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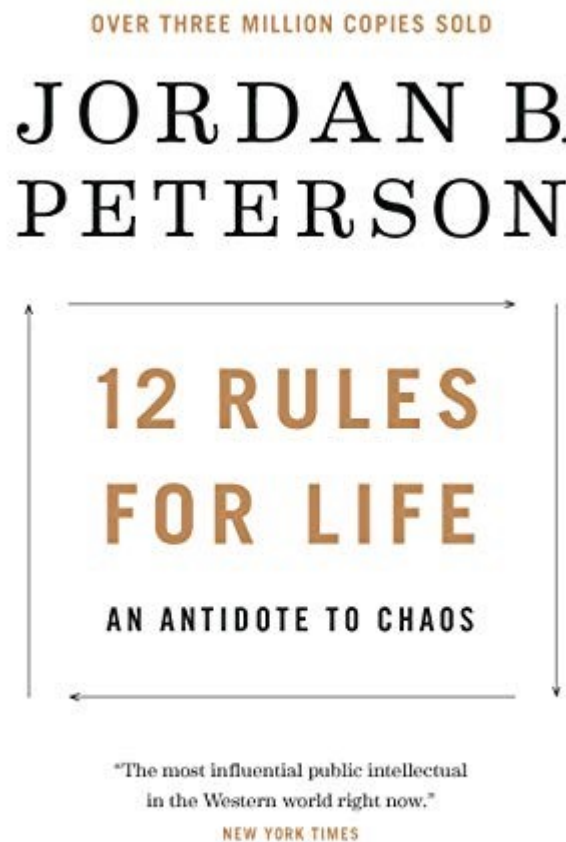
Translator's Foreword (Fluctuarius Argenteus)

Almost by necessity, all previous Kholmogorov translations have been those of his older texts, with a “lag” between the original and the translation varying between several days and several months. What you see now is a much rarer treat. Kholmogorov has just finished a long and engrossing article on Alexander Solzhenitsyn, clocking in at 16,000 words, to be published by a Russian conservative outlet. Publishing a complete translation on The Unz Review would require the text to be split into three or four parts, and would be an exercise in futility if the figure of Solzhenitsyn doesn't attract enough attention from the readership in the first place.

As a result, this text was born. It is the preamble to Kholmogorov's yet-unpublished Solzhenitsynean magnum opus, and it functions well on its own as a glimpse into Solzhenitsyn's status in present-day Russia, going far beyond CliffsNotes truisms and common ideological myths surrounding his name. The article argues that, far from being a relic of the Cold War, Solzhenitsyn remains a relevant figure, perhaps even more so than during his lifetime, with many of his predictions coming true

and some of his suggestions and ideas being adopted wholesale by the Russian government.

It is worth adding that Solzhenitsyn's global importance is far from diminishing any time soon as well, attracting both detractors (usually from the NeoCon/NeoLib Unholy Alliance, as evidenced by [this hot take](#)) and admirers (e.g., Jordan B. Peterson, one of the Alt Right's intellectual darlings, speaks fondly of Solzhenitsyn's influence on his life philosophy in [12](#)



[Rules for Life](#)).

[12 Rules](#)

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Unz Review readers have the rare opportunity to get a primer of this article before it comes out in Russian. If it flies well with the audience, get ready for an epic three- or four-parter!

Note from AK: If you are enjoying these translations, please feel free to donate to Egor Kholmogorov [here](#).

Alexander Solzhenitsyn: A Russian Prophet

Translated by **Fluctuarius Argenteus**

Alexander Solzhenitsyn was, without doubt, the most politically successful author in world history. Surely there were crowned poets, but their talents had never been truly exceptional. There were politicians awarded the Nobel Prize in literature, such as Winston Churchill. There were men of letters who had made a successful bureaucratic career, such as Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Prime Minister of Saxe-Weimar. But there was but one writer whose words could uplift entire continents and send shockwaves through global political trends. There was only one who bequeathed his nation a detailed ideological and political program that would become not less, but more relevant after his death. This man was Solzhenitsyn.

At present, Russia – to both the joy and chagrin of many – is entering a new political era, codified specifically by Solzhenitsyn’s writings and ideas. It is not the Solzhenitsyn of ideologically varnished Liberal anthologies, nor is this his twisted inversion, the Solzhenitsyn who, as an “enemy of the people”, is the never-ending source of Neo-Communist hysterics. The driving factor of current politics is becoming the true Solzhenitsyn, as revealed in his actual writings – novels, short stories, articles, discourses, and interviews.

Some formulas coined by the writer became part of government policy, such as the emphasis on the “preservation of the people”. Others became a political reality, such as his call for a nationally minded authoritarianism, as opposed to the aping Western multiparty democracy. There are also still many – such as his ideas regarding the *zemstvo*, organs of “small-space

democracy” – that are yet to be widely heard and discussed.

Our civic and political maturation, in line with Solzhenitsyn’s vision, is happening right here and now. For many years, Solzhenitsyn kept pointing out that the mid-17th century church reforms that had provoked the schism of the Old Believers was one of the direst and most calamitous events of Russian history. Nothing could be more pathetic than a struggle against the most pious and hard-working part of the Russian nation. But we nowadays see a determination to heal that old wound from within both the government and the Orthodox Church.

On August 30, 1991, Solzhenitsyn wrote a letter to President Yeltsin, urging him to refrain from automatically accepting Soviet administrative demarcation lines as the new state boundaries. For more than 15 years, he kept insisting that the idea of Crimea and Sevastopol as parts of the Ukraine is nonsensical, and that the Eastern Ukrainian oblasts, once known as Novorossiya, should be granted the right to make their own choice of allegiance in a referendum. A rejection of all attempts to “drive a wedge between kindred peoples” and construct the Ukrainian state as an anti-Russia project is a mainstay of Solzhenitsyn’s writings – and reflective of his own dual Russian (Solzhenitsyn) and Ukrainian (Scherbak) ancestry. All of this seemed of only minor importance at the time of his passing in 2008, but ever since 2014, we have been living in a reality where these issues have again become cardinal.

One of Solzhenitsyn’s chief concerns was the question of Russian unity: The injustice inherent in the system of federalism that was rife with another “parade of sovereignties”[1], the idiocy of the central government making treaties with minority republics, the unacceptable discrimination against the Russian language. Solzhenitsyn was one of the first critics of the US

Public Law 86-90 regarding the so-called “Captive Nations”, in which Russia was tarred as the “occupier” of ephemeral “nations” such as “Idel-Ural” and “Cossackia”. Once again, we feel Solzhenitsyn’s legacy acquiring the most acute present-day relevance.

It is not just Solzhenitsyn’s ideas that are coming to the fore, but even his historical appraisals. It was Solzhenitsyn who hailed Peter Stolypin as the consummate Russian statesman, and the late imperial Prime Minister now occupies a central place in the Russian political canon. Likewise, it was Solzhenitsyn who singled out the figure of [Alexander Parvus](#) in the history of the Revolution, and nowadays, no analysis of the Russian Catastrophe avoids discussing this international man of mystery and his contribution to Russia’s destruction. The only figure that our present day views with more appreciation than Solzhenitsyn is probably Emperor Nicholas II. However, even in this case, we see a creeping evolution towards latent monarchism in Solzhenitsyn’s old age.

ROGPR: *Towards Tropical Hyperborea?*

It sometimes seems that even nature itself hews to Solzhenitsyn’s will. When he first proclaimed the necessity of developing the Russian North-East and harnessing its vast and inhospitable spaces, it seemed an impossible utopian dream. His claim that “Russia is [the North-East of the planet](#), and our ocean is the Arctic, not the Indian” was countered by the seemingly commonsense reply that the ocean is called the Arctic Ocean – or the “Ice Ocean”, as it is called in Russian –

because it's literally covered with ice, and that one can't live in the permafrost. Soon afterwards, the rapid melting of the Arctic has begun to provoke geopolitical ferment; there are conversations about internationalizing the Northern Sea Route to foreign shipping, and mutterings that Solzhenitsyn's call to settle and secure the Far North was left unattended for too long. But better late than never.

Solzhenitsyn's legacy is not only a Russian, but a planetary political phenomenon. It was Solzhenitsyn who in his famous [Harvard Speech](#) warned the West that they were not alone on this planet, that civilizations described by Western historians and culture theorists are no mere decorative elements, and instead living worlds in themselves, that cannot have a Western measure imposed upon them. Russia, a unique civilization, is of these historical worlds. And the Western measure itself has become subjected to spiritual corrosion, and has fallen far relative to the bygone greatness of Christian civilization. Solzhenitsyn's once-shocking idea that a globalist "End of History" is impossible has since been appropriated by Western political theorists, namely Samuel Huntington with his "Clash of Civilizations". This very idea has constituted the bedrock of Russian foreign policy since Putin's [Munich Speech](#) in 2007.

The Gulag Archipelago, published in the West, carried out a sweeping detoxification of Western elites from their poisoning by Communism, that "opiate for the intellectuals" (to quote Raymond Aron). However, this transformation gave them no antidote for militant atheism, the very force that had spawned Bolshevism. A liberal version of anti-Communism logically led to the triumph of Communism under the modernized and updated guise of Cultural Marxism – leftist [feminism](#), totalitarian

“tolerance”, racist “anti-racism”, the final victory of Homintern. Even this had already been envisioned by Solzhenitsyn. He theorized that, at a certain point in the future, a Russia liberated from Communist totalitarianism would gaze in horror at the triumph of a Liberal-built Western “Communism”.

That said, Solzhenitsyn’s main concern was never an abstract global humanity, but the Russian people. He is perhaps the writer with the most acute and intensely conscious national awareness out of those who had risen to fame in the second half of the 20th century. His resistance to Communism cannot be properly understood without its main motive: The Russian people cannot and must not be used as a tool for any utopias or experiments, be they Communist or “progressive” in nature. Solzhenitsyn equally rejects political projects that treat Russians as expendable fodder – be it for the Empire, or the “world revolution”, or the triumph of industrialism, or the space race. Everything that improves and intensifies Russian national life is good; everything that doesn’t, is bad.

His resolute and outspoken anti-Communism, his determination to bring down the Reds whatever the cost, was borne out of the conviction that the Occidental Marxist utopia had led to a colossal and bloodstained waste of national human resources, that the Russians had been reduced to cogs in a machine and fuel for the fire, that the organic development of Russia, both spiritual and economic, had ceased. The constant leitmotif of his books is not just the enunciation of the damage wrought by Communist tyranny upon the Russian psyche and livelihoods, but also in revealing the forces of resistance and freedom hidden inside that psyche.

In addition to his anti-Communism, he was just as merciless towards both Occidental and plain Western Russophobia. He

lambasted the intelligentsia, devoid of tradition and roots, as “the Smatterers”[2]. He introduced the very notion of Russophobia into modern political parlance, to be later developed into a coherent theory by his closest ally, the mathematician Igor Shafarevich. Solzhenitsyn provided his definition of Russophobia: The view of Russia as a backward “land of slaves”, the claim that the Soviet regime was a natural continuation of historical Russian statehood, both Muscovite and Imperial, which was purportedly also based on wanton cruelty and inhumanity. In his anti-Russophobe polemics, Solzhenitsyn emphasized the *normalcy* of Russia’s pre-Bolshevik history. He spurned both October and February revolutions of 1917 as the fruits of a nihilistic desire to unmake and remake Russia based on a total ignorance of Russian life.

Solzhenitsyn is opposed to both the verbal mockeries of Russia-bashing “pluralists” with their non-concealed contempt for “this country”, and the cold determination of Western politicians and political theorists to paint Russians and not Communism as the main adversary of the West. Solzhenitsyn publicly lashed out at US military plans to specifically bomb the Russian population in case of war, and came to realize both his own and his Russian compatriots’ unenviable position as “a grain caught between two millstones”[3] – that of Communism and that of Western Liberalism.

It was clear to him that these millstones were both just parts of an infernal machine built by a godless anti-Christian “humanism”. Communism and Liberalism are two siblings spawned by the Enlightenment ideology that would put mankind on the disastrous road of worshiping Matter instead of Spirit, which would inevitably lead to the sully and degradation of said Matter. Solzhenitsyn puts forward a detailed and consistent

anti-Enlightenment doctrine: A return to God, voluntary self-restraint and self-restriction of humankind, emphasizing duties instead of ever-expanding “rights”, prioritizing inner freedom, and rejecting the sacrifice of national life not only to totalitarian utopia but also to the orgy of freedom. Solzhenitsyn’s doctrine is one of the most consistent and politically sound Conservative philosophies formulated over the last couple of centuries. His duel with the ghosts of Voltaire and Rousseau goes on after his death, and the score is still in the Russian writer’s favor.



Sviyazhsk, Russia.

It was Solzhenitsyn’s activity directed against the convergence of the Western and Soviet systems, towards the moral discreditation of Communism and the awakening of a spirit of radical resistance to the Red evil in the West, his critique of the Liberal foundations and hypocritical hegemonism of the West itself, and last but not least, his post-homecoming attempts at a moral consolidation of Russia around a nationalist, conservative, populist, anti-Western and anti-Neo-Communist platform – it was all of this which drove the global Enlightenment project into its current state of crisis.

Moreover, this is not just a merely ideological crisis, manifested in the increasingly totalitarian Liberal self-destruction of Western civilization. It is also a geopolitical crisis, caused by the following fact: Moscow, once a center of global Communism (that is, one of the poles of the Enlightenment spectrum), is rapidly transforming – unless it deviates from Solzhenitsyn’s legacy – into a Vatican, or if you will, a Mecca of Conservatism. It is precisely here where the strongest redoubt that defends the image of mankind in its traditional Christian interpretation is now located.

References

[1] A byword for the snowballing secessionism of Soviet republics in 1988-91, when they first proclaimed “state sovereignty” (primacy of republican legislation over Soviet laws) and then full independence.

[2] The most common English translation of his 1974 essay *Obrazovanschina*, alluding to the narrow and superficial intellectual development of Liberal intelligentsia.

[3] Russian proverb equivalent to “between the devil and the deep blue sea”, also the title of Solzhenitsyn’s memoirs published in 1998-2003 (usually rendered in English as simply *Between Two Millstones*).