

the prison camp system that arose in the Soviet Union after 1929 [and] served primarily as a way to gain control over the entire population, rather than punish criminal acts. The incarceration of millions of innocent people in the GULAG system is correctly seen as one of the worst and most shocking episodes of the twentieth century.

Jacques Rossi, a memoirist quoted in the same study, has a more poignant description:

The GULAG was conceived in order to transform human matter into a docile, exhausted, ill-smelling mass of individuals living only for themselves. And thinking of nothing else but how to appease the constant torture of hunger, living in the instant, concerned with nothing apart from evading kicks, cold and ill treatment.

According to Hosford and co-authors, quoting a 1990 report by the *Moscow News*, “between 1931 and 1953, 3,778,234 people were arrested for counter-revolutionary activities and state crimes, of which 786,098 were shot.”¹⁶

Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn’s *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* (1963) and *The Gulag Archipelago* (1973) provided previously unknown windows onto this horrifying world. Solzhenitsyn was a twice-decorated Red Army officer arrested while serving in East Prussia

16 Hosford et al., *GULAG*, pp. 1, 24 and 1, respectively.