fear that anger cannot be controlled, to
trauma not only shapes the internal representation of reality for several generations but becomes "an unconscious organizing principle . . . constituting the matrix within which normal developmental conflict takes place." Multigenerational trauma is a culturally transmitted phenomenon which moves from generation to generation in word, writing, body language, and even in silence. Moreover, the traumatic impacts of past events may be bequeathed to the children born after the trauma.

Time may not necessarily heal the trauma. On the contrary, in some cases time may even magnify human response to further trauma and carry intergenerational implications. As Baker observes, some of the madness that swept through all levels of Soviet society during the Great Terror of the late 1930s "may never completely heal in millions of families." The empirical data show that people who were deprived of familial continuity with their lost grandparents experience a decline in functioning.

deny the possibility that one's own society contains the embryo of its own regeneration—all these gestures of despair, capitulation to the idea that a people marked by violence is destined always to repeat it." See Merridale, Night of Stone, 338.

Danieli, "Conclusions and Future Directions," 670.
Ibid., 9.
Ibid., 10.
Ibid., 422.
Both sociologist Levada\textsuperscript{179} and psychologist Baker\textsuperscript{180} show that during the last century Russia did not experience the smoothly working mechanism of generational change and succession. To the contrary, the family cutoffs\textsuperscript{181} generated generational ruptures that were experienced in Soviet as well as in post-Soviet Russia, creating generational gaps that were "conserved," but also led to an accumulation of mutual misunderstanding and aggressiveness.\textsuperscript{182} Here is a summary of how the societal cutoffs have been conceptualized by Baker. First, as far as post-Soviet Russian society is concerned, it has been characterized by chronic anxiety due to the multiple emotional cutoffs that run across several generations. They impacted both Soviet and post-Soviet families. During the Soviet and post-Soviet periods it has been possible to observe cross-generational distancing behaviors, as the Soviets repudiated the czarist period of Russian history, and the present generation of Russians repudiates the Soviet period. Second, the Soviet system created a concrete manifestation of secondary societal cutoff through imposing an "iron curtain" between its own geographic borders and the rest of the world. This cutoff was reinforced by shutting out the flow of ideas, jamming radio stations, censoring publications, and limiting correspondence, as well as curtailing the movement of peoples through limiting permission to travel across those borders in either direction.

\textsuperscript{179}Levada et al., "Generations of the 20th Century," 57.


Third, societal cutoff during the Soviet period led not only to a denial of the historical past, but also to the reappearance of extreme versions of the milder authoritarianism and disrespect for individuals that were characteristic of the czarist period, including imprisonment of dissidents in Siberia and other places. Finally, the significant long-term cutoff apparent between generations in Russia and the Soviet Union may be associated with a wide variety of health, social, and environmental problems and with societal regression in general.¹⁸³

More often than not, Soviet trauma was experienced in the absence of an adequate psychological process or ritual, individual or collective, past or present, for absorbing these changes.¹⁸⁴ Both the culture and community were unable to overcome the blows to the basic tissues of the social organism, thus creating a profound collective trauma. As Erickson explains, this kind of damage works its way slowly and even insidiously into the awareness of those who suffer from it, so it does not have the quality of suddenness normally associated with 'trauma.' But it is a form of shock all the same, a gradual realization that the community no longer exists as an effective source of support and that an important part of the self has disappeared. . . . 'I' continue to exist, though damaged and maybe even permanently changed. 'You' continue to exist, though distant and hard to relate to. But 'we' no longer exist as a connected pair or as linked cells in a larger communal body.¹⁸⁵

The people traumatized had to suppress or arrest their feelings. The arrested grief in people of one generation affected the identity-processing of the next. The phenomenon of self-isolation and internal immigration was not uncommon. As a result, intrapsychic

¹⁸²Dubin, 250.
¹⁸⁴Lifton, "History as Trauma," 218.
¹⁸⁵Erickson, 233.
repairing and integration were even less possible. Additionally, because the Soviet state would often resort to coercive psychiatric treatment of the political deviants, the general suspicion of any clinical intervention or open discussion seems to have been natural.

Individual aspect

The process of adapting to multiple breaks without transition caused individuals to experience the phenomenon of "dissembling and dissociation" as a protective technique leading them to "wall off certain features of behavior from an authentic self."\(^{186}\) Soviet ideology and praxis created a worldview that was responsible for causing a phenomenon called doublethink. Doublethink meant that one part of the self was divided from another part of the self.\(^{187}\) As a result, the split personality could hardly function consistently with a sense of genuine individuality.

Thus, one of the ways to conceptualize the Soviet period of Russian history is to view it in terms of the prolonged psychosocial traumatization caused by large-scale socioeconomic calamities. Those events disrupted the first part of the last century causing a deterioration of reality and subtle traumatizations of everyday life under Stalinism. Trauma of the past begat the trauma of the present. This reality of socially and politically sustained wounding extends across generations and reverberates in the present-day social milieu of Russian citizens by affecting their identities and worldviews, behavioral patterns, and moral values.

As early as 1974 Bowen stated that

when a family is subjected to chronic, sustained anxiety, the family begins to lose contact with its intellectually determined decisions to allay the anxiety of the

\(^{186}\) Lifton, "History as Trauma," 218-9.

\(^{187}\) Ibid., 219.
moment. The results of the process are symptoms and eventually regression to a lower level of functioning. The societal concept postulates that the same process is evolving in society; that we are in a period of increasing chronic societal anxiety; that society responds to this with emotionally determined decisions to allay the anxiety of the moment; that this results in symptoms of dysfunction; that the efforts to relieve the symptoms result in more emotional band-aid legislation, which increased the problem; and that the cycle keeps repeating, just as the family goes through similar cycles to the states we call emotional illness.\textsuperscript{188}

No special astuteness is needed in order to understand how many Russians grew up in malfunctioning, dysfunctional, or broken families and who now bear the scars of sins they did not commit. Regrettably, Russian society has not dealt enough with the corrupting legacies of the Soviet past and has not completed the process of de-Stalinization. This means two things: A possibility for various forms of social and political re-emergence of the past traumas is still high and the way for healing is seriously snarled.

Stalinism and Spiritual Warfare

In addition to the historical, political, economic, and socio-psychological dimensions of Soviet trauma that were discussed earlier, the issue of Stalinism must also be looked at theologically.\textsuperscript{189} It is assumed that the intricate interaction between the empirically observable realms of human history on the one hand, and the inexplicable world of principalities, powers, and "rulers of the darkness of this age" (Eph 6:12), on the other, is important in conceptualizing Stalinism as trauma that affected the national soul

\textsuperscript{188}Bowen, 386.

\textsuperscript{189}The temptation to interpret history solely in terms of so-called modern (positivistic) worldview must be resisted. As Joseph Ratzinger observes, "Constructing a world by our own lights, without reference to God, building on our won foundation; refusing to acknowledge the reality of anything beyond the political and material, while setting God aside as an illusion—that is the temptation that threatens us in many varied forms." Joseph Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI), Jesus of Nazareth: From the Baptism in the Jordan to the Transfiguration, trans. Adrian J. Walker (New York: Doubleday, 2007), 28.
of Russia. The two-kingdom worldview of Scriptures is a theological fact and as such can provide additional insight concerning the interface existing between the human/Divine, human/demonic, and Divine/demonic realms of reality. It seems vital to look beyond the mere empirically observable realms of human history, socioeconomic conditions, and political structures. As Jacques Ellul, prominent French sociologist and lay theologian, explains in his 1946 article,

> We tie ourselves to exterior forms without searching for their deeper reality. We want to combat social injustice, and that is very good, and we connect it to an economic system, but we do not penetrate the true structures of this system. We do not attempt to penetrate into the lair of the blacksmith who is forging our chains, whether because of a sacred fear of this mystery or because of an incapacity to go far enough. It is easier to accuse two hundred families, the Jews, or the bolshevik with a knife between his teeth—beyond that, we seem to have no way to get a hold on things. Nevertheless, it is only by going beyond that [into more critical analysis] that we will have any chance of encountering the more stable reality on which the shifting problems depend. It is in such a descent into hell that we might be able to grasp the element of continuity according to which the current difficulties are propelled. It is in attaching these roots that we have a chance of reaching the tree itself, and not in the chasing of leaves blown by the hazards of the wind.

This necessity of discovering the deeper reality invites several points of reference and justifies the drawing of some parallels between the remote past as interpreted by Bible writers and contemporary conditions. Application of the basic biblical warfare principles to the Soviet trauma paves the way to building a missiological paradigm intended for contemporary Russia.

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190 For an overview of the biblical teaching on the subject, see Boyd, *God at War*, 184-191. As the author comments on a number of passages, "in New Testament terms the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan are correlative concepts. The former can be understood to be expanding only as the latter is diminishing. This is precisely why healings and exorcisms played such a central role in Jesus' ministry." Ibid., 184.

It is true that the problem of evil in general and political oppression committed under the Soviet regime in particular should not be attributed to metaphysics alone. On the other hand, why must metaphysics be discarded if, as Jean-Paul Sartre concludes, Marxism is a "metaphysical doctrine and . . . materialists are metaphysicians"? Furthermore, as Berdyaev points out, the militant anti-spiritual materialism of Marxism-Leninism is not a phenomenon of matter but of spirit. The venture into "the abyss of the unconscious" has not yet produced a convincing explanation of the phenomenon of state-sponsored social exterminations and other crimes so that further inquiries would be redundant. In the discussion centered on the complex issue of large-scale social catastrophes as endured by Russia in the twentieth century, it would be too shortsighted to ignore the data accumulated in the biblical narrative over a span of fifteen hundred years. Thus I maintain that Stalinism is foremost a spiritual phenomenon, a warfare against God, His truth, law, and the gospel. Like Gnosticism, Stalinism preyed parasitically on the Christian religion, borrowing its theological concepts, language, beliefs, rituals, and practices. In fact, Stalinism attempted to replace the truths of

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194 Berdyaev, The Origin of Russian Communism, 153.
196 Besançon points out the following characteristics of Gnosticism which are reminiscent of Soviet ideology: "a locked encyclopaedic [sic] system of cosmology and soteriology; the over-interpretation of history; a morality deriving from the doctrine, and taking its criteria from it; self-criticism as a way of renewing understanding of the interpretive system; the relativization of man to his contribution to salvation; the division laid down between the militants and the masses; the militant, custodian of knowledge, ascetic, professional, freed from the ordinary tasks of life; and the geo-historical dualism between regions which are ontologically damned and regions which are saved." Besançon, 16-7.
Christianity by claiming virtually unlimited control over human minds and souls; consequently, the society that experienced the phenomenon of Stalinism suffered from the grip of evil forces, which can hardly be known or effectively confronted by a power other than the truth of the God of the Bible.

The Warfare Worldview of Scripture

It has been rightly noted that the Bible begins not with the planet Earth, but with the universe.\(^197\) It is a biblical-theological fact that at a certain point in the existence of the universe conflict broke out "in heaven" (Rev 12:7; cf. Isa 14:12-15; Ezek 28:1-10). Such archetypical events as Creation (Gen 1 and 2), the fall of the first human beings (Gen 3), mission and the history of the divine elect (Gen 12:1-3), and the entire history of biblical Israel constitute significant episodes of that war and shed light on its various aspects. On a larger scale, such biblical narratives as the Book of Daniel portray earthly kingdoms as visible and empirically verifiable stages in world history on which unfolds the drama of metahistory or macro-story (Dan 2, 7, 9:20-27; 10:10-21).\(^198\) As the apostle Paul recasts the panoramic view of Daniel centuries later, "we [followers of Christ] have been made a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men" (2 Cor 4:9).

Jesus, too, considered Himself fighting with Satan who fell "like lightning from heaven" (Luke 10:18). Neither of the major events in the ministry of the Messiah, such as


the cross or resurrection, nor His teachings, prayers, miracles, exorcisms, and healings can be interpreted correctly until they are interpreted as acts of apocalyptic war. In the Gospels, Satan is described as "the ruler of this world" (John 14:30; cf. Matt 4:8-9), "a murderer from the beginning," "a liar and the father of [lies]" (John 8:44). The Gospel writers describe Satan as being able to "enter" an individual (John 13:27; cf. Luke 22:3) and hold complete control over a person ("one of you is a devil," John 6:70; cf. Matt 16:23), to cause physical diseases (Luke 9:38-42; 13:16), to demonize separate individuals (Mark 1:23; 5:1-19) and entire groups of peoples (John 8:44), including those in power, both religious (the chief priests, the elders, the Sanhedrin) and secular (Pilate and Herod). The former as well as the latter, if judged by their works—the plot against Jesus while knowing He was innocent, the hiring of false witnesses, manipulation of public opinion, violence and public disgrace inflicted on the Messiah—clearly show themselves to be resisting the Holy Spirit and therefore being controlled by the devil (cf. Acts 7:51-52; John 8:40, 41a; 1 Cor 2:8; Luke 22:53b). Alluding to Pilate, Annas, and Caiaphas, Paul says that these "rulers of this age" did not know the hidden wisdom of God and therefore crucified "the Lord of glory" (1 Cor 2:8). What the apostle means by that is, as Berkhof asserts, "in and behind these visible authorities, Paul sees invisible higher powers working." 

However, that power was defeated on the cross and in the resurrection of Jesus. It was then that "the ruler of this world" was "cast out" and all were "drawn" to the Messiah (John 12:31-32). Of the many images used in the Gospels to portray Jesus' battle against

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199 Boyd, God at War, 18.
Satan, one of the most powerful is a metaphor of light shining in the darkness, "and the darkness did not comprehend it" (John 1:5; 12:35-6; cf. 13:30). It was this victory the apostle Paul had in mind when he wrote that "having disarmed principalities and powers, He [Jesus] made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in [the cross]" (Col 2:15).

The Bible describes God as a Supreme Being concerned with the totality of human existence, including such areas as state and society, power and the individual, the material world, and the realm of spiritual conflict. Both Old and New Testaments present a number of cases from which it becomes clear how God appraises certain social structures and even entire political systems when they abuse power and legitimize evil.201

As far as the concept of a demonized culture is concerned, the New Testament writers do not use the term culture. Instead, they often speak of the world (kosmos) as "the socially constructed matrix that serves as the arena in which people live."202 Kosmos is a realm

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201 For instance, at various points of history, social injustice, violence, economic oppression, and other vices flourished in Israel (Mic 3; Isa 1:10-31) as well as in the neighboring lands of Sodom (Ezek 16:49), Babylon (Isa 13, 21:1-10; Dan 4:24), and Nineveh (Jonah 1:2 and 3:8), etc. It was not uncommon in those days to rule the nations by raw power. Infanticide, oppression, and genocide were institutionalized or could have been institutionalized in Egypt under pharaoh "who did not know Joseph" (Exod 1:8-22), in Persia under Ahasuerus (Esth 3:8-11), and in Judea under Herod the Great (Matt 2:16-18), etc. Among many other symbols of the oppressive religious-political systems the image of Babylon is probably the most prominent. The interpretation of this God-opposing power "far transcends its own historical parameters." See Hans Wildberger, Isaiah 13-27: A Continental Commentary, trans. Thomas H. Trapp (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997), 327.

202 Bruce Bradshaw, Change across Cultures: A Narrative Approach to Social Transformation (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002), 70. In Pauline theology, Maggregor asserts, the word kosmos means not only "the total world of creation" and "the stage on which human life is played," but primarily "the quintessence of earthly conditions and earthly claims as opposed to the future and the heavenly, as when Paul contrasts 'worldly affairs' with 'the affairs of
under enslavement of Satan (1 Pet 5:8-9; 1 Cor 10:20-21), a domain penetrated by the
demonic influences (Eph 2:1-3; 6:12). According to Arnold's interpretation of Paul's
references to the issue of "powers" and "principalities," there is no existing human
structure exempt from their influence.

The believers are admonished to love not the world or "the things of the world" (1
John 2:15, 16). Rather, the world must be overcome by faith in Jesus (1 John 5:4-5) in the
same manner as Jesus overcame the world (John 16:33) and destroyed "the works of the
devil" (1 John 3:8). The uncompromising antagonism between Christ and the world (John
1:10-11; 17:14-16), between the children of God and the children of the devil (1 John
3:10; 2 Cor 6:14-18) is reminiscent of the enmity placed between the tempter and woman
at the very beginning of human history (Gen 3:15). Since any culture is subject to the
power of Satan, it is the essence of Christian mission to turn people from darkness to
light, from apostasy to God (Acts 26:18).

Another biblical narrative, the Book of Revelation, strongly suggests that there is
interaction between the spiritual realms of the cosmic conflict and the political powers

the Lord' (1 Cor. vii. 32-3). G. H. C. Maggregor, "Principalities and Powers: The Cosmic

As Wendland concludes, the background for Paul's message to the Ephesians was a
depressing socio-religious milieu that was "obsessed with mystical and/or spiritual power—that
is, how to recognize, understand, access, control, and benefit from or defend against it in one's
everyday life." See Ernst R. Wendland, "Contextualising the Potentates, Principalities and Powers

Arnold, 209. As Sider points out, "Evil is far more complex than the wrong choices of
individuals. It also lies outside us both in powerfully oppressive social systems and in demonic
powers that delight in defying God by corrupting the social systems that God's human image-
bearers need." Ronald J. Sider, One-Sided Christianity? Uniting the Church to Heal a Lost and
acting within a given cultural context. For instance, references and allusions to kings and mighty men are numerous throughout the book (Rev 6:15; 13; 17:12; 19:18, etc.). The susceptibility of earthly powers to the influences of the spirits of demons (Rev 16:14) and their collaboration with false belief systems make them wage "war with the Lamb" (Rev 17:14). The whole world is involved in that war (Rev 12:7-9, 12b), and the fight is to the death.

Although this is only a cursory overview of the spiritual battle revealed in the pages of Scripture, it supports Boyd's notion that a "warfare worldview is . . . the basic worldview of biblical authors, both in the Old Testament and even more so in the New." Boyd has enough evidence to believe that this world does not only look like a war zone between good and evil, but it is a war zone. In other words, human sufferings, psychosocial traumas, and perplexities take on a different meaning when they are viewed against the backdrop of a cosmic conflict, as opposed to an idea that "assumes everything is part of God's 'secret plan'." As Boyd further asserts, the classical-philosophical Christian approach to the understanding of evil within the framework of God's absolute sovereignty and total control over the world falls short of explaining the concrete problems of evil. According to Boyd, evil "cannot be known through faceless, nameless statistics or abstract theorems. All approaches to the problem of evil that do not

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206 Boyd, God at War, 13.
208 Boyd, Satan, 15.
go beyond these will be in danger of offering cheap and trite solutions.\textsuperscript{209} The basic assumption behind this approach is that although God is considered to be an omnipotent God, his omnipotence does not entail meticulous, exhaustive control over the world.\textsuperscript{210} Unlike the worldviews in many other cultures, the biblical warfare worldview is based on the belief in a triune God who wages war against rebel agencies whatever historical form and disguise they might take.\textsuperscript{211}

In spite of the biblical clarity concerning the reality of the cosmic conflict, a word of caution must be expressed with regard to the comprehensibility of this warfare theme within a given historical period. As Sider points out, "The powers [in Pauline thinking] are the ordered structures of society and the spiritual powers which, in some way we do not fully comprehend, lie behind and undergird religious, intellectual, socio-economic and political structures."\textsuperscript{212} The ontological status of the "principalities" and "powers" transcends the reach of human intellect.\textsuperscript{213} It has been rightly suggested that "the demonic can not be defined; it can only be contemplated—and experienced."\textsuperscript{214} Ultimately, the mystery of evil brings us to the mystery of humanity. As Nugent suggests,

Man is the highest part of creation, and the mystery of Satan seems inseparable from the mystery of man. Man is Satan's milieu, and let us confess the truth: some twenty-five hundred years after Plato's Academy, two thousand after the Bible, and even three hundred after the Enlightenment, we still do not know what man is. ... 

\textsuperscript{209}Boyd, \textit{God at War}, 34.
\textsuperscript{210}Ibid., 20.
\textsuperscript{211}Boyd, \textit{Satan}, 18.
The mystery of man, it would seem, is in his indeterminateness: he is made of the image and likeness of God, but with a latency of Satan. He can embody either, and in a very real sense he gives Satan existence. . . . As one becomes more diabolical one becomes less human.\textsuperscript{215}

On the other hand, the mystery of evil is also one of the most intriguing enigmas of human history. If human history is "the story of the conflict of good and evil"\textsuperscript{216} and if "to live in history is to live in sin,"\textsuperscript{217} then, one is forced to consider what it is that drives history. Naugle takes up Boyd's idea about the centrality of a warfare worldview for the Bible writers and re-casts it as a "worldview warfare." According to Naugle, "a worldview warfare is a warfare over worldviews; that is, a megabattle between the forces of light and darkness over the identity or definition of the universe."\textsuperscript{218} What are the implications of these important insights for a theological analysis of a culture contaminated by Stalinism as that dictatorial worldview drove Russia during the longest period of the twentieth century? The following section suggests a framework of assessing the phenomenon of Stalinism theologically.

Assessing Stalinism Theologically

In spite of the fact that Marx was "demonically closed against transcendental reality,"\textsuperscript{219} his social teaching was not pure science either. It was "a religiously inspired mythopoetic drama carefully camouflaged within various scientific-sounding

\begin{references}
\item[215] Ibid., 184-85.
\item[216] Ibid., 7.
\item[217] Ibid.
\end{references}
accretions."\textsuperscript{220} In Soviet Russia, Marxism was considered to be the only and ultimate solution to the whole array of age-old problems of humanity. In reality, however, it functioned as a new faith lying beneath the power structures of secular theocracy. As Wolfe concludes, Marxism was "a deeply emotional faith, with true believers, orthodoxy and its inevitable shadow of heresy, dedication, confession, schism, anathema, excommunication, even imprisonment and execution and erasure of one's name, where the faith and the secular arm are one."\textsuperscript{221} Marxism drew on the spirit of Jacobinism,\textsuperscript{222} German philosophy (primarily Hegelian historiosophy),\textsuperscript{223} and the economic theory of Ricardo.\textsuperscript{224} Once implemented in Russia, this new political religion\textsuperscript{225} was perceived by its prophets and apostles as the sum total of the ultimate truth. Russian Marxism not only challenged the foundations of Orthodox Christianity, but it made significant efforts to replace or at least to transform those foundations with its own version of an all-encompassing worldview.\textsuperscript{226} Inwardly and outwardly, consciously and subconsciously,


\textsuperscript{221}Bertram D. Wolfe, \emph{Marxism: One Hundred Years in the Life of a Doctrine} (New York: Dial Press, 1965), 357.

\textsuperscript{222}Karl Marx, "The Bourgeoisie and the Counterrevolution," in \emph{On Revolution}, 460-61, and elsewhere.


\textsuperscript{224}Besançon, 44. See also Karl Marx, "Class Conflict and Its Implications," in \emph{Karl Marx: Economy, Class and Social Revolution}, ed. Z. A. Jordan (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1971), 170-72.

\textsuperscript{225}Among the basic features of political religion are (1) doctrines of inner-worldly salvation, (2) a total reconstruction of society, (3) the primacy of politics, (4) a moral elite to promulgate doctrines of faith, (5) exclusive commitments to the holy cause, and (6) world mission. See Riegel, 98-9.

\textsuperscript{226}For one of the most comprehensive comparative studies of Soviet Marxism and Christianity see Arthur J. Klinghoffer, \emph{Red Apocalypse: The Religious Evolution of Soviet Communism} (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1996).
the ideologues of the new social order had to contextualize their social vision by taking on some forms and rituals from the previous religious-cultural paradigm.227

On a social level, the implementation of Marxian theory within the patriarchic milieu of Russia formed a bizarre amalgamation of mutually hostile realities. On the one hand, such values as human life, dignity, the institutes of religion, kinship, family, and marriage were challenged and finally desacralized as being of little value for social progress Bolshevik style. On the other hand, the entire way of life in Soviet Russia took on an aura of a new progressive revelation.228 In its counter-historical movement, communism crossed the boundaries of the modern age and brought an entire nation into a mediaeval epoch, into the time of Muscovite Orthodox Tsardom.229

The grand task of building socialism was transformed into an everyday experience of the sacred. To doubt the cause of communism was just as dangerous as to hold heretical views in the time of the medieval inquisition. At first, this metamorphosis from Christianity to its secular-eschatological counterfeit decisively changed human perceptions of reality and then transformed their behavior.230 The fusion of religious and political spheres to one dominant Weltanschauung and to one behavioral pattern marked Marxism-Leninism as a new political religion.231 Eventually, this change led to the

227Marcin Kula indicates that communists "fought the Church and religion so ardently that they ended up assuming some of their adversary's behavioural patterns." See Marcin Kula, "Communism as Religion," Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions 6, no. 3 (December 2005): 380.

228Kotkin, 293.

229Berdyaev, The Origin of Russian Communism, 143.


231Klaus-Georg Riegel, "Rituals of Confession within Communities of Virtuosi: An Interpretation of the Stalinist Criticism and Self-Criticism in the Perspective of Max Weber's
Stalinist auto-da-fé during the Great Purge. If considered globally, the communist realization of heaven on earth by the means of "transforming violence" murdered from eighty to a hundred million people in the twentieth century.

In light of the above evidence, there seem to be no irrefutable proofs why Stalinism and Soviet culture as its derivative cannot be analyzed as a quasi-religious phenomenon. Furthermore, the Russian Marxism sprouted within the philosophical matrix of European history, that is, in the realm of a predominantly Christian civilization. It deserves, therefore, a closer look through the lenses of basic theological, anthropological, and ethical postulates found in the Judeo-Christian Scriptures. Demonology and spiritual warfare are two of those lenses.

In his analysis of Eph 2:2—the passage that speaks about "the prince of the power of the air"—Heinrich Schlier suggests that the word "air" should be interpreted in socio-cultural terms. Accordingly, Satan exercises his power over the minds of people "by means of the spiritual atmosphere which he dominates and uses as the medium of his power. . . . If men expose themselves to this atmosphere, they become its carriers, and thereby contribute to its extension." Looking at the Bolsheviks' experiments through the prism of biblical revelation, one cannot help contrasting their philosophical premises, socio-political claims, and imagery with some of the worldview themes shared by the


232Halfin, 2.
233Burleigh, 251.
235Ibid., 31.
Bible writers. Among these are such issues as: power and authority; salvation and savior; human value and dignity; truth and infallibility; and human transformation and ethics.

Power and authority

The programmatic slogans of the makers of the Russian revolution were at odds with the fundamental assertions of Jesus the Messiah. For instance, the famous motto: "All power to the Soviets!" contrasts with Jesus' claim: "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth" (Matt 28:18; cf. John 17:2 and Matt 6:13). Perhaps this could be viewed as no more than an inessential link between a political slogan and a claim by the founder of the Christian religion. But as historical developments showed, the Bolsheviks usurped not only political power in Russia, but claimed the unlimited mental, moral, and spiritual allegiance of the citizenry. As Berdyaev describes the phenomenon, the monster of the communist Leviathan "has laid its paws upon everything." 236

In their highly influential book *The ABC of Communism* (1919), 237 Nikolai Bukharin, the Communist Party's prominent ideologue and the editor of *Pravda*, and Evgeny Preobrazhensky, wrote: "For the realisation of the communist system the proletariat must have all authority and all power in its hands." 238 These words are not unique. Rather, they reflect the general notion of Marxism that all the power should


238 Ibid., 79.
belong to the proletariat and be "shared with none."\textsuperscript{239} Taken to its logical end, Marxism-Leninism seized the power not only over various forms of property and means of production, but over the meaning of life, over human minds and souls, and over people's dreams and hopes. The absolute power in the hands of atheistic sectarians and political extremists proved itself to be the destructive force that kept the nation in servitude for more than seven decades.

Salvation and Savior

Unlike the New Testament, which considers sin to be the root of the human predicament (Matt 1:21; Rom 3:23; 5:12-21) and places it within the individual (Mark 7:20), the Bolsheviks, following Marx's teaching, believed it was material exploitation that caused all the injustices in the world. This postulate positioned the enemy anywhere (primarily in private property and in the inequality between social classes) except in human nature.\textsuperscript{240} Consequently, whereas the Christian religion taught that there is a God-given, incarnated Savior who delivers from the bondage of sin, places His throne in one's heart, and provides eternal salvation (Rev 3:20; Mark 10:45b; John 1:14; 3:16; Rom 3:25-26), Marxists promoted the idea that liberation is nothing more than an inner-worldly experience that must come from within economically and socially reformed

\textsuperscript{239}Lenin, \textit{State and Revolution}, 23 (italics mine).

\textsuperscript{240}According to Marx, "Communism is the positive abolition of private property, of human self-alienation, and thus the real appropriation of human nature through and for man. . . . It is the definitive resolution of the antagonism between man and nature, and between man and man. It is the true solution of the conflict between existence and essence, between objectification and self-affirmation, between freedom and necessity, between individual and species. It is the solution of the riddle of history and knows itself to be this solution. . . . The positive supersession of private property as the appropriation of human life, is therefore the positive supersession of all alienation, and the return of man from religion, the family, the state, etc. to his human, i.e. social life." Karl Marx, "Third Manuscript," in \textit{Marx's Concept of Man}, ed. Erick Fromm (New York:
humanity. This philosophy led to the "self-divinization and self-salvation of man" and replaced the transcendental logos with "an intramundane logos of human consciousness." A new, other-than-Christ-of-the-Gospels messiah was looming in this world. To be more precise, it was the historical mission of the proletariat to function as "the true saviour of mankind from the horrors of capitalism, from the barbarities of exploitation." Thus Marxism was no longer a social theory, but "a drama of redemption in which the proletariat is the redeemer class, a role that it earned by being the most suffering class in society." Paradoxically, Lenin believed that it was Marx's philosophical materialism alone that had "shown the proletariat the way out of the spiritual slavery in which all oppressed classes have hitherto languished." The Christian soteriology was replaced with the Marxian notion of the humans' perfectibility through correct social consciousness and proper practice resulting from the abolishment of private property and the creation of a classless society. Thus redemption in Russian Marxism was understood not only externally and collectively, but also internally and individually.

Similar to the Christian idea of personal conversion and spiritual regeneration, Party applicants were to go through the experience of a Bolshevik conversion which played a decisive role in the process of distancing oneself from the evil past and coming


242Bukharin and Preobrazhensky, 137.
to the communist light. As Halfin demonstrates, the Party candidates' autobiographies abound in such terms as \textit{prevrashchenie} (transformation), \textit{perekhod} (transition), \textit{perekovka} (remolding), \textit{dushevnyi perelom} (spiritual break), \textit{mirovozrencheskii povorot} (reversal in worldview), etc. However, this ambition to redeem the individual and create the new person was driven by such negative emotions as hatred, intolerance, violence, and revenge. Accordingly, the miracle needed to produce good out of evil and to generate light out of darkness just did not happen. And it is precisely this swindle of Marxian dialectics that Berdyaev calls "the demoniacal element of Marxism."\footnote{Berdyaev, \textit{The Origin of Russian Communism}, 183.}

At the unveiling of a memorial to Marx and Engels in Moscow on November 7, 1918, Lenin delivered a speech which seemingly contained nothing of note. On that very first anniversary of the Bolshevik coup he said: "It is the great and historic merit of Marx and Engels that they indicated to the proletarians of all countries their role . . . to be the first to rise in the revolutionary struggle against capital and to rally around themselves in this struggle all the toilers and exploited."\footnote{Vladimir I. Lenin, "Speech at the Unveiling of a Memorial to Marx and Engels" (Nov. 7, 1918), in \textit{Marx-Engels-Marxism}, 75.} But if read against the background of Christ's well-known appeal—"Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt 11:28)—one is forced to acknowledge that it was not a mere linguistic coincidence. Rather, Lenin's statement defined Marxism in salvationist terms as a genuine substitution for Christianity. Clearly, the leader of the Russian Bolshevism

\begin{footnotesize}
\footnote{Luke, 81.}
\footnote{Halfin, \textit{Terror in My Soul}, 51.}
\footnote{Berdyaev, \textit{The Origin of Russian Communism}, 183.}
\end{footnotesize}
drank in the destructive philosophy and passion of nechaevshchina, trying to generate a new order out of the revolutionary disorder and chaos. Regardless of the fierce attacks against the Orthodox Church, his party was destined to demonically imitate it in the years following his death.  

At the early period of Lenin's reign his relationship to Marx was thought of as that of Jesus to Moses: "Marx is the prophet with the tables of the law and Lenin the greatest executor of the testament." Gradually, the marriage of ideology and mysticism manifested itself in the growing Lenin cult, which was being built by his closest brothers-in-arms as well as other admirers. His political pamphlet What Is to Be Done? (1902) was called the gospel; his personality had become corporately revered as the ultimate embodiment of the collective, the party, the working class; in Christian-like manner—"one Lord, one faith, one baptism" (Eph 4:4)—his deification was set up to convey the idea of one truth, one history, one man-god the savior, the latter being "the chosen one of millions" and "the leader by the grace of God."  

From the name of Sergei Nechaev (1847-1882), an author of the Catechism of the Revolutionist (1869) which was the first manual in the history of Russia to describe large-scale terrorist activity. As the Catechism states, "The only revolution that can save the people is one that eradicates the entire state system and exterminates all state traditions of the regime and classes in Russia. . . . Our task is terrible, total, universal, merciless destruction." See Michael Confine, ed., Daughter of a Revolutionary: Natalie Herzen and the Bakunin-Nechaev Circle, trans. Hilary Sternberg and Lydia Bott (LaSalle, IL: Library Press, 1973), 229.

Klaus-Georg Riegel, Marxism-Leninism как политическая религия (Marxism-Leninism as a political religion) (Moscow: Poligrafia, 2001), 129.

Leon Trotsky, Lenin (Garden City, NY: Garden City Books, 1959), 208.

Nina Tumarkin, Lenin Lives! The Lenin Cult in Soviet Russia (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), 82, 88, 91, 155. As a miner wrote in his letter to the Funeral Commission set up after the death of Lenin, "His [Lenin's] call was the call of a leader. This call penetrated deeply into every soldier's bloodstained heart. They followed him. They did not hesitate to give their lives for Lenin's slogans. They died with joy; no one grieved for himself." Ibid., 155.
On the day of Lenin's funeral, Lev Sosnovsky, a Jewish-born journalist, published a eulogy in which he described the *vozhd'* (chief) both as a perfect man and an immortal deity, a man of history and a messiah of faith.253 Finally, the Lenin cult culminated in the construction of the Mausoleum as "the axis mundi of Soviet cosmology."254 In the hands of the hierocratic elite, the Lenin cult and his legacy as the leader of the Russian Revolution became a powerful myth-making tool to portray the future in the salvationist terms of secular soteriology. The Lenin cult, however, was only a prelude to the Stalin cult, which "transcended all hitherto known tendencies toward the idolization of a ruler."255 No wonder Christian religion and its sacred books were banned by the Stalinist inquisition, for in them one could find Jesus' alarming warning, "Many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many" (Matt 24:5).

Human value and dignity

Distinct from the biblical teaching on the value of humanity created in the image of God (Gen 1:27; cf. Isa 43:4; 1 Cor 6:19-20), Marxism did not see any value in individual human life itself. Rather, the class and the collective were of far greater importance. As Nicholas Berdyaev pointed out, "the doctrines of worth of Marx and of Christianity are diametrically opposed."256 If there is no reign of law, no privacy, and no freedom for decent moral, intellectual, and spiritual development, humans are deprived of

253Ibid., 167.
254Ibid., 270.
256Nicholas Berdyaev, *Christianity and Class War*, trans. Donald Attwater (London: Sheed & Ward, 1933), 44.
the dignity peculiar to them by the fact of being created in the image of God. Since every
citizen in the Soviet Union was considered to be the property of the state, men's and
women's dignity was defined in relative terms, as something based on and subdued to the
state's absolute interests. This subjugation of an individual self to the omniscience of the
state legitimized the conditions under which there was nothing, including private life and
thoughts within one's skull, that could possibly avoid the Party's political x-ray
examination. "Hermeneutic of the soul," as Halfin calls it, "was embodied in a wide
gamut of practices, among which there were interrogations, purges, comrade trials, and
campaigns of self-criticism." It was believed that the Soviet people were redeemed by
the proletariat through revolution. Hence, how could they belong to anybody but the
state, which held the death grip on its subjects? The declared equality of people
camouflaged the system in which everybody was a master and slave, a prisoner and
secret police agent at the same time.

One of the ways to show loyalty to the state was to glorify the Party, which
structurally and ideologically cemented that state. A watchword on posters placed all
over the Soviet cities, towns, and villages read: "Glory to the Communist Party of Soviet
Union!"—a radical antipode to the crowning words of the Lord's Prayer: "For Yours
is ... the glory forever" (Matt 6:13). The biblical idea of God as Father of the fatherless
(Ps 68:5), "the Father of mercies and God of all comfort" (2 Cor 1:3), was replaced by the

257 Leszek Kolakowski, "Marxist Roots of Stalinism," in Stalinism: Essays in Historical
258 Kotkin, 294.
259 Igal Halfin, "Looking into the Oppositionists' Souls: Inquisition Communist Style,"
The Russian Review 60 (July 2001): 316.
260 Lindy, "Legacy of Trauma and Loss," 25.
notion that at first it was Lenin\textsuperscript{261} and then Stalin who were to be thought of as the true fathers of the commoners, the shepherds of nations. As Alexander Etkind points out, "Stalin's image was drummed into the nation's psyche as a paradigmatic father figure, while Lenin was widely perceived as a grandfather of sorts."\textsuperscript{262} Soviet iconography painted them as wise men who day and night thought about the needs of people. The Gospel image of Jesus blessing the children (Mark 10:13-16) was substituted by numerous representations of Lenin, Stalin ("the Children's Best Friend"\textsuperscript{263}), and subsequent party chiefs either photographed or painted among children. One of the posters that hung in the Soviet orphanages of the Stalinist era read: "Thank you, our Stalin, for our happy childhood." Ultimately, the degrading power of hypocritical worship or even genuine belief in the "red god" transformed the worshippers into obedient herds destined to psychic deformity and slaughter. Murder was committed, if not physically, then at least psychologically and spiritually.

Truth and infallibility

In contrast to the Christian religion, Marx taught that the task of history is "to establish the truth of this world."\textsuperscript{264} What he meant was that nothing else but his own theory was the ultimate truth, paving the way to world-wide socioeconomic

\textsuperscript{261}"Vladimir Ilyich is no more. The party is orphaned. The workmen's class is orphaned," wrote Leon Trotsky on January 22, 1924, on the news of the death of Lenin. Trotsky, 215. "Our dear father! You have left your children forever, but your words will never die in our proletarian hearts."—wrote distressed workers to the Funeral Commission. Tumarkin, 154.

\textsuperscript{262}Etkind, 110.

\textsuperscript{263}Ginzburg, \textit{Within the Whirlwind}, 365.

transformation. Once adopted by the socialist movement in Russia and especially after
the October 1917 coup, this truth rejected all other truths. The patristic writings of Lenin
and Stalin became just as sacred as the holy works of Marx. Conversely, the holy,
revealed truth of the Bible was defied. The reality of the Soviet experiment has made it
very clear, however, what the Bolshevik truth looked like: "a caricature of the truth."²⁶⁵
As a result, entire generations lived in a realm where reason was disoriented, any point of
reference was removed, where there was absolute separation between what ideology
asserted and how things were established, and the "Dominion of the False" was set up.²⁶⁶
Moreover, just as in some extreme cases in the Medieval Church, the truth of
communism was to be defended by state-supported terror against all and any opposition,
heresy, and political deviation. The "red inquisition" was called forth to prevent others
from falling into the errors of the heretics.²⁶⁷

According to Kolakowski, there is a perfect equation between ultimate truth,
Soviet ideology, and Stalin: "truth = proletarian consciousness = Marxism = party's
ideology = party leaders' ideas = chief's decisions. . . . And there is nothing un-Marxist in
this equation."²⁶⁸ One of Lenin's prominent statements that often served as an epithet for
the textbooks on Soviet ideology and political economy reads: "Marx's teaching is all-
powerful because it is true."²⁶⁹ The idea that the Communist Party could never be

²⁶⁵Berdyaev, The End of Our Time, 217.
²⁶⁶Besançon, 287.
²⁶⁷Klinghoffer, 124.
²⁶⁸Kolakowsky, 289.
²⁶⁹Kuusinen, 15.
mistaken and therefore held accountable was indisputable. How could such a party ever be held accountable for anything done in history if there was not higher truth to be judged by?

Against the backdrop of such a worldview, all biblical claims about the ultimate truth embodied in God's Word and Jesus (John 14:6; 17:17) became superfluous. The Spirit of God as "the Spirit of truth" and guide "into all truth" (John 16:13) was cast out by the notion that it was Marxism's mission to be "the teacher, guide and leader of all the toiling and exploited." \(^{271}\) Jesus' promise—"You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32)—was diabolically usurped and recast as an assurance of a godless paradise that was eventually built on the bones of those who thought otherwise.

Human transformation and ethics

The Christian religion is unique in what it teaches about the new person who is re-created in the image of God (Col 3:10). The apostle Paul states that there is an ideal that was set for every man and woman, that is, to experience new life, "created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness" (Eph 4:24). And there is only one way to enter new life and become a "new creation"—to be found "in Christ" (2 Cor 5:17; cf. Gal 6:15). \(^{272}\) This experience of conversion takes place in the "inward man [which] is being renewed day by day" (2 Cor 4:16) and signifies "a complete and irrevocable break with

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one's former way of life." Christ living in the individual is the highest and noblest ambition a mere mortal could ever have (Phil 3:8-10).

As far as the Decalogue is concerned, it is not abolished; rather, its function is to lead humans to Christ (Gal 3:24) by exposing them first to the reality of their utter sinfulness (Rom 7:7). Furthermore, the Ten Commandments are a mirror of one's moral makeup, a criterion of moral soundness or depravity (Jas 1:23-25). The philosophy that the ends justify the means is rejected as totally incompatible with the very nature of Christian faith.

A totally different picture is seen when one considers the Soviet project of creating a new anthropological species. Once in the hands of the omnipotent state, the Christian idea of moral regeneration was itself transformed and resulted in the seduction of both those in power and their subjects. The grandest task undertaken by the Bolsheviks was the all-out remaking of Russian identity from the inside out to produce the New Person as the new moral and psychic entity. The underlying premise of this project was a conviction that "the human individual remains plastic into adulthood, and can continue to shape his fundamental character at a relatively mature age—if he is equipped with an adequate ideological picture of himself and the world." 274

The undertaking was super-ambitious, on the border of social phantasmagoria. The degrading power of physical slave labor, introduced and promoted by cynical propaganda and force, substituted for the transforming power of the Holy Spirit (Gal 5:22-23; 2 Cor 3:18). The use of coercion was justified by the Marxian notion that "it is

273Ibid., 186.

force to which we must someday appeal in order to erect the rule of labor."275 Hence, when Stalin administered the "sacrament" of perekovka (reforging) as "a multilayered process that sought to remake individuals from the inside out,"276 a kind of "second birth,"277 it called forth diabolic transformation and produced the new entity, Homo Sovieticus.

In this process of social engineering the communist ideologues relativized all moral truth except the absolute truth of Stalinism.278 The law as a set of universally accepted rules and principles was abolished and therefore could not protect the individual from the tyranny of the state. Lenin's maxims that "the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat is ... power that is unrestricted by any laws"279 and "morality is what serves to destroy the old exploiting society and to unite all the working people around the proletariat"280 became the signs of the time and determined the course of the country for generations ahead. Aron Zalkind, one of the Party ideologues, proposed the new moral code by recasting the biblical Decalogue into Bolshevik language. Here is what it looked like:

"THOU SHALT NOT STEAL"—expropriate expropriators;  
"THOU SHALT NOT KILL"—unless it is an organized killing of a class enemy by a class following an order of the class state, in which case it is moral;  
"HONOR THY FATHER"—respect only a father who stands on the proletarian-revolutionary platform and consciously defends the interests of the proletariat. If all attempts to move your father from mystical, proprietary positions fail, you are morally free to abandon him;

275Marx, On Revolution, 1:64.  
276Ruder, 147.  
277Ibid., 151.  
278Wolfe, 361.  
279Lenin, "The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky," 123.  
280Besançon, 213.
"THOU SHALT NOT COMMIT ADULTERY"—sexual activity is permissible only to the extent that it promotes the growth of collectivist feeling.⁷⁸¹

If it is true that "lawlessness is the essence of tyranny," then the Bolshevik regime is a classical example of state-sponsored criminality. The long-bred Russian tradition of banditry in which the bandit was considered to be "the people's hero, defender, and savior" was embodied in the Bolshevik state. The communist version of moral truth became the foundation of exterminatory rather than transformational policy. The fundamental attitude linking the Bolsheviks together was "neither love, nor concord, but . . . hatred." As Krasnyi Mech (Red Sword), the official organ of the Soviet secret police, declared in the first issue (August 18, 1919): "Ours is a new moral code. Our humanitarianism is absolute, for it is based on the glorious ideal of the abolition of tyranny and oppression. All is permitted for us, for we are the first in the world to draw the sword not in behalf of enslavement and oppression but for the sake of freedom and emancipation from servitude."⁷⁸⁵ Thus the value attached to human life was next to nothing.

Out of this new moral code came the bloody fratricidal war of 1918-1921. Out of this new moral code came dekulakization, the forced collectivization, and liquidation of the kulaks as a social class. Out of this new moral code came government-imposed

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⁷⁸¹ Halfin, Terror in My Soul, 129.
⁷⁸³ Mikhail Bakunin, "Revolution, Terrorism, Banditry," in Voices of Terror: Manifestos, Writings, and Manuals of Al-Qaeda, Hamas and Other Terrorists from around the World and Throughout the Ages, ed. Walter Laqueur (New York: Reed Press, 2004), 68. This anarchist writer further states that "without understanding the essential nature of the bandit, no man will ever understand the history of the Russian people." Ibid.
⁷⁸⁴ Besançon, 218.
⁷⁸⁵ Wolfe, 368.
famine. Out of this new moral code came public show-trials. Out of this new moral code came the Stalinist judicial system. Out of this new moral code came the apotheosis of the institutionalized evil that flourished in the Stalinist "corruptive labor camps." Could it be that because of the apocalyptic nature of the Gulag reality Russia qualified herself as a revelation of "the great city . . . where also our Lord was crucified" (Rev 11:8)? As Toker observes concerning the inverted moral order in Soviet concentration camps, "between the murderer and the thief . . . Christ is crucified every day, his hands growing stiff around the handle of the spade or pick and acquiring its shape, his feet frost bitten, side bleeding from indignities. And Judas betrays him every day with kisses or blows." Needles to say, the state-driven transformation of people into previously unknown beings resulted in their moral deformity. The Sovok was marked by such repulsive characteristics as conformism, laziness, inefficiency, hypocrisy, and irresponsibility. Dubin points out that "a negative attitude to the other [fellow human being] has been laid in the very anthropology of the Soviet society." There has been erected a Spiritless, dehumanized kingdom which unleashed "the works of the flesh" (Gal 5:19-21; cf. Mark 7:20-23). Humans have been deformed while the propaganda would insist that they have been transformed.

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286 As Dallin and Nicolaevsky assert, "The so called 'corrective' labor camps have necessarily become corruptive labor camps. There is no spot in the world where morals have sunk so low as in the institutions of modern slavery. The effects of this alarming degradation are felt far beyond the walls of the concentration camps." David J. Dallin and Boris I. Nicolaevsky, *Forced Labor in Soviet Russia* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1947), 106.


288 *Sovok* is a popular Russian term for *Homo Sovieticus*.

289 Kon, 193.

290 Dubin, 249.
Conclusion

In light of the preceding discussion of Stalinism as trauma-in-history, it may be concluded that the cultural macrocosm of the Russian people has been tainted with an array of spiritual, moral, and socio-psychological deficiencies. The Stalinist worldview charted a course for Russian culture that was self-destructive, full of violence, vices, and sufferings. Following the criterion of Jesus—"You will know them by their fruits" (Matt 7:16a)—there is little doubt regarding the long-term impact of the demonic wisdom on the Soviet culture. Wolfe describes this complex amalgam of the Marxism-in-power as "the Devil of Faust and Man-God of Christianity become one." The Soviet project disguised the lies of the Serpent with the rhetoric of the Savior.

Once Stalin's totalitarian system of pseudo-religious theocracy was established, it limited God's saving, healing, and transforming presence throughout the Soviet empire. In its most extreme forms, that is, during its formative years, Russian Bolshevism showed signs of mass demon possession with many venomous repercussions. Among the losses of Russia under this totalitarian regime the multigenerational damage done to human capital was the highest. Infected by the demonic worldview, Marxism-Leninism generated a culture that was in open opposition to God. As a result, no other anthropological species could appear but the image of Homo Sovieticus whose moral and

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291 Wolfe, 370.

psycho-social deficiencies metastasized throughout the Russian nation. The culture of
death proved its vitality and managed not only to survive the reforms of the 1990s but
through political, socioeconomic, and rhetorical mutations received a second wind in a
state now being built on moral compromise.

Needless to say, the task of Christian mission to address the traumatic legacies of
communism in Russia is enormous. But however difficult it may seem, this challenge
must be met from within the very culture that has been subjugated and depraved by
totalitarianism. This can be done on the basis of the liberating and healing power of
Christ as envisioned and proclaimed in the two-part narrative of Luke—a topic that is
discussed in the following chapter.
CHAPTER 4

HEALING THE TRAUMA: TOWARD A MISSIOLOGY FOR
CONTEMPORARY RUSSIA

Introduction

Stephen Bevans states that "any theology that is not in some sense countercultural cannot be a truly Christian theology." This notion encapsulates the main point of the present chapter—namely, to address the trauma of Stalinism from the countercultural viewpoint which is characteristic of the programmatic declaration of Jesus at Nazareth (Luke 4:16-21). Here is the RSV rendering of the Nazareth sermon of Jesus:

And he [Jesus] came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up; and he went to the synagogue, as his custom was, on the sabbath day. And he stood up to read; and there was given to him the book of the prophet Isaiah. He opened the book and found the place where it was written, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." And he closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant, and sat down; and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. And he began to say to them, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." (Luke 4:16-21; RSV)

Jesus' inaugural announcement, if interpreted in the context of Luke-Acts, is of fundamental importance in building a missiological paradigm for contemporary Russia. The cluster of significant theological themes found in this locus of Luke's two-volume

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narrative will be applied to the trauma caused by the history of political oppression and spiritual subjugation. This chapter proposes a biblical-missiological basis that a Christian community in Russia may incorporate to become a more authentic agent of Missio Dei amid a culture stricken with spiritual, moral, and social scars.

The analysis of Stalinism presented earlier in the second and third chapters suggested that a panacea for Russia's culture of death is probably non-existent. The seeds of blood, hatred, and falsehood that have been so liberally sown during the Soviet era and in its aftermath cannot be eradicated with a single stroke. Even current favorable economic circumstances have not been able to significantly impact the social situation in Russia and reverse, for instance, the high death and low birth rates. As Merridale put it, "The culture that makes abuse possible cannot be washed away in a tide of dollars." The fact that the Russian government appears to have made no major progress in fighting such social vices as crime, corruption, resurgent nationalism, and chauvinism, serves as a reminder that no fast and easy solution exists to the mess of moral degradation and hopelessness caused by a century of four revolutions and the Stalinist Gulag. Consequently, a slow and painful transformation of Russia into a morally and socially healthy nation seems to be the only hope for the future.

Christianity in Russia is an old phenomenon that has experienced a long and complex history, including facing a significant period of highly aggressive and militant godlessness. The fact that over a thousand years ago Russia joined the Byzantine branch of Christianity

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2 "Christian community" is a generic term that I apply cross-denominationally to designate men and women who not only profess their faith in Jesus Christ but also act upon that faith, seeking to live consistently with the core principles of the Christian religion.

did not mean that Eastern Slavs were won for Christ; rather, the new faith was gradually imposed upon them. This imposition of a new faith led to the caesaropapist form of church-state relations that prevented Russian Orthodoxy from having an independent, politically neutral mission in the New Testament sense.

The grassroots of the pagan culture were touched but only partially transformed, and as a result, "paganism would retain a firm grip on the population of Russia for centuries to come." The problem of dvoeverie (double faith) has come to be known as a distinctive feature of Russian Orthodoxy "even as late as the nineteenth century."

To some extent, it was this ambiguous legacy, coupled with the inability of the dominant church to become a passionate voice for the oppressed, that caused the Russian intelligentsia to look for the inner-worldly liberation elsewhere rather than in conventional Orthodoxy. The temptation of Marxism came at a time when Russia was in its weakest social, political, and spiritual condition. The giant empire could not avoid the slow but steady slide into revolutionary chaos resulting in an entity which declared itself a state of workers and peasants, though in reality it was a reign of utopian faith institutionalized and ritualized under one-party dictatorship.

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4Reginald M. French, The Eastern Orthodox Church (London: Hutchinson's University Library, 1951), 96.

5Jacob Stamulis, "Восточно-православное богословие миссии сегодня" (Eastern Orthodox theology of mission today), in Православная миссия сегодня (Orthodox mission today), comp. Vladimir Fyodorov (St.-Petersburg: "Apostol'sky gorod," 1999), 140-41.

6John Fennel, A History of Russian Church to 1448 (London: Longman, 1995), 42.

7Ibid., 87.

8Riegel, Marxism-Leninism, 113.

9Besançon, 217.
This cursory overview of Russia's historical development indicates that her quest for national identity and restoration in one way or another revolves around the Christian truth that is inseparably linked with the history and destiny of her people.\textsuperscript{10} This reality impels me to reflect on the missional dimension of the Christian faith in the amalgam of the religious-cultural milieu of Russia, bringing to the forefront of the discussion: What can Jesus of Nazareth offer to the Russian people who have to live in the context of post-apocalyptic culture?\textsuperscript{11} How should the Russian Christian community respond to the traumatic aftereffects of totalitarianism labeled by Dominick LaCapra as "the hauntingly possessive ghosts," which are not fully owned by anyone and yet affect

\textsuperscript{10} As a latest example of how the Christian religion affects Russia's quest for national identity, one may point to an ideological alliance emerging from the dubious church-state relations. Zhan Toshchenko, a leading Russian sociologist, asserts that Russia is a secular state by name but "heavily (activno) stricken with the clericalization processes." Zhan T. Toshchenko, "Государство как субъект теократии" (State as subject of theocracy), \textit{Sotsiologicheskie issledovania} 2 (2007): 6. See also Tatyana Matsuk, "Religion and Spirituality as Factors Affecting Social Cohesion in Contemporary Russia," in \textit{Social Capital and Social Cohesion in Post-Soviet Russia}, ed. Judith L. Twigg and Kate Schechter (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 2003), 161. Furthermore, "The Declaration of Human Rights and Dignity," adopted at the Tenth World Council of Russian People held in Moscow April 4-6, 2006, states that "there are values that are no less important than human rights, they are: faith, morality, sacred objects, the Motherland." See http://www.mospat.ru/index.php?page=30728 (accessed Dec. 27, 2006). By this assertion, the Orthodox Church called into question the idea expressed in Article 2 of the 1993 Russian Constitution which declares: "Man, his rights and freedoms shall be the supreme value." For further discussion of church-state relations in contemporary Russia see Father Georgii Chistiakov, "In Search of the 'Russian Idea': A View from Inside the Russian Orthodox Church," in \textit{Religion and Identity in Modern Russia: The Revival of Orthodoxy and Islam}, ed. Juliet Johnson, Marietta Stepaniants, and Benjamin Forest (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate Publishing Co., 2005), 57. Fr. Chistiakov's analysis proves the point that to change \textit{Homo Sovieticus} into \textit{Homo Orthodox} is a big, if not impossible, task. See also Franklin and Widdis, 115.

\textsuperscript{11}The term "post-apocalyptic" does not mean that the apocalyptic prophesies of Daniel, Jesus, and Paul have been fully fulfilled. Rather, speaking from the local cultural perspective, I want to emphasize the scale of the drama that befell Russia under the duress of Communism. In its extreme sufferings, the Russian nation experienced a time of trouble that may certainly be qualified as apocalyptic by its nature.
everyone? As a missiological core of this study, the following section seeks to answer these questions from the viewpoint of Jesus' inaugural address delivered at Nazareth (Luke 4:16-21).

Toward a Missiology for Contemporary Russia

The issue haunting every church and religious group in Russia is threefold, that of identity, meaning, and mission. Because history plays such an important role in shaping people's life and attitudes, in its quest for relevance and authenticity, the Russian Christian community must absorb the full theological significance of the country's recent history and develop a missiological vision relevant for decades to come. The misery and moral depravation that befell Russians during the communist experiment must be encountered by a counterforce matching the scale and nature of their predicament; or else the church is in danger of alienating herself from the surrounding culture to the point that her "saltiness" will become useless. With that end in view, I propose to use the Lukan vision of the triune God (Luke 4:14-21) unfolding His mission of liberation, restoration, and transformation as the most adequate response to the immense trauma caused by

12Dominick LaCapra, Writing History, Writing Trauma (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), xi.

13It is assumed that by saying "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me" Jesus actually made a trinitarian statement. In other words, His programmatic sermon is a mission statement of the triune God. Besides Luke 4:16-21, such passages as 4:43 ("I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, because for this purpose I have been sent"), 5:32 ("I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance"), and 19:10 ("for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost") definitely fall into the category of programmatic declarations. Guy D. Nave, The Role and Function of Repentance in Luke-Acts, in Academia Biblica, no. 4, ed. Mark A. Powell (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2002), 165. Metaphorically, the fact that the Lukan Jesus delivered His most important programmatic speech at Nazareth, a city in semi-pagan Galilee (Matt 4:15; cf. Isa 8:22 and 9:1) where nothing good could come out of (John 1:46), may coincide with the moral depravity that plagued Russia under Stalinism and in its aftermath.

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Stalinism. Although this is not an entirely new approach,\textsuperscript{14} the missiological potential of Jesus' programmatic announcement at Nazareth has never been the focus of mission theology and praxis in Russia.


There are three main reasons why Luke-Acts seems to be the most adequate reference point for building a missiological paradigm for contemporary Russia, a country marked with sustained social traumas: (1) the significance of history and culture in Luke-Acts; (2) the continuity between the mission of Jesus and the apostolic church; and (3) the totality of Jesus' ministry of liberation. All three reasons reflect Luke's theological constants stemming from and based on his faith, scientific research (Luke 1:1-4),\textsuperscript{15} his vocation as a physician (Col 4:14), and his close association with the apostle Paul (2 Tim 4:11; Phlm 24).

**Significance of History and Culture in Luke-Acts**

Luke-Acts promotes a dialogical rather than an escapist approach to culture. For the Third Evangelist it is indisputable that "Christian faith—Luke is the first to be so

\textsuperscript{14}Stanley Jones, a missionary and evangelist to India, after his visit to the USSR around 1934, took the Nazareth inaugural address of Jesus as "the starting point" of his program, which he believed was to become a Christian alternative to the growing influence of Communism in the world. E. Stanley Jones, *Christ's Alternative to Communism* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1935), 10. Cf. Samuel O. Abogunrin, "Jesus' Sevenfold Programmatic Declaration at Nazareth: An Exegesis of Luke 4.15-30 from an African Perspective," *Black Theology* 1, no. 2 (May 2003): 225-49.

aware of this matter—must engage in dialogue with human cultures." Since culture, broadly defined, is both a historically and spiritually conditioned phenomenon, Luke begins his narrative by stating (1:5) that the events he is about to recount took place in the days of Herod, the king of Judea (political context), when there was a certain priest named Zacharias, of the division of Abijah (religious context). Then Luke specifies the larger, imperial setting in which Jesus' birth occurred, "It came to pass in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered" (Luke 2:1). Finally, the Third Evangelist mentions that the eve of Jesus' public activity fell at "the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, while Annas and Caiaphas were high priests, the word of God came to John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness" (Luke 3:1-2).

This is not, however, merely historical information. In fact, "Luke sets the stage for his narrative as a complex power system that includes both Roman and Jewish authorities and that is both political and religious in character." Furthermore, Luke makes it very clear that human history is an arena of God directing the metahistory

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(cosmic history) and thus unfolding His eternal plan of salvation and restoration of humanity. As can be deduced from the Lukan narration of the second temptation of Jesus (to receive the authority over all the kingdoms of the world at the price of worshipping the devil, Luke 4:5-8), the reading of Luke-Acts must reject both the false dichotomy between religion and politics and that between earthly powers and the realm of the demonic.

Luke's theological message is clear: Missio Dei finds its fullest expression when Jesus enters the depths of human existence: human history and human culture, no matter how deeply they have been warped by the demonic. Unlike the timeless myths peculiar to Eastern mysterious religions, the God of Israel and His Anointed One intervene in human history, both ecclesial and secular, and by entering various cultural circumstances change its course from within. Hence, spiritual, socioeconomic, and political overtones can be heard from the outset of Luke's writing. The three Jewish Christian hymns of Luke 1-2 serve as "the overture which sets out certain motifs which will recur in the body of the composition." For example, in the Magnificat (Luke 1:46-55), Mary praises God by saying that He "scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts," "put down the

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19 As Yamazaki-Ransom argues, "The supernatural setting of Luke's second temptation (the reference to Satan and the viewing of the entire world 'in an instant') and the political content of the offering (the kingdoms of the world) suggest a close relationship between the supernatural and earthly realms: the authority the devil offers to Jesus is simultaneously supernatural/demonic and earthly/political. This provides a hermeneutical framework for the subsequent narrative of Luke-Acts: the earthly events Luke tells the reader must be read within the larger framework of the cosmic conflict between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan." Yamazaki-Ransom, 210-11.

mighty from their thrones, and exalted the lowly"; God "filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He has sent away empty" (Luke 1:51b-53). Likewise in the Benedictus (Luke 1:67-79), Zachariah prophesies that his son John, in his mission as the Messiah's forerunner, will "give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death" (Luke 1:79a; cf. Acts 26:18). As Horsley concludes, Zachariah's song "celebrates God's salvation of the people in a comprehensive sense, the sociopolitical dimensions being inseparable from the religious." Later in the Lukan narrative, Jesus would establish His program based on these liberation themes and use them as descriptors of His comprehensive mission.

Thus, from the outset of his two-volume work, Luke makes it obvious that God meets people where they are culturally. The value of Luke-Acts as a basic referential system for any attempt to pursue historically and culturally relevant missiological ends is beyond question.

**Continuity between the Mission of Jesus and the Apostolic Church**

Matson asserts that Luke wrote his twofold composition not only as a historian, theologian, and literary artist, but also as "the missiologist." Luke described the mission

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21 As Farris highlights, these words are to be understood as addressing both spiritual and concrete (sociopolitical) reality. Farris, 124. Raymond Brown, in his magisterial work *The Birth of the Messiah*, suggests that the poor and the hungry in the *Magnificat* are primarily spiritual, but this does not exclude "the physical realities faced by early Christians." Raymond E. Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah: A Commentary on the Infancy Narratives in Matthew and Luke* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1977), 363-64. See also Richard A. Horsley, *The Liberation of Christmas: The Infancy Narratives in Social Context* (New York: Crossroad Publishing Co., 1989), 114.

22 Horsley, 119.

of God as being fulfilled not only in the person of Jesus of Nazareth but also as being incarnated in the ministry of the early church. As a result, the Gospel of Luke is the only Gospel that has a sequel. Loughlin has insightfully expressed the notion of unity between the mission of Jesus and the church, saying:

The story of Jesus is also the story of the Church; or rather, the story of Jesus opens onto the Church's story, so that the two stories are one story. This is because Jesus' story does not come to an end with his death, but continues, and does so variously. The story of Jesus continues because no one human life-story is isolate, entire onto itself. All human life-stories are woven out of and into other life-stories; the stories of parents and children, of friends and enemies, of all whom we have touched and who have touched us, however fleetingly. Thus Jesus' story is also the stories of those who cared for him and who taught him, who befriended him and who hated him; as it is also the stories of those for whom he cared, whom he taught and loved. And each one of their stories is woven into the stories of the people with whom they had to do. Thus we can think of the story of Jesus as linked to, or woven with, many others; all of them interwoven so that together they make one story: ultimately the story of humanity.

The interlink that knits together two Lukan narratives is the reality of the Holy Spirit who equally empowered Jesus (Luke 4:18) and the early Christian community (Acts 1:8). This new situation signified that after a long absence God re-established His presence in the midst of His people. It comes as no surprise, therefore, that Wenk

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26Loughlin, 82-3.
concludes, "what Lk. 4.14-30 is for the Gospel, Acts 1.8 is for the second volume of Luke's writing."²⁹ Jesus began the self-definition of His mission by saying, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me" (Luke 4:18). After the resurrection, He assured His disciples that He would send upon them His Father's "promise," the "power from on high" (Luke 24:49). The author reiterates this assurance in Acts 1:4 and 8. In turn, Acts 2 describes the fulfillment of the promise and indicates how Christ's claim—"the Spirit of the Lord is upon Me"—was transformed into another reality—"the Spirit of the Lord is upon us" where the us is 120 disciples with the Twelve at the core of the group as a whole (Acts 1:16). The disciples became co-anointed with Jesus.

Once the Holy Spirit empowered the early church, He became the driving force behind the early disciples' mission in the same manner as He was present in the ministry of their Master.³⁰ It was one mission of the same triune God carrying out His eternal plan of salvation. The fact that Acts ends so abruptly suggests that the story of Jesus is not finished and "includes the stories of all those people who were touched by Him, and of the people touched by them, and so on through the Church's touching history."³¹

This issue of unity and, in a sense, equality between the ministry of Jesus and that of the early Christian community constitutes an important reference point for missiology today when Jesus is not physically present in the midst of His followers.

²⁹Wenk, 19.
³⁰Ibid., 257, 316.
³¹Loughlin, 86.
Totality of Jesus' Ministry of Liberation

The Nazareth inaugural sermon demonstrates the all-encompassing character of Jesus' mission: He came to proclaim "the whole gospel . . . to the whole person in the whole world." As Joseph Ratzinger points out, "Jesus has to enter into the drama of human existence, for that belongs to the core of his mission; he has to penetrate it completely, down to its uttermost depths, in order to find the 'lost sheep,' to bear it on his shoulders, and to bring it home."

Jesus saw illness not only as an issue of physical infirmity, but as that which has devastating effects on the totality of human existence, alienating from God, breaking off social relations, and destroying the meaning of life as a whole. As Pilch's taxonomy of illnesses in Luke-Acts suggests, Jesus had to deal with all three dimensions of the human predicament: illnesses in which a spirit was involved, illnesses that afflicted symbolic body zones (heart/eyes, mouth/ears, hands/feet), and illnesses that affected one's ritual status regulated by the purity and impurity norms. Pilch notes:

This holistic perspective on the illness category of human misfortunes in Luke-Acts prompts the observation that in the ministry of Jesus, all human beings are totally in need of God's redemption (all three zones), which redemption Jesus provides. When all zones are affected, this totality of zones correlates with the complete need of redemption. Persons totally dominated by Satan experience total powerlessness, and

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33Ratzinger, 26.


like people affected in all three zones are also in need of redemption or empowerment.\textsuperscript{36}

So too the healings Jesus performed were holistic for they were realizations of the divine šālōm.\textsuperscript{37} As Green points out, the Lukan emphasis on holism calls into question two interrelated views held in the twentieth-century West—namely, that "salvation" must be understood in "spiritual terms" whereas healing is only for the physical body: \textsuperscript{38} "Far from speaking of deliverance in soulish or spiritual terms, the Gospel of Luke . . . presents Jesus' salvific ministry in ways that foster wholistic thinking about soteriology."\textsuperscript{39} The Lukan Jesus did not belong to the middle-class bourgeois; \textsuperscript{40} neither should He be ranked

\textsuperscript{36}Pilch, 206.

\textsuperscript{37}According to Gerhard Hasel, "'healing' in the biblical sense, is the experience or process which restores fallen, alienated human beings to intimate fellowship, friendship, and communion with God. It is šālōm—'peace'—in that comprehensive sense of total well-being." Gerhard F. Hasel, "Health and Healing in the Old Testament," \textit{Andrews University Seminary Studies} 21, no. 3 (Autumn 1983): 202.

\textsuperscript{38}An example of this somewhat unwarranted dichotomy is the following statement made by John Stott: "The 'salvation' which Christ once died to win and now offers to men is neither psycho-physical healing nor socio-political liberation." John R. W. Stott, \textit{Christian Mission in the Modern World: What the Church Should Be Doing Now!} (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1975), 100. Years later, however, the same author articulated his position concerning salvation somewhat differently: "To ignore the dehumanizing evils of society, while preaching the humanizing influence of salvation, is to be guilty of an inner contradiction which misrepresents God and distorts the gospel. Compassionate involvement in other people's felt needs is part and parcel of incarnational mission, and is demanded by the gospel of Christ." John R. W. Stott, \textit{The Contemporary Christian: Applying God's Word to Today's World} (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992), 353.


\textsuperscript{40}As Esler observed, "the ingrained disregard among scholars for the social and economic setting of Luke-Acts, and their corresponding enthusiasm . . . for its alleged spiritual and individualistic approach to salvation, originate in a clear middle-class bias. Generations of scholars, in their seminaries and universities, have been so successful in making Luke's message on possessions palatable for bourgeois tastes that its genuinely radical nature has rarely been noted. Having succeeded in spiritualizing the good news announced by Lukan Jesus to the destitute, the European scholarly establishment should not be too surprised that during the last
among political messiahs whose task was to launch a "permanent cultural revolution."\textsuperscript{41} Luke's philosophy of holism avoids the two extremes, that of "an excessive verticalism" (liberation from sin and evil understood in terms of private spiritual life which focuses on the otherworldly) and "no less excessive horizontalism" (salvation is reduced primarily to the social and political dimensions);\textsuperscript{42} his theology "strikes a careful balance between physical and spiritual salvation; he offers hope to men and women at all levels of their troubled existence."\textsuperscript{43}

The scope of Jesus' grand design included Jews and Gentiles (Luke 1:54-55, 77; 4:26-27; 13:29),\textsuperscript{44} people up and down the social ladder (7:2; 18:18; 19:2; 5:29-31; 13:11; 15:1), the oppressed and the oppressors alike.\textsuperscript{45} The Third Evangelist masterfully encapsulated this universal dimension of the gospel in the concise form of Luke 4:18-19, a passage that contains not only what the Messiah was going to do but also the kind of people He came to minister to: "the poor," "the captives," "the blind," and "those who are

150 years the working classes have abandoned the leading Christian denominations in the West in their droves." Esler, 170.


\textsuperscript{43}Esler, 199.

\textsuperscript{44}Pereira points out how God's "authentic universalism" promised in the Old Testament reached its climax in Ephesus where "both Jews and Gentiles together were preached to on an equal footing," that is, outside of the synagogue. Moreover, the parallelisms of Jesus-Paul, John the Baptist-Apollos, the twelve disciples of Jesus and the twelve disciples in Ephesus, Jesus' way to Jerusalem and Paul's plans to go to Rome, and Jesus' last instructions to His disciples and Paul's farewell discourse with the Ephesian elders highlight the continuity between the mission of Jesus and that of the post-Pentecost church. Francis Pereira, \textit{Ephesus: Climax of Universalism in Luke-Acts: A Reduction-Critical Study of Paul's Ephesian Ministry} (Acts 18:23—20:1) (Anand, India: Gujarat Sahitya Prakash, 1983), 253-58.

\textsuperscript{45}Witherington III, 72.
oppressed" (RSV). As Bock concludes, all these images point to the totality of Jesus' deliverance and the comprehensiveness of His message.46

The import of Jesus' programmatic announcement at Nazareth indicates that His concern for "the poor" was of central importance for Him,47 and the weight of this inference should not be overlooked in any missiological discourse addressing the post-Marxist social and spiritual realities.48 In the Gospel of Luke, "the poor" are a paradigm within a paradigm.49 The phrase euangelizesthai ptochois ("to evangelize the poor") is "an encompassing designation of Jesus' whole ministry which is then expanded upon in the remainder of the verse [18]."50 Whether "the poor" are to be understood as those who


47See Luke 7:22; 14:13, 21; 16:20, 22; 18:22; 19:8; 21:3. James Metzger notes that "it is reasonable to view "the poor" (πτωχοίς) as the primary designation for the intended recipients [of "good news"], whose make-up is then further delineated by the list that follows: 'the captives'; 'the blind'; 'the oppressed'. In effect, Jesus' initial statement—'He has anointed me to bring good news to the poor'—may be understood as a thesis that is subsequently expanded by a second statement—'He has sent me to preach release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free the oppressed, and to preach a favorable year from the Lord—which not only adds further dimension to the inclusive category of πτωχοί but informs readers of the ways in which this good news will be manifested." James A. Metzger, Consumer and Wealth in Luke's Travel Narrative, Biblical Interpretation Series, vol. 88, ed. R. Alan Culpepper and Ellen van Wolde (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 27.

48In a sense, communism did side with the poor precisely because the Church failed to do so. As Ellul observes, "Christianity should have taken up the cause of the poor; better yet, it should have identified with the poor. Instead, during almost the entire course of its history, the Church has served as a prop of the powerful and has been on the side of exploiters and states. The Church is numbered among the 'powers'; it has sanctified the situation of the poverty-stricken. It provided theological justification for political regimes and tried to persuade the poor to accept their oppressed condition, all the while legitimizing their exploitation." Jacques Ellul, Jesus and Marx: From Gospel to Ideology, trans. Joyce M. Hanks (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1988), 6.


were sinned against, as social outcasts, as the personae miserabiles (socially distressed and all the suffering ones), in terms of spiritual predicament, in the modern context of a traumatized culture such inclusiveness of the term is suggestive. As Topel points out, "the poor" refers to "a mixture of social, economic, political, and religious dimensions." Furthermore, in the Gospel of Luke, this category of people creates a backdrop against which Jesus reveals the compassionate character of His Father and proves that the Dayspring from on high did visit the needy and the oppressed (Luke 1:78).

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51 Gutierrez, 292-95.
54 As Bock argues, Luke uses the term ptochês to mean a "soteriological generalization"—that is, it refers to those who most often responded to Jesus (1 Cor 1:26-29), and in an invitation context it refers to those who are open to God." Bock, Luke: Volume 1, 408.
55 According to Wenk, "the poor" that occur between Luke 4:16-30 and 7:22 are the beneficiaries of the era of Jubilee and "embody all levels of society, including the economically poor, the sick, the dishonored, those excluded from God's people by their fellow Jews, those held in satanic bondage and those in need of forgiveness of their sins. With the inclusion of the centurion, a Gentile, the poor represent all of humanity in its need of God's eschatological salvation." Wenk, 214. Moxnes asserts that in the Gospel of Luke, "poverty' is almost always combined with other human situations of deprivation, illness, shame, impurity or a position of marginality. This is because 'poverty' was not just an economic condition but a total situation. Thus, the descriptions that are added here bring together a combination of aspects that all express that the poor are not in control of their situation, they do not have power over their own 'place', rather they are put in a place defined by others: a place of shame, scorn, derision." Halvor Moxnes, "Kingdom Takes Place: Transformation of Place and Power in the Kingdom of God in the Gospel of Luke," Biblical Interpretation Series, vol. 53, ed. R. Alan Culpepper and Rolf Rendtorf (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 195. For a helpful discussion of poverty and poor in the Old Testament and in the Gospel of Luke see L. John Topel, Children of a Compassionate God: A Theological Exegesis of Luke 6:20-49 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2001), 67-87.
56 Topel, 67.
The totality of Jesus' mission—which included spiritual, moral, psychological, and sociopolitical elements—corresponds with the immensity of trauma caused by Stalinism. However, a dimension of His ministry such as spiritual warfare must be singled out as that of greater significance. From Peter's recounting of the nature and meaning of the Messiah's public activity—"how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; how he went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him" (Acts 10:38; RSV, italics mine)—it is unambiguously clear that Luke understood the Nazareth sermon "in terms of Jesus' overthrowing the demonic forces which have held the people captive." 58 This fits well with Luke's depiction of the earthly drama of Jesus as a miniature portrayal of the cosmic conflict between God and Satan that broke out in the shadowy past. 59

Luke located the Nazareth episode between two blocks of material that directly relate to the issue of spiritual warfare: the testing of Jesus by the devil in the wilderness (Luke 4:1-13) and the healing of a demon-possessed man at Capernaum (Luke 4:33-37), the latter being the very first recorded miracle of Jesus. In addition, the following two accounts, namely the healing of Peter's mother-in-law and of multitudes (Luke 4:38-39 and 40-41 respectively) provide additional illustrations of Jesus' determination to free captives from the oppression of Satan. 60


Thus, Jesus' announcement at the Nazareth synagogue serves as "a privileged locus to understand and define Christian mission." The value of His programmatic sermon lies in the fact that it sets a precedent for creating a mission paradigm for wounded individuals and broken societies. Christ's philosophy of "evangelizing the poor" reveals God's plan to bring liberation to those who have been held captive by "the power of darkness" (Luke 22:53; cf. 1:79 and Acts 26:18). It is precisely this factor that makes Luke 4:16-21 exceptionally relevant and applicable to the traumatized and demonized cultural milieu of post-Soviet Russia.

The legacy of Stalinism, as previously mentioned, is foremost a spiritual phenomenon and as such must be encountered by the power of the same Spirit that was upon Jesus (Luke 3:22; 4:18) and His disciples (Acts 2). Luke summarizes Jesus' commission given to the Twelve, saying that He called them together and "gave them power and authority over all demons, and to cure diseases" (Luke 9:1). The driving out of demons and the healing of diseases was one indivisible mission of Jesus' early followers...
Thus, instead of reducing its mission efforts to one or two elements of the Nazareth paradigm, a Christian community in the context of a post-totalitarian culture must take into consideration the totality of Jesus' ministry of liberation, healing, and transformation.

Missiological Aspects of Luke 4:16-21

A missiological reading of the Nazareth episode (Luke 4:16-21) reveals several significant aspects of Jesus' mission. First, the scriptural rationale of His program was based on what I would call a hermeneutic of actuality. In other words, Jesus knew how to read the Scripture communally and interpret the community's story scripturally. Second, Jesus advanced the idea of binding together Sabbath worship and the Jubilee theme of deliverance. Third, Jesus regarded the household/family structure as the main social location of His holistic ministry. Finally, His program of liberation presupposed an ever-present tension between the Kingdom of God and the political kingdoms of this world. The following sections of this study explain the missiological meaning attended to each of these facets as they relate to the traumatized culture of contemporary Russia.

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Jesus' Hermeneutic of Actuality

Scriptural exposition

The brilliance with which Luke handles the eyewitnesses' testimonies about the Jesus event is a recognized fact in Lukan studies.64 The *chiasme rhétorique* found in numerous passages of his two-volume work, including Luke 4:18-19, is another evidence of his literary skills. The insertion of Isa 61:1 in the Nazareth pericope is a uniquely Lukan choice absent in two other Synoptic Gospels (Mark 6 and Matt 13). The author reworked the Septuagint text of Isa 61:1-2a in such a way as to present a more coherent chiastic structure with new emphasis. He eliminated the clause "to heal the brokenhearted" (Isa 61:1d), replaced it with the slightly changed (from imperative to infinitive) words found in Isa 58:6 ("to let the oppressed go free"), and omitted the theme of vengeance spelled out in Isa 61:2b.65 Thus Luke's efforts resulted in the chiastic form in which the phrase "recovering the sight to the blind" became the climax. This carefully crafted chiastic structure serves as "the hinge around which the list of Jesus' healing activity revolves [Luke 7:22-23]."66 Luke presents Jesus as both enabler and object of

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physical seeing, and he does so "in a way that symbolizes the deeper seeing which is the faith that perceives Jesus' true identity and acts upon it."  

In addition, it seems that Luke also desired to emphasize that Jesus' ministry was based on and stood in continuity with the Old Testament Scriptures. Hence, there is such a notable tracery with the words—"receiving the Scripture," "opening the Scripture," "closing the Scripture," and "returning the Scripture." Jesus did not start His mission as an impostor; on the contrary, He understood it as the fulfillment of the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms (Luke 24:44).

The subsequent assertion—"today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing" (Luke 4:21)—demonstrates how He interpreted the Jubilee motif of Lev 25 and Deut 15 mediated through the prophet Isaiah. As Liu comments, "the fulfillment lies in the presence of the Proclaimer." Jesus proclaimed Himself as "the very one whose activity was therein spoken of, and thereby claimed to fulfill simultaneously the roles ascribed both to the Messiah King and the Prophet like Moses of the end times." The permanent actuality implied in the word today makes Jesus' program of liberation

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68 Liu, 194.


70 Monshouwer, 98.
relevant for all the subsequent readers and hearers of this gospel story. It follows, therefore, that the eschatological end-time is not an indefinite future but the present of which the liberation ministry of Jesus is "an expression." Accordingly, Luke "de-emphasizes the timing of the End and seeks to prepare the church for the long haul and for its mission to the world." As Byrne explains, Luke's schema of salvation is open-ended and flexible, and that is one reason why it is so attractive. The image of God that emerges from this Gospel is a God of the 'second chance.' Those who fail to respond the first time around (during Jesus' own life), get a second chance in the time of the Church. . . . Put another way and somewhat more colloquially, the God of Luke is a God who, in the game of salvation, is always moving the goalposts—but doing so to the advantage, not the disadvantage, of weak, laboring humankind.

Regardless of the scriptural validity of Jesus' message and contrary to the strong appeal it had to the mind-set shaped by messianic expectations, His compatriots turned into a "lynching party." As Luke explains, they sought a miracle from Jesus (Luke 4:23). This Jesus refused and supported His decision by referring to the experiences of Elijah and Elisha whose ministries transcended the boundaries of their own land and people. Enraged by Jesus' response, people in the synagogue thrust Jesus out of the city

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71 Hamm, "The Freeing of the Bent Woman," 34.
75 David Hill, "The Rejection of Jesus at Nazareth (Luke iv 16-30)," Novum Testamentum 13, no. 3 (1971): 178. As Evans points out, the references to Elijah and Elisha "emphasize that those assumed to be non-elect (Gentiles, Samaritans, the poor) may in fact be included in the kingdom and even serve as examples for others to follow, while those who assume their fitness for the kingdom (such as the pious and wealthy who say, "I will follow you") may actually be excluded." Craig A. Evans, "The Function of the Elijah/Elisha Narratives in Luke's Ethic of Election," in Luke and Scripture: The Function of Sacred Tradition in Luke-Acts, ed. Craig A. Evans and James A. Sanders (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 82.
with the intention of throwing Him down over the cliff (Luke 4:28-29).  

Missiological implications

**Bringing the Scripture and community together.** When Jesus proclaimed, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing" (Luke 4:21; RSV), He demonstrated His wisdom of how to read the Scripture *communally* and the history of one's community *scripturally*. Both readings were a single event of revealing the eternal truth in the temporal realm of culture and history. The exegesis of the Scripture was well supported by the exegesis of culture. In other words, Jesus entered the world of the Scripture in such a way as to become part of both its story and the story of the community shaped by that Scripture. His was a communal and socio-textual reading of the Old Testament.

Jesus' example entails a necessity to take the same hermeneutical step: to read Russian history scripturally and to interpret the Scripture through the lenses of trauma induced by Stalinism. Out of this socio-textual interaction emerges a culturally sensitive conception of Christian mission for today. As a prerequisite for the healing ministry to the traumatized society, the spiritual self-awareness of the Russian Christian community must include a thorough comprehension of the phenomenon of Stalinism and its legacies.

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76 As Sanders concludes, "the prophet who wrests a prophetic challenge to his own people out of their identifying traditions, precisely by the hermeneutic of the freedom of God as Creator of all peoples, is himself not acceptable to them." James A. Sanders, "Isaiah in Luke," *Interpretation* 36 (April 1982): 154. According to the view held by Jeremias, negative reaction to the sermon of Jesus at Nazareth was due to the fact that while citing the prophet Isaiah—"to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord" (Isa 61:2a; RSV)—Jesus left out the prophet's words about the day of vengeance: "and a day of vengeance of our God" (Isa 61:2b; RSV). Joachim Jeremias, *Jesus' Promise to the Nations*, trans. S. H. Hooke (Naperville, IL: Alec R. Allenson, 1958), 45.

77 Cf. Loughlin, 113-14.
As Wright notes, "if our mission is bringing good news into every area of human life, then it calls for some research and analysis as to what exactly constitutes the bad news, horizontally in the structures of a given society and vertically in its history." In effect, this theological self-reflection will make it clear that the church, albeit in a different fashion, suffered the very same traumatic influences that shaped Russian culture and made it what it is today. But most importantly, by establishing a common ground with the traumatized culture, the bearers of Jesus' story will know how to share it with their fellow citizens in a way that will touch the depths of their predicament and make a difference in their lives.

**Engaging in dialogue with culture.** As an inference from the previous missiological implication, it is an important task of Christian thinkers in Russia to seek ways for culturally appropriate forms of religious self-expression, including printed matter, styles of worship, religious holidays, church building architecture, etc. There is hardly any better way to appeal to the recipients of the gospel message than to present it in the language people speak, through the mental images they use, and within the history they live. Furthermore, reading literary works that deal with various aspects of Russian life, including those that reflect on the theological (philosophical) meaning of the Bolshevik tragedy, constitutes one of the most important aspects of the engagement in meaningful dialogue with Russian culture.

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79Various themes of the biblical Book of Apocalypse have been incorporated in such Russian novels as Dostoevsky's *The Idiot*, Bely's *Petersburg*, Platonov's *Chevengur*, Bulgakov's *The Master and Margarita*, and Pasternak's *Doctor Zhivago*. For analysis of this phenomenon see
Sabbath Worship and Healing/Deliverance

Scriptural exposition

To deliver His program of liberation Jesus chose the Sabbath worship in the synagogue setting of Nazareth. Of the three synoptic writers it is the Third Evangelist alone who highlights that Jesus was *eiotos* (a verb participle meaning *to be accustomed*) to enter the synagogue and participate in the Sabbath worship (Luke 4:16; cf. 22:29). All four Gospel writers imply that the traditional Jewish understanding of Sabbath observance and Sabbath worship lacked compassionate concern for fellow humans (Matt 12:9-14; cf. Mark 3:1-6; Luke 6:6-11; John 9). As a result, the Sabbath healings performed by Jesus often caused controversy over the meaning of the Sabbath commandment. Jesus considered both the time and the place of curing the sick to be of high importance for His mission. As Mark underscores, Jesus "was preaching in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and casting out demons" (Mark 1:39; cf. Luke 4:31 and Matt 4:23; 9:35).

There are, however, several uniquely Lukan type-scenes of Jesus curing the sick on Sabbath that presume His re-interpretation of the meaning of Sabbath worship. In fact, the Gospel of Luke "has the greatest amount of text on the issue of healing on the


80 In Acts 17:2, the same word is used regarding Paul's habit to participate in Sabbath worship. At that time, a synagogue service had the embryo of the following pattern: praise—prayer—reading of Scripture (the Law and the Prophets; see Acts 13:14-15)—homily/sermon. See O. S. Rankin, "The Extent of the Influence of the Synagogue Service upon Christian Worship," *Journal of Jewish Studies* 1 (1948-1949): 29. The service also included the recitation of Shema (Deut 6:4-9) and a benediction. See Bock, *Luke: Volume 1*, 403.
sabbath." For example, it was on a Sabbath (temporal setting), in a synagogue (spatial setting), and in some relation to the synagogue service (sacred setting) when Jesus healed the demon-possessed man in Capernaum (Luke 4:31-37), the man with the withered hand (Luke 6:10), and "a woman who had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years" (Luke 13:11, 13). Another healing also occurred on Sabbath, but its location was in the house of one of the leaders of the Pharisees and not in the synagogue (Luke 14:1-6). Of these four accounts the narrative of the healing of the bent-over woman (Luke 13:10-17) is of special significance: first, because it has "an interpretive point of reference to Jesus' introductory programmatic address in the synagogue at Nazareth on a sabbath day (4.16-30)"; second, because it stands as "one of the most finished elaborations of the programmatic lines in Luke." The text reads:

Now he [Jesus] was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath. And there was a woman who had had a spirit of infirmity for eighteen years; she was bent over and could not fully straighten herself. And when Jesus saw her, he called her and said to her, "Woman, you are freed from your infirmity." And he laid his hands upon her, and immediately she was made straight, and she praised God. But the ruler of the synagogue, indignant because Jesus had healed on the sabbath, said to the people, "There are six days on which work ought to be done; come on those days and be healed, and not on the sabbath day." Then the Lord answered him, "You hypocrites! Does not each of you on the sabbath untie his ox or his ass from the manger, and lead it away to water it? And ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham whom Satan bound for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day?" As he said this, all his adversaries were put to shame; and all the


82A possible repercussion of this practice of Jesus to heal on the Sabbath can be found in the story of Paul healing a slave-girl possessing a spirit of divination (Acts 16:16-18; cf. 16:13).


people rejoiced at all the glorious things that were done by him. (Luke 13:10-17; RSV)

This is definitely an exegetically rich passage incorporating eschatological, christological, ecclesiological, and soteriological themes of the entire Lukan theology.\textsuperscript{85} In addition, it may have strong sociopolitical implications.\textsuperscript{86} Luke placed this occurrence at the center of the chiastically structured unit (Luke 12:49—13:35). The passage 13:10-17 crystallizes both blessing for those who recognize the time of God's favor and judgment for those who prefer to remain in spiritual blindness.\textsuperscript{87}

This story teaches that a needy person is not an animal and therefore deserves a better lot than living the miserable existence of a social outcast. Furthermore, the healing of the bent woman shows Jesus fusing in a single event such crucial aspects of the Sabbath commandment as the life-giving power of the Creator ("For in six days the LORD made . . ." [Exod 20:11]) and the Divine passion for human liberation and restoration ("And remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God brought you out from there" [Deut 5:15]).\textsuperscript{88} Jesus' interaction with the synagogue leader demonstrates that without compassion religion may become an instrument of oppression, a theme that has much in common with other stories and parables of the Gospel of Luke.\textsuperscript{89}

\textsuperscript{85} Hamm, "The Freeing of the Bent Woman," 23.
\textsuperscript{87} Hamm, "The Freeing of the Bent Woman," 29-31.
\textsuperscript{88} Ibid., 27-8.
\textsuperscript{89} See, for example, the following stories and parables focusing on the issue of compassion: the healing of the leper (Luke 5:12-16), the centurion's son (Luke 7:1-10), the raising of a widow's son in Nain (Luke 7:11-17), the curing of the demoniac in the country of the
Jesus freed the bent woman because He recognized that she was "a daughter of Abraham" (Luke 10:16), that is, she too had a share in the covenant promises given to Abraham.90 This proves that Jesus "proposed mercy as the lens through which to interpret the law."91 If in the meaning of the Sabbath there is no room for the idea of liberation, this commandment may function as the opposite of what it was meant to be. As a result, "being an opponent in the programme of loosening . . . implies being adjuvant to a programme of binding."92

Missiological implications

The worship that liberates. It may be deduced from the story of the bent woman that Sabbath worship should invoke not only remembrance of the deliverance that occurred in the distant past but actual experiences of deliverance lived through *hic et nunc*.93 Not only prayers *for* the destitute, but also prayers *in the presence of* the destitute must become an indispensable element of worship. In fact, these prayers as well as other healing elements of worship will comprise deeds of deliverance brought about "in Jesus' name"—something characteristic of the mission of Christ's closest associates (Luke 9:1-2; 10:1, 17). The eschatological *today* highlighted by Jesus in the Nazareth sermon (Luke Gerasenes (Luke 10:25-37), the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37), and the parable of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32).

90Seim notes that "it is a consistent trait in Luke-Acts that the motif of liberation is central in the traditions about Abraham: 1.52-3; 1.73-5; Acts 7.6-7." Seim, 49.


92Welzen, 180.

93For Luke, Esler notes, "the elimination of injustice, the alleviation of the sufferings of the poor and the destitute, is not merely an eschatological reality, but is a vital constituent of Christianity in this world, here and now." Esler, 193.
4:21) stands as a powerful example of what it means to live in the end-time: to evangelize/liberate "the poor." His eschatological today is irrefutable evidence that to keep the Sabbath holy means to be engaged in acts of deliverance.

The Sabbath is both a day for healing and a day of release envisioned in the Old Testament Jubilee tradition. The praise on the lips of the healed woman and of those who sympathized with her in the synagogue (Luke 13:10, 17) resulted from the revelation of Christ as the Divine Healer and Liberator. The centrality of the idea of liberation in both the Sabbath commandment and in the ministry of the "Lord of the Sabbath" (Luke 6:5) suggests that this aspect must regain its rightful place in the theology and praxis of Sabbath worship. In this respect, the story of the bent woman suggests a shift from a solely theocentric model of worship to that of both theocentric and anthropocentric.

The worship as a counterculture. The profoundly countercultural meaning of Sabbath worship is highly relevant in the post-Soviet reality that exudes a culture of cruelty and death. The worship service (especially the Lord's Supper) must be structured from the standpoint of those who have been repeatedly traumatized and whose traumas are sustained, who are being alienated from God, who are being "bent-over" by the everyday spiritual and socioeconomic pressures. Viewed as a unique opportunity to fulfill the multifunctional task of spiritual renewal, psychological counseling, intellectual nourishment, and moral exhortation Sabbath worship can continuously make people

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95 Richard H. Lowery, *Sabbath and Jubilee* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2000), 139.
"straight" so that they, like the bent-over woman healed by Jesus, experience genuine Shabbat in their very beings.⁹⁶

Nothing can compete with properly organized and inspired worship to reaffirm the image of God in the traumatized individuals who enter the Sabbath's sacred time and space. The Sabbath provides ample opportunity to redefine the identity of humans by reminding them of their Creator and by letting them experience the power of His liberation. An effective way to resist the demoralizing and demonizing influence of the dominant culture would be to experience the counter-force of Divine compassion, forgiveness, and regenerating power springing from the Word of God shared on Sabbath. A powerful way to foretaste the eternal life within Familia Dei is to worship in the company of fellow believers in a non-judgmental, compassionate environment of genuine solidarity of the destitute. The truth of eternal life in unity with God must be experienced already in the setting of His transformative presence amidst His followers. As long as the everyday struggles of "the poor" are misunderstood or ignored, as long as their everyday pains are not addressed by Sabbath worship, the latter will speedily degenerate into a mere talkfest. As a result, the true meaning of Sabbath will be missed.⁹⁷ If the contemporary faith community does not provide an ample environment to liberate those who are being "bent" by the oppressive everydayness, if it does not raise its voice for the sake of the "bent-over," and is unable to disempower the forces of this world in the lives

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⁹⁷ Kinukawa, 314.
of individuals, the preaching about the second coming of Jesus and the life in the
hereafter will be significantly invalidated.

**Jesus, Oikos, and Evangelism**

Scriptural exposition

Jesus' sermon at the Nazareth synagogue (Luke 4:16-21) reflects not only the
scope of His ministry but also the type of people He came to minister to: "the poor." As
far as the evangelistic thrust of His program is concerned, the Third Evangelist
characterizes it in terms of didáskô (to teach), euangelizô (to preach the good news), and
kérússô (to proclaim). These terms can be found not only in the referred passage but

In what spatial and social locations did Jesus' evangelistic/liberation ministry take
place *par excellence* and why? Where did He encounter those who were the focus of His
wholistic mission: "the poor," "the captives," "the blind," and "the oppressed"? In what
spiritual, social, and moral terms does Luke describe the new household established by
Jesus?

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98 The word *evangelism* is used here as a technical term meaning "that dimension and
activity of the church's mission which, by word and deed and in the light of particular conditions
and a particular context, offers every person and community, everywhere, a valid opportunity to
be directly challenged to a radical reorientation of their lives, a reorientation which involves such
things as deliverance from slavery to the world and its powers; embracing Christ as Savior and
Lord; becoming a living member of his community, the church; being enlisted into his service of
reconciliation, peace, and justice on earth; and being committed to God's purpose of placing all
things under the rule of Christ." Bosch, 420. As far as various types of the New Testament
evangelism are concerned, for a detailed discussion of them see Timothy E. Byerley, "New
Testament Models of Evangelization and Their Expression in American Catholicism" (Ph.D.
diss., Fordham University, 2006).

What is the missiological significance of the Lukan representation of Jesus not only ministering to the *oikia* but building the new *oikos* of God? What can the post-Soviet church in Russia infer from the Lukan theology of God as the Head of the new *oikos*?

**Jesus as the liberator of the human *oikos***. The correlation between the *oikos* and the liberation activities of Jesus as described in Luke-Acts merits special attention because for Luke, as for Jesus, "the household was ... the social basis and focus of the Jesus movement and the Christian worldwide mission." It was one of Luke's authorial intentions to demonstrate that the *oikos*, and not the Temple or the synagogue, was the main spatial setting for the evangelistic activity of Jesus and His disciples.

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In pre-revolutionary peasant society of Russia, the close equivalents of the New Testament concept of *oikos* were *dvor* (the household) and *mir* or *obshchina* (the commune) where *domokhoziain* was the head of the household and *skhod* was considered as a governing body composed of all the heads of households. Goldman, 145-52.


Manifesto of Jesus (Luke 4:16-21) demonstrated that God broke into human history primarily through the institute of the family/household. Furthermore, the identical phraseology employed in the two missionary discourses (Luke 9:1-6; 10:1-16) points out the strategic importance of the *oikos* for the mission of the Twelve and of the Seventy (-two). In each discourse Jesus commanded His disciples to enter the house, to break bread with the members of the household (but not to intrude upon their hospitality), to heal the sick, and to preach the kingdom of God (Luke 9:5; cf. 10:5-7).

The *oikos* as the patriarchally structured and tightly knit family/household was "precisely the place where some of the central problems of his society become..."
evident." In fact, as Jacobson asserts, in the early days of Christian development the locus and the battleground of Jewish religious life outside of the Jerusalem Temple was the household and not the synagogue. It was natural, therefore, for Jesus to make the household and domestic conduct a central theme of His teaching.

Choosing the family/household as both social structure and theological metaphor was critically important for Jesus' comprehensive ministry: Through the transformation of the oikos He sought to bring regeneration of the entire community of Israel. Moreover, He expected His early disciples to follow this pattern and to consider household evangelism as their modus operandi in the expansion of God's kingdom. It is not accidental that whereas the conversion of Zacchaeus's household (Luke 19:1-10) marks the conclusion of Jesus' mission to the cities and houses of Israel (Luke 10:1-16),


John Elliott, "The Jesus Movement Was Not Egalitarian but Family-Oriented," Biblical Interpretation 11, no. 2 (2003): 199. For example, the political metaphor of God as "king" and God's rule as "kingdom" Jesus explained with a domestic metaphor: household scenes and relations, roles, and activities. Elliott, "Jesus Was Not an Egalitarian," 86.


Matson, 184.
by entering Cornelius's home and converting his household (Acts 10) Peter ushered in the wide-ranging mission to the Gentiles.111 Elliott states, "A key feature of the Jesus movement in the Pauline period . . . was its household orientation: its mission focused not on individuals but household groups; believers assembled in houses for worship; and the household or family (oikos) provided a chief metaphor, as it did for Jesus, for characterizing relations and responsibilities within and among the believing communities."112

At the same time, in discussing the issue of oikos in Luke-Acts one can hardly avoid the problem of the seemingly a-familial sayings of Jesus: Luke 9:57b-58 ("the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head"), 9:59-60a ("Let the dead bury their own dead"), 9:61-62 (permission to say good bye to the family), 12:51-53 ("I came to bring . . . division"), and 14:26 (hatred for one's family as a prerequisite for discipleship).113 Of these five passages Luke 12:49-53 is probably the harshest.114 The passage reads:

I [Jesus] came to send fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled! But I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how distressed I am till it is accomplished! Do you suppose that I came to give peace on earth? I tell you, not at all, but rather division. For from now on five in one house will be divided: three against two, and two against three. Father will be divided against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. (Luke 12:49-53)

111Elliott, "Jesus Was Not an Egalitarian," 75, 85.
Various ideas have been proposed to explain away what looks like Jesus' passionate call
to renounce family ties.\textsuperscript{115} Griffith's dissertation provides, in my view, the most
convincing explanation. According to her,

for Luke the harsh demands were vital to discipleship only in the first period when
Jesus was present among the disciples; in that epoch, to be a disciple was to follow
Jesus—literally and physically—in the itinerant task of proclaiming the kingdom.
After the crucifixion, the concept of discipleship expands to include all believers,
both the itinerant 'disciples' and the local sympathizers and supporters. . . . In the
second volume of Luke's work . . . we found no evidence that the disciples of Jesus
and the missionaries continued to observe the original stringent demands for
itinerant proclamation of the kingdom. . . . Moreover, the gospel message is said to
bring unity and joy into homes as entire households convert together and the gospel
spreads from household to household. . . . As the house and family become the basic
unit of the church, natural families become the basic building blocks of the larger
'family of God'.\textsuperscript{116}

\textbf{Jesus as the founder of the new oikos of God.} Unlike the Jerusalem Temple,
which, according to Luke, had undergone the regression from being the house of
Jesus' Father (Luke 2:49) to becoming a "den of thieves" (Luke 19:46) and, finally,
being left desolate (Luke 21:20; cf. 13:35),\textsuperscript{117} the new oikos of God—the Jesus

\textsuperscript{115}See Jacobson, "Jesus against the Family," 201, and "Divided Families," 364-367; Ieuan
Oporto, 230-38.

\textsuperscript{116}Sheila M. D. Griffith, "Not Peace but a Sword! Luke 12:49-53 and Other Hard Sayings
on the Family in Early Gospel Literature" (Ph.D. diss., University of Virginia, 2004), 302-03. In
her article, Carolyn Osiek reached a similar conclusion stating that Jesus did not abolish the
family but extended it; He did not remove the boundaries of kinship but reset them. Osiek, 32.

\textsuperscript{117}Elliott asserts that in Luke-Acts, "the temple is the object of critique and the arena of
rejection, Satan-inspired conflict and death. In contrast, the household is the object of praise and
the sphere of repentance, concord, and divinely conferred life. Thus . . . the Spirit of God and its
sanctifying power moves from temple to household, from the chief symbol of Jewish national
identity to the principal symbol of a community united with a heavenly Father. In Luke-Acts the
household emerges as the preeminent sphere and symbol of the reception of the gospel, Christian
movement and church that sprang out of it— is a prosperous reality because its fundamental principle is compassion. Compassion marked the entire ministry of Jesus who bodily personified God's new oikos and Himself was "the living Temple of God." Twice in His parables Jesus revealed that compassion is characteristic of the very being of God. Compassion prompted a certain Samaritan to take care of the half dead man lying on the road between Jerusalem and Jericho, and if this had not occurred in a remote place, the Samaritan would have probably taken the robbery victim to his oikos and not to an inn (Luke 10:33). In the parable of the prodigal son, compassion moved the father to run and embrace his spiritually and socially impoverished son (Luke 15:20). Jesus, too, was driven by compassion when He raised the only son of the widow

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118 The apostle Paul calls the church "the household of faith" (Gal 6:10). Because through Jesus Christians have "by one Spirit" access to the Father, their status is that of citizens and members of "the household of God" (Eph 2:19).

119 Esler opines that the Lukan emphasis on the physical and this-worldly dimension of salvation was rooted in his "unusual compassion for the poorest members of his community and of society generally, together with his passionate belief that the gospel was not gospel unless it offered them immediate relief for their physical miseries and gave them, perhaps for the first time, a sense of their own dignity as human persons." Esler, 199.

120 For Luke, compassion "refers to an ideology of inclusiveness, which includes all marginalized people, irrespective of whether they were poor, sick, deformed, outsiders in terms of ethnic classification, even rich. This was opposed by the exclusive ideology of the Pharisees that was also derived from the symbolic universe, and found its expression in the concept of wholeness as holiness." Piet van Staden, Compassion—the Essence of Life: A Social-scientific Study of the Religious Symbolic Universe Reflected in the Ideology/Theology of Luke, Hervormde Teologiese Studies Supplementum Series, vol. 4, ed. Andries van Aarde (Pretoria, Republic of South Africa: University of Pretoria, 1991), 232.

at Nain from the dead (Luke 7:33). In all three instances Luke uses the same phraseology: When the Samaritan/father/Jesus saw him/her, he had compassion on her/him. As Forbes concludes, "Jesus reflects the heart of God in his concern for the downtrodden of society."\(^{122}\) It comes as no surprise, therefore, why the destitute of Jesus' day would often seek nothing but His mercy and heart-felt sympathy.\(^{123}\)

In harmony with Jesus' command to his followers—"be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful" (Luke 6:36)—the relations within this new household of God are to be characterized neither by exploitation nor by egalitarianism.\(^{124}\) The essence of social life must be constituted by compassion.\(^{125}\) The fatherly compassion of God does not abolish but re-defines the patron-client relations that were characteristic of the Greco-Roman world.\(^{126}\) Moreover, these relations are marked by such attributes as: mutual sharing (Luke 6:3-36; 11:5-13; Acts 2:44-47; 4:34-37), justice (Acts 6:1-6), humility

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\(^{123}\) Luke 17:13; 18:13, 38; cf. the following verses in which the theme of mercy and compassion is implied: 7:36-50; 19:1-10, 41-42; 23:34, 39-43.

\(^{124}\) Elliott, "Jesus Was Not an Egalitarian," 88-90.

\(^{125}\) According to Luke, Staden argues, compassion is the essence of God, and as such it must also become the essence of social life. van Staden, 170-71.

\(^{126}\) As Moxnes puts it, "the language of 'father' and 'children' and social relations understood as sharing within a close group, changes the spirit of the relationships. Thus, patron-client relations continued to exist . . . but the old system was not merely adapted into a new *institutional* structure, it was also a new symbolic structure in which patrons or clients in the social world were children of the one Father." Halvor Moxnes, "Social Relations and Economic Interaction in Luke's Gospel," in *Luke-Acts: Scandinavian Perspectives*, 72.

The Lukan Jesus' primary vehicle for social change . . . was the structure of life in the community of his disciples. Among his followers the Lukan Jesus sought a revolution in social attitudes. His disciples were to live in the present in light of God's reversal of all human values in the Eschaton. Such a stance, of course, was regarded by some as "turning the world upside down" (Acts 17:6), even if that was not a primary or even a conscious intention of the Christians. By embodying structures of social relationships that reflected the new life in the Spirit under the Lordship of Jesus, the Christian community functioned in the larger society as an agent of social change.

The main criterion for people to be allowed into the family of God is to be of kin to Jesus, that is, "to hear the word of God and do it" (Luke 8:21; cf. 8:28; 11:27-28).

This is the "good part" that was chosen by Mary (Luke 10:42). Jesus compared His new kin with a man who dug deep and laid the foundation of his oikos on the rock (Luke 6:47). Another image of Jesus' new family is seed that fell on good ground and bore fruit (Luke 8:15). An invitation to follow Jesus must be accepted wholeheartedly as illustrated by the example of James, John, and Levi who "forsook all and followed Him" (Luke 5:11, 28).

As Duling explains,

'Following' is not only a metaphor for discipleship. It demands total commitment to the extent of actually breaking (at least partially) with one's customary family, friends, and work associates and forming new ones. It is total. There is no hesitation, no turning back. . . . Yet, networking is implied by the sets of brothers, by Peter's family at Capernaum, and by fishing contacts around the Sea of Galilee. It is also

127Elliott, "Household and Meals," 104.
128Talbert, 117-18.
130Unusual for the ancient Middle Eastern context, when Luke lists the Twelve (6:14-16), he uses the title the son of for only two of them: James the son of Alphaeus and Judas the son of James (6:15-16). Thus, the boundaries of the new oikos are reset and redefined.
implied in relation to disciples of disciples ([Mark] 9:38 ... ) and to specific persons who 'follow' but are not in the intimate network.  

The kinship with Jesus, however, is not possible without repentance/conversion on the part of the sinner and forgiveness on the part of God. The theme of forgiveness develops the Jubilee image of deliverance as expressed by the terms *aphesin* and *aphesei* (a sending away, remission) in Luke 4:18. Just as the parable of the Prodigal Son is at the heart of the Gospel of Luke, so the idea of repentance is at the heart of this parable (Luke 15:17-19). When Jesus announced that He did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance (Luke 5:32), He clearly indicated that repentance and forgiveness of sins stand as prerequisites for entry into the new family of God (cf. Luke 7:36-50; 18:10-14). The Fatherhood of God, thus, is "righteousness demanding righteousness in response."

The new members of the household of God are "born" into it "as a place of identity and as a community of sharing by 'following Jesus'." Considering the parabolic nature of the image of the child in Luke's Gospel (9:46-48; 18:15-17), it seems that the

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132 According to Nave, in Luke-Acts, repentance must be understood in terms of "the rejection and abandonment of one's former ways of thinking and living and adoption of new ways of thinking and living that result in the just, merciful and equitable treatment of all people by all people." Nave, 166.


135 Moxnes, "Kingdom Takes Place," 201.
household of God is open to the lowly and, in effect, to all.\textsuperscript{136} Moreover, the image of the child as "an archetype which entails mystery, hope, coherence, wonder and openness to life itself"\textsuperscript{137} marks new colors on the overall picture of God as Father and as head of the Divine-human \textit{oikos}. Already during Jesus' ministry, "the poor" partook of the new life in the \textit{oikos} of their Father physically,\textsuperscript{138} socially,\textsuperscript{139} and spiritually. As for the latter, by teaching the Twelve to address God as "our Father" (Luke 11:2) Jesus made it obvious that communion with God as Father is also spiritual entry into His \textit{oikos}, a foretaste of life in His Kingdom.\textsuperscript{140} Thus, in Luke-Acts, the \textit{oikos} imagery is a fundamental symbol of wholistic liberation and restoration, of new life and new kinship.

\textbf{A social sketch of the modern Russian \textit{oikos}.} In the first place, it is important to make clear that the patriarchal family/household in the New Testament time and the post-Soviet family are not the same social institution. The household evangelism model

\footnotesize
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{138}Luke sums up the initial stage of Jesus' ministry: "The blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have the gospel preached to them" (Luke 7:22; cf. 4:18).
\item \textsuperscript{140}Moxnes, "Kingdom Takes Place," 200-201.
\end{itemize}

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manifested in the ministry of Jesus and His apostles cannot be uncritically extended to the reality of 40 million families and 50 million households in Russia today.\footnote{It has been estimated that 40 million families and 50 million households in Russia comprise five general categories: (1) one-person households (20 percent of all households); (2) married couples with children living with them (52 percent of all households); (3) married couples with no children living with them or one-generation families (about 14 percent of all families); (4) single-parent families with children (embracing two generations) or with children and parents (embracing three generations) represent 13 percent of all households; (5) three-generation families of married couples with children (about 1.2 percent). Natalia Rimashevskaya, "Family and Children during the Economic Transition," in \textit{Social Capital and Social Cohesion in Post-Soviet Russia}, 78.} Russian households today lack many characteristics that resided in the patriarchal households of the Mediterranean World and can no longer be considered as tightly knit social units embracing ancestors, extended family, slaves/servants, property, assets, etc.\footnote{In the Roman empire, D'Angelo points out, \textit{"Pater reflects an understanding of the empire as a great familia in which the emperor functions as a paterfamilias, whose auctoritas is based on his ability to regard the whole Roman people as his clients."} Mary R. D'Angelo, \textit{"Abba and 'Father': Imperial Theology and the Jesus Traditions,"} \textit{Journal of Biblical Literature} 111, no. 4 (1992): 623. Cf. pp. 158-59 of this dissertation and Anton S. Makarenko, \textit{The Collective Family: A Handbook for Russian Parents}, trans. Robert Daglish (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., 1967), 27.} As it was demonstrated in chapter 3 of this dissertation, Stalinism significantly undermined the patriarchal structure of the family model in Russia, seeking to replace it with the notion of the "Soviet family" in which the Soviet state, like ancient Rome, assumed the role of the father and the socialist society was regarded as a kind of hyper-extended family.\footnote{Tania R. Lyon, "Housewife Fantasies, Family Realities in the New Russia," in \textit{Living Gender after Communism}, ed. Janet E. Johnson and Jean C. Robinson (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2007), 36. See also Svitlana Taraban, "Birthday Girls, Russian Dolls, and...} Moreover, since the break-up of Stalinism in 1991, the Russian family has undergone significant changes. Regardless of the fact that the patriarchal family has not disappeared completely,\footnote{Tania R. Lyon, "Housewife Fantasies, Family Realities in the New Russia," in \textit{Living Gender after Communism}, ed. Janet E. Johnson and Jean C. Robinson (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2007), 36. See also Svitlana Taraban, "Birthday Girls, Russian Dolls, and...} the emergence of a child-centered (modern) and now a spouse-centered...
(post-modern) type of family indicates significant transformation in family structure, values, and role in society.

Furthermore, one has to take into consideration the issue of family make-up in post-Soviet Russia. The family traumas of the past begot the family traumas of the present and millions of Russians continue to suffer from the prolonged psychosocial traumatization caused by the large-scale socioeconomic calamities that occurred under the Soviet regime and in its aftermath. Many Russians have not only grown up in malfunctioning, morally impoverished, and/or broken families but tend to reproduce the very same brokenness which becomes evident, for instance, in the increasing number of divorces, abortions, children born out of wedlock, in the growing social orphancy, and in the number of mentally handicapped children. The transitions


145 Valerii V. Elizarov, "Демографическая ситуация и проблемы семейной политики" (Demographic situation and the issues of family policies), *Социологические исследования 2* (1998): 55.

146 Ibid., 55-60.

147 In 1995 alone, for each 100 births there were 74 abortions. If considered against the backdrop of low birthrates (in 1992, 10.7 per 1000 population; in 2000, 8.7 per 1000 population), this reality makes one think that the survival of the Russian nation is at stake. Rimashevskaya, 91.

148 According to Rimashevskaya, if before 1985 the percentage of births out of wedlock was about 10 percent, after 1985 it rose rapidly and in 2000 it reached 28 percent. In some regions it is over 50 percent (the highest, 62.7 percent, in the Komy-Permyak Autonomous Region). The number of births to unmarried women exceeded 300,000 in 1997 and equaled 354,300 in 2000 when the number of births to married women was 912,500. Ibid., 76.

149 By the end of the 1990s, the number of orphans in Russia was 3 times higher than it was at the end of WWII and amounted to between 2 to 3 million or 1.5 to 2 million. Rimashevskaya, "Family and Children during the Economic Transition," 94. To be an orphan in Russia does not necessarily mean to be without parents. For example, in the Novosibirsk region, 90 percent of children being raised in state institutions (about 9,000 out of more than 10,000) have parents. Ibid., 93.
following the break-up of the Soviet Union have been especially unfavorable to women and children whose poverty paints a gloomy picture of Russia's future.

Keeping in mind the above facts, it is clear that there are far-reaching missiological implications for the society where family ties have been so severely undermined, family traditions so severed, and values of marriage, parenthood, and childhood so trampled on. In other words, the restoration of social brokenness is a task that must be envisioned in terms of Jesus' revelation of God as Father and Head of the new household.

Missiological implications

In light of the moral and social reality stated earlier, Jesus' words from His programmatic sermon at Nazareth—to evangelize the *ptôchos* ("the poor")—must be understood as to evangelize the *oikia* ("the houses/families") for among the various social institutions it was primarily the Russian family that suffered the most during Stalinism and in its aftermath. To use the imagery of Jesus' parable of the Strong Man, the Russian *oikos* was attacked and plundered by Satan and, therefore, needs to be "exorcised" and liberated by the power of the stronger man (Luke 11:21-22).

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150 As of January 1, 1999, the number of mentally handicapped children in Russia reached 600,000. Ibid., 92.

151 Lyon, 28.


the dominion of the devil over Russian households is to liberate them with the power of Jesus' evangel—the good news about God incarnate in Jesus of Nazareth.\textsuperscript{154}

Here emerge two questions. First, what, according to Luke-Acts, was the content of Jesus' evangel? And the answer to this question is simple: God as Father.\textsuperscript{155} As Chen points out, "the image of God as Father explains God's purposes and activities more comprehensively than any other designation of God in Luke-Acts."\textsuperscript{156} Second, what is the significance of Lukan theology of the Divine fatherhood and how can his image of God as Father contribute to the healing of moral and socio-psychological scars inherited from the Soviet era? The following four missiological conclusions that have been drawn from the Lukan theology of the oikos give a compelling answer to that question.

**Hospitality of God.** Before everything else, it is important to state that the Lukan Jesus belongs equally to the family of God and to all humanity.\textsuperscript{157} In Him, the fatherhood

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\textsuperscript{154}As Arnold states, "Just as Christ bound the strong man in order to plunder his house, so too the body of Christ plunders Satan's kingdom by proclaiming the promise of divine rescue to captives in the kingdom of darkness." Arnold, 157.

\textsuperscript{155}This term should not be used without some important qualification. Kenneth Bailey argues that Scripture does define the word "father" as it applies to God, and that "that definition alone should surely govern the way Christians understand God as Father." According to the scholar, "God is not like a father but rather like this father, namely the father set forth in Hosea 11 and Luke 15." He further asserts that "Jesus of Nazareth took the picture of a divine father in Hosea 11, added the compassionate female side of God that appears in the Old Testament and went beyond them as he created the figure of the father in the parable." As a result, "this new father is full of tenderness, patience, compassion, love and a willingness to suffer in order to redeem." Bailey, 139 (for the first quote) and 144 (for the following quotes).


\textsuperscript{157}Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit when the power of God "overshadowed" Mary (Luke 1:35). By the same token, Jesus began His public ministry as the One anointed by the Spirit
of God and the sonship of humans are not only mysteriously intertwined\textsuperscript{158} but also pointedly displayed.\textsuperscript{159} As Montefiore notes, Jesus "declared the Fatherhood of God and by his life and death this Son-Father relationship with God was and is possible for all men."\textsuperscript{160} There is a good reason, therefore, why the Lukan representation of God as Father legitimizes reading Jesus' story as an invitation to join the family of the Divine, that is, to be engrafted into the family tree rooted in the Godhead, to enter God's \textit{oikos}, to re-gain the "wholeness of life,"\textsuperscript{161} true identity and "absolute worth,"\textsuperscript{162} true freedom and true selves, and to experience the joy that this re-union brings to the lost (Luke 15)\textsuperscript{163} and of the Lord (Luke 4:18). Jesus' human lineage, however, indicates that He was born of a virgin (Luke 1:26-27; 2:7) and later was adopted by Joseph. Thus, His family tree ends with Joseph but starts with God (Luke 3:23, 38).

\textsuperscript{158}Luke is the only evangelist who asserts that Jesus recognized His kinship with the Father in heaven when He was twelve years old (Luke 2:49). Neither Joseph nor Mary understood this status of their boy (Luke 2:49-50). Years later, when Jesus began His public ministry, Jewish leaders, too, categorically refused to accept His claim of Divine sonship (John 5:18).

\textsuperscript{159}Jesus' mission as a whole sprang precisely from His intimate oneness with God as Father, and this is one of the central theological points of the Gospel of Luke as a whole. In every prayer of Jesus narrated by the author (10:21; 11:2; 22:42; 23:34, 46), Jesus addresses God as "Father." Chen, 173. Luke is unique in showing that at Jesus' baptism, \textit{while He was praying} the voice from heaven confirmed His privileged status as the Son of the heavenly Father (Luke 3:21-22). The Third Evangelist seasons his narrative with brief but distinctive and highly significant observations about Jesus spending long hours in prayerful communion with His Father: after the intensive healing and preaching ministry in one of the Galilean cities (5:16); on the eve of the choosing the Twelve (6:12); on the occasion preceding His asking the disciples about His identity (9:18); at the transfiguration (9:28-29); on the occasion prior to teaching the disciples to pray "Our Father" (10:1); not long before the betrayal by Judas (21:37); on the Mount of Olives shortly before being arrested (22:39-45); and on the cross (23:34, 46).


\textsuperscript{162}Bennett, 15.

\textsuperscript{163}Joachim Jeremias, \textit{Rediscovering the Parables} (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1966), 104. At the same time, the sovereignty of God is not denied, for, according to the Lukan
to the Father.\textsuperscript{164} Entering God's \textit{oikos} is therefore an issue of entering God's story. As Loughlin put it, "Entering the story of [God], becoming a character within its storied world, is . . . a matter of becoming part of the body [church] that embodies the story."\textsuperscript{165} The call to believe and follow Jesus must be communicated in terms of the invitation to enter the new life flourishing within \textit{Familia Dei}. This invitation, in effect, "brings a new family into being whose father is God and whose ties are the free adherence of faith."\textsuperscript{166}

The rags and dirt on the body of the prodigal son is a picture of post-Marxist Russia stricken with the worst kind of poverty, "a poverty of being."\textsuperscript{167} They have not only sinned but have been mercilessly sinned against. Their state of misery and impoverishment makes it necessary to place Jesus' image of God as a compassionate Father at the center of Russian missional theology and praxis.\textsuperscript{168} The Lukan philosophy of the Divine-human \textit{oikos} paradigmatically stands as both a powerful identity-forming and value-creating system able to bring liberating and transformative impact on the post-Soviet worldview. Only in this \textit{oikos} will the traumatized individuals and communities be

\begin{quote}
Jesus, "no one knows who the Son is except the Father, and who the Father is except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him" (Luke 10:22).
\end{quote}


\textsuperscript{165}Loughlin, 86-7.

\textsuperscript{166}Hamerton-Kelly, 65.

\textsuperscript{167}The expression "a poverty of being" was coined by Augustine Musopole, quoted in Bryant L. Myers, \textit{Walking with the Poor: Principles and Practices of Transformational Development} (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2004), 76.

\textsuperscript{168}When God is placed at the heart of the church's theology and praxis, this does not mean that Jesus is moved to the periphery for, as Bailey rightly observes with regard to the parable of the Prodigal Son, "the father [of the parable] has quietly evolved into a symbol of Jesus." Bailey, 190.
able to really understand not only what the oppressive system has done to them but, most importantly, what it means to return to the home of their Father.

Whether post-Soviet Russians admit it or not, but in the face of obvious existential meaninglessness, and a lack of a true and firm moral fulcrum, they are eager to find and hold to someone who is if not able to explain their sufferings then at least to sympathize with them and offer hope for a better future. In other words, they need a compassionate ear. The multiple collapses of inner-worldly promises and messianic theories created deep soul-longing for the oikos which is not of this world. Forgiveness and salvation illustrated by the three parables of the lost (Luke 15) is a powerful appeal to the broken-hearted and hopeless victims of the Soviet system. It is of no avail to engage the public in metaphysical debates by means of speculative terms of philosophy-laden reasoning; it is far more important to bring people back to the hospitable oikos of God the Father. To that end, the evangelistic thrust of the Russian Christian community must include not only preaching, teaching, and witnessing, but through her charity and various forms of diakonia, through her worship and liturgy the church must display the transforming power of the Divine compassion. As Wright points out, "if faith without works is dead, mission without social compassion and justice is biblically deficient."  

169 Any philosophy of evangelism in post-totalitarian Russia must necessarily include a theology of compassionate listening. As Luke points out, Jesus was about thirty years of age when He began His ministry (Luke 3:23). This means that the time He had actually spent in listening to the cries of His people was almost ten times longer than the time He ministered through speaking. Before Jesus articulated His inaugural address (Luke 4:16-19), He had gone through a long time of preparation for ministry, albeit unreported in the Gospel of Luke. How could He get the eyes of all who were in the Nazareth synagogue "fixed on Him" (Luke 4:20) unless He knew for sure both what their predicament was and how it could be addressed? And how could He know this unless He knew how to listen to His compatriots with deep compassion?

Sacredness of the Divine mission. Although the members of the oikos of God are numbered (Luke 15:4, 8, 11; Acts 1:16; 2:41), Luke-Acts does not know a philosophy that turns individuals into a numbers game of evangelistic competition. When the variety of human responses to the Gospel is measured mostly in terms of numbers, human life easily loses its sacredness (cf. Luke 12:7, 24, 28) and becomes almost like the raw material in a soul-winning technological process governed by the laws of a religious market. Conversions are not precious metals to be extracted at any cost. A far more genuine picture of an evangelist is the image of a sower.  

An evangelist is both a co-sower with God and co-anointed with Jesus. Whenever the seed of the Word of God is sown, its growth becomes visible through the conversion of people and the development of new attitudes toward the oikos of God. The driving force of the church's liberation program does not lie in the motive to multiply Christians but springs out of submission to the Master and the faithful following of the lead of His Spirit that was given to "those who obey Him" (Acts 5:32).

Crossing the barriers from dogma to trauma. Crossing the barriers from pulpit to "the poor," from dogma to trauma, is a ubiquitous challenge for those Protestant communities of faith that are characterized by highly rationalized eschatological-apocalyptic theology. It is often forgotten that a precondition for receiving the power of the Holy Spirit reads as follows: "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority" (Acts 1:7). In other words, God as Father does not

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173 Acts 2:4; 4:8; 7:55; 8:17, 29, 39; 9:17; etc.
so much favor speculations about the end-time as He prompts the disciples to be faithful
witnesses "to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8) and bring His lost children home.

The mission of the Holy Spirit entails not only evangelism but social concern as well.\textsuperscript{174} The Christian home must become a place where the principles of social
responsibility are taught and practiced. There is a strong connection not only between the
Sabbath and the Lukan theology of liberation but also between the Sabbath and his
theology of the Christian \textit{oikos} as a nucleus for the transformation of society. The cluster
of Sabbath and Jubilee principles explicitly stated in Jesus' inaugural sermon at Nazareth
definitely extends to the Christian family/household. As Lowery points out,

Social responsibility begins in the home and extends outward. A modern spirituality
of sabbath and jubilee begins with justice in the household, with solidarity and
shared power. Justice and peace in communities and nations are built on caring and
respectful relationships in families, between partners and between parents and
children. People who are valued at home are much more likely to value others.
Households are classrooms in human interaction. Homes shaped by spirituality of
sabbath and jubilee offer daily instruction in being the image of God and honoring
that image in every other person.\textsuperscript{175}

\textbf{Healing through relationships}. No discussion on post-Soviet society can

The Third Evanglist is "as much concerned with the conversion of communities as the

\textsuperscript{174}Sider, \textit{One-Sided Christianity}, 166, 175-86. "The Lausanne Covenant" (1974) is of
pivotal importance to understand the evangelical position with respect to Christian social
responsibility. As the fifth paragraph of the document reads, "Although reconciliation with other
people is not reconciliation with God, nor is social action evangelism, nor is political liberation
salvation, nevertheless we affirm that evangelism and socio-political involvement are both part of
our Christian duty. For both are necessary expressions of our doctrines of God and man, our love
for our neighbor and our obedience to Jesus Christ." John R. W. Stott, \textit{The Lausanne Covenant:}
\textit{An Exposition and Commentary} (Minneapolis: World Wide Publications, 1975), 25.

\textsuperscript{175}Lowery, 149.
The core values of Jesus' evangel must find their way to where people are socially. On the one hand, the traumatized individuals living in post-totalitarian Russia must be approached with the good news of Jesus individually and as individuals. Yet, since every individual is a social being and in one way or another belongs to and is part of the household as the basic social structure, the Christian message must appeal to the relational aspect of one's personality just as thoroughly as it appeals to the intellectual and spiritual dimensions. It should not be forgotten that "those outsiders who are linked to one or more movement members through preexisting extra-movement networks will have a greater probability of being contacted and recruited into that particular movement than will those individuals who are outside of members' extra-movements."}

The fact that the Person of Jesus embodied the oikos of the Divine implies that God seeks relationships and works through them. Thus, conversion as the noblest aim of Christian evangelism must be to a Person rather than to a particular theological (social, moral, psychological, etc.) teaching. The latter, however, is also important because it informs one's faith and prevents such undesirable developments as fanaticism and

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176 Byrne, 196.
177 Wright, 428.
178 Duling, 143.
179 Ellul is right when he points to the danger of transforming Jesus into an idea and/or an idol. As he explains, "it is a lie when we invent a gnosis that refines or uses the person of Jesus in a metaphysical system, or makes him part (even the main part) of a closed dogmatics or philosophy, or inserts him into some practice such as politics, or evaporates him in a divine paradise, or treats him merely as the theme of a dissertation, or thinks that the idea of truth is the essential thing." Jacques Ellul, The Subversion of Christianity, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1986), 181.
idolization of the self (community, denomination, church structure, dogma, motherland, etc.).

Post-Soviet Russians value genuine, sincere, trusting, and lasting relationships more than anything else. The "cameo descriptions"\textsuperscript{180} of God's new \textit{oikos} drawn by Luke in Acts 2:42-47 (cf. Acts 4:32-37; 5:12-15; 12:12) are very attractive in their portrayal of the community of believers who know how to sustain brotherly and sisterly relationships. If an invitation to enter "the household of faith" (Gal 6:10), that is, to repent and believe in the gospel is not enhanced by the compassionate social setting of the church,\textsuperscript{181} it is an invitation to nowhere. Spiritual children must be born out of and into love relationships that are supposedly present within the eschatological community of faith and truth.

Propositional truths concerning the hereafter, if unmediated through the visible manifestations of the Divine presence (relationships of love, justice, compassion, and understanding) as well as evidenced in the Eucharist, sound as religious-ideological clichés rather than as words of life. In creating a rich variety of social activities for men, women, and children the local faith communities will actually establish the multiple channels of meeting each others' needs, nurturing healing and spiritual growth.

\textbf{Jesus and Politics}

In approaching the issue of Jesus and politics, it is important to understand that, as Hanson states, such social domains of New Testament time as politics, economics,

\textsuperscript{180} Hamm, "The Mission Has a Church," 75.

\textsuperscript{181} June Gibble, in her preface to the book \textit{A Spirituality of Compassion}, points out the relational aspect of the Christian faith by giving the following definition of compassion: it means "moving deeply into the lives of others, meeting them at their points of need, [and] being met at my own points of need." June A. Gibble, preface to \textit{A Spirituality of Compassion: Studies in Luke}, by Harriet Finney and Suzanne Martin (Elgin, IL: Brethren Press, 1996), ix.
religion, and kinship were not discrete entities operating in isolation from one another. In fact, there is a never ceasing interaction between them in every society. Neither Roman nor Jewish legislative systems knew what has become commonplace for some modern democracies, namely a strict separation between the affairs of the state and those of religion. In this respect, the temptation to read into the text of the Bible one's own worldview assumptions must be resisted.

It is not within the scope of the following section to propose new insights concerning the complex and controversial issue of the Lukan representation of the Roman empire. Jesus' mission can hardly be qualified as political messianism; neither should politics be understood in terms of His major concern. Luke understood Jesus and His disciples "as politically non-threatening to Rome." Jesus showed no deference toward

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183 Ibid.


185 As Steve Walton suggests, Luke "offers his readers a strategy of critical distance from the empire. He thus falls at *both* ends of the spectrum between Romans 13 ["be subject to the governing authorities"] and Revelation 13 [the vision of the empire as "a beast rising up out of the sea"]." Steve Walton, "The State They Were In: Luke's View of the Roman Empire," in *Rome in the Bible and the Early Church*, ed. Peter Oaks (Grand Rapids, MI: Paternoster Press, 2002), 35.

186 Chen, 238.
political figures (Luke 13:31-33) nor was He "involved, Ghandi-style, in a nonviolent resistance to them."\(^{187}\)

Nevertheless, Jesus' program of preaching the good news to "the poor" was not entirely apolitical and did involve the socio-political dimension. Otherwise, how can one explain the opposition to the Messiah and His followers which constitutes an ever present backdrop against which Luke articulates the story of Jesus?\(^{188}\) It is not an insignificant detail that before Luke introduces Jesus as a public figure, he mentions Annas and Caiaphas, the Jewish chief priests, along with such political figures of Roman power as Pontius Pilate and Herod (Luke 3:1-2). Ultimately, it was their questionable alliance that brought Jesus to the cross (Luke 23:1-24). Because Jesus the Messiah was determined to set at liberty those who were oppressed (Luke 4:18), sooner or later He was to encounter the oppressors, that is, ecclesio-political authorities as "the primary oppressor."\(^{189}\)

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Scriptural exposition

All three Gospel writers are unanimous that after being tempted in the wilderness, Jesus started His public ministry in Galilee. Explaining to their readers the content and meaning of Jesus itinerancy, the Gospel writers differ from each other and use slightly different terminology in their descriptions. While Matthew pictures Jesus as the Bringer of "the kingdom of heaven" (Matt 4:17), Mark prefers the phrase "the gospel of the kingdom of God" (Mark 1:15). As for Luke, he too resorts to the term "kingdom of God" but puts it at the very end of his long introductory chapter on the Galilean ministry of Jesus (4:43). Linguistically, however, this text refers the reader back to the inaugural sermon at Nazareth and makes clear that for Luke, as for Jesus, to proclaim basileia tou theou ("the kingdom of God") and euangelizesthai ptōchois ("to evangelize the poor") was the same. The words basileia and euangelion (including its derivatives), which are scattered throughout Luke-Acts, are politically charged terms because they were chosen by the author from the political realm.

There are some other theological terms in Luke-Acts that force one to think about politics as an underlying theme of the Lukan narrative. For instance, such a seemingly neutral word as "forgiveness," which Luke has in mind when he utilizes the terminology

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190 D'Angelo makes an interesting point concerning the political meaning of Jesus' lifestyle of an itinerant Palestine preacher, stating, "Where the emperor is the head of the great familia of the empire, whose order depends on controlling lesser familiae, itinerancy and other challenges to the patriarchal family emerge as challenges to the imperial order." D'Angelo, 628.

"release" in 4:18 and elsewhere in his two-volume work, if examined against the backdrop of Jubilee traditions, "is at heart a political word." So too the words "repentance" and "father" have political connotations. The various adjectival and verbal forms of such key words as eirēnē (peace), dikaios (justice/righteousness), sōtēr (savior), etc., comprise the political stance of Luke-Acts. As Swartley asserts, "not only does Luke portray Jesus' royalty and role as Savior (and even Benefactor), but his pervasive call to repentance has economic and political consequences, since it yields a counter blessing, salvation, joy and peace to that which Rome's emperor's promised.

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193 Sharon H. Ringe, Jesus, Liberation, and the Biblical Jubilee: Images for Ethics and Christology (N.p.: Fortress Press, 1985), 94. As Ringe further asserts, the images by which forgiveness is presented in Jubilee traditions "are of people set free from the dehumanizing effects of social role definitions (Luke 7:36-50; 19:1-10), from the stigma as well as the physical consequences of disease (Isa. 61:1-2; Mark 2:1-12), and from the vicious cycle of economic oppression (Leviticus 25; Matt. 18:23-35)." Ibid., 94-5. For the Lukan usage of some other politically charged words see "God, People, and Empire," 168-71 and elsewhere.

194 According to Danker, "repentance is a political decision of no mean consequence. It is a renunciation of the very political devices that led to the crucifixion of Jesus and that also lead to the exploitation and oppression of the poor and the outside." Frederick W. Danker, "Politics of the New Age According to St. Luke," Currents in Theology of Mission 12, no. 6 (December 1985): 343.

195 D'Angelo suggests that "if indeed the title 'father' was important to Jesus, it may have been in the context of spiritual resistance to imperial pretensions. The use of 'father' and the announcement of God's reign proclaimed 'we have no king but you [God and Father of Jesus]." D'Angelo, 628.


197 Ibid., 146. Walton demonstrates that the Lukan usage of such terms as "Lord," "king," and "savior" for Jesus suggests that the Third Evangelist "presents the early Christians as subversively using Caesar's titles for Jesus." Walton, 27.
No other New Testament author refers to the Roman emperors by name save Luke: Augustus (Luke 2:1), Tiberius (Luke 3:1), and Claudius (Acts 11:28; 18:2). Unlike Matthew who, while narrating the temptation story, uses the term kosmos for "world" (Matt 4:8), Luke prefers the term oikoumene indicating the social and political order of the empire (Luke 4:5) and highlighting the fact that the imperial power structure was under the dominion of the devil (v. 6). If Luke seems to be vague as far as the specifics of Palestinian geography are concerned, he shows a good knowledge of the power structures over this area (Luke 1:5; 2:1-2; 3:1-2) and, as it can be inferred from the parable of the talents (19:11-27), over Mediterranean space.

Clearly, although the Third Evangelist does not appear to promote a theology favoring any involvement in politics understood in terms of the struggle for political power, by discussing such sensitive issues as one's socioeconomic condition and loyalty to Caesar versus God he does address the political reality of his readers. This must

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199 Moxnes, "Kingdom Takes Place," 184.

200 Ibid., 182.

201 As Moxnes explains, "the absolute power sits in Rome, that is where local pretenders must go to 'receive' a confirmation of their vassal power. That is also where citizens from around the Roman empire and dependent areas send their embassies to their lands as an extended household: their trusted men or local noblemen are represented as their 'servants' and are granted dominion of 'cities', i.e. a town with its surrounding rural villages. Here we have in a narrative form a good description of political structure of domination in the Mediterranean, an 'emic' description that would make sense among Luke's contemporaries and that provides clues to modern etic descriptions of benefactor (patron) and clients' forms of political rule." Ibid., 184-85.

202 As Wright explains, "to confess 'Kyrios Iēsous,' 'Jesus is Lord,' was to make a statement that is much political as it is religious, for it relativizes all forms of human authority on earth under the sovereignty of God in Christ. And multitudes of Christians perished paying the
have important missiological implications for the present study. After all, Stalinism is a political term and the Russian Federation is a political realm being built on the ruins of the Soviet empire.

Missiological implications

It is true that neither Moses nor Jesus left a comprehensive political theory. As Voegelin observes, "we cannot extract political content from either the Decalogue or from the Sermon on the Mount." It is equally true, however, that if the community of faith is determined to follow fundamental principles for authentic faith and life, neither her determination nor its consequences can be entirely apolitical. As John Stott put it, "political action (which could be defined as love seeking justice for the oppressed) is a legitimate extrapolation from the biblical emphasis on the practical priorities of love." The separation between the state and religious associations, which was declared by the Russian Constitution (1993, Article 14, paragraph 2), does not demand that the church turn a blind eye to the developments taking place in the political realm of the country. Rather, the fact that the church prays about the coming of God's kingdom (Luke 11:2) involves a necessity to be concerned about the relationship between this otherworldly kingdom—of which the church must be a symbol and foretaste—and contemporary forms of political power. This concern points out the necessity to perform a spiritual-political price of refusing to confess the lordship of Caesar with the same lips that confessed the sole lordship of Christ." Wright, 311.


political analysis of a given culture and raises the issue of responsibility of church leadership.

**A need for a spiritual-political analysis.** It is no secret that there has always been "the tension between a truth of society and a truth of the soul." This should not mean, however, that ambiguity toward politics is a justified position for a community of faith. Whenever there is a clash between the two truths the direction pointed out by Jesus (Luke 20:25) and His apostles (Acts 5:29)—to render to Caesar what is Caesar's but to render to God what is God's—is a guide for action. At the same time, if the church takes seriously the ethics of Jesus' Sermon on the Plain (Luke 6:17-49), it does not have a right to ignore social evils, especially if the dominant culture pays no or little attention to

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206 For example, there is obvious uncertainty in the Russian Adventists' position toward politics as seen from the contradiction that crept into *The Foundations of Social Teaching of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Russia*. The document states that the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Russia "does not feel called upon to make any statements regarding the political order, forms of public administration or conduct of state affairs" (Krushenitsky, 67). On the very next page *The Foundations* asserts something directly contrary to the above: "The church reserves to itself the right ... to raise its prophetic voice against those forms of public administration which debase human dignity" (ibid., 68). This inconsistency in defining the church's attitude to the political realm can be further demonstrated by the claim that the church's mission "has had nothing to do with the politics ... but has always been turned toward man, toward protection of his rights and dignity" (ibid., 67) as if the latter were outside of politics.

Russian Adventism is not an exception but reflects the same inconsistencies and contradictoriness toward politics and human rights which have been demonstrated throughout the history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church as a whole. Zdravko Plantak, *The Silent Church: Human Rights and Adventist Social Ethics* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998), 208.

207 As stated in *Declaration of the Seventh-day Adventist Church on Church-State relations*, "When we are faced with a situation in which the law of the land conflicts with biblical mandates, however, we concur with the Scriptural injunction that we ought to obey God rather than man." See *Declaration of the Seventh-day Adventist Church on Church-State Relations*, http://www.adventist.org/beliefs/other_documents/other_doc8.html (accessed 19 Feb. 2007).
them. A Pilate's washing of hands is not permissible for the Christian conscience.

To the contrary, these evils must be dealt with in a proactive rather than reactive way. Sometimes even a refusal to call evil good requires having plenty of grit (Isa 5:20). It is not right to close one's eyes to evil only because it is done or tolerated by the state. Instead, as Bosch asserts, "like its Lord, the church-in-mission must take sides, for life and against death, for justice and against oppression." In addition, "a fixation on the parousia at the end simply means that we are evading our responsibilities in the here and now." When Paul said that "there is no authority except from God" (Rom 13:1), the context to these words clearly shows that he assumed that the governing authorities are instituted by God to promote good and resist evil. If under certain conditions the political situation is reversed, then intellectual, moral, social, and spiritual resistance to state-sponsored evil becomes a virtuous imperative rather than sin. The case of Christ interrogated by both political and religious authorities is clear proof to that.

**Responsibility of church leadership.** When historical forces produce a clash between truth of the state and truth of the soul and produce worldview crisis and chaos, it

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208 As Beach points out, "Christians should participate in the public forum, offering a significant ethical vision. Yes, the church must be separate from the state but not alienated from or indifferent to society." Bert B. Beach, "Should the Christian Mission Focus on Salvation or Society?" *Ministry*, March 2007, 27.

209 Fyodor A. Stepun, "Христианство и политика" (Christianity and politics), in *Сочинения* (Collected Works), comp. V. K. Kantor (Moscow: Rosspen, 2000), 412.

210 Bosch, 426.

211 Ibid.
is the church leader's duty to help his flock in such a way that their choice would be truly an informed choice.\footnote{Voegelin's reflections on the dangers that threaten democracy have some relevance as to how theologians and church leaders can help the flock to be better informed citizens and church members: "A democracy is in danger when the individual citizens are, for one reason or another, either incapable or unwilling to be well-informed, reasoning, arguing, debating citizens forming opinions and making them effective by speech, writing, associations, etc.; or, when the citizens no longer produce out of their midst a sufficient number of individuals who are ready to assume political responsibility in a democratic temper." Eric Voegelin, "Democracy and the Individual," in \textit{The Drama of Humanity and Other Miscellaneous Papers, 1939-1985}, 25.} As Ellul convincingly argues,

Christian realism leads to evaluating every political situation in its evolution relative to this kingdom of God, for every political situation necessarily locates itself relative to it, whether as a prophetic announcement, or as a Refusal. . . . \textit{And the genuine, concrete, historic development of a historic situation depends, not on a dialectical or logical process, but on this relationship, announced or refused, with the kingdom of God. It is thus that the church must understand the reality of the world, and as long as she does not do this work, all her declarations and her works serve nothing.} \footnote{Jacques Ellul, "Political Realism (Problems of Civilization III)," in \textit{Sources and Trajectories}, 83.}

The experiences of some faith communities in Soviet Russia and elsewhere teach that current political developments must be of no lesser concern for the church than its long-held theological beliefs. It is not biblically justifiable to leave the issue of spiritual discernment entirely for the decision of the individuals without properly informing and warning the members about the undercurrents of the spiritual and political domains. It is equally unacceptable to do the assessment of the spiritual-political aspect of culture on any basis other than the Word of God. Otherwise, political correctness, lack of spiritual discernment, or ordinary human cowardice can lead to deplorable situations on a large scale as happened in Russia under the Bolsheviks,\footnote{For example, the implementation of Marxian dogmas by the Bolsheviks in Russia was not anticipated by conventional theological thinking of Adventism. In fact, as was stated in a pro-Soviet declaration adopted at the fifth All-Council Convention in Moscow in 1924, "Immediately after the appearance of the Soviet Government in the territory of Czarist Russia, the Seventh-Day} in Germany under
Adolph Hitler, and in China under Mao Zedong.

If there is a lesson to learn from the Soviet past, it is perhaps a warning to never again separate the theme of the spiritual from political life. There appears an ever urgent

Adventists who resided in the Socialist Soviet Republic never doubted that the slogans of the Soviet Government, such as 'the transition from capitalism to socialism,' 'all government in the hands of the working farmer,' 'equal rights and self-administration for all ethnic groups,' 'religious and antireligious propaganda,' 'the Soviet Republic—a shelter for the victims of religious persecution,' 'separation of church and state,' are a magnet which unites all serious-thinking people into a strong Soviet republic. Based on the principle of divine assistance to governments, we are convinced that God in his providence guided the heart of our unforgettable W. J. Lenin and gave him as well as his immediate followers the wisdom to create the only progressive, up-to-date form of government existing in the whole world today." Daniel Heinz, "Origin and Growth of the Adventists in Russia: A Historical Survey," Journal of the American Historical Society of Germans from Russia 10, no. 4 (Winter 1987): 42.

An important point is made by Roland Blaich who observed with regard to the church-state relations in Germany under Hitler that "since Adventist apocalypticism had so long focused on the enemy in Rome, they may have been blind to the growing on the political right." Roland Blaich, "Nazi Race Hygiene and the Adventists," in Thinking in the Shadow of Hell: The Impact of the Holocaust on Theology and Jewish-Christian Relations, ed. Jacques B. Doukhan (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2002), 182. This comment may also apply to theological confusion of Adventism in Soviet Russia and, probably, to its higher constituencies. Unbalanced emphasis on apocalypticism at the expense of paying attention to the present-day political developments can be fatal for the very identity and mission of the church. See also the following articles by the same author: "Selling Nazi Germany Abroad: The Case of Hulda Jost," Journal of Church and State 35, no. 4 (Autumn 1993): 807-31; "Health Reform and Race Hygiene: Adventists and the Biomedical Vision of the Third Reich," Christian History 65, no. 3 (September 1996): 425-40; "Religion under National Socialism: The Case of the German Adventist Church," Central European History 26, no. 3 (September 1993): 255-80; "A Tale of Two Leaders: German Methodists and the Nazi State," Church History 70, no. 2 (June 2001): 199-225. According to an interview with Fritz Holl (conducted 28 July 1986), a retired church administrator in the Nazi era, Adventists were "too narrowly informed" and had not considered the "broad currents of time and thought." Roland Blaich, "Nazi Race Hygiene and the Adventists," 189.

Another example comes from China. As Leslie Lyall, formerly with the China Inland Mission, says it in his confession to the Chinese brethren, "we neglected to prepare you for the Advent of a Communist government: we seldom discussed social and political issues from the Biblical point of view. We were not very sure ourselves what we believed about Church and State, so we kept quiet—criminally quiet. And when the crunch came you were found wanting—uncertain, bewildered, without convictions, disunited." Ralph Neall and Beatrice Neall, "The Rains Descended and the Floods Came—A Survey of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Communist China," term paper for CH 570 History of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Andrews University, May 1971, 57.
need to perform a spiritual-political analysis on a given culture. If the church does not undertake any Bible-based theological reflection on major political trends, both involving domestic politics and the international scene, it misses a chance to have God speak to the present. And if God speaks to the future and future only, God becomes irrelevant for today. Another consequence is that members' attitudes and values are shaped primarily by the media which speaks to the present, but often in a biased way from an unwritten rule to serve the interests of the stakeholders rather than to dig down to the objective, politically inexpedient truth. When the church removes itself from addressing the evils of society as long as they do not touch its adherents (including intrusions upon freedom of conscience, prohibition for the right to know religious truth and follow it in daily life, inclinations toward despotism, aggressiveness, and derogation from the rights of religious minorities, etc.) such a position can hardly be justified by the social ethics of Jesus (Luke 6:31; 10:25-37). The church may be ruined organizationally but not spiritually and theologically if it adheres to what it believes is right and wrong. A deal with the devil, made in the name of political expediency, seduces the church and strips it of spiritual decency and social credibility.\(^{217}\)

**Conclusion**

This chapter addressed the trauma of Stalinism from the standpoint of a missiological reading of Luke 4:16-21. This programmatic sermon of Jesus at Nazareth, whose meaning is unfolded in the larger context of Luke-Acts, is of primary importance

\(^{217}\)The two major aspects of political participation suitable to the healing ministry of the Russian Christian community, namely a creating of an externally focused self-awareness and practical involvement in the life of the *polis*, will be presented in the final section of the following chapter of this study.
for the current Russian culture warped by the forces of the demonic realm. The rationale for using Luke-Acts in a post-Soviet theology of mission and the cluster of theological theses that underlie Jesus' program of liberation are both foundational for a missiological paradigm intended for post-totalitarian Russian society. A close analysis of Luke 4:16-21 revealed four main facets of Jesus' program of liberation which are indispensable for a culturally sensitive and biblically authentic approach to Christian mission in a traumatized society: the *hermeneutic of actuality* (reading the Scripture communally and interpreting community story scripturally), the principle of binding together worship and deliverance, the Lukan theology of *oikos*, and the political implications of the liberation program outlined in that passage.

First, the Russian Christian community in its quest for authenticity needs to understand the rationale of Jesus' liberation program. Just as Jesus was able to locate Himself deeply in the historical and cultural reality of His community, so too every community of faith in present-day Russia has to learn how to bring together the world of the Scripture and that of the contemporary culture. In other words, there is always a need to understand what it means to read the Scripture *communally* and interpret the community's story *scripturally*. To be more specific, the task of developing a theologically sound explanation of such a significant religio-political phenomenon as Russian Marxism-in-power remains a challenge which, if unresolved, may continue to hinder the development of culturally appropriate forms of mission. Conversely, the theological self-reflection of the Russian Christian community will help the church to establish a common ground with the traumatized culture. As a result, the bearers of Jesus' story will know how to share it with their fellow citizens in a way that touches the depths
of their predicament and makes a difference in their lives. In this respect, it is vital for the church to effectively elaborate theological language and imagery that address both the Soviet and post-Soviet culture of Russia in a meaningful, cliché-free way.

Second, central to the Sabbath commandment (Deut 5:15) and to the ministry of the "Lord of the Sabbath" (Luke 6:5; cf. 4:18; 13:10-17) is the idea of holistic liberation which suggests a shift from a mere theocentric model of worship to that of a theocentric and anthropocentric model. This means that the profoundly countercultural potential of the Sabbath must be realized in worship if it is to make "straight" those who are repeatedly "bent-over" by oppressive everydayness. Challenging the status quo and a reality of post-Soviet society that exudes a culture of cruelty and death, Sabbath worship must create a counter-reality by affirming the image of God in traumatized individuals. Sabbath worship redefines the identity of humans and provides both a temporal and spatial setting within which to experience the power of God's liberation. As Jesus' healing of the bent woman demonstrates (Luke 13:10-17), the Sabbath is meant to be a counter-force resisting and overcoming the demoralizing and demonizing influences of the dominant culture. The truths of Jesus' second coming and God's eternal kingdom must be experienced in the present setting of His transformative presence amidst His followers and in the company of fellow believers in a non-judgmental, compassionate environment of genuine solidarity of the destitute.

Third, Luke's theology of God as Father and Head of the new household strongly suggests reading Jesus' story as an invitation to enter God's oikos and join the family of the Divine. The imagery of the parable of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32), if read against the backdrop of the trauma of Stalinism, portrays the greatest need and the
greatest opportunity of Russians: to come to their senses, as it were, and return home. The parable's image of God as a compassionate and forgiving (healing) Father is a restoration paradigm meant for those who not only sinned gravely but have been mercilessly sinned against, which is for post-Soviet Russians. The Lukan philosophy of the Divine-human *oikos* bridges a worldview chasm caused by the break-up of communism. In this *oikos*, the traumatized individuals and communities are able to understand not only what the oppressive system has done to them but, most importantly, what it means to be welcomed home by their compassionate Father.

The Lukan vision of the Divine-human *oikos* also provides an ethical framework for a theology of human worth and dignity that is foundational for evangelism and social responsibility. Humans are to be liberated and brought home precisely because God loves them and sees worth in them (Luke 12:7, 24, 28). They are a reflection of His image and likeness. They are sons and daughters of God and not a resource for extracting gold or merely a workforce. In the context of post-Marxist Russia, the main motivation behind the church's liberation program is not a desire to multiply Christians but genuine concern for the holistic well-being of the traumatized. This understanding necessarily entails not only evangelism but also social involvement in the lives of individuals and society as a whole. In fact, both the Christian church and the home must become places where the core ethical principles of Jesus' *evangel* (social justice, peace, reconciliation, mercy, forgiveness, etc.) are taught and practiced. By doing what is being taught, families comprising the local churches may become the nuclei for the transformation of the whole society.
In addition, the Christian message must appeal to the relational aspect of one's personality just as thoroughly as it appeals to the intellectual and spiritual dimensions. The fact that the *oikos* of God was personified and embodied in Jesus implies that God seeks relationships and works through them. What follows is that the invitation to repent and to believe in the gospel must be supported by a caring social setting of the church. Spiritual children are to be born out of and into love relationships that must be characteristic to the community of faith and truth. However correct and accurate the propositional truths concerning the hereafter might be, if unmediated through relationships of compassion, understanding, hospitality, and justice as well as experienced in the Eucharistic sharing of bread and wine, such doctrinal statements will sound like religious-ideological clichés rather than as ever fresh and relevant words of life (Acts 5:20). By creating a rich variety of social activities for women, men, and children the local congregations will actually establish the multiple channels of meeting each others' needs, nurturing healing and spiritual growth.

Finally, Jesus' program of liberation presupposes an ever-present tension between the kingdom of God and political kingdoms of this world. Although, according to Lukian theology, "no political force, Roman included, overcomes God's plan," the latter can be significantly hindered. The forces that held control over *oikoumene* in Jesus' time (Luke 4:5-6) still exist and exercise their power over contemporary political realms. As a result, the church's determination to follow, for example, the ethics of the Sermon on the Plain (Luke 6:17-49) will in one way or another bring about clashes between the two

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kingdoms. To render to God what is God's (Luke 20:25) means to take sides with those whom Jesus sided with: "the poor." By definition, this moral and social stance cannot be politically neutral. If the church wants to be faithful to the high calling of proclaiming recovery of sight to the blind (Luke 4:18), it has no right to be selective and close its eyes on certain evils only because they are done or tolerated by the state. The self-removal of the church from addressing the evils of society as long as they do not impact its members can hardly be justified by the social ethics of Jesus (Luke 6:31; 10:25-37).

The Russian Christian community is neither a state's servant nor a state institution. Although the church cannot and should not be involved in the struggle for political power, to retain its spiritual power and use it in constructive ways, the communities of faith in Russia dare not view themselves outside the life of the polis. Regardless of how big or small memberships may be, churches constitute a force that shapes certain attitudes toward truth and reality of human existence, toward the kingdom of God and the kingdoms of the world. The reason why the church exists in the world requires its adherents to use their intellectual, spiritual, moral, social, and legal powers to articulate God's voice and materialize His will concerning everything that belongs to His domain; and there is nothing, including politics, which can be found outside of His domain. It is then that God's will which is done in heaven (Luke 11:2) will also be brought to earth.\textsuperscript{219}

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In his missiological reflection on how sin affects human society and history, Wright notes:

If our mission is bringing good news into every area of human life, then it calls for some research and analysis as to what exactly constitutes the bad news, horizontally in the structures of a given society and vertically in its history. Many factors will be uncovered in the process. But only as they are uncovered can the cleansing, healing and reconciling power of the gospel undo their dismal effects.¹

Having in mind this frame of reference, chapters 2 and 3 enquired into what really constituted the bad news of Stalinism in Russian history of the twentieth century. The fourth chapter, on the other hand, inquired into the liberating and healing nature of Jesus' evangel—the good news about God as Father.

There were three main questions that I sought to answer in this multidisciplinary study. First, what was the phenomenon of Stalinism experienced by the occupants of Kolyma Gulag as described in Varlam T. Shalamov's Kolymskie rasskazy? Second, what was the impact of Stalinism on the worldview and everyday life of the Soviet citizenry as evidenced in historical record? Finally, what a missiological response should the Russian Christian community provide to a culture that was so heavily stricken with Stalinism?

¹Wright, 240.
To gain a deeper understanding of Stalinism, this work conceptualized this phenomenon as being closely interwoven with the spiritual realm. My task was to look beyond the empirically observable realms of human existence and consider the social engineering carried out during the Stalinist cultural revolution (late 1920s—early 1930s) and its aftermath in conjunction with Holy Scripture and its two-kingdom theology. To better comprehend the trauma of Stalinism, the narratives of *Kolymskie rasskazy* provided an empirical (based on sensory evidence) inquiry into the reality of enormous sufferings experienced by the inmates of the Kolyma Gulag. Reading Shalamov's tales was a means to uncover the nature and extent of the wounds that the Russian national psyche suffered during the heyday of Stalinism. Holy Scripture, on the other hand, provided the theological (faith-based) inquiry into the causes and implications of those sufferings. The concluding three sections present the findings of this dissertation and their missiological implications.

**The Impacts of Stalinism on the "Small Zone"**

In *Kolymskie rasskazy*, this firsthand literary and historical testimony of life and death as experienced in the forced-labor camps of The Far East Trust, Shalamov powerfully depicts the phenomena of total *rastlenie* (moral depravity) and psychosocial disintegration that plagued the inmates of Kolyma. "The camp," states Shalamov, "is a totally negative school, even an hour mustn't be spent there—this would be an hour of depravation."² The author provides the reader with a narrative of human departure from what it means to be human and, on a deeper level of his tales, demonstrates that not only the state, the professional criminals, and the harsh natural environment were responsible

²*NB, 839.*
for the moral apostasy of the camp inmates; the fatal transition from a state of being human to the state of being non-human often depended on one's choice: either to victimize others or be a victim oneself, to kill or be killed oneself, to steal from others or be robbed, to inform on others or be informed on. This choice, however, was determined either by one's ultimate allegiance to God (or stemming from His Law moral principles) or by subjection to the (self-)destructive forces released from human nature.

It must be re-emphasized that the characters of *Kolymskie rasskazy* are highly representative and function as paradigms of a bigger universe than what appears on the surface of the narrative. On a subtler level, Shalamov's magnum opus suggests that Stalinism and the death camps, flourishing within this political and cultural system, were the natural result of people's erasing God from all human affairs. Hence Shalamov's assertion: "We do not know what stands behind God, behind faith, but we clearly see . . . what stands behind disbelief." 3 *Kolymskie rasskazy*, therefore, can be legitimately called a weeping over the greatest loss a human has ever experienced—*a loss of self in the loss of God*. In this respect, *Kolymskie rasskazy* is a story of people who agonizingly found themselves face to face with absolute evil, with God in absentia.

Other autobiographical works of Shalamov can also be considered as the painful recounting of trauma that mirrored and magnified the moral and social wounds around it. 4 Reflecting on the devastating impact of the October Revolution on the lives of his family, Shalamov wrote, "The year 1918 brought collapse to all our family." 5 This was certainly

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3 *NB*, 842.
4 Cf. Todorov, 159.
5 *CW*, 4:128.
true not only of his parents, two brothers and two sisters, but of many millions of other families and households.

As the historical backdrop of Shalamov's writings suggests, during the Bolshevik Russia's transition from proto-capitalism to the historical realization of the utopian communism, her population was actually turned into raw material to be used in grand social experiments. In that process of all-out transformation, the world of the so-called corrective-labor camps became an emblematic feature of the Soviet power, Soviet history, and Soviet culture. From its inception in 1918 and especially during the formative years of the Bolshevik state under the dictatorship of Stalin (1929-1953), the Soviet Gulag "processed" millions of people, fracturing families and depriving individuals of their basic rights, human dignity, physical and psychic health, and often life itself. As a result, Stalinism became a prolonged phenomenon of trauma-in-history.

There is little doubt that the traumatic microcosm of Shalamov's characters belongs to the larger cultural world—namely, the macrocosm of everyday Stalinism. "The camp," asserts Shalamov, "is the imprint of our lives. . . . [It] is like the world at large." In Shalamov's writings are found one of the most successful attempts not only to conceptualize the Gulag experiences but also to describe their impacts on the entire Soviet cultural matrix. According to the author, the basic features of the Gulag subculture had a cancerous effect on the minds and souls of Russian people. As he stated in a notebook dated 8 December 1968, "here is the main theme of [our] time—the depravation that Stalin introduced into the people's souls."

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6 "There is No One to Blame in the Camp," CW, 4:263.
7 NB, 295.
The Impacts of Stalinism on the "Big Zone"

Among the losses of Russia under the communist regime the multigenerational damage done to human capital was the highest. The system of socioeconomic and ideological compulsion generated a culture of moral depravity and multiple forms of psychosocial aberration. If considered in terms of its multigenerational effect, Stalinism brought forth such an exceedingly eclectic and deeply traumatized anthropological species as *Homo Sovieticus*.

*Philosophically,* the worldview of *Homo Sovieticus* can be characterized by utopian dreams of social transformation. It was a totalitarian worldview that held an iron grip on the entire population. Marxism-Leninism, when applied to the deeply patriarchal culture of Russia, brought into being an ideology known for its secular millenarianism and aggressiveness. It was an inner-world eschatology that took on the most extreme of forms. The Bolsheviks' vision for an all-out cultural transformation was destructive by its utter disregard for the fundamental values of human life, freedom, and individuality. Having no alternative, people absorbed an outlook which was counter-productive to their own well-being and sane development.

*Socially,* the Soviet person possessed a personality type leaning toward a community-oriented hierarchy of values. The notion of the collective was considered to be more significant than the individual self. The individual was defined in its relation to the collective. This conceptualization resulted in the destruction of a sense of personal responsibility, the value of independence, initiative, and enterprise. In order to survive, *Homo Sovieticus* had to internalize time-serving attitudes, including that of chiseling and window-dressing. The surviving mechanisms often gave rise to conflicting ways of
behaving: on the one hand, there was a fleeing from the over-supervision of the state into the shell of the reserve; on the other, there was vigilance displayed for the sake of the cause of communism. If seen in the broader historical context, the low rating of the role of the human factor in societal development was one of the root causes of its ultimate collapse in 1991.  

*Psychologically and behaviorally,* the Soviet experiment produced an unsettled personality type distinguished by a number of splits: being versus pretending, thinking versus speaking, speaking versus doing. A phenomenon of doublethink, a stable system of double standards that separates the criterion of "it-is-necessary" from the criterion "it-is-true," became characteristic of consciousness of *Homo Sovieticus.* This phenomenon had a corrupting effect on the morality of the Soviet citizenry, an inclination toward a non-legal type of mentality and behavior. In addition, the enemy complex and fear engrained in the very soul of *Homo Sovieticus,* turned out to be a psychopathological constant which has been bequeathed to present-day Russians.

*Ethically,* the Soviet person is known for its "polycentric relativism." Shaped by a culture that warped basic moral principles and as such never considered human life and dignity to be of the highest value, *Homo Sovieticus* is distinguished by its apathy and indifference to the sufferings of neighbors. As Dubin points out, "a negative attitude to the other [fellow human being] has been laid in the very anthropology of the Soviet society." During the communist era, people's basic concepts of good and evil were

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8Zaslavkaia, 13.
9Levada et al., *From Opinions to Understanding,* 409.
10Ibid., 510.
11Dubin, 249.
severely warped and the moral scales shifted resulting in the increase of crime, violence, corruption, and other social vices. This became evident in the period of socioeconomic reforms in the 1990s when the state withdrew its control and paternalistic interference in the everyday life of its citizens. More often than not *Homo Sovieticus* was guided by considerations of short-term advantage than by a strong sense of law. This lack of respect for law is rooted in a culture that not only generated violence but itself was subject to victimization.

Although scholars in various fields admit that they do not yet fully know how to evaluate, measure, and conceptualize wide-scale impacts of Stalinism, among the major social dimensions of Soviet trauma one can identify familial, societal, and individual aspects. It is clear that the psycho-social trauma transmitted itself from generation to generation via the institute of the *family*. Furthermore, Soviet socio-economic experiments produced a profound *collective* trauma. As Erickson asserts, this kind of trauma results in a gradual realization that "the community no longer exists as an effective source of support and that an important part of the self has disappeared."\(^{12}\) As far as the *individual* aspect of trauma is concerned, probably the most destructive and the least capable of repair was a phenomenon of doublethink. Thus, one of the ways to conceptualize the Soviet period of Russian history is to view it in terms of the prolonged psychosocial traumatization caused by large-scale socioeconomic calamities. Those events disrupted the first part of the twentieth century causing a deterioration of reality and subtle traumatizations of everyday life under Stalinism. Trauma of the past begot the trauma of the present. This reality of socially and politically sustained wounds extends

\(^{12}\)Erickson, 233.
across generations and reverberates in the present-day social milieu of Russia affecting their identities and worldviews, behavioral patterns and moral values.

Finally, a biblical-theological assessment of Stalinism reveals that once a totalitarian system of pseudo-religious theocracy was established, the result was a culture demoniacally infected by the worldview of Marxism-Leninism. Being not just a sociopolitical system, but a state of mind, Stalinism resulted in legitimization and institutionalization of a culture of death and lawlessness. It was a culture challenging the very nature and existence of God. Looking at the Bolsheviks' experiments through the prism of biblical revelation reveals that the near absolute power in the hands of atheistic sectarians and political extremists erected a Spiritless, dehumanized kingdom that unleashed "the works of the flesh" (Gal 5:19-21).

Taking into consideration this reality of the bad news about Stalinism, what then constitutes the counter-reality of the good news as presented in the Nazareth Manifesto of Jesus (Luke 4:16-21)?

The Healing Power of the Divine Oikos

A missiological reading of Luke 4:16-21 reveals that there is a remedy that can be applied by the Russian Christian community to the traumatic aftereffects of Soviet totalitarianism. The Nazareth Manifesto of Jesus points toward a God whose power not merely matches but actually exceeds the forces of spiritual brokenness and moral depravity. And this hope for Russians who suffered under the godless regime is not a new social utopia; rather, it is rooted in the compassionate reality of the Divine.

The method of socio-textual interaction (interpreting the Soviet history scripturally and reading the Scripture communally), utilized throughout this study, set
forth a certain conception of Christian mission intended for contemporary Russia. When
history is envisioned as the stage on which the drama of human salvation is played out,\textsuperscript{13} then Christian mission is understood in terms of the commitment to liberation, healing,
and transformation.\textsuperscript{14} At the heart of this approach to mission lies the Lukan imagery of a
God who has compassion on "the poor" (the traumatized), who enters their dysfunctional
\textit{oikos},\textsuperscript{15} casts out its demons, and calls on humans to enter the \textit{oikos} of the Divine. By
doing so, God invites women and men to join the family of the triune God and to become
free and compassionate participants in His mission.

To be better aligned with God's mission of healing, it is not enough for the church
to be engaged in dialogue with the surrounding culture, however important this dialogue
might be. A far more significant task is to be actively involved in a direct and immediate
ministry of healing. To that end, the following three missiological strategies must be
considered essential to the reality of post-Soviet society.

First, the profoundly countercultural power of the worship service needs to be re­
gained and channeled toward healing the worshippers who have inherited not only
traumas of the past but are being repeatedly traumatized by the everyday spiritual and
socioeconomic pressures. Calling the worshipers to experience the liberating power of the
Christian \textit{evangel} is, in fact, inviting them to become more fully human.\textsuperscript{16} As the worship
is structured from the standpoint of the traumatized, it will work powerfully to restore in

\textsuperscript{13}Bevans and Shroeder, 70.
\textsuperscript{14}Wright, 44-5.
\textsuperscript{15}Interestingly, on December 20, 1953, Shalamov, a Gulag survivor who just returned
home, wrote to Pasternak, "in Christianity . . . everything has to do with advent, with the
appearance of God in everyday life (v yavlennii Boga v byt)." \textit{NB}, 422.
\textsuperscript{16}Cf. Wright, 424.
them the image of God. The worship and liturgy of the church, then, create a context in which God's power over all demonic influences sets at liberty everyone who seeks freedom in Him, to live in loving obedience to His commandments. An effective way to resist the demoralizing and demonizing power of the dominant culture would be to experience the counterforce of Divine compassion, forgiveness, and love springing from the Spirit of God, from the Word of God, and from the community of the Word. Needless to say, if Christian community does not provide an ample worshipful environment to liberate those who suffer from "the hauntingly possessive ghosts"17 of the demonic past and is unable to disempower the forces of the corrupted culture, it will fail to become a vehicle of Divine healing.

Worship is not only the church's sacred duty but also God's way of ministering to each worshiper. If viewed from such a perspective, ways of mediating Christ's healing presence in weekly as well as in the daily worship activities of the church members should be created through prayers, songs and music, testimonies and admonitions, sermons, confession, and other participatory (liturgical) elements of the worship service. Opportunities must be provided for those burdened with a sense of guilt or with sins needing to be confessed to experience the healing power of Christ. A culturally sensitive ritual of lament should be developed to become an appropriate tool to liberate people from the pain and heaviness of the past. If people need to cry out in their sorrows, that possibility must be provided. If they need a listening ear, that should be available. Pastoral visits even when not requested (cf. Luke 19:5) must become part of the ministry of the church. An offer to pray for the sick and distressed at every weekly church service

17LaCapra, xi.
should be articulated. People with the gift of prayer and healing should be set apart and trained to deal specifically with the traumatized. Christ's admonition to not be led into temptation (Luke 11:4) must become part of the theology and praxis of ministry. People need to learn how to resist the demoralizing influences of the surrounding culture. The communion service should be considered as an unique opportunity to realize the restoring power of Christ, the "wounded Healer," who brings His healing touch to the broken-hearted. The Word of God should be preached not just to inform, to catechize, and to educate the worshippers but also to liberate them from the depressing everydayness and from the spirit of despair and hopelessness.

In addition, the healing power of Christ must not only be experienced but also celebrated by the community of faith. Temptations resisted, sins overcome, and wounds healed must be publicly celebrated with praise and thanksgiving. In this way the presence of Christ can impact an ever expanding circle of hurting and traumatized people in society.

Second, just as God chose the family/household as both the social structure and spatial location for the ministry of His Messiah, so too the contemporary church-in-culture must consider this approach as her modus operandi. Keeping in mind the fact that it was primarily the institution of the family that suffered the most under Stalinism, Jesus' words from the Nazareth Manifesto—"to evangelize the poor"—must be understood also to include the liberation, healing, and transformation of human families. The only way to impact the dominion the devil has over Russian households is to liberate them with the power of Jesus' evangel—the good news about God as Father. In this respect, the Lukan

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18Destro and Pesce, 233.
representation of God as Father must be understood as an invitation to join Familia Dei, to be engrafted into the family tree rooted in the Godhead. Only in this new Divine-human oikos will the traumatized children of God gain their true identity and worth, true freedom and true selfhood, true joy and true peace.

This new Divine-human oikos must involve itself in teaching God's ideal for families, His ideal for the role of fathers, mothers, and children. A powerful way to address the multigenerational trauma is to develop and encourage multigenerational healing through a sustained modeling of gospel principles of family life. Christian households must teach discipline and moral responsibility, preparing children for adulthood. Christian families in Russia must break the cycle of past moral depravity and family disintegration, nurturing the present and future generations in new family values, new attitudes, and new patterns of family life. The Christian families should not be exclusive or separate from those in its community, but must reach out to heal the wounds of the past that have caused much divorce, single parents, widows, and orphans. The church must be a healing family for the community by extending God's hospitality to the hurting members of society and by accepting and embracing of all who need to feel welcome in the Christian community.

Furthermore, the hospitality of God means entering God's oikos and entering God's story. The call to believe and follow Jesus is an invitation to enter the grand story of God, to become a character in that story; it is an appeal to undertake the task of writing, as it were, the third volume of Luke-Acts. Entering deeply into the setting of God's story of healing is not only a matter of consuming the scriptural story of Jesus of

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19 Loughlin, 86-7.
Nazareth\textsuperscript{20} but also a matter of being with those who were traumatized, entering into their story and their everydayness, living with them, and becoming part of their story. Regardless of how tragic a story of Stalinist trauma was and is—a story of "martyrs who were not, who could not and did not become heroes"\textsuperscript{21}—the Russian Christian community must consider itself to be a vital part of a grander narrative, that is, a story of God's healing of the wounds of the social body of Russia.

Finally, there are two major aspects of political participation suitable to the healing ministry of the Russian Christian community: first, by creating an externally focused self-awareness, and second, by practical involvement in the life of the polis. In the first, the gift of spiritual discernment must be applied to the realm of political power. To understand the spiritual undercurrents of the political world and their social implications is an important step toward acquiring a sound missional identity. The more the church advances in her comprehension of sociopolitical reality, the clearer she sees what needs to be addressed by her healing ministry. Furthermore, bearing in mind that the likelihood of the recurrence of new socio-political upheavals in Russia is not entirely ruled out, the community of faith must be willing to learn how to avoid past mistakes when she found herself under considerable pressure from a totalitarian regime.

The second aspect may be gleaned from an inquiry into the political meaning of Jesus' inaugural address, namely the social ethics of the church. The prophetic calling of the church requires her doing something more than just taking sides with "the poor." In a proactive way, the church must be willing to present a clear standard of truth, morality, human worth, dignity, freedom, and civil responsibility. By committing herself to voicing

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\item \textsuperscript{20}Loughlin, 87.
\item \textsuperscript{21}"About Prose," \textit{CW}, 4:362.
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God's intention for His creation, the church will actually materialize the notion of a God who not only sees and restrains the evils of society but actively creates a counter-reality, that is, a reality of His healing and transformative presence at all levels of human existence. The church is to be the hands and feet of God going and ministering to those in need. In short, the members of the *oikos* of God have a mission: to leaven the *polis* of humans from the inside out.
APPENDIX

SHORT BIOGRAPHY OF VARLAM SHALAMOV

In his code of belief, his sufferings as a prisoner, and his prosaic and poetic references to his overwhelming experiences, Varlam Tikhonovich Shalamov was the archetypical representative of the terrifying events that were endemic in the Soviet Union during the rule of Joseph Stalin. He left fictionalized accounts of what ranks as one of the most horrific series of events to blight the twentieth century: the Great Terror in the Soviet Union, with millions sentenced to prison camps in the gulag. Because, as one of its most thorough and faithful witnesses, Shalamov was able to record firsthand the enormity of the terror, his work—especially the short stories for which he is renowned—is central to a knowledge and understanding of the abhorrent excesses of Soviet rule, particularly during Stalin's hegemony.

The last of five children, Varlam Shalamov was born on 18 June 1907 in the northern Russian city of Vologda, traditionally a place of exile. He was the son of Tikhon Nikolayevich Shalamov, an Orthodox priest who had performed missionary work in Alaska, and Nadezhda Aleksandrovnna Shalamova, a schoolteacher.

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In his late teens, after completing secondary school, Shalamov decided to leave Vologda. He opted to go to Moscow, then the center of contemporary Russian life, and he moved there in 1926. Later that year, during a period of open enrollment, Shalamov matriculated in the Department of Soviet Law at Moscow State University. In 1927-1929 he joined an underground Trotskyist cell, consisting of Komsomol (Communist Youth) members. He even took part in a political demonstration in November 1927 and was placed under arrest for the first time on 19 February 1929 for his participation in underground publication and distribution of Lenin's so-called testament (zaveshchanie). He was interrogated for a month and on 13 April 1929 he was sent for three years to a labor camp in Vishera, North Urals.

While Shalamov was in Vishera, he met his first wife, Galina Ignat'evna Gudz'. Following his release, Shalamov stayed on in the Vishera region until 1932, when he ventured back to Moscow. Choosing literature as his venue for achieving fame and a lasting legacy, he was drawn at this time to prose. His literary career, which had started to flourish in the 1930s, was brutally interrupted by his subsequent arrest and imprisonment.

He was arrested once again during the night of 11-12 January 1937. The very nature of the terror, with intellectuals the principal targets in a dragnet operation, virtually guaranteed the arrest of a man like Shalamov, one who long had been suspect for his openly hostile and independent stance. Shalamov's arrest in 1937 ruined his family life. He subsequently was estranged from both his wife and his daughter. Charged with "Counterrevolutionary Trotskyist Activity," he was initially incarcerated in Butyrskaya Prison in Moscow, where he refused to confess. Shalamov was sentenced to five years in
corrective labor camps in Kolyma in the Far East and, in a move typical for this time, deprived of the right of correspondence.

Shalamov was unbroken by his incarceration in the Far East, and like the few positive characters in his stories, he continued to stand up against injustice. He was transferred to Magadan prison in December 1938 as punishment for writing a complaint a year earlier on behalf of one of his fellow prisoners. From there he went to a transfer camp and subsequently landed in quarantine for typhus, an experience that inspired the title for one of his later stories, "The Typhus Quarantine." A theme running throughout the stories as a whole is that of the camps themselves representing a sort of quarantine, with prisoners constituting the "infected" elements of society who must be isolated from it. Shalamov returned to the gold mines when coal mining proved unworkable, but his five-year sentence did not end on schedule. He was sent to Dzhelhala camp in December 1942. Within months, in May 1943, he was rearrested, and his conviction (ten more years in the camps) followed on 3 July 1943. One possible cause for the rearrest may have been Shalamov's praise of the great émigré writer Ivan Alekseevich Bunin, although his comments on Bunin have not been corroborated.

Shalamov spent the summer of 1943 in the hospital in Belich'ia, where he had been sent to recover from dysentery, a condition worsened by his near starvation. He had been deprived of food as a punishment for poor production norms, a practice that brought about a vicious circle: less food meant less energy to work. During his stay he met Dr. Petr Semenovich Kalembed and the medical assistant and prisoner Boris Nikolayevich Lesniak, both of whom took Shalamov into their care. His experiences in various hospitals in 1946 enabled him to pass the necessary examinations that allowed him to
work as a medical assistant. He could now leave hard labor and his most horrible experiences behind and stay in hospitals in a professional capacity.

On 13 October 1951 Shalamov's sentence finally came to an end; because of extra work hours he was a year ahead of schedule. Still in exile, he was forced to remain in Kolyma and continued to work as a medical assistant, first in Baragon and then in Kiubiuma, near Oimiakon. At this time, prior to his release to the mainland on 30 September 1953, approximately six months after the death of Stalin, Shalamov composed a great deal of poetry.

After returning to the mainland and its relative freedoms, Shalamov considered writing his most important duty. He wrote fictionalized accounts of the horrifying events that he and other witnessed, and he described the dehumanized officials and criminals with whom he had come into contact or about whom he had been apprised. Shalamov's own assessment of human nature can be seen as more deeply, intrinsically anti-Soviet (even anti-Marxist); it runs counter to the official view of man and society, which, in accordance with Soviet Marxism, perpetually soar upward toward perfection.

Because Shalamov's family life fell apart upon his release, he actually never returned "home." He severed ties with his wife and daughter in 1956. Pasternak admired Shalamov's work, and his warm encouragement of the writer during this same period helped ease Shalamov back into literature. Yet, Pasternak's contacts with Shalamov were limited by the latter's exile from the capital, which continued until 10 October 1956, the month he married Ol'ga Sergeevna Nekliudova. Because she was a Muscovite, Shalamov was able to obtain permission to live in Moscow once again. He settled there with his new wife and stepson, Sergei. He also was fortunate to find work in Moscow as a writer,
and he produced essays on the history of culture, art, and science for the journal Moskva (Moscow). This employment lasted only until late 1957, when many writers at Moskva were fired and the end of the first Thaw period. Shalamov was in shock and anticipated a return to the terror of the 1930s. He began at time to suffer from Menière's disease, followed almost simultaneously by liver and heart trouble. He was not given the invalid status that should have enabled him to retire on a pension. In part because of his poor health, coupled with the acute stress he had while in the camps, Shalamov began to display extremes of behavior; he isolated himself even from his few remaining friends. Although he had relished having his own home again, his marriage was not able to survive the continued stress from his difficult personality and situations. He and Ol'ga Sergeevna divorced on 30 May 1966.

Losing hope that Kolymskie rasskazy would ever appear in print in the Soviet Union, at least in part because so many of his stories were smuggled out and had already appeared in the West in defiance of the authorities, Shalamov made an enormous sacrifice and decided to dissociate himself from his beloved stories. On 23 February 1972 he wrote a disclaimer in the form of a letter that was published in Literaturnaia gazeta. In the letter he denounced the Western publication of Kolymskie rasskazy, a move almost certainly undertaken to ease the domestic publication of his poetry, which was now more important to him than his prose.

Throughout this period Shalamov's health continued to worsen. In addition to suffering from Menière's disease and liver and heart problems, he had poor vision and hearing. He was suffering from a premature general physical decline, a typical fate for camp survivors. His addiction to the anti-insomniac drug Nembutal further complicated
his health problems. These difficulties increasingly interfered with his ability to maintain
the few personal relationships he still enjoyed, and he found himself more isolated than
before. In 1972 he was forced to move to a communal apartment, where he completed the
final stories of *Kolymskie rasskazy*, as well as *Vishera* and a short story "Fyodor

From this point onward Shalamov was finished with prose fiction and
concentrated instead on poetry, criticism, and his memoirs. His rapidly and dramatically
deteriorating health resulted in near blindness and deafness, handicaps that, in 1979,
forced him to enter a nursing home. The nursing home was sufficiently horrific to remind
him of his experiences in the camps. During this period, in 1981, a cycle of his poems
appeared abroad in *Vestnik russkogo khristianskogo dvizhenia* (The Messenger of the
Russian Christian Movement). This publication of his poetry in the West brought new
troubles for Shalamov, who was now declared "officially senile"—a sign of the new turn
that political oppression had taken.

Shalamov's greatest significance lies in the short-story cycles that compose his
*Kolymskie rasskazy*. These stories not only reflect his pessimistic view of human nature,
particularly that of "homo sovieticus," but also stress his important contention that the
Soviet Union had been turned into one vast labor camp. Although he planned to write
approximately 200 tales, he managed to complete only about 150 of them—with several
stories left unfinished—before he died of pneumonia on 17 January 1982 at the Home for
Chronic Mental Patients #32.


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