

Wolfgang Kasack

**Russian Literature
1945-1988**

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Wolfgang Kasack

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Köln and Much, December 1988

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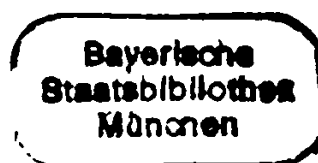
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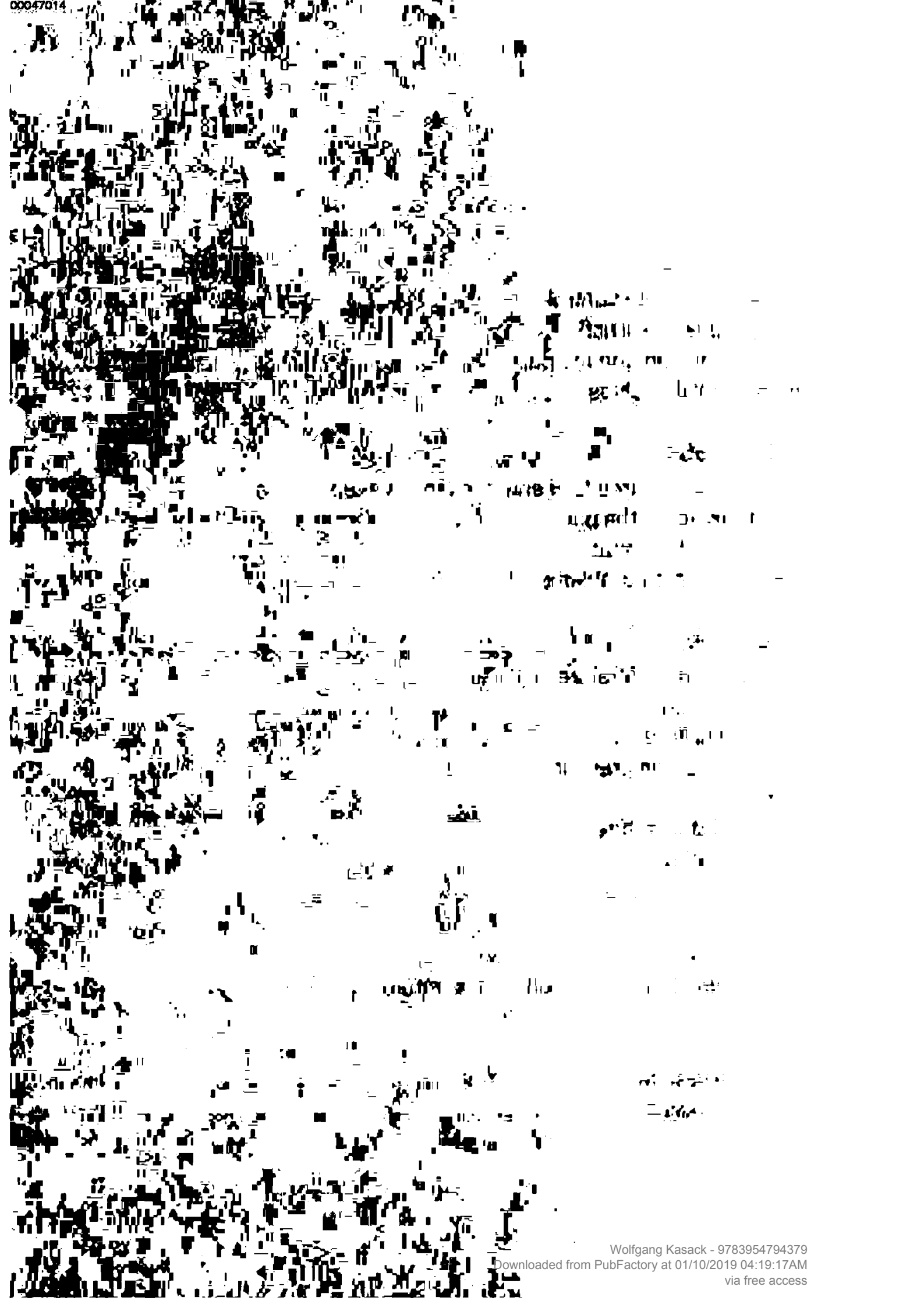
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FOREWORD

The end of the Second World War marks a watershed in twentieth-century Russian literature. The phases of this literature are also conditioned by political factors: in 1917 by the Bolshevik seizure of power; in 1932 by the creation, on Party orders, of a single Writers' Union (one of many measures to establish centralization of power); in 1953 by Stalin's death – or in 1956 by his exposure at the 20th Party Congress (which initiated de-Stalinization); in 1964 by the fall of Khrushchev leading through the years of Brezhnev's supremacy to 1984 and to Gorbachev's rise to power in 1985. The development of Russian literature from 1945 to 1988 will in what follows be considered in four phases, with breaks in 1953, 1964, and 1985, and with each general conspectus followed by an exposition of particular topics.

The subjection of post-1917 Russian literature to politics is a consequence of the claim of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union to guide literature. The implementation of this claim was subject to considerable fluctuations, going so far as to degrade the art of verbal expression into a mere instrument of propaganda, while at other times personal artistic expression was tolerated to the point of social criticism. The central concept of this literature, in duty bound to endorse its own social system, is that of "Socialist Realism"*, formulated in 1932. Together with the principle of "Party spirit"*(*partiinost'* – subordination to the directives of the Communist Party), this unites the requirement for an idealized evocation of the future, simple comprehensibility for large numbers of people and a basic integration in Marxist materialist philosophy. The impossibility of a uniform intellectual and spiritual alignment in all the people sharing a language or a social system is evident, on the one hand, from the many works which were published in the Soviet Union without completely corresponding with the principles of Socialist Realism, and on the other by the (especially since 1959) increasing phenomenon of the circulation of literary works outside the censor-controlled Soviet publishing system – some in duplicated copies (*samizdat**), some in Western editions (*tamizdat**). The division in Russian literature began with the Bolshevik takeover in 1917, when a large number of important

writers emigrated. It resumed in 1941–1945, when a procession of writers left the country under cover of the German troops, and it became universally evident for the third time when, year by year from 1972, leading Soviet authors chose the road to freedom. Since 1917 even the Soviet interpretation of what forms part of "Soviet literature" has vacillated, individual works and authors having constantly been acknowledged, rejected, condemned or rehabilitated according to the political climate. Only what, at a given time, is politically recognized belongs to "Soviet literature", thus allowing the concept to encompass literature in all the many languages spoken in the USSR. The concept "Russian literature", however, is determined by language and has one unalterable meaning; it transcends political divisions, and includes works of the non-Russian nations in the Soviet Union only when they are by bilingual authors.

1945–1953

Renewal of Party control

This period begins with the end of the Second World War and ends with the death of Stalin; it is marked by intensified Party control over spiritual and intellectual life as a whole, and by the consolidation of the second emigration. In order to ensure success in the struggle against Nazi Germany, the Soviet leadership had been forced into two basic tactical concessions. Externally, it had had to form an alliance with its ideological opponents, the "capitalists"; internally, it had been compelled to allow some scope to non-Communist forces – for instance, to the Orthodox Church. Thus, during the war, many long-suppressed writers such as Anna Akhmatova, Boris Pasternak and Andrei Platonov were to some extent published. But the post-war period is characterized by a return to pre-war ideological principles. Stalin announced the new Party line – a reversion to the old Bolshevik confrontation of Socialism and Capitalism – in an address on 9 February 1946.¹ In the domain of ideology, the about-turn was introduced by the Party resolution* of 14 August 1946 *O zhurnalakh "Zvezda" i "Leningrad"* (On the journals "Zvezda" and "Leningrad"). This resolution, and the accompanying speeches of Leningrad Party Secretary and Politbyuro member Andrei Zhdanov, made it clear that not only were these two Leningrad organs of the Writers' Union* under attack for publication of "ideologically harmful works" but henceforth all non-political literature was to be forbidden.

"(...) our journals, be they scientific or literary, cannot be apolitical ... Our journals are a powerful weapon of the Soviet State in the education of the Soviet people, especially of the young (...) The power of Soviet literature – the most progressive literature in the world – lies in the fact that it is a literature which neither has nor can have any interests besides the interests of the people and of the State."²

The two authors grossly abused in the resolution, Anna Akhmatova and Mikhail Zoshchenko, were considered both as individuals and as representatives of particular literary attitudes. Akhmatova stood for the entirety of Russian poetry, rooted in religion, which sought spiritual,

indeed metaphysical, values; which presented basic questions of human existence, such as love, suffering and death; and which did not demean itself in the propagation of messages from PRAVDA. Zoshchenko stood for every kind of satirical presentation, for irony – indeed for all and any realistic depiction of Soviet actuality. A further resolution *O repertuare dramaticheskikh teatrov i merakh po ego uluchsheniyu* (On the repertoire of dramatic theatres and measures for its improvement), dated 26 August 1946, stressed the anti-Western elements of the revised politics of literature, while denouncing the pernicious influence of foreign bourgeois plays. The simplistic bureaucratic conception of literature is evident in the decree that "every year two or three new plays of high ideological and artistic merit are to be staged" – as if true art could be produced according to rule. Similarly, there had appeared on 10 February 1948 a condemnation of the most prominent Russian composers, Sergei Prokof'ev, Dmitrii Shostakovich and Aram Khachaturyan, for alleged cacophony, decadence, abandonment of folksong and anti-proletarian formalism. The term "formalism", referring back to the very fruitful non-Marxist, "Formalist School" * of literature in the twenties (with Boris Éikhenbaum, Viktor Shklovskii, Yurii Tynyanov), was now used pejoratively as a stigma, for the suppression of any and every kind of artistic experimentation. To it was added in 1947 the concept of "cosmopolitanism" as a "reactionary ideology" – one which dared to recognize the intellectual achievements of the non-Communist West. Under the slogan "Fight against the rootless cosmopolitans", well-known literary scholars were attacked as much as writers – the objects of the attack being first and foremost Jews.

The Party demanded the representation both of the heroic struggle and victory of the Soviet army in war, and of the successful reconstruction. The basic assumption of Socialist Realism – that literature should present to the people the paradigm of an ideal condition to strive for – had the result that none of the real problems of those years were reflected in literature. Once the main conflict of early Soviet literature between the Old (pre-Revolutionary) and the New (post-Revolutionary) had been worked out, as well as that of war literature between the Red Army and the enemy, the post-war ideological formula led to the view that the only conflict left in Soviet society was that between "the good and the better" – and eventually

between "the better and the best". Only when the untenability of a requirement so remote from reality became obvious was the "Theory of conflictlessness" (now considered harmful) invented in 1952, without any presentation of the real problems having been afforded.



A cult developed, from 1937 onwards, round the person of Iosif Stalin, reaching a climax at his seventieth birthday in 1949. Represented as the Dictator was in countless pictures and sculptures, many writers also vied with one another in ever new panegyrics. The 20th Party Congress in 1956 initiated open criticism of his "personality cult", to be followed however by a reaction after 1965. This photomontage of Stalin and his son originated in the Soviet Union, and was published in Mikhail Shemyakin's APOLLON '77 (Paris).

From 1946 onwards, Soviet literature underwent so extraordinary a decline that even PRAVDA (7 April 1952) was obliged to speak of it. Famous writers were condemned to silence; insipid and untalented authors poured out quantities of schematic works, intended to endorse the political process and to glorify the leader (vozhd'), Iosif Stalin. Literature was characterized by the "positive hero" – the exemplary ideal figure who solves all problems, treats all obstacles as child's play, overfulfils all norms; who knows no private life, but only service to Communist society; who (naturally) belongs, not among the simple

workers, but among the Party officials. The cult of the leader reflects, in miniature, the cult of Stalin.

In many Stalin-poems, Stalin was idolized as the all-seeing, all-hearing, all-powerful "leader" and "master" (khozyain), directing and caring for all. Thus wrote Aleksandr Prokof'ef on Stalin, to whose word the whole world hearkens, who has the answer to all questions (*Stalin prosto govorit s narodom* 1949 – Stalin talks simply with the people); thus also Nikolai Gribachev, in the poem *Vozhdyu* 1945 (To the leader), begs Comrade Stalin, the "beloved father", to "accept the love of his great people"³. And in the same sense Vsevolod Vishnevskii expressed himself in 1949, with his falsification of history in the play (and film) *Nezabyvaemyi 1919* (The unforgettable 1919), and thus the novelists strove to display their positive heroes in conversation with the brilliant leader. To all this Andrei Dement'ev objected in 1964: "The cult of personality fettered the development of the intellectual life in the country and the creative activity of the Soviet people."⁴

The course of the war enabled a number of writers – such as Ol'ga Anstei, Ivan Elagin, Dmitrii Klenovskii, Sergei Maksimov, Nikolai Morshen, Nikolai Narokov, Leonid Rzhevskii and Boris Shiryayev – to leave the Soviet Union with the German troops, having experienced the impossibility of honest creative work there or of free development of their personality. And among the Russians who had been sent to forced labour in Germany during the war there were some who preferred not to be repatriated. These two groups formed the so-called "second emigration", whose centre was, until 1950, in Germany, particularly in Munich and Frankfurt. Due to the German occupation of France during the war, many members of the first emigration, who had left Russia between 1917 and 1922, found themselves obliged to remove yet again, to the United States. During the period 1945–1953 both groups conducted a flourishing literary activity, striving for a truthful presentation of conditions in the Soviet Union and for free profession of religion.

Post-war reconstruction

The main theme, as required by the Party, in Soviet literature from 1945 to 1953 was that of post-war reconstruction under the guidance of the Communist Party. The following is a typical scenario: an experienced, much-decorated officer comes home – either after the war, or wounded in action; either to his own village, or to a place ordered by the Party. Hoping for a well-earned convalescence, or for a new posting to the front, he soon (after some internal conflict) admits the necessity of playing his part in reconstruction. Not everybody grasps the hero's far-sightedness: a reactionary member of the management offers resistance, preferring his own methods. But the hero, guided by the Party, strives for the only possible solution, which, in concert with the Collective, he speedily attains, convincing the timid and the doubtful in the process. And now, good fortune also smiles on him in love.

Into this framework fit even the best-known novels of the period, some of which, distinguished by Stalin Prizes *, retained their credit in later years. Petr Pavlenko, active as political commissar during the Revolution, stages just such a plot in the Crimea from 1944 to 1946 in *Schast'e* 1947 (Eng. Happiness, 1950)⁵. He does bring in some of the suffering of war, and describes the resettlement of the Kuban Cossacks (saying nothing however about its cause, Stalin's liquidation of the Crimean Tatars). He pours scorn on the part played by the English and the Americans in the war, and grants his ex-Colonel Voropaev, as Secretary of the District Party Committee, a personal meeting with Stalin. The "happiness" promised in the optimistic title arises, under Stalin's guidance and through the Party leadership, in service to the Collective.

One of the most approved writers of this period was Semen Babaevskii, with his novel *Kavaler zolotoi zvezdy* 1949–50 (Eng. Cavalier of the Gold Star, 1956), and its two-part sequel *Svet nad zemlei* 1949, 1950 (Light over the land). Here the distortion of truth attains an unimaginable scale of "truly blasphemous rubbish"⁶. Instead of the great distress in agriculture caused by scorched earth, lack of manpower, shortages of seed corn and building materials, and the inept interference of non-specialists from the Party, Babaevskii offers us great pseudo-prosperity and small pseudo-conflicts. Such

fabrications of Socialist Realism were denounced for a while after 1954 as "varnishing of reality". Gribachev's verse narratives *Kolkhoz "Bol'shevik"* 1947 (The Kolkhoz "Bol'shevik") and *Vesna v "Pobede"* 1948 (Spring in the "Victory" Collective) also crowned with Stalin Prizes, were likewise condemned in the post-Stalin period.⁷



One of the main requirements of Socialist Realism is the representation of the "positive hero". Ideal models, flawless and confident, placing their personal desires and emotional impulses at the service of the State, were bestowed on the artist. From 1946 to 1953, they dominated art and literature, bringing about, through the implausibility of their character and actions, a debasement in Soviet literature to be deplored, from 1954 to 1956, by the Soviets themselves. On this poster by Viktor S. Ivanov (1945), the worker and the peasant are heroically idealized; in literature however it was not the ordinary people who constituted the ideal figures, but their Party leaders in industry and agriculture.

Such works often served directly to illustrate actual Party decisions. Thus Aleksei Kozhevnikov, following the usual plot-line in his novel *Zhivaya voda* 1950 (Eng. Living water, 1954), relates how a flawless positive hero, implementing a Central Committee resolution of the Plenum of February 1947 "On measures to improve agriculture in the post-war period", sets up a new irrigation system on the steppe, thus creating blossoming orchards.

Beside these illusionist works about agricultural development stand equally schematic creations in the realm of industry – the so-called "production novels". In *Zemlya Kuznetskaya* 1949 (Eng. Kuznetsk land, 1953), Aleksandr Voloshin sought to depict how the first post-war five-year plan was fulfilled in the mining industry through new technical processes under the guidance of the Party. The cheap idealization and contrived plot, the artificial dialogue and stilted language escaped criticism in his case, due to his Party-conformist message (he was awarded a Stalin Prize Second Class for 1949). Ol'ga Berggol'ts, who



Viktor S. Ivanov, honoured with the Stalin Prize for his war posters and still enjoying official recognition, in 1948 proclaimed the Party slogan "We shall fulfil the five-year plan in four years". Similarly, writers were enlisted in Party propaganda as "engineers of human souls" (Stalin).

had become known during the war through her poems on the suffering and will to resist of the besieged population of Leningrad, took (as did many others) the Volga-Don construction project as a theme for poetic evocation in *Na Stalingradskoi zemle* 1952 (On the soil of Stalingrad). Marietta Shaginyan continued her journalistic prose-epic of industry, commenced in 1930 with a five-year plan novel, taking as her subject the building of new railways (*Po dorogam pyatiletki* 1947 – On the roads of the five-year plan). Vasilii Azhaev's novel *Daleko ot Moskvyy* 1948 (Eng. *Far from Moscow*, 1950), was relentlessly publicized. Dealing with the construction of an oil pipeline in the Far East at the beginning of the war, it still met the current educational requirements of the Party: the estimated building time of three years is reduced to one by the combined progressive forces in the Collective under the leadership of the Party, despite the opposition who put their faith in foreign experts. It was of course never admitted that such projects in Siberia were constructed by the labour of prisoners, the slaves of the NKVD. Not until the post-Stalin period was this work

severely criticized – for contrived personal relationships, for declamation of Party slogans in lieu of dialogue, for excess of industrial jargon, and for the crude expedient of reporting, rather than representing, psychological events.

Dealing with current ideological problems, Sergei Mikhalkov, among others, wrote cheap propagandist works. In *Ya khochu domoi* 1949 (I want to go home), he agitates against the British for the return of Russians still remaining in the West;⁸ in *Il'ya Golovin* 1949 (Il'ya Golovin) he makes his anti-American contribution, in the spirit of antic cosmopolitanism.

The formula of basic conflict between the positive hero (bound to the people, faithful to the Party's guidance, firmly standing in the Collective and gradually winning through) and the negative figure (egoistic, uprooted from everything Russian, and defending lost causes) lies at heart of Leonid Leonov's *Russkii les* 1953 (Eng. *The Russian forest*, 1966). In this novel, Leonov was following Stalin's call to battle against the exploitation of the forest, and he worked on it from 1948 to 1953. He transposes the action however to the early part of the war, sometimes reaching as far back as the eighteen-nineties. The dispute between two forest scientists about correct forest management (spoliation versus careful, considered use) is but one strand of this convoluted work. Its particular character stems from the attempt to elevate the forest into a symbol of Russia and its people – indeed of the unending cycle of life itself. The peculiar interweaving of myth and naturalism, of psychologically implausible scenes, of simplistic black-and-white depiction and a tendency to demand ethically irreproachable measures, failed to produce a true work of art.

War, revolution and the past

The Second World War remained one of the central themes of Russian Soviet literature during the first post-war phase. It was incorporated in many works on the subject of reconstruction, including Leonid Leonov's *Russkii les*. Russian literature abroad made its own important contribution to depicting the war as it really was.

From the point of view of Soviet literary criticism, one of the most important war books of this period was accounted Aleksandr Fadeev's *Molodaya gvardiya* 1945 (Eng. *The young guard*, 1958). In this novel, commenced after 1943, he depicts the spontaneous resistance of a group of Komsomol in German-occupied Krasnodon, and gives an account of the young people's successes and failures. Fadeev was at that time a member of the Central Committee, and after the Party decree of 1946 became General Secretary of the Writers' Union. None the less, even he came in for severe criticism in 1947, in conformity with the new Party line: his novel did not sufficiently emphasize the leading role of the Communist Party. In 1951 the work appeared in altered form. Similarly, Valentin Kataev's *Za vlast' Sovetov* 1949 (For the Soviet power), and Vasilii Grossman's *Za pravoe delo* 1952 (For the just cause), had to be recast in contradiction to historical fact.

Most revealing for this rewriting of history in the Soviet Union was the fate of *Lyudi s chistoi sovest'yu* 1945–46 (Eng. *Men with a clear conscience*, 1949), the (originally) documentary account by Petr Vershigora, commander of the First Ukrainian Partisan Division, of the partisan groups from their rise in the summer of 1941 until their union with the regular army in 1944. In the first version, he depicts the in fact independent, uncoordinated, frequently arbitrary activities of groups of partisans in the German-occupied rear. Subsequently, numerous altered versions distorted this picture into one in which the military operations of the partisans are from the start directed according to plan by Stalin and the Party. (Come de-Stalinization, nearly all references to Stalin fell victim to censorship.) The novel was thus robbed of its central problem – what had been contributed to victory by individuals.⁹

Vera Panova's very human book *Sputniki* 1946 (Fellow-travellers. Eng. *The train*, 1949), which likewise appeared prior to the Party

decree of 1946, springs from personal observation – of day-to-day life in a hospital train. In the novel's symmetrical framework she encompasses the course of the war from beginning to end, softening the suffering of the present with digressions back into peacetime, and succeeds in portraying her protagonists with verisimilitude both in the exercise of their calling and in their personal sensibility.

Day-to-day life at the front was the new element brought to war literature by Viktor Nekrasov in his novel *V okopakh Stalingrada* 1946 (Eng. *Front-line Stalingrad*, 1962). To the customary abstract idealization of Soviet troops and the grounding in the "historical process" required by the Party he opposed a presentation which, as the concept of "trench realism", was from 1956 onwards to lead to a new wave in war literature. Nekrasov depicts the war from the concrete, realistic point of view of an engineering officer. He allows retreat and attack, victory and defeat, action and boredom to counterbalance one another, shunning neither the sufferings nor the horror of war – and even ventures to portray a Soviet officer ruthlessly cheating his own men. In consequence, the book soon met with severe criticism, and from 1947 had to wait until 1958 for a new edition. However, it remained thereafter one of the most celebrated of Soviet war books (120 editions in 30 languages), until Nekrasov attracted Party condemnation and emigrated to Paris in 1974. There he republished the book, which had meanwhile been banned in the Soviet Union, in 1981 under its original title *Stalingrad*.

Typical of post-1946 Soviet war literature are the works of Boris Polevoi and Mikhail Bubennov. War correspondent to PRAVDA, and delegate to the Supreme Soviet from 1946 to 1958, Polevoi attempted in his story *Povest' o nastoyashchem cheloveke* 1946 (Eng. *A story about a real man*, 1949) to portray the special and superior Soviet individual. Following Nikolai Ostrovskii, he sets before us an airman who, after being wounded and losing both legs, finds a new will to live with the help of Party officials, and is finally reinstated as a pilot. Undaunted by difficulties, he meets every doubt with the remark "But I am a Soviet man". Already in 1954 2.34 million copies of this cheaply moralizing work had been printed, and it has been continually reissued.

In his novel *Belaya bereza* 1947 (Eng. *The white birch*, 1949) Bubennov describes the 1941 retreat up to its turning point before Moscow. He has his hero, under the influence of the Party, mature from

a soldier with (despicable) compassion for prisoners into a fighter in the army of Socialism. He is also the first to feature a traitor from his own side in a war book. A high point is the encounter of the positive hero with Stalin, which directly announces the beginning of the counter-attack of the Red Army. Pettiness also shows in Bubennov's turning of the foe to ridicule (thereby completely devaluing the performance of his own side). The second part of the novel was, after 1953, criticized for conflictlessness and for personality cult.

It was only in the Russian literature of the second emigration that the subject of the oppression under Stalin could be treated. The novel *Mnimye velichiny* 1952 (Imaginary dimensions. Eng. The chains of fear, 1958) by Nikolai Narokov, translated into several European and Asian languages, gives a manifold insight into the activities of the NKVD around 1937; into cruelty, despotism, self-deception, insincerity, subjection; and into the only apparent power of the leaders great and small. In *Sem' let* 1950 (Seven years) Vladimir Varshavskii describes his war experiences as a volunteer in the French army and his years as a prisoner of war in Germany. In *Vrag naroda* 1952 (An enemy of the people), later expanded into *Parallaks* 1972 (Eng. Parallax, 1966) Vladimir Yurasov provides a solid literary counterbalance to Soviet presentation of the war, in which he above all else examines the spiritual and mental state of a questioning Soviet officer after the war.

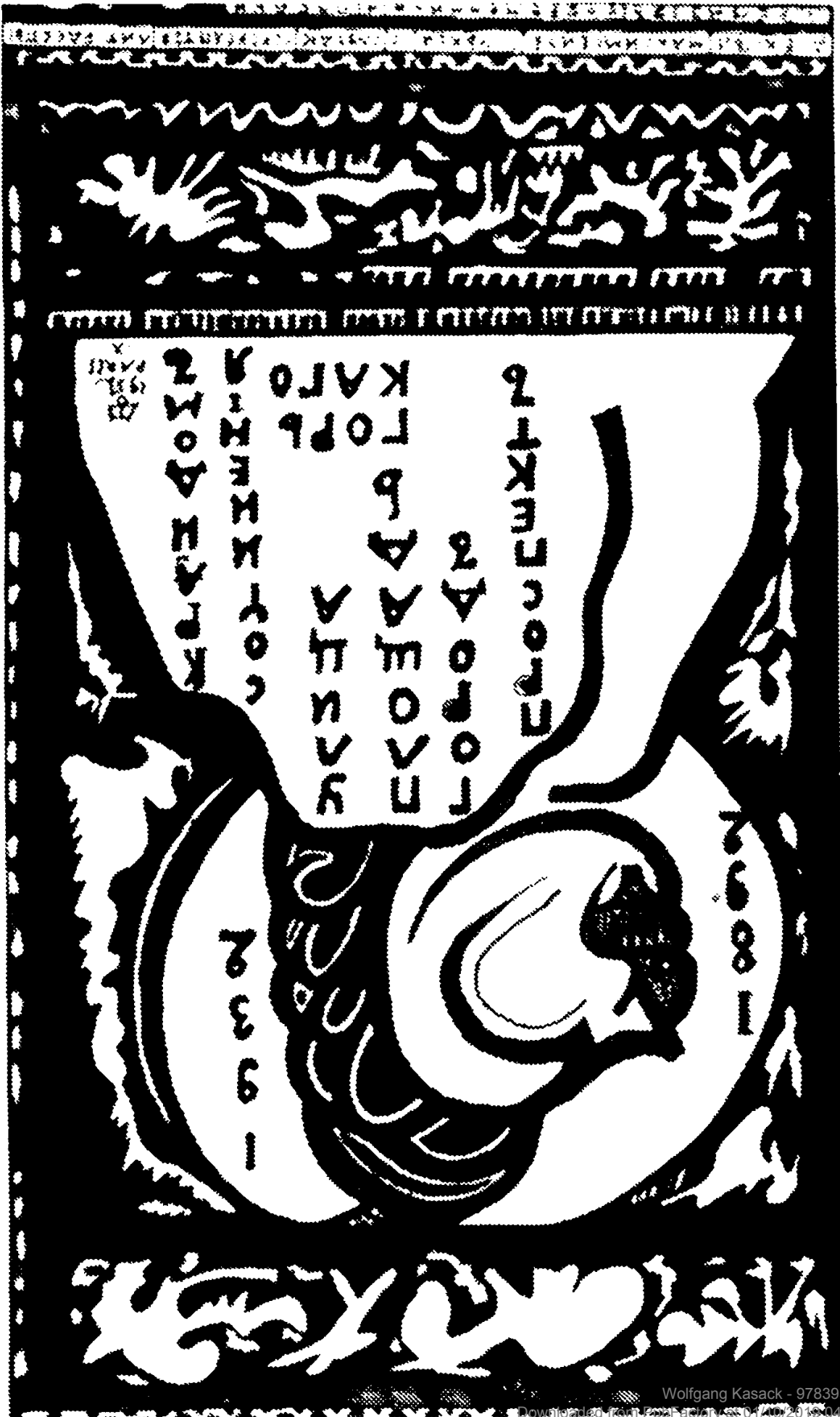
The perennial theme of Soviet pre-war literature, namely the Revolution and Civil War, was also treated after 1946. Konstantin Fedin, in 1921 a member of the Serapion Brothers and after 1959 First Secretary of the USSR Writers' Union, wrote at this period the second part of his trilogy on the subject, *Neobyknovennoe leto* 1947/48 (Eng. No ordinary summer, 1950). Set in Saratov in 1919, the action centres on problems of the relationship of the intelligentsia to the Revolution, and of the function of art. The work is, in the manner of Lev Tolstoi, a broad weave of many strands of narrative and historical commentary, and, in a Party-ordained divergence from historical fact, it over-emphasizes the part played by Stalin and denies the existence of Trotskii. Whereas Fedin received a Stalin Prize First Class for 1948, his successor as leading light of the Writers' Union of the USSR, Georgii Markov, found less favour (a Stalin Prize Third Class for 1951) with his longwinded family and revolutionary saga *Strogovy* 1939, 1946 (The Strogovs).

Because of the limitation of subjects due to censorship, many Soviet authors resorted to the historical novel. When Stepan Zlobin found himself unable, in 1946, to publish his vindication of former Russian prisoners of war *Propavshie bez vesti* 1962 (Lost without trace), he returned to his historical studies of the 17th century Peasant's Revolt, and produced in *Stepan Razin* 1951 (Stepan Razin), one of the best ever Russian historical novels – a vast canvas of the period, without the modern over-dramatization of the leader figure.

During the same period Ol'ga Forsh published a Decembrist novel *Perventsy svobody* 1950–53 (Eng. Pioneers of freedom, 1954), and Ivan Novikov gathered together his previous studies in *Pushkin v izgnanii* 1947 (Pushkin in exile). Among the émigrés, Mark Aldanov continued his series of historical-psychological novels with, among others, a portrayal of Balzac in *Povest' o smerti* 1953 (A story about death), and in Paris Boris Zaitsev published his biographical presentation of *Zhukovskii* (1951). In the Soviet Union historical subjects were also revived in the realm of drama (Aleksandr Shtein, Boris Lavrenev, Vsevolod Ivanov, Konstantin Paustovskii and others).

Some important memoirs of older writers also exist from this period, although they were not published in the Soviet Union between 1946 and 1953. Paustovskii, who after 1955 became one of the most important writers in the Soviet Union, published in 1945 the first volume of his six-part *Povest' o zhizni* 1945–63 (Eng. The story of a life, 1964) – *Dalekie gody* (Distant years. Eng. Childhood and schooldays, 1964). This is characterized by the autonomy of each chapter in the epic manner, typical of this author, and by the simple, balanced and clear language. The focal points are human encounters, literature and nature. Paustovskii gives form to his own experiences and reflections, but attempts no interpretation of the period: the artist outweighs the historian. Zaitsev continued his autobiographical novel *Puteshestvie Gleba* (Gleb's journey), about his own childhood and youth in Russia, publishing the parts *Tishina* (Silence) in 1948 and *Yunost'* (Youth) in 1950.

Here the émigré writer Aleksei Remizov satirizes the Gor'kii-cult, which continued unabated after Gor'kii's final return to the Soviet Union in 1931 (his disapproval of seizure of power by force being ignored). The arrangement of the letters, read vertically, recalls the town named after Gor'kii and the streets and squares that bear his name; the top line, read across, is a reminder of the secret police (GPU), master in all spheres of intellectual life.



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Of a quite different character was Ivan Bunin's volume *Vospominaniya* 1950 (Eng. *Memoirs and portraits*, 1951), which was published in Paris. Here we have almost exclusively judgments on other writers (pronounced with unusual asperity), and little of personal experience. Bunin, who aligned himself with Lev Tolstoi and Anton Chekhov, reiterated in old age his uncompromising rejection of the experimental and revolutionary poetry of his youth – from Aleksandr Blok to Vladimir Mayakovskii, from Konstantin Bal'mont to Sergei Esenin – and his condemnation of the Soviet system and all its adherents, such as Maksim Gor'kii. Bunin's reminiscences stand alongside his creative work; Paustovskii's works incorporate the essence of his poetic and human genius.

Human relationships

Inherent in the Party's educational requirement for Soviet literature up to 1953 was the exclusion of the individual, with his personal troubles and joys, from creative writing. Only as a small cog in the Party-guided machine had he a place in works of literature. A few exceptions are therefore all the more noteworthy. Konstantin Paustovskii, in those years, produced some of his finest stories, such as *Noch' v oktyabre* 1946 (*A night in October*), *Telegramma* 1946 (Eng. *The telegram*, 1963) and *Kordon "273"* 1948 (*Cordon "273"*), which are completely apolitical and convey a gentle sense of human relationships and attachment to nature. They are lone rays of light in the uniform drabness of production-line literature. In this period of the supremacy of banal political pseudo-literature, the occasional publication of Paustovskii's esteemed descriptions of nature, and of Mikhail Prishvin's minor experiences, added at least a touch of colour to the flood of grey monotony.

In Russian literature abroad, on the other hand, human problems outweigh political ones. Vladimir Nabokov, after his years in Berlin and Paris, had in 1940 been forced to re-emigrate, to the USA, where he now produced novels in English. *Bend Sinister* 1947 is in fact his

most political novel: in it he illustrates the common features of totalitarian systems both Soviet and National Socialist, but his emphasis is ever on human, religious and aesthetic values. This is also evident in his poems – *Stikhotvoreniya* (Verses) of the years 1929–1951 – published in Paris in 1952. Yurii Terapiano became, after 1945, a leading literary critic. In 1946 he published *Puteshestvie v neizvestnyi kraj* (Journey to an unknown land), a deeply spiritual, partly surrealist short novel in the field of Asiatic religious wisdom, describing a still divinely-ordained, undivided human condition. His fourth volume of poetry *Stranstvie zemnoe* 1950 (Earthly wanderings) confirmed his status as a religious poet, in Paris. In *Vstrechi* 1953 (Meetings) he produced a volume of essays recalling life in the Paris emigration from 1925 to 1939.

Poetry in the Soviet Union was on the whole dominated by standard versifying in praise of Stalin or as illustration of Party policy, whether composed by the highly regarded poets Mikhail Isakovskii, Konstantin Simonov and Aleksandr Tvardovskii, or by untalented versifiers such as Evgenii Dolmatovskii, Nikolai Gribachev or Vasilii Lebedev-Kumach. And yet there were a few exceptions. Yaroslav Smelyakov's *Kremlevskie eli* 1948 (The Kremlin spruces) stood out "from the general background of superficial and basically insensitive sentimentality"¹⁰ and earned him severe condemnation for "Blok-sentiment", pessimism and preoccupation with death. Nikolai Zabolotskii, having returned in 1946 from prison camp and exile in the Altai region and in Karaganda, was able to publish in 1948 one volume, *Stikhotvoreniya* (Verses) in which he raises questions about the place of poetry in a nature moulded by reason, about sincerity, and about the meaning of death. Critically annihilated by Mikhail Lukonin, among others, this production was "possibly the most significant poetic event of the years 1945–1948"¹¹ – an indication that, even when bitterly hostile to art, politics could not completely stifle true poetry, which might yet, in exceptional cases, still be published.

In emigration, poetry developed in various ways. Poets such as Ivan Elagin and Nikolai Morshen produced a succession of politically critical verses, while others, like Ol'ga Anstei and Dmitrii Klenovskii gave expression to their religious consciousness, which had been stifled in the Soviet Union. Klenovskii's first volumes of poetry – like *Navstrechu nebu* 1952 (Towards heaven) – represent earthly life as an episode in

the true spiritual existence from which man comes and to which he returns in death. While Klenovskii remained in Germany, Ol'ga Anstei, who had published her first book of poems *Dver' v stene* 1949 (A door in the wall) in Munich, in 1950 transferred herself to the United States. The poetry of Ekaterina Tauber, who fled from Yugoslavia to France after the Second World War, has a similarly religious basic attitude, balanced in her volume *Pod sen'yu olivy* 1948 (Under the shade of the olive tree) by the inclusion of nature poetry. Vladimir Zlobin, companion of Zinaida Gippius and Dmitrii Merezhkovskii in St Petersburg and Paris, collected his verse, defined by such themes as death, the soul, angels, Satan, paradise or hell, in the volume *Posle ee smerti* (After her death) in 1951.

1953–1964

The dawning of freedom and conservative repression

The death of Stalin on 5 March 1953, by temporarily unsettling the Party and government leadership in the Soviet Union, gave both hope and certain possibilities of development to the liberal forces. The title of Il'ya Érenburg's short novel *Ot tepel'* 1954 (Eng. *The thaw*, 1955) gave its name to this period, whose distinct phases (and the corresponding frosty reactions) set the tone of cultural development until 1964 – that is to say until the fall of Khrushchev. The effort to free themselves from Stalinist dictatorial politics united a variety of tendencies in the land; at the end of the day however it was the fear of the leadership – that the admission of free critical expression in literature and art would open the door to criticism of the Party and of the system itself – that was to be decisive.

Three phases are discernible in this decade, each introduced by political events: Stalin's death in 1953; the 20th Party Congress in February 1956; and the 22nd Party Congress in October 1961.

"Sincerity is what is lacking". With this affirmation, a till then little-known writer and lawyer, Vladimir Pomerantsev, introduced a theoretical article on the state of literature, published in the journal *NOVYI MIR* in 1953 (part 12). In it he voiced the opinion of all devotees of true literature, who from now on were to contribute to the "literature of sincerity". At first older writers, such as Konstantin Paustovskii and Il'ya Érenburg, recalled, in essays on literature, the artistic principles intrinsic to authorship, thereby dismissing the purely political, antiliterary demands of Socialist Realism.¹² Individual pseudo-literary productions of the Stalin era, such as the mendacious prizewinning works of Semen Babaevskii, were cast down from their pedestals. Presentation of real social and personal problems was now required, as well as consideration of the non-political, purely human themes of literature. The call for "sincerity" ran parallel with the claim for personal expression of the writer. All such demands, founded on the very nature of art, were bitterly contested by the forces of conservatism.

Administrative measures were likewise contradictory. Millions of innocent detainees, who had survived the horrors of the Gulag, were

set free, but the process of rehabilitation was long-drawn-out; great difficulties attended reintegration into working society; and the camps remained in existence as an institution. The Stalinist Aleksandr Fadeev was dismissed in 1954 from his post as General Secretary of the Writers' Union (he took his own life in 1956), to be succeeded by Aleksei Surkov (until 1959 – then by Konstantin Fedin until 1971); on the other hand the editorial board of NOVYI MIR was disbanded for publishing liberal articles. After a break of twenty years, a Writers' Congress was again organized in 1954, but only a few of the liberal-minded writers were allowed to speak. It was Veniamin Kaverin who most clearly expressed what, in the prevailing circumstances, were considered to be the minimal freedoms for literature. He depicts a literature of the future, in which "a writer's development is determined by strong and independent criticism"; "publishers fearlessly defend literary works" (against censorship); "personal relationships play not the slightest part"; and "no comment of any kind, be it ever so influential, can bar the way for a work; for the fate of a book represents the fate of a writer, and the fate of a writer must be treated with consideration and kindness" ¹³.

The 20th Party Congress, through a speech of Khrushchev (only later published) on Stalin's crimes, gave the signal for the relegation of the past and coined the phrase "cult of personality". The Party resolution of 30 June 1956 *O preodolenii kul'ta lichnosti i ego posledstvi*i (On overcoming the cult of personality and its consequences) confirmed the tendency and defined the limits of criticism: "grave breaches of Soviet law, and repression of the masses"; "many honest Communists and non-party Soviet people were slandered and suffered innocently". For writers, this measure signified the rehabilitation* of a number who had perished in prisons or camps (such as Isaak Babel', Ivan Kataev, Daniil Kharms, Boris Kornilov, Aleksandr Vvedenskii) and the return of many from camps and exile in distant parts of the Soviet Union (as Naum Korzhavin, Sergei Bondarin). It also signified the reprinting (or first publication) of work suppressed for decades – for example by Anna Akhmatova, Mikhail Bulgakov, Sergei Esenin, Yurii Olesha, Evgenii Shvarts, Yurii Tynyanov – and opened the way to literary formulation of the wrongs that had been suffered. Many writers now experienced an undreamed-of stimulus, which helped to restore the prestige of Russian literature

beyond the frontiers of the Soviet Union. One of the most important (and most fiercely attacked by the conservatives) publications of this period was the second volume of the anthology *LITERATURNAYA MOSKVA* (1956). In it were gathered both old (unpublished) and new works, and Aleksandr Yashin was presented as a politically changed author with his story *Rychagi* (The levers), in which he mercilessly attacked the lack of moral courage of the degraded upholders of the Socialist system. And an attempt was made, by the reintroduction of the Lenin Prizes on 15 August 1956, to revalidate the system of Stalin Prizes, discredited by having been awarded to so many undeserving Party propagandists.

In the Writers' Union, the liberal forces temporarily gained the upper hand. However, in 1957/58 the fate of Boris Pasternak made the limits of liberalization abundantly clear. After 1954 some poems by this long-suppressed author had indeed appeared, but publication of his novel *Doktor Zhivago* (Eng. *Doctor Zhivago*, 1958), in spite of being openly announced on Radio Moscow in May 1956 was nonetheless forbidden. Its appearance in Italy in November 1957 brought world fame to its author, aroused awareness of his poetry, and gained him a Nobel Prize in October 1958. At home on the other hand it led to unrestrained abuse and persecution of the poet by Soviet officialdom, reminiscent of Zhdanov's scurrilous outbursts against Anna Akhmatova and Mikhail Zoshchenko; like them, he was excluded from the Writers' Union. Many writers, also of good standing, attacked Pasternak for publishing abroad, but on this occasion there were already some writers in the Soviet Union prepared to defend him. In the long run, it was the hostile attitude of the authorities that caused Russian intellectuals, individually or in common, from this time on to muster the spirit to do battle for freedom. Pasternak, meanwhile, was to remain proscribed, and only after his death in 1961 was he once more acknowledged as a lyric poet,¹⁴ his exclusion from the Writers' Union being revoked on 19 February 1987. Ol'ga Ivinskaya, whom Pasternak had portrayed as Lara in his novel, described their years together and details of his persecution in her book *V plenu vremeni* 1972 (Eng. *A captive of time*, 1978).

A particular manifestation of the internal conflict in Soviet Russia was the formation in December 1958 of a Writers' Union of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR), to stand alongside the

All-Union organization. With the arch-conservative Leonid Sobolev at its head (until his death in 1971, and thereafter Sergei Mikhalkov), it supported the forces of orthodoxy against the revisionists.

The disillusion of the liberal forces found an outlet in the dissemination of creative and critical writings by means of transcription and duplication. From 1959/60 onwards these operated alongside the official censored press, and, under the Russian designation "samizdat" (self-publishing), became a permanent extemporary procedure, combated by officialdom but never eliminated. Alongside samizdat, there arose with Pasternak's *Doktor Zhivago* the practice of "tamizdat" (there-published), whereby works written in the Soviet Union were published abroad, either intentionally by the author or without his knowledge, since publication in their country of origin was impossible.



The first principle of totalitarianism in the intellectual life of the Soviet Union is obedience to the single Party. Independence of thought and judgment is not required - only unconditional compliance with each and every directive and opinion of the CPSU. In literature, the principle of "Party spirit" is an indispensable constituent of Socialist Realism - as it was even during the relatively liberal phase of the Thaw (1954-64). This 1960 poster by Sur'yaninov adjures "We approve Party policy!"

The 22nd Party Congress, at which Aleksandr Tvardovskii spoke as a liberal and Vsevolod Kochetov as a narrow-minded conservative writer, was the last occasion when the policy of de-Stalinization prevailed. Among the novels which now gave accurate information about the Stalin era, the one to find most recognition both at home and

abroad was Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's *Odin den' Ivana Denisovicha* 1962 (Eng. One day in the life of Ivan Denisovich, 1963). Published with the approval of Party leader Khrushchev, it was the first literary work to report honestly on a Russian prison camp, on its slave labour and on the arbitrary sentences. It was also, for its literary merit, proposed for the Lenin Prize in 1964. The success of the conservatives in blocking this choice marks the end of a period of false hopes. In the West, in his cycle of stories *Neugasimaya lampada* 1954 (The inextinguishable icon lamp), Boris Shiryayev had already laid bare the terrors of a Soviet camp, symbolized by the former Solovetskii Island monastery – incidentally commemorating the heroism of the priests and monks. This work attracted as little attention as Sergei Maksimov's story *Taiga* 1952 (The taiga), also based on personal experience of camp life. The world press experienced the horror of the Gulag through Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn.

About the same time, in February 1964, there took place in Leningrad the first trial of a Soviet writer in the Soviet Union since 1953: that of Iosif Brodskii, a young apolitical poet who earned his living as a translator. His sentence of five years' forced labour – for not performing socially accepted work – caused a massive outcry from well-known Russian writers, and also from the world press. Such manifestations of literary outspokenness became typical of the post-1964 phase.

The truth about the past

The period of upheaval after Stalin's death made it possible for writers to set down intimations about the past which before 1953 would have cost them their freedom or their life. It also allowed them to try out whether previous work, written "for the drawer", was now publishable. An incalculable amount of literary work prior to 1953 had to be destroyed – often, out of fear, by the author himself. But Lidya Chukovskaya's short novel *Opustelyi dom* 1967 (Eng. The deserted house, 1967), for instance, composed in 1939/40 shortly after the events therein described, was preserved. An employee in a publishing office, a firm believer in the Soviet régime, is witness to the arrests of

1937, but allows no doubt to arise in her mind as long as others alone are involved. Only when her own son is arrested and she consequently loses her job does she grasp the terrible truth about arbitrary power, slander and family guilt. Too much of the truth was in that book, and conditions in the Soviet Union had not sufficiently changed for its publication to be possible. It therefore became, early in the sixties, one of the first and most widely distributed works in samizdat, and was published in Paris in 1965. Similarly, Anna Akhmatova's lyrical cycle *Rekviem* (Eng. Requiem, 1976) about her imprisoned son, a scream of outrage "under the Kremlin's walls" on behalf of so many Russian women, was first printed, in Munich, in 1963, and not until 1987 in the Soviet Union. This cycle, composed between 1935 and 1940 and added to in 1957 and 1961, is one of the world's great poems, written by a devout woman, about suffering, separation and death. Her greatest work, *Poëma bez geroya* (Eng. A poem without a hero, 1973), started in 1940, with the final version completed in 1962, originated from her own experiences in 1913, on the eve of the great upheaval, extending in veiled hints, cryptic utterances and plain words, through the period of suffering behind the barbed wire. This work also could only be published in the United States (1960, 1961), and even in the 1986 edition was not accessible to the Soviet reader in its entirety.

Even unhappier was the fate of Vasillii Grossman's book *Vse techet* 1970 (Eng. Forever flowing, 1972). Inspired by the signs of liberalism, he began in 1955 to set down this poetical-essayistic work, in which important historical events of the post-revolutionary past are combined with penetrating meditations. The story (of a man returning home after twenty-nine years' imprisonment, who meets with much misunderstanding and finds that the period of crime, which he had believed to be ended, lives on), serves merely as a framework for independent recollected episodes. Also depicted was the forcible collectivization, with the liquidation of millions of people and the expatriation and murder of a predetermined number of industrious peasants. The passage on the resultant famine reveals the sort of experiences and accusations crying out in writers for verbal expression: "Heads, heavy as bullets; necks, thin as those of young storks ... The children's little old faces, worn out, as if the babes had already lived seventy years on earth, in spring no longer human faces:

here a tiny beaked bird's head, here a little frog's face – thin, wide lips, a third like a gudgeon, open-mouthed. Not human faces. And their eyes, dear God! Comrade Stalin, my God, have you seen these eyes?"¹⁵

The book was confiscated by the security forces in 1961, rewritten as well as possible until 1963, circulated in samizdat, and was published in the West in 1965. Grossman had put down on paper a measure of facts which went well beyond the permitted dose. And he had not merely accused Stalin, but had recognized the guilt in the system itself, independent of any specific leader.

Vladimir Dudintsev's novel *Ne khlebom ediny* 1956 (Eng. Not by bread alone, 1957) – published, severely criticized, almost banned and yet reprinted – was the first serious attempt, after Il'ya Ėrenburg's *Ottepel'*, at an analysis of the Soviet higher ranks and of the mechanics of the power structure. In the person of an engineer trying to bring out an invention, thwarted and slandered by the envious and the incompetent and finally sentenced to a labour camp, Dudintsev picked out the type of the talented intellectual who wishes to serve his country, but by his divergent thinking only succeeds in upsetting the ruling élite who are set on the retention of power. The book did not receive official recognition until the beginning of perestroika. Vsevolod Kochetov, the author of a Stalinist family chronicle *Zhurbin* 1952 (Eng. The Zhurbins, 1953) and chief editor of the journal OKTYABR' from 1961 to 1973, produced in *Brat'ya Ershovy* 1958 (The Yershov brothers) a work which handled themes from Ėrenburg's and Dudintsev's novels from an aggressively Party standpoint. His inventor serves up pirated work, is a repulsive personality under Western influence, an informer etc. So crude were Kochetov's attacks (allegedly due to misinterpretation of the resolutions of the 20th Party Congress) that even PRAVDA (29 September 1958) distanced itself from them.

The atmosphere of fear, arrests, injustice and the power of the informer is conveyed by Yurii Bondarev in his novel *Tishina* 1962 (Eng. Silence, 1965). He describes the fate of an ex-wartime officer and his family in post-war Moscow. The father, a victim of despotism, is arrested (in a much-discussed scene of realism); the main character is himself denounced by a former comrade in arms (now a Party official), losing thereby (thanks to the author's mitigation) only his place as a student. Bondarev allows the "positive" characters to follow only the

voice of conscience, thus touching on a theme that was also to play a large part in the poetry of the period.

One of the first attempts to portray "negative" Party officials and unjustly accused Communists in dramatic form was made by Aleksandr Shtein in *Personal'noe delo* 1954 (A personal affair). The dramatist who had in 1948 attracted attention with a lamentable anticosmopolitan play, was now indeed in harmony with the new spirit, but he minimized the problems. What appeared in his play as one particular contrived combination of unfortunate circumstances was actually the fate of hundreds of thousands of people. The exertions of the victim's friends on his behalf, the loyal bearing of his family, and many other details are an idealistic softening, deprecated even in the Soviet Union, of a far grimmer reality. These sorts of slander had a way of ending quickly and cruelly both for the victim and his family.¹⁶

The finest poetry on coming to terms with the past came from Vladimir Lugovskoi and Aleksandr Tvardovskii. A year after Lugovskoi's death there appeared *Seredina veka* 1958 (Mid-century), a work consisting of twenty-five verse epics which he had begun in 1942 and then completely revised. The October Revolution, NÉP and the Second World War are some of the events which he recalls, mingling them with personal experiences and reflections. Many and varied themes are also bound up in Tvardovskii's story in verse *Za dal'yu - dal'* 1960 (Far, far away). The narrative framework of a journey enables him, among other things, to take issue with the readiness of authors to conform and with the artistically detrimental uniformity set by editors; also to express a sort of act of contrition for all having participated in the cult of Stalin.

... When, behind the Kremlin's walls
 Alive, he dwelt cut off from life,
 Oppressed us like a dreadful spirit
 His was the only name we knew.

(...)

Of this, our poems never sang:
 That lawless, in an evil hour,
 On helpless tribes he could at will
 Hurl down his anger from above...¹⁷

Although up to 1962 the factual existence of the camps as a malpractice of the past had featured in many works of literature, it was only with Solzhenitsyn's *Odin den' Ivana Denisovicha* that the sufferings of camp life came to be described. From his own experience, the previously unknown author rehearsed the course of a day in the life of one uncomplicated, unreflective prisoner, as it corresponded with the reality that had been lived through by millions. In so doing, he gave permanent expression to the central experience of suffering of his people. Only a few works on this theme by other authors achieved publication in the Soviet Union, before it became again taboo. But Solzhenitsyn's short novel was to become, through its



Boris Sveshnikov: Camp sketch. In the field of nonconforming Russian art, Sveshnikov's drawings, salvaged from his imprisonment (1949–56), became known through Mikhail Shemyakin's anthology APOLLON '77 (published in Paris). Along with countless millions of innocent people, Sveshnikov was, in the Stalin era, condemned to forced labour behind the barbed wire. But, unlike many others, he lived to enjoy release and rehabilitation under Khrushchev – although labour camps continued to exist in the Soviet Union. His pictures of deprivation, loneliness and death in the Gulag are still relevant. 'Not drawings from nature, but dream faces from eternity, flitting over the glass of nature or of history' (Abram Terts). Born in 1926, Sveshnikov now lives in Moscow, and gained recognition through his illustrations for Goethe's SORROWS OF YOUNG WERTHER and E. T. A. Hoffmann's fairy tales.

depth of humanity, its verbal density and its universally relevant detail, the world's permanent image of Soviet prison camp practice.

After 1956, Soviet war literature was particularly varied and extensive. Many young poets, such as Konstantin Vanshenkin or Evgenii Vinokurov, now had the opportunity to set down their experiences in words. Viktor Rozov was able to have his first play *Vechno zhivye* 1956 (Alive forever**) written in 1943 during the war but left "in the drawer" – staged in 1957 in the new Moscow theatre Sovremennik. Absence of sentimentality and cliché, evocation of what had been personally lived through – these were the principles of the new wave in war literature stemming from Viktor Nekrasov. Typical of this is first of all the description of individual experience on a small stage, as achieved by Grigorii Baklanov in *Pyad' zemli* 1959 (An inch of land. Eng. The foothold, 1962), in which he recapitulates in detail the battle for a bridgehead over the Dnestr. In the same spirit, Yuri Bondarev, in *Batal'ony prosyat ognya* 1957 (The battalions request fire support) and *Poslednie zalpy* 1959 (Eng. The last shots, 1961), described what his generation actually underwent at the front. Bulat Okudzhava, popular after 1960 for his vivid, melodious verses sung to a guitar, presents the war from the viewpoint of a very young volunteer – and has the temerity to admit the men's fear and feelings of insignificance, and to intensify tragedy with irony. For many years his novel *Bud' zdorov, shkolyar* 1961 (Good luck, schoolboy**) was to be found only in Paustovskii's liberal-minded collection TARUSSKIE STRANITSY (Eng. Pages from Tarusa, 1964), remaining proscribed as pacifist by the critics: his frankness had overstepped the bounds set by the Party. Konstantin Simonov's, on the other hand, was quite acceptable in his numerous war novels – for instance *Zhivye i mertvye* 1959 (Eng. The living and the dead, 1962), in which he links his depiction of the retreat of the Red Army in 1941 with censure of Stalin's misguided policy which underestimated the enemy. From the multifarious new war literature, Stepan Zlobin's *Propavshie bez vesti* 1962 (Lost without trace) still stands out, because of its admission of the crime against the Russian soldiers who, after imprisonment in Germany, vanished into Soviet camps; also *Vernost'* 1954 (Fidelity) by Ol'ga Berggol'ts, for its unusual form as a lyrical-dramatic tragedy about the battle for Sevastopol', in which she conforms her talent, in a spirit faithful to the Party, to describe the suffering of a single woman. One of the most

important products of Russian war literature is the novel *Kudeyarov dub* 1957/58 (Kudeyar's oak), from the pen of Boris Shiryayev, who emigrated during the war. In it he above all formulates the moral dilemma of the Russian opponents of totalitarianism who took the decision to co-operate with the Germans.

On the perennial theme of Russian literature since 1917 – revolution and civil war – post-1953 minds were very sharply divided. The literature of sincerity was permitted to present the past under Stalin, within limits, in a new way, but for the pre-Stalin era distorted history still remained sacrosanct. The gifted younger writers in any case felt no urge to write about the Revolution, while many older ones clothed the familiar in new garments – for instance Georgii Markov in *Otets i syn* 1963/64 (Father and son), in which he yet again exhaustively unfolds a



In Peredelkino, near Moscow, the Writers' Union owns a village in which privileged writers live. Here resided, among others, Kornei Chukovskii, Aleksandr Fadeev, Konstantin Fedin and Boris Pasternak, whose house is here illustrated. This is the place where he handed over the manuscript of DOKTOR ZHIVAGO to an Italian journalist, thereby initiating the new phase of publishing modern Russian literature abroad. After Pasternak's death in 1960, the house became an unofficial shrine. In 1986 it was requisitioned by the Literary Fund of the Writers' Union and allotted to another writer, upon which worldwide protests and a petition by forty writers at the 8th Writers' Congress won the decision to set up an official Pasternak Museum there in 1987.

Siberian family history, in Party terms, as an example of the class struggle in the twenties. Against this background, the worldwide attention attracted by Boris Pasternak's *Doktor Zhivago* in 1957 on its publication in the West is readily understandable. Here, after enduring forty years of repression, a great and independent poet questioned anew the purpose and consequences of the Revolution; truthfully described the devastation of the country, the senseless killing, the calculated extermination of the upper classes; and described the *via dolorosa* trodden by a man who preserved his spiritual independence. In a complex treatment, rich in symbols, Pasternak relates the life of a doctor and poet from the beginning of the century until 1929. The significance of chance in the ordering of a life's destiny is clarified in the ending, the epilogue, and the appendix of poems.¹⁸ Zhivago's death from want of air is, finally, an indictment of intellectual suffocation; his survival in the minds of his friends and in his poems is a declaration of the primacy of spiritual and religious values.

Within the literature now published in the Soviet Union, the new political climate gave a stimulus to the genre of memoirs. Here it was possible for specific falsifications of history to be corrected and for particular persons to be rehabilitated without forcing conclusions about the system and its current manifestation. This patchwork truth was already a great step forward, although hopes of enlarging the picture were to be dashed. In 1946 Konstantin Paustovskii had put aside his work on *Povest' o zhizni*, since after the first volume there was no further prospect of publication. Now, however, since the personal address to the reader, so necessary to every author, seemed possible, he resumed the work and between 1955 and 1963 produced five more books, in which he was able to commemorate many persecuted authors – such as Babel, Bulgakov, Olesha – and to record, in prose of lyrical beauty, many personal experiences. Paustovskii, who developed in those years into a human exemplar of decency and the conscience of his period, created in this informal cycle first and foremost a work of art.

Quite different was the message of Il'ya Érenburg, whose memoirs *Lyudi, gody, zhizn'* 1960–65 (Eng. *People, years, life: Memoirs of 1891–1917*, 1961; *Memoirs 1921–1941*, 1964) might also be described as his masterpiece. His bent was more of a journalistic and historical

kind. He provides contemporary pictures of great events and portraits of many important artists, native and foreign – such as Hemingway, Picasso, Modigliani, O. Mandel'shtam, Kol'tsov, Mayakovskii, Babel' – and above all discusses his own intellectual and political development, whereas Paustovskii dwells on questions of language and literature. Ėrenburg, who had frequently compromised with the Soviet régime, ventured on many topics to the limits of what was permissible; his work was, on the Soviet side, criticized for being too subjective.

These two comprehensive sets of memoirs were complemented by, among others, *Dnevnye zvezdy* 1959 (Diurnal stars) by Oi'ga Berggol'ts (a "lyrical diary" mingling recollections of childhood with the siege of Leningrad); by Sergei Bondarin's vivid and perceptive descriptions of writer friends from Odessa (Bagritskii, Olesha, Il'f, Babel');¹⁹ and by Olesha's last, posthumously published book, *Ni dnya bez strochki* 1965 (Eng. No day without a line, 1979), which impressionistically combines fragments of thought and scraps of memory, but as a whole does not quite add up to a work of art.

The present in literature

To the problem of overcoming the past through candid presentation of pre-1953 abuses and crimes corresponded the present-day problem of living alongside yesterday's guilty men – and the danger that they might regain exclusive influence. There was indeed rehabilitation, but no general juridical investigation of yesterday's rulers took place to compare with de-Nazification in Germany. Thus every work critical of the past was intended to serve both as a mirror of the present and as a warning. One which became famous as an indictment of the prevailing situation was Evgenii Evtushenko's poem *Nasledniki Stalina* (Eng. The heirs of Stalin, 1963), which warned of pockets of Stalinist power in current political life. Its publication in PRAVDA (21 October 1962) served to indicate that its message was quasi-official. Since 1956 Evtushenko's publicistic poetry had won enormous popularity at home and abroad, his easy clarity and youthful (and well-founded) rebelliousness quickly gaining him friends. On occasion his censure challenged the Party line,

as when in *Babii Yar* 1961 (Eng. Babi Yar, 1962) he utterly denounced Russian anti-Semitism. His fame died with the Khrushchev era. A few other young poets who had only started writing after Stalin's death also became famous through their provocative subject-matter and modern technological imagery – for instance Andrei Voznesenskii, whose consciously original poetic style indicated that not only in content, but in form also, a break with the past had been effected. His work is characterized by motifs of world civilization (e. g. the triangular lamps of the New York underground) and by experiments with form. Among the younger talents, the gifted and sensitive Bella Akhmadulina attracted notice, coming to terms in daring images with her poetic self in the changed world.



One of the most important authors who first came into the open as a consequence of the spiritual awakening which followed Stalin's death is Bella Akhmadulina. She never abandoned her non-conformist stance, and intervened on behalf of those who were persecuted, but did not have to emigrate.

Bella Akhmadulina

The theme of the reintegration of the guilty was incorporated by Viktor Rozov into his play *Pered uzhinom* 1961 (Before supper); similarly in *Zateinik* 1966 (The social director) the subject (the gradual

recognition and mastery of the human baseness which survived beyond the Stalin period) is aptly handled as an analytical drama. Here we witness the meeting of two men, who in the days of Stalin had loved the same woman. One of them had imparted his passion to his father (a public prosecutor) in such a way that the latter had misused his power over life and liberty to reverse the woman's choice. The persistence of meanness, the recognition of guilt, undying love – these are, as much as a personally and professionally ruined life, the elements used by Rozov to expose the tragedy of his time. To the particularly grave (although disowned by the State) problems of the reintegration of people returned from up to thirty years of Gulag imprisonment Viktor Nekrasov was the first to devote a novel (*Kira Georgievna*, 1961; Eng. 1962) – which also, with its unexemplary central character and the complexity of her sexual relationships, breaks down earlier taboos.

Aleksandr Volodin, with Rozov one of the best dramatists of the decade, engaged, in his first play *Fabrichnaya devchonka* 1956 (Factory girl), a basic problem of life in the Soviet Union: the contrast between the false picture of society and everyday reality. A Komsomol official ruins the life of a young working girl, in despite of what he knows is the truth, in the interests of a press campaign planned from above – "in our country we are judged not by deeds, but by words"²⁰.

Such works of dispraise flourished only briefly. In the case of the dramas, a successful staging was accompanied by lively controversy in newspapers and journals (sometimes by debates in the Secretariat of the Writers' Union, as was known to have happened in the cases of Dudintsev and Pasternak). However, by the second half of the sixties at the latest, the overthrow of the "cult of personality" was regarded as complete, and overtly critical works met with the anathema of censorship.

One of the real and lasting new elements in post-Stalin literature about the present day is awareness of the human person. Man was no longer seen merely as a social being, for whom even love only operates as part of the socialist structure. The changed relationship between the theme of industrial production and the domain of the individual found its expression in, for instance, the plays of Nikolai Pogodin – *Sonet Petrarki* 1956 (Petrarch's sonnet) and Aleksei Arbuzov – *Irkutskaya istoriya* 1959 (An Irkutsk story**). Pogodin,

already known for his plays about the five-year plan, Stalin and Lenin, proclaimed the new line of placing the private world of the individual before the Party. Arbuzov showed that it was artistically justifiable to use the building of the great Angara dam as a background to a quite unrelated love entanglement, as a sign that the tragic also was entitled to a rightful place in the Soviet Union, and that the production novels and plays of the Stalin era were bound to fail because of their lack of realism.

Galina Nikolaeva's novel *Bitva v puti* 1957 (Battle on the way), may be described as an instruction manual on Khrushchev's new policies. It is a Party-minded work, starting with the death of Stalin and illustrating the struggle for the elimination of the personality cult. Set in a tractor factory, the novel frankly exposes defects and shows up dogmatic Party officials – although it tones down the quarrel with them. The novel scores through its psychological insight into love relationships.

Perhaps less well crafted, but all the more telling, is Valerii Tarsis' satire *Skazanie o sinei mukhe* 1962 (Eng. The bluebottle, 1962), which attacks the abuses of the time with merciless candour. It is made plain to his hero, a political scientist who strives not merely for certain temporary relaxations but for total free expression, that independent thought is rated an illness; that the "divergent thinker is an enemy, even though he may be considering how to build Communism more quickly and better"²¹.

Great importance became attached in those years to literature concerned with the generation which had come to maturity after conditions had changed – who would therefore have been about seventeen in 1956. The forum for such work was the journal YUNOST' which commenced in 1955. The most significant novelist dealing with the youth problem was to be Vasilii Aksenov, who combined the new subject-matter with experiments (new in post-Stalin Russian literature) in form – above all that of multiple perspective. In his short novel *Zvezdnyi billet* 1961 (Eng. A ticket to the stars, 1963) he presents young people who want to be independent, who face the world with scepticism and reluctance, who enjoy Western literature and music and try to understand abstract painting, and who win their right to choose their own path by fleeing from Moscow to Reval. At another level Aksenov shows a scientist with the moral courage to take risks, who wins through on his own in a field of research not included in the Plan.

There ensued savage attacks from dogmatic critics against this apologia of independence and doubt – but more stories in the same spirit followed. (These works, important as they were for the development of literature in the Soviet Union, were, after Aksenov's exile in 1980, erased from Soviet literature and its records.)

On the stage Viktor Rozov introduced the new hero with his prerogative of doubt. *V dobryi chas* 1954 (Good luck!**) and *V doroge* 1961 (On the way), which actually features a Bazarov-like nihilist, exemplify the new formal possibilities of drama: the neoclassical conclusion of Stalinist didactic plays, in which all problems are resolved, now made way for the open ending, which left the audience with the possibility of various solutions. Alongside the hypotactically constructed drama in the neoclassical tradition, in which

Viktor Rozov, one of the most important Russian dramatists, carries conviction through the force of his humanity. His talent developed most strikingly when, after Stalin's death, everyday life, with its complications at the domestic and individual level, won the right to be presented in literature. Rozov's plays have the advantage on stage of his experience as actor and director. Their contemporaneity is evident in their solid moral concern, without detracting from their universal relevance.



each event is subordinated to the central plot-line, there reappeared with these plays the paratactic construction, in the Shakespearean tradition, with a number of independent acts or scenes, a variety of locations and a multiplicity of characters. (*V doroge* has thirty-seven scenes.)

After 1953 a complete change occurred in the literature concerned with village life. In the domain of agriculture, as a result of forcible

collectivization and the extermination of the independent peasantry, the situation in the Soviet Union was so catastrophic that objective reporting and criticism of detail were permitted by the Party, so as to involve literature in the service of reorganization. Originating with Valentin Ovechkin, there developed a moderately critical kolkhoz literature: the so-called "village sketches" (*derevenskie ocherki*) – journalistic reports and dialogues about topical issues in agriculture, which made no secret of the problems. Ovechkin combined professionally-based criticism with concrete proposals for amendment. In 1954 Efim Dorosh commenced his *Derevenskii dnevnik* 1963 (Village diary), which for some twenty years was to record chronologically observations, encounters and reflections from the world of the kolkhoz villages. His stylistic gifts raised these one- or two-page essays on economic, cultural and human issues to the level of permanent literature. Aleksandr Yashin's story *Rychagi* is akin in character to the village sketch, but, because it treated the defects of village life as fundamental, and concerned itself with the contrast between mendacious Party pressures and the honest aspirations of the peasants for meaningful work and trust, it was savagely condemned. The city versus country dichotomy is illustrated by one particular case in Sergei Antonov's *Delo bylo v Pen'kove* 1956 (Eng. It happened in Penkovo, 1956), with absurd directions "from above" – i. e. from the city. Much of the village prose described the campaign to win new virgin lands, as in Nikolai Virta's *Krutye gory* 1956 (Steep mountains) – a crude exposition of the new agricultural policy of the time. Vladimir Soloukhin discovered in *Vladimirskie proselki* 1957 (Vladimir country roads. Eng. A walk in rural Russia, 1966) a form of lyrical, at once contemporary and tradition-conscious prose, based on his own experiences and on his observation of the peasants of the kolkhoz. The importance of village prose is due to its gradually increasing role in the new search for the moral values of life, which, because of the city- and civilization-centred ideology of materialism, had been mainly preserved in the village.

It was Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn who, at the end of his story *Matrenin dvor* 1963 (Matrena's place**), gave the fullest poetic expression to belief in the good, just and selfless human being. "We all lived near her, and did not realize that she was that same just person without whom (according to the proverb) the village cannot stand. Nor the town. Nor

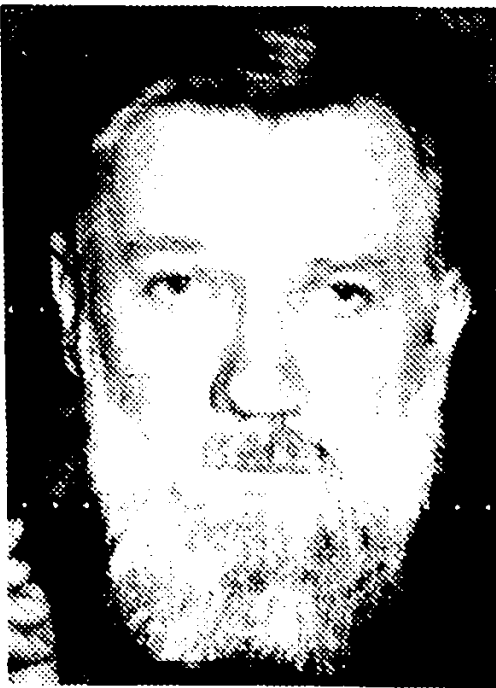
our whole world." It was probably for reasons of censorship that Solzhenitsyn disguised the reference to the Bible (Genesis 18, 24–33) as a "proverb", but the failure to recognize Matrena as "just" in the biblical sense epitomizes yet again the total reproach represented by the story against the materialistic system – it is defection from God. This story marks the beginning of a "village prose" moralistic, religious and tradition-conscious in character, that was to provide Soviet Russian literature with many important works during the next two decades.

In the first decade after Stalin's death the Russian literary scene was enlarged by some non-Russian writers capable of creative expression in two languages, who found recognition in the Soviet Union, and to some extent in the world at large, for work not in their mother tongue but in Russian. The Abkhaz Fazil' Iskander made his début with poetry, which excited attention with its vivid Caucasian imagery. The Kirgiz Chingiz Aitmatov achieved world fame with one of his earliest stories *Dzhamilya* 1958 (*Dzhamilya*), by his convincing evocation, both in individuals and in their personal relationships, of the contrast between the oriental, patriarchal tradition of the nomads and technologically progressive society.

The conclusion of cultural agreements (with strictly-controlled foreign contacts), to which the Soviet Union acceded as from 1956,²² had the by-product that now more than just a few selected writers (mostly literary officials) were allowed to make short trips to the West. True, these "detachments" or tourist parties hardly afforded normal contact, but they broadened the outlook of open-minded authors. The result was a number of travel reports, ranging from Party-minded confirmation of the propagandist picture of the "rotten West" (Gribachev, Dolmatovskii) to honest impressions and objections to the obstacles in the way of real contacts (V. Nekrasov, Paustovskii).

The emergence of freedom after 1953 in the first place affected content – rejection of falsehood; reversion to sincerity. But it also affected form – abandonment of naively realistic narrative and of the neoclassical drama of resolved situations; a tendency to break inherited patterns, and a cautious return to the non-realistic literature of the early part of the century. Thus came about the resurgence in prose of the long-suppressed genre of science fiction. Aleksandr Belyaev, the most prolific of the early Soviet Russian science fiction writers,

reappeared in print in 1956 after a fifteen-year interval. In Ivan Efremov Russian literature possessed a practitioner of the genre who matched up to the ideas of the Party. Scientifically accredited as a biologist, a gifted and imaginative writer, he depicted in his space Utopias – such as *Tumannost' Andromedy* 1957 (Eng. *Andromeda: a space-age tale*, 1960) – an idealized Communist society of the future. Especially popular with readers were the brothers Strugatskii (Arkadii, a Japanologist, and Boris, an astronomer). From 1959 onwards they produced a series of novels of space fantasy – for instance *Strana bagrovykh tuch* 1959 (*The country of the crimson clouds*), about a flight to Venus – and gradually moved on to Utopia with a moral and socially critical message. Andrei Sinyavskii, as a satirist, adopted the medium of grotesque fantasy, despatching his stories to France for publication (under the pseudonym Abram Terts) as early as 1956. His non-realistic prose intensified the portrayal of contemporary Soviet life, with its aura of mistrust and anxiety.



For a period this author led a double life: as Andrei Sinyavskii, recognized Soviet literary scholar, author of, among other things, the foreword to the Pasternak edition of 1965, and as Abram Terts, the unknown author of fantastic stories which appeared in the West. In 1965 the pseudonym was uncovered, and Sinyavskii found himself in a prison camp. Since 1973 he has been living in Paris, where this picture was taken.

General human problems

Emphasis on the individual with his peculiarities and his inner experiences, with his joys and sorrows, his doubts and imperfections – this is one of the most important characteristics of that post-1953 Russian literature which (as a counterbalance to the Party-minded

falsity of the Stalin era and of its own time) considered itself committed to sincerity. This stress on the right of the individual to his own life was for the most part already a component of works both about the present and about the past, but many authors also avoided social issues either wholly or in part, and depicted general human problems – often, like Yurii Kazakov, under the influence of Paustovskii. The animal tale that made him famous, *Arktur, gonchii pes* 1957 (Eng. Arkturus the hunting hound, 1968), is unrelated to time or place, and has the melancholy and affinity with nature that typify many of his stories. He often represents people as failures – people who have opted out of the world, and who excite our sympathy by their loneliness and disappointment. With Yurii Nagibin, whose talent is also for the short story, one is chiefly struck by the great diversity of people and places. His work is unified by a strong ethical message and by faith in human goodness. He, also, describes incidents rather than destinies, and seeks above all to seize the "moment of awakening" – the change in one's relationship with another and therefore with oneself. At the heart of Andrei Bitov's work there lies a high capacity for empathy with psychological processes, as well as a search for new narrative structures. In *Sad* 1960–63 (The garden) he describes in detail the inner life of a young man of passive disposition, who loves a married woman and for her sake commits a theft. From the tension between perception, repression, wayward behaviour and subconscious suspicion emerges the portrait of a man at a point of crisis.

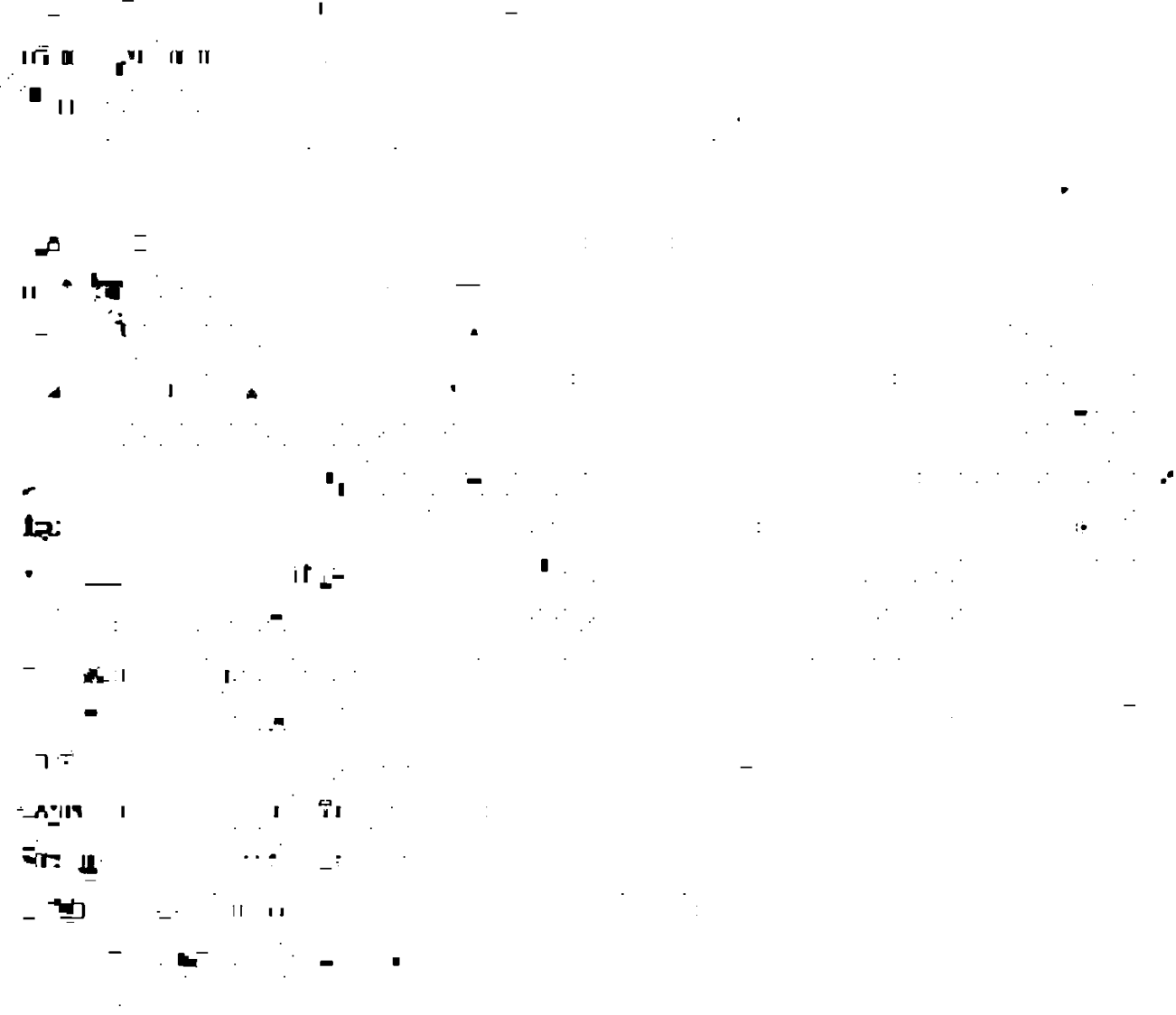
Russian poetry abroad, after 1953, developed seamlessly, since it was not dependent on political events in the Soviet Union. Vladimir Smolenskii (in Paris) brought out his most important volume *Sobranie stichotvorenii* 1957 (Collected poems), which also included his previous ones (1931, 1938). In formally perfect verses, with a firm religious base, he embodies his own view of the fundamental themes of love, pain and death – and with his occasional political poems also has made a significant contribution to Russian literature. Lidiya Alekseeva (in New York), who had left Yugoslavia in 1944, brought out with *Lesnoe solntse* 1954 (Forest sun) her first volume of poetry, rooted in nature and life-affirming in despite of all suffering. Ekaterina Tauber, who had already settled in the south of France in 1936, confirmed with her third book *Piecho s plechom* 1955 (Shoulder to shoulder) her talent for poetically expressing nature in its innermost harmony and

innermost perception. From the second emigration, Dmitrii Klenovskii (in Germany) continued his output of poetry and confirmed his feeling for the angelic world with *Neulovimyi sputnik* 1956 (The unseizable companion).²³ Boris Nartsissov (in the United States) brought out *Stikhi* 1958 (Poems), his first volume of poetry, which benefits from the tension between his two avocations – that of a natural scientist, and that of a poet powerfully drawn to the numinous. Nikolai Morshen (in the United States) published in Frankfurt his first volume of poetry *Tyulen'* 1959 (The seal), which still bears the imprint of conflict with the political restriction he suffered in the Soviet Union, and of the loss of his homeland.

As for poetry in the Soviet Union, the new possibilities for non-political creativity, still contested, but at least tolerated by the censorship, were like the opening of floodgates. Much previously hoarded work reached the public in those years – thus in 1954 Pasternak's *Zhivago* poems made their appearance (with the exception of the religious ones – an indication of the limits of toleration). Of particular importance for the self-discovery and development of the new poetry was the republication of the great poets of the twenties – Akhmatova, Blok, Belyi, Tsvetaeva – of whom the younger generation had grown up in total ignorance. The poets who had returned from the war now sought, a decade later, to erect a memorial to the fallen, and through representation of the blood, pain and horror to raise their voices in warning. Boris Slutskii, with his unsentimental, ascetic poetry of war recollections, became a model for many – although he still had to hold back a number of poems. His style is the antithesis of Bulat Okudzhava's musical, deeply-felt verse. The secrecy in which great poets had been writing for decades was demonstrated by Arsenii Tarkovskii, who, having worked since 1932 as an outstanding translator of oriental poetry, suddenly produced the first volume of his own poems in 1962 at the age of fifty-five – refined musical strophes, disclosing unexhausted possibilities of classical versification. Also in 1962, Samuil Marshak, who as director of the Children's Publishing House had in the twenties given opportunities of work to nonconformist writers such as Daniil Kharms or Evgenii Shvarts, brought out the first important selection of his own work – no longer translations and verses for children – which for a considerable time he had only been able to publish as separate pieces. As with

Tarkovskii, this is a grave, philosophical type of poetry, which treats of both death and life thereafter. Marshak and Tarkovskii do not avail themselves of the new possibilities of stylistic challenge, as did Andrei Voznesenskii and Evgenii Evtushenko – who often however expend their efforts on linguistic experiment for its own sake. Vadim Shefner, with his wide range of theme and period, also based himself on the philosophical tradition of Tyutchev, Fet and Baratynskii, as did Evgenii Vinokurov with his propensity to discover truth in the unremarkable and in paradox, and Aleksandr Kushner, whose poetry seems to be sustained by a primeval fear of evil and of the perils of mankind. While Naum Korzhavin, who had succeeded in publishing his only volume of poetry in the Soviet Union in 1963, in a dense, unadorned and morally telling style, warns against any ideological approach, Novella Matveeva can say, also in 1963, "I seek the soul behind the outward form"²⁴. Thus the decade after Stalin's death became the one in which, regardless of their numbers, the political versifiers who sought only outward appearances were ousted by true poetry.

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16

1964–1985

The division of literature

Although the fall of Khrushchev heralded no such major reversal in the intellectual life of the Soviet Union as did the death of Stalin, it did bring an end to a period – that of the Thaw. The politics of literature underwent a change. The new period – that of the supremacy of Leonid Brezhnev and his two successors – ended with the coming to power of Mikhail Gorbachev in 1985. It is characterized by a renewal of the division in Russian literature, initiated by the expulsion or authorized departure of many well-known writers from 1971 onwards, in the form of the third emigration.

Party and government both had up to the end of this period conducted a policy of de-Stalinization, which had its effect on literature: this now came to a stop. Aleksandr Tvardovskii had succeeded in making NOVYI MIR into a focal point of sincere literature: from 1965 onwards his position became ever less tenable, and in 1970 he had to part company with the journal, which thereafter declined both in excellence and in prominence. There had indeed, in the first decade after Stalin's death, been the unfortunate Pasternak affair, as well as the great Pomerantsev and Dudintsev controversies – but all the victims had been allowed back into the literary fold. The period after 1964, on the other hand, is distinguished by the régime's tactic of finally breaking with writers whose literary utterances did not correspond with the conceptions of the Party. True, these conceptions were not quite the same as those of the Stalin era; true, the field of play within the fluid concept of Socialist Realism remained widened – but the ideological stance of the Party had considerably stiffened, and the "divergent thinker" (*inakomyslyashchii*) was vindictively hounded as an enemy – resulting in protests at home and abroad and in loss of prestige for the Soviet Union.

On 18 February 1964, Iosif Brodskii, whose non-political, religious poems had become known through samizdat, was condemned to five years of forced labour because his work was deemed "not socially useful". On the same charge, Andrei Amal'rik, whose dramas of the

Absurd and interest in abstract art had aroused official mistrust, was in 1965 exiled to Siberia. In February 1966 Andrei Sinyavskii and Yulii Daniëi' were condemned to seven and five years' forced labour respectively, the pseudonyms (Terts and Arzhak) under which their satires had appeared in the West having been uncovered. Their sentences, for satirical social criticism, once again sparked off the spirited protest of many Soviet intellectuals, as well as world-wide indignation. The fact that Mikhail Shokolov publicly reviled the condemned writers at the 23rd Congress of the CPSU gave moral justification to those who had criticized the award of the Nobel Prize for literature to the author of *Tikhii Don* 1928-40 (Quiet Don. Eng. The Don flows home to the sea, 1940).

But the most discussed literary-political event of this phase was to be the fate of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn. Celebrated in 1962 as the most important literary discovery since the war, member of the Writers' Union by invitation (instead of by application, as was usual), praised on highest Party authority and nearly awarded the Lenin Prize, he now met with a complete reversal. In 1967, with two substantial novels still not accepted for publication, and himself banned from participation in the 4th Writers' Congress, he turned to his colleagues in an open letter, in order to provoke a debate on the hostility of the Soviet censorship to literature. When the novel *Rakovyi korpus* (Eng. Cancer Ward, 1968) – of which the first part was already set up in type and whose publication had been supported even by such authors as Konstantin Simonov – was finally vetoed in 1968, it was brought out by Western publishers at the same time as *V krughe pervom* 1968 (Eng. The first circle, 1968). Expulsion from the Writers' Union in 1969 was followed by world-wide recognition through the Nobel Prize in 1971. The arrest of a secretary and the hunting down of his documentary work on the post-1917 Soviet camps *Arhipelag GULag* 1973/75 (Eng. The Gulag archipelago, 1974/78) induced him to release this work for publication in the West. In 1974 the authorities made their decision to arrest Solzhenitsyn and forcibly expel him to the West. There he settled, the most revered author in the world of those years, initially in Switzerland and since 1976 in the United States.

Solzhenitsyn's exile was as far from being exceptional as was the publication of his works, in Russian, in the West. The disenchantment of Russian writers on discovering that, far from being a beginning, the

In 1962 Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn became at a stroke a universally-known, and in the Soviet Union highly-respected, writer. The reversal in the Soviet politics of literature caused him to be excluded from Soviet literary life. Living since 1976 in the United States, where this picture was taken in 1978, he has wholly devoted himself, in his novels dedicated to the illumination of the truth, to the prehistory of the Bolshevik takeover in 1917.



liberalization of the early post-Stalin period was to represent only a limited phase, caused a growing number of authors to make use of the alternative method of circulating their works in samizdat. The chain of transcription often evolved unbeknown to the author, just as the transmission of manuscripts to the West could be planned or fortuitous. Both samizdat and tamizdat became permanent features of the Russian literary scene.

After the massive uproar provoked by the first trials of writers in 1964 and 1965, the State proceeded to other tactics in its battle against authors whose works did not match up to the desired pattern. In 1966 Valerii Tarsis, arrested in 1962 and committed to a psychiatric institution, was permitted to travel to England and forbidden to return. From 1971 onwards, exile – or the sanction of approved travel – became the norm above all for famous writers. Éfraim Sevela went in 1971 to Israel, followed in 1972 by David Markish; Brodskii went to the United States in 1972, Abram Terts (Sinyavskii) to France and Naum Korzhavin to the United States in 1973. In 1974 Viktor Nekrasov,

Vladimir Maksimov and Evgenii Ternovskii made their way to France; in 1975 Vladimir Maramzin left for France and Sasha Sokolov via Austria for the United States; in 1977 Sergei Yur'enen left for France (transferring in 1984 to Munich) and Feliks Kandel' for Israel. In 1978 Sergei Dovlatov emigrated to the United States, followed in 1979 by Yuz Aleshkovskii and in 1980 by Vasilii Aksenov. In the same year Fridrikh Gorenshtein and Vladimir Voinovich went to West Germany; in 1982 Yurii Kublanovskii went to France and in 1983 Georgii Vladimov to West Germany. Some of these authors published their first literary work as émigrés.

Departure from the fatherland was preceded by a multitude of vexations: interrogations, incarceration in psychiatric institutions, arrest, labour camp or exile in distant parts of the Soviet Union, expulsion from the Party and, every time, expulsion from the Writers' Union. These measures also affected a number of writers who did not leave the Soviet Union – either because they were not allowed to, or because they did not wish to. In 1974, for instance, Lidiya Chukovskaya and Vladimir Voinovich were expelled from the Writers' Union, likewise Vladimir Kornilov in 1977; Semen Lipkin resigned in 1979 in protest. Loss of membership entailed great financial hardship for these authors, whose works could appear only in the West. To each of them applied equally the remark about Aksenov in *SOWJETUNION HEUTE* (the journal of the Soviet embassy in Bonn) in March 1979, before he fell from grace: "Today ... it can truly be said that, without him, modern Soviet prose writing would be the poorer". The occasion for exclusion or resignation from the Union – with subsequent obliteration from the Russian literature which is printed, taught and read without risk in Soviet Russia – was slightly different for each of these authors, but the reason was the same as for their predecessors: they were committed to literature as an art which, finally, is not of rational origin; they followed the truth as they personally experienced and recognized it; they had more concern for the well-being of their fellow-men and their country than for themselves and their families. For them, "partiinost", meaning the subjection of their personal artistic creativity to the directions of the Party, was not possible; but besides this (for such an attitude applies with a variety of consequences to many who live and publish in the Soviet Union) they had come into conflict on political grounds with State institutions.

It should not be concluded, from the fact that only a few writers like the above-mentioned are known to have thus come into conflict with the power of the State, that the remainder were all representative of ideological literature as officially required by the Party. On the contrary, de-ideologizing is perhaps one of the most typical characteristics of intellectual life in the Soviet Union since 1964. Beginning after Stalin's death with the consideration of the true laws of art, it made further progress throughout the Brezhnev period. Of the oldest generation, which in the twenties had assumed ideology as a protective cloak, only a few (such as Leonov or Shklovskii) were still living. The writers who genuinely believed in Communism as an ideology were also gradually dying out (for instance Tvardovskii, Simonov). There were of course literary apparatchiks still actively writing (Chakovskii, Gribachev, G. Markov, Mikhalkov). However, any literature of significance in the Soviet Union during this period was written, either to a degree apolitically and anti-ideologically as by Aitmatov, Belov, Bitov, Iskander, A. Kim, Petrushevskaya, Rasputin, Slavkin and Trifonov, or with the Russophile slant of Astaf'ev, E. Nosov or Soloukhin. On closer examination of individual works it is obvious that this classification is too rough and ready – but its drift cannot be denied.

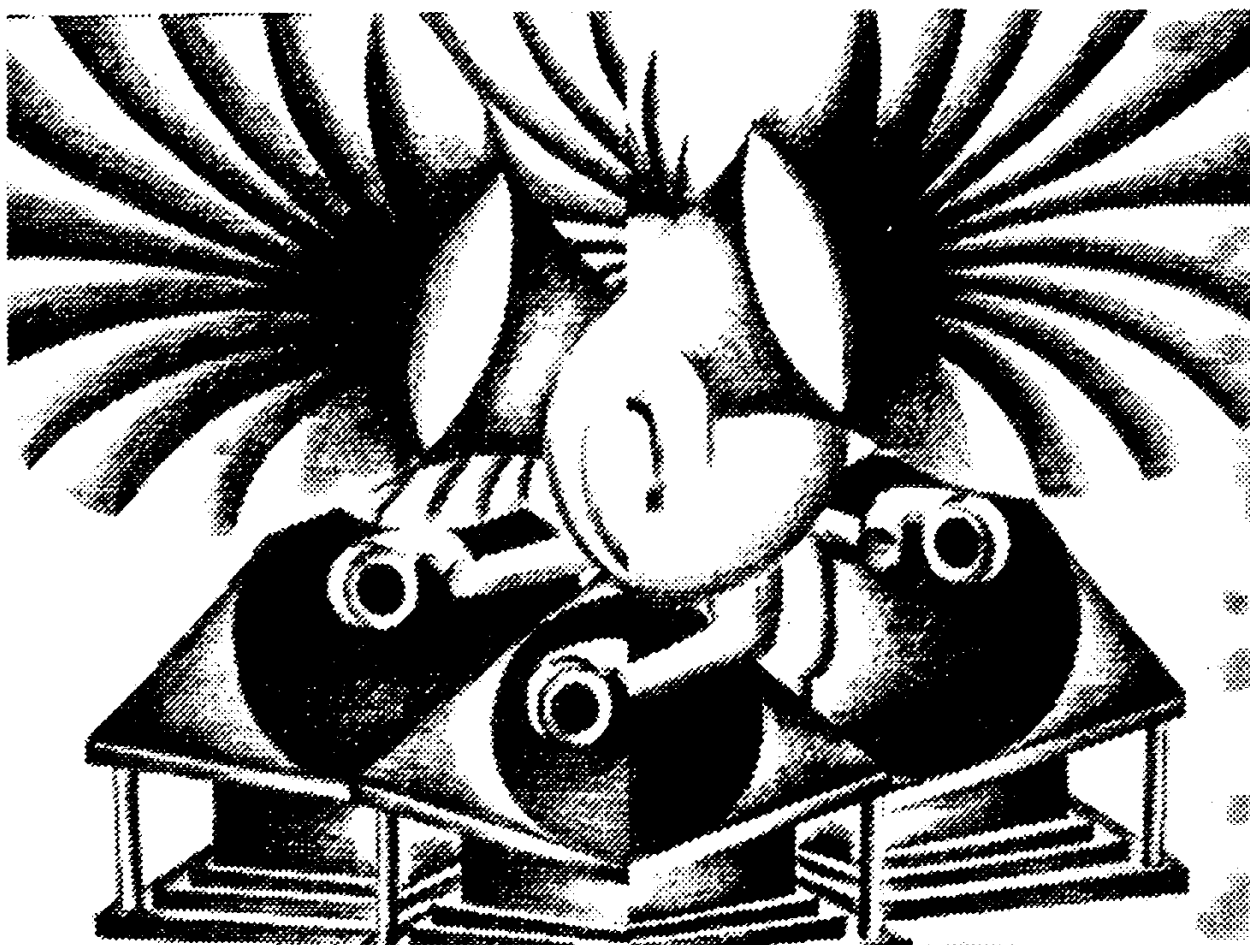
The most important occurrence between 1964 and 1985, which led to the universally-known confrontation between officialdom and the promoters of a literature free of ideology, was the publication of the collection METROPOL' * in 1979. Twenty-three Soviet authors, including internationally known ones such as Aksenov, Bitov and Iskander (who also acted as editors), besides Akhmadulina, Lipkin, Lisnyanskaya, Voznesenskii and Vysotskii, had laid before the Writers' Union a collection of fiction, poetry, drama and essays, with the request that it be printed without alterations. Although the texts were devoid of social criticism, and were distinctive in content only by a rather free treatment of religious and sexual themes, as they were in form by avant-garde experimentation, word-for-word publication without the interference of Glavlit * was not permitted. The book came out abroad, and the authors were exposed to both personal and economic repression; in the cases of the gifted co-authors and -editors Evgenii Popov and Viktor Erofeev the process of admission to membership of the Writers' Union came to a stop – this was the occasion for the resignation of Aksenov, Lipkin and Lisnyanskaya. METROPOL', a collection in the tradition of LITERA-

TURNAYA MOSKVA (1956) and TARUSSKIE STRANITSY (1961), became a symbol of the confrontation of free literature and State regimentation, and the emblem of the intransigence of creative art. The fate of the collaborators however typifies the attitude of State authority to artists in general: some were distanced from literature; some were forced to go abroad; the majority were, after a few months or years, more or less reintegrated into the literary system. It is typical of the seventies that some better-known authors, such as Aksenov, Bitov, Iskander, Korinets, Shalamov, Soloukhin and Sosnora were able to publish in the West as well as in the Soviet Union – each of their books differing substantially according to the place of publication. Not until the end of 1986, with Gorbachev in power, did Popov and Erofeev find it possible to publish in journals.

It was its political environment that gave international resonance to METROPOL': as regards literary importance, six other collections might have earned as much attention for Russian literature. In Paris in 1981 there appeared the RUSKII ALMANAKH, edited by Zinaida Shakhovskaya representing the first emigration, Evgenii Ternovskii as one of the writers of the third emigration, and René Guerra, French Slavist and outstanding authority on émigré literature. The volume brings together first publications from literary archives (such as texts of Belyi, Tsvetaeva, Gumilev, Vya. Ivanov or Pasternak) with those of living émigrés of all three waves (as of Odoevtseva, Chinnov, Morshen or Burikhin), and with art reproductions and literary or philosophical contributions. In Salzburg appeared three volumes of the anthology NRL. NEUE RUSSISCHE LITERATUR (1978, 1979/80, 1981/82), with texts mainly by living writers whose works were not permitted in the Soviet Union; a more experimental tendency also predominates. A particular achievement of this collection is its completely bilingual (Russian–German) form. In New York in 1982 appeared RUSSICA – 81. LITERATURNYI SBORNIK, a selection of new Russian poetry, fiction, essays, memoirs and scholarly, mainly documentary, contributions, under the editorship of Aleksandr Sumerkin. Most of the authors (for instance Aksenov, Aleshkovskii) belong to the emigration of the seventies.

Resembling METROPOL', there originated in Moscow the KATALOG of the Literary Club – an unofficial union of writers, founded in 1980 by seven talented Moscow authors who had published partly at home,

partly abroad, and all of whom were non-members of the Writers' Union. This almanac, whose frustrated publication in Moscow in 1980 led to house searches and interrogations, came out in 1982 in the USA.

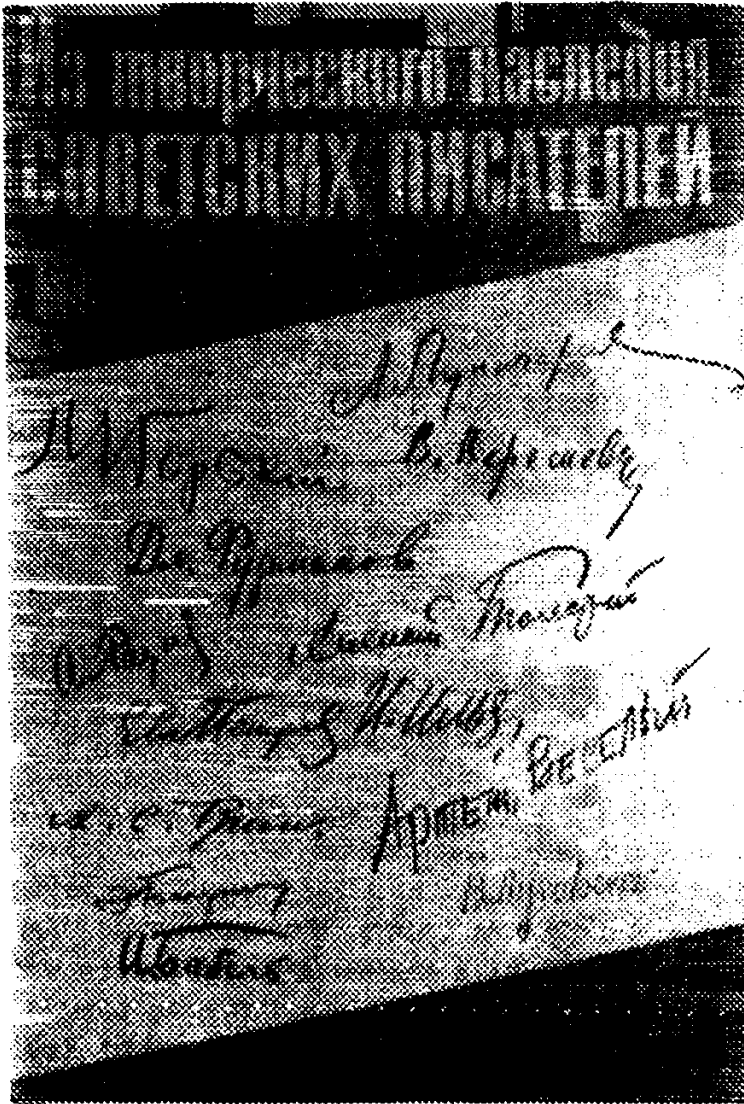


Driven beyond endurance by censorship, which not only suppressed the truth about the Soviet past and present but also prevented all experimentation with form, a group of authors found themselves, in 1979, united in an attempt to publish, legally and with no interference by "editors", an anthology with the title METROPOL'. The attempt failed, and the volume came out in the West; its contributors were banned from further publication for a long time. The picture reproduces a drawing from the album of Boris Messerer, Bella Akhmadulina's husband – a stylized representation of old gramophones housed in the studio which they shared.

The editor, Filipp Berman, gave the contributors (who had in the meantime become known through METROPOL' and NRL) the opportunity to introduce themselves personally, first through a questionnaire, then with one work – a moving document of suppressed literary activity.

The lamentable circumstance that a large number of Russian authors were, for Soviet readers, obliterated from literature between 1964 and 1985, was counterbalanced, not only by the gratifying fact

that they found themselves able to publish abroad, but also by the reappearance, from an earlier period, of certain authors who had been similarly silenced and works which had been similarly banned for decades. The printings of such works are in general relatively small, and intended for libraries or for export, but they do preserve something of intellectual worth from oblivion.



One of the most important events of the post-Stalin period, in its influence on the development and flowering of Soviet literature, was the rehabilitation of suppressed or murdered authors. Works which had been suppressed for decades now saw the light of day. In this connection the series LITERATURNOE NASLEDSTVO (Literary Heritage) was of importance. The wrapper of vol. 74 (From the literary remains of Soviet writers), 1965, reproduces the following signatures: A. Lunacharskii, M. Gor'kii, V. Veresaev, Dm. Furmanov, A. Fadeev, Aleksei Tolstoi, Ev. Petrov, I. Il'f, A. S. Grin, Artem Veselii, É. Bagritskii, V. Lugovskoi, I. Babel'.

Many literary rehabilitations went no further than a single republication about 1958, but selected works of a small, slowly increasing number of important authors of the twenties and thirties were released in the Soviet Union after 1964, for the first time since their authors' arrest or death. In the winter of 1966/67 there appeared a shortened version of Mikhail Bulgakov's *Master i Margarita* (Eng. *The master and Margarita*, 1967), the author's satirical masterpiece, after twenty-five years' suppression, and about the same time Andrei

Platonov began his return to literature with the publication of his short stories. His most important works however – the novels *Kotlovan* 1969 (Eng. *The foundation pit*, 1974) and *Chevengur* 1972 (Eng. *Chevengur*, 1978), written in the late twenties – appeared only in the West and remained closed to readers in the Soviet Union until the eighties.

In 1973 a large selection from Osip Mandel'shtam – one of the greatest Russian poets, who died in a prison camp – at last achieved publication; in 1975, decades late, a volume of the poetry of Fedor Sologub, the fantastical-demonic Symbolist, was issued. Similarly – sometimes after decades of suppression – there appeared in due course volumes of poetry by Igor' Severyanin, the eccentric Ego-Futurist who emigrated to Estonia in 1918 (1975, ²1978); by Vyacheslav Ivanov, the religious philosopher and historian who emigrated in 1924 (1976); by Maksimilian Voloshin, the anthroposophist, who weathered the terrors of the Civil War in the Crimea and lived there in retirement until his death (1977); by Nikolai Klyuev, the peasant poet murdered in the Gulag (1977, 1981). In 1976, forty years after his death as a sacrifice to the power of the State, there appeared a first volume of works by Boris Pil'nyak – one of the earliest to present the dark side of the Revolution. Of Aleksei Remizov, the bizarre storyteller attached to the world of myths and fairy-tales, who produced forty-five more books after emigrating in 1921, only one regrettably one-sided and far from representative volume of prose was published, in 1978. Vsevolod Ivanov's novel *Uzhginskii Kremi'* (The Uzhga Kremlin) of 1929/30 was first published in 1981; Aleksandr Afinogenov's highly critical play *Lozh'* (The lie), banned in 1933 shortly after its original production, was first published in the new journal *SOVREMENNAYA DRAMATURGIYA* (1.1982), to be followed in the same publication by Bulgakov's comedy *Zoikina kvartira* (Eng. *Zoya's apartment*, 1972) of 1926, which had already had a new edition in the West (first published, in German translation, in Berlin in 1929). Nikolai Érdman's second play, *Samoubiitsa* (Eng. *The suicide*, 1975), which Meierkhol'd was forbidden to stage in 1932, enjoyed a belated return to Moscow in 1982, as did an "Obériutic" dramatic sequence after Daniil Kharms.

At the same time there appeared in the West (as indeed previously) scholarly editions of authors who had for decades been withheld either

in whole or in part from the Soviet reader: complete (as far as possible) works of Anna Akhmatova (Washington/Paris 1967–83), Nikolai Gumilev (4 vols. Washington 1962–68), Osip Mandel'shtam (Washington/Paris 1964–81), Aleksandr Vvedenskii (2 vols. Ann Arbor 1980, 1984), Daniil Kharmis (4 vols. Bremen 1978–88); early prose of Mikhail Bulgakov (4 vols. Munich 1976, 1978, 1981, 1983); Nikolai Ėrdman's comedy *Mandat* (Munich 1976; Eng. *The mandate*, 1975); Sergei Klychkov's novel *Sakharnyi nemets* (Paris 1982, *The saccharine German*); the collected poems of Mikhail Kuzmin (3 vols. Munich 1977–78) and seven volumes (out of a projected ten) of his collected prose (Berkeley 1984–87); prose and plays of Lev Lunts (Würzburg 1972, Jerusalem 1981, Munich 1983); poems by Georgii Obolduev (Munich 1979) and by Vladimir Narbut (Paris 1983); a complete collection of the poetry of Konstantin Vaginov (Munich 1982); three out of four volumes of the poetry of Andrei Belyi (Munich 1982–1984) – and a great deal more. The contribution of Western Slavists and publishers to the preservation of literature suppressed and silenced for decades in the Soviet Union cannot be overestimated.

All these editions of Russian writers of earlier decades make it clear that, because of the presence of the Soviet censorship, Russian literature can only subsist as an entity if Slavist scholars and publishers in the West supplement the activity of their colleagues in the Soviet Union. Every publication of a work long suppressed in the Soviet Union on political grounds confirms that Russian literature must, from a scholarly point of view, be considered only as one entity. A symposium organized in Geneva in 1978 under the title "Oдна или две русские литературы" (One or two Russian literatures) confirmed this view of Western Slavists, which is increasingly widespread: there is but one single Russian literature, which, like literature in general, is defined by language; within this literature there are, as well as aesthetic standards, political standards, determining whether individual authors or works will at a given time be recognized by the literary officialdom of the Soviet Union. If those so recognized come within the Soviet period, they are part of "Soviet literature".

As regards that part of Russian literature that has to exist away from home, that is to say Russian literature abroad, the third wave of emigration, as in its day the first, formed an important centre in Paris. This is where Vladimir Maksimov has since 1974 brought out the

journal KONTINENT – a platform for antitotalitarian writers both inside and outside the Communist bloc. Here also since 1978 has been published Vladimir Maramzin's purely literary journal ÉKHO, which concentrates on the contemporary. Here was founded in 1925 the journal VESTNIK RUSSKOGO KHRISTIANSKOGO DVIZHENIYA (Vestnik RKhD), which during the seventies admitted to its pages members of the third emigration and – like all the journals mentioned here – authors living in the Soviet Union and unable to publish there. This journal does not confine itself to religious questions. Many émigrés live in the United States, where, along with the journal NOVYI ZHURNAL (edited for decades by Roman Gul'), they have attracted notice in the new journals TRET'YA VOLNA and STRELETS (both edited by Aleksandr Glezer) by their inclusion of the graphic arts and their hospitality to émigrés of the first wave. Since 1981 Mikhail Morgulis, in LITERATURNYJ KUR'ER, has made available, besides new and older literary works, important writings on modern Russian literature. Valentina Sinkevich produces, in VSTRECHI, a valuable annual collection of new poetry.

A considerable number of émigrés settled in Israel. Both Russian journals published there, VREMYA I MY and DVADTSAT' DVA, concentrate on Russian-Jewish matters. From both of the first two emigrations a few authors remained in Germany, and thus it was with the third. Founded in 1946, the journal GRANI produced issues 56-135 between 1964 and 1985. It belongs to Possev-Verlag, an assiduous publisher of émigré work to rank with YMCA-Press (Paris), Overseas Publications Ltd (London) and Érmitazh (Tenafly, N.J.). Slanted more towards the preservation of the literary heritage and the unity of Russian literature are the firms Wilhelm Fink (Munich), Otto Sagner (Munich, with the series ARBEITEN UND TEXTE ZUR SLAVISTIK) and Ardis (Ann Arbor), none of which are in Russian hands.

In the Soviet Union, the organization of literary life developed its own fixed rules. The statutory Congresses of the Writers' Union (4th 1967, 5th 1971, 6th 1976, 7th 1981) took place with a small, select attendance (some 500 delegates out of a membership of 6000 to 9000), and (during the Brezhnev years) the speeches were approved beforehand. During this period neither divergent opinions nor internal tensions found expression. The 5th and 6th Congresses of the Writers' Union of the RSFSR took place in 1980 and 1985, with Sergei Mikhalkov re-elected as chairman; similarly, at the 7th Congress of the Union of

Soviet Writers Georgii Markov was re-elected as First Secretary. Along with these two, Chingiz Aitmatov, Yurii Bondarev, Nikolai Gribachev and Vadim Kozhevnikov (among others) were sent as delegates to the 26th Congress of the CPSU; Gribachev obtained in 1980 the post of chairman of the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR. This combination of Party, government and Union posts illustrates the methods of political direction in the field of literature.

The most important occurrence in this attempt to influence the direction of literature in the period 1977–1982 was the Party resolution of July 1982 *O tvorcheskikh svyazyakh literaturno - khudozhestvennykh zhurnalov s praktikoi kommunisticheskogo stroitel'stva* (On the creative links of literary journals with the practice of Communist construction; Pravda 30 July 1982). The adoption of this resolution was preceded by a secret conference of the editors of leading literary journals – which points up the functions of censorship and guidance of these high-ranking Nomenklatura appointments by the Central Committee. The main objects of criticism in the resolution are: the favourable presentation of the Russian village before collectivization or before the Revolution; the uncritical inclusion of religious feeling in literary works; and the emphasis on Russian – by implication therefore on Ukrainian, Estonian, Georgian or whatever – national attitudes. The resolution reflects the development of Soviet literature during this period and the difficulties of the Party leadership in urging its conceptions on the writers.

Since 1953, Soviet literature has become more heterogeneous. Even among the recipients of literary prizes one finds, besides literary functionaries, some genuinely talented authors. The Lenin Prize for 1978 was awarded to Aleksandr Chakovskii, the editor-in-chief of LITERATURNAYA GAZETA, for *Blokada* 1968–79 (Blockade), his mammoth war book rehabilitating Stalin; his next propagandist novel *Pobeda* 1978–81 (Victory) earned him the State Prize of the USSR in 1983 in addition. Mikhail Bubennov in 1978 received the Ministry of Defence Prize for *Belaya bereza* 1947 (Eng. The white birch, 1949) – that same work which had already been honoured with a Stalin Prize First Class in 1947, and criticized during the Thaw for its cheap propagandizing. With Egor Isaev (Lenin Prize 1980) and Mikhail Dudin (USSR State Prize 1981), equally untalented but conformist writers were distinguished. On the other hand, the State Prize of the USSR for

1980, 1981 and 1982 was awarded respectively to Aleksei Arbuzov as gifted dramatist, to Vasillii Belov, one of the main exponents of moralistic village literature, and to Grigorii Baklanov, one of the more principled war writers. In 1983 this prize was awarded to Bondarev and Aitmatov, two authors who combine high literary-political office with literary respectability. The following year it was received by Evgenii Evtushenko, the poet who in the course of twenty years had found a way to balance his criticism and challenge between East and West. Vladimir Soloukhin, avowed adherent of a Russian tradition which included religious manifestations, received the RSFSR State Prize for 1979 – but was attacked in the journal *KOMMUNIST* in February 1982. Vasillii Bykov, the Belorussian author of many honest books about the Second World War, was rewarded merely with the State Prize of his own republic for 1978. Considering the great achievements of many Soviet writers (and not only Russian ones), the award of the Lenin Prize for Literature in 1979 to Leonid Brezhnev for three slim volumes of war reminiscences in the style of Chakovskii appeared more than unfortunate. But, in the way familiar from the personality cult of the Stalin era, these insignificant (even in the context of war memoirs) writings were immediately hailed as a literary masterpiece. After his death there was no further mention of this pinnacle of his personality cult.

On examination of the list of writers deceased towards the end of this period, the fragmentation of modern Russian literature becomes evident. Yurii Trifonov, who died in 1981 at only 56 years of age, had become, through his novels on the Moscow élite fossilized in the ideas of materialism, the most internationally famous Soviet author of the seventies. In Aleksandr Galich (1977), the emigration lost a committed antitotalitarian poet, and in Andrei Amal'rik (1980) one of the most active pioneers for the protection of human rights and an independent-minded supporter of the drama of the Absurd. Dmitrii Klenovskii, who died in 1976 at the age of 84, had, after decades of silence, only after emigration in 1945 found his way back to creative expression in the Acmeist manner, and developed into a religious poet who could give form to direct angelic experience. In the French emigration, Yurii Terapiano, who died in 1980 at the age of 87, was also one of the most important religious poets in Russian literature, as well as an authority on oriental religions and for decades one of the most

substantial literary critics. The death of Konstantin Simonov in 1979 robbed Soviet literature not merely of a formerly gifted poet and subsequently practised novelist, but also of an officially respected writer who had used his position to protect endangered colleagues. A similar social comportment is known of Nadezhda Mandel'shtam (1980) (the widow of the poet Osip Mandel'shtam who perished in captivity), who through her memoirs contributed much to our understanding of the Soviet literary scene. In Leonid Martynov was lost (1980) a committed poet; in Gennadii Gor (1981) a writer of fiction who used fantasy to explore questions of the philosophy of art; in Yurii Kazakov a master of Russian lyrical, nature-based narrative (1982). In Aleksandr Kusikov (1977) and Ryurik Ivnev (1981) were lost the last two representatives of Imaginism – the first in Paris, where he had given up all literary activity after 1922, and the second in Moscow, where since the twenties he also had played no noticeable part. In 1980 there was consternation at the death of Vladimir Vysotskii, whose first volumes of poetry and songs could appear only after his death (one in the West and one in the Soviet Union). In Switzerland in 1977 died Vladimir Nabokov – a positive symbol of creativity in emigration, who wrote originally in Russian and later in English. Belonging to both American and Russian literature, he might have contributed much, and much earlier, to the development of the latter in the arts of language, if only his work had been allowed into the Soviet Union before 1986. Also in Switzerland, in 1983, died the satirist Valerii Tarsis, the first Russian of this period to pay by exile for his championship of liberalism in literature. In Moscow in 1978 Yurii Dombrovskii died – a writer who had spent fifteen years a prisoner of the Gulag, and whose most important works could, until 1988, only appear abroad. With the death of Varlam Shalamov in 1982 in a Soviet home for the aged was lost a writer highly esteemed (especially by Pasternak, Solzhenitsyn and Aigi) for his prose work, who during his lifetime was allowed only to be a poet. In the West however, through the collection of his Kolyma stories, he gave an insight into human suffering and human resilience in Soviet concentration camps. Extracts from them first appeared in the Soviet Union in 1988. In 1984 Viktor Shklovskii died – the brilliant, stimulating theoretician of Formalism and promoter of the Serapion Brothers. Briefly an émigré, he became famous for *ZOO, ili Pis'ma ne o lyubvi* 1923 (Eng. Zoo; or, Letters not about love, 1971). A literary

scholar who remained active up to an advanced age, even in his works on literature he allows more importance to elegance of poetic formulation than to accuracy of content.



Varlam Shalamov is one of the most important witnesses to the terror, the misery and the humanity of the prison camps. His KOLYMA TALES, dating from the early sixties, which soberly record the truth, were freed for publication in the Soviet Union in 1988. The bust in the picture is by Fedot Suchkov, in Moscow.

Two important intermediaries of German literature in Russia gained world-wide celebrity in the years under review: Konstantin Bogatyrev and Lev Kopelev. Bogatyrev, the inspired translator of Rilke, the friend of Roman Jakobson, Heinrich Böll and many others, was assassinated in front of his own house in 1976.²⁵ Kopelev, after going abroad, was awarded the Peace Prize of the German book trade in 1981.

All in all, during the Brezhnev period, neither the hardening of ideology nor the division of Russian literature led to the appearance in the Soviet Union merely of works in the spirit of Stalinist propaganda.

This was indeed disseminated in large editions, and Andrei Zhdanov, responsible for the decline of Soviet literature in 1946, was again accorded respect (Pravda, 10 March 1976). On the other hand, between 1964 and 1985 there appeared works of high artistic merit – both at home and abroad – those in the Soviet Union generally without reference to any issues of the day.

The Soviet past

During the period 1953–1964 the need of authors to write the truth about what had happened in the Soviet Union had led to many important publications. None the less, the whole truth had not yet been disclosed, for the Stalinist literary functionaries battled against further revelations, and against the trend towards more truth. The change of leadership in 1964 gave them mastery over literary life in the Soviet Union, with the consequence that many works of this kind, written in hopes of publication at home, could still only appear abroad. Some of these works sought to comprehend the whole history of the Soviet Union since the Bolshevik takeover, others to render particular phases more accurately.

Aleksandr Tvardovskii, who under Stalin had written in the spirit of the times, but had subsequently been in the forefront of liberalization, got to work in his narrative poem *Po pravu pamyati* (On the right to remember), composed between 1967 and 1969, on his personal subjugation of the past.

Vain to imagine that remembrance
 Does not preserve itself intact;
 That time will cloud our recollection
 Of every grief,
 Of every act,
 While earth, indifferently turning,
 Adds to its count of nights and days;
 That poets will not pay a price
 For stifling, out of cowardice,

The knowledge in their spirit burning...
 No! All that has remained unspoken
 Our duty now is to speak out.²⁶

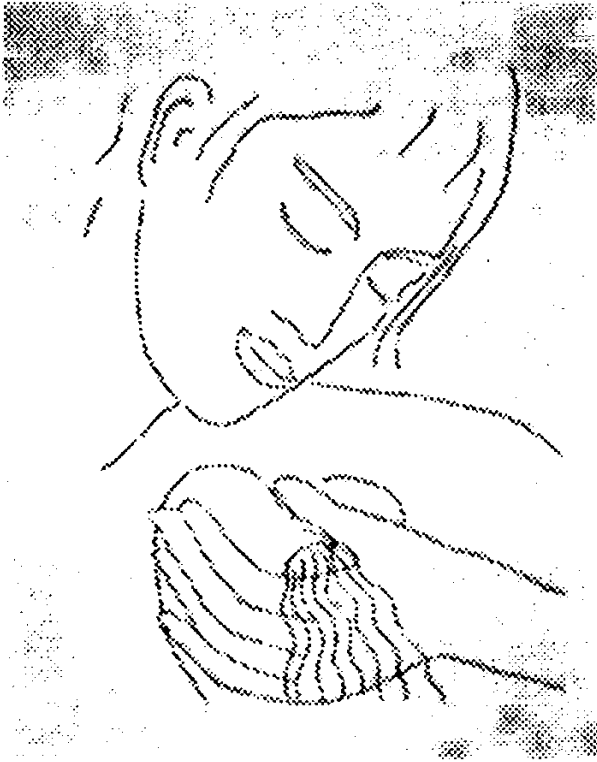
But the censorship did not grant the "right to remember" to the Soviet reader. Only in 1987 was this narrative poem first published in the Soviet Union.

The elemental revolt of a worker's son, who got to know the Soviet system from the level of the underprivileged, broke out in Vladimir Maksimov's *Sem' dnei tvoreniya* 1971 (Eng. The seven days of creation, 1975). In fragments full of originality and savagery, with drunkenness, murder, love and crime, Maksimov formulates his indictment of fifty years of betrayal of the proletariat in whose name the Revolution had been accomplished. Title and structure suggest a symbolic proposition and its conclusion – the seventh day being the day of hope and resurrection. His Marxist education notwithstanding, the author has found his way to Christian belief, and sees the only possibility of salvation for his fatherland in a retreat from materialism and in repentance, love and Christian faith. His books circulated in samizdat, and were published in the West. Shortly afterwards (26 June 1973) Maksimov was expelled from the Writers' Union, and in February 1974 he was allowed to emigrate.

In the Soviet Union, however, the rehabilitation of Stalin was making progress. In 1967 was published a narrative poem by Sergei V. Smirnov (a member of the Presidium of both Writers' Unions). In *Svidetel'stvuyu sam* (I bear witness) the barely imaginable Terror is dismissed as a "mistake" (not of course to be hushed up); a call is made for the recognition of "merits" – perpetrating the blasphemous insult to the "spirits of the dead" (those who had been trampled to death at Stalin's lying in state) of describing them as his "funeral wreath". Smirnov implores the image of the "massive man" ("With arms upraised he stood like the Thunderer in person") to let the "cult of personality", the embodiment of despotism and barbarity, arise again.²⁷ To the author of this laboriously limping verse was awarded, in 1969, the Gor'kii Prize.

Some of the works, autobiographical or fictional, which attempt to cover the period since 1917 as a whole, take an earlier starting point. Vladimir Lindenberg, who got his German name from his stepfather but

whose real name is Chelishchev (from a 700 year-old noble Russian family) wrote his memoirs when in his sixties. Since emigrating in 1918



Vladimir Lindenberg is one of the great examples of positively coming to terms with emigration. A descendant of the noble family of Chelishchev, tracing his ancestry back to Michael the saint, prince of Chernigov (d. 1246), he drew his strength from his awareness of tradition and from a deep, tolerant religious faith. This spirit shines out as much in his books (33 from 1948 to 1987) as in his pictures. The drawing reproduced here is from his Bible illustrations (John 7.38: If a man believes in me, rivers of living water shall flow from within him).

he had become so rooted in German culture that he used the German language for his writing. During the period here considered he published volumes 2–6: *Bobik im Feuerofen* 1964 (Bobik in the fiery furnace) – his own experience at the beginning of the Bolshevik Terror; *Bobik begegnet der Welt* 1969 (Bobik meets the world) – childhood travels in China, Japan and Western Europe, and spiritual education with Russian Rosicrucians; *Bobik in der Fremde* 1971 (Bobik abroad) – the development of his personality in a foreign environment; *Wolodja* 1973 (Volodya) – his period as a doctor in Germany and at sea; *Himmel in der Hölle* 1983 (Heaven in hell) – internal exile, concentration camp and struggle for survival under the Nazis. Always, the personal is subsumed into the more-than-personal, the whole is held together with a total mastery of both German and Russian culture, and the roots in religion of the individual self are made apparent.²⁸

In three volumes, which he sent away to the United States for publication, Lev Kopelev relates his own experiences. *Khranit' vechno* 1975 (Eng. To be preserved forever, 1977) contains his account of the encroachment of the Red Army into East Prussia and of what he himself went through during his time in a Soviet prison camp between

1945 and 1947. *I sotvoril sebe kumira* 1978 (And made for myself an idol. Eng. The education of a true believer, 1980) describes his development as a Communist believer before this period, and documents the brutal requisitioning of provisions in the thirties. *Utoli moya pechali* 1981 (Eng. Ease my sorrows, 1983) describes his years in a special camp for prominent scientists – thus complementing Solzhenitsyn's *V krughe pervom*.

Even before his exclusion from the Writers' Union Vladimir Kornilov had no longer found it possible to be published in the Soviet Union. In *Kamenshchik, kamenshchik ...* 1980 (Stonemason, stonemason ...) he produced a novel designed to comprehend everyday life from the turn of the century, through the Civil War, the Stalin Terror and the Thaw, up to the beginning of the third wave of emigration. His hero retreats into a dubious form of internal exile, inconspicuous and well away from the firing line. There are, again, echoes of the problem of complicity through silence.

Yurii Korinets, known within and without the Soviet Union for his often Party-propagandist children's books, published his partly autobiographical artist's novel, *Vsya zhizn' i odin den'* (A whole life and one day), in the first instance – and in complete form – only in the West (1980). Episodes from the past, omitting neither State despotism nor conflicts with dream visions and interpretations of death, are here skilfully incorporated into the narrative of a journey to the north of Russia.

Unusual in Soviet literature is the comprehensive presentation of the fate of a Jewish family over several generations, as undertaken by Anatolii Rybakov in *Tyazhelyi pesok* 1978 (Eng. Heavy sand, 1981). Against the setting of the Ukraine in the period 1910 to 1943, the disregard of the hungry years 1930–1933 and of Stalin's Terror 1937–1938 has the effect of distortion, and the disparaging treatment of emigration that of propaganda. Petr Proskurin, also, with his two volumes *Sud'ba* 1972 (Fate) and *Imya tvoe* 1977 (Your name), produced a voluminous, contradictory and many-sided work, ranging from 1929 to the present day, from village life to space-flight, from a portrayal of Stalin to criticism of the Soviet Russian assertion as a Great Power.

Evgeniya Ginzburg dedicated herself to truth alone in her two-volume autobiography *Krutoi marshrut* 1967, 1979 (The steep

route. Vol. 1 Eng. Journey into the whirlwind, 1967; Vol. 2 Eng. Within the whirlwind, 1981). Her eighteen-year experience of concentration camps and exile in Magadan, in the constant shadow of death, with human extermination as routine and with daily confrontation between the morally and spiritually responsible individual and the criminal, is here preserved as written evidence for posterity. The book ends with her rehabilitation "in the absence of a criminal offence". Heinrich Böll describes the book as an "analysis and consideration of this Archipelago of Absurdity in an absurd country"²⁹.

In *Na karnavale istorii* 1980 (Eng. History's carnival; a dissident's autobiography, 1979), Leonid Plyushch presents the Ukrainian nationalist movement in its efforts for the preservation of its national traditions. In his memoirs *V podpol'e mozžno vstretit' tol'ko krysy* 1980 (In the cellar you meet only rats. Eng. Memoirs, 1982) Petr Grigorenko, the former Soviet general, also made a cross-section through his whole life – from his childhood in his Ukrainian home, through the Civil War, his period as a Soviet general, his efforts for the return of the Crimean Tatars, up to his sufferings in a psychiatric prison for alleged mental illness (i. e. for nonconformist opinions).

Among the most important documentary publications of the past decades is Lidiya Chukovskaya's *Zapiski ob Anne Akhmatovoi* 1976, 1980 (Notes on Anna Akhmatova). These partly cryptic, original diary entries from 1938–1941 and 1952–1962, when both writers were in regular and friendly contact, have been clarified by the notes and appendix, and raised to the level of a document on the fate of the Russian intelligentsia in general, with its ways of thought, its feelings, and its practical struggle for survival. In this book, nothing has been reconstructed from memory: the everyday existence of the writer, in its commitment to the word and its subjection to State pressures and material want, comes to life before our eyes.

A leading part in presenting the truth about the past was played in the Soviet Union by Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn. Typical of his method is restriction of the action to one short period, from which he refers back to much earlier times. Between 1955 and 1958 he had completed his long novel *V krughe pervom*, and in order to publish it in the Soviet Union he subjected it to self-censorship and restricted it to 87 chapters. A contract for this version was agreed with the journal NOVYI MIR in 1964, but the censor forbade publication. In 1968 Solzhenitsyn decided

to release the novel (which in the meantime had been circulating in samizdat) for publication in the West. Once again the changes in the literary-political scenery were made very clear (in 1978 Solzhenitsyn, now living in the United States, brought out the restored and revised original version in 94 chapters). The immediate action of the book is restricted to 24–27 December 1949, and takes place in a special prison for scientists, who are working on two projects of importance to State Security: the identification of a speaker by recording his voice, and electronically encoding a voice. By means of flashback Solzhenitsyn broadens the action to form a comprehensive picture of human enslavement over a period of more than twenty years. The work achieves diversity through each chapter being an autonomous entity (in the manner of epics), thus taking up an apparently inexhaustible number of themes. The cast of characters is very large, and the involvement of historical personalities (including Stalin) reinforces the links with reality – as do the allusions to historical events. Thus, piecemeal, is built up a mosaic of degrading and deathly labour camps. Solzhenitsyn conjures up two worlds, that of the prisoners and that of the free. The latter, however, living outside the barbed wire, prove themselves, in their thoughts and deeds, to be far less free than the prisoners. It is these who, from greater moral fibre, base decisions on their own conscience. When Nerzhin, one of the most important characters, is offered (for successfully working out the key to the acoustic code) premature release, total amnesty and residence in Moscow, he replies: "They'll repeal my conviction (...) But where did you get the idea that I want such a bounty – You've done a good job, so we are releasing you?! We forgive you! (...) That is no solution! Let them first admit that you cannot put people in prison for what they think – then we'll consider whether we will forgive!" (End of ch. 9)

In his second novel (also based on his own experience) *Rakovyi korpus*, Solzhenitsyn broadens and deepens his picture of the Soviet Union. Here the main action (situated in a hospital ward in a town which can be identified as Tashkent) extends over a somewhat longer period (3–10 February and 3–19 March 1955), and is of greater importance. The thoughts of all the characters are on the inevitability of death and the brevity of life's span, thus constituting a warning parable of the earthly existence of mankind in general. In the persons of an official and of an exile discharged from prison-camp, Solzhenitsyn

illustrates the unspoken abuses of power and the nameless suffering of previous decades, man corrupted through privilege and man coming to maturity in subjection, while the end of the novel (the return of both characters to their preferential or disadvantaged situations) is an expression at once of concern and of warning. Many well-known Russian authors, in the interests of Soviet society, advocated the publication of the book in the Soviet Union.

One of the last works in frank indictment of the recent past to appear in the Soviet Union, Veniamin Kaverin's *Dvoinoi portret* 1966 (Double portrait) was written in the manner of the modern investigative novel. Using his favourite settings of science and crime, Kaverin demonstrates how unscrupulous, ambitious incompetents, by means of denunciation, delivered respectable, talented people to imprisonment and death. At another level is reflected the absence of legal protection for ex-prisoners and the persistence of the malign influence of criminal parvenus of the Stalin era into the phase of semi-liberalism.



DAS DOPPELTE PORTRAT
 ДА? ДООБЛЕ ПОКЛКЛ
 WENIAMIN KAWERIN
 WENIAMIN KAWERIN
 ROMAN INSEL VERLAG
 РОМАН ИНЗЕЛ ВЕРЛАГ

B. Kaverin

Veniamin Kaverin was known in the early twenties as one of the Serapion Brothers, and continued into old age a writer and a champion of the freedom of literature.

In *Pered zerkalom* 1971 (Before the mirror), Kaverin embodied another subject that had previously been kept out of Soviet literature, with the fate of an émigré from 1910 to 1932. In keeping with his partiality for authentic material, he retained the original letters from this tragic love story, carefully setting them in fictional events.

As ever, the literature devoted to the events of the Revolution is extensive. Mariya Prilezhaeva, to her countless works depicting the Revolution from a Party standpoint, added a further one, *Zelenaya vetka maya* 1978 (Green twig of May) which also takes into account her personal experiences. To his numerous Lenin plays, Mikhail Shatrov added another one with *Tak pobedim!* 1982 (Thus we shall conquer!) dealing with Lenin at the approach of death. He had previously, in *Revolutsionnyi étyud* 1979 (A study of revolution), chosen the October Revolution as starting point for his linkage of generations. His "chronicle-novel" *Fevral'* 1979 (February) – about the 1917 February Revolution – compiled in partnership with the historian V. Loginov, is reminiscent of the "technique of fictionalized fact".

Memoirs also were affected by the division that took place in those years. In the Soviet Union Kaverin, in *V starom dome* 1971 (In the old house), erected a literary memorial to many forgotten and persecuted writers, such as the Obériu Group with Daniil Kharms and Aleksandr Vvedenskii, and described his own youth in *Osveshchennye okna* 1974/76 (Lighted windows). Vsevolod Rozhdestvenskii mingles his own experiences with anecdotes from the lives of other authors in *Shkatulka pamyati* 1972 (Box of memories). Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn and Vladimir Maksimov were published only in the West. In *Bodalsya telenok s dubom* 1975 (Eng. The calf and the oak, 1980), Solzhenitsyn gives an autobiographical and documentary description of Soviet literary politics from 1961 to 1974; in *Arkhipelag GULag* he combines a documentary account of the Soviet system of camps and terror, from Lenin onwards, with autobiography, and strives for spiritual mastery. Vladimir Maksimov's third novel *Proshchanie iz niotkuda* 1973, 1982 (Eng. Farewell from nowhere, 1979) is a barely fictionalized autobiographical evocation of his unusual youth among criminals. In the second part, with the subtitle *Chasha yarosti* 1982 (A cup of rage), he describes the most important stages of his life as a writer in the Soviet Union from 1954 to 1974. Valentin Kataev is another to have joined the ranks of writers of memoirs. In his fictionalized depiction of

the twenties *Almaznyi moi venets* 1978 (My diamond diadem) he combines subjective recollections, mainly focused on himself (and containing distorted portraits of well-known but unidentified writers), with reflections of the moment. For him, what matters is the interplay of memory and literary creation. Nina Berberova, who in 1922 had left Petrograd in the company of Vladislav Khodasevich, brought out in the United States a voluminous autobiography *Kursiv moi* 1972 (Eng. *The italics are mine*, 1969), which describes the life and comportment of many émigrés as observed by herself.

In war literature, the "new wave" of anti-heroic novels died away. The White Russian Vasil' Bykau (Vasillii Bykov) continued the tradition of sincerity in literature with his depiction of the war in all its horror – in *Sotnikov* 1970 (Sotnikov. Eng. *The ordeal*, 1972), for instance, or in *Poiti i ne vernut'sya* 1978 (To go and not come back), the story of an incident in the Belorussian hinterland in 1942; likewise Grigorii Baklanov – *Naveki – devyatnadtsatiletnie* 1979 (Forever nineteen), dedicated to the young war dead; and also Yurii Bondarev – *Bereg* 1975 (The shore) and *Vybor* 1980 (Eng. *The choice*, 1983). In both works Bondarev opposes wartime to the present day: in the first he has two men come across each other again in Hamburg twenty-six years after the end of the war; in the second he contrasts the fortunes of two fellow-soldiers, of whom one was to gain recognition in the Soviet Union as a painter while the other emigrated in 1945. In this way Bondarev combines historical and current political interpretation.

Anatolii Kuznetsov, in his novel *Babii Yar* 1966 (Eng. *Babi Yar*, 1967), sought to present the truth about the slaughter of the Jews by the SS, and about the destruction of the main street of Kiev and the Kiev Pecherskii monastery by the NKVD at the beginning of the war. After escaping in 1969 he republished the novel, which had originally appeared in the journal *YUNOST'* in 1966, indicating the extensive mutilations wrought by the Soviet censorship.

Vitalii Semin, in his war book *Nagrudnyi znak "OST"* 1976 (The badge "EAST"), was able to take as starting-point his own experiences in a German concentration camp. So thoroughly however does he involve himself with the helplessness of the prisoner in the face of malice and arbitrary power, that his book is a general indictment of the treatment of prisoners in totalitarian countries. Vasillii Grossman's most voluminous book was preserved in spite of being confiscated by the

KGB in 1961, and achieved publication twenty years later in Lausanne by Efim Étkind and Simon Markish – *Zhizn' i sud'ba* 1980 (Eng. Life and fate, 1986). This is the second part of his Stalingrad novel *Za pravoe delo* 1952 (For a just cause); it illustrates the basic inhumanity of totalitarian systems, while shifting the action back and forth between the Soviet Union under Stalin and Germany under Hitler.

Konstantin Simonov was able to continue his considerable contribution to telling the truth about the war, but the new Party line is evident in his *Poslednee leto* 1970–71 (The last summer), which once more featured Stalin as the sagacious commander. Aleksandr Chakovskii centred his multi-volume novel *Blokada* on the defence of Leningrad, pursuing above all the task of ideological education. His concern is to display the superiority of the Socialist system, along with

The education of Soviet people in patriotism and in the consciousness of their superiority to all nations of the world is an essential component of Party ideology. This is the spirit required of literature about the Second World War. After the phase of "trench warfare" realism, which in the years after 1956 produced honest, genuinely human war books, came with 1965 the return into Soviet literature of the "positive hero" – very like the Superman in Mekhant'evs's poster "For the sake of our Soviet homeland" (1970).



the wise leadership of the Party, the heroism of the Soviet General Staff, and the moral and military inferiority of the enemy. Chakovskii's favourable evaluation of Zhdanov as Leningrad Party Secretary, in spite of his well-remembered and regrettable part in the repression of

literature after 1946, is evidence of the narrow dogmatism of the current Party line. The great formal weaknesses were not passed over even in Soviet critics. In 1965 Vadim Kozhevnikov, who during the war had confectioned trashy tales of heroism, also returned to pseudo-heroic war books. The reversion to the heroizing presentation of the Second World War reached its peak with the Brezhnev memoirs.

Completely different from anything ever written in the Soviet Union about the war, and far from heroizing – indeed ironic in its chatty way – is the insight into military life in the Soviet Union in wartime afforded by Éfraim Sevela, a Russian Jewish author who emigrated in 1971 and in 1974 settled in the United States. Originally able only to work as a journalist in Vilna and a scriptwriter in Moscow, after 1977 he published in Jerusalem several books, mostly of a satirical nature, which were speedily translated. *Monya Tsatskes – znamenosets* 1977 (Eng. The standard bearer, 1983) tells, in an often hyperbolically pointed style, the story of Lithuanian Jews from call-up to active service at the front. Less ironic is his novel *Pochemu net raya na zemle?* 1981 (Eng. Why there is no heaven on earth?, 1983) which gains depth from the tragic ingredient of a Russian Jewish childhood fate. Taking as starting-point his own provincial boyhood, and pursuing the theme in his depiction of numerous episodes in the childhood and boyhood of his friend Berele Mats, he recalls that this lad, like Anne Frank, was discovered in his hiding-place and died with his family. Over and above the fate of children, Sevela throws light on Jewish life and Jewish people of different spheres in the Soviet Union quite differently from Anatolii Rybakov – sympathetically and convincingly.

Writers who had experienced the Stalin Terror in their own person or through their friends felt an intense compulsion to speak out honestly, but publication in the Soviet Union was for them out of the question.

The year 1937 – the climax of Stalin's Terror, the year of the torture and murder of millions of people – is the starting-point of Yurii Dombrovskii's novel *Fakul'tet nenuzhnykh veshchei* 1978 (Faculty of unneeded things). Written between 1964 and 1975, the novel originally came out, in Paris, only in the year of the author's death (it was published in the Soviet Union in 1988); the title plays on the state of jurisprudence – the perversion of law and justice in the Soviet Union. Taking as example the leader of an archeological expedition seeking gold in Kazakhstan, Dombrovskii, from his own experience, brings to

life mindlessness, human degradation and the testing of character under interrogation.

Of great historical importance is Semen Lipkin's novel *Dekada* 1983 (The decade) written between 1979 and 1980. Before his resignation from the Writers' Union of the USSR, Lipkin had made a considerable name for himself in the Soviet Union as translator of several Central Asian and Caucasian folk epics, although little of his original verse had been published. In this novel he has created a forever valid memorial to the victims of the inhuman Soviet ethnic policy. With a small fictitious Caucasian nation at its centre as illustration, the work covers the phases of expatriation, compulsory settlement, partial return and decline of national consciousness in the fifteen years after 1944. The combination of authentic personal experience and creative generality gives its moral and artistic value to the novel.

Some works are entirely concentrated on the post-war period. Vladimir Maksimov sets the action of *Kovcheg dlya nezvanykh* 1976 (Eng. Ark for the uncalled, 1984) on one of the Kurile Islands (annexed by the Soviet Union after the Second World War). The quality of Maksimov's novels derives, not from the symbol-laden story, but from the living detail – incidents, glimpses of the Soviet way of life, religious attitudes.

Fridrikh Gorenshtein's first published novel *Iskuplenie* (Redemption), was originally published incomplete (1979), in Russian, in Israel. It deals with the unusual topic of interpersonal tensions in the Soviet Union immediately after the retreat of the Germans. On the one side denunciation, hatred of Jews, exposure of collaborators, blackmail; on the other love, friendship, unselfish behaviour: good and evil interpenetrate, and judgment is left to the reader.

A special place in the literature of the recent past is held by the so-called village prose. This new form of honest description of the privations and problems of the Russian village, which had begun after Stalin, also continued after 1964, thus remaining a treasure-house of Russophile thinking and moral awareness. Boris Mozhaev excited attention with his story *Iz zhizni Fedora Kuz'kina* 1966 (From the life of Fedor Kuz'kin), in which he features a peasant who, due to unrealistic bureaucratic procedures gets into debt although he owes nothing – and in fact desires nothing but what is needful for the existence of himself and his family. His struggle against bureaucratic

intrigues is but a part of this exposition of the hard lot of the peasants. The happy ending, which the author sets in the year 1955, in no way disguises the reality of the kolkhoz problem as a whole.

In his *Pryasliny* 1958–78 (The Pryaslins), Fedor Abramov produced a tetralogy of faith in the essential toughness of the peasantry. The grim fortunes of his peasants are played out in a far northern setting. The struggle for survival, depicted in wartime in the first volume, does not end with the war, but develops into conflict with Party functionaries. Abramov portrays people as individuals, responsible for themselves and for their fellows. The work, which ends with the death of Stalin, has significant relevance for the present day.

In his series of works depicting peasant life in its many aspects, Vasilii Belov (living in Vologda) put together a cycle of stories – *Kanuny* 1972–76 (The eves) – about the north Russian village in its independence before forcible collectivization, as a "chronicle of the twenties". Basic moral questions, typical of those dealt with in Russian "village prose", pervade this book also, and together with the historical elements constitute its permanent positive quality. His work focuses on the joys and sorrows of simple peasants, and springs from his personal



Vasilii Belov's prose is a profession of faith in the old Russian peasant tradition. In the power of a Russian national consciousness bound up with Orthodox Christianity he sees the possibility of a renewal of Russia itself, after the human element of such a consciousness had been largely destroyed by Soviet forcible collectivization and religious persecution.

experience of peasant life. He preserves, both in the dialogue and in the scraps of narrative spoken by the peasants, the colourful language and turns of phrase unusual in written Russian. Only in 1987 was Belov able to bring out the third part of the work, presenting with remarkable frankness the hard lot of the dispossessed peasants.

Russian history

Already at the end of the twenties political pressures had caused some writers (as for instance Yurii Tynyanov) to fall back on historical subjects. A similar orientation in émigré writers can be explained rather by their increasing awareness of their own roots. Even so, many authors see the historical novel as their true vocation.

At the end of the sixties Bulat Okudzhava, also, turned to the historical novel. In *Bednyi Avrosimov* 1969 (Poor Avrosimov. Eng. A taste of liberty, 1986), he takes the fate of the Decembrists as his starting-point. Using a fictional narrator from the second half of the nineteenth century, and with the narrow perspective of a law clerk, he symbolically passes judgment on the practice of denunciation, and illustrates the allocation by fate of the interchangeable roles, in politics, of accuser and accused. Likewise, *Mersi, ili pokhozhdeniya Shipova* 1971 (Mersi; or, The adventures of Shipov. Eng. The extraordinary adventures of the secret agent Shipov in pursuit of count Leo Tolstoy in the year 1862, 1973), with its censure of absurd police extravagance and senseless mistrust, has its satirical relevance to the present day. His two-volume *Puteshestvie diletantov* 1976–78 (The travels of dilettantes. Eng. Nocturne: From the notes of Lt. Amiran Amilakhvari, Retired, 1978) remains to a large extent an interplay of amusing chat, without serious relevance to the period (1841–1851) or moral weight.

Other writers applied themselves to the depiction of the nineteenth-century revolutionaries, regarded by the Party as precursors of the 1917 Bolsheviks – for instance Yurii Trifonov in *Neterpenie* 1973 (Eng. The impatient ones, 1978), (a complicated novel about the assassination of the Tsar in 1881), or Vasillii Aksenov in

Lyubov' k élektrichestvu 1971 (A love of electricity) (about Leonid Krasin, the engineer and terrorist, during the events of 1905–1908).

Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn saw his personal function not in the presentation of his own experiences as in *V krugé pervom*, but in the truthful presentation of Russian history prior to the fateful year 1917, and in thereby illuminating the processes which led to the collapse of the old Russia and the Bolshevik seizure of power. He began *Krasnoe koleso* (The red wheel), planned as a multi-volume work, with *Avgust chetyrnadtsatogo* 1971 (Eng. August 1914, 1972). Having, once in the United States, discovered how many sources had been unknown to him in the Soviet Union, he rewrote the work, enlarging it to twice its size. To this novel, which begins with the battle at Tannenberg in East Prussia, he added *Lenin v Tsyurikhe* 1975 (Eng. Lenin in Zurich, 1976), chapters from the following "Knot" (as he called the novels or cycles based on a single point in time). The "Second Knot", *Oktyabr' shestnadtsatogo* 1984 (October 1916), is also in two volumes, confining itself to the single major event of Stolypin's murder; it depicts the gradual dissolution of the Russian State at all levels. Solzhenitsyn's narrative technique is to interweave the documentary and historical chapters with fictional ones; in the fictional chapters he links many historical figures with one fictional character.

In the Soviet Union Édvard Radzinskii, author of many entertaining and frequently performed plays, came up with a Decembrist drama of unusual construction: *Lunin, ili Smert' Zhaka, zapisannaya v prisutstvii Khozyaina* 1979 (Lunin; or, The death of Jacques, recorded in the presence of the landlord. Eng. J. Mikhail Sergeevich Lunin, 1982). In the form of a dramatized account by the victim, Radzinskii here formulates problems about the imprisonment of political opponents.

Vladimir Soloukhin, son of peasants, poet and novelist with his roots in nature and the village, warned against neglecting Russian traditions (including those of religion and the Church). In his book *Vremya sobirat' kamni* 1980 (The time to collect stones), consisting of five reports in the form of essays, he deplores the decay of important memorials of the Russian cultural past, such as Derzhavin's estate Zvanka, or the monastery Optina pustyn' (visited by Gogol', Tolstoi and Dostoevskii).

Vasilii Shukshin, whose short stories are focused on the individual human being, also wrote a novel *Ya prishel dat' vam volyu* 1971 (I have come to give you freedom), about the Cossack rebel Stepan Razin. This novel, a series of colourful scenes from Russian folk life in the seventeenth century, which also reveals Shukshin to be a master of dialogue, makes use of material originally intended for a film. The making of the film (with Shukshin himself in the main part) was however forbidden by the censor.

Russian writers are well aware of the classical authors of the nineteenth century. In the period 1964–1985 there also appeared many literary works connected with the giants of the past. The long years of semi-official suppression and prejudice in the case of Dostoevskii were followed by a Dostoevskii revival, reflected in numerous references in fiction.

Almost simultaneously with his unusually provocative *Progulki s Pushkinym* 1975 (Walks with Pushkin), Abram Terts (Andrei Sinyavskii) published the volume *V teni Gogolya* 1975 (In the shadow of Gogol') – a fiction about fiction; and a general view, supported throughout by quotations from works and letters, of Gogol's artistic personality as seen by a similarly satirical and religious Russian writer whom he overshadowed. His occupation as teacher of literature in Paris led to his book *"Opavshie list'ya" V. V. Rozanova* 1982 ("Fallen leaves" of V. V. Rozanov), in which, with ever-new variations and with delight in his own creative word-play, he proves paradox to be a particular characteristic of Rozanov.

Natal'ya Baranskaya, known besides as a portrayer of the Soviet present and above all of the problems which the system caused for women – *Nedelya kak nedelya* 1969 (One week like another**) – wrote a longer story about Pushkin's wife in the first year of her widowhood *Tsvet temnogo medu* 1977 (The colour of dark honey). The skilful narrative technique of changing the viewpoint with each chapter between the members of the family, friends and household staff is aesthetically pleasing, and casts a new, sympathetic light on the woman who was the occasion for Pushkin's duel.

Fridrikh Gorenshtein was able to publish only one story in the Soviet Union (1964). At the same time as his contribution to METROPOL', several other works by him appeared in the West, concerned mainly with events in the recent past. All the more astonishing is his historical

narrative *Tri vstrechi s M. Yu. Lermontovym* (Three meetings with M. Yu. Lermontov), written in 1977 and published in NRL 1979/80, in which the fiction that the narrator had indeed thus got to know the enigmatic Romantic writer is utterly convincing. This is no mere interpretation, but an imaginative rendering of artistic and historical truth.

Another poet, not Russian but German (though much loved and much read in Russia), is the subject of Lev Kopelev's biographical novel *Ein Dichter kam vom Rhein* 1981 (A poet came from the Rhine). Already completed in 1968, this book about Heinrich Heine appeared only in German translation. In his presentation of the relationship of the poet to politics, of the German to his Jewish descent, of the patriot to the spirit of revolution, and in his concern for freedom of speech, one recognizes the problems which finally drove this Russian-Jewish author to emigration. The novel combines philological research with the writer's delight in creativity, and in this respect can be viewed in the same context as Terts' Gogol' book and Natal'ya Baranskaya's Pushkin story. Gorenshstein's Lermontov encounters however are composed in the style and spirit of the previous century.



Only in 1969 did the Russian philologist Natal'ya Baranskaya make her début as a writer. Her particular theme is the position of Russian woman in the past and in the present. Her short novel ONE WEEK LIKE ANOTHER acquainted readers in many countries, in a frank and unaffected style, with the fragmented existence of a woman in the Soviet Union torn between family, household and profession. Her novel SUNDAY BEFORE ADVENT, dealing with Russian family fortunes from the perspective of several women, is, after long suppression, at last to be published in 1988. (Photograph 1976)

Problems of the present

The representation of the immediate present is one of the basic requirements of Socialist Realism. It is true that the incorporation of an idealized future is no longer demanded even in public speeches, as in the period 1934–1953, but the problem of to what extent a work of Soviet literature does express the truth about living conditions and the intellectual climate remains unchanged.

It was Yurii Trifonov who became the central figure in the Soviet Russian literature of the seventies concerned with the present day. Starting in the late sixties, he produced a series of short novels about the life of average Moscow intellectuals, casting a perceptive eye on his characters and their psychological development. In *Obmen* 1969 (Eng. *The exchange*, 1975) he exposes the materialist thought-process as it disregards moral considerations in order to gain advantage from a well-timed exchange of accommodation. In *Predvaritel'nye itogi* 1970 (Eng. *Taking stock*, 1978) a forty-eight year-old translator ponders his alienation from his wife and son. In *Dolgoe proshchanie* 1971 (Eng. *The long good-bye*, 1978) an actress, caught up in the vortex of circumstances, gradually renounces a personal relationship of long standing, and finds professional success in a new association. In *Dom na naberezhnoi* 1976 (Eng. *The house on the embankment*, 1983) Trifonov demonstrates in human terms the effect of the considerable class differences in the Soviet Union, and denounces the practice of publicly disgracing formerly privileged people fallen into disfavour. In this novel, although Trifonov takes the present as his base, he depicts life in the Soviet Union during key periods of the past, which itself has something relevant to say about the present. All these novels give a realistic picture of Moscow, make evident the dangers inherent in a life of material prosperity, and indicate, but without hope, the real values in the domain of the spirit. In *Starik* 1978 (*The old man*) Trifonov produced on the one hand a historical work, containing some facts about the persecution of the Cossacks during the Civil War, and on the other a picture of the present day, in which the young generation has lost all understanding of its grandparents' revolutionary ardour. In every one of his books, Trifonov strove to extend the limits set by the censorship.

The causes of philistinism, and its remedy, are more deeply probed in a novel which could only be published abroad: Evgenii Ternovskii's *Strannaya istoriya* 1976 (A peculiar story). Its first-person narrator abandons his family, because he can no longer endure the materialist ideal and seeks a spiritual meaning to life. The prostitute he tries to help is as much in search of support as the boss who has succumbed to drink and sex. His search leads him to destitution on a railway station, to the militia, to the Church and to a family of believers – but his sense of alienation is too great and the possibility of a future release in faith is barely hinted at. More than in Trifonov, resonances of Dostoevskii are discernible in Ternovskii. More episodic, but no less convincing, is Ternovskii's presentation of the religious world (including the "underground church") in the Soviet Union in his second novel *Priemnoe otdelenie* 1979 (Reception department). The action unravels the intersecting paths of two men from different levels of Soviet society, and of their wives who are patients in a hospital, and gives an insight into inequality in law, conceptions of personal entitlement, human helpfulness and adaptability in the Russia of these years.



In his novels, Evgenii Ternovskii describes Soviet reality without distortions, and for this reason they could only be published in emigration. His psychologically convincing characters are depicted in contrast to one another and in their inner conflict.

Like Ternovskii, who has lived in Paris since 1974, other Soviet émigrés also have made the present as they themselves experienced it in the Soviet Union – that is to say the immediate past – the focal point of their work, in order to make known in literary form the truth which there could only be presented with restrictions if at all. Feliks

Kandel', before his departure for Israel in 1977, told in *Zona otdykha* 1979 (Rest area) of his fortnight's imprisonment along with other Jewish would-be émigré demonstrators. The degrading treatment by the State is in sharp contrast with the humane solidarity of those deprived of their rights. *Koridor* 1981 (The corridor) brings to life the problems in a Soviet communal dwelling. Kandel's attention is directed on many levels, and his novels, with their musically cadenced handling of language, have their own particular literary character.

Sergei Dovlatov, whose works circulated in samizdat from the end of the seventies, swiftly made a name for himself as a factually reliable, ironically distanced writer, after emigrating to New York, with a succession of small books. He retails his own experiences both as a journalist in Estonia in *Kompromiss* 1981 (Eng. The compromise, 1983), and in his ludicrous battle with the literary establishment to get his stories published, in *Nevidimaya kniga* 1978 (Eng. The invisible book, 1979).

In the Soviet Union, Vladimir Tendryakov found a way, in several novels, to portray contemporary social problems in their human aspect. A very serious problem of the Communist system lies at the heart of his novel *Noch' posle vypuska* 1974 (Graduation night). It is that, while the Soviet system of education may well provide youngsters with homogeneous factual knowledge, it does not make them into people of independent thought and humane behaviour. In a skilfully constructed dual story he depicts both teachers and pupils, leaving his conclusion open. In *Zatmenie* 1977 (The eclipse) Tendryakov combines the story of an unhappy marriage with topical issues such as protection of the environment, moral courage in the face of a campaign to slander respectable persons, and Christianity. In *Shest'desyat svechei* 1980 (Sixty candles) – a novel that had to wait eleven years for clearance from the Soviet censor – he depicts the human disaster of a headmaster who has always acted according to Party rule, and only realizes at the age of sixty that there exist higher laws, attaching to no particular time, régime or political system.

During the Thaw, Vasilii Aksenov had developed into a leading writer on the youth problem, with a deep feeling for language. During the Brezhnev years he emerged as an honest presenter of the social problems of his time. The long short story *Zatovarennaya bochkotara* 1968 (Eng. Surplussed barrelware, 1985) takes its

departure from the story of a heavy-goods driver who earns illegal profits by carrying passengers in his empty containers. Here, in Aksenov's characteristic episodic manner, many stories from Soviet life – and even dreams – succeed one another; like his previous ones, the book is distinguished by word-play and feeling for language. In later works of Aksenov layers of realism alternate with fantasy. After his unsuccessful attempt in 1979, as one of the editors of the anthology *METROPOL'*, to win the right to publish without interference by the censor, relations between Aksenov and literary officialdom became so strained that he had no choice but to emigrate (in 1980). In Washington he was quick to integrate into American cultural life, and published several books.

A wide-ranging intent, with little of conventional story-telling, is pursued in Aksenov's longest book to date *Ozhog* 1980 (Eng. *The burn*, 1984), which originated between 1969 and 1975. This for the most part covers the late sixties and the early seventies – the period when it was written. Several chapters describe the same events as *Krutoi marshrut* (the memoirs of his mother, Evgeniya Ginzburg). The entry of the Soviet Army into Prague in 1968 is also incorporated, in Aksenov's typical post-1965 mingling of realism and fantasy. In his account a Soviet tank, having lost its way, proceeds through Italy among the tourist vehicles. These books are pervaded with the trauma of an intelligence which, betrayed by the Revolution, has matured again into independence of thought and judgment.

At the same time the old Soviet production novel was revived, in only slightly modified form. In *Stremnina* 1971 (*The rapids*) the Stalinist author Mikhail Bubennov produced a work purporting to display the worker engaged in river control in Siberia as a model of heroism; it fails however due to synthetic portrayals and hollow sentimentality.

The leading officials of the Writers' Union also made their contributions to the propagation of the Party standpoint. Georgii Markov produced yet another longwinded Siberian novel, whose title echoes the perennial Communist assurance of a better future – *Gryadushchee tvoritsya segodnya* 1981 (*The future is taking shape today*). Into this novel are worked actual economic plans for Siberia.

Aleksandr Chakovskii followed his vainglorious war book *Blokada* with a propagandist novel on the Soviet fight for peace: *Pobeda*. A

literary exposition of the Party standpoint, this work takes its start from the re-encounter, at the 1975 Helsinki Conference on peace and security in Europe, of a Soviet and an American journalist. Much space is given to retrospection on the Potsdam discussions, with Stalin at their centre.

Another author, Semen Babaevskii, even more famous in the Stalin period and the target of justified criticism (for "varnishing the truth") during the Thaw, remained in his new novels – *Stanitsa* 1975–76 (A Cossack village) and *Privol'e* 1978–79 (Wide open space) – trapped in his style of cheap glorification of present conditions, as exemplified in the Socialist development of the Kuban district.

A younger author, Oleg Kuvaev, attempted in *Territoriya* 1974 (The territory) to advertize the "scientific-technological revolution" in prospecting for gold, but lacked the imagination for creative story-telling and the verbal talent to endow either the whole or the parts (for instance the dialogue) with inner consistency.

In *I dol'she veka dlitsya den'* 1980 (Eng. The day lasts more than a hundred years, 1983), Chingiz Aitmatov produced his first novel and also that most wide-ranging in its content. It extends from mythical prehistory (with recognition of spiritual and religious truths) across the Stalin period (with its crimes against humanity) up to the immediate present (with its political and moral problems). Here he unmasks the type of the power-hungry rising functionary, who sees his ideal in directing people according to his own conceptions. And here also he claims fellowship with the Soviet worker, who combines regard for his trade and his neighbour with religious tradition and the inclusion of death in life. Here, in episodes of fantasy, he indicts space travel, for not being conducted with true international cooperation and not being based on a universal moral perception – thus being unprepared for the encounter finally aspired to, with extraterrestrial civilizations.

Evgenii Evtushenko, also, brings questions of space travel and belief in extraterrestrial intelligent beings into his first novel *Yagodnye mesta* 1981 (Eng. Wild berries, 1984). In this he bases himself on Konstantin Tsiolkovskii and Nikolai Fedorov, and takes up the subject, vainly outlawed by Marxism, of the spiritual survival of man after death. He criticizes the ever-growing pervasiveness of the ruthless cynic, who, neither a believing Communist nor a convinced dissident, will in any milieu say only what will be to his advantage, and who strives only for

material well-being and power over others. Evtushenko illustrates the nature of class in Soviet society as represented by the rising generation of privileged youth. This structurally unbalanced work, many-sided to the point of contradiction in its assertions, gives valuable insight into the material and spiritual life of his country.

In Anatolii Anan'ev's novel *Gody bez voiny* 1975–81 (Years without war) also, many serious problems are raised, such as the incongruity between the profitable private backyard economy and the persistent unsuccess of the kolkhozy and sovkhozy, or the influence of religion on the young sixty years after the enforcement of atheism.

Boris Mozhaev is in fact better known as a representative of village prose * – like Fedor Abramov, Vasillii Belov or Valentin Rasputin. In his story *Poltora kvadratnykh metra* 1982 (One and a half square metres), however, with the chronic shortage of dwelling-space in the Soviet Union as his starting-point, he deals with the issues of lack of legal security and State-sanctioned perversion of justice.

The current very real problem of the growing importance in society of the ruthless cynic, featured equally in the novels of Evtushenko and Aitmatov, is also in the centre of Viktor Rozov's play *Gnezdo glukharya* 1979 (The nest of the wood-grouse). The wood-grouse (which in Russian also symbolizes deafness) is here a well-placed member of the Soviet ruling class, insulated from the common people, whose son-in-law proves to be a selfish, calculating careerist who rejects his wife and her family (the milieu in which all Rozov's dramas are enacted) as soon as he has attained their level in society. But he too is soon under threat from the next, even deeper level of nastiness.

Whereas Rozov's plays are characterized by human relationships, which predominate over social comment – as in *Zateinik* 1966 (The social director) and *Gnezdo glukharya* – it was for his journalistic dramas that Aleksandr Gel'man, a playwright younger by twenty years, became famous. Plays such as *Protokol odnogo zasedaniya* 1974 (Minutes of a meeting) depict the discrepancy between plan, report on completion, and reality. In *My, nizhepodpisavshiesya* 1979 (We, the undersigned) he describes a falsified building inspection. Gel'man always makes it plain that one consequence of the Socialist system is a fraud-ridden economy.

The division by subject field used here leads, as does any arbitrary division in literary history, to a one-sided perspective. Many of the

Soviet works referred to belong simultaneously to quite different contexts. Thus, the Aitmatov, Aksenov and Evtushenko novels contain non-realist elements; thus, in the works of Rozov, Aitmatov and Trifonov, human relationships finally play a more important part than contemporary social problems. On the other hand it is those aspects which distinguish their work from that of others that predominate in the questions raised here. Equally topical is the theme of the dangers which threaten the natural world in the second half of our century, treated in Viktor Astaf'ev's *Tsar'-ryba* 1976 (Eng. *Queen fish*, 1982), an epically cumulative work of more or less independent stories. With his Enisei homeland as illustration, he indicts the inroads of civilization for their effects not only on the natural but on the moral environment.

Considerably more comprehensive – written without regard for the censor and without his actual deletions – are those works of modern Russian literature focused on the present day and written abroad, or intended for publication abroad. Andrei Bitov's voluminous novel *Pushkinskii dom* 1978 (Eng. *Pushkin House*, 1988) belongs on the fringe of this branch of literature; it appeared in complete form in the USA, after extracts had circulated in samizdat during the sixties, and Bitov was able to publish parts of it in journals and in his book *Dni cheloveka* 1976 (*The days of a man*); the complete version was published in the Soviet Union only in 1987. Bitov is here attempting to formulate in narrative form the perception Soviet people have of the world around them, basing his story on one man, with all his weaknesses, who has grown up in that society. Bitov's concentration on narrative techniques and its complexities make the book somewhat difficult of access.

Less comprehensively, and therefore with a more discernible story-line, this theme is formulated in Fridrikh Gorenshtein's story *Stupeni* 1979 (Eng. *Steps*, 1982). Here the "steps" through life of the hero are downwards in day-to-day affairs and upwards in spiritual matters, because he, a professor of medicine, has formed a relationship with a believing Christian working woman. The philosophical and ideological concern to demonstrate the growing quest for religion in the Soviet Union gives this work its character.

Vladimir Rybakov lived in Paris from 1972 to 1984, and then moved to Frankfurt. His first novel, *Tyazhest'* 1977 (Eng. *The burden*, 1984), is a realistic depiction of the day-to-day life of the Soviet armed forces on

the Chinese border. The ruthlessness of those in command, the insufficiency and poor quality of supplies, the resort to drugs, the perpetual fear – all are described in their human repercussions. His second, *Tavro* 1981 (Eng. *The brand*, 1986) describes the internal and



Viktor Nekrasov was at one time representative of Soviet literature and (by an arbitrary decision of Stalin against the wishes of Aleksandr Fadeev) a Stalin Prizewinner. After 1974 he became one of the most important authors in the Paris group of exiles. These photographs, taken during a private conversation in Bonn in 1977, give an idea of his lively humanity, his dramatic verve and his readiness to listen and to take in new ideas. The first page of A GLANCE – AND MORE indicates how quickly the author took to well-balanced narrative. The location given in the heading (San Vicente in Spain) reveals, by its position at the beginning of the story, Nekrasov's characteristic blending of new experiences and recollections. He begins with the enquiry of the Kiev Party Secretary in August 1974 "Pray excuse the impertinent question, Viktor Platonovich, but what exactly do you propose to do, when you go abroad?". Nekrasov continued to write and publish until his death in Paris in 1987.

external difficulties of a fugitive from the Soviet Union during his early days of exile in France. The personal experience which lies at the heart of both books is fused into an organic whole with the basic problems of the situation. In *Tavro* Rybakov also conveys some idea of the grave mental conflict of one who has reached manhood in the Soviet Union when, having acquired discernment with maturity, he is obliged to come to terms with his acquired totalitarian patterns of thought and behaviour.

Zinovii Zinik, who in the Soviet Union had been able to publish only theatre criticism, brought out his novel *Izveshchenie* 1976 (The notification) in Jerusalem, very shortly after his emigration in 1975. Just as he here describes the difficulties experienced by a Soviet immigrant in adapting to living conditions in Israel, so, having transferred to England, he depicts in his sixth novel *Russofobka i fungofil* 1985 (Eng. The mushroom-picker, 1987) the unfitness of a Soviet-moulded man to adapt himself to English manners and customs, and presents with grotesque verve a Soviet citizen's view of the English way of life.

Viktor Nekrasov, settled in the Paris area, was also one of those Russian authors of the third emigration who wrote regularly and actively. In his third book *Po obe storony steny ...* (On both sides of the wall ...), first published in KONTINENT (18, 19 1978/79), he takes as a starting point his first sight of the Berlin Wall, reflecting on the menace to peace and the separation of people represented by this internal German frontier, and combines his own travel experiences with recollections of vicissitudes in the Soviet Union. He continues in this documentary-reflective vein – an often subjective narrative style with many digressions – in *Iz dal'nikh stranstvii vosvratyas'...* 1979–81³⁰ (On return from wandering afar ...).

The four books produced in emigration during this period by Nekrasov are autobiographical, thus becoming part of a quite considerable sequence of memoirs devoted to his immediate past. Efim Ėtkind's *Zapiski nezagovorshchika* 1977 (Eng. Notes of a non-conspirator, 1978) is largely concentrated on the circumstances of travel abroad and on literary-political life in Leningrad. Andrei Amal'rik, who as dramatist from 1963 to 1965 had continued the Absurd art of the Obériuty, provided in *Nezhelannoe puteshestvie v Sibir'* 1970 (Eng. Involuntary journey to Siberia, 1970 (abridged)) – published in the United States – an insight into Soviet reality that was shocking by

the very sobriety of its portrayal of degrading living conditions. After emigrating in 1976 he described his resultant period of imprisonment and exile to Tomsk in *Zapiski dissidenta* 1982 (Notes of a dissident). Vladimir Bukovskii, one of the most important Soviet dissidents (until his exchange in 1977 for the Chilean Communist leader Corvalán), describes in *I vozvrashchaetsya veter* 1978 (And the wind returns), besides living conditions inside and outside the prisons, the spiritual intent of these unarmed fighters for human rights. His *Pis'ma russkogo puteshestvennika* 1981 (Letters of a Russian traveller) was written with the Western reader in mind: it is a critical consideration of his discoveries and disappointments in the West, a comparative analysis of Socialism in East and West, and a warning based on his own soberly pondered experience.

Sergei Yur'enen, who through marriage to a Frenchwoman was able to move to Paris, brought out two novels of interest also from a stylistic point of view. *Vol'nyj strelok* 1980 (The freeshooter) illustrates the doublethink and doublespeak of the critical intelligentsia in the Soviet Union during the Brezhnev years. In his second novel *Narushitel' granitsy* 1984 (The breaker of boundaries), he not only created a true-to-life representation of Moscow University during the period of repression following the Thaw, but describes various attempts to shake off the suffocating embrace of totalitarianism – through spiritually aware underground groups; through (failed) attempts to escape across the frontier; through a sham marriage to a foreign woman. Even the explicit displays of sexuality arise from the need to free oneself from the constraints of the system.

Satire

Totalitarian régimes are particularly sensitive with regard to satirical literature, since the trademark of social satire is to attack the system in power, by holding its weak points up to ridicule, with the intention of changing it. Besides which, those in power are frequently lacking in humour, and never recognize that the aim of satire is, ultimately, to obtain improvement of living conditions. During the twenties Mikhail

Bulgakov became the victim of his own satirical talent, which gained him success only during the brief period when a variety of opinions was still tolerated. He was rehabilitated, with his non-satirical works, at the beginning of the Thaw, and later on favourable circumstances allowed his masterpiece *Master i Margarita* 1966–67 to be printed. This work had been banned, on the one hand as a satire on the Soviet system – in particular on literary life in Moscow during the thirties, and on the other as a religious novel. The satirical aspect, again, is disguised as fantasy: the Devil makes his appearance in Moscow; the female protagonist temporarily turns into a witch; the surface of natural reality is grotesquely penetrated by a level on which the laws of nature have been abolished. Literary censorship, informers, State trickery, arbitrary arrests, Party nepotism – these were but a few of the objects satirically exposed. Thanks to the 26-year delay in its publication, this work, one of the finest novels in world literature, became a novel of the sixties and seventies. The first printing, mangled by the censor, was followed by a complete edition, first in Frankfurt (1969) and then, in far too small a printing, in Moscow (1973). Bulgakov's collected early satire, including his satirical plays, was still suppressed.

The most popular Russian satirist of the twenties had been Mikhail Zoshchenko. Proscribed in 1946, he was restored to Russian readers with a selection of his works, and a very few editions also appeared between 1964 and 1985.

It was Vladimir Voinovich who developed into the most important satirist of this period. He had to pay for his talent by exclusion from the Writers' Union (in 1974) and consequent serious material hardship. From 1961 onwards he had won favourable notice as a critical portrayer of the Soviet present day. His masterpiece was to be *Zhizn' i neobychainye priklyucheniya soldata Ivana Chonkina* composed between 1963 and 1967 (Eng. *The life and extraordinary adventures of Private Ivan Chonkin*, 1977), which circulated in samizdat with enormous success. The beginning of the novel appeared in 1969 in Frankfurt/Main, and the complete work in 1975 in Paris (and from December 1988 in the periodical *Yunost'* in the Soviet Union). Voinovich here took as his schema the soldier mindlessly keeping his post. This anti-hero survives a series of adventures (involving the military, the kolkhoz administration, the militia, the NKVD and the Party) in a Russian village in 1941 at the beginning of the war, which by their

very realism and sober tone amount to a satire on the system as a whole. Chonkin himself, who actually does nothing but obey orders, develops into a tragi-comic figure. The continuation of this novel, *Pretendent na prestol 1979* (Eng. *Pretender to the throne*, 1981),

Vladimir Voinovich lived, officially banned, for several years in Moscow, while his satires, in Russian and in numerous translations, had to appear abroad. In 1980 he was compelled to emigrate, and now lives in Stockdorf near Munich. With its disparity between promise and actual performance, Soviet reality always provided fertile soil for satirists. Although Zamyatin, Zoshchenko, Bulgakov and Voinovich have won world-wide renown, their works were banned, or published only selectively, in their own country. The photographs show Voinovich in 1987, and the beginning (in his own hand) of his famous Chonkin story.



В конце войны устроил для нас конспиративную квартиру, но я решил уехать в исключительном виде, а сам все еще похотелось неизвестно, счастлив или же не, тогда мне и в голову не приходило, что я уеду и поселюсь в...

Прозрел то же время в моем доме в 1941 году - в этот прекрасный вечер, не то в конце мая, не то в начале июня 1941 года - в этот прекрасный вечер.

Сидел отключившись, мажор, как будто в это время года жила. Все похотелось тогда зайти и увидеть себя, а тогда Блудного, который слышал на улице, ирландское искусство и док-ту не виделся тогда в том же времени, когда не слышал орофе - орудия и оружие. В то время...

does not merely continue Chonkin's own adventures, but, with new characters, centres on his trial after being arrested. The absurdity of the Soviet legal process is illustrated by the hyperbolic conclusion: Chonkin is simultaneously condemned to death and honoured, seen at one and the same time by Stalin and by Hitler, in a dream, as a hero.

In 1972 Voinovich was able for the last time to publish two books in the Soviet Union, after which his difficulties with the authorities became unremitting. They culminated in two summonses before the KGB, whose course he describes in *Proisshestvie v Metropole* 1975 (Eng. Incident at the Metropole, 1977) – a detailed account, horrifying in its ironic detachment; and also in the vexations he suffered from a privileged person in pursuing his legal claim to a two-room flat (for three persons). With literary virtuosity he relates this incident in a personal satire *Ivan'kiada* 1976 (Eng. The Ivankiad, 1977) – with humour, but with documentary support for his entitlement. Right up to his enforced exile Voinovich remained an active campaigner for the preservation of human rights. Since 1980 he has been living in Stockdorf near Munich. In *Antisovetskii Sovetskii Soyuz* 1985 (Eng. The anti-Soviet Soviet Union, 1986), he published a collection of satirical essays written after his departure.

Vladimir Maramzin's satirical work, also, led to condemnation and exile. His story *Tyanitolkai* 1976 (Pushmi-pullyu), written in 1966, anticipates the method of all-embracing subordination of the KGB; later his essentially verbal satire verges on non-realist art. But in Paris, where he has lived since 1975, Maramzin has found himself unable to write any more satire: his main literary earnings come from editorship of the periodical *ЭКХО*.

Fazil' Iskander achieved success both within and without the Soviet Union. In *Sozvezdie Kozlotura* 1966 (Eng. The Goatibex constellation, 1975), depicting a typical Soviet press campaign about a scientific pseudo-achievement, he in reality takes issue satirically with the manipulation of thoughts and minds. *Sandro iz Chegema* 1973 (Eng. Sandro of Chegem, 1983) is a picaresque novel composed of eight separate novellas, deriving its charm from its Caucasian local colour. This abridged edition of *Sandro iz Chegema* was followed, in the United States in 1979, by the complete one (more than double in size), and by further chapters in 1981. In METROPOL' Iskander published possibly the most powerful literary contribution to that anthology with

Malen'kii gigant bol'shogo seksa 1979 (Eng. A very sexy little giant, 1981). Constructed in the style of the picaresque novel this entertaining tale of the amorous adventures of a photographer in the Caucasus culminates in an encounter with a woman who also receives the visits of Beriya, the head of the security police in the later Stalin period. The variety of word-play, the skilful use of repetition and the change of perspective obtained by refracting the events through a friend of the photographer all give the narrative a particular artistic charm.

Venedikt Erofeev became suddenly famous through his satire *Moskva-Petushki* 1973 (Moscow-Petushki. Eng. Moscow to the end of the line, 1980), published in the West. Living on the outside of both official and unofficial circles in Moscow, he only entered Soviet public awareness under the emblem of perestroika. His satire is an evocation in words, in the shape of a railway journey, of the ancient Russian vice of drunkenness. The first-person narrative sweeps the reader on in the mounting intoxication. The accounts of Soviet reality acquire, through the rising blood-alcohol level, a partly grotesque, partly softening alienation, while the comic element of the situation is absorbed by the tragic. The serious message is brought home engagingly and amusingly through artistically effective treatment, and holds a symbolic significance for the whole chaotic absurdity of life. In his play *Val'purgieva noch' ili "Shagi komandora"* 1985 (Walpurgis Night or, "The Commander's steps"), which reached the West a decade later, Erofeev presented the problem of alcoholism in the Soviet Union more realistically. Here he depicts the arrest and arbitrary treatment in a psychiatric clinic of a Jewish toper who has preserved his independence of spirit.

No longer satisfied with the purely realistic style which won him fame in the Soviet Union in the late fifties, Vasilii Aksenov has since 1965 woven surrealism and fantasy into his work. He took with him, on emigrating in 1980 to the United States, his novel *Ostrov Krym* 1981 (Eng. The Island of Crimea, 1985), whose title, referring to the Crimea's geographical peculiarity as a peninsula, indicates at once distance from and closeness to reality. Aksenov's Crimea was not – and this fiction is basic to his story – taken over by the Red Army in 1920, but remained, with its White refugees, an autonomous independent State like a Russian Formosa. Through this prism of unreality we now see the development of emigration and the transformation of the Soviet State –

until Soviet parachutists put an end to the not fully apprehended freedom. Aksenov's satire is directed as much against the Soviet élite as against past and present tendencies in the Russian emigration.

Aleksandr Zinov'ev was a Senior Research Fellow of the Institute of Philosophy of the Soviet Academy of Sciences when he began his involvement with literature. His first, massive, satirical work *Ziya-yushchie vysoty* 1976 (Eng. *The yawning heights*, 1979), which led to his exile in Munich, is a comprehensive satire on the present Soviet system. All aspects of intellectual life are covered, in short scenes, in this sociological-satirical work. Here the Socialist system is thought out to its conclusion, and all that had been unspoken – the privileges of the upper classes and of the Party, the constraints on people of intellect, the mendacity of the press – meticulously dissected and set down. As soon as the book came out in the West, its author was persecuted just as were other satirists who had attacked the system at its roots. It was followed, year after year, by similar works, which, although monotonous overall in style, provide in some parts a sharp analysis of social relationships and individuals in the Soviet Union.

Non-realist literature

The boundary between realistic and non-realistic literature is fluid, but the difference between Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn and Sasha Sokolov in their creative handling of language is obvious. Socialist Realism, the designation created in 1932 for art as accepted in the Soviet Union, is indeed first and foremost – as signified by the adjective "Socialist" – a political concept, whose content is subordinated to Party policy, but it indicates in "realism" the sense of reflecting social and interpersonal events by the use of simple and appropriate language. The more political, and therefore less attuned to art, the attitude of Soviet literary officialdom throughout the years, the narrower was the interpretation of "realistic" in the sense of "immediately comprehensible".

The correspondence between avantgarde art, in Futurism, and political revolution, in Bolshevism, was followed by the suppression of modernism in writing (Khlebnikov, Kruchenykh), in the theatre

(Meierkhol'd), in graphic art (Malevich, Chagall, Kandinskii), and in music (Prokof'ev, Shostakovich). After 1953, renewal was concentrated on content, and only gradually did the revival of art come to affect form. This development continued after 1964; however, unreadiness to recognize the new avantgarde resulted here again in a division between official and underground literature. None the less, non-realist elements penetrated ever more deeply into the literature accepted by the censorship, and a craft as word-conscious as Marina Tsvetaeva's, or a blending of the realistic and the fantastic as grotesque as that of Mikhail Bulgakov or Andrei Platonov was once more (if within narrow limits) admitted. Still prohibited during the entire period 1964-1985 was the Absurd art of the Obèriuty, the last protest movement from Leningrad against Realism in 1927-1930, before art was brought into line (Kharms, Vvedenskii). Non-realist art was to a large extent driven out Westwards: Sasha Sokolov, Vladimir Maramzin, Vasillii Aksenov for instance emigrated, while Gennadii Aigi, Genrikh Sapgir, Vsevolod Nekrasov, Vladimir Kazakov among others could only publish their non-realist, experimental, surrealist works in the West.

Several anthologies which appeared in the West give evidence of this art, which by its very form makes a protest against the demands of Socialist conformism. METROPOL' belongs with part of its contributions in this context. APOLLON '77 1977, a large-format, voluminous tome published in Paris by the painter Mikhail Shemyakin, indicates the variety of verbal and pictorial experimentation taking place in the Soviet Union. Liesl Ujvary published in Zurich in 1975 a volume - FREIHEIT IST FREIHEIT (Freedom is freedom) - containing Russian concrete poetry by Igor' Kholin, Éduard Limonov, Vsevolod Nekrasov, Genrikh Sapgir, Vladislav Len and Vagrigh Bakhchanyan, in Russian and in German; Rosemarie Ziegler, in her parallel Russian-German anthology NRL. NEUE RUSSISCHE LITERATUR (1978, 1979/80, 1981/82), published in Salzburg, concentrated on the avantgarde. The basic attitude in all the works mentioned here is that literature does not simply reflect life and wait upon it, but, like life, has its own intrinsic value. This non-realistic literature can descend into mere playing with sounds, evoked by logic and not from the heart; it can however also be the expression in words of the spiritual, thereby fulfilling the highest duty of art.

It is among such positive literary manifestations that the work of Sasha Sokolov, who emigrated in 1975, takes its place. Important

components of his *Shkola dlya durakov* 1976 (Eng. *A school for fools*, 1977) are philosophical doubts about the reality of physical time and a borderline position between the split personality and the Doppelgänger. Here, the boundaries between life and death, past and future, have been abolished; behind the topical allusions, the perpetual variation in rhythm of different styles of speech and the symbolic correlation of the parts, lies the search for new directions in art. In his second, avantgardist novel *Mezhdu sobakoi i volkom* 1980 (The twilight hour), written in Canada and the USA, Sasha Sokolov moved even further from realistic narrative than in his first. The collection of incidents in the book occurs in the disintegration of light implied in the



With A SCHOOL FOR FOOLS, Sasha Sokolov enriched Russian literature with a surrealist, multi-voiced prose of metaphysical depth. He resides in the United States and Canada.

title; chronology, personal identity, fantasy and reality, the borders of thought and language have vanished, and only the place (the forested upper reaches of the Volga, where the author lived for a time) is clearly recognizable. The artistic and linguistic construction is impressive on its own account. In his third novel *Palisandriya* 1985 (Eng. *Astrofobia*, 1987), Sokolov takes his start from the imaginary biography of a great-nephew of Beriya in the twenty-first century. In surrealist, often grotesquely overdrawn scenes, full of irony, he also draws a vivid

portrait of an unfree man in a privileged situation. This multi-layered work is distinguished by word-play, neologisms, and delight in verbal formulation.

From 1972 onwards, the highly Absurd art of Vladimir Kazakov, who lives in Moscow, became known in the West. His utterances are characterized by protest against the purely logical conception of the world, and by an unconventional style of expression. Some of his absurdist post-1965 prose and dialogues exist in West German publications. World-fields surrounding "mirror", "clock" or "tea" serve as linkages in his "novel" *Oshibka zhivykh* 1976 (Mistake of the living), which refers back to the Russian Futurists and the absurdist art of the Obériuty. A second volume, *Sluchainyi voin* 1978 (An accidental soldier), contains his collected verse, short plays devoid of all logical connection, and an essay on Aleksei Kruchenykh.

The avantgardist work of Vladimir Maramzin, produced in Leningrad before he emigrated, is somewhat more governed by reason. *Blondin obeego tsveta* 1975 (A blonde of both colours) consists of a series of fictitious notes in which, not least, the creative process is itself reproduced and put in question. Irony, parody, anti-logic and pseudo-logic are all combined with literary allusions and a constant seeking for a point d'appui. Among Maramzin's not very extensive output are also realistic pieces of social criticism.

In Moscow, Yurii Mamleev had busied himself since 1953 in the search for the spiritual basis of our earthly existence, with the help of Indian philosophy, theosophy, and esoteric and occult texts. At the time of his emigration in 1974 he had written some 100 short stories with no prospect of publishing them in the Soviet Union. Those that appeared in the West demonstrate that he has done away with the barrier between life in the body and life outside the body, and that he views the Satanic world of evil as a perpetual, powerful threat to humanity.

As a general principle, many satirists frequently abandon the terra firma of realistic narrative. This can be done by means of interpolations, as with Voinovich, or can take the form of the grotesque, as with Bulgakov, when realism and fantasy intermingle in the narration and the reader is left all at sea. Aksenov's post-1965 prose also can be included with this literary form. In a conscious rejection of Soviet pseudo-realism, Abram Terts (Andrei Sinyavskii) in 1956 chose this

method for his narratives, and expressed his view of reality in fantastical hyperbole.

Very gradually, possibilities improved also in the Soviet Union for the plunge to be taken into non-realistic narrative. Valentin Kataev, who had always known how to write in a way that ensured publication and official recognition of his work, broke artistically new ground in *Svyatoi kolodets* 1965 (Eng. *The holy well*, 1967). He no longer narrates chronologically, and does not tell a story, but follows the impulses of his consciousness, mingling a real and an imaginary world, and on occasion allowing people and things, the present and the past, to merge into one another. The basic form of a report on a journey in the United States had, ten years after the inauguration of controlled cultural exchanges, lost its charm. The Party-conformist misrepresentation of the USA (whose Indian reservations, for example, Kataev equates with Nazi concentration camps) detracts from the value of the innovatory style. He continued in this style, avoiding realism in all his subsequent works, such as *Trava zabveniya* 1967 (Eng. *The grass of oblivion*, 1969) – subjective portraits of Bunin and Mayakovskii, or *Razbitaya zhizn' ili Volshebnyi rog Oberona* 1972 (Eng. *The mosaic of life; or, The magic horn of Oberon: Memoirs of a Russian childhood*, 1976) – a colourful jumble of 250 childhood recollections. This transfer of interest to style and psychology, combined with indifference to historical truth, reaches its peak in *Almaznyi moi venets*.

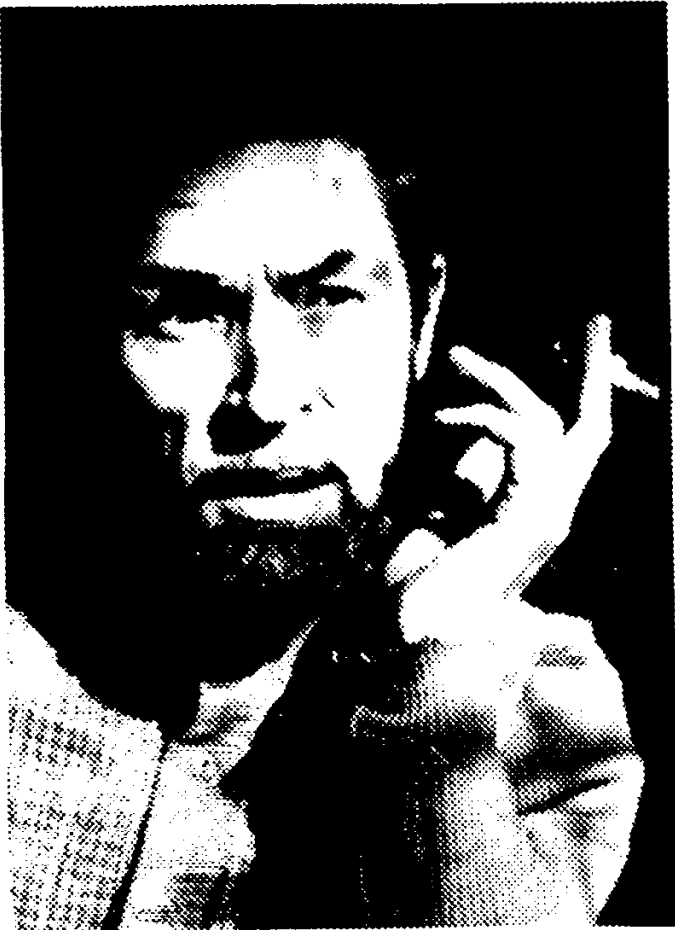
The degree of liberation from the usual realism exercised by Kataev is on the one hand insignificant compared with what could in the sixties and seventies be published only outside the Soviet Union, but also, on the other hand, when viewed beside Anatolii Kim's novel *Lotos* 1980 (*Lotus*). A writer of Korean origin, grown up with the Russian tongue, Kim proved himself in this work to be one of the greatest literary talents of his time. He tells here of the death of a simple mother in the presence of her son, an artist. The religious-based conviction that every individual existence continues after death in disembodied form, and the abolition of space and time in that transcendental world far superior to that of the body, are expressed not only in the content but in the form of this novel. Existence is grasped in its wholeness after death, in its parts during life; the disembodied – called "We" and "Chorus" – are well aware of the course of fate and the degree of independent action, and are concerned with the well-being of those in

their charge. The transformation from one state of being to another, a continuous, ever newly-formulated motif, becomes the key to the understanding of life and art.

Non-realism in drama is rarer. Many dramatists incorporated happenings outside reality into an integrated whole that simulated reality; thus Ion Drutsé in *Svyataya svyatykh* 1977 (Holy of holies), in which the repeated scenes alternately show only the thoughts of the characters in contrast to their utterances. Aleksandr Volodin disem-barrassed himself of contemporary realism about 1980, transferring the action of *Dve strely* (Two arrows), *Vykhukhol'* (The musk-rat) and *Yashcheritsa* 1984 (The lizard) to the twelfth century B. C., in order to express his fundamentally moral, but on occasion also political message in parable form within the boundaries of myth, legend and prehistory. The absurdist path in drama was taken by Andrei Amal'rik, who based himself on the Russian – but unpublished in the Soviet Union – art of the Obériuty, as well as on Ionesco and Beckett. In *P'esy* (Plays) dated 1963–1965 and published in Amsterdam in 1970, his characters are frequently interchangeable phantoms in a society of mistrust, and the irrational and the grotesque are dominant, resulting in a display of meaningless speech and dehumanized action.

Vasillii Aksenov's play which appeared in METROPOL' – *Chetyre temperamenta* 1979 (Four temperaments) – having been kept "in the drawer" since 1967, takes place outside time and space. It enquires into the existence of man after death, using symbolic characters. The partly serious, partly humourous dialogue takes its tone from the attempt at a rational exploration of these metaphysical problems.

In Russian poetry, the Chuvash Gennadii Aigi was not only the first, but also the most significant of the non-realists. His volume *Stikhi 1954–71* (Verses 1954–71) was published in Cologne in 1975. In his highly condensed verses, which oppose fragments of images or thoughts, he contemplates the perpetual struggle to give verbal form to spiritual phenomena. For him, poetry is never a semantic exercise, but the revolt of the spirit against the debasing mechanization of existence. In Paris was published *Otmechennaya zima* 1982 (A winter of note) – a second, more extensive collection of Aigi's condensed, word-conscious verse, many-sided and deeply questioning. And in a cycle of poems he composed a literary memorial to his friend Konstantin Bogatyrev, the inspired Russian translator of Rilke, murdered in 1976.³¹



Gennadii Aigi, a Chuvash, lives in Moscow and writes in Russian; from the closure of the Moscow Institute of Literature (1959) until 1988 he was kept at a distance from official Soviet literary life. His poetry, notable for its concise language and which strives for the deepest spiritual comprehension of existence, has nonetheless appeared in many books outside the Soviet Union, both in Russian and in translation. He is also known, in his homeland, for his renderings of French, Russian, Hungarian, and Polish poetry into the Chuvash language.

At the head of an informal group of poets, formed in Moscow in the sixties under the descriptive name "Konkret", was Genrich Sapgir. Earning his living as a writer of children's books, he was however, until 1988, able to publish his real work, of spiritual inspiration, only in the West. The volume *Sonety na rubashkakh* 1978 (Sonnets on shirts) displays his characteristic combination of a serious, philosophical, even religious, message, with word-play. Sapgir's imagery is bold, and distancing in its power.

In the two decades between 1964 and 1985, the bounds of permitted publication in the Soviet Union in the sphere of non-realist writing were being constantly extended. The grounds for publishing abroad are, in individual cases, hard to explain: they may be accountable to a particular person, to the circumstances of a particular year, or to an entire oeuvre. This consideration, also, supports the view that both groups – works published at home and works published abroad – compose Russian literature as a whole.

Science fiction

Since 1964 the brothers Arkadii and Boris Strugatskii have indisputably become the best-known and most widely translated authors of science fiction. In a number of new short novels (povesti) they have sought, by the similitude of a world of fantasy, to depict defects of the real world or to portray an ideal world of the imagination. In *Trudno byt' bogom* 1964 (Eng. *Hard to be a god*, 1973) they not only strike at the model of the totalitarian State, but also ridicule religious faith in its historical role as the support of the monarchy. *Ponedel'nik nachinaetsya v subbotu* 1965 (Eng. *Monday begins on Saturday*, 1977), also, incorporating elements of the folk tale, suffers by its lack of a spiritual basis and understanding of the mythic. In *Khishchnye veshchi veka* 1965 (The predatory things of the age. Eng. *The final circle of paradise*, 1976) they clothe in their fantastical, occasionally absurdist, narrative form their concern about the predatory influence of material possessions on the domain of the intellect. *Ulitka na sklone* 1966/1968 (Eng. *The snail on the slope*, 1980) was planned as a double novel, with the action alternating from chapter to chapter. Heavily veiled as was the criticism of a bureaucratic, totalitarian system, the work could only appear in the Soviet Union in its separate parts, in organs that only became known through these very texts. With *Obitaemyi ostrov* 1971 (The inhabited island. Eng. *Prisoners of power*, 1977), the Strugatskii brothers reverted to space fiction, and depicted the anti-Utopia of a tyrannical State. In *Gadkie lebedi* 1972 (Eng. *The ugly swans*, 1979) is sketched the model of a city State which – with secret police, and "lepers" segregated behind barbed wire, unable to live without books; with alcoholism, mistrust and an author who must write to order – contains so many characteristics of Soviet society and its perils that the novel could only be published abroad (Frankfurt/Main). Among the best productions of the Strugatskii brothers must be counted *Piknik na obochine* 1972 (Eng. *Roadside picnic*, 1977), because of its skilful and effective preservation of the mysterious. The book became world-famous through Andrei Tarkovskii's film adaption in "Stalker". The brothers' vivid science fiction, satirically attacking human and social weaknesses, is marred by their being able to see progress only in material, not in metaphysical, terms.

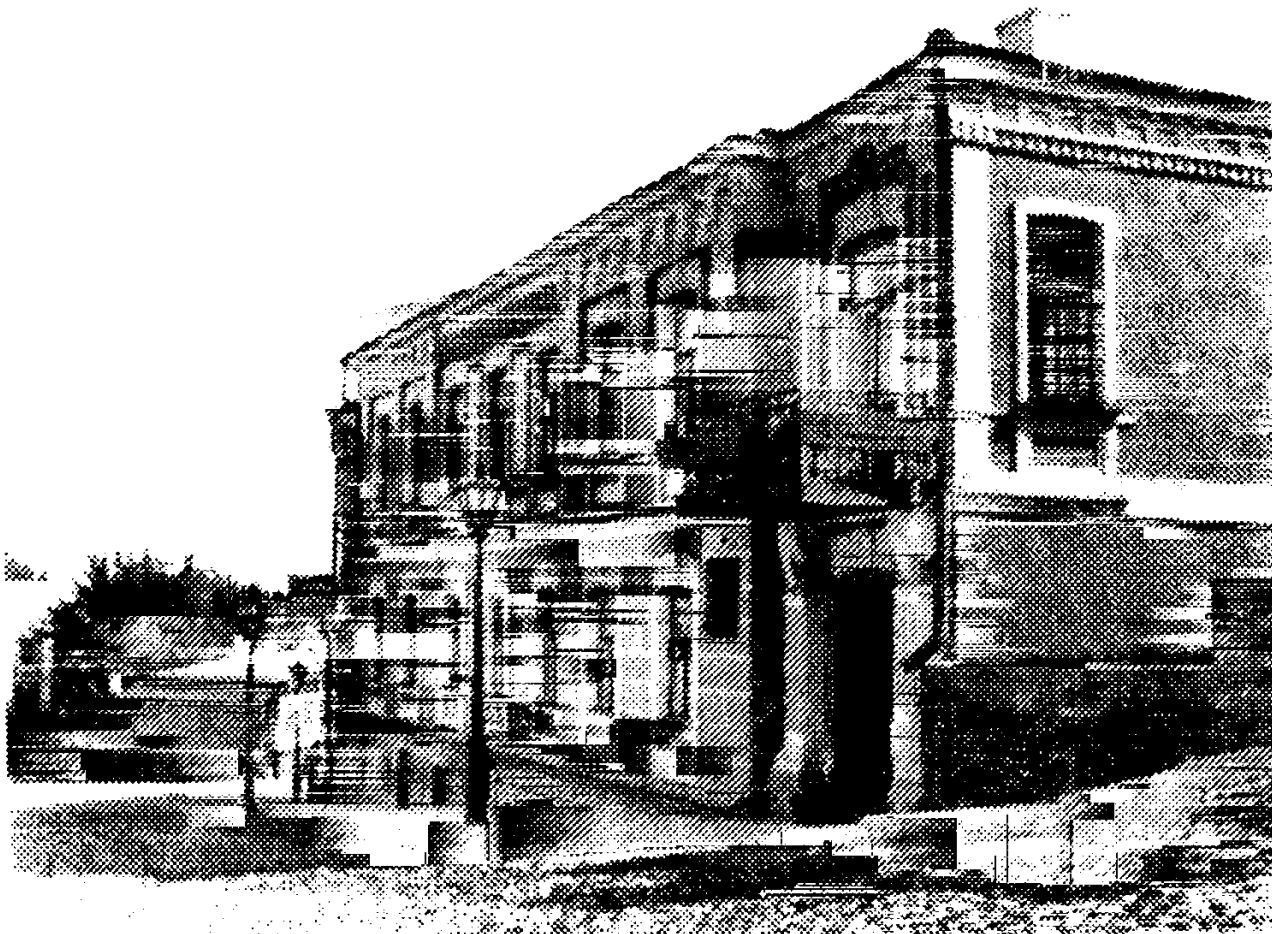
In contrast, the work of Mikhail Ancharov, who published his first short story *Venskii val's* (Viennese waltz) in 1964, springs from a religious and philosophical basis. In his short stories and novels, which in part belong with the fantastic, he depicts life as a miracle, happiness as something transcendental, and man as a microcosm inexplicable by material logic.

Gennadii Gor, also, turned to fantasy in the sixties, in order to voice spiritual problems. He uses the genre to illustrate philosophical thoughts on art and literature, semiotics and immortality, time and space. *Izvayanie* 1972 (The sculpture) or *Geometricheskii les* 1973 (The geometric forest) make art into perceptible reality, a step into both the past and the future, and lift the barrier between matter and spirit. Gor seeks means of expression which will at least hint at the spiritually highly-developed human being in his greater nearness to God, comparing him to "children, and those who believe in supernatural beings"³².

Abram Terts (Andrei Sinyavskii) owes his name as a writer to his grotesque-fantastical stories of the mid-fifties, written long before he emigrated. Only after an interval of two decades did he return to fantasy, in a new form. Even the title of the new tale, *Kroshka Tsores* 1980 (Small Tsores), is a reference to E.T.A. Hoffmann. But, with all his good will, Small Tsores brings only misfortune into the world. His fantastic activities are set in Soviet actuality, which for him, as for his author, is made bearable by the ironic style of writing.

Some authors broaden their otherwise realistic narrative by the interpolation of a layer of fantasy. This method had already been tried in contemporary Russian literature by Mikhail Bulgakov in his Civil War novel *Belaya gvardiya* 1924 (Eng. The White Guard, 1969) – a novel which however had only become known in the Soviet Union on its publication in 1973. Here, in the traditional form of a dream, is inserted a fantastical scene of the reception of the fallen on the Other Side, proclaiming that God's kingdom is open also to atheistic Bolsheviks. Boris Mozhaev, in his long short story *Poltora kvadratnykh metra* also introduced a dream scene depicting a meeting with God, in order to pose questions about the meaning of life and about the justification of fighting for one's rights on earth. The inconclusive answer is an indication of free will and individual responsibility in moral questions. Evgenii Evtushenko, also, opts for a level of fantasy in his otherwise

realistic novel *Yagodnye mesta*, to deal with various religious questions. Using the unpublished autobiography of the brilliant pioneer of extraterrestrial flight Konstantin Tsiolkovskii, he presents the existence of unbodied entities in the framework of divine creation.



Mikhail Bulgakov, the greatest Russian satirist, whose works became accessible to the Soviet reader only twenty-five to forty years after his death, lived in Kiev in the house here illustrated. For a long time it contained an unofficial museum, which demonstrated the veneration of his readers for an author suppressed by literary officialdom.

Other authors, such as Vladimir Voinovich and Chingiz Aitmatov, use similar fantastical interpolations merely as symbolic illustration of social criticism. Taken as a whole, however, modern Russian science fiction and fantastical literature make important contributions in the domains of material and technological Utopianism, social criticism, and the spiritual comprehension of human existence.

General human problems

The sifting out of works in modern Russian literature in which the emphasis is on the human aspect – on the real questions of human existence – is justified in the first place because up to 1953 themes of this kind had long been repressed in the Soviet Union and subordinated to political or economic questions, and, secondly, because Soviet literature in particular exercises an informative function to a high degree, communicating many facts ignored by the mass media. In works of permanent value, the factually significant interpenetrates with critical and human questions. The reappraisal of common moral problems in human relationships, which began in 1953, also characterizes Russian literature after 1964. However vigorously during this period the censorship might interfere with works analyzing either the present or the past, all the more did the fundamental human questions about the meaning of life, about guilt and fate, love and pain, predestination and death present their own claim to creative assertion. Russian literature abroad has always seen it as its duty, on the one hand to assert the truth about the recent past and about Russian history, and on the other to penetrate, in the framework of general human problems, into that area of religious truth forbidden by the ideology-bound Soviet censorship.

The greatest discovery of those years was Valentin Rasputin, a prose writer from Irkutsk. His work is centred on the Russian village, but his particular interest is of an ethical nature. He is concerned with the bonds of a tradition rooted in Christianity, and with the permanent moral values of human existence. He strives for the preservation of nature. In all these aspects he is a typical exponent of Russian village literature, and because of the excellence of his fiction is one of the best writers in this field. His work comprises areas both within and beyond his own experience, and displays a remarkable capacity to imagine himself into the lives of others. In form, Rasputin is master on the grand scale. In *Poslednii srok* 1970 (The terminal period. Eng. Borrowed time, 1981), the death of an old woman is kept at bay for a few days by her love for her children; meanwhile we are made familiar with human strengths and weaknesses, and with the fortunes and tribulations of Russian people. *Zhivi i pomni* 1975 (Eng. Live and remember, 1978)

In the Siberian Valentin Rasputin, contemporary Russian literature discovered, during the seventies, one of the great masters of prose. As a serious practitioner of "village literature", he finds his inspiration in his strong links with tradition, and warns against the destruction of spiritual values by the materialist philosophy of life.



is, ostensibly, a war novel about a deserter, but at heart it is a deep exploration of the entanglements of personal fortunes through their involvement with those of the community - be this a loved and loving person, a village, or a people. Rasputin's roots in tradition and religious belief give its character to *Proshchanie s Materoi* 1976 (Eng. Farewell to Matyora, 1979), a tale of human despair in a village destined to be flooded. Here the search for the meaning of life and death leads to the question of whether the dead will, on the other side, learn the whole truth - thus demonstrating that this kind of serious literature can no longer disavow the collapse of the materialist philosophy of life. Rasputin also produced a series of outstanding short stories. *Vasilii i Vasilissa* 1967 (Vasili and Vasilissa) depicts the torment of a human life based entirely on the inability to forgive. In *Uroki frantsuzskogo* 1973 (French lessons) he shows himself to be a

master of child psychology. In *Starukha* 1980 (The old woman) he displays his profound knowledge of shamanism, and the destruction of such roots of human existence by twentieth century materialism. In *Natasha* 1982 (Natasha), Rasputin demonstrates his familiarity with parapsychological occurrences, exemplified by the recognition of a nurse as a woman previously known in a dream.

Also in the post-1964 period, a remarkable literary talent came to the fore in the film director and actor Vasilii Shukshin, whose short stories about peasant life display notable human concern. His affection is for the eccentrics, the odd characters from the people, who have managed to retain their childlike faith in an imagined happiness. His short novel about the fortunes of a released prisoner *Kalina krasnaya* 1973 (Eng. Snowball berry red, 1979) became widely known in its film version. Here, as elsewhere, he uses situations that are out of the ordinary in order to seek out, whether in comedy or in tragedy, a deepened understanding of life and death in people who themselves are out of the common run.

Not the unusual in incident or character, as with Shukshin, but the everyday, is what Georgii Semenov chose to portray. Like Yurii Nagibin and Yurii Kazakov, whose output continued unaltered after 1964, he concentrates on the human aspect, avoiding anything connected with the contemporary or with politics. In his work too, the short story predominates, giving a particular insight into the psychological processes of simple people. In encounters set in an epically calm flow of narrative, he hints at many personal and interpersonal difficulties, and leaves them to resonate in the reader's mind. Semenov's moral stance, his attention to what is good, his search for that which brings happiness into human life, his closeness to nature – all these occasionally relate his work to that of Konstantin Paustovskii.

The greater part of prose literature published in the Soviet Union focusing on general human problems belongs to the category of so-called village prose. From Solzhenitsyn's *Matrenin dvor* (1963) onwards it found its chief exponent in Valentin Rasputin, with such authors as Vasilii Afonin, Vladimir Krupin, Vladimir Soloukhin and Vasilii Shukshin displaying variations of its basic ingredients: setting in the Russian village, a retreat from the contemporary and concentration on common interpersonal behaviour patterns. All good and permanent literature, in the long run, depicts interpersonal events and deals in

symbolic fashion with basic experiences – love, death, maturity, probation, failure – and with fundamental ethical questions.

Vasilii Afonin, a hitherto unknown Siberian writer of village fiction, develops the plot in *Na bolotakh* 1978 (In the marshes) round the tension between two brothers whose characters are so different that the catastrophe (one of them kills the other) seems unavoidable. The events are played out in a Soviet context – with the celebration of a war hero, the inevitable black market, imprisonment, blackleg labour, three-day wedding feasts and unquenchable attachment to the immense Siberian taiga. The depiction of human relationships however is of universal relevance.

Vladimir Krupin's fiction, also, is concentrated on the Russian village. In his story *Zhivaya voda* 1980 (The water of life) he introduced his home territory of Vyatka (now called Kirov) into modern Russian literature. With a wasted life as illustration, Krupin gives a view of much originality into the North Russian village of today, stressing the prevalence of alcohol, and without any ideologically rose-tinted softening. *Zhivaya voda* provoked angry protests and discussions – as did *Sorokovoi den'* 1981 (The fortieth day), a longer story in the form of fourteen letters. Here Krupin paints a harrowing picture of public and private squalor in the village where alcohol deliveries regulate the rhythm of life. He harks back to the spontaneous cooperation of old in the "Mir" and, like Vasillii Belov in *Kanuny*, mourns the disappearance of the neighbourly helping hand. He also portrays the reporting journalist with his inner doubts, which arise from the necessity of lying. In the same way as this story, many of Vladimir Soloukhin's writings can be classed primarily as social criticism. But in his "poetic reportage" *Prigovor* 1975 (The sentence), he departed from his usual fiction with its roots in nature. Here he presents (probably autobiographically) the thoughts and actions of a man to whom doctors have positively given only a short time to live – but who does survive.

Like Trifonov, Vladimir Tendryakov also mainly unfolds the action of his novels in the town and not in the country. If *Noch' posle vypuska* and *Shest'desyat svechei* could still be primarily included in the literature of contemporary problems, two other short novels of this period are above all laden with human problems and human conflict. In *Zatmenie* a marriage breaks up, because the husband does not

sufficiently enter into his wife's spiritual and religious yearnings. In *Rasplata* 1979 (The pay-off), he takes up the theme, already illuminated in its psychological and religious depths by Dostoevskii, of "justified" murder, and makes evident the complicity of everyone in near relationship to the perpetrator. The self-questioning teacher, who plays an important part in this novel (and had previously also been used by Tendryakov as a fictional character), reappears at the centre of *Shest'desyat svechei*. His morally dishonest conduct is a consequence of his conformity to Party requirements. Uprightness in principle and in teaching is embodied in a pre-Revolutionary school-master: in his search for positive ideals Tendryakov, like the village prose writers, looks to the past.

During the period 1964 – 1985 there arose and gathered strength in the Soviet Union a particular women's literature – that is to say, works by female authors dealing chiefly with women's problems. Natal'ya Baranskaya, Irina Grekova and Maya Ganina became known as the most important of these authors.

The theme of everyday life, with its double burden for women – job and family – runs throughout most of Natal'ya Baranskaya's stories, most typically in *Nedelya kak nedelya*. In shorter pieces she depicts the more particular troubles of women – such as their husbands' alcoholism, and their unthinking readiness to burden an equally working wife with the laborious shopping for food and clothing as well as the housework; likewise the problems of love – whether love fulfilled, love unfulfilled, or love betrayed.

Basing herself on her experience as a professor of mathematics, Irina Grekova often describes the fortunes of scientists in her short stories and novels, while remaining keenly attentive to the problems of women in general. In *Letom v gorode* 1965 (Summer in the city) she casts light on the attitude to unplanned pregnancy and abortion as a problem of generations; in *Vdovii parokhod* 1981 (Eng. The ship of widows, 1985) she unfolds, by means of numerous changes of perspective, a mother-son relationship and the tensions between unattached women in a Soviet communal dwelling.

Maya Ganina was the first Soviet representative of women's literature. During the seventies she progressed from short stories to the novel, portraying women of action, whose main interest is their professional life. In the novel *Esli budem zhivy ...* 1983 (If we sur-

vive ...) she tells the life-story of a woman who abandons her negatively-portrayed husband, and seeks in vain for happiness in her private life.

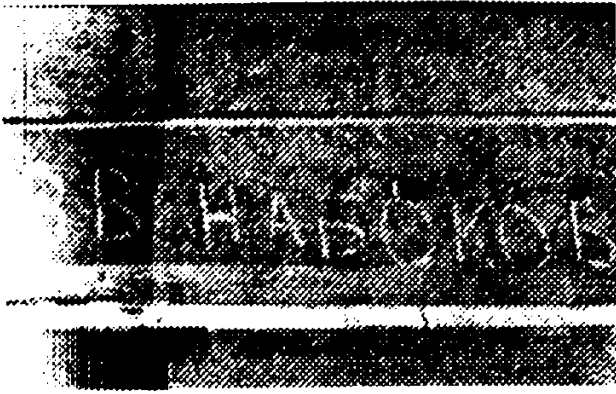
Daniil Granin, who in *Iskateli* 1954 (Eng. Those who seek, 1957) had written one of the novels about scientists in the spirit of de-Stalinization, opted as a rule for contemporary problems, with plots related to the engineering profession. In *Odnofamilets* 1975 (The namesake) he eschews social issues, and addresses himself to common human problems (such as talent and character, acceptance of fate or individual struggle) exemplified in an engineer coming to terms with his past (a frustrated scientific career, a broken love affair).

A newcomer to Soviet literature in 1965 was Vladimir Makanin. He features city-dwellers, in their jobs, in their families, and among friends. His interest lies in psychological penetration of his characters in their weaknesses, and his strength in grasp of the microcosm, not of the spiritual or contemporary social context. The novel *Golosa* 1980 (Voices) unites as a collage fourteen innocuous everyday stories, with the attention focused on the thoughts and actions of the characters. *Predtecha* 1982 (The precursor) does not fulfil the religious promise of the reference in its title to John the Baptist. Makanin paints a one-sided portrait of a healer as a bizarre person, who lacks the quality most important for anyone in the medical profession: compassion.

From Russian literature abroad, and in the context of humane moral aspiration, the voluminous work of Vladimir Lindenberg (Chelishchev), written almost entirely in German, must be mentioned, beginning with *Die Menschheit betet* 1956 (Eng. Meditation and mankind, 1959). Along with his autobiography, works from the period 1964 – 1985 which merit particular attention include *Gottes Boten unter uns* 1967 (God's messengers among us), because here Lindenberg, by citing factual occurrences mostly experienced by himself, demonstrates the operation of supernatural helping powers, and also *Geheimnisvolle Kräfte um uns* 1974 (Spiritual forces around us), in which he explores the preordination of many encounters. *Jenseits der Fünfzig* 1970 (The far side of fifty) is a guide on how to accept ageing; *Über die Schwelle* 1972 (Across the threshold) is an important treatise on death, attitudes to death, existence after death, and reincarnation. All these books contain quotations from the world's religious literature, admissions of Russian Orthodox Christianity, and experiences from his

childhood in Russia, and are stamped with faith in man's essential goodness.

Vladimir Nabokov, during the period in question, continued his output of novels, whose main concern is the human being in his behaviour, which seen from changing perspectives is subject to constantly varying judgments. In *Ada, or Ardor, a family Chronicle* (1969) he takes up once again the theme of the lost Russian culture of



Vladimir Nabokov enjoyed universal esteem as one of the greatest Russian writers of the first emigration while his work - at first in Russian, and later in English - was still suppressed by Soviet literary officialdom. But the house in Leningrad where he grew up had already been furnished with a handwritten inscription by unknown admirers. The changes in Soviet cultural politics after 1985 allowed Soviet readers access to some of his works for the first time.



the nineteenth century; *Transparent Things* (1972) is, on the surface, likewise a playful experiment in form with the structure of the novel, but at heart is an exploration of the question of material reality as mere semblance and of the inner meaning of death. In *Look at the Harlequins!* (1974) Nabokov resumed his frequent play with a Nabokov-Doppelgänger, and disguised many a serious statement with irony, parody and word-play.

To the Russian writers who as émigrés used the languages of their host countries can be opposed those in the Soviet Union who, themselves non-Russian, wrote in the Russian language. Among those

non-Russians who became part of Russian literature about 1964, Maksud Ibragimbekov, from Azerbaidzhan, merits particular attention. In *I ne bylo luchshe brata* 1973 (Eng. There was never a better brother, 1982), he depicts the conflict arising between the persistence and the decline of the ancient oriental ways of life, and binds his realistic narrative with careful symbolism. Human nature under test when life is at risk is the theme of *Za vse khoroshee – smert'* 1974 (For all that's good – death), in which the connection with the Second World War is only secondary.

In the field of prose, perhaps the most important example of this interpenetration is Aitmatov's novel *I dol'she veka dlitsya den'*. This novel can indeed claim a place in each of the four subject divisions considered here. Already in *Belyi parokhod* 1970 (Eng. The white steamship, 1972) Aitmatov had opposed good and evil to one another, associating "good" with the ties of tradition, myth and a religious attitude, and in this respect the new novel is a continuation of the story written ten years previously. But whereas then he presented man and wife as estranged, he now depicts people in love and friendship – even in the love that finds its pinnacle in renunciation for the sake of another. The book is focused on death, and, in spite of materialist explanations, demands a conscious integration of death into life. Fundamentally, Aitmatov's novels are distinctly weaker than his stories. While the stories are mostly fired by poetic inspiration, the novels adhere to a rational structure. In the short novel *Pegii pes, begushchii kraem morya* 1977 (A skewbald dog running on the shore), set by the Sea of Okhotsk, Aitmatov again proves himself a competent storyteller, attached to nature and affectionately disposed towards children. The action is relegated to a mythical prehistoric time, when people still lived in total unity with gods and spirits. Here also Aitmatov's spiritual message is hard to correlate with his political activity.

Anatolii Kim came on the literary scene only in 1976, with his first collection of short stories. In *Nefritovyi poyas* 1981 (The nephrite belt) he describes the changes in an invalid conscious of the imminence of death and of the significance of death's integration into life. *Solov'inoe ékho* 1980 (Echo of nightingales) depicts the interlocking weave of destinies down the generations, as illustrated by a German merchant who in 1912 marries a Korean woman in Siberia. These works also are characterized by the spiritual comprehension of earthly events, which



reaches its peak in the short novel *Lotos* (1980), in which realistic narrative goes by the board. In the novel *Belka* 1984 (The squirrel), Kim attempted to transpose the polyphony of world events into a narrative structure in the style of J.S. Bach.

In the field of drama, Viktor Rozov returned to the scene with a further series of plays, whose chief concern was with common human problems – which, true to his particular talent, he develops in contemporary situations and preferably in the family circle. In *Traditsionnyi sbor* 1967 (A traditional gathering) he spanned twenty-five years, and set several characters to reflect on what they had achieved since leaving school in 1942. Rozov's just conclusion, that personal development alone, and not position in society, can be a standard for judgment, was contested from official Soviet critics downwards to official textbooks. *Situatsiya* 1973 (A situation) illustrates the perils inherent in the unexpected acquisition of wealth – as much for the recipient of the windfall and his family as for his environment. Material wealth arouses mean instincts.

The greatest discovery of this period in the field of drama was the short-lived Aleksandr Vampilov, from Irkutsk. In somewhat paradoxical situations he points out moral predicaments of contemporary social life – perhaps forms of corruption in the sphere of higher education, or human betrayal revealed through the unconditional trust of the betrayed. This last is one of the themes in *Starshii syn* 1970 (The elder son), in which a younger man encountering a stranger claims to be his illegitimate son. This unusual situation gives an insight into serious human problems, and from the fortuitous meeting there arises a fateful spiritual sonship. In *Utinaya okhota* 1970 (Eng. Duck hunting, 1980) he unravels, from three separate stages in time, the psychological make-up of a weak-willed man, who comes to grief both in his personal and his professional life, and who is constantly induced by negligence and dishonesty to take the line of least resistance. In his short comedy *Istoriya s metranpazhem* 1971 (The affair with the maker-up) can be

Anatolii Kim, a Russian writer of Korean origin, first made his name in literature during the seventies. The clear truth of his metaphysical understanding of the world, seeing human life-span as embedded in a higher spiritual existence, is surprising and pleasing in the context of Soviet literature. This illustration for his novel LOTUS is by Jürgen Fischer from Weiden.

recognized an allusion to Gogol's *The Inspector General*, and the universal relevance of censure of servility before high office – but here the satire is entirely aimed at a society that already takes inequality before the law for granted.

Aleksei Arbuzov, also, preserved his reputation as one of the remarkable older Russian dramatists. By preference, he confined himself to purely interpersonal problems. In *Skazki starogo Arbata* 1970 (Tales of old Arbat**), he combines reflections on artistic creativity with the love story of a sixty year-old doll-maker and a twenty year-old dressmaker. In *Zhestokie igry* 1978 (Cruel games**), a play partly situated in the West Siberian oilfield, he demonstrates how easily one person can, through carelessness, inflict serious physical and mental pain, indeed permanent damage, on another.

Aleksandr Volodin, in the two decades between 1964 and 1985, turned away from themes of contemporary significance and placed personal relationships squarely in the foreground. *S lyubimymi ne rasstavaites'* 1969 (Do not part from your loved ones) describes, in skilfully changing scenes, a case of separation utterly without reason. In *Osennii marafon* 1980 (Autumn marathon), Volodin demonstrates, in the situation of one man between two women, the destructive power of weakness of will combined with indecision.

Probably the best play by Ion Drutsè, a Moldavian author of fiction and drama writing in Russian, is *Svyataya svyatykh* (1977). By "Holy of holies" is meant Nature, in particular the domestic animals which humans are bound to respect as creatures. Allegorical scenes and dialogue in thoughts reinforce the message of the work – to demonstrate the possibility of friendship and love between occupants of completely different social positions. Some very real problems are raised: in the human sphere, the anticipation of one's own death; in politics, voluntary retirement, at the appropriate time, from high office.

Yuliu Ėdlis, also, originated in that part of Romania which was annexed by the Soviet Union after the Second World War as the Moldavian SSR. Like Drutsè, he writes in Russian. His play *Gde tvoi brat, Avel'?* 1965 (Abel, where is your brother?) shows the confrontation of two former Russian prisoners of war, one previously a political instructor and the other one of Vlasov's men. In *Iyun', nachalo leta* 1970 (June, beginning of summer) he analyses the psychology of the break-up of a marriage. Ėdlis is haunted by the

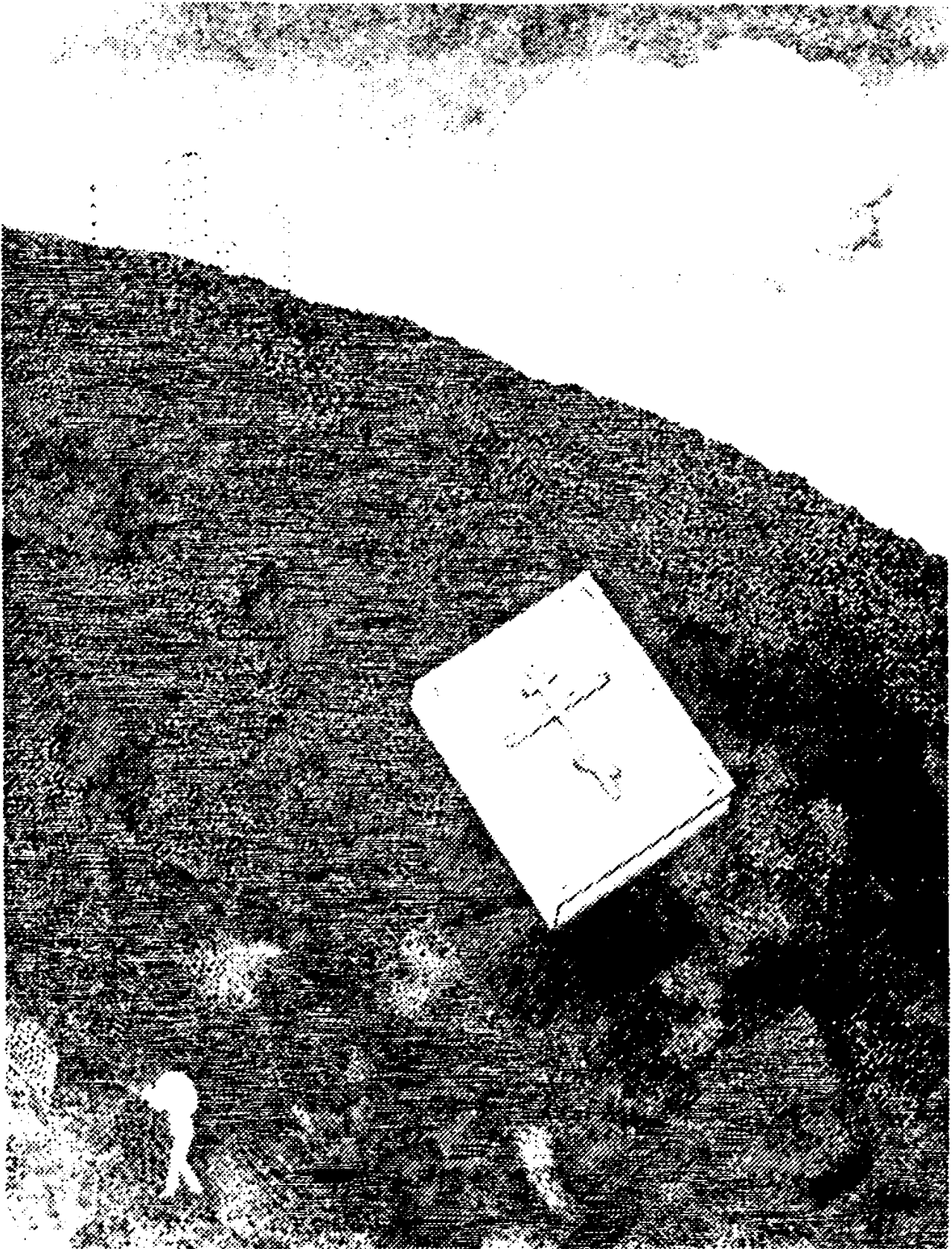
question of whether guilt can be erased by time – indeed whether one man can be another's judge.

Viktor Slavkin proved himself a notable dramatic talent, his first major play – *Vzroslyaya doch' molodogo cheloveka* 1979 (A young man's grown-up daughter) – being produced on one of the Moscow stages. Here he opposes his own generation of forty year-olds to youth in two aspects: to contemporary youth, that is to say his own children, and to the youth of twenty years previously, when American jazz was a forbidden ideal – in fact himself around 1960. In *Serso* (Cerceau), written in 1981, he depicts loneliness and the nostalgic longing for past love, in the vain attempt of a random group to achieve human warmth, trust and love, by forming a new society.

In 1980 Aleksandr Galin burst on the scene with his first play *Retro* (Backwards). This work also is entirely focused on one interpersonal problem: a seventy-two year-old pensioner, after the death of his wife, is shown as the object of his daughter's well-intentioned efforts to interfere in his life and bring about his remarriage. Galin's technical mastery ensured the success of this entertaining but far from superficial comedy.

In the domain of poetry, there was no noticeable hiatus in the Soviet Union in 1964. Poets who in the previous decade had made their names with a genuine evocation of the perennial questions of humanity (such as Arsenii Tarkovskii, Evgenii Vinokurov, Aleksandr Kushner, Vadim Shefner, Boris Slutskii, Leonid Martynov) remained faithful to their own forms of expression, and cultivated a concentrated philosophical utterance which never expends itself in the merely topical.

Poetry is ultimately required to present general human problems. Here Soviet poetry is facing a dilemma – one brought about by the totalitarian Communist system as a whole. Questions about the meaning of life and the status of death can only (on the evidence over millennia of spiritual witnesses) be answered from a religious point of view. But religious expression is, on principle, forbidden by the Marxist censor. However just as government orders from 1917 onwards still failed to eradicate religious activity, thought and yearning, so religious ideas did not completely disappear from Soviet literature – in fact in the period 1964–1985 they had a notable resurgence compared with the thirties and forties. The religious declarations are generally subliminal –



Aleksandr Kharitonov: "The flying Gospels". Sixty years of atheist propaganda and persecution of believers failed to extinguish religious feeling in the Soviet Union. Christian belief is cryptically concealed in many literary works which have appeared there, and characterizes many books published in emigration. Their authors, like Kharitonov, found their way to Christian faith in the Soviet Union. The artist (born in 1931), has been Orthodox since the end of the sixties, and lives in Moscow.

– veiled in symbolism rather than outspoken – but after all this is one of the characteristics of good art. Open religious confession as we know it in nineteenth-century Russian literature – the poem as prayer – remained banned from Soviet Russian literature. But it lived on in Russian literature abroad, regardless of where it had originated, whether in Russia or in emigration.

The most important new talent to become known in Russian poetry in the years 1964–1985 was that of Iosif Brodskii. His metaphysical poems could, in 1959, only circulate in samizdat, and Brodskii's unsanctioned poetry was the reason for his banishment from Leningrad, his home town. This was still, in 1964, the work of those forces which the liberal upsurge of the Thaw had halted. This rejection by the Soviet State of a totally humane, religious type of poetry led, in the case of its finest representative Iosif Brodskii, to emigration (in 1972), and to publication abroad of his work from 1965 onwards – including the volume *Ostanovka v pustyne* 1970 (A halt in the wilderness), which also contains one of his best early poems *Bol'shaya èlegiya Dzhonu Donnu* (Great elegy for John Donne), which culminates with the representation of the bodiless, spiritual existence of human beings attainable through sleep or death. To the metaphysical depth of Brodskii's works correspond his formal scope and verbal diversity. Brodskii's creative powers have been unbroken by exile, thus (in common with comparable fates of Russian writers) indicating that, in spite of the division in Russian literature, the part liv-



Iosif Brodskii: one of the most important Russian poets of the twentieth century. The stages of his life: samizdat poet and translator in Leningrad; internal exile and forced labour, because the Soviet authorities did not accept his activity as a poet; exile to the USA; worldwide recognition as poet, Nobel Prizewinner 1987; first member of the third emigration to whom a Soviet journal could accord the disposal of a few pages.

ing outside the homeland continues creatively active, and will bring its own real contribution to Russian literature as a whole. Brodskii published three collections during this period: *Konets prekrasnoi épokhi* 1977 (The end of a wonderful epoch), *Chast' rechi* 1977 (Eng. A part of speech, 1980) and *Rimskie élegii* 1982 (Roman elegies). The imagery and the narrative level of his verse, which with its frequent enjambements is often close to prose, reflect his encounters with Western culture (Mexico, London, Paris, Rome). He is developing into a bilingual (English/Russian) poet. In 1981, with the sum of \$ 208 000 (to cover five years), from the McArthur Foundation, Brodskii was the recipient of the largest grant ever allotted to an émigré Russian writer.

When Brodskii was forced to emigrate, older poets from both preceding emigrations were still active. Yurii Terapiano brought out in *Parusa* 1965 (Sails) his final volume, which yet again shows how deep were his religious roots. Valerii Pereleshin, whose emigration had taken him across China to Rio de Janeiro, was from 1967 onwards once more heard as a poet. Master of the sonnet form, he assembled 153 of these poems (out of respect for Shakespeare, one short of the Bard's total) in the volume *Ariél'* (1976). Pereleshin's poetry can contain prayer, accusation, doubt, or professions of love for his friends, and rings the changes on individual thoughts to penetrate to the essential heart of a matter.

Dmitrii Klenovskii, although he could only leave the Soviet Union during the second emigration, is closer to the writers of the first both by reason of age and of his Acmeistic tradition. In 1967 he collected under one cover (*Stikhi* (Verses)) his first six volumes of poetry, following them with another four before his death. For him, as for Pereleshin, successive lives on earth are a self-evident fact, so that his poetry displays no fear of death, but a recognition of the meaning of earthly life through death. Relationship with nature, and awareness of living in the company of one's guardian angel are also among his dominant themes.

Boris Nartsissov brought out one volume in 1965 – *Pamyat'* (Memory), to be followed by three more including his last, *Zvezdnaya ptitsa* 1978 (Starry bird). The inspiration of his work lies in the numinous, with Doppelgänger, ghosts, dream visions etc. as themes, but fine nature poetry and reminiscent evocations of his Estonian home and of his sojourn in Australia are also to be found in it.

Nikolai Morshen, an author of the second emigration now living in the United States, brought out his second volume *Dvoetochie* 1967 (Colon), followed by a third, *Ėkho i zerkalo* 1979 (The echo and the glass). Here he treats the questions of good and evil, right and wrong, from an ironic distance; his delight in wordplay and verbal artistry displaces his personal attitude even more into the background, leaving the reader in the paradox of fragmentary questions.

Yurii Ivask, who in 1944 fled from Estonia before the Soviet troops and has been a teacher of Slavic studies in the United States since 1949, combined in his poem *Igrayushchii chelovek* 1973 (Homo ludens) autobiographical recollections (mainly about encounters with art – for instance in Mexico) with fundamental reflections on poetry, human existence and God. This work, along with other of Ivask's poems, was taken up in a samizdat volume which appeared in Moscow in 1977.

Among the female poets of the first emigration, Marina Tsvetaeva and Zinaida Gippius were the most important. Both were dead by the time of the third emigration. But contact with the third emigration was found by Ekaterina Tauber from Khar'kov, who after sixteen years in Belgrade had settled in the south of France in 1936. Her limpid verse, wholly springing from the soul, is always related to nature, often works on themes of loneliness and remembrance, and draws its strength from Christian faith. At the age of seventy she published the collection *Nezdeshnyi dom* 1973 (A house not of this world), following it eleven years later with *Vernost'* 1984 (Fidelity).

As part of the second emigration Ol'ga Anstei, with her then husband, the poet Ivan Elagin, came to the West from Kiev. In the United States she brought out her second and last poetic collection *Na yuru* 1976 (In an open place) – lyrical declarations of the world as animate, which in their recognition of adversity compel the positive decision – either opening one's eyes to it, or teaching one to accept suffering. Valentina Sinkevich, who found her way to the American emigration through forced labour in Germany during the war, did not become known until 1973 with her first volume *Ogni* (Fires), following it with *Nastuplenie dnya* (Daybreak) in 1978. Her poems guide the reader to a conscious acceptance of life in its spiritual dimension. In the anthologies which she has edited since 1977 she gathered poets from all three waves of emigration.

Among the Russian poets who had to leave the Soviet Union shortly after Brodskii's departure, Naum Korzhavin and Aleksandr Galich had already made their name at home. Korzhavin, cast up in Boston, brought out two volumes of poetry – *Vremena* 1976 (Times) and *Spleteniya* 1981 (Interweavings). Although his long poem *Moskovskaya poëma* (Moscow poem) takes off from personal experience (his conveyance through Moscow as a prisoner), it basically deals with perennial questions – in his case the many-sided entanglement of "conscience, bread, freedom".



Naum Korzhavin is among the many Russian poets for whom the repression of intellectual freedom in the Soviet Union made it impossible to continue living there. His religiously-based poetry is a multi-voiced indictment of violence past and present; it is also a testimony to integrity, courage and freedom.

Aleksandr Galich, whose poems, and the songs he sang to his guitar in the early sixties, had found wide circulation in samizdat, published the volume *Pesni* 1969 (Songs) in Frankfurt/Main before being forced to emigrate. His poems combine the religious with the political, sober reflection with satire and irony, and uncompromisingly contend for the freedom for self-realization.

As part of the third emigration, Liya Vladimirova, who in the Soviet Union had worked as a script-writer, went to Israel. In her volumes of poetry, such as *Svyaz' vremen* 1975 (The bond of time) or *Sneg i*

pesok 1982 (Snow and sand), she expresses in highly contrasted images her constant search for man's true place in life.

Anri Volokhonskii is part of the avantgardist tendency of modern Russian poetry, closely related to the direction of the journal *ЁЖО*. His poetry is rooted in philosophy and religion, with irony, parody and the grotesque as its forms of expression.

Two Leningrad poets, who had radically departed from the received ways of writing, were able to publish only in the West: Elena Shvarts, who in her verse searches for the place of man in a world governed by evil, and Viktor Krivulin, who pins down, in language rich in imagery, the pressures and destructiveness of the surrounding world.

The physicist Boris Shapiro, likewise, goes his own way. Since he emigrated, his striving has been for the telling word, in Russian and German, and his poems collected in *Solo na fleite* 1984 (Solo for flute) take musicality as basis – as "contextless semantics of the musical organization" of the text.

Until 1979 Inna Lisnyanskaya and her husband Semen Lipkin were recognized poets in the Soviet Union. The consequence of their collaboration on the anthology *METROPOL'* was that for years to come they were able only to publish abroad. It can be seen from Lisnyanskaya's poetry to what extent spiritual affirmation is crushed by the Soviet censorship. Her thinking is not of general morality, as was to be concluded from her pre-Metropol' poems, but solidly religious. The volume *Dozhdi i zerkala* 1983 (Rain and mirrors) was the first to give a true impression of her poetry. She overcomes temporal problems by proposing that, in the sight of God, present and future, fugitive and pursuer, self and time become one and the same. Semen Lipkin's "drawer" poems, also, now saw the light of day abroad. His volume *Volya* 1981 (Free will) ends with the confession (at heart also Christian) "that even human sorrow is a festival of life, a festival of existence".

The most significant new talent among the poets publishable in the Soviet Union during the period 1964–1985 was Oleg Chukhontsev. It was only after eighteen years of occasionally contributing to journals that he was able to bring out his first slim volume of poetry *Iz trekh tetradei* 1976 (From three booklets). Here he formulated, in telling verse, the close relationship of life and death; he stressed the importance of keeping one's eye on the path – the path of life, or the daily path; and coined the term "sud'ba – nesud'ba" (Fate – non-fate),

which can strike or spare the individual. In a further volume *Slukhovoe okno* 1983 (The dormer window), Chukhontsev revealed his deep feeling for people's pain and suffering, and his consideration for the poor and the persecuted – the Job-figures of this world.

Most of the poets who during the Thaw had ventured to take up the themes of the spiritual and the interpersonal continued to write, and some of them were able to bring out one-, two- or three-volume collections of their verse.

Arsenii Tarkovskii, in *Zimnii den'* 1980 (Winter's day), raises the question of judgment – judgment of our actions, and also self-judgment. For him, as for Dostoevskii, this question transcends our earthly existence: man's survival after death is subject to no doubts. Two larger collections, *Izbrannoe* 1982 (Selected verse) and *Stikhi raznykh let* 1983 (Verses from various years), confirm the permanence of Tarkovskii's reputation.

Boris Slutskii also, during the period in question, brought out new books: *Vremya moikh rovesnikov* 1977 (The time of my contemporaries) and *Neokonchennye spory* 1978 (Unconcluded arguments), and a large collection of his poems written between 1944 and 1977 – *Izbrannoe* 1980 (Selected verse). Laconically concise as ever, with the choice of words determined by their sound, his poetry now concentrates on – besides the art of poetry – questions of age, death ("progress in another country"), fate, and the grounding of personal existence in a wider context. But his politically critical poetry remained outlawed in samizdat.

A poet who, until the Thaw, could only publish translations, David Samoilov made his name thereafter with his own poems, through his clarity of expression and purity of thought. In 1980 he was able to assemble a volume of selections – *Izbrannoe* (Selected verse) – of poems from three earlier collections (1958, 1963, 1978). He also revealed himself an outstanding theoretician and an expert on Russian poetry in his treatise *Kniga o russkoi rifme* 1973 (A book on Russian rhyme). In the later poems belonging to this period the theme of loneliness predominates; external life is viewed as a sacrifice, as "self-combustion" to which poetry is contrasted as immutable – as the expression of the true inner life, quite detached from that of every day.

A poet of Russophile tendency (with its links with the soil and with tradition) Nikolai Rubtsov, who died young, gained recognition with his

elegiac verse. So remote from him is the world of technology that he does not even contrast with it his own world of stars, water and birch trees, of silence and space. A posthumously published volume *Stikhotvoreniya 1977* (Poems), which collects his work from 1953 to 1971, makes manifest the fundamental place of the world's pain in nature, and Rubtsov's desire to be of help.

Viktor Sosnora, whose first volume of poetry appeared in 1962, stands out with a truly individual style of verse. The volume *Pesn' lunnaya 1982* (Moon song), gathered from his work of over a decade, displays his versatility. Sosnora searches for his own place in spiritual reality, contemplates nature and the world of urban technology, he even, in a kindly ironic manner, depicts themes from old Russian and ancient history, transposing characters from heroic poetry into unheroic, merry or warlike, even amorous, but always human, everyday situations. But sometimes, also, pain pierces through the armour of his poetic foolery. In 1987 he let it be known that three-quarters of his poetic output still had perforce remained unpublished.

After 1965 Vladimir Sokolov published several collections of his ideology-free, nature-related poems. The volume *Dolina 1981* (The valley) gathers together all his work since 1948, during which period he found success as one of the so-called "traditionalist" poets. Sokolov's eye is for the world of the mind, the universal – never the affairs of the day. He gives expression to the fragility of human existence, and its perils; turns his gaze to the eternal; sees in music "the only wonder"; and uses a simple language, with metaphors based on nature, to convey many-layered meaning.

Bulat Okudzhava became known during the Thaw for his socially critical, even religious, songs, which he rendered to his own guitar accompaniment. Some of them appeared in the Soviet Union, and others abroad. During the Brezhnev period he retreated into the historical novel. (This portrait by Ya. Trushnovich is from the Possev edition, Frankfurt 1968).



Along with his historical prose, Bulat Okudzhava remained faithful to poetry. His volume *Stikhotvoreniya* 1984 (Poems), containing post-1957 verse, reveals his religious sense and his acceptance of fate. In one poem, inspired by the concept of emigration, he depicts his own, officially ordered, departure from the Arbat, at the same time evoking the emigrations of the seventies and eighties, so tragic for the Russian people and for the Russian literature.

Yurii Levitanskii, in his most important book *Izbrannoe* 1982 (Selected verse), collected his poems from the same period. His grave, contemplative poetry, with its considerable technical skill, has the ability to penetrate from a factual experience or observation into the depths of spirituality – and, as one well acquainted with ironical distancing, he has produced a number of parodies.

Vladimir Vysotskii's output of songs belongs to the tradition of Bulat Okudzhava and Aleksandr Galich. His popularity with millions of Russians at all levels is due to his talent for formulating and projecting, with heightened intensity, the everyday of his fellow-men on a practical and on a spiritual level. Only after his death, with *Nerv* 1981 (The nerve), was a bare quarter published of his supplicatory, ironic, humorous, accusatory, religious, benevolent poetry.

Bella Akhmadulina's poems are very individual in character. Her dream-world and her melancholy, her readiness to be available to others and her joy in friendship, arise here as new, in conscious word-artistry occasionally reinforced by effects of distancing. A slim volume, *Svecha* 1977 (The candle), was followed in Tiflis by a wide selection (also containing translations and prose) *Sny o Gruzii* 1979 (Dreams of Georgia).

Rimma Kazakova, who collected her post-1955 poems in *Ruslo* 1979 (River-bed) and a two-volume edition *Izbrannye proizvedeniya* 1985 (Selected works), frequently proceeds from her experience of nature. Beside contemplative poetry we find poems about woman in love and mother-love. Her confident appeal to what is good is able to communicate itself to the reader.

Two of the three volumes *Sobranie sochinenii* 1976–77 (Collected works) of Leonid Martynov contain a broad selection of his life's poetry. Basing himself on concrete, vivid depiction in his search for the significant, Martynov finds his way to a philosophical interpretation. To

this end, he is always ready to choose new images, in order to preserve creative ambiguity.

Evgenii Vinokurov, whose uncomplicated, apolitical everyday philosophy is accessible to a broader readership, brought out, in the period under review, besides small new works, three larger collections – in one volume in 1968, two volumes in 1976, and three volumes in 1983/84.

Evgenii Evtushenko's verse has no place in the domain of the interpersonal and introspection. His three-volume selection of poems and narrative verse *Sobranie sochinenii* 1983–84 (Collected works) is a record of his publicistic concerns. One of his 1971 poems emphatically sets his own work apart from the revival of metaphysical poetry in the style of Fet. On the other hand, Evtushenko regularly offsets his orthodox propaganda with critical journalism.

Andrei Voznesenskii, likewise, lost his leading role as renewer of Soviet poetry after 1956. To him also was granted a three-volume edition *Sobranie sochinenii* 1983–84 (Collected works). The title of a later volume, *Proraby ducha* 1984 (Foremen of the spirit) – the title a metaphor for poets and artists – shows how the provocative juxtaposition of the most diverse semantic and thematic elements continues to characterize his work. But his religious terminology refers to the spirit of the age, not to inner conviction.

However clear the difference may be between serious poetry published in the Soviet Union and its equivalent abroad, as far as the size of volumes and editions is concerned, they are, as regards spiritual assertion, fairly evenly balanced. In this field the content of truth in what is allowed by the Soviet censor is seldom interfered with, and the apolitical is still permitted. The Russian contribution to a spiritual comprehension of existence is notable.

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1985–1988

Transformation of the politics of literature

The emergence as leader of Mikhail Gorbachev in March 1985 caused a stir in the politics of the Soviet Union, including those concerned with literature and art. With catchwords such as "openness" (glasnost'), "restructuring" (perestroika) and "democratization" (demokratizatsiya) as guides, there was permitted, on the one hand, a measure of criticism which had until then been quite out of the question, while on the other publication was sanctioned of works that had for years been suppressed by the censor. This enlargement of Soviet intellectual life affected members of the first emigration (Nabokov, Khodasevich, G. Ivanov, Chagall), defunct victims of persecution in the Soviet Union (Kharms, Gumilev, Pasternak, Bulgakov, Platonov), recognized authors, now dead, of whom particular works had been suppressed (V. Grossman, Tvardovskii, Slutskii, Trifonov) – also however living writers (Chukovskaya, V. Kornilov, Mozhaev, Nagibin, A. Rybakov), and many who only now achieved recognition after years of literary work (Aigi, Sadur).

Criticism of existing conditions was directed, above all, against the omnipotence of those functionaries, branded as bureaucrats, who, themselves untalented or indifferent literary craftsmen, made the decisions for or against banning, and about size of edition and interference with the text, of works by writers vastly superior to themselves. In this context, criticism was also directed against editorial methods (that is to say, the encroachments of publishers, their readers and the censorship), as also against the undemocratic election procedures by which the selectors had been previously determined by the Communist Party according to the Nomenklatura system. Such criticisms were voiced at the 8th Writers' Congress of the USSR (24–28 June 1986) – the first congress for a long time to be distinguished by a real debate, with addresses that had not been approved beforehand. The 543 participants, however, have been delegated by the 9584 members according to the old system. The demand, made here, for the Zhdanov Party resolution of 1946 to be lifted, was met on 20 October 1988.

As far as the key positions in the literary establishment were concerned, only minor changes of direction have been achieved. The holders of power, who had fought their way to the top under Brezhnev, were to a large extent able to protect their position, concealing their true, arch-conservative intentions behind the new slogans. The struggle between the groups is affecting the overall position at the very moment this chapter is being written. The transfer of management of the Writers' Union of the USSR from Georgii Markov to Vladimir Karpov in 1986 signified no change. Markov received the honorary post of President of the board and Yurii Verchenko continues to exercise the real power as Permanent Secretary of the organization. Changes in the chief editorship of journals, on the other hand, have had notable effects. The mass-circulation illustrated OGONEK, after decades in the hands of the anti-liberal playwright Anatolii Sofronov, became at a stroke a champion of the new tendency under the poet Vitalii Korotich. In OGONEK was effected the literary rehabilitation of Nikolai Gumilev (1986.36) and Vladislav Khodasevich (1986.48), while Dmitrii Merezhkovskii and Zinaida Gippius (1987.8), Vladimir Narbut (1987.11), Mat' Mariya (referred to her first married name E. Kuz'mina-Karavaeva) (1987.9), Sofiya Parnok (1987.15), Mariya Shkapskaya (1987.14) and others were mentioned in positive terms. The transfer of the editorship of NOVYI MIR to Sergei Zalygin represented a return to the tradition of Aleksandr Tvardovskii – whose banned verse narrative *Po pravu pamyati* was now permitted to appear (Novyi mir 1987.3). Responsibility for the poetry section was given by Zalygin to the highly gifted, wholly spiritually dedicated Oleg Chukhontsev, in place of the cautious Evgenii Vinokurov, and the circulation figure of 500 000 in 1987 rose to 1 100 000 in 1988. The journal ZNAMYA, after a long period in the hands of the Stalinists Vsevolod Vishnevskii and Vadim Kozhevnikov, passed to Grigorii Baklanov, a well-known representative of the honest war literature of the early sixties, who for his part was able to secure Vladimir Lakshin as deputy. Similarly, other critics such as Benedikt Sarnov once again got a hearing. In the long run however most of the literary journals have taken part in the wave of publishing long-suppressed works.

From the Russian literature of the first emigration, the Soviet readership was for the first time allowed access to Vladimir Nabokov, his work having been reissued in the United States between 1974 and

1979. In 1986 his novel *Zashchita Luzhina* 1929/30 (Eng. The defense, 1964) appeared in the Soviet Union, to be followed by his essay on Gogol' (Novyj mir 1987.4), as well as a series of poems. In 1988 were published his reminiscences *Drugie berega*, 1954 (Other shores. Eng. adaption: Speak, memory, 1967), and in 1987/88 his novel *Priglasenie na kazn'* 1935/36 (Eng. Invitation to a beheading, 1959). In 1987, at the age of 85, Irina Odoevtseva took up the invitation of the Writers' Union to return from Paris, whither she had emigrated from Petrograd in 1922, to Leningrad. This was the occasion for a separate publication of her poems, and those of her husband Georgii Ivanov, after being ignored for decades. A separate volume of Evgenii Zamyatin's stories had been published in Voronezh in 1986; this was followed in 1988 by the novel *My* (Eng. We, 1972), written 1920 – an exposure of the havoc wrought by the Communist system in the spiritual and the personal domain in general. To this generation of writers also belonged Gumilev, an even more prominent opponent of the Bolshevik takeover, who did not however emigrate and was executed in 1921. His hundredth birthday served as a pretext for his rehabilitation, and for the reintegration of his work, suppressed since 1923, into Russian literature in the Soviet Union. Poems, a play and letters of his have appeared, with a selection projected in the series "Biblioteka poeta".

To the older literature of the most important authors, banned until now in the Soviet Union and at last allowed to be published, belong Anna Akhmatova's poetic cycle *Rekvlem* (Neva 1987.6), and Boris Pasternak's *Doktor Zhivago*, the most fiercely attacked novel of the Thaw, published at last in NOVYI MIR in 1988. Andrei Platonov's novel *Yuvenil'noe more* (The sea of youth), banned for over 50 years and published in Paris in 1979, now appeared in 1986, followed in 1987 and 1988 by his considerably more critical novels *Kotlovan* and *Chevengur*, whose publication had been prevented by Maksim Gor'kii in 1929. In 1983 the Soviet reader was allowed access to Vasilii Grossman's novel *Zhizn' i sud'ba*, and there appeared in Leningrad Lidiya Chukovskaya's novel *Sof'ya Petrovna*, written 1939/40 and published in the West in 1965 as *Opusteiyy dom* – a first-hand account of the gradual comprehension by simple Soviet citizens of the arbitrary, lying and cruel onslaught of the Terror of 1937. From Mikhail Bulgakov's work, long familiar in the West, *Sobach'e serdtse* (Eng.

The heart of a dog, 1968), written in 1925, was in 1987 at last freed for publication and stage performance, and *Rokovye yaitsa* 1925 (The fatal eggs) could once more appear, after a break of sixty years, in 1988. Both works are satires on the Communist experiment and its "new man". To a notable extent, journals were permitted to publish works which had gathered dust in their offices for longer or shorter periods awaiting authority to print – many of these had circulated in samizdat. Only rarely was material involved which the authors themselves had kept aside in the hope of better times. Now books composed during the previous period – 1964 – 1985 – as well as some older ones, became works of the new era.

Vladimir Dudintsev's novel *Belye odezhdy* (White garments) appeared in 1987 – a historically faithful exposition of the suppression of Soviet genetics and of the persecution of well-known scientists by Trofim Lysenko after 1948. The title refers to those scholars prepared to suffer for the sake of truth, who fell victim to the pseudo-scientists supported by the Party and the NKVD. Daniil Granin likewise presented in *Zubr* 1987 (The aurochs), with a high degree of historical accuracy, the fate of a Russian scientist – Nikolai Timofeev-Resovskii – who, because of his work in Germany, was arrested in Berlin in 1945 and spent a long time in the Gulag. Yurii Trifonov, in his latest novel to become known *Ischeznovenie* 1987 (The disappearance), again chose for his setting the house of the privileged by the river Moskva, presenting the life of luxury of the children of the Nomenklatura of 1937 more fully than in *Dom na naberezhnoi*. From Vladimir Tendryakov's literary remains two shorter novels were published. In *Chistye vody Kitezha* 1986 (Pure waters of Kitezha), behind the theme of polluted water is concealed that of polluted relationships in the editorial offices of Soviet journals, in which staff set their sights on the opinions of their superiors, regardless of objective facts or of their own personal views. *Pokushenie na mirazhi* 1987 (Attempt on illusions) is devoted to the theme of religious feeling in the computer age. The structure of this double novel combines the present day with a historical level concerning Christ, in which spiritual events in the Bible (such as the conversion of Saul and his transformation into Paul) are presented in purely rational terms or (the stoning of Christ) deliberately changed. Anatolii Rybakov's novel *Deti Arbata* (Eng. Children of the Arbat, 1988) appeared in 1987, shedding light on the circumstances of Kirov's

murder as an evil machination of Stalin; likewise in 1987 Sergei Antonov's novel *Vas'ka* (Vaska), after a decade of suppression, vividly depicting the life of young people in the Soviet Union during the building of the Moscow Metro at the beginning of the thirties. The second part of Boris Mozhaev's novel *Muzhiki i baby* (Village men and women), an honest presentation of forcible collectivization, written between 1978 and 1980, at last received the go-ahead in 1987. Bulat Okudzhava's novel *Bud' zdorov, shkolyar* originally appeared in Konstantin Paustovskii's collection *TARUSSKIE STRANITSY* in 1961. Due to its fundamentally pacifist attitude, this autobiographical work was subsequently banned in tamizdat; in 1987 it was published in a large edition.

In the domain of poetry, publication of previously prohibited verse made the scale of censorship restrictions evident. Yunna Morits's poem *Na beregu vysokom* (On the high bank, in: *Oktyabr'* 1986.6) originally could not appear because of the line "All roots stretch towards freedom" (*Vse korni tyanutsya k svobode*) – although the high standard of her poetry, drawing both on reality and on the visionary, its richness of imagery and its spiritual roots, had always been apparent.

Several previously banned groups of poems by Boris Slutskii (*Znanya* 1987.1, *Novyi mir* 1987.10, *Znanya* 1988.1) give an insight into his critical view of the morale of Russian soldiers at war, into the State embargo on the truthful revelation of his experiences, unwelcomed by the censor, and into his despair over the betrayal of the principles of the 20th Party Congress. True religious feeling and a prayerful attitude are forcibly expressed in Bella Akhmadulina's poems, as she was able to publish them in *DRUZHBA NARAODOV* 1986.9 and in *SMENA* 1987.1.

In the sector of drama there occurred several notable events. Viktor Rozov's play *Kabanchik* 1987 (The little boar), after awaiting sanction for five years, was staged in Riga in 1986 under the title *U morya* (By the sea), and thereafter, under its original title, in Moscow. Here Rozov depicts the sense of loss of the son of a Soviet high official when his father is condemned for a typical Soviet economic crime. Several plays by Mikhail Shatrov shocked both audience and readers – notably *Diktatura sovesti* 1986 (The dictatorship of conscience), in which, exemplified by a mock trial about Lenin, the contrast between ideal and real Socialism is illuminated from many angles and Dostoevskii's

devastating criticism from *The devils* is quoted; and *Brestskii mir* 1987 (The peace of Brest), in which are featured not only Lenin and Stalin, but also Trotskii, Bukharin and Zinov'ev – that is to say people who for decades had been non-persons. This play had remained an unpublished manuscript since 1962. The taboo on the theme of sex was shattered with fresh and playful clarity by Édvard Radzinskii in his boulevard comedy *Sportivnye tseny 1981 goda* 1986 (Sport scenes in 1981) – in which the author simultaneously exercises social criticism with political openness. Aleksandr Buravskii's publicistic play *Govori ...* 1986 (Speak ...) refers back to the circumstances of Valentin Ovechkin's life and to his prose sketches *Raionnye budni* 1952 (District workdays) (which had a part to play in the Thaw), and castigates incompetence and misuse of power by Party officials with unusual severity. The warning conveyed by the past as revealed is that although the dogmatic, domineering Party official may have been removed, the humanly aware one, intent on the matter in hand rather than on his own power, will still fall victim to the pressures of the system, while the people, called to open criticism for the salvation of their country, will be silent, well knowing the fatal consequences entailed, over the decades, by honesty. The disaster in the nuclear reactor at Chernobyl, largely attributable to human error, but with its roots in the political system itself, was handled by the PRAVDA editor Vladimir Gubarev in his candidly critical play *Sarkofag* 1986 (Eng. Sarcophagus, 1987).

More important as true literature, rather than as political events, are the plays of authors who up to now have remained wholly or partly in the shade. In *Kvartira Kolumbiny* 1985 (Columbine's apartment) Lyudmila Petrushevskaya achieved a combination of parable and realism which reflects everyday life in its unsparing rigour. Mark Rozovskii, previously suppressed as a contributor to METROPOL', gained recognition with his dramatizations – for instance of Tolstoi's Kholstomer under the title *Istoriya loshadi* 1983 (Story of a horse), and in 1988 was enabled to open his own drama studio. His amalgamation in dialogue form *Dva sushchestva v bespredel'nosti* 1988 (Two beings in endless space) of two novels by Dostoevskii (The devils and Crime and punishment) is at once a timeless piece of dramatic art and a concrete indictment of terror. Nina Sadur displayed a consummate understanding of metaphysical factors in her plays

Pannochka 1985 (The young lady), based on Gogol's *Vii*, and *Chudnaya baba* 1987 (A strange woman), a grotesque mixture of surrealist occurrences and Soviet reality. The fact that up till now (1988) Viktor Rozov has unsuccessfully demanded the publication of their plays and stories shows that perestroika is by no means a settled affair.

Both at home and abroad, much interest has been aroused by a series of new prose works either just prior to or during the new period of much publicized "openness" (*glasnost'*). Most of these reveal, with unusual plainness, appalling contemporary conditions in the Soviet Union. They are linked by despair over the manifestations experienced, and by the hope of contributing to improvement through literary exposure.



The change in the politics of literature under the emblem of Gorbachev's perestroika gave a new impetus to the theatrical life of Moscow. A number of drama studios were founded (or were legalized), exploring new artistic ways without benefit of censorship or State funding. Mark Rozovskii, who from 1958 to 1969 had directed the student theatre NASH DOM, was enabled in 1988 to open his own theatre studio U NIKITSKIKH VOROT.

In his short novel *Pechal'nyi detektiv* 1986 (The sad detective) Viktor Astaf'ev depicts everyday criminality in the Soviet Union – acts of aggression perpetrated by the young, out of malice or just for kicks: the final confirmation that the socialist system has not succeeded in producing a "new man". In *Rov* 1986 (The ditch), Andrei Voznesenskii produced a cycle of poems and documentary prose denouncing a revolting form of grave desecration in the Soviet Union: in the Crimea, more than 40 years on, people are disinterring Jews murdered by Germans in order to enrich themselves with their gold teeth and jewellery. Like Astaf'ev, Voznesenskii is horrified by the greedy materialism and moral depravity of his fellow-countrymen. And, like Voznesenskii and Astaf'ev, Valentin Rasputin, in his prose work *Pozhar* 1985 (The blaze), gives precedence to factual information over the aesthetics of literary construction. He sets the reader down in the situation following on his novel *Proshchanie s Materoi* – that is to say, in an artificially created village, wholly lacking in tradition, where teams of lumberjacks engaged from outside are intent only on profit, and materialist thinking has crowded out any sort of co-operation or sense of community.



The Siberian Viktor Astaf'ev is one of the exponents of Russian village prose. His religious message is above all concerned with the moral recovery of his Russian countrymen and the ecological salvation of his Siberian homeland. He also addresses himself to topical problems, depicting highly negative manifestations in the Soviet Union.

Among the new works, the one to attract the most attention was Chingiz Aitmatov's novel *Plakha* 1986 (The block). Less balanced in its parts, and as a whole less the product of an inner compulsion, this novel reveals two concerns of its author: to stigmatize drug

consumption in the Soviet Union, and to discuss the resurgence of religious sentiment in the country blessed with State atheism. While the topic of drugs had until now been taboo in Soviet writing, Aitmatov merely looks at religion from new angles. He was permitted to write the word "Bog" (God), as before the Bolshevik takeover, with a capital letter. The Christ he presents in conversation with Pilate – an apparent plagiarism from Bulgakov – is however deprived of his divinity, and merely human. God is reduced to being the product of human fantasy. A member of the Central Committee, Aitmatov attempts to transform Christian thought and the experiences and terminology of faith into general ethical concepts.

Many literary rehabilitations have occurred almost unnoticed. Semen Lipkin, who had resigned from the Writers' Union on account of the METROPOL' affair, was reinstated on 21 October 1986. The METROPOL' authors Evgenii Popov and Viktor Erofeev were once again able to publish in journals; retrospectively reinstated in the Writers' Union in 1988 as from 1978, they were in effect rehabilitated. A first collection of work by Boris Vakhtin (who in the meantime had died) came out in 1986. The suppression of Vladimir Vysotskii's poems during his lifetime was attacked, and a larger collection than the first one announced; while in the case of Vladimir Kornilov, excluded from the Writers' Union in 1977, journals were once more prepared to admit his poems two years before his readmission in 1988. For the centenary of Velimir Khlebnikov, the greatest of the Futurists, a scholarly edition of 735 pages, *Tvoreniya* 1986 (Works), appeared in a printing of 200 000 copies; whereas for that of Aleksei Kruchenykh – his even more thoroughly suppressed fellow-worker towards a renewal of the language from 1912 onwards, of whom since 1980, after 50 years' obliteration from Russian literature, only a few lines had been published – in Kherson, his birthplace, at least a symposium and a preliminary small publication were approved. In 1987, after sixty years of undercover existence in samizdat, and many publications abroad (Daniil Kharms and Aleksandr Vvedenskii), the Absurd art, deriving from the Futurists, of the Leningrad group Obériu, at last found its rightful place in the Russian literature of the Soviet Union, and became a yardstick for young poets.

For Russian literature abroad the year 1985 naturally signalled no such change as for Soviet Russian literature; however, the liberalization

of cultural politics did have certain immediate effects. The necessity for tamizdat is declining, because of the notable relaxation of censorship, so that, happily, Akhmatova's *Rekviem*, Pasternak's *Doktor Zhivago*, Tvardovskii's *Po pravu pamyati* and the most important of Platonov's novels no longer belong to Russian literature abroad; émigré authors may well even be able to return to the Soviet Union – like Aleksei Tolstoi, ready and willing to conform, in 1923; Maksim Gor'kii, surrounded by flattery, in 1931; Aleksandr Kuprin, terminally ill, in 1937; Antonin Ladinskii, expelled from France, in 1955; and Irina Odoevtseva, aged and ill, in 1987. On the other hand the poet Irina Ratushinskaya was released from her labour camp in 1986 and granted permission to emigrate, and in 1987 the practising Christian prose writer Leonid Borodin was once again released from labour camp, and in 1988 was for the first time enabled to publish.

The champions of perestroika encountered much difficulty in helping their émigré or exiled colleagues, that is to say the writers of the third wave, to be published in their own country. (From the second wave only Ivan Elagin and Dmitrii Klenovskii had, by 1988, been introduced to the Soviet reader.) First of all the ban on naming their names was lifted, then, towards the end of 1987, besides both favourable and critical references, there followed reprints of actual texts, as from Iosif Brodskii, Aleksandr Galich, Naum Korzhavin, Viktor Nekrasov, Sasha Sokolov, and Vladimir Voinovich.

The award of the Nobel Prize for literature to Iosif Brodskii in 1987 was a distinction not so much for Russian literature abroad as for modern Russian metaphysical poetry. Just previously a decision had been made to publish some of his poems in a Soviet journal (*Novyi mir* 1987.12) – the first acceptance as a writer in the Soviet Union of a member of the third emigration – and this decision was allowed to stand. Moreover, the collections of his poetry, such as *Uraniya* 1987 (Eng. *To Urania*, 1988), and the works of all the writers in Russian living abroad, continued to be printed in journals and by Russian-language publishing houses outside the Soviet Union.

Some works by émigré writers have attracted particular notice. A novel by Vladimir Maksimov has appeared, enquiring into the coherence of the 1917 catastrophe – *Zaglyanut' v bezdnu* 1986 (A glance into the abyss). Exemplified in the fate of Admiral Kolchak, Maksimov depicts from various perspectives the collapse of the White

Army in Siberia, and looks for deeper connections. In this novel he succeeds in placing love, the real bond of the heart, above seriously pondered questions of politics and history, as finally the highest, divine principle of peace.

Vladimir Maksimov had a particularly hard early life in educational camps for the young. Having after emigration become editor of the journal KONTINENT in Paris, he developed into one of the foremost champions of human rights. In his novels, which link the menacing events of the twentieth century to Russian history, harsh and wild elements jostle with the tender and loving.



Vladimir Voinovich, also, came up with a novel written in emigration – *Moskva-2042* 1986 (Eng. *Moscow 2042*, 1987). In this fictional autobiography, in the freely satirical, entertaining and gripping style familiar from his *Chonkin* novel, he describes a visit to Moscow, the city of real Communism, sixty years in the future. Elements of satirical hyperbole mingle with those of science fiction, and with others of real experiences in Germany and the USA.

Methodically and tirelessly, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn continues his cycle of historical novels. The "Third Knot", *Mart semnadtsatogo* (March 1917), came out in four volumes from 1986 to 1988. In them, he seizes on the February Revolution as the key event in the history of Russia, and of the world, in the twentieth century; he depicts the multiplicity of forces seeking new paths, and reveals the guilt of the tsars as lying in indecision and inertia. Besides the action mainly played out in Petrograd there are scenes set in Zurich, Moscow and

Tsarskoe Selo, while many autonomous episodes round off the various lines of the plot. Here we have an attempt at a many-voiced, evaluative, literary representation of the February Revolution. In Solzhenitsyn's view, it was the misuse of the new rights and freedoms that made way for the October Revolution under Lenin. The depiction of these circumstances is the centre of the "Fourth knot", *Aprél' semnadtsatogo* (April 1917), with which Solzhenitsyn planned, in 1987, to conclude the work.

With *Nevidimaya gazeta* (The invisible weekly), Sergei Dovlatov abandoned the recital of his experiences in the Soviet Union, setting this work against his previous *Nevidimaya kniga* (1978) and adding it to his book *Remeslo* 1985 (The handicraft). The handicraft in question is that of writer and journalist. Having previously described the obstacles in the Soviet Union, he now exposes those put in the way of founding a new Russian weekly in the United States by the Russian daily newspaper already established there. Irony brings into sharper focus the conflict between the third and first emigrations, and between Soviet and American attitudes – and the self-analysis evoked in seeking a new place in life.

In 1982 a Jewish doctor and writer named Boris Khazanov had emigrated to Munich, his first books appearing only in the West. *Antivremya* 1985 (Anti-time) combines a story about fictional incidents in Moscow between 1937 and 1946 with philosophical discussion of questions of time, space and preordination by fate in human existence. Concluded in 1982, this first-person novel abounds in reflections, and its characters are as much part of the intelligentsia as those to whom it is directed. The work reflects the dualism of the Russian Jew, brings out the isolation of the intellectual in the Soviet Union, and makes very clear what it means to live with the realities of denunciation, everyday troubles, religious quest, constant fear, and arrest (with which the book concludes).

If the publication of a book in the Soviet Union is frequently delayed for political reasons, in emigration these are usually financial. Many a book appeared in translation before the original was published. At the beginning of the new period was published David Markish's novel *V teni bol'shogo kamnya* 1986 (In the shadow of the great stone), which he had already brought out in Hebrew in 1982 under the title *Kadam the magpie-slayer*. Here, exemplified in the fate of a Kirgiz

hunter, he exposes the dangers of foreign cultural domination of the Central Asian peoples. Markish's frequent use of Jewish themes here involves the Ukrainian Jewish commander of a military station, whose intention it is to bless the mountain-dwellers of Central Asia with the benefits of Soviet power.

Vladimir Rybakov, who in *Tyazhest'* (1977) had distinguished himself by a realistic presentation of the daily life of Soviet soldiers, now took as his subject the actual invasion of Afghanistan by the Soviet army. *Tiski* 1985 (The vice) is a collection of 68 stories centred on typical experiences of Soviet soldiers both at home and in the new war, with as underlying concern the preservation of human dignity.

In *Syn imperii* 1986 (Son of the Empire) Sergei Yur'enen produced a novel which, also based on his own experience, vividly captures, in the life of a child, the final Stalin years up to the Hungarian uprising. Because the child's stepfather believes in Stalin, the scenes from Soviet everyday life, whether in the normality of personal relationships or with informers, cramped lodgings, drunken orgies or criminality, acquire a particular ambiguity.

Besides appearing regularly in various journals, or in individual editions of some authors, the poetry of émigré writers also found a show-case in one large anthology *RUSKIE POÉTY NA ZAPADE* 1986 (Russian poets in the West). This was produced by Aleksandr Glezer's publishing house "Tret'ya volna" (Third wave), and gathered together thirty-eight poets with verse composed in part in Russia, in part abroad.

The policy of glasnost' and perestroika is progressing. Writers such as Baklanov, Belov, Bykov, Morits, Rasputin, Rozov, Sosnora, Voznesenskii or Zalygin are fighting to make it irreversible, while the conservative old guard, fearful for its own position, fights against it. Petr Proskurin even described the publication of long-suppressed masterpieces as "literary necrophilia"³³. At the heart of the matter lies an attempt at spiritual renewal, seen by some authors as possible only in a religious (i. e. Russian Orthodox) tradition, while others consider that at least it provides a release from materialist thought and from the perpetual lie of the Communist reasons of State, in favour of honesty and of admitting the primacy of moral and spiritual values. Much remains to be done. But what has taken place from 1985 to 1988 is a positive break with the past, and has served to enrich Russian literature.

NOTES

- * The concept is fully explained in: Wolfgang Kasack, *Dictionary of Russian Literature Since 1917*. New York: Columbia University Press 1988. The Dictionary contains full biographical dates for nearly all authors referred to here, as well as primary and secondary sources.
- ** The translation quoted was not separately published, but appeared in a collection or a journal. Details of the source can be referred to in: W. Kasack, *Dictionary of Russian Literature Since 1917*. Loc. cit.
- 1 I. V. Stalin, Rech' na predvybornom sobranii izbiratelei Stalinskogo izbiratel'nogo okruga goroda Moskvy. 9.2.1946. In: I. V. Stalin, *Sochineniya*. 3 vols., ed. R. H. McNeal, Stanford, Calif. 1967, vol.3, pp.1-22.
- 2 KPSS o kul'ture, prosveshchenii i nauke. Moscow 1963, pp.220f.
- 3 N. M. Gribachev in the anthology: *Vesna v "Pobede"*. Moscow 1949, p.297.
- 4 A. Dement'ev in: *Voprosy literatury* 1964.12, p.23; cf. also L. F. Il'ichev, Rech' na XXII s-ezde KPSS. In: *Pravda* 26.10.1961, pp.2f.
- 5 "Eng." before an English title indicates that an English translation with this title is available; following the English title is the year when the translation was published. The date given after the Russian titles are always of the first publication of the original Russian version; in the case of plays it is that of first publication or first stage production.
- 6 H. von Ssachno, *Der Aufstand der Person*. Berlin 1965, p.67.
- 7 Cf. also F. A. Abramov, *Lyudi kolkhoznoi derevni v poslevoennoi proze*. In: *Novyi mir* 1954.4, pp.210-231.
- 8 An account of the terrible fate of those forcibly repatriated is given by Nicholas Bethell in: *Poslednyaya taina. Nasil'stvennaya vydacha russkikh v 1944-47 godakh*. In: *Kontinent* 4-7 ([Paris] 1975-76), published in book form as: Nicholas Bethell, *The last secret. Forcible repatriation to Russia 1944-7*. London 1974.
- 9 Cf. H. -J. Dreyer, *Petr Veršigora*. Munich 1976.

- 10 N. Korzhavin, *Sud'ba Yaroslava Smelyakova*. In: *Grani* 91 (1974), p.168.
- 11 Z. Mathauser, *Die Spirale der Poesie*. Frankfurt/Main 1975, p.12; cf. also E. Etkind, *Russische Lyrik von der Oktoberrevolution bis zur Gegenwart*. Munich 1984, p.192: "Frequently true pearls are to be found among this trash".
- 12 K. G. Paustovskii, *Poëziya prozy*. In: *Znamya* 1953.9, pp.170–176; I. Ėrenburg, *O rabote pisatelya*. In: *Znamya* 1953.10, pp.160–183.
- 13 V. A. Kaverin (address at the 2nd Writers' Congress). In: *Vtoroi Vsesoyuznyi s-ezd sovetskikh pisatelei*. Moscow 1956, p.170.
- 14 Cf. Sergio d'Angelo, *Der Fall Pasternak. Zehn Jahre danach*. In: *Osteuropa* 1968.7, pp.489–501.
- 15 V. S. Grossman, *Vse techet*. Frankfurt/Main 1970, p.127.
- 16 Cf. M. Shcheglov, *Realizm sovremennoi dramy*. In: *Literaturnaya Moskva* 1956, vol.2, pp.681–708.
- 17 A. T. Tvardovskii, *Za dal'yu – dal'*. In: *Sobranie sochinenii*. 4 vols., Moscow 1959–60, vol.3, pp.340, 343.
- 18 Cf. W. Kasack, *Die Funktion der Erzählschlüsse in Pasternaks "Doktor Živago"*. In: *Zeitschrift für slavische Philologie*, 35 (1970), pp.170–186.
- 19 S. A. Bondarin, *Razgovor so sverstnikom*. In: *Nash sovremennik* 1962.5, pp.175–192.
- 20 A. M. Volodin, *Fabrichnaya devchonka*. In: *Teatr* 1956.9, p.55.
- 21 V. Ya. Tarsis, *Skazanie o sinei mukhe*. Frankfurt/Main 1966, p.26.
- 22 Cf. W. Kasack, *Kulturelle Außenpolitik*. In: *Kulturpolitik der Sowjetunion*. Ed. O. Anweiler, K.-H. Ruffmann, Stuttgart 1973, pp.345–392.
- 23 Cf. W. Kasack, *Der Schutzengel in den Gedichten Dmitrij Klenovskijs*. In: *Communicatio Fidei*. Festschrift für Eugen Biser. Regensburg 1983.
- 24 N. N. Matveeva, *Dusha veshchei*. Moscow 1966, p.103.
- 25 The life and work of Konstantin Bogatyrev are discussed in the memorial volume *Poët-perevodchik Konstantin Bogatyrev. Drug nemetskoi literatury*. Red.-sost. Vol'fgang Kazak s uchastiem L'va

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- 26 A. T. Tvardovskii, Po pravu pamyati. Quoted from Zh. A. Medvedev, Desyat' let posle "Odnogo dnia Ivana Denisovicha". London 1973, p.140. Original version printed in: Posev 1969.10, pp.52–56. The passage, slightly altered in the Soviet version, is in: Znamya 1987.2, p.12.
- 27 S. V. Smirnov, Izbrannye stichotvoreniya i poëmy. 2 vols., Moscow 1974, vol.2, pp.150f. For open protest from among the Soviet public cf. L. K. Chukovskaya in: Literatur und Repression. Munich 1970, pp.143–145.
- 28 Cf. W. Kasack, Schicksal und Gestaltung. Leben und Werk Wladimir Lindenbergs. Munich 1987.
- 29 In the Preface to J. Ginsburg, Gratwanderung. Munich 1980, p.5.
- 30 In: Vremya i my 48.49.61, 1979–81.
- 31 Poëtu rozy poëta. In: Poët-perevodchik Konstantin Bogatyrev. Loc. cit., pp.162–179; German version: Dem Dichter des Dichters der Rose. Translated from Russian by Friederike Kasack. In: Ein Leben nach dem Todesurteil. Loc. cit., pp.45–60.
- 32 G. Gor, Strannik i vremya. In: Fantastika 1962. Moscow 1962, p.73.
- 33 Cf. A. Voznesenskii. In: Literaturnaya gazeta 6.5.1987.

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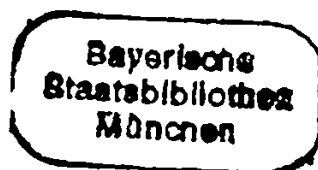
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