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The Holocaust, Gulag, and Sociology: Why is There Less Scholarly Interest in the Soviet Repressive System?

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THE CARL AND WINIFRED LEE HONORS COLLEGE

CERTIFICATE OF ORAL EXAMINATION

Rachel Schroeder, having been admitted to the Carl and Winifred Lee Honors College in Fall 1998 successfully presented the Lee Honors College Thesis on November 19, 2001.

The title of the paper is:

"The Holocaust, Gulag, and Sociology: Why is there Less Scholarly Interest in the Soviet Repressive System?"

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Vyacheslav Karpov", written over a horizontal line.

Dr. Vyacheslav Karpov, Sociology

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Gerald Markle", written over a horizontal line.

Dr. Gerald Markle, Sociology

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John Martell", written over a horizontal line.

Dr. John Martell, Lee Honors College

The Holocaust, Gulag, and Sociology: Why is there Less Scholarly Interest in the Soviet
Repressive System?

A Senior Honors Thesis

By Rachel Schroeder

Thesis Defense:

November 19, 2001

Committee Chair:

Dr. Vyacheslav Karpov

Committee Members:

Dr. Gerald Markle

Dr. John Martell, Jr.

Introduction:

The Soviet Gulag and the Holocaust are two formative events that claimed millions of victims in the Twentieth century; however, the Gulag has received markedly less interest from scholars than the Holocaust. As is shown below, approximately one hundred and sixty-five times more publications exist on the topic of the Holocaust than on the Soviet Gulag. These numbers raise a very important question that demands an answer: Why does such a major discrepancy exist in the amount of attention that is focused on the Gulag as compared to the Holocaust?

This paper offers a response to the above question. It explores the scale and dimensions of the discrepancy through a comparative analysis of a Gulag bibliography and a Holocaust bibliography. The paper also offers a response to the question of why the discrepancy exists by inquiring into the historical, political, and intellectual roots of the discrepancy. Specifically, I examine the objective limitations to Gulag research, the opinion climate surrounding the Gulag, and the lack of interest groups related to the Gulag. Through the exploration of possible causes for the existence of the discrepancy, the paper will also raise and offer a response to another important question: In the future, will it be possible for the level of Gulag research to reach that of Holocaust research?

In the discussion that follows, the decision to use the quantity of Holocaust literature as a reference point is not meant to challenge the importance or uniqueness of the events of the Holocaust. Nor is it meant to take away any of the valuable scholarly attention to the events of the Holocaust. Instead, the Holocaust literature is being used as a standard of comparison to bring attention to another important, formative, and unique

event of the Twentieth century that claimed millions of victims, the Soviet Gulag. The Gulag is significant because it provides scholars the opportunity to research another “face” of modernity. The Gulag was one result of the adherence to some of the most noble ideas and aspirations, such as progress, equality, and justice. Thus, the primary purpose of the research is to address the need for more research on the Gulag by initiating the process of working towards a sociological understanding of the Soviet concentration camp system. This is increasingly important because as time distances scholars from the Gulag, it is imperative to not let the Gulag and its millions of victims to be relegated to the realm of the forgotten.

Holocaust and Gulag:

The Holocaust and Gulag refer to a wide range of historical events, and can be considered in very broad or very narrow terms. Thus, it is necessary to give historical information on the background of the Holocaust and Gulag in order to define what events the concepts of the “Holocaust” and “Gulag” pertain to before beginning the comparative bibliographic analysis to document the discrepancy between the number of their respective publications.

Holocaust:

The Holocaust is usually considered to begin with the ascension of Adolf Hitler as chancellor of the German Republic in 1933. The reign of Hitler and the Nazi Party proved to be a Fascist, totalitarian government based upon a racist and anti-Semitic

ideology. Groups such as the Jews, Gypsies, Slavs, political dissidents, Jehovah's Witnesses, and homosexuals were deemed "undesirable" by the ideology of the Nazi regime. This Nazi ideology led to a system of repression, violence, and ultimately to the horrendous "Final Solution" of the "Jewish question."

The government through different forms of legislation legalized the racist and anti-Semitic ideology and thus paved the way for the systematic violence of the government, and also the hostile reactions of its citizens against the designated target groups. Two of the most well known examples of the Nazi legislation are the Nuremberg Laws of September 15, 1935 that dealt with and included the official definition of citizenship and marriage ("Blood and Honor Laws"), and the decree requiring all citizens of Jewish descent to wear a gold Star-of-David on their clothing. Some lesser known decrees also dealt with a variety of prohibitions and other circumstances, such as the arrest of Gypsies. The enforcement of the legalized ideology fell to the secret state police and the political police, the notorious Gestapo and SS. This Nazi legislation and its enforcement led to a society hostile to or indifferent to the Jewish population, and resulted in mass repression, prohibitions, denunciations, arrests, attacks, and even violent pogroms against the Jews such as the infamous *Kristallnacht* of the night of November 9, 1938 (Laqueur, 2001).

With the advent and growth of the concentration camp system in Nazi Germany, the violence against the "undesirables," including the Jews, reached monstrous proportions. Dachau, the first concentration camp in Nazi Germany, was first established in 1933 and initially housed Socialists and Communists. Soon, however, other camps

such as Buchenwald (1937) and Mauthausen (1938) were established and the Jewish prisoners began to arrive by the thousands. Also, the Jewish population of the Third Reich was being rounded-up and placed into tightly packed ghettos in places like Lodz, Warsaw, Krakow, Lublin, and Vilna. Additionally, the special mobile killing squads, or *Einsatzgruppen* and *SS Sonderkommandos*, began the mass slaughter of Jews in places like Babi Yar. The killing squads soon proved inefficient, and using the information the government had gained from its program of euthanasia of the mentally ill, the first experimental gassing of Soviet Prisoners-of-War took place in Auschwitz on September 3, 1941. By December, mobile gas vans were being used to exterminate Jewish prisoners at the Chelmno death camp. Following the Wannsee Conference and the implementation of the “Final Solution,” millions of Jews and other prisoners were carted across the expanse of the Third Reich in railroad cattle cars to arrive at the many concentration and extermination camps of Nazi Germany. Many of the prisoners faced a slow death resulting from starvation and forced labor while others faced the immediate death of the gas chambers of the “Final Solution” (Laqueur, 2001).

With the liberation of the camps by the Allied forces, and the ultimate defeat of Germany in World War II in 1945, the horrendous scale of the camps was realized by the outside world. For twelve years the Nazis led a totalitarian government based upon a concentration camp regime that resulted in mass repression and the systematic extermination of millions of people. The concentration camps were located throughout the Third Reich and the occupied territories. And it is estimated that between five and seven million Jewish victims were claimed by the Holocaust, as well as millions of

Gypsies, Slavs, Jehovah's Witnesses, political dissidents, homosexuals, and other "undesirables" (Hilberg , 1985; Laqueur, 2001, xiv).

The Gulag:

The era of the Gulag finds its beginnings in the October Revolution in 1917, when the Bolsheviks and their allies seized power of the Russian government and established the Soviet regime. The totalitarian Communist government that followed under Lenin, Stalin, and others, was a system marked by massive repression, violence, and terror against its citizens (Vilensky, 1999; Conquest, 1973; Courtois et al., 1999).

A period of civil war followed the October Revolution, which pitted the Bolsheviks and the Red Army against the soldiers who were against Bolshevik rule, known as the White Army. During the Civil War, both the Red Army and White Army committed acts of repression, terror, and violence against their real or imagined opponents. However, V. I. Lenin's "Red Terror" was much more systematized than the terror of the White Army. Lenin, the Communist party, and the secret state police, or Cheka, violently repressed workers' strikes and peasant revolts, began mass deportations of the Cossacks, allowed the peasant population to be ravaged by the Great Famine, took hostages and interned them in concentration camps¹, and executed thousands of citizens (Werth, 2001, 71-131).

After the Civil War, legislation was created that legalized the terror and repression, and the rise of the massive concentration camp system, noted by the acronym *GULag*, began.² In 1922, the Criminal Code of the USSR was first created and began to

be enforced by the Cheka. The Criminal Code specified what acts constituted criminal behavior, and what punishment was suitable for each crime. The Code was again established in 1926 with the addition of the infamous Article 58 under which many of the well-known political prisoners, such as Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, were sentenced.³ The establishment of the first permanent Soviet concentration camp on the Solovetsky Archipelago also took place in 1922, the same year as the first major show trial, the trial of the Socialist Revolutionaries by the *troika* or tribunal court. Thus, during the reign of Lenin, class categories such as “enemies of the people,” “suspects,” and “dangerous elements” became established, and seemed to be a horrendous precursor for what was to come during the Stalin era (Solzhenitsyn, 1973; Vilensky, 1999, 340; Werth, 1999, 71-131).

Following Lenin’s death in 1924, Josef Stalin defeated his rivals to become the sole leader of the USSR in 1928. With the rise of Stalin, mass repression and violent terror ensued. His first Five-Year Plan, with its industrialization and forced collectivization of the peasants, including de-kulakization,⁴ led to an immense famine that killed millions of people, especially Ukrainians, and served to quash any resistance to the government in the rural countryside.⁵ Also, by using of the secret police, which was originally known as the Cheka, but went through many name changes (GPU, OGPU, NKVD, MGB, KGB), Stalin repressed any real or imagined opponents to his leadership with a system of denunciations, deportations, show trials, and waves of purges. Though his most well known wave of purges, the Great Terror of 1936-1939, claimed public figures of the Communist party, intelligentsia, and military, the victims of the

Stalinist terror ranged across every corner of the spectrum of possible social, economic, and political backgrounds, including millions of Soviet workers and peasants. The Stalinist ideology thus created social classes of “enemies of the people,” and used systematic terror based upon a system of concentration camps to enforce the totalitarian regime (Conquest, 1973; Vilensky, 1999, 340-341; Werth, 1999, 132-268).

This systematic terror and concentration camp system continued to be used throughout the Krushchev and Brezhnev eras, and did not halt until the 1980s. The enormous scale of the Gulag became known through the information provided by survivors and witnesses, and eventually the partial opening of the Soviet archives. The Soviet concentration camp and forced labor system itself was a leviathan spanning the expanse of the Soviet Union. It ranged across many of the most inhospitable areas of the USSR, most notably Siberia, where the climate and pathetic food rations served to exterminate the prisoners as efficiently as the gas chambers of the Nazis. However, the camps did not exist only in Siberia, but “there was not a single major population center that did not have its own local camp or camps” (Applebaum, 2000). Also, as Anne Applebaum explains, “In the Soviet Union of the 1940s, it would have been difficult, in many places, to go about your daily business and not run into prisoners. It is no longer possible to argue, as some Western historians have done, that the camps were known to only a small proportion of the population” (2000).

Thus, the camps alone claimed an estimated twelve million lives between only the years of 1936 to 1950, while another estimate gives twenty million deaths resulting from the camp system from the 1920s to the 1950s (Conquest, 1973, 710; Ivanova, 2000, 188).

Also, approximately five million peasants are estimated to have died in the famine in 1921-1922, while eleven to over thirteen million peasants are estimated to have died in the famine of 1931-1932 (Courtois, 1999, 9; Conquest, 1986, 299-307). Applebaum writes that between 1930 and 1953 that “some 18 million Soviet citizens had experience of camps, and perhaps another 15 million had experience of some other form of forced labor” (2000). Overall, estimates give at least twenty million deaths resulting from the system of mass terror and concentration camps, if not more (Conquest, 1973; Courtois et al., 1999; Ivanova, 2000).

Concept Definitions:

Because of the wide array of historical events involved in the “Holocaust” and “Gulag,” both concepts can be defined in very broad or very narrow terms. Broadly, the concepts of the Holocaust and Gulag⁶ may include the entire repressive system of their respective totalitarian governments, and thus be synonymous with the state-sponsored use of violence, terror, concentration camps, and murder. Narrowly defined, however, the concept of the Holocaust may only refer specifically to the events of the “Final Solution,” and the concept of the Gulag may only pertain to the camp system which is referred to by the acronym, *GULag*. The Holocaust and Gulag do represent different political systems, Fascism and Communism, and also different ideological criteria for designating their victims. However, their respective concentration camp systems represent the crystallization of both the Holocaust and Gulag in that the repressive and violent actions of both regimes become more formalized, systematic, concentrated, and visible through

their concentration camps systems. The concentration camps thus represent the institutionalization of the repressive and violent actions of the Nazi and Soviet regimes. Consequently, the concentration camps may serve as a beneficial focus for comparisons of the Holocaust and Gulag. Thus, in this paper, I will use these concepts in both their broad and narrow senses.

Comparative Bibliographic Analysis:

Holocaust Literature:

During the reign of the Third Reich and the post-war years following its collapse, the atrocities that were committed against Jews, Gypsies, Slavs, political dissidents, Jehovah's Witnesses, homosexuals, and others declared "undesirable" by the Nazi government did not receive very much attention from the general public, and very little attention at all from scholars. At the start of the Nuremberg war crimes trials in October 1945, much evidence had been collected documenting the existence of the concentration camps and the numerous atrocities that had occurred during the Holocaust era. Despite the availability of evidence concerning the Holocaust, and the publication of a few survivor memoirs, serious study of the events was overshadowed by the different nations' post-war concerns of "recovery and reconstruction" (Laqueur, 2001, xv).

However, the advent of the Eichmann trial in Jerusalem in 1961 and the circumstances surrounding his apprehension, helped to bring public consideration to the events of the Holocaust. The Holocaust garnered more attention, public and scholarly, as

other major trials were carried out against the perpetrators of the atrocities of the Nazi era. In the 1970s and 1980s, scholars in the West began to focus even greater amounts of interest in the Holocaust and the Third Reich resulting in the emergence of the new field of Holocaust studies. As Walter Laqueur writes, “Whereas in the immediate postwar periods very little had been done to document and commemorate the Holocaust, by the 1970s the field was becoming quite crowded” (2001, xvii). Chairs in Holocaust studies began to appear at major universities around the world, as did research institutes and museums dealing with the Holocaust, such as the Leo Baeck Institute, the Simon Wiesenthal Institute, the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, and Yad Vashem (Laqueur 2001, xvi-xviii). The concentration of scholars and the amount of research on the Holocaust continued to grow throughout the 1990s and beyond the advent of the year 2000.

Thus, as the Holocaust gained attention in the West, scholars and writers have produced an immense collection of scholarly works. Research on the Holocaust covers a wide array of important topics in practically every major field of study. As one author of a bibliography of Holocaust literature comments, “the quantity of the relevant literature is staggering, and it increases annually” (Edelheit, 1986, xxiii). In order to obtain an accurate representation of how much literature is available on the subject of the Holocaust for the purpose of comparison with the availability of Gulag literature, it is necessary to now move to a bibliographic analysis of Holocaust literature.

Data:

One of the most recent and comprehensive bibliographies of Holocaust literature published is the *Bibliography on Holocaust Literature*, compiled by Abraham J. and Herschel Edelheit. The bibliography is a three-volume set including the original volume published in 1986, the first supplement published in 1990, and the final supplement published in 1993. The bibliography contains a total of 18,251 citations of works published in English, and is arranged by headings and sub-headings covering an array of topics dealing with the Holocaust, such as anti-Semitism, the SS State, the concentration camp system, the Final Solution, resistance, etc. Overall, it provides a more than adequate view of the number and types of literature available on the topic of the Holocaust.

Method:

I performed a quantitative thematic content analysis of the *Bibliography on Holocaust Literature*. My unit of analysis consisted of themes designated by each major heading and sub-heading of the bibliography. I analyzed the major headings and sub-headings thematically, and separated the entries whose theme was parallel with the topic of the research of the Gulag from the headings and sub-headings that were not thematically related to the topics pertaining to the Gulag. Thus, the topics: "Anti-Semitism" (Origins of the Holocaust), "The SS State," "Europe Under Nazism," "The Concentration Camp System," "The Final Solution/Victims," "Resistance," "The Bystanders," "The Free World Reaction," "Reflection on/ Legacy of the Holocaust," "Search for Justice," "The Holocaust in Literature and Art," and "Historiography,

Research, Bibliographies, etc.” were included. However, the topics: “Jewish Life in Pre-War Europe,” “Modern Europe,” “Fascism,” “The Nazis (biographies),” “World War II,” “From Holocaust to Rebirth,” and “Distorting the Holocaust” were not included. Since the three volumes did not follow the exact same arrangement, I unified the similar headings and placed sub-headings under different major headings when needed while attempting to keep the heading arrangement of the initial volume of the bibliography.

My unit of observation and count consisted of each citation of the Holocaust bibliography. Thus, after unifying thematically the major headings and sub-headings of the three volumes, I calculated the number of citations in each section (see Table 1). In my compilation of the number of citations in each section I did not include the numerous cross-referenced citations since many of them appeared more than once under the same major heading. The cross-referenced citations thus add to the overall number for each section, which could lead to an exaggeration of the actual number of available works.

Results:Table 1: Number of Entries for Included Headings of the *Bibliography on Holocaust Literature*

	Bibliography	Supplement, Vol. 1	Supplement, Vol. 2	Total
Origins of the Holocaust	349	227	110	686
The SS State	565	366	168	1099
Europe Under Nazism	958	268	436	1662
(Ghettos)	174	53	22	[249]
Concentration Camp System	288	111	48	447
The Final Solution/ Victims	897	476	421	1794
(Diaries, Memoirs, Testimonies, Biographies, etc.)	409	309	201	[919]
Resistance	1020	272	188	1480
Bystanders	261	177	122	560
The Free World Reaction	1190	868	560	2618
Reflections and Legacy	689	676	377	1742
Search for Justice	384	321	140	845
Holocaust in Literature & Art	198	512	167	877
Historiography, Research, Bibliographies, etc.	428	579	347	1354
				15,164

As is shown in Table 1, there is an extensive number of publications available concerning the Holocaust. There are a total of 15,164 entries that are included in the analysis. The most explored topic is “The Free World Reaction,” with 2,618 entries. The category concerning the “The Final Solution/Victims” also contains many entries at 1,794, as well as “Reflections and Legacy” with 1,742 entries and “Europe Under Nazism” with 1,662 entries. Each of these topics was thus the most explored by scholars.

Some thematic topics, however, are significantly less explored by scholars than those mentioned above. The category dealing with the “Concentration Camp System” contains only 447 citations, as compared to the 2,618 entries of “The Free World

Reaction.” Also, the publications on “Bystanders” only numbers 560, and the “Origins of the Holocaust” only includes 686 entries. Consequently, the various thematic categories vary in the number of publications they contain and thus also in the amount of exploration they have received.

Gulag Literature:

The literature available on the Gulag is much more limited than that of the Holocaust. The Gulag has captured considerably less attention from scholars, especially scholars from the West. Also, the scholars that have focused their research on the Gulag, mostly historians and political scientists, have faced many obstacles to their studies such as the repression of information regarding the Gulag and other reasons that will be discussed later in the paper.

Since the October Revolution and the Civil War, concentration camps existed in Russia. Most of the information about the early camps came from prisoners who escaped the camps or exile and arrived in the West, many of whom later published memoirs and diaries of their experiences. However, as Stalin ascended to lead the government of the USSR, the concentration camp system, or Gulag, reached monstrous proportions and there was repression of information regarding the camps. Also, former prisoners may not have been open about their experiences because they were “in denial,” especially given the political left-wing influences of the post-World War II era.

With the repression of information and the dissemination of propaganda by the government regarding the camps, clandestine *samizdat*, or “self-published” works began

to be circulated throughout the USSR with some eventually reaching the West in the 1960s through the 1980s. Again, most of the information regarding the camps consisted of memoirs, diaries, testimonies, and biographies. However, some research regarding the Gulag began to be published, mostly by survivors and witnesses to the camps.

The Krushchev period brought about the release of some information regarding the Stalinist purges, the Gulag, and other atrocities. At the XXth Party Congress in 1956, Krushchev gave his “Secret Speech” admitting some of the atrocities of the Stalinist regime. And he again addressed these issues in a speech at the XXIIInd Party Congress in 1961 (Conquest, 1973, 437, 686; Courtois, 1999, 18). Krushchev also allowed the publication in the Soviet Union of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn’s *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* (1962), which gave a fictional account of the events of one day in the life of a prisoner of the Gulag (Courtois, 1999, 24). Thus, in “...1961-4, a large amount of relevant information was put out in the Soviet Union” in regards to the trials, purges, and camps (Conquest, 1973).

Following the Krushchev period the loosened restrictions became tightened as information about the Stalinist atrocities was again repressed. Although, during this time period another of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn’s important works, *The Gulag Archipelago*, was published in the West and helped to bring the Gulag to the attention of not only scholars but also the general public. The historian, Robert Conquest, also brought the Stalinist purges and the Gulag to the attention of West with his book, *The Great Terror*.

Recently, with Gorbachev’s *glasnost* and the fall of the USSR in 1991, there has been scholarly interest in the Gulag and there have been some publications dealing with

the topic. Courtois, et al. brought much interest to the Gulag with the *Black Book of Communism*, which was published in France in 1997 and in an English edition in 1999. However, despite the “openness” that was said to characterize the Gorbachev regime, and is now said to characterize the newly democratic Russia, groups wishing to document the Gulag, such as the Memorial, have faced open government opposition, and the focus in Russia seems to have moved towards the future as the past is neglected. Thus, even after the period of Gorbachev’s *glasnost* and the eventual fall of the Soviet Union in 1991 that showed the partial opening of the archives, scholarly attention to the Gulag never reached that of the Holocaust. This can be seen in the fact that there are no chairs of “Gulag Studies,” and that there are also very few courses offered dealing with the Gulag. Foundations, museums, and memorials to the Gulag have also not developed. This situation is reflected in the findings from my analysis of a Gulag bibliography.

Data:

The most extensive bibliography of the literature published on the Gulag is *Soviet Prisons and Concentration Camps. An Annotated Bibliography 1917-1980*, compiled by Libushe Zorin. The bibliography contains 485 citations from 1917 to 1978 that are arranged chronologically by year of publication. Unlike the Holocaust bibliography, however, Zorin’s bibliography covers works published not only in English, but also Russian, Ukrainian, Polish, French, German, Hebrew, and other languages.

Method:

My method again was a quantitative thematic content analysis. For *Soviet Prisons and Concentration Camps. An Annotated Bibliography 1917-1980*, the units of

analysis were the themes of the entries of the bibliography. The unit of observation and count again was a bibliographic entry. However, since the bibliography was arranged chronologically by year of publication instead of by specific topics, I had to analyze the title and annotation for each entry and place the entries into thematic categories parallel to those of Holocaust. In order to insure comparability, I followed the major headings and sub-headings of the Holocaust bibliography and created parallel headings and sub-headings for the Gulag bibliography. The thematic headings that were included are: "Origins of the Gulag," "The Police State," "The Soviet Union Under Communism," "The Concentration/ Forced Labor System," "Victims of the Police State," "Resistance," "Bystanders," "The Free World Reaction," "Reflection on/ Legacy of the Gulag," "Search for Justice," "Gulag in Literature and Art," "Historiography, Research, Bibliographies, etc.," and "Miscellaneous/Unable to Place."

I then analyzed each entry and its annotation in order to place the entries into the categories, and also calculated the number of entries for each category (see Table 2). Since the Holocaust bibliography consisted only of works published in English, and the Gulag bibliography contained works published in seven of the world's major languages, it was also necessary for me to calculate the number of entries in English. Also, for some of the entries I obtained a translation of the title when necessary if the title was not in English. However, because of the language barrier and the fact that not all of the entries were annotated, some of the citations could not be placed into the thematic categories. Also, because of the possibility of error inherent in the act of deciphering which thematic category each entry belongs in, there may be some entries that would be better placed in

other categories. Yet, the discrepancy between the amount of the two literatures still proves to be so great that such possible errors will not considerably alter the overall picture.

Results:

Table 2: Number of Entries for Included Subjects of the *Soviet Prisons and Concentration Camps. An Annotated Bibliography 1917-1980*

	Total Entries
Origins of the Gulag	1
The Police State	28
The Soviet Union Under Communism	21
(Prisons/Psychiatric Hospitals)	[9]
(Exile/Deportation)	[5]
Concentration Camp/ Forced Labor System	77
Victims of the Police State	218
(Memoirs, Diaries, Testimonies, Biographies, etc.)	[198]
Resistance	14
Bystanders	0
The Free World Reaction	41
Reflection and Legacy	5
Search for Justice	10
Gulag in Literature and Art	28
Historiography, Research, Bibliographies, etc.	2
	445
Miscellaneous/ Unable to Place	40
	485

As is shown in Table 2, the Gulag bibliography contains significantly few entries. The total entries of the Gulag bibliography number 485. Of these 485 total entries, 218 are included in the category of the “Victims of the Police State.” The sub-category dealing of the “Victims of the Police State” concerning “Memoirs, Diaries, Testimonies, Biographies, etc.” alone contains a significant 198 entries. None of the other thematic

categories compare to the level of publications related to the “Victims of the Police State.”

Many thematic categories, however, contain very few publications. The category of “Bystanders” contains no bibliographic entries. Also, the category dealing with the “Origins of the Gulag” contains only one publication, and the “Historiography, Research, Bibliography” category contains two publications. The 485 entries are thus greatly concentrated in the “Victims of the Police State” category while the other 267 publications are thinly distributed among the remaining categories.

Discussion:

Table 3: Results of the Comparative Bibliographic Analysis of *The Bibliography on Holocaust Literature* and *Soviet Prisons and Concentration Camps. An Annotated Bibliography, 1917-1980*

	Holocaust Bibliography	Gulag Bibliography	Estimated Gulag Bibliography
Origins	686	1	
The Police/SS State	1099	28	
Europe Under Nazism/ USSR Under Communism	1662	21	
Concentration Camp/ Forced Labor System	447	77	
Victims	1794	218	
(Memoirs, Diaries, Testimonies, Biographies, etc.)	[919]	[198]	
Resistance	1480	14	
Bystanders	560	0	
The Free World Reaction	2618	41	
Reflection and Legacy	1742	5	
Search for Justice	845	10	
Holocaust/ Gulag in Literature and Art	877	28	
Historiography, Research, Bibliographies, etc.	1354	2	
Miscellaneous/ Unable to Place	N/A	40	
	15,164	485	
Entries in Major Languages	estimated 100,000	485	608
Entries in English	15,164	268	335

In comparing the bibliographic analyses of the Holocaust and Gulag bibliographies, the results are indeed staggering. By viewing the overall numbers and the numbers for each section heading, it becomes increasingly clear that a major discrepancy exists between the amount of scholarly attention focused on the Holocaust and Gulag. The Holocaust has thus received a large amount of attention from scholars and writers while the Gulag has faced relative neglect.

The *Bibliography on Holocaust Literature* contains a total of 15,164 entries that pertain to parallel topics of the Gulag, while the bibliography of Soviet prisons and concentration camps contains a total of only 485 entries. However, the Holocaust bibliography does include publications from more years than the bibliography on the Soviet prisons and camps because of its section on anti-Semitism. The average number of publications per year for the fifty-nine years of the bibliography on the Soviet prisons and camps is about 8.22. Thus, a conservative estimate of the number of new works published during the fifteen years between 1978, when the entries for the Gulag bibliography end, and 1993, when the last supplement of the Holocaust bibliography was published, would give approximately 123 new citations to the Gulag bibliography for a total of about 608 citations. Yet, even with the 123 entries added on, the Holocaust bibliography still contains about 25 times more entries than the bibliography on the Soviet prisons and camps.

The comparison of the different section headings is also quite astonishing. The Holocaust bibliography includes 447 entries pertaining to the concentration camp system, while the bibliography of the Soviet prisons and camps only includes 77 entries. There are a total of 1,794 entries listed pertaining to the victims of the Nazis, but only 218 pertaining to the victims of Stalinism. Also, of the 15,164 entries for the Holocaust bibliography, only 919, or about six percent are diaries, memoirs, testimonies, biographies, etc., leaving the other 94 percent for documentation and scholarly works. However, of the 485 entries for the bibliography of Soviet prisons and camps, 198, or

about 41 percent of the entries include diaries, memoirs, testimonies, biographies, etc., leaving only 59 percent of the remaining entries for documentation and scholarly works.

Another important category, the one that contains the entries dealing with the reflection upon and legacy of the Holocaust and Gulag, shows 1,742 works on the Holocaust compared to only 5 on the Gulag. And the category on the search for justice shows 845 entries for the Holocaust and only 10 for the Gulag. In the analysis of the Gulag bibliography, there also could not be found any citations pertaining to the topic of the bystanders of the Gulag. The Holocaust bibliography, however, listed 560 citations dealing with the significant topic of the bystanders. It is impossible not to see a major discrepancy in these numbers.

Also, when the fact is taken into consideration that the Holocaust bibliography includes works published only in English while the bibliography of the Soviet prisons and camps contains works published in over seven of the world's major languages, the situation appears even more bleak. As the Edelheits explain in the Introduction to the *Bibliography on Holocaust Literature Supplement, Volume 2*: "Judging by the number of materials that have been published in English, a comprehensive multilingual bibliography on the Holocaust would encompass at least 100,000 items published in every major European language, Hebrew, and Yiddish" (1993, 2). The gap between 100,000 items and 608 items is shocking in itself. However, The Edelheits also give reference to "a Polish bibliography on Auschwitz cited by M.R.D. Foot in his 1977 book, *Resistance*, that "listed some seven thousand items on that camp alone" (1993, 2). Seven thousand

items exist on Auschwitz alone, yet the bibliography covering the entire system of Soviet prisons and concentration camps contains only 485 entries.

It is also quite shocking to consider that the Holocaust bibliography contains a total of 15,164 citations of works published in English while the Gulag bibliography (included the estimated entries) would contain only 335 citations of works published in English. The literature published in English on the Gulag would thus represent only *one forty-fifth* of the literature of the Holocaust. This is significant because English is the language of the United States, the country considered to be the hub or apogee of Western culture. Thus, the discrepancy may also be viewed as a bench mark of how the Gulag has fallen to the wayside in the Western world in being considered by scholars as a consequential event of the Twentieth century.

Conclusion:

Thus, the numbers in each category of the table for the Gulag bibliography greatly pale in comparison to the numbers in each category for the Holocaust bibliography. The realization that *one hundred and sixty-five times* more literature exists on the Holocaust than on the Soviet Gulag is quite disheartening. This is also true of the fact that the Gulag literature published in English represents only *one forty-fifth* of the Holocaust literature published in English. It is also amazing to think that there could not be found any citations for the topic of the bystanders to the Gulag, and that the numbers in each thematic category could present such a major gap between the Gulag and Holocaust. This

disparity between the immense amount of literature available on the subject of the Holocaust and the meager amount of literature available on the subject of the Gulag is astounding and clearly deserves an explanation. Thus, the next section provides an exploration of the historical, political, and intellectual roots of this discrepancy.

Exploring the Roots of the Discrepancy:

What factors led to such a clear lack of interest by scholars in researching the Gulag? In the exploration of the historical, political and intellectual roots of the discrepancy, the Holocaust will again provide a standard of comparison for the Soviet Gulag, and there will be three major areas of concentration, including the objective limitations to research, the climate of opinion, and the non-existence of viable interest groups of the Gulag. Each of the three areas has had, and continues to have, a profound effect on the differing amounts of literature produced about the two phenomena. The three areas also represent the major obstacles that scholars will have to overcome to develop study of the Gulag.

Objective Limitations:

The existence and availability of accurate archival evidence is often crucial in the production of accurate and informative research about large-scale historical events such as the Gulag and Holocaust. However, the circumstances surrounding the Soviet archives have proved to be very problematic for scholars. Following World War II, researchers faced difficulties in gaining access to the Nazi archives and also faced problems relating

to the accuracy of the archives. However, the complications they faced never reached the extent of the difficulties that scholars have come up against in their attempt to study the Gulag through the state archives of the USSR. Hence, these differences in objective limitations surrounding the Nazi archives and Soviet archives may aid in explaining the discrepancy in the amount of publications produced on each historical event.

At the end of World War II, the Allied powers emerged victorious while Nazi Germany fell defeated. Upon defeat by the Allies, the Nazi government was thwarted in its attempts to completely destroy evidence of the horrendous events of the Holocaust. The Allies quickly occupied the defeated country, and began the process of de-Nazification. The Nazi government was dismantled, including the secret state police and political police (the Gestapo and the SS), and the Nazi party was quickly outlawed. With the advent of the Nuremberg War Crimes Trials, there was also a mass collection and presentation of evidence documenting the atrocities committed under the auspices of the Third Reich. The repressive and violent actions of the Nazi government towards Jews and other target groups were deemed reprehensible by the governments of the Allied forces, and individuals with any ties to the Nazi ideology or government were stigmatized. Thus, the defeat of the Third Reich and the process of de-Nazification led to an open atmosphere surrounding the German archives. Ultimately, definitive works in Holocaust Studies that relied upon the German archives, such as Raul Hilberg's *The Destruction of the European Jews*, were produced (Edelheit, 1990, 668; Marrus, 2001, 282; Malia, 1999; xiii).

The history of the Soviet Union and the Soviet archives, however, took a very different path than that of Nazi Germany. Unlike the Third Reich, the Soviet Union never faced defeat in war or occupation by outside forces. The USSR also never followed a rigorous process of de-Stalinization that could be considered the equivalent of the de-Nazification of Germany. Even after Krushchev's secret speech at the XXth Party Congress, Gorbachev's *glasnost*, and the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, the Communist regime cannot be characterized as having been dismantled, but can more aptly be described as having "mutated."

As Nikita Krushchev came to power, he attempted to establish his basis of political control on the platform of the de-Stalinization of the Communist Party. His secret speech to the XXth Party Congress, in which some crimes of the Communist government were admitted, allowed Krushchev to place the guilt and blame of the horrendous atrocities of the Gulag on Stalin and his "cult of personality" while exonerating himself and the Party from any responsibility in the atrocities. This is poignant considering Krushchev's position in 1938 as head of the Ukrainian Communist Party when an estimated 106,000 Ukrainians were arrested, a majority of whom faced execution (Werth, 1999, 192). Other important figures of the Party were also not mentioned in relation to Stalin and his "cult of personality." Krushchev, by skillfully admitting some of the crimes of the party, and by placing blame on Stalin and his "cult of personality," was able to keep the Communist government of the USSR intact, including the systems of repression and violence. Krushchev was thus able to create a façade of change and de-Stalinization without truly enacting any change or cleansing the Party of

those members who participated in the atrocities. Consequently, the foundations of the Party, exonerated from any responsibility or complicity in the violent and repressive actions committed under Stalin, continued to be preserved in their same form.

Neither did Gorbachev's program of *glasnost* in the 1980s result in a complete process of de-Stalinization. The Communist Party still was not cleansed of those members bearing responsibility for violent and repressive acts and the repressive institutions were not dismantled in any way. The secrecy surrounding the events of the Gulag again appeared, though not to the level it had under Stalin. There were important releases of information including the re-publication of Solzhenitsyn's *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* and other publications by Russian historians (Courtois, 1999; Bacon, 1994, 23). However, Edwin Bacon aptly describes the government in this way: "Although far more open than its predecessors, the Gorbachev regime did sometimes deliver only a 'half *glasnost*,' whereby previously secret subjects were placed in the public domain but the information revealed about them was not the full picture (1994, 23). Thus, the Party continued to be preserved in its Stalinist form despite the "openness" that was said to characterize the new regime.

In 1991, following the failed coup d'état by members of the Communist Party, the Soviet Union collapsed and Boris Yeltsin took power. A democratic transformation then began, and it seemed as though a complete process of de-Stalinization was underway. The archives concerning the year 1941 were opened to researchers, and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) was outlawed just as the Nazi Party had been in Germany (Kirillova, 2, 2001; Dallin, 1995, 245). However, this possibility quickly

dissolved as the Communist Party re-emerged under a new name, the Communist Party of the Russian Federation (Dallin, 1995, 263). Again, there was not a dismantling of the Party or even the government in general. Former Communist leaders who had been responsible for, or showed complicity to, the violent and repressive actions of the Soviet government reappeared as members of the new Party and as members of other new parties like the Nationalists. And although there was a period of openness surrounding the archives in the early 1990s, there was no cleansing of the government but instead the preservation of the Party continued as it had for centuries. Consequently, being affiliated with Communism has never carried the stigma that being affiliated with Nazism carries with it (Malia, 1999, xiii).

This situation has had serious implications for the availability of sound evidence on the atrocities of the Gulag. One of the greatest hindrances that scholars have faced while attempting to research the Gulag is the unavailability of the Soviet archives. Historically, the Communist government of the USSR was surrounded by secrecy, and this secrecy and censorship of information meant the severe limitation of access to the archival evidence documenting the repressive measures of the government. Stephane Courtois writes, “the absolute denial of access to archives... and the entire apparatus for keeping information under lock and key were designed primarily to ensure that the awful truth would never see the light of day” (1999, 18). And although the Communist Party and government were officially dissolved in 1991, the secrecy that once had ruled over the events of the Gulag has re-emerged as ex-members of the Party and Communist

government continue to occupy positions of authority in the polity, military, and law enforcement.

Among the Soviet government institutions that were not dismantled in a process of de-Stalinization was the KGB, whose ranks now form the present-day Security Forces. Though the archives had temporarily been placed under the jurisdiction of a group of special researchers, a presidential decree given by Vladimir Putin on June 6, 2001, placed the archives back under the jurisdiction of the Security Forces (Kirillova, 2001). The Security Forces thus gained control over the archives just as had their predecessors, the KGB. The presidential decree gave the Security Forces authority over the many facets of the archives, including decisions of access, decisions of availability of specific archival documents, and even control over the content of the archives.

Also, during the days of the USSR, there existed within the KGB a division whose task was specifically “dis-information,” the placement of false documents among the original documents in the archives (Kirillova, 2001). With the Security Forces regaining control of the archives, it seems that scholars and the public alike must ask the question: does the division of “dis-information” find itself at work again? By positioning the archives under the jurisdiction of the Security Forces, President Putin places scholars between their own Scylla and Charybdis. Not only will scholars again face restricted access to the archives following a period of relative openness, but they must also question the credibility of the documents they view.

The questionable credibility of the Soviet archives is not a new phenomenon. Historically, not only was there a KGB division of “dis-information” for archival

information, but the misrepresentation of statistics in general was common under the totalitarian Soviet regime. Statistics were typically required to conform to standards that the Party desired. Robert Conquest points out that in 1937 the members of the Soviet Census Board were executed as spies for “diminishing the population of the Soviet Union.” This was perhaps the result of an attempt by the Soviet government to hide or cover-up the enormous scale of the purges since a greatly diminished Soviet population through state sponsored violence would not conform to the picture that the Party desired. Consequently, the “...new Census Board [of 1939] had some incentive to exaggerate the numbers...” (Conquest, 1994, 235). The possibility of misrepresentation in the documents of the Soviet archives forces scholars researching the Gulag into a very problematic position in which they could face open criticism and opposition from other scholars and the government in their use of archival data. Thus, scholars must take great care in evaluating and utilizing data gleaned from the archives.

One other remnant of the Soviet past that continues to haunt Gulag research is the “State Secret Law” which has been used to keep archival information documenting the atrocities of the Gulag from being revealed (Kirillova, 2001, 3). In the past, and perhaps in the future, persons were denied access to information, even the dossier of their own arrest and imprisonment, when the government felt that the information fell into the realm of “State Secrets.” Oftentimes, this information, if released, would create dissonance with the admirable image of the government that officials wished to present. Victims of the Gulag, such as Solzhenitsyn, mention times when they were denied access

to their personal files. The general sense of the “State Secret Law” opens a large chasm of possibility of denying researchers access to the archives.

The existence and availability of accurate archival evidence is often instrumental in the production of accurate and informative research about large-scale historical events such as the Gulag, as the research of the Holocaust has shown. However, the circumstances surrounding the Soviet archives have proved to be very problematic for scholars. The availability of the Nazi archives has given Holocaust scholars an opportunity that scholars researching the Gulag have not yet been able to obtain. The complete opening of the Soviet archives to public scrutiny would be incredibly valuable to scholars. As with the German archives, the complete opening of the Soviet archives would allow scholars to critically evaluate the documentary evidence, and also to fill the gaps in information that have appeared through the study of memoirs, first-hand accounts, and previous government documents. Recent publications based at least partly upon archival data, such as Edwin Bacon’s *The Gulag at War* (1994) and Courtois et al. the *Black Book of Communism* (1999), are important examples of the significance of the archives to scholarly research concerning the Gulag. Archival evidence would provide scholars with an important and more complete dimension for the study of the Gulag by tearing down one of the major obstacles to Gulag research.

Climate of Opinion:

To the Allied powers in World War II, Nazism was the embodiment of a “great evil” that needed to be eradicated from the world. After the Allied victory which rid

Europe of its fascist governments, and the circumstances of the Holocaust came to light during the Nuremberg War Crimes trials and the Eichmann trial, Nazism was characterized not just as a “great evil,” but as an “absolute evil” (Malia, 1999, xii). The Nazi government of Germany was thus completely dismantled, and memorials to commemorate the victims of the Holocaust were built. Scholars and researchers were met with an atmosphere open to critical evaluation and study of the Nazi regime and the atrocities of the Holocaust. The defeated Nazi Germany thus became the center in the new field of the study of genocide as scholars and the public began to question how the atrocious events of the Holocaust could have happened. Following its defeat and occupation, Germany was ultimately instilled with a democratic government, and the critical examination of Germany’s Nazi past continues to be carried out in the open democratic atmosphere.

Without a clear process of de-Stalinization having ever been carried out, the climate of opinion surrounding the Gulag in Russia is not one indicative of openness to scholarly research and critical examination of the Soviet past. As was explained, the USSR was never defeated in war or occupied by outside forces, and the Communist regime was never dismantled. This has had important implications for the study of the Gulag because it affects not only the accessibility and content of the archives, but also the climate of opinion surrounding the Gulag in Russia and in the West.

Following the failed coup d’etat in 1991, President Yeltsin outlawed the Communist Party (CPSU); however, it soon reappeared under a new name, the Communist Party of the Russian Federation. Resulting from this lack of adherence to de-

Stalinization is one of the most glaring examples of the lack of changeover in the newly democratic Russia—the elections of 1993. In the elections of 1993, the Communist Party of the Russian Federation was able to win sixty-four seats in the new State Duma (Dallin, 1995, 267). The super-nationalist Liberal Democratic Party was also able to win twenty-four percent of the party list in the elections to the new State Duma (Dallin, 1995, 267). Together, the communists and extreme nationalists held a majority of seats in the legislature (Dallin, 1995, 245). Communist ideologues and the anti-Western nationalists were able to hold sway in the new democratic government, and thus the reemergence of the dark past of the atrocities committed under the Communist government of the USSR would not cohere with the image the communists or nationalists wished to present to the public. For the communists and nationalists, the realities of the Gulag would be better concealed and relegated to history than to be studied openly by scholars. To have the realities of the Gulag presented to the public may bring criticism to the parties that they would naturally desire to avoid.

The controversy surrounding the embalmed body of Vladimir Lenin may also be an indication that the atmosphere in Russia may not be conducive to Gulag research. In 1997, President Boris Yeltsin suggested a referendum to decide whether Lenin's body should finally be buried (Digges, 1997; "Eighty Years On, Lenin Still Stirs Russian Passion," *Russia Today*, 1997). However, the State Duma, led by the communists and nationalists, opposed Yeltsin's attempt to bury the Soviet founder and Russia's communist past. Instead of embracing Russia's democratic future by critically examining the Soviet past, the Duma passed a resolution against removing Lenin's body from the

mausoleum in Red Square (“Parliament Opposes Efforts to Bury Lenin,” *Russia Today*, 1997). Consequently, Lenin’s embalmed body still symbolically remains within the mausoleum today.

President Putin has also perpetuated aspects of the Soviet past within the democratic present. Along with his presidential decree transferring the archives back to the jurisdiction of the Security Forces, under his leadership, human right’s groups who have documented the atrocities of the Gulag, such as the Memorial, have faced open opposition from the government. Putin has also chosen to reintroduce the same Soviet anthem for the new Russia. His regime has put much emphasis on looking toward the future of the capitalist and democratic transformation of Russia, while placing no importance on examining the Soviet past with its stark realities of the Gulag.

Perhaps most disheartening of all is the decline and even absence of public knowledge of many aspects of the atrocities of the Gulag. Sociologists Howard Schuman and Amy D. Corning studied collective knowledge of public events in Russia, including collective knowledge of specific events such as the Yezhovshchina (Great Purge), the Doctors’ Plot, the XXth Party Congress, and also knowledge about Solzhenitsyn’s book, *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* (2000). Sadly, Schuman and Corning found that four out of five Russians knew nothing about Solzhenitsyn’s *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*, a powerful fictional account of one day in a prisoner’s life in the Gulag (2000, 930). Also, although the Yezhovshchina was one of the most known about events (fifty-one percent of respondents had at least partial knowledge of the event), Schuman and Corning found that the greatest knowledge of the event was “...by those who lived

through the purge, then a gradual loss of knowledge from that time through cohorts more and more distant from it, with no evidence of a particular increase as a result of glasnost.” Thus, “[n]either distant family memories nor very recent revelations could provide for younger cohorts the same degree of knowledge possessed by older Russians who had experienced the Yezhovshchina” (2000, 940). Only twenty-nine percent of respondents had even partial knowledge of the XXth Congress where Krushchev delivered his “Secret Speech,” and only thirty-one percent of respondents had even partial knowledge of the Doctors’ Plot; and, again the level of knowledge of these events dropped off among the younger cohorts (2000; 944, 946). Ultimately, more Russians had knowledge of the dog Laika, the first mammal sent into space, than of any of the events related to the Gulag; except, three more percent of the respondents had knowledge of the Yezhovshchina than of Laika (2000, 925). The picture that is produced by the results of the research that Schuman and Corning conducted is of a Russian society that lacks knowledge of the important events of the Gulag, and which will continue to lose knowledge of the events as the younger cohorts are distanced from the events by time. As with the present government, the public climate of opinion seems to be focused more on the present than on the historic events of the past, which can not only seriously effect any attempts made by researchers to study the Gulag but can also lessen the number of Russian scholars who desire to research the Gulag.

The climate of opinion in the West, especially in the United States, has also not been conducive to the study of the Gulag. The Soviet Union’s position as an Allied power in World War II, and the historic persistence of leftist leanings in academe,

especially since the 1960s, have clearly limited the study of the Soviet Gulag in the United States. The controversial circumstances surrounding the publication of the *Black Book of Communism* in France also point to an antagonistic atmosphere relating to Gulag research in the West. Consequently, serious limitations to the study of the Gulag are not only present within Russia, but also in the West which it would seem should be more open to the critical examination of the Soviet past.

Unlike the Third Reich, which represented the “great evil” that needed to be defeated in the World War II, the Soviet Union was a fellow ally in the war against fascism. After the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact between the USSR and Nazi Germany in 1939 was broken by Germany, the Allies quickly added the Soviet Union to their ranks. The West embraced the USSR and its Communist government in the fight against Nazi Germany at a time when the Soviet government was very much involved in purges, executions, and sentencing people to the Gulag. The position of the Soviet Union as an ally to the Western governments meant that the Soviet government would not face serious criticism from the West. Emphasis was placed on Allied unity against fascism, not unity in investigating the crimes perpetrated by the Soviet government. Stalin and the USSR were thus able to share in the Allied victory over the Third Reich while the atrocities of the Gulag continued unchecked by the West. Thus, the crimes committed by the Soviet government were continually overshadowed in the West by the part played by the USSR in the victory over fascism.

The overshadowing of the Gulag by the important role of the Soviet Union in the defeat of Nazi Germany was also compounded by the historic leftist leanings of

America's academe. Gary Abrams has noted that, "American universities may be one of the last bastions of intellectual Marxism..." (in Lipset, 1990, 27). Also, Seymour Martin Lipset writes that, "American intellectuals have been on the left anti-establishment side for the past century" (1990, 26). The fascination with the progressiveness of the Soviet Union even reached intellectuals prominent in the West, such as John Dewey and George Bernard Shaw. Both Dewey and Shaw traveled to Russia and returned with favorable attitudes of the new Soviet regime despite its ongoing repressive and violent actions. Shaw's attraction to the Soviet political system was continually portrayed through his various literary works, including his *The Rationalization of Russia* which was published after his death (1964). Dewey's favorable attitudes toward the Communist regime were also included in his *Impressions of Soviet Russia* (1929), which was widely read by the academic community in the United States and abroad. Many intellectuals inside and outside the U.S. and other Western universities, who by virtue of their education and occupation are best equipped to initiate study of the Gulag have continually shown an affinity to Marxism, the doctrine that was used by the Soviet government to justify its policies. This affinity has placed potential critical researchers of the Gulag in an uncomfortable position of exploring the crimes committed in the name of the very doctrine they have embraced. Moreover, in the atmosphere of the Cold War, an investigator of the crimes of the Soviet regime could easily be viewed as an anti-Communist. And anti-Communism had been, from the 1950s through the 1980s, a predominantly right-wing platform.

The McCarthy era generated an aggressively anti-Communist climate in the country. However, information regarding the atrocities of the Communist regime was not revealed to the American public. The witch hunts targeted individuals, many of whom were intellectuals, for being affiliated with the “anti-American” Communist left. Remarkably, the movement was more concerned with domestic security than with exposing the atrocities associated with the Soviet Gulag. Lipset mentions that university educated professional groups, including professors, were often attacked because they were the “most effective opponents of McCarthyism” (1963, 335). Thus, despite the critical atmosphere surrounding Communism and the left, little information became available in the United States about the crimes of the Soviet regime.

Following McCarthyism there was a significant rise of left-wing sentiments on American college campuses in the 1960s and 1970s. McCarthyism was dismissed as a reactionary movement as the academic climate moved increasingly to the left. Though the Krushchev regime began to release vital information regarding the Soviet Gulag such as his speech at the XXIInd Party Congress and the publication of Solzhenitsyn’s *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*, there appeared little interest from the academic community in examining the Soviet atrocities. The publication in the West of Solzhenitsyn’s *Gulag Archipelago* in 1973 initiated interest from a few scholars, but the leftist leanings of the academe kept interest at a minimum especially since critical research that was produced on the Gulag could easily be labeled as right-wing, anti-Communist and reactionary. Thus, as information did become available about the Soviet

Gulag, the academic climate was not favorable for its analysis. Serious research on the Gulag thus fell victim to the Cold War.

Sociology, with its focus on the large-scale social processes can be seen as potentially the most important contributor to the studies of the Gulag. However, this discipline was strongly affected by the above-described political and ideological situation. In the discipline of sociology, Marx is considered a classical thinker and his works have been included in the canon of sociological theory. Also, Lenin's theory of imperialism has been widely studied, and as Marxism, also forms the basis of more recent sociological conceptions such as dependency and world systems theories (see Wallerstein, 1979 and Frank, 1969). Even the works of Stalin have been studied in reference to the "nationalities question." Often the works of Marx, Lenin, and Stalin are introduced without any reference to the Gulag or the repressive and violent actions of the Communist governments. Thus, unlike the works of Hitler and the Nazi ideology which are not relied upon for academic study, the works that formed the ideological basis of the Communist government of the Soviet Union form part of the sociological canon.

Robert Conquest has examined and detailed the implications that the "Marxist tinge in the prevailing intellectual atmosphere" has had on the study of the Gulag (1994, 229). Conquest reveals how the leftist leanings in academe have often led to uncritical and inaccurate research through the reliance on Soviet statistics, or as Lipset says, "nonstatistics," and the belief in Soviet propaganda (Conquest 1994, 229-230; Lipset 1994, 251). Scholars such as Sydney and Beatrice Webb and Sir Bernard Pares were even convinced of the validity of the Moscow Show Trials in the 1930s, and the Webbs

viewed the exile of the *kulaks* as a legitimate and necessary action of the Soviet government (Conquest 1994, 230-231). Also, many of the later revisionist Sovietologists suffered from the same uncritical acceptance of Soviet statistics, as well as a distorted view of the significance of the terror, purges, and Gulag (Conquest 1994, 232 and 234; Lipset 1994, 240-241). Conquest writes that the revisionist Sovietologists "...held that terror was not in any case of major importance, since institutional and social changes were the true essence of the period" (1994, 232). Thus, scholars such as J. Arch Getty "wrote of 'thousands' executed and 'tens of thousands' imprisoned" when the actual number of victims ranged in the millions (1994, 232). It is evident through their research that these scholars, as well as many others, were blinded to the atrocious reality of the repressive and violent actions of the Soviet government by their uncritical view of Marxism and the reality of Communism.

As the political climate of academe in the United States moved significantly to the left, intellectuals in other Western countries, such as France, moved more to the center of the political spectrum (Lipset, 1990). This has had important implications for the reception of information regarding the Gulag by intellectuals in France, as is shown by the emergence of the "Children of Solzhenitsyn." French philosophers such as Andre Glucksmann and Bernard-Henri Levy began to re-evaluate Marxist ideology and Socialism in light of the reality of the Gulag as presented by Solzhenitsyn's *The Gulag Archipelago*. Levy designates Solzhenitsyn as the "Dante of Our Time," and explains, "that the publication of [*The Gulag Archipelago*] was enough to immediately shake our mental landscape and overturn our ideological guideposts" (1979, 153). Also,

Glucksmann came to the conclusion: “No camps without Marxism” (Levy, 1979, 158). The *nouveau philosophes* thus began to critically examine Marxism in conjunction with the existence of the Gulag, unlike their American counterparts.

However, despite the existence of groups such as the “Children of Solzhenitsyn,” France has also put forth resistance in the reception of information regarding the Gulag, as is shown by the controversy surrounding the publication of *The Black Book of Communism* (Courtois, et al., 1999). The publication of the *Black Book* in 1997 began a controversy within the French legislature. The center-right opposition Union of French Democracy “tried to use the book to embarrass Prime Minister Lionel Jospin, whose Socialist-led coalition Government has the French Communist Party as its junior partner and includes three Communist ministers in the Cabinet” (Riding, 1997, A-9). Mr. Jospin was asked, “What was he going to do...about a political ally associated with murderous regimes?” (A-9). The leader of the Union of French Democracy, Francois Bayrou, and his deputies then proceeded to walk out of the session (A-9). Even within the writing of the book, two authors threatened to withdraw their pieces if the original title, *The Book of Communist Crimes*, were not changed (A-9). Thus, it is not surprising that the *Black Book* has been labeled by some as “right-wing anti-Communist rhetoric” (Malia, 1999, xx).

Typical theoretical biases against the sociological examination of the reality of the Gulag were explored by Michel Foucault. He outlines four different ways that the left has avoided facing the Gulag. *Firstly*, Foucault points out that people on the left “question the Gulag on the basis of the texts of Marx or Lenin or...ask oneself how,

through what error, deviation, misunderstanding or distortion of speculation or practice, their theory could have been betrayed to such a degree” (1980, 135). Instead, Foucault asserts that the left should ask “what in those texts could have made the Gulag possible, what might even now continue to justify it, and what makes its intolerable truth still accepted today” (135). *Secondly*, scholars on the left “restrict one’s questioning to the level of causes,” which makes the Gulag appear as a “disease” (135). Contrary to this view, Foucault asserts that the Gulag should be analyzed in relation to its functions, and “as a politico-economic operator in a socialist state” (136). *Thirdly*, Foucault explains that the left erroneously “adopt[s] for the critique of the Gulag a law or principle of selection internal to our own discourse or dream”(136). By this, Foucault explains that the left should not divorce “Soviet socialism” from the ideal socialism, but instead critically examine all forms of socialism in light of the Gulag. And *fourthly*, Foucault contends that individuals on the left “universa[lize] dissolution of the problem into the ‘denunciation’ of every possible form of internment” (136-137). Contrary to the universalizing tendency of the left, the Gulag is not a question for every country but is instead “to be posed for every *socialist* country” (137). Overall, Foucault maintains that, “we must insist on the specificity of the Gulag question against all theoretical reductionisms..., against all historicist reductionisms..., against all utopian dissociation..., [and] against all universalizing dissolutions into the general form of internment” (137).

Ultimately, the opinion climate both in Russia and the West has been a major impediment to Gulag research. In Russia, the focus away from the atrocities of the

Communist past and the failure to dismantle the Communist regime have led to an important lack of interest in Gulag research, and also to a lack of opportunity to research the Gulag. In the West, the Cold War climate and the leftist leanings in academe have resulted in inaccurate and questionable research on the Gulag, and also in a lack of interest in its study. The Holocaust research, on the other hand, has faced no such impediments. Consequently, the unfavorable atmosphere surrounding the study of the Gulag can clearly be seen as a significant factor in explaining the discrepancy between the amounts of attention given to the Gulag in comparison to the Holocaust.

Non-Existence of Interest Groups:

The social constructivist perspective explains how social problems are socially defined, and how political processes influence the definition of phenomena as social problems worthy of public attention and scholarly research (Specter and Kitsuse, 1977). One important aspect of the political process is the emergence of interest groups. Within the context of interest groups, there are issue entrepreneurs who have vested interest in bringing attention to the phenomena, and there are moral entrepreneurs who desire to bring interest to the phenomena for moral reasons (McCrea and Markle, 1989, 25 and 48). The existence or non-existence of interest groups, therefore, has important implications on whether or not phenomena such as the Holocaust and the Gulag will be defined by society as social problems that require public attention in the form of scholarly research.

Holocaust research was greatly influenced by the extensive network of existent interest groups related to the Jewish community, and the emergence from these of interest groups related to the Holocaust. Prior to, during, and following World War II, there were many organizations and groups established to support and bring together the Jewish communities around the world. These included the American Jewish Committee, the American Jewish Congress, American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, the Anti-Defamation League, B'nai B'rith, Agudat Israel, the Board of Deputies and the Jewish Friendly Societies, the Bund, and the World Jewish Congress, among many others (Laqueur, 2001, 3, 84, 104, and 695). Following the end of World War II, and more specifically the Eichmann trial, many organizations of the international Jewish community turned their interest toward researching and documenting the Holocaust. Thus, the organizations began to take the form of interest groups unified by the Jewish identity of the Holocaust victims.

Within these interest groups, Holocaust related issue and moral entrepreneurs emerged. Issue entrepreneurs, in the form of Jewish organizations, used political processes to initiate a social movement to bring public attention to the events of the Holocaust. The Zionist movement and the establishment of the state of Israel proved to be powerful political forces behind the placement of the Holocaust in the public sphere. Thus, through the work of issue entrepreneurs, the Holocaust was institutionalized through the establishment of Holocaust Studies departments, and the creation of numerous Holocaust museums, memorials, and foundations. Issue entrepreneurs, including scholars, began to have vested interest in the Holocaust as many formed their

careers through activities related to bringing public attention to the atrocious events of the Holocaust. At the same time, the Holocaust survivors, such as the writer Elie Wiesel, became prominent public figures and moral entrepreneurs. Thus, Wiesel's many literary works, including *Night*, received public acclaim and are widely read around the world. Wiesel won the Nobel Prize for his literature, and he is also widely known for being a dynamic lecturer on the Holocaust. Wiesel was thus able to bring the moral questions regarding the events of the Holocaust into the public forum through his position as a moral entrepreneur of the Holocaust. The vested interest of the issue entrepreneurs and the energy of moral entrepreneurs, have thus created political processes whereby the scholarly research of the Holocaust is defined as important by society.⁷

Gulag research, on the other hand, has been plagued by conditions that have led to the non-existence or weakness of interest groups related to the Gulag. Unlike the Jewish community, the international community of Eastern European émigrés was not well organized and also did not have extensive access to resources. In many cases, the émigrés could not find a unifying characteristic or force to draw themselves together in organizations because of the diversity of areas they represented. Also, the victims of the Gulag could claim no unifying characteristic beyond their experience as victims because they came from a vast array of ethnicities, nationalities, geographic regions, and social classes. Consequently, the framework built around a common identity of victims and organizational members that existed for the emergence of interest groups for the Holocaust was not present for the Gulag.

Gulag interest groups also did not emerge because of the secrecy surrounding the Communist government as well as the climate of opinion in the West. The secrecy surrounding the Communist government and its repressive actions created an atmosphere in Soviet society that was not conducive to the expression of experiences of Gulag victims. Literary works concerning the Gulag were generally not published, and oftentimes when they were published in the West the authors were forced to renounce their writings, as was Varlam Shalamov when his *Kolyma Tales* were published. Other authors, such as Solzhenitsyn, also feared for the confiscation of their manuscripts and for being imprisoned for their writings. Human rights groups were also often repressed or not allowed to enter the Soviet Union. Also, the climate of opinion in the West was not conducive to victims' expressions of their experiences. Many of the victims were in denial about their experiences, especially since the atmosphere in the West was often not accepting of the victims' accounts. Without the ability of victims to express their experiences openly and possibly unite through their experience as victims of the Gulag, interest groups were not able to form.

Furthermore, although the majority of victims of the Gulag were workers and peasants, the members of the intelligentsia and the Party leaders wrote most of the personal accounts and memoirs related to the Gulag. In my analysis of the Gulag bibliography, forty-one percent of the bibliographic entries consisted of diaries, memoirs, testimonies, biographies, etc. Consequently, the intelligentsia and Party leaders received the majority of public attention and were able to shape and define the "experience" of a victim of the Gulag, while the workers and peasants were left without the ability and

incentive to document their experiences. The majority of the victims of the Gulag were thus left “voiceless,” and their experiences remain unknown to the public and to other victims.

Issue entrepreneurs for the Gulag were thus unable to develop in the wake of these obstacles. Consequently, there has been no comparable institutionalization of the Gulag in the form of monuments, museums, or foundations as there was for the Holocaust. The Gulag has also not received similar amounts of media coverage as the Holocaust has historically. Scholars and others have been unable to form a career based upon preserving, documenting, and researching the events of the Gulag, or by imparting knowledge of the Gulag to future generations. People are unable to have vested interests in the Gulag as they do with the Holocaust. Therefore, there are very few people for whom the Gulag is an important research subject.

However, a moral entrepreneur of the Gulag did emerge over the years in the writer and Gulag survivor, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn. Solzhenitsyn was able to bring interest to the Gulag through his literary works, especially *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* and *The Gulag Archipelago*. But unlike Wiesel, the interest in Solzhenitsyn came mostly from a limited number of intellectuals, not the general public. Also, the author did not dominate the media as Wiesel had continued to, but on the contrary, he was often labeled monarchist, nationalist, and reactionary. Thus, Solzhenitsyn did not develop into the spokesperson and speaker that was needed for him to be effective as a moral entrepreneur of the Gulag. Ultimately, Solzhenitsyn’s stature as a moral

entrepreneur never reached the equivalent of Wiesel's, and thus he was unable to bring attention to the Gulag as Wiesel had to the Holocaust.

The non-existence of Gulag interest groups has had important implications for the amount of scholarly attention that has been given to the Gulag. Interest groups for the Gulag have been unable to emerge because of the many obstacles that have impeded their growth, and thus there has been no pressure for the Gulag to be defined by society as an important phenomena that deserves scholarly attention. As Specter and Kitsuse explain, "Other things being equal, groups that have a larger membership, greater constituency, more money, and greater discipline and organization will be far more effective in pressing their claims than groups that lack these attributes" (1977, 143). The Holocaust interest groups are clearly characterized by these attributes; however, the non-existence of Gulag interest groups has meant that Gulag research has not received the same "social endorsement" (Specter and Kitsuse, 1977, 303) as Holocaust research, and thus less scholarly attention.

Conclusion:

Thus, not only does a very large and important discrepancy exist between the scholarly literature produced on the Holocaust as compared to the Gulag, but also as was found through the exploration of the historical, political and intellectual roots of the discrepancy, obstacles exist to the development of Gulag studies. There is one-hundred and sixty five times more literature on the Holocaust than on the Soviet Gulag. Moreover, research on the Gulag is seriously impeded by the unavailability of the Soviet

archives, the mutation of the Soviet regime, the Cold War sentiments and leftist leanings in academe, the neglect of the past in Russia, and the non-existence of Gulag interest groups. Consequently, we return to the question raised in the introduction to the paper: Will the level of Gulag research ever reach that of Holocaust research?

The answer to this question that has been arrived at through exploration of the roots of the discrepancy seems to me to be an ominous and resounding “no.” Despite recent publications, my research has shown that the obstacles to Gulag research are too great and too established to allow for any major changes in the level of Gulag research in the immediate future. Also, as time distances scholars from the events of the Gulag and claims the lives of survivors, much of the information needed for Gulag research will be lost to history. Consequently, the Gulag may be another formative event of the Twentieth century that may be added to the list of those events that are not deemed worthy of extensive study.

Despite my dismal conclusion, I believe that it is imperative for scholars to attempt to resist these obstacles by developing Gulag research. Study of the Gulag could provide scholars, especially sociologists, with important information. The Soviet Gulag deals with important sociological issues, including modernity and oppression, revolutions and repression, totalitarianism and total institutions, social organizations and bureaucracy, and the effects of violence on society. Also, as was shown through my thematic content analysis of the Gulag bibliography, there were no works that dealt with the category of “Bystanders to the Gulag.” Nicolas Werth, in the *Black Book of Communism*, writes that “[m]any gray areas remain, particularly regarding the everyday

behavior of people reacting to the violence. If one wishes to find out who the executioners actually were, then it is the whole of society that must be questioned—all those who took part in the events, not just the victims” (1999, 268). A sociological examination of the existence of bystanders to the Gulag would thus seem to be imperative. The development of sociological research dealing with the Soviet Gulag, therefore, would be valuable to the discipline, as well as to the general understanding of Soviet-type regimes.

One valuable way of initiating possible Gulag research is to take advantage of under-utilized resources, including memoir and fictional literature. Numerous survivor and first-hand accounts of the Gulag have been published and would provide information about the Gulag system. This could include study of such works as Solzhenitsyn’s *Gulag Archipelago*, Ginzburg’s *Into the Whirlwind*, Bardach’s *Man is Wolf to Man*, and the recently published collection of women’s experiences in the Gulag system, *Until My Tale is Told*. Another worthwhile resource to utilize in researching the Gulag would be historical-fictional accounts of the Gulag in the form of short stories and novels. Authors, most notably Varlam Shalamov in his *Kolyma Tales* and Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, have produced fictional works that expose the dynamics of the repressive machinery of the Gulag as well as document social life within the Gulag. These texts would thus provide an important resource for Gulag research, and could perhaps help researchers to surmount the difficult obstacles surrounding its study.

Millions of innocent victims lost their lives in the Soviet Gulag, and it is imperative that the Gulag and its victims not be relegated to the realm of the

forgotten. As Walter Benjamin explains, “[f]or every image of the past that is not recognized by the present as one of its own concerns threatens to disappear irretrievably” (1968, 255). The victims lost their lives as a result of the Twentieth century pursuit of the most noble ideas and aspirations, including equality, progress, and justice. Thus, as with the Holocaust, the reality of the Soviet Gulag forces us to question our very conceptions of “modernity” and “civilization,” as well as directly examine the deadly potential of humanity and society. Much research remains to be done on the Gulag, and we should not allow ourselves to neglect examination of this important, formative, and unique event of the Twentieth century.

Notes

¹ Thus, the USSR, and not Nazi Germany, pioneered the development of a concentration camp system.

² “Gulag” was the acronym that represented the Main Administration of Camps (Glavnoe upravlenie lagerei) (Bacon, 1994, xi). The Gulag was an extensive system of forced labor and concentration camps that extended throughout the USSR. The Gulag is most known for the system of camps located in the inhospitable regions of Siberia, but there were camps in most of the major population centers such as Moscow and St. Petersburg as well as in Soviet satellite countries such as Uzbekistan (Applebaum, 2000).

³ Article 58 of the criminal code documented fourteen definitions of counterrevolutionary activity and the proper punishments for the “counterrevolutionary crimes.” Article 58 thus “reinforced the legal foundation of the terror,” and was not repealed until 1958 (Werth, 1999, 136; Conquest, 1973, 740-746). Robert Conquest includes the description of Article 58 published by the Juridical Publishing House in Moscow in 1949, in an appendix to *The Great Terror: Stalin’s Purges of the Thirties*.

⁴ “Kulak” was the term given to those peasants who were viewed as “petty bourgeoisie” elements. It was originally used to refer to the “village moneylender and mortgager,” but came to refer to a more general “exploiting peasant class” (Conquest, 1986, 23). During the process of de-kulakization under Stalin, millions of peasants were labeled as “kulaks” and they and their families were deported to the Arctic. The somewhat arbitrary nature of the term “kulak” also meant that many of the peasants sent to the camps and colonies were not actually economically well-off as their designation as kulaks represented, but instead were deported simply to fill quotas (Conquest, 1986, 4).

⁵ Robert Conquest in *Harvest of Sorrow* and Nicolas Werth in the *Black Book of Communism*, document the government-engineered nature of the famine. To Conquest, the famine was created by the Stalinist government specifically as a “weapon” against the “kulak-nationalist enemy,” in order to “break the spirit of the most recalcitrant regions of peasant resentment to collectivization” (1986, 326, 329). Werth also reflects similar sentiments in his section on “The Great Famine” (1999, 163).

⁶ Though the acronym “Gulag” was used specifically as a reference to the camp system, prisoners often described the world outside of the camps in the same terms as the camps. Anne Applebaum explains how, “...in prison camp slang, the world outside the barbed wire was not referred to as “freedom,” but as the *bolshaya zona*, the “big prison zone,” larger and less deadly than the “small zone” of the camp, but no more human, and certainly no more humane, nonetheless (2000). Thus, “Gulag” is not solely a reference to the geography and administration of the camps, but can be used in a broad sense to refer to the Soviet repressive system.

⁷ The institutionalization and extensive publicity surrounding the Holocaust have recently become the subject of controversy and debate. Some scholars see the Holocaust as being commercialized, which trivializes the horrendous events. Norman Finkelstein, in his very controversial book *The Holocaust Industry*, outlines his view of the detrimental effects of the extensive amount of interest in the Holocaust.

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