Other ethnicities and affiliations are pointed out throughout the narrative, such as two Estonians in the came who were "…as close as brothers…They shared their food, they slept in adjacent bunks…but in fact they weren't brothers at all. They first met here in the 104th" (p. 40). Exemplary of strong ethnic strife in Russian history carried into the rule of Stalin is a prisoner in Shukhov's squadron by the name of Tiurin. He was expelled from the Soviet Army and sentenced to the gulags for being the son of a Kulak. "…I learned from him that the regimental commander and commissar were both shot in thirty-seven, no mater whether they were of proletarian or kulak stock…" (p. 70). Ethnic strife previously pointed out in describing violence among prisoners, was the ethnicity of the victim being Moldavian. Key throughout Solzhenitsyn's work and the development of characters through the first hand account of Shukhov, are descriptions of ethnic and religious groups essential in understanding their imprisonment in their camp, the segregation of these groups within Russian society and the need for these minority groups to unite in camps for a sense of comfort, and the sociological issues of violence stemming from historic oppression against various regional areas under various Russian rulers. All of this ethnic strife and terror surrounding it proved to serve the purpose of Stalin's propaganda towards Socialist Patriotism vs. Historic Nationalism after victory in World War II.

Deeply impacted by the war, labor camps, and Stalinization are gender relations and the failure of the kolkhoz in the context of the failures of the collectivization of labor. Through recalling his memories of home before he was imprisoned, the importance of the kolkhoz in the political structure of rural Russia is outlined. Farmers were failing to meet their daily quotas and because of the collectivization occurring, many individual plots of land had been cut down to one third of an acre. "What he couldn't take in was the fact that, as his wife wrote, the number of people in the kolkhoz hadn't grown by a single soul since the war. All the young men and women…had managed to get away and work in factories…Half the men hadn't come back from the war and those who had, were some who cold-shouldered the kolkhoz…The kolkhoz was kept going by the women who'd been there since 1930" (p.32). Shukhov could not fathom the idea that men were no longer working for the kolkhoz and that many in his old village had given up seasonal and private work at the expense of their government. Through the critical evaluation of the role of women as described by Stalin during World War II, the conclusion can be made that they held the nation together during this time period. With all of the men in labor camps or fighting in the war, it was mainly women and children who dug the trenches and barricades at home, maintained the kolkhoz, and worked in the heavy industries developed by Stalin. This is evident in his propaganda campaigns towards the collectivization of labor and industrialization, in which women are portrayed as strong laborers in the country side and happy workers of industry in the city, although there is ample evidence to suggest otherwise.

The organizational structure of the labor camp is an important theme throughout the novel, allowing the audience to further understand and factor in the absurdity of the system in general. They woke up every morning and ended their day with the same thing consistently, organized counts of squadrons, terror of random acts of violence against them committed by guards daily, and the assignment of hard and unrealistic work quotas. Watch towers were established with guards on duty observing their every move while working and they never marched to and from any given point within the camp without the accompaniment of an assigned guard to perpetuate the installation of terror and ensure that no one escaped. However, the role of the squad leader was more central and direct to the daily lives of the prisoners than that of the guarding soldiers. The squad leader, a prisoner himself, was responsible for reporting to authorities for their squad's work assignment, delegating his men to various tasks to complete the job, and somehow ensuring that the job got done without any proper supplies. "More depended on the work report than on the work itself. A clever squad leader was one who concentrated on the work report. That was what kept men fed. He had to prove that work which hadn't been done had been done, to turn jobs that were rated low into ones that were rated high. For this the squad leader had to have his head screwed on, and to be on the right side of the inspectors…But who benefited from all of those work reports…the camp got thousands of extra rubles from the building organization and so could give higher bonuses to its gaurs…you got an extra six ounces of bread for your supper. A couple of extra ounces ruled your life" (p. 50). Most of the time their work situation was a catch-22. They didn't have proper supplies, so they had to scour the camp and steal them while avoiding not getting caught by the guards. The supplies they were given had to be used adamantly, and if there was a surplus of goods at the end, they had to somehow be secretly disposed of or the squadron would be accused of not working efficiently for that day and thrown in the cells.

The geographical isolation and harshness of the Siberian steppe is an important issue in examining the labor camps. The climate was unimaginably cold and the land was uninhabited, but it was rich in natural resources such as timber, minerals, and oil. This in reasoning, incorporated the Gulag system of forced labor camps very deeply into the Soviet economy and Stalin was keenly aware of this. Survival was meek in Siberian work camps despite the fact that the Soviet government profited off of the slavery of its own citizens. Most prisoners never survived their ten to twenty-five year sentence. "The steppe was barren and windswept, with a dry wind in the summer and a freezing one in the winter. Nothing could ever grow that steppe, less than nothing behind four barriers of barbed wire…however much blood you sweat at work, however much you grovel on your belly, you'll force no food out of that earth; you'll get no more than the damned authorities give you…they rob you here…" (p. 39). In temperatures that reach negative forty one, working in this climate is a sheer nightmare. "There is nothing more bitter as this