The Creative Artist

IN A COMMUNIST SOCIETY

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THE CREATIVE ARTIST
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Compiled and Edited

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I

THE SOVIET UNION

"The highest social purpose of literature and the arts is to arouse the people to a struggle for new successes in the building of Communism." -- Nikita S. Khrushchev

Three of the Soviet Union's most famous modern composers, Dmitri Shostakovich (left), Aram Khachaturian (center) and Sergei Prokofiev (right) experienced considerable difficulty in satisfying Communist officials of their artistic faithfulness to party objectives. Branded as "anti-popular formalists" in a 1948 musical purge, the three were rehabilitated in 1958. For Prokofiev, who died in 1953, the party's changed attitude came five years too late.

This portrait study of Boris Pasternak suggests the qualities of quiet scholarship, poetic reflection and artistic integrity which have helped to make the famous poet and novelist a highly controversial figure in the Soviet Union.

THE ARTIST IN A MONOLITHIC STATE

By George Gibian

(Mr. Gibian is an associate professor in the Russian Department of Smith College, Northampton, Mass.)

PART I

The Price of Success

The young Soviet writer, actor, or musician who at the threshold of his career stops to consider what his professional future may hold in store for him is likely to be struck with awe by the tremendous gap separating the possibilities of great fame and great failure.

The fact that two very divergent fates face a budding artist does not seem in itself very surprising. Is there any country in the world where the difference between the extremes of success and failure are not very pronounced? The real peculiarities of the Soviet situation lie in the kind of failure or success, in the circumstances and the ways in which either may come about.

Let us first consider the most favorable possible course of development for a Soviet writer. His works, whether novels, plays, or poems, are published in editions running into hundreds of thousands, sometimes even millions of copies. They may be published first in installments in a literary monthly, perhaps in October (Oktyabr) or The New World (Novy Mir, in exceptional cases even in the pages of Pravda or The Literary Newspaper (Literaturnaya Gazeta.) His writings are translated into the

various languages of the Soviet Union--Ukrainian, Georgian, Armenian, and many others. His name is known to millions of his fellow citizens; he is admired and revered. He may become a candidate for the annual Lenin Prize (which has replaced the former Stalin Prizes) and may even win one of them.

The material rewards of such a successful writer's life match his fame and honor. He is paid substantial royalties (based, oddly enough, according to the old Russian system, on the length of his work) every time his work is printed, whether in a magazine, as a book, or in translation. He can keep almost the entire amount he is paid, for income tax in the Soviet Union is extremely low, seldom exceeding ten or fifteen percent. He is very likely to be assigned a small but comfortable apartment in Moscow in one of the large apartment houses owned by the Union of Writers, where he pays a very low rent and has the pleasure of living in close proximity to numerous colleagues and friends -- or perhaps rivals. He may also purchase or build a dacha, a country home, again very likely in an artists' settlement some miles outside the capital of the republic where he lives, or, most likely of all in the case of an established writer, at Peredelkino, the writers' colony close to Moscow, for the advantages of life in the capital attract an even greater percentage of Russian writers than Paris draws of the painters and sculptors of France.

The successful, favored writer may be one of the few Soviet owners of a private automobile. When he wishes, he may receive a putyovka (coupons entitling him to free or reduced rates for travel and hotel accommodations) to Black Sea and other resorts. If he plans to write a novel about a remote section of the country, he will be supported during months of stay and research in the region.

Is there any drawback -- any set of conditions to be fulfilled -- if he is to enjoy this enviable mixture of honors and material rewards? Is anything necessary other than an unusual share of artistic talent?

Unfortunately, a great deal. In order to climb to and remain at the zenith of a Soviet artistic areeer, it is necessary to stay in the good favors of the Union of Writers -- and of the Communist Party, whose instrument the Union of Writers is. One has to keep writing in a manner pleasing to the controlling officials. Since 1934, the one and only literary method or style permissible has been the vague and amorphous "socialistic realism." (Between 1928 and 1932, the slogan had been "social command," a somewhat clearer description of the desired attitude towards writing.) Socialistic realism has been described by many personages, ranging from Stalin to Gorky, without ever being completely clarified. At the Second Writers' Congress, in December 1954, the author Fedin complained that foreign Communist writers were asking for an exact definition of socialistic realism. It is impossible to give them as simple an answer as they seem to want, Fedin declared. They should not "expect a recipe" which would read something like "Take fifty parts of positive hero, five parts of negative hero, one part social contradiction, one part inspired romanticism, one hundred parts distilled water." The only positive, but hardly satisfying, suggestion he was able to supply was to study "the best works" of various Soviet writers and imitate them.

In actual practice socialistic realism has consisted of taking contemporary subjects (often specific areas of Soviet life in which the Party felt some change or improvement was necessary: the production of

cement, the cultivation of the "virgin lands" of Kazakhstan, or the organization of an electric engineering research institute,) and treating them properly. The proper manner of treatment means concentrating not on the individual aspects, but on the social, on the masses, on the collective; taking an optimistic, cheerful view of Soviet life, rather than being negative and critical; and writing in a manner intelligible to the masses, without excessive attention to form -- in other words, avoiding experimentation, anything modernistic and smacking of the "decadent, bourgeois," and concentrating on a plain, "realistic," conservative, conventional method of narration.

To know just what subjects, attitudes towards them, and manner of treatment are permissible or not permissible, encouraged or prohibited (for the Party line shifts here as in other areas) is one of the major and most delicate tasks of a Soviet artist. Some of the most prominent ones (and most consistently favored ones) have been those who, like Konstantine Simonov or Ilya Ehrenburg, have had a keen nose and a good sense of timing in sensing a change of line almost before it had occurred and the docility to conform to what they felt was in the air. Those who either did not catch on or who were temperamentally unsuited for the task of following every twist of the line -- Vladimir Dudintsev, Margarita Aliger, Boris Pasternak, and others -- have been chastised or silenced.

If we looked only at what has happened to some unfortunate artists in Soviet Russia, we might wonder why any young man or woman in Russia decides to become a playwright, film director, or author -- it must take great blindness, gullibility, or courage. Pasternak, the whole world now knows,

has been insulted and threatened after he received the Nobel Prize for a novel which has never been published in Russia; others have been attacked in a manner typified by the following description applied by a critic to the imaginative Zamyatin: "This adept at mimicry and falsification whose whole conception of life was culled from literary reminiscences and bore no relation whatsoever to reality, left no trace in literature and has been completely forgotten by the present generation of Soviet readers."

The characters of the satirist Mikhail Zoshchenko have been called by the same critic, Alexander Anikst, "misshapen caricatures" and his work in general "a slanderous portrayal of Soviet people as primitive beings with philistine tastes and manners. . . . Zoshchenko had a tradesman's attitude towards life and wallowed in the mire of petty everyday affairs and could not rise to the heights required to paint an extensive canvas of life with a realistic picture of its typical characters and manifestations." Some writers, like Isaac Babel, it is now admitted in Soviet Russia, were arrested, sent to work camps, and even executed.

End Part I

THE ARTIST IN A MONOLITHIC STATE

By George Gibian

PART II

Methods of State Control

There are three main ways in which the Soviet Communist Party makes clear to the U.S.S.R.'s artists how they should write, paint, and compose.

The first way is by means of general pronouncements of guiding principles. Congresses of writers or painters are held, at which some of the leaders of the particular artists' union make theoretical statements; speeches are delivered by political figures (in 1957, for example, Khrushchev made three such speeches which were later printed and are still being quoted and pointed to as authoritative indications of principle); or authoritative articles are printed in newspapers and magazines.

One such recent essay, by Y. Elsberg (in Kommunist, No. 12, 1958), is typical of these direction-setting articles. It sets down the usual chain of reasoning concerning Party control over the arts. The first premise, according to Elsberg, concerns the task of literature -- which is "to inspire the people towards new progress in building communism." The next presupposition is that it is "the policy of the Communist Party /which/ expresses the deepest interests of the people" and that "never before was the life of the people so full of principle, so fully intellectually saturated, so aware, so many sided." The conclusion follows:

"Therefore the Soviet writer, a faithful supporter of the Party's work, has at his disposal an infallible compass [the Party] which helps him to orient himself correctly in the complex problems of studying and artistically representing the nation's life."

This rationale for compelling writers to write cheerfully, positively, and in full obedience to the Party is strengthened by the second major means of instructing them: the picking of a handful of deterrent examples. In the last two or three years, the whipping boys have included Vladimir Dudintsev, Margarita Aliger, Alexander Yashin (for his story "The Levers,") David Granin (for his "Convictions Of One's Own,") and Semyon Kirsanov -- a list recently joined and eclipsed by Boris Pasternak.

The third method is to hold out as examples works which embody the desirable characteristics the Party wishes other artists to imitate. From time to time, such hallowed masterpieces are selected, praised, analyzed. Thus every artist in the country learns what he is to emulate, if he is to be in the good graces of the "political artists," the various functionaries of the unions, the aparatchiki (apparatus personnel) of the artistic bureaucracy. A recent example of such an officially approved work is Vsevolod Kochetov's The Yershov Brothers. Elsberg, in his article, betrays the ideological reasons for the special "honoring" treatment given to Kochetov's novel when he praises its hero as a "truly conscious builder of communism" and as a man who remained "politically vigilant during the months which followed the Twentieth Party Congress, when certain individual unstable elements tried to interpret the decisions of the Congress in a revisionistic spirit."

There are four different roads open to the Soviet artist. The first is for him to be a sincere, fanatical Communist convinced that whatever the Party wants is truly for the best. Therefore he cheerfully follows the Party line, which most of the time coincides with his own opinions anyway. If it does not, he willingly sacrifices his personal or artistic conscience on the altar of Party discipline. Such artists are as few and usually as mediocre in their field as they are fortunate in being spared the inner conflicts of their colleagues.

The second way is that of the majority of the most talented artists, who also conform to the Party's wishes, but do so grudgingly, regretting the price exacted of them, yet preferring to live comfortably and to continue working in their chosen field, with such concessions as are necessary. They paint uniformed Stalins or smiling tractor drivers, depending on the currently approved subjects, in such style as happens to be fashionable. On the side, in secrecy, they may paint entirely different subjects, in a personal manner. It was said about Gerasimov, the conformist patriarch and leader of Soviet painters, that his studio concealed scores of nudes painted in defiance of official taste, which he never tried to exhibit or sell.

The third way, taken by many honest men, is silence or evasion. Rather than paint or write as they do not wish to, they leave the field of art and make their living in some other way, or turn to some politically innocuous corner within their field. Thus many writers gave up "formalistic" and "subjectivistic" poetry or fiction and turned to safe biographies or historical fiction. Pasternak devoted many years to marvelous translations of Shakespeare.

The fourth road, that taken by a small minority, is to follow one's artistic and civic conscience, to go against the Party dictates, to attempt to publish what one fears will be badly received, and then to defend it as long as possible. Such was the course of action of Margarita Aliger and others, particularly during the years 1956-57, when the limits of freedom were extended and blurred. Since the spring of 1957, the Party has been making a special effort to put the clock back and to show the writers that they must not exceed the bounds of the permissible. It was not content with damning certain objectionable works; it insisted on their authors' recanting and apologizing. After months of what even Russian writers called "the heroism of silence," most of the authors attacked surrendered and delivered the required apologies, by speech or letter. Typical of the pathetic, humiliating "confessions" is Margarita Aliger's:

> ". . . in my public work I committed a number of gross mistakes. . . . I really committed those mistakes about which Comrade Khrushchev speaks. I committed them, I persisted in them, but I understood them and confessed them deliberately and consciously . . . Obviously I must now be much more exacting with myself, rid myself of a certain speculativeness. . . "

For art and literature to be considered such an important weapon as to call for constant, top level direction (Stalin called writers "engineers of the human soul") is, to one way of looking at it, a great compliment to their power and importance. Unfortunately it brings in its train great limitations which are far from complimentary: Party control, both positive (guidance, exhortation) and negative (reprimands, punishments.) The writers are the most outstanding victims, for their medium, words, refers most clearly and unequivocally to the realities of

Soviet life -- and hence courts the danger of running afoul of Party wishes. Relatively most fortunate are the composers. Some of them have occasionally been attacked, but as long as they avoid being too modernistic or atonal, they enjoy considerable freedom -- for when a composer declares that the subject of his suite is "Praise of Russian Reforestation," who can contradict him?

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THE PUZZLING POLICY OF SOCIALIST REALISM

By Gleb Struve

(Mr. Struve is an associate professor in the Department of Slavic Languages and Literature at the University of California.)

"Socialist realism," one of the more puzzling catch phrases of Communist policy, might be defined as the term most frequently used to describe the rules which all Soviet artists -- particularly writers -- are expected to apply in their creative undertakings.

This statement, admittedly, fails to answer such questions as "what, precisely, is socialist realism?" and "what is its relation to just plain realism?"

Actually, as we shall see, it is far from easy to evolve intelligent answers to questions of this sort, which may explain why the subject already has produced a voluminious and somewhat contradictory literature of its own.

The formula known as "socialist realism" is supposed to have been coined by Stalin and is said to have been first used by him at a gathering of Soviet writers in October, 1932. One Soviet scholar drew attention to the fact that the same formula had been cited earlier in a Literaturnaya Gazeta editorial. This editorial which appeared in the issue of May 29, 1932, noted that "The masses are demanding from the artist sincerity, truthfulness, and revolutionary socialist realism in the depiction of the proletarian revolution."

The "socialist realism" formula was widely discussed between 1932 and 1934, during the preparations for the first Congress of Soviet Writers, which took place in August, 1934, at Moscow. By that time socialist realism had been accepted as the guiding principle of Soviet literature and, as such, was incorporated in the charter of the newly founded Union of Soviet Writers. In the preamble to that charter we read that the creative ideas of Soviet literature, evolved under the guidance of the Communist Party, "have found their main expression in the principles of socialist realism." The charter then gives this rather vague definition:

> "Socialist realism, being the basic method of Soviet imaginative literature and literary criticism, demands from the artist a truthful, historically concrete depiction of the reality in its revolutionary development. At the same time the truthfulness and historical concreteness of the artistic depiction of the reality must be combined with the task of ideological remolding and upbringing of the toilers in the spirit of socialism."

Socialist realism was also said to provide the artist an exceptional opportunity of showing his creative initiative, as well as "a choice of diverse forms, styles, and genres."

Hundreds of articles were written, and numerous discussions held, in an attempt to lend more substance to these rather nebulous formulations, as well as to define the relation between socialist realism and that which was, at different times and by different people, variously described as "classical realism," "bourgeois realism," or "critical realism."

The stress shifted now to one, now to another element of the above definition. Much was made of the importance of depicting reality as a revolutionary development, and in this was seen the main difference between socialist realism and the traditional "bourgeois" realism. There was also a great deal of toying with the formula "revolutionary romanticism," which was said to be a necessary ingredient of socialist realism. This latter association was particularly dear to the heart of Maxim Gorky, who once said that revolutionary romanticism was really a pseudonym for socialist realism.

This identification of socialist realism with revolutionary romanticism was combatted, however, by some writers, critics, and scholars, among them Gyorgy Lukacs, a Hungarian Communist critic and literary scholar, himself a great admirer of Gorky, who in the 1930's lived and wrote in the Soviet Union and whom Herbert Read has described as "by far the most formidable exponent of Marxism in literary criticism." For Lukacs, who later returned to Hungary and played a not unimportant part in the intellectual fermentation which preceded that country's 1956 revolt, "revolutionary romanticism" signified a naturalistic degeneration of socialist realism, while the latter was really a logical step forward from, and an improvement upon, the critical realism of the nineteenth century, the realism of Balzac and Tolstoy, to whose study Lukacs devoted most of his time.

From Lukacs's interpretation of socialist realism it would follow that, fundamentally, socialist realism is a legitimate offspring of the critical realism as expressed in the European novel of the nineteenth century and continued in modern times by such writers as Thomas Mann, and

that the new element or quality in it is the socialist outlook of its exponents. Whether this justifies us in describing it as a new artistic method, however, is highly doubtful.

Even some Soviet scholars, critics and writers have at times raised some doubts, asking themselves whether socialist realism should not rather be described as a philosophy of life or world outlook (mirovozzrenie, Weltanschauung). In one of the latest Soviet pronouncements on the subject, a paper by V. Shcherbina, this view is, however, rejected. Mentioning those who propose to regard socialist realism either as a totality of certain artistic means of representation or as a world outlook, he rejects both these approaches as "onesided" and insists that socialist realism is an artistic method.

In the 1930's much of the discussion about socialist realism was of a purely scholastic, academic, often hairsplitting, nature, though at times the political essence of the whole concept would break through. Thus the critic Isaac Musinov, who was later to become one of the victims of Zhdanov's witch-hunting, in 1934 offered the following formula of socialist realism which seemed to have little to do with art: "The main object of socialist realism is the struggle for the destruction of the world of property and the triumph of socialism."

As time went on, this social-political aspect of socialist realism came more and more to the fore. This was largely the result of the fact that with the principle of socialist realism came to be coupled the notion of partiynost', or partymindedness, a notion which can be traced back to an article by Lenin, written in 1905, about the principle of party literature.

Whether Lenin had in mind party literature in the narrow sense of the word and the conditions then prevailing in Russian life, or was visualizing the partyminded literature of the future, remains a moot point. At any rate it so happened that Lenin's principle of partiynost' came to be inseparably associated with the principle of socialist realism. To be a good Soviet writer, it was no longer enough to be a socialist realist: it was necessary also to be "partyminded." The partymindedness of Soviet literature came to be particularly stressed during the so-called Zhdanov era, that is, after World War II. It was during this period that it became increasingly clear that socialist realism in practice boiled down to the current Party line.

Both in imaginative literature and in literary criticism and scholarship, only that was admissible which conformed to the general line of the Party at the given moment. Rabid anti-Westernism, assertion of Soviet priority in almost every field of human endeavor, and the cult of Stalin became the salient features of a socialist-realistic work of literature. When de-Stalinization set in and the cult of the individual was denounced, the criteria of socialist realism were revised overnight, and many of the literary works produced between 1946 and 1953, and regarded previously as models of socialist realism, were dismissed as idealized distortions of reality.

During the so-called "thaw" in Soviet literature, works like Ehrenburg's novel of that name contained an implicit admission that socialist realism, as understood during the post-war period, meant an inevitable decline of art. In some Communist countries outside the U.S.S.R, writers,

and artists in general, went even further: in Poland and in Hungary the adoption of socialist realism in the early Thirties came to be regarded as the deathknell of all true art. The result was that Soviet critics and scholars were henceforth to adopt a defensive, apologetic attitude in the debate about socialist realism. But the principles of socialist realism and partymindedness were by no means abandoned. They were firmly reasserted, as the mainstays of Soviet literature and art, by Nikita Khrushchev in the summer of 1957. His statements to Soviet writers and artists, widely publicized, were described by Soviet writers as "historic" and "programmatic", and are now looked upon as directives which must guide the course of Soviet literature.

Despite the subject's fascination for communist officials, however, a satisfactory definition of socialist realism, either in theory or in practice, is still lacking. Since cultural coexistence has become part of the official policy of the Soviet government, there has been a growing tendency to try to reconcile socialist realism with the critical realism of the past (and of the present as far as non-Communist countries are concerned), even though at the same time Lukacs's views are being refuted as "revisionism."

Let us take two typical recent pronouncements. V. Shcherbina, in a paper already quoted, writes that socialist realism must not be divorced from, or opposed to, critical realism, and that the cognitive and artistic value of much of contemporary non-Russian realistic literature must be fully recognized. Shcherbina is even ready to admit the existence in Soviet literature of currents other than socialist realism. He also

speaks disparagingly, in the wake of Lukacs, of "naturalistic pseudo-realism." In a recent volume of studies of socialist realism, V. Ozerov also speaks of the latter as the culmination of old realism, as its successor and continuator. At the same time he comes dangerously close to admitting the purely ideological differentia of socialist realism when he describes it as "a /realistic/ method fertilized by the ideas of socialism," or sees the "newness" of Soviet art in the novelty of its representational material.

At times Shcherbina and Ozerov contradict each other, once more demonstrating in what confusion the whole subject is still wrapped. Thus, while Shcherbina insists that it is a fallacy to speak of the demands that socialist realism places on the artist, Ozerov writes that, instead of a long enumeration of various "characteristics" of socialist realism, it would be better to mention "the main demands which it makes upon writers, and in the first place the demand for truth, revealed and interpreted in the light of the socialist ideal and of the Communist partymindedness."

What "partymindedness" in art is, no one has as yet explained satisfactorily.

The elastic, adjustable nature of socialist realism as understood by Soviet literary lawgivers is best illustrated in the statements recently made by Mikhail Sholokhov, the celebrated author of And Quiet Flows the Don. Last April Sholokhov spent a few days in Prague, where he was received and interviewed at the Union of Czechoslovak Writers. The interview was published in Literary News, the official weekly of the Writers' union.

To the first question -- "What he thought of socialist realism?" -- Sholokhov replied as follows:

"Theory is not my forte. I am just a writer. But I shall tell you a little story. Not long before his death, I met my friend Alexander Fadeyev. I asked him the same question. I asked him what would he answer if he were asked a straightforward question about the meaning of socialist realism. He said: 'If someone were to ask me this, to the best of my knowledge I would have to reply: 'Devil knows what it really is.' Maybe Fadeyev was joking. If I were to answer for myself I would say that, to my mind, socialist realism is that which is in favor of the Soviet regime and is written in a simple, comprehensible, artistic language. This is not a theoretical assumption, but the experience of an author. The theoreticians are there to prop it up with their scaffolding and to drive in theoretical wedges."

Sholokhov's reference to Fadeyev, who had always been one of the staunchest supporters of the Party line in literature and was regarded as one of the most thorough exponents of socialist realism at its best, and who committed suicide a few months after the debunking of Stalin, is highly significant. His own crudely simplified definition of socialist realism has an almost mocking ring. But even more irreverent was Sholokhov's answer to the next question. Asked whether he considered his own works as representative of socialist realism, Sholokhov replied:

"When you ask me this question I recall that at first my works were proclaimed by Marxist theoreticians to be those of a kulak writer; later, I became for them a 'counter-revolutionary' writer; while in recent years it has always been said that I have been a socialist realist all my life."

It would be difficult to describe more succinctly the elasticity of this famous formula. It is significant that while this interview of Czech writers with Sholokhov was reprinted in the official Polish Communist paper (Trybuna Ludu), not a word of it was breathed in the Soviet press. Soviet critics, on the other hand, are fond of quoting the statement which Sholokhov made in his speech at the Second Congress of Soviet Writers in 1954, when he said: "...our enemies abroad say that we write at the dictate of the Party. Things are somewhat different; each one of us writes at the dictate of his heart, but our hearts belong to the Party and to our people whom we serve by our art."

One may only guess at the degree of conviction in Sholokhov's remark.

THE ARTIST'S ROLE, AS DEFINED BY COMMUNIST LEADERS

By Henry V. Burke

Communist leaders, from Lenin to Mao Tse-tung and Khrushchev, have made no secret of their determination to control the creative arts.

The theme that close adherence to party doctrine must be the first consideration of writers, painters and composers, therefore, is constantly stressed in Communist pronouncements governing the activities of intellectuals.

"The principle of party literature," V.I. Lenin once declared, "consists in the fact that not only may literature not be an instrument of gain for individuals or groups, but also in that it may not be an individual matter at all." Instead, the Communist party's founder added, "literature must become a component part of organized, planned, unified party work."

Nikita Khrushchev broadened Lenin's concept in this series of statements:

"The highest social purpose of literature and the arts is to arouse the people to a struggle for new successes in the building of Communism."

"One of the most important principles is the indissoluble connection of Soviet literature and art with the policy of the Communist party."

"Our people need works of literature, art and music which reflect the glory of labor... The method of socialist realism insures unlimited possibilities for the creation of such works."

Khrushchev was particularly frank in outlining the role of newspapers and magazines in a Communist society. "We cannot let the press organs fall into unreliable lands," he asserted. "They must be in the hands of the workers that are the most loyal, most reliable, most staunch politically, and most devoted to our cause."

The Chinese Communist leader Mao Tse-tung has stressed that "art for art's sake, art which transcends class or party, art which stands as a bystander to, or independent of, politics" cannot be allowed to exist.

"When we say literature and art follow politics," he added, "we mean class politics."

President Kuo Mo-jo of the Chinese (Communist) Academy of Sciences, pointed out in 1958 that "literary style... mainly involves ideology and the ideological method."

Chou Yang, vice chairman of the Chinese Communist party's central propaganda department, recently endorsed the Soviet line that literature is primarily an ideological weapon when he said: "Under the leadership of the Communist party, Chinese literature has always regarded socialist realism as the most correct principle of creation, and looked upon Soviet works as models."

Communist newspapers and theoretical journals have been even more pointed in their cultural edicts.

"The most important task of Soviet writers," according to Bolshevik, "is to preach the ideas of Communism and to show the advantages of the Socialist (Communist) system."

"The form of (artistic) presentation," said the Teacher's Gazette, "as well as stylistic beauty and poetical images... must all be subordinate to the principles of Marxism-Leninism."

"Only that artist is free in his creation," Culture and Life asserted, "who is versed in the laws of the historical development of society and who with all his heart is devoted to his people, to the Communist party, and to the Communist society."

Pravda, not forgetting the potential influence of motion picture films, has decreed that "Soviet cinema art has not and cannot have any interests or tasks other than the interests of the state and the tasks of educating the people, and the youth particularly, in the spirit of the great ideas of Lenin and Stalin."

# # #

POST-STALIN LITERARY "THAW" ENDS WITH NEW CONTROLS

By Vera Alexandrova

(Vera Alexandrova, formerly editor-in-chief of the Chekhov Publishing House in New York, is recognized as an authority on the USSR's literary history.)

The Boris Pasternak case probably has done more than anything else since the death of Stalin to dramatize and clarify the Communist Party's position on cultural matters.

This elderly Soviet poet and novelist, a symbol of stalwart individualism in the midst of censorship and regimentation, captured the world's admiration and sympathy to a degree few writers have experienced.

Pasternak's 1958 ordeal, however, as this review will show, was merely the culmination of a chain of circumstances which began some four years before.

In March, 1954, a year after Stalin's death, the Soviet magazine Znamya published a novel entitled The Thaw. This book by Ilya Ehrenburg was to become a rallying point for those seeking relief from the Communist Party's program of making Soviet literature a propaganda tool.

"Thaw" thus rapidly became a popular byword and was applied to the brief post-Stalin period of relaxed party pressure on literature during which the pent-up need of Soviet writers for greater creative freedom unmistakably began to break through to the surface.

However, by the end of the year, the Communist Party had succeeded in strengthening its control and partially restoring its shaken cultural authority. This was the atmosphere in which the Second All-Union Writers Congress was held in December 1954. A faint breath of freedom still persisted in the literary air.

A new "thaw" began after Khrushchev's speech at the closed session of the 20th Communist Party Congress in February, 1956, with its shocking exposure of Stalin's crimes. This second "thaw," which lasted more than a year, was halted by the direct intervention of Khrushchev himself, who arranged two conferences with writers, artists and composers in May, 1957, and followed these up with a speech on the tasks of literature and art at a meeting of leading Communist Party workers. The three Khrushchev talks were reworked into a long article, "For Close Ties Between Art and Literature and the Life of the People," which first appeared in the magazine Kommunist in August, 1957, and was later reprinted in all literary journals throughout the Soviet Union.

Khrushchev's statements were built upon a single idea: the will of the Communist Party is the genuine expression of the will of the people; hence the "party spirit" in literature, that is, absolute adherence by writers to the party's directives, is the only expression of their true loyalty to the people. Any show of independence by a writer is an expression of a hostile attitude toward the people. This decree, which was soon proclaimed to be a "party document," became Moscow's mandatory credo for all Soviet writers. A new literary freeze had begun.

During the second literary "thaw," which had preceded the 1957 edict by Khrushchev, there appeared an inspired novel by the young writer Vladimir Dudintsev, Not By Bread Alone. This work was serialized in the magazine Novy Mir, in August, September and October, 1956.

Dudintsev's novel depicts the struggle of the talented "individualist" inventor Lopatkin, who designs a machine that is to simplify production methods and cut costs in the manufacture of metal pipes, against the inertia and bureaucracy of the Communist industrial administration. "No matter how hungry I might be," says Lopatkin, at one point, "I would always exchange my bread for a spark of faith." And because Lopatkin does not surrender, he acquires devoted friends and emerges a victor from the unequal struggle.

Both the general reader and other writers welcomed Dudintsev's novel with great enthusiasm. A meeting held at the Central Writers' Club in Moscow at the end of October, 1956, to discuss the novel was filled to overflowing. All the speakers were unanimous in their praise.

Only one month later, however, people cautiously began to dissociate themselves from Dudintsev, who was now accused by the party of "bias in favor of individualism" and "inability to realize and appreciate the strength of the collective" (Literary Gazette, November 24; Izvestia, December 2, 1956). At the March, 1957, plenum of the Executive Committee of the Writers' Union there was no longer any trace of the initially favorable response to Not By Bread Alone.

In a later comment, Dudintsev described the plight of Soviet writers as being comparable to that of the child whose every movement is closely controlled by strict parents.

In 1958 Vsevolod Kochetov wrote a novel, "The Yershov Brothers" (published in the magazine Neva, June-July, 1958), which was conceived as a kind of anti-Dudintsev production, and is today recognized as such. It is centered around an ideal family of hereditary proletarians, the Yershov brothers, and bristles with political tirades in the spirit of Khrushchev's "party document."

Kochetov's novel, as might be expected, won the highest praise of the literary authorities. Kommunist (August, 1958) characterized it as an "'acute and timely' book honoring the image of a truly conscious builder of Communism." A further accolade to Kochetov by Izvestia (on October 2, 1958), described his book as a "party novel" -- the highest term of Communist praise.

In the light of the party's response to these two novels, it becomes clear why the epic work of Boris Pasternak, Doctor Zhivago, could not appear in the Soviet Union. Dr. Zhivago is permeated by feelings which the Communist Party and its literary censors have been trying for decades to destroy or at least to suppress. Foremost among these feelings is hunger for freedom and a sense of man's dignity and independence. These ideas pervade the entire book.

"The main misfortune, the root of all the evil to come," says Dr. Zhivago, "was the loss of confidence in the value of one's own opinion. People imagined that it was out of date to follow their own moral sense, that they must all sing in chorus, and live by other people's notions, notions that were being crammed down everybody's throat."

But these thoughts do not lead Pasternak and his heroes to pessimism and despair. The novel ends on this note of hope:

"Although victory has not brought the relief and freedom that were expected at the end of the war, nevertheless the portents of freedom filled the air throughout the postwar period, and they alone defined its historical significance."

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COMMUNISM'S SINGLE STANDARD FOR LITERATURE AND THE ARTS

By Arturo Valente

Part I

Lenin Sets The Pattern In 1917

Most scholars looking for an explanation of modern Communism's rather exacting requirements for writers and other creative artists sooner or later find themselves engaged in a study of the 1917 Bolshevik revolution.

It is in this eventful period of Communist development, one quickly realizes, that the party's present attitude toward the expression of divergent viewpoints began to take definite form.

Paradoxically, the first official actions of Lenin and his associates upon gaining control of the Russian government on November 7, 1917 were to deny to others the opportunities for self-expression which had made their own revolutionary movement possible. Although Marx, Engels and Lenin had depended to a great extent on books, pamphlets and articles to spread their own theories, one of Lenin's first moves after seizing power was to stop the publication of all newspapers and periodicals not committed to Bolshevism. Proposals that the new Russian government include representatives of other political groups were quickly rejected and it was not long before the freely elected Constituent Assembly was forcibly disbanded for refusing to accept the Bolsheviks' insistence on absolute control.

From this rather abrupt and prophetic beginning has come the monolithic Communist party as it is known today.

Shrewdly and inexorably, Lenin and his successors have applied the principles of centralized power to every aspect of Soviet life, seeking at all times to create the image of an all-wise party leadership which can do no wrong and which therefore demands unhesitating loyalty from each of its subjects. In actual practice, the concept of Communist reality implies far more than mere obedience; the citizens of a Communist state are expected to concentrate their entire beings on the building of Communism as blueprinted by the party.

Writers, painters and composers who accept these conditions without question, and have skill in their crafts, are handsomely rewarded. They are provided with country homes, good incomes and the privileges of travel. Authors, for example, have the Soviet writer's union to supervise their affairs and make sure that whatever they write is in keeping with party policies and objectives. The outward benefits of conformity are demonstrably attractive.

Conversely, any artist whose vision is broader than the party's is on dangerous ground the instant he gives first priority to his own personal reactions to the world around him. Anything resembling what the party calls a revisionist tendency is quickly spotted, as in the case of Boris Pasternak's Dr. Zhivago, and the artist finds his work branded as unfit for Communist audiences. If the writer or other creative worker,

again as in the case of Pasternak, is not sufficiently amenable, he is expelled from his union and faces the uncertain future of all non-conformists in a conformist society.

Soviet officials, from Lenin to Khrushchev, have made no secret of their position on the intellectual's role under Communism. "The highest social purpose of literature and the arts," says Khrushchev, " is to arouse the people to a struggle for new successes in the building of Communism." Lenin's edict that "literature must become a component part of organized, planned, unified party work" was strikingly similar.

In other words, as the Soviet intelligentsia is constantly reminded by party newspapers, magazines, central committee proclamations and other policy outlets, the artist's work is only useful to the extent that it fits the desired ideological grooves.

Critical observations, satire and other thoughtful ventures calculated to stimulate the people's curiosity as to whether Communism is indeed the best of all possible solutions to life's problems are, of course, forbidden. Those who even skirt such questions are risking condemnation as revisionists, dogmatists, formalists or worse.

This intellectually cloying aspect of Communist life, it is commonly believed, has been the greatest single deterrent to the creation of a meaningful body of literature in the Soviet Union, Communist China and the satellite countries of Eastern Europe.

Since the ideological content of music and painting is relatively nebulous, it is writers as a class who feel most keenly the pinch of

party discipline, the never-ending political surveillance of their activities. This is undoubtedly what Vladimir Dudintsev, the troubled author of Not By Bread Alone, meant when he said: "Alas, I constantly feel that I am on a leash. . .such as those sometimes used for guiding infants." This, it might be added, is by no means an unusual reaction for writers in Communist states. Far across the Eurasian continent, the Chinese editor Chin Chao-yang is on record with the observation that today's writers in his country "are apprehensive, ill at ease and always cautious, lest someone grab them from behind."

One typical solution to the Communist-controlled intellectuals' dilemma has been to follow the party's orders in public but to do the work that really interests them in secret.

As the noted Soviet affairs commentator Edward Crankshaw wrote recently: "Today there are painters (in the Soviet Union) whose rooms are stacked with the products of their imagination, their visual curiosity, their preoccupation with western developments of the past hundred years. It is the same with the novelists, the playwrights and the poets. Innumerable manuscripts lie hidden in desks and are never taken out except to be read to small groups of friends."

In any event, it has become fairly obvious that great works of art cannot be produced to meet rigidly prescribed formulas. It is only logical, therefore, that modern Soviet fiction abounds in stereotyped, wooden characters and that many readers turn, in despair, to the older Russian classics. Even the party is dissatisfied with the image of the

"new Soviet man" as various writers, to the best of their ability, have managed to portray him. The single-minded, ideologically pure builder of Communism, as party officials seem to want fictional heroes to be characterized, just doesn't seem real -- even on paper.

A similar deadness has been noted in the "people's art" of Communist China, North Vietnam and the more repressed countries of Eastern Europe.

Communist officials, moreover, seem exceedingly fearful of the personal liberties necessary to correct this situation. The upsurge in literary activity which preceded the 1956 Hungarian revolt, the somewhat radical trends which developed in the Soviet Union during the post-Stalin "thaw," and the outspoken criticism which erupted in Communist China at the time of Mao Tse-tung's brief "hundred flowers" experiment still serve as ominous object lessons to the party's disciplinarians.

In simpler terms, it appears that Communism's own leaders have accepted as proven fact that their doctrine and way of life cannot withstand the unrestricted probing of independent minds.

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COMMUNISM'S SINGLE STANDARD FOR LITERATURE AND THE ARTS

By Arturo Valente

Part II

"Few Of Our Young People Are Becoming Writers"

The Soviet Communist Party's monolithic stand against anything resembling an objective literary examination of the nature and results of its rule, as demonstrated recently by the suppression of Boris Pasternak's Dr. Zhivago, raises a number of questions about the future course of literature in all Communist-dominated societies.

These questions, which presumably apply equally to the various regimes which have acknowledged Moscow's self-appointed role as ideological leader of the Communist bloc, deal with the most basic concepts of human thought, expression and social development.

Can a vibrant, meaningful culture, for example, be built upon a foundation of censorship and the imposition of arbitrary literary and artistic rules?

Party spokesmen, judging from their periodic decrees and exhortations, appear to think that it can. They are, at least, obligated to a defense of this viewpoint, in much the same way that writers are obliged to follow their advice if they expect their works to be approved for publication.

Those taking the opposite viewpoint feel rather strongly that no intellectual culture of any permanent value can come from the maze of restrictions which confront the creative artist living under a system which requires him to be, first of all, a propagandist for the party's political program. Critics of the Communist method point to the writer's historic role of social catalyst, in helping to shape man's understanding of his environment, as a prime example of the need to let the creative artist speak from his own mind, heart and experience. The cultural future looks dark indeed, these critics say, if the creative arts are to become only a supporting chorus for the politicians in power.

Most readers, by now, are familiar with the Communist party's tendency to regard the thinking man with distrust. They have noted the official Soviet line that advocacy of any theory or viewpoint not sanctioned by party councils constitutes revisionism and therefore becomes punishable as a crime against the party. This formula, they have observed, seems to apply in all areas under Communist rule -- Mainland China, North Vietnam, the Soviet Union and the satellite countries of Eastern Europe.

The line of demarcation between party approval and disapproval, to compound the average writer's dilemma, is not always easy to anticipate. Vladimir Dudintsev, for example, was condemned for his provocative attack on Communist bureaucracy in Not By Bread Alone, even though Premier and Party Chief Khrushchev himself took a remarkably similar stand in his

1957 demand for a reorganization of Soviet industry. Even writers like Ilya Ehrenburg, who usually manage to conform satisfactorily, seem to harbor an inner resentment because they must do so. In any event, scholars say Ehrenburg made some devastating points against the Soviet system in his 1957 article, Lessons of Stendhal, under the cover of a rather skillful symbolic association of certain Stendhal quotations with the conditions of today.

Soviet attempts to influence the course of literature are by no means confined to the areas Moscow now controls. Soviet sponsorship of such affairs as the Tashkent conference strongly indicates a desire to internationalize the concept of literature as propaganda. This 1958 meeting, ostensibly a forum for mutual discussion between the writers of Africa and Asia, was held in the Soviet city of Tashkent.

"The conference," according to a delegate from India, the literary critic and scholar Durga Bhagvat, "was just an elaborate technique to exploit persons from the academic class for the propagation of a particular political philosophy."

"The author," Miss Bhagvat wrote after returning to India, "was valued but not the person. His writings were regarded as important, but there was no attempt at any critical appreciation of his writings. The various forms of literature were important, but the contents must always be the usual propaganda stuff. The conference was concerned with various forms of writing more from the point of view of their utility than the basic aspect of creativeness of literature."

The Communist cultural trend, as Miss Bhagvat has indicated, is apparent. Both on the national and international fronts, "party-mindedness" is the first requisite for the hopeful Communist writer, painter or composer.

It is interesting, however, to note that the manuscript of the Soviet-banned international best-selling novel, Dr. Zhivago, has become a popular black-market item in the USSR. This would seem to indicate that the reading public in the so-called "first country of Communism" is by no means entirely satisfied with the voluminous party-approved literature now in circulation.

What, then, is the real future of Communist literature?

One of the speakers at the 1958 Soviet Communist youth congress may have provided the answer in a single sentence.

"We cannot help but feel disturbed," Secretary S. Pavlov of the Moscow city committee said, "by the fact that very few of our young people are taking up the profession of writing."

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COMMUNISM'S SINGLE STANDARD FOR LITERATURE AND THE ARTS

By Arturo Valente

Part III

"To Tell About The Future Is Not An Easy Task"

Shortly after the 1917 Bolshevik revolution brought Communism to Russia, a Soviet writer named Yevgeni Zamyatin produced a book about life in the far-off future -- a time when the entire world was ruled by a single power.

Zamyatin's novel, We, was centered around the love story of a dedicated space scientist and a girl who had become a rebel against the all-pervading, oppressive nature of "the single state." The scientist, to simplify the story, finally rejects his sweetheart and removes all possibility of future temptation by undergoing a brain operation which renders him mentally incapable of rebellious thoughts.

The implications of Zamyatin's visionary masterpiece, which is supposed to have influenced the writing of George Orwell's satirical classic, 1984, were apparently considered too provocative for Soviet audiences. At any rate, recent reports say the book is no longer obtainable in the USSR.

Modern writers of Communist science fiction, however, have been given formulas far less likely to create ideological doubts in the minds of their readers. The recommended approach, it will be seen, is closely linked to the party's general attitude concerning all matters of potential

influence on popular thinking. For this reason, although "future" fiction is not usually included in serious literary studies, the subject merits further examination.

By way of illustration, here are condensed plot summaries of four recent Soviet offerings:

1. Aelita, by Alexei N. Tolstoy. A Soviet expedition lands on Mars and helps the Martian proletarians defeat their "capitalist" oppressors.

2. Menni, the Engineer, by A. Bogdanov. This is an account of early Martian history, when the people were suppressed by "capitalists." Menni comes to recognize the "evils" of capitalism, but it is his son, Netti, who does the most to advance Communist principles on the planet.

3. The Planetary Guest, by G. Martinov. A space ship from a remote planet lands on earth, its passengers revealing that their ancestors conquered the problems of space long ago -- primarily because they had adopted Communist methods.

4. Engineer Garin's Hyperboloid, by Alexei Tolstoy. This story about a mad scientist's plan to conquer the world with his "death ray" employs a typical Soviet "cold-war" theme. The evil scientist is sponsored by American capitalists but is finally defeated by a Communist.

These stories, apart from their obvious straining for broad propaganda effects, suggest other and more interesting aspects of the writer's problems in a Communist society.

In dealing with the future, especially, Communist writers are faced with almost insurmountable obstacles -- for their books and stories cannot, under any circumstances, presume to predict the course of party policy.

As the New York Times' specialist on Soviet affairs, Harry Schwartz, pointed out recently, Soviet fiction is notable for its "reluctance to speculate on what life actually would be like under a future 'Communist utopia.'"

"Even the dullest Soviet author," Schwartz noted, "is aware of the dangers of such fantasies. Communism is nominally the goal of all Soviet striving and its supposed future benefits are the justification for the many sacrifices that were and are now required of Soviet citizens. Yet the official picture of just what Communism will be like is exceedingly vague."

Therefore, Schwartz concluded, any Soviet writer who presumed to speculate in detail about the USSR's future "would be running grave political risks. Only someone of Nikita S. Khrushchev's stature may today dare to talk on this topic."

Knowing this, the USSR's science fiction writers, in particular, are faced with a task of formidable proportions. They must write popular pieces about the future, giving Communism the credit for all possible achievements but avoiding any speculation as to what political shapes their system will assume.

Even the official Soviet newspaper Izvestia, in the course of a recent demand for more and better Communist fiction, was forced to admit that "to tell about the future is not an easy task."

Izvestia might have added that it is equally difficult for Soviet writers to produce satisfactory works about the present. The Moscow Literary Gazette, on January 24, 1959, put its editorial finger on the

problem by pointing out some of the party's major objections to writing which is too factual and too realistic in its approach. "These works," Literary Gazette charged, are written in such a realistic way that "the life of the communist in the struggle for building communism appears monotonous and dull."

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MUSICAL CENSORSHIP POSES PROBLEMS FOR COMMUNIST OFFICIALS

By Marcel Grilli
(Mr. Grilli is music critic for the Japan Times of Tokyo)

Music, because it is an art form which defies measurement by the same sort of ideological yardstick used to assess the work of writers, has long been a problem for Communist cultural censors.

The difficulties these doctrinal experts encounter in drafting a "safe" line for authors, for example, are compounded to a formidable degree when they attempt to spell out the party's regulations for composers. Words, it becomes obvious, are vastly easier to regulate than the subtler messages which may be contained in symphonies, sonatas or concertos.

Nevertheless, since the Communist party requires that all artistic expression be monitored, controlled and disciplined, no exception can be made for music.

These introductory remarks may help to explain the confusion which attended promulgation of a significant 1958 Moscow decree which purports to contain the latest party line for musicians. Although approved by the party's ruling central committee on May 28, the new regulations proved to be so complicated that it was not until June 8 that Pravda (the party's principal press organ) was able to publish them, along with an attempted clarification.

The interval of two weeks was needed for the preparation of "an overall and profound analysis" and for developing the theses of musical development according to the new prouncement -- a task assigned to Pavel Satyukov, the editor of Pravda. This document, that was to clarify obscurities and reconcile the irreconcilable, turned out to be as voluminous and riddled with contradictions as such official dicta are wont to be. In order to find whatever meanings might be hidden in the directive -- apparently part of the general reversals of Stalinist policies instituted by Premier Khrushchev -- one has to reexamine the zig-zag track of Soviet musical esthetics and the governing Communist policy of "socialist realism."

The one consistent Soviet cultural policy throughout the years has been enforced subservience of music and the other arts to the practical problems of revolutionary development. Such a tie-up of art and politics has been a standard practice in many totalitarian countries, so the Soviet Union was hardly original in formulating its needs for a kind of "politically suitable" music.

Since the mid-1930's the Soviet Communist Party has been sending out a stream of directives intended to maintain its concepts of the ideological significance of music. Through disciplinary action and heavy penalties the USSR's leading composers have been repeatedly pulled back from "deviationism" through subjective expression or stylistic connection with modern movements in the West. Instead, Soviet composers have been ordered to work with themes of social significance which would also be immediately comprehensible to a wide audience. In the case of Prokofiev, Shostakovich, and

Khachaturian, to mention three composers whose works are most performed and admired abroad, the accusations of "deviationism" from the "true esthetic principles of Soviet art" have been recurrent and vociferous. Each time the necessary genuflections and expiations had to be performed before the artist could resume his work. (The case of Prokofiev may be excepted; in many ways his was an unusual case. Less manageable than either of his two confreres, he was certainly a more independent spirit. For a time he continued to write as he pleased under the cover of an occasional "Ode to Stalin" or a "Peace Oratorio," which contained a sufficient number of party-line allusions to make the music acceptable).

The great musical "purge" of 1948 involved eight top composers, including Nikolai Miaskovsky (who died in 1950), Prokofiev, Shostakovich, and Khachaturian. A prominent Soviet critic recently ranked these four composers as "the great masters of Russian music in the Soviet period." But in 1948 they were confronted by Alexander Zhdanov, then the chief Soviet cultural inquisitor. The immediate spark that set off Moscow's attack at that time was an opera entitled The Great Friendship, by a minor Georgian composer, Vanno Muradelli. This work, dealing with Stalin's years of friendship with Lenin, had obviously been intended as a noble tribute, but the touchy subject managed to offend Communist Party leaders at a "closed" performance in Moscow in November 1947.

The decree that followed on February 10, 1948, however, was directed at a far wider field. "Formalism" was the key word and its many meanings all bore accusations of failure to serve the cause of "the great

epoch of socialist reconstruction." The dissident composers were accused of employing the advances in musical style developed by such "decadent" and "corrupt" "Western" musical leaders as Stravinsky, Schoenberg, and Hindemith.

Again Shostakovich and Khachaturian saw fit to recant their "errors" and speedily made their peace with the party bureaucrats. Prokofiev, long in poor health, maintained his tongue-in-cheek attitude, but on the whole led a quiet existence until his death of cerebral hemorrhage at the age of 61 in March, 1953, a week after Stalin's passing. (Prokofiev's last formal work, it might be noted, was a Sinfonia Concertante which is merely a rehash of a previous cello concerto written twenty years earlier.)

Two important points now emerge from the new decree and the voluminous commentary published in Pravda on June 8, 1958: (1) the decree admits that Muradelli's opera, The Great Friendship, which had occasioned the previous decree of 1948, really did not deserve the label of "formalism in music," and (2) that it had been wrong to describe such composers as Prokofiev, Shostakovich, and Khachaturian as "representatives of anti-popular formalistic trends." Also admitted to have been "unjustifiably severe" were past denunciations of a number of other distinguished composers and of two additional operas of 1951, namely, Konstantin Dankevich's Bogdan Khmelnitsky, based on the history of the 17th-century Ukrainian people's war of liberation, and German Leontievich Zhukovsky's Ot vsevo serdtsa ("From the Bottom of the Heart"), whose plot

was drawn from a novel by Maltsev. Stalin had become the scapegoat, and the Party's previous musical line was ascribed to the fallen dictator's "subjective approach" and to the "negative influence" exerted by such "anti-Party" traitors as Molotov, Malenkov, and Beria.

So far, so good. The very next day, on June 9, 1958, messages from Soviet musical personalities endorsing and praising the new party ruling began to appear in the columns of Pravda. It was recalled that many composers who had suffered under Zhdanov's cultural dictatorship had later been awarded prizes and had their compositions performed after Stalin's death. One of these messages, from the veteran Yuri Shaporin, composer of the monumental opera, The Decembrists (begun in 1925 and not completed until some thirty years later) spoke eloquently of "the directness and high-principled attitude" of the party's decision, which, in the words of Shaporin, had "exposed the mistaken evaluations of musical works which were formed under the conditions of the personality cult."

Prokofiev had once described some of his musical colleagues as "babes in arms", and evidently Soviet composers again are naively reading into the new decree what they wishfully hope to see there. For example, Shostakovich was on hand to welcome the new pronouncement -- "a yardstick of national interest," he called it euphemistically, against which artists could measure their advances in creative work. On the general subject of party prepared yardsticks, Shostakovich had previously clarified his views in Pravda on March 27, 1957, when he wrote: "I consider this a great benefit and a great advantage for the artist because

it saves him from the self-delusion of individualism and the risk of straying off to the byways that lead to decadence, turgidity, and hack work...." Such a statement on the part of the leading Soviet composer is all the more revealing since it came at a time when Shostakovich was preparing for the premiere of his Eleventh Symphony, a musical re-evocation of episcodes of the abortive Russian revolt of 1905, an overly long work whose main features are its fanfares, popular march tunes, and patent cliches.

Also indicative was a Radio Moscow broadcast in August of 1958 reporting that Shostakovich had turned to musical comedy in an effort to attune his creativeness to the new artistic experiments encouraged by the Khrushchev regime. Like the revised view of Jazz, this appeared to be a consequence of the official tendency to woo the rank-and-file of Soviet aficionados of musical stage works away from the Italian and French operatic repertoire, which remains extremely popular throughout the U.S.S.R. For it must be admitted that, in spite of strenuous efforts on the part of the directors of Soviet opera houses to popularize modern native works, few of the operas produced by contemporary Soviet composers have managed to win a permanent place in opera-goers' hearts. As a matter of fact, repeated appeals have been made to win official Communist approval for some relaxation of rigid party ukases and party sanction for policies more in favor of bolder attempts by composers, librettists, and producers to find new forms. This was tacitly conceded in the June 8 Pravda editorial which not only called for more and better operas on contemporary subjects,

but also for a greater tolerance on the part of critics towards composers searching for new formal solutions.

Such developments would also seem to be all to the good. But the verbatim translation of the new party-approved dictum is far less ebullient than the journalistic commentaries. For example, there is an explicit acknowledgment that the previous 1948 resolution had correctly related the task for the development of music to the concept of socialist realism and had properly condemned formalistic tendencies in music. A network of linguistic contradictions allows loopholes that make previous criticism seem to be in error, but nevertheless still upholds the "important party rulings" and the "important party documents" in which the original criticism appeared. Finally, the demands of composers, musicians, and producers for freedom from party restrictions and discipline are peremptorily rejected.

Pravda itself has admitted that the danger of "unhealthy and alien" musical phenomena and "incorrect tendencies" still exists. The party newspaper also points out an inclination to "false originality," an enthusiasm among young composers for formal experimenting "without a healthy and realistic ground," and the existence of uncritical attitudes towards "decadent modern art." All these are condemned without mincing words.

What, then, is the concrete and factual residue left after the verbiage is sifted from the 1958 decree? There is a pretense at legalizing the rehabilitation of previously censured composers. A few freedoms which

the composers had been winning for themselves were also grudgingly conceded. But there is no evidence of relaxation of discipline imposed on music as a utilitarian tool in a political organization. The extent to which composers may benefit by the breakthrough achieved after Stalin's death is very strictly delimited. No Soviet composer who wishes a measure of material success can afford to ignore these boundaries.

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PASTERNAK'S FELLOW AUTHORS SPEAK THEIR MINDS

By Henry V. Burke

When Soviet actions in the Boris Pasternak affair reached an ideological point of no return in late October of 1958, it was not surprising that authors in other countries were among the first to voice their opinions.

The situation in which the famed Soviet poet and novelist suddenly found himself -- the recipient of increasing praise throughout the non-Communist literary world but faced with rapidly mounting pressure in his own country -- quite naturally had a special kind of impact on those individuals who, in one form of another, felt themselves to be Pasternak's spiritual colleagues.

Who better than another writer could sense the full import of Pasternak's personal ordeal? The whole Pasternak episode was, after all, the most dramatic kind of revelation of what any artist faces if he happens to live in a society which regards all manifestations of the creative imagination as potentially dangerous.

In this context, the fact that authors living in the Soviet Union either kept silent or joined in the Communist attacks on Pasternak gives added significance to the words and actions of those other writers who were in a better position to comment as individuals.

It is something more than a coincidence, one might add, that virtually every author outside the Communist bloc arrived independently at almost the identical conclusion about Pasternak's abrupt rejection of the Nobel award.

Here, for example, are the comments of three former Nobel prize winners in literature:

"I don't believe Pasternak refused the Nobel prize of his own free will." -- Albert Camus of France.

"Knowing the Russians' way of life as we do, we may well think that Pasternak had no alternative but to reject this prize." -- Bertrand Russell of Britain.

"The rejection, which no doubt was made under pressure, does not alter his (Pasternak's) world stature as a writer. It does reflect, most unfortunately, upon his government and his compatriots." -- Pearl Buck of the United States.

The noted British author Stephen Spender termed Pasternak's expulsion from the Soviet Writers' Union "a disgrace to civilization." Similar reactions came from French author Andre Maurois, who called the reprisal against the Soviet poet and novelist a "scandalous" development, and President Tatsuzo Ishikawa of the Japanese Writers' Union, who characterized Pasternak's treatment in the USSR as "deplorable."

A number of world-renowned authors felt so strongly about the Pasternak case that they sent indivicual or group messages of protest to Soviet officials.

Iceland's Halldor Kiljan Laxness, winner of both the Nobel and Stalin prizes, directed this appeal to Soviet Premier and Party Chief Nikita Khrushchev:

"Turning to Your Excellency, I implore you as a level-headed statesman to use your influence in mitigating the malicious onslaughts of sectarian intolerance upon an old, meritorious Russian poet, Boris Pasternak. Why lightheartedly arouse the wrath of the world's poets, writers, intellectuals and socialists against the Soviet Union in this matter? Kindly spare the friends of the Soviet Union an incomprehensible and most unworthy spectacle."

More strongly worded protests came from authors in Britain, the international P.E.N. organization, the Authors' League of America and various national committees for cultural freedom.

A number of prominent Austrian writers signed a resolution protesting Soviet actions against Pasternak and saluting "our great Russian colleague in his hours of solitude to which the anti-intellectual terror of the rulers of his country has condemned him."

Italy's National Union of Writers dispatched this appeal to the Soviet Writers' Union in Moscow:

"The Union expresses its painful shock and its protest against the attitude taken by you concerning Boris Pasternak. Such steps which we do not consider justified, even as a political and doubtlessly desperate polemic, seriously violate the professional dignity of writers and are in open contradiction to the unanimous decisions of the recent international

writers' congress held in Naples and which were approved also by your official delegation."

A group of Indian writers issued a statement charging that "it is the Communist rulers who are imparting political considerations to a purely literary affair. Literary men all over the world will disapprove of this tendency of mixing politics with literature. We hope the Russian government will have some consideration for the opinion of writers and will in deference to that stop their ill treatment of the great Russian writer, Boris Pasternak."

Sharp criticism of the Soviet campaign against Pasternak also came from authors and academicians in Latin America. Among the first to protest was the Brazilian novelist and poet Jorge Amado, himself a former winner of the Stalin prize. Amado asserted that "Pasternak's expulsion from the Union of Soviet Wrtiers demonstrates that schematic, sectarian and dogmatic elements still dominate in the Soviet Union, trying to impede literary creation and to impose a single school of thought, just as in the Stalin era." The Brazilian Association for Freedom of Culture declared, in a particularly forthright statement, that "any attempt to prevent an artist from giving voice to his art is an irreparable crime against humanity."

The Swedish Association of Writers cabled the USSR's Union of Writers that "in our firm opinion, it is your and our common task to guard freedom of speech and the writer's right to speak out on the great questions of our time. Therefore, an author must be able to feel certain that his criticism of circumstances in his own country will be met by counter-criticism, not reprisal."

From these randomly selected examples of world literary reaction, it is apparent that the Soviet campaign against Pasternak for presuming to write objectively of life in the USSR was uniformly regarded as an official repudiation of the artist's inherent right to express himself.

Any attempt to seek out the real reason for the Soviet Union's official attitude, however, must go beyond the overt political campaign conducted against Pasternak and those who honored him with the Nobel award. One must first examine the original Soviet decision to ban Pasternak's novel, "Dr. Zhivago," and then consider the strenuous efforts made to prevent its appearance in other countries.

Soviet literary censors, in rejecting the manuscript of "Dr. Zhivago" when it was first submitted for publication in the USSR, put their objections into a surprisingly simple, frank and revealing statement.

"The thing that disturbed us about your novel," they wrote to Pasternak, "is something that neither the editors nor the author can alter by cuts or alterations. We mean the spirit of the novel, its general tenor, the author's point of view...The spirit of your novel is that of non-acceptance of the Socialist (Communist) Revolution."

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DR. ZHIVAGO "HAS NO INTEREST FOR US"

By Arturo Valente

As anticipated, one of the questions raised by newsmen during Soviet Deputy Premier Anastas Mikoyan's early 1959 visit to the United States concerned Boris Pasternak's much-discussed novel, Dr. Zhivago.

Mikoyan's answer, when asked if this world-famous book would ever be published in the USSR, was simplicity itself. "It has no interest for us," the Soviet official replied.

From an official and party point of view, Mikoyan's statement was undoubtedly true, it having already been decided that Dr. Zhivago was not suitable reading for residents of the Soviet Union and its areas of primary influence.

A few months before, however, spokesmen for the Soviet Communist Party were giving every indication that they considered Dr. Zhivago a subject of the greatest possible interest. This was the period, late in 1958, when award of the Nobel prize for literature to Boris Pasternak set off a nation-wide campaign to discredit both book and author.

In view of the more recent Soviet stand that Dr. Zhivago and Boris Pasternak are unworthy of serious discussion, it might be interesting to consider some of the Communist Party's possible reasons for wishing to wash its hands of the whole matter.

Back in 1956, long before Dr. Zhivago became an international best-seller, Boris Pasternak's manuscript was weighed against the standards of "Communist realism" which govern all cultural endeavors in the Soviet Union.

Editors of the Soviet literary monthly, Novy Mir, after considering the manuscript in their capacity as party examiners, expressed themselves as shocked by both the tone and content of Pasternak's panoramic survey of Russian life before, during and after the Bolshevik revolution.

"The thing that disturbed us about your novel," Pasternak was informed in a 10,000-word letter of rejection, "is something that neither the editors nor the author can alter by cuts or alterations...The spirit of your novel is that of non-acceptance of the socialist (Communist) revolution."

While the tone of Novy Mir's letter was remarkably temperate, in relation to the party's later attacks on Pasternak, its long-delayed publication by the Soviet Literary Gazette in 1958 prompted many non-Soviet readers to take a second look at their copies of Dr. Zhivago. Just what, they wondered, were the Communists so disturbed about?

In addition to the author's obvious feelings about the fundamental importance of the individual, and his right to freedom of thought, a number of specific passages must have seemed highly improper to Communist party officials. Here are some examples:

"You know, it looks as if I'll be forced to resign from my jobs. It's always the same thing -- it happens again and again. At first

everything is splendid. 'Come along. We welcome good, honest work, we welcome ideas, especially new ideas. What could please us better? Do your work, struggle, carry on.' Then you find in practice that what they mean by ideas is nothing but words -- claptrap in praise of the revolution and the regime. I'm sick and tired of it. And it's not the kind of thing I'm good at."

* * *

"Marxism is too uncertain of its ground to be a science... Sciences are more balanced, more objective. I don't know a movement more self-centered and further removed from the facts than Marxism."

* * *

"His (Strelnikov's) alliance with the Bolsheviks is accidental. So long as they need him, they put up with him...The moment they don't need him they'll throw him overboard with no regret, and crush him, as they have done with other military experts."

* * *

"To conceal failure by every means that terrorism can suggest, it is necessary to make people learn not to think and to judge, forcing them to see things that did not exist and proving the contrary of what everyone could see."

* * *

"The worst evil and the root of future evil were a loss of confidence in the value of one's own opinion...We thought it was necessary to sing in chorus and to live on absolute concepts imposed from above."

* * *

"What was conceived as a noble and lofty idea has become material and crude...Russian enlightenment has become the Russian revolution."

* * *

"The idea of social betterment as it is understood since the October revolution doesn't fill me with enthusiasm. It is far from being put into practice, and the mere talk about it has cost such a sea of blood that I am not sure the end justifies the means."

* * *

"The great majority of us are required to lead a life of constant, systematic duplicity."

* * *

"Civic institutions should be founded on democracy; they should grow up from below...You cannot hammer them in from above like stakes for a fence."

* * *

"Life is never a material, a substance to be molded. If you want to know, life is the principle of self-renewal, it is constantly renewing and remaking and changing and transfiguring itself. It is infinitely beyond your or my obtuse theories about it."

# # #

WHY KHRUSHCHEV DISTRUSTS THE SOVIET INTELLECTUALS

By James H. Billington

From The New York Times Magazine

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The current Soviet campaign to humiliate and defame Boris Pasternak is only the latest and most dramatic illustration of the continuing tension between the Soviet regime and its intellectuals. Whatever Nikita S. Khrushchev's successes in material construction and foreign policy, he has not yet found a formula for dealing with this troublesome element in Soviet society.

A recent trip to the U.S.S.R. provided me an opportunity to learn -- through formal and informal talks in a number of intellectual centers -- something of the outlook of the Soviet intelligentsia. While the picture was often depressing, there seemed little doubt even in those days before Pasternak received -- and refused -- the Nobel Prize, that this lonely and craggy figure is closer to the thinking people of the U.S.S.R. than is Khrushchev or any other recent political leader.

Khrushchev's problem in determining what to do about Pasternak is part of the broader dilemma of the despot posing as a reformer. On the one hand, he must grant his cerebral servants enough freedom to produce the things the regime needs; at the same time, he must make it clear that they are still on a leash.

In this period of uncertainty in which attempts are being made to tighten the leash on Soviet writers, if not to terrorize them, intellectuals seem to feel perplexed and increasingly antagonistic to "them" -- the Communist Party supervisors of intellectual life. "We hardly know what they believe, let alone what we are to think or teach," one young Soviet teacher said of the recent changes in the official histories of the U.S.S.R.

These feelings of discontent are in many ways recent developments. Late in 1956, at the end of the officially sanctioned "thaw" in Soviet intellectual life, apparently many still spoke with gratitude of the days "since the birth of Khrushchev" -- a pun, since the words for Khrushchev and Christ sound somewhat similar in Russian.

Now the general attitude seems closer to that of a writer, who said, in discussing Khrushchev's denigration of Stalin: "Comrade Khrushchev seems to have gotten the idea that the rumblings he made after his revelations were unqualified cheers for him. He is like the master of ceremonies in a bad comedy show. When he suddenly receives an uproarious reaction from the crowd he congratulates himself on his great wit without noticing that his suit has just come apart at the seams."

One of the surprisingly large number of young writers who knew and admired Pasternak (and who had some familiarity with "Doctor Zhivago" despite the official ban on its publication in the U.S.S.R.) pointed out with considerable feeling that Pasternak, in contrast to Khrushchev, neither benefited from the terror of the Stalin era nor waited until the master was dead to make his attitude clear. This same writer pointed to the "moral dignity" of Pasternak's long literary silence, and to such past incidents as his reading of nonpolitical poems at "literary evenings" almost entirely devoted to grovelling odes to Stalin.

Khrushchev's most serious problems with the intellectuals are probably not, however, those that follow from his exposed ideological position so much as those that result from his determination to "overtake and surpass America," to use the official slogan of current Soviet construction (or "keep ahead of the Chinese," to use one of the unofficial ones). One of the many jokes about this slogan tells of the economics professor who, after explaining that America is inevitably declining, asks his class what is the future goal of Russia and is answered in chorus: "Overtake and surpass America." This very determination renders the ambitious politicians increasingly dependent on the intellectuals' talents at a moment when their ideological hold over the thinking community has been weakened.

Who makes up the intellectual community in the U.S S.R.? Its official members are the professional scientists, writers and professors who work for the Academy of Sciences, the Union of Writers and the higher

state schools. These full-time intellectuals are often better paid and more publicly honored than their counterparts in the United States, though they pay a price that few thinking people can ever fully tolerate: acceptance of their task as essentially service to the state.

It was with the obvious intention of fostering the impression that all is well on this intellectual assembly line that a meeting was arranged for me in Moscow at the Union of Writers -- the organization from which Pasternak was recently expelled. Seated at the head of a table in the palace that was Tolstoy's model for the Rostov estate in "War and Peace" was the writer Boris Polevoi and a small entourage of "literary figures."

After a cordial welcome, Polevoi said: "So you wanted to see -- ; well, here he is." Thereupon a door opened and the first of several prominent young writers whom I had asked to see entered on cue for a brief and rather wooden discussion.

This unedifying parade was accompanied by much effusive camaraderie among Polevoi and the permanent members of his literary seminar, who engaged in some mock sparring over such pressing matters as which really was the best novel of some obscure Soviet writer. "You see," said Polevoi, throwing his arms out expansively lest I miss the point, "we have many arguments among ourselves." "Yes"; "Certainly"; "All the time" came the reprise from the chorus.

At this and similar meetings (especially with large visiting delegations) a flattering illusion of contact is created and an earnest effort made to disarm potential critics with brief displays of friendliness and free discussion. However, smaller informal meetings or follow-up discussions are almost invariably ruled out, often by the simple method of putting off the initial meeting until the final day of a visitor's stay.

But even in these formal meetings it is often possible to discover more than the Communist stage managers probably intend. One writer will tell you in the course of his recital that he is now preparing an edition of his selected works -- "very selected", -- another that he has suddenly developed a passion for translating after previously saying pointedly that he had never had any ability or interest in foreign languages. Others convey a great deal simply by silence, by a look, or by including -- as most whom I met did -- the names of Pasternak and other unorthodox contemporary figures among those whose work has made the deepest impression on them.

In these rare "moments of truth," in official meetings and in even more rewarding chance encounters, one slowly comes to realize how much fuller the intellectual and creative life of Russia is than that which is represented by its official Communist overseers.

The intellectual community in the Soviet Union today includes not only professionals, but many of the growing number of educated laymen as well. The very word intelligentsia is a Russian one with past connotations of high purpose and deep concern. Even today the word kulturny ("cultured") is generally esteemed to be a far higher compliment

than partiny ("party-spirited"). "To be kulturny you must live honorably," a Moscow cab driver explained, "and to be intelligentny you must be able to read between the lines." There is little doubt that he -- and many other Russian members of this uniquely philosophic profession -- are both more "cultured" and more "intelligent" than most of the regime's paid philosophers.

Soviet intellectuals in this special sense are today the very old and the very young. While the very old -- Pasternak and many of the best scientists, writers and historians -- have their roots in pre-revolutionary Russia, the post-war generation of intellectuals represents a new source of vitality. Their unorthodox "rotten moods" have perplexed the regime, which denounces them vigorously, but rather implausibly, as perezhitki -- "survivals of the past."

They are in essence the Soviet Union's version of the angry young men -- though their anger has a moral and selfless quality about it. They find unity in a common revulsion toward those whom one writer called "petit bourgeois Communists" -- men who survived the Stalin era and prize above everything else this animal survival. If these young intellectuals have no unifying positive vision, they do have a common idea of hell: the bovine life of the middle-aged bureaucrats who, without honor, humor or embarrassment, swarm in their inelegant beach pajamas over imitation baronial palaces along the Black Sea.

A second common characteristic of this rising student generation is its almost insatiable curiosity about the outside world. A student to whom I had given a copy of an American newspaper later told me that he had cut it into 75 pieces in order to give each of his classmates some of it.

A young musician insisted that Van Cliburn was received with such unprecedented warmth not only because of his musical virtuosity, but because of a widespread desire to demonstrate in some way the popular thirst for expanded contact with the United States.

In any event, whenever informal meetings were possible, young Soviet intellectuals asked questions not only about Little Rock and unemployment, but others revealing broader horizons than many might have thought possible under Soviet methods of indoctrination. They seem genuinely interested in knowing if, and why, educated Americans still believe in God, or if, and why, different universities teach the same subjects differently.

When I assured a group of Moscow University students that no one regulated the content of my courses at Harvard, the spokesman of the group nodded and said, with a tone of reverence that would be hard to duplicate in the free world, "Da svoboda slov!" ("Yes, freedom of speech!").

Expanded intellectual horizons are, to a very considerable degree, the accidental creations of Khrushchev's policies. Although Khrushchev clearly intended to let out the leash only when necessary to produce results in areas of priority concern to the regime, he appears to have stimulated independent thinking in many unwelcome areas.

Architects, for instance, have at last been encouraged to cease building pretentious civic monuments and get on with long-overdue housing projects. But several architects who had been sent abroad to study foreign techniques seemed less interested in the specific methods they were supposed to have studied than in the ideas they had picked up in free countries:

of tailoring construction more to individual needs and tastes, of building more harmoniously into the landscape and, above all, of emphasizing lightness and simplicity.

The bordeom and exasperation induced by official ideology is illustrated by one of the many jokes told about the regime's attempt to drape itself in the mantle of a "return to Leninism." Lenin, it seems, arose from the grave and went in search of a newspaper that would tell him what had happened in the U.S.S.R. since his death. When he asked for Pravda (Truth), Sovetskaya Rossiya (Soviet Russia) or Trud (Work), the news vender explained to him: "There is no Truth left; Soviet Russia has been sold out; all that remains is Work."

This story is typical not only in its expression of discontent, but also in its resignedly submissive conclusion. This technically trained student generation seems politically naive and even indifferent; but its members are at least bent on doing their work well -- without frills, without cant, and, above all, without interference. To an observer, this no-nonsense attitude may seem a natural and insignificant development; but to the Soviet leaders -- whose political position is still dependent on their ideological pretensions -- it apparently seems to be part of some insidious plot, a kind of creeping pragmatism which bids fair to threaten the "leading role of the party" in all walks of life.

This struggle between party bureaucrat and scientific specialist seems to have been almost literally built into the new Moscow University, which dominates the horizon of the capital for miles around. These new buildings are for the exclusive use of the favored scientific faculties,

but they are built in the heavy, Muscovite style which many scientists openly refer to as "the Empire style in the time of the plague." All study is free, but engraved on the wall of the main auditorium is Stalin's ominous warning that scientists must be not only skilled specialists, but faithful and active party men as well.

At the other end of the intellectual pole from the creeping pragmatism and skepticism of the scientist is the half-hidden interest of many intellectuals in the broader questions of meaning and purpose.

While the educated classes, on the whole, do not appear anxious to return to any formal religion, I did notice some evidence of renewed interest in religious ideas. One student explained that the riotous student demonstrations of support for the novelist Dudintsev two years ago were more on behalf of the title of his work, "Not by Bread Alone," than for the author or the book itself. In the re-examination of long-neglected elements in Russia's past during the past few years, the attention of the thinking classes has been focused largely on the tortured but deeply religious figure of Dostoevsky. A new edition of his works and a new motion picture version of "The Idiot" seem to be enjoying more popularity and provoking more thoughtful discussion than almost any other recent cultural productions.

In such delicate subjects as the exploration of Russia's past, "they" (the party bureaucrats) are, of course, ever alert to see that cultural activities either support an ideological point or contribute to the prestige of the Soviet state. There was something both amusing and depressing about a young Communist archaeologist who pointed with great solemnity

to some birchwood account records that had been dug up at great expense. "These prove," he announced rather defensively, "that we Russians weren't illiterate back in the twelfth century, and that we didn't get our culture from the church, either."

If the Soviet intellectual community is in frequent conflict with its party overseers and is increasingly populated by inquiring young men who can "read between the lines," nonetheless its contribution to the state remains immense.

The undeniable material progress that Russia has made in the Soviet period would have been unthinkable without the cooperation of many pre-revolutionary intellectuals and the development in more recent years of an impressive new generation of scientists and technologists. Although Soviet science almost certainly owes a theoretical debt to Germany, England, and the United States for its recent advances in such fields as rocketry, jet aviation, and nuclear energy, these still are substantial national achievements, in which most Soviet intellectuals take considerable pride.

The intellectuals' sense of identification with the fate of their native land is exemplified by Pasternak's anguished plea not to be exiled from Russia. Particularly since the upsurge of wartime nationalism, the regime seems to have benefited from the general desire to stick together, almost no matter what, while the motherland got back on her feet. However, after more than 13 years, many now seem to feel that it is time for a new period to begin.

Both the vitriolic campaign against Pasternak and Khrushchev's new program to remedy the students' "separation from life" by imposing on

them obligatory service in a factory or on a farm indicate that the regime is determined to tighten the leash. But it is unlikely that Khrushchev can ever preside over a full-blown return to Stalinism, having himself done so much to shatter the myth of infallibility. Thus, it appears likely that the Soviet leadership will have to grant some further grudging concessions to the group on which it depends for the realization of its plans.

Vindictive personal injustices -- such as forcing Pasternak to decline the Nobel Prize -- undoubtedly will continue. But as all who have recently seen Pasternak attest, he has developed a noble indifference to his personal fate as long as he can in some way give witness to his ideals within his native Russia. If some party bureaucrat, such as his principal tormentor Surkov, the widely disliked secretary of the Writers Union, should succeed in imposing even more brutal sanctions on Pasternak, they would probably do the cause which Pasternak serves more good than harm. Indeed, the vast uproar already made about "Doctor Zhivago" has, no doubt, done far more to stimulate curiosity about a novel still unpublished in the U.S.S.R. than to call forth any genuine indignation over it.

When I concluded my visit in the Soviet Union in the fall of 1958, I did not feel any great optimism about the ability of these inquiring young intellectuals seriously to affect the politics or policies of the Soviet state -- at least in the near future. Nonetheless, I left with a distinct feeling that Soviet creative life has a richness and depth which the regime has been unable fully to control and the world fully to appreciate.

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Though I did not see Pasternak, I nevertheless felt some sense of his presence in many talks with Russian thinkers. Outstanding young writers, who are among his closest friends and admirers, have long been heartened by his adherence to poetic values in an age of political doggerel.

Some of the unorthodox aesthetic ideas they experessed -- of experimenting with blank verse or poeticizing the Russian language by eliminating harsh gutterals -- represent the sort of thing he himself might do if he still had youth and a chance to publish. In talking with many others who have no real understanding of Pasternak's literary work, I found that he stands as a witness to the proposition that it is possible to have lived through all that Russia has experienced in this century and yet still speak truthfully about important questions.

One cannot leave the U.S.S.R without some feeling of respect for the forests of cranes atop buildings going up, for the new dams and hospitals, for the hypnotic statistics of physical construction. But somehow one feels that these are not what thinking young Russians really care about; that this building is for them a massive calisthenic exercise held in the half-light prior to the dawn.

But is there to be a dawn? In search of an answer one turns inevitably to Pasternak -- and to the many others whose names and fates may never be known. It is possible that in Pasternak and "Doctor Zhivago" one sees only the last reflections on a lonely mountain of a sun that has already set. But perhaps his is also the perspective of Prospero -- the wondrous final creation of the Shakespeare whom Pasternak has so long and so lovingly translated. For Pasternak "the cloud-capp'd towers, the

gorgeous palaces" of Soviet construction may already seem an "insubstantial pageant faded" and man "such stuff as dreams are made on."

As he recently said: "The proclamations, the tumult, the excitement are over. Something new is growing, imperceptibly and quietly as the grass grows. It is ripening as fruit does, and it is growing in the young. The essential thing in our age is that a new freedom is being born."

E N D

This article appeared in the magazine section of the November 9, 1958, issue of The New York Times. The author, an assistant professor at Harvard University, recently returned from a visit to the U.S.S.R. He teaches Soviet history and modern Russian intellectual history.

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THE LESSON OF PASTERNAK

By Ignazio Silone

From The New Leader

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The great storm around Boris Pasternak has now abated. Now we can put into perspective some of the things revealed by it.

What, above all, is the true significance of the protests that have been voiced in all parts of the world against the grave threats and persecution to which Pasternak has been subjected in the U.S.S.R.? These protests, in my view, constitute the most fitting reply to the abject rationalizations which the poet himself was forced to submit in rejecting the Nobel Prize for Literature. The first reason given by Pasternak for his rejection referred, as we know, to the particular psychology of the national society to which he belongs and which, realistically, he must take into account. But the intense emotion and the rising storm of protest engendered throughout the civilized world by this episode demonstrate that there exists, at least potentially, a society larger than the national society to which Pasternak, as a man and as a consummate artist, fully belongs.

All of us knew, in discussing the Pasternak affair, that we were not arbitrarily interfering in the internal affairs of a foreign country. Pasternak is our colleague; he belongs to us as much as to the Russians; he is part of what Goethe called Weltliteratur. The boundaryless society of artists and free men felt outraged and wounded by the ignoble behavior of the Soviet cultural bureaucracy. We had the right and the duty to intervene. Pasternak unexpectedly gave a name and a face to the cause of the freedom of art. With him our dignity and our honor as writers were at stake. Now the simple fact that a novel has been the center of the world's attention must impress upon us the importance which true art can still assume in the life of the people.

After Budapest, after Warsaw, we now have "Doctor Zhivago." Anyone who, in the future, speaks of the role of the intellectuals in our time will not be able to ignore these fundamental events. In this sense, the Pasternak case has served as a touchstone which no Western literary circles can refuse to recognize. The cowardice, the ambiguity, the subtle distinctions, the hypocritical evasions of "equi-distance" have again laid bare the malaise which still afflicts many Western writers when they are confronted with the need to assume a responsibility that endangers their tranquility. This is a lesson to keep in mind.

The Pasternak case has also enabled us to see more clearly the present status of cultural life in the Soviet Empire. We already knew that the "thaw" was a short-lived one. We knew that the cultural institutions, the publishing houses, the writers' and artists' associations,

the editorial offices of the reviews remained unchanged, with the same directors who had been placed there by Andrei Zhdanov. But we never could have predicted that the insolence of these gentlemen could take this form, which, to us, appears mad. To be sure, even now we are not in favor of a rupture of cultural relations with the Soviet Union; we remain, now as always, partisans of a free circulation of men and ideas. But we shall not easily forget the names of the Soviet men of letters who promoted the shameful campaign against Pasternak and who led the Moscow Writers Union to request that the Government deprive Pasternak of the right to work and live in the U.S.S.R. We must wait for one of these gentlemen to appear at some international conference in Venice, Rome, Zurich, or Paris, to ask him to account for his ignominy. Of course, shameful attitudes have been taken by other writers, recently and in the distant past. But the literary history of no country knows a more degrading spectacle than that of an assembly of 800 writers condemning a novel without having read it. Not even the Spanish Inquisition, in its darkest period, descended to such depths of violence and stupidity.

It would seem that certain Soviet writers, including some famous ones, did not join in the general outcry against Pasternak. We must hope that more will be known about this, and soon. But the question that arises is this: Taking into account the conformism of the Writers Union, is it conceivable that it could have been convened, and that it would have taken these mad decisions, without an explicit order from the supreme political authorities? No, this is unthinkable. How, therefore,

can we explain the fact that these decisions were not implemented? The apparent repentance, it appears to me, was dictated by the information which had in the meantime been received by Nikita S. Khrushchev on the internal and international repercussions of the scandal. He must have noticed that the Zhdanovists of the Soviet culture apparatus had forced his hand, and he offered Pasternak the possibility of an accommodation.

Pasternak's letter to Khrushchev was rather disappointing to many admirers of "Doctor Zhivago." But who can judge? We must exercise our imagination to conjure up the lynch atmosphere to which Pasternak was exposed during a period of some ten days. To be sure, it is an embarrassing letter. Fully five times, despite the brevity of the letter, Pasternak repeats that his statement was written freely, without violence, without blackmail, without suggestions from others. "I have not been subjected to threats or to constraint," we read . . . "Nothing can force me to act against my conscience . . . ." "I have given up the prize without constraint by anyone." And so on. Would this not seem too much for a free man in an atmosphere of serenity? The letter is based upon a glorification of Pasternak's native soil which ominously recalls the notorious sentiment of "Blut and Boden," in sharp contrast with the internationalist tradition of the founders of Russian Communism almost all of whom knew exile, and with the work of Pasternak himself. Nobody leaves his own country with a light heart, but if need be, one can in fact emigrate. Before being Italian, German, Russian, one is a man.

Finally, the references in Pasternak's letter to the circumstances through which "Doctor Zhivago" came to be published are not truthful. And the publisher, Feltrinelli, has done well to refrain from setting the record straight -- for how, after all, can one engage in polemics with a prisoner? But we may be permitted, through an association of ideas, to recall an episode from the period of the great Stalinist trials: A defendant, forced to confess that he had met Leon Trotsky's son in a Copenhagen hotel, gave a fictitious name -- so that from the falseness of this detail, the falseness of the entire testimony could be deduced abroad.

Alas, in these days, Pasternak was so deafened by the hysterical shrieking of the Moscow writers that he failed to perceive that, because of the alert sounded by international opinion, he was stronger than his adversaries. But "Doctor Zhivago" will survive all polemics; this is the revenge of which no dictatorship can deprive the poet.

E N D

This article appeared in the January 5, 1959, issue of The New Leader, a liberal magazine published weekly in the United States and containing articles on international and national affairs. The author is known throughout the world as a leading Italian novelist.

PASTERNAK'S "DR. ZHIVAGO"

"My greatest wish, a quiet life"

By Max Hayward

From Encounter

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Boris Pasternak's novel, "Dr. Zhivago," was first mentioned in the Soviet press during the thaw after Stalin's death. For almost 20 years Pasternak, once a leading figure in the Russian literary world, had published practically nothing. Then in April 1954 ten magnificent poems, described as "poems from the novel in prose, 'Dr. Zhivago,'" appeared in the magazine Znamya issued by the Soviet Union of Writers. In an introductory note, signed "The Author," Pasternak wrote:

> "The novel will probably be completed in the course of the summer. It covers the period from 1902 to 1929, with an epilogue relating to the Great War for the Fatherland.
>
> "The hero, Yu A. Zhivago, a physician, a thinking man in search of truth, with a creative and artistic bent, dies in 1929. Among his papers written in younger days, a number of poems are found, which will be attached to the book as a final chapter. Some of them are reproduced here."

What happened in the two years between the summers of 1954 and 1956 remains shrouded in mystery. Soviet writers on visits abroad gave contradictory reports on whether and when Pasternak's novel would be finished. The author himself remained silent except for the occasional publication in Soviet periodicals of a solitary poem, or a critical article on translations from Shakespeare. During the minor freeze-up in the autumn of 1954, marked by the condemnation of Pomerantsev's article on "Sincerity in Literature" and the removal of the poet Tvardovsky from the editorship of the magazine Novy Mir, the poems published in Znamya were mildly criticised by Soviet critics as "lacking in vitality" and "failing to answer the call of the present day." Details of a literary intrigue are rarely ventilated in the pages of the Soviet press. We must therefore rely for our knowledge of the destiny of Pasternak's novel in that period on an official interview given to the Italian Communist paper, L'Unita (22nd October, 1957), by the secretary of the Union of Writers of the U.S.S.R., a poet, a prominent literary bureaucrat and a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Alexeyi Surkov. Surkov, who, according to L'Unita, at last gives us the true story of "Dr. Zhivago," stated that Pasternak had sent the manuscript of his novel to one of the Soviet publishing houses. The "whole collective" -- by which the firm's editorial board is probably meant -- read it. They sent a private letter to Pasternak explaining the reasons for their disagreement with him. Surkov pointed out that he could not blame those who had read this book, as he had done himself, for believing that it

put in doubt the validity of the October Revolution which is described as if it were the greatest crime in Russian history. According to Surkov, Pasternak seemed to agree with some of the criticism contained in the letter and spoke of his intention to revise the text. Surkov also stated that Pasternak had sent a telegram to his Italian publisher asking him to return the manuscript (which had been used for preparing an Italian translation) to Moscow for revision.

The important part of Surkov's statement lies in the information that the novel has been condemned by a group of writers, including Surkov himself, which explains why it has not yet appeared in the Soviet Union. What Surkov did not say in his interview with L'Unita was that, at the same time as he presented his novel to the Union of Writers for publication, Pasternak had given the copyright for all translations into foreign languages to the publishing firm of Feltrinelli in Milan, who arranged for publication in English, French and German as well as an Italian version. Feltrinelli is himself a rather prominent member of the Italian Communist Party. His representative visited Pasternak in the summer of 1956 and brought the manuscript to Italy. In the year that passed between the conclusion of the agreement between the author and his Italian publisher and Surkov's visit to Italy, there was plenty of time for a Russian edition to appear, perhaps even a revised one, and then of course the Italian publisher would have taken into consideration any revisions. As nothing of the kind happened, Feltrinelli decided to stick to his original agreement with the author and refused to stop the publication of the Italian translation. In a statement to the press he made it known that Surkov

had visited him, accompanied by an official of the Italian Communist Party, and that the two used every means of persuasion, including Surkov's expressed concern for Pasternak's personal safety, and various kinds of threats to force Feltrinelli to alter his decision. Pressure was also applied to the other foreign publishers, and telegrams signed by Pasternak were received by them asking them to abandon publication. However, in a statement to foreign journalists made at his residence near Moscow in December 1957, after the appearance of the Italian translation, Pasternak expressed no regret that the novel had appeared, and put the bleme for "all this nonsense" on the Soviet literary authorities who could have avoided it by permitting publication in the U.S.S.R.

The situation is bedevilled by the fact of a personal rivalry between Surkov and Pasternak, of which Surkov makes no secret in his public statements. This may be seen in, for example, Surkov's attack on Pasternak in Pravda of 1st December, 1957, in which he condemns attempts to "canonise" Pasternak and other writers of similar outlook. However, Surkov must be keenly conscious of the opprobrium which would fall on him if he had to bear sole responsibility for the decision to suppress "Dr. Zhivago." He was careful to get a unanimous decision from the board which sat in judgment over the novel. Recently, verses by him were published side by side with some of Pasternak's in the Literaturnaya Gazeta, probably an attempt to establish an alibi.

Nevertheless, it is hardly possible that the recent efforts to stop publication abroad could have been made only at the instigation of Surkov or other litterateurs who were moved by professional jealousy. Of

course, such jealousies would be used by the Party in order to get the active support of Surkov and people like him for the effort to silence Pasternak. But the decision must have been taken at a higher level than the Union of Writers and from more general motives than literary jealousy.

The reason for the attitude of the Soviet authorities must therefore be sought in the first place in the contents of the novel itself and, in the second place, in the personality of the author. Surkov's argument that the novel was rejected because of an alleged slander on the October Revolution is not quite convincing. To begin with, there is no outright condemnation of the October Revolution as such in the novel, and the question whether the Revolution was a crime or not could never have been put by Pasternak. He does not think or speak in such categories. But even if -- by implication -- Pasternak's novel can be interpreted as an attack on the October Revolution, it does not follow that it would have been rejected outright for publication in the summer of 1956.

There was, at that time, a hint in the air of an open discussion of the fundamentals of the Communist creed. Those responsible for the publication of literary works were bold enough to allow Dudintsev's novel "Not by Bread Alone" to appear in the monthly journal Novy Mir, and the Moscow writers were preparing for the second issue of "Literaturnaya Moskva," 1956, which contained a number of bitter attacks on the policies of Government and Party. Historians were working out a revised version of the October Revolution and of the history of the Party. If misrepresentation of the October Revolution had been the only -- or the main -- fault of Pasternak's novel, the appearance of the novel could have been

made the opportunity for reasserting the Party line in literature. The fact that those responsible did not take this view, but decided not to print the novel, shows that there was more to it than Surkov admits.

It is clear that those who read "Dr. Zhivago" in the summer of 1956 thought that, from a Party point of view, the damage which would be done to the regime by its publication in the U.S.S.R. would be greater than any advantage which could be derived from exposing and criticising its shortcomings after it had appeared. There must be something in the novel, the suppression of which seemed necessary to those responsible for Soviet cultural policy even at the cost of compromising, in the eyes of the world, the reputation for liberalism which they were, at that time, trying to establish, and at the risk of destroying the claim that artistic creative work can go on unimpeded in the Soviet Union.

Pasternak's early poetical work (his first two volumes of poems were published in 1917 and 1922) can be regarded as a totally new departure in Russian poetry. Perhaps his early ambition to become a composer (he had been a pupil of Scriabin) and the diversity of his interests in general account for the fact that the imagery of these poems is that of a fleeting, momentary association of ideas which remains unimpeded by common-sense knowledge or artistic prejudice. He would compare the eyelid of the sleeping Helen of Troy to "a dear old apron," or say: "...The rain is fumbling on the doorstep. The rain smells of wine-bottle corks and if you think of it," he would add, "the writings of the gentry on equality and fraternity had smelled exactly like that." Some of this imagery is impressionistic. Some of it arises from a play with

alliterations and from semantic riddles. It strikes the reader for a moment as incomprehensible, sometimes as gibberish. It is only by letting the words produce the full aura of associations in the mind that the images come alive and, after a short period during which they seem artificial and capricious, one suddenly realises that their fleeting spontaneity could never have been the result of artifice but only of a vision which had possessed the poet. This is why it is right to say that Pasternak's poetry, as recorded in the few volumes of verses which he has published, has not been his life-work, but a series of accidentally preserved samples of that poetical vision which goes on uninterruptedly as long as he breathes, and which is the very essence of his life. Realising the identity of the poet and the human being in Pasternak's personality, we begin to appreciate the silliness of the suspicion that he could use his poetical gift for a political aim.

From his parents (his father was an eminent painter and his mother an accomplished musician) Pasternak inherited the gift of poetical sight and a very elaborate rhythmic expression. But these gifts and talents are only the prerequisites of his poetry. The poetry itself is the sum total of the events of his every-day life, of waking and going to sleep, of acting and eating. To make use of his talents for a political or, for that matter, any other extraneous purpose, would mean selecting and concentrating certain images, certain verbal expressions, even certain rhythms, in order to produce a desired effect on his readers. The Communist Party demands of the poets in the Soviet Union that they do this in order to produce enthusiasm for the Communist cause. This is the sense

of all Party directives on poetry. What would this mean in the case of Pasternak? It would mean the suppression of some, and the wilful interference with others, of the free associations of ideas and emotional reactions which constitute his poetical vision. For one whose creative moments are rare and summoned up by a deliberate effort of will this might perhaps be possible. For Pasternak and any poet of this type such an interference would mean an intolerable mutilation of all his vital activities. Looking out of the window would become torture indeed if the process by which the sight of branches of trees and of the buildings and the drops of rain on the glass are transformed into a rhythmic expression of all they mean to the poet, was interfered with by a censor, who would select out of it what he believes they should mean to the reader. Pasternak's silence lasting for 20 years can only be explained as a passive resistance to such interference with his poetical life.

Perhaps, in a paradoxical way so characteristic of Soviet conditions, Pasternak's claim for the recognition of his independence as a poet provides an explanation of the surprising fact that he was never physically molested, imprisoned or banished under the Stalin regime. Stalin may well have believed that if nothing could be obtained from Pasternak in support of the regime, not much need be feared from him which would endanger it. Stalin knew that the stick and the carrot might be effective with Alexei Tolstoy or Ilya Ehrenburg, but would be of no avail with Pasternak. At the same time, he must have sensed what the Soviet poets and writers whom his apparatus controlled thought of Pasternak's towering superiority. It is in keeping with what we know of

Stalin's character to assume that he held Pasternak in reserve as a kind of bogy for the controllable poets and writers so that he could say: "If ever I allow freedom of creative work to anyone, I will allow it to Pasternak. He, at least, will produce genuine poetry whereas you, who have been serving me with your 'khaltura' (pot-boiling) might make use of such freedom to serve another master."

However this may be, the fact remains that Pasternak lived in terror and frustration between the middle 1930's and the beginning of the Second World War. During the war, he remained in Moscow and witnessed the peculiar atmosphere which prevailed in the city between October and December 1941. This period has been described more than once as a kind of crisis of liberation.* As Pasternak states expressly in his novel, the beginning of the war produced a powerful liberating effect on the mentality of the sensitive Soviet citizen. It was probably at that moment, when in the midst of physical privation and fear some natural freedom and moral courage could be recovered, that the idea of "Dr. Zhivago" was hatched.

The decision to write the novel as it has been written, without fear or scruple, and to press for its publication, cannot have come easily to Pasternak. This is revealed in the first of the poems included in the Appendix to the novel. In this poem the poet is about to play the part of Hamlet. He is already on the stage and from the dark auditorium he feels the touch of a thousand opera-glasses focused on him. He prays the

*Compare, for instance, such other witnesses as M. Koryakov in "The Liberation of the Soul" [Chekhov Publishing House, New York, in Russian] and Yulia Neuman in her poem on the year 1941, described as a "pure year," because "in that year of camouflage and blackout, chicanery crumbled like plaster and we saw our neighbours without masks" ["Literaturnaya Moskva," vol. II, Moscow, 1956].

Father to spare him the ordeal. He admits that he is ready to accept the destiny of Man and that he loves the life which has been given to him. He is ready to fulfil the human drama and to play his part in life. But he begs God to spare him this appearance in social isolation before a hostile and uncomprehending humanity. The order of life is, however, pre-established and the final goal of the path of his life is unavoidable. "I am alone: everything is drowned in pharisaic hypocrisy. To live one's life is not all that easy" (is not like crossing a field, as the Russian proverb goes). It was in this mood that "Dr. Zhivago" was conceived.

Pasternak's attitude towards the revolutionary events which are the setting of his novel was that of an "obyvatel" -- an untranslatable word which Russians have used since the nineteenth century to describe those among them whose attitude towards politics was exactly that of ordinary people everywhere towards the weather. For them, political conditions and circumstances were to be taken account of solely in order that they should not interfere with their personal lives. It would be sheer lunacy to attempt to interfere with these events, to jeopardise or even render more difficult personal achievements by the vain attempt to change political circumstances, just as it would be lunacy to try and influence the weather to suit our ends.

"Obyvatelshchina," or the attitude of the "obyvatel," is a typically Russian phenomenon. This form of aloofness from all things political and social is not the result of a narrowness of heart and mind like that of a German "spiesser." While the "obyvatel's" behavior

towards State authority and, in particular, every kind of police, may appear submissive and cowardly, he is capable of great personal courage and spirit of sacrifice in all personal relations and in personal misfortunes. His submissiveness is resilient. An "obyvatel" will enjoy official festivities, march to music in demonstrations when required, and perform all the ritual imposed on the politically reliable citizens by Authority, while remaining inwardly as aloof towards this authority, be it the Tsar or the Communist Party, as one is towards the frost or the rain, or to the causes of disease and death. The "obyvatel" has often been a rather despicable figure in Russian literature, or a figure of fun, especially in so-called "progressive" writings, but much attention has been focused on him and his human qualities ever since Pushkin's "Tales of Belkin" and Gogol's "Overcoat."

The key position in Russian literature of Gogol's "Overcoat" is beyond doubt. It is the source of the stream of writings in defence of the dignity of the small man. But it is surprising that another feature of this story has not been pointed out by the many literary historians who have discussed it. The little clerk in "The Overcoat," whose precious garment had been stolen after he had starved and saved for months to pay for it, turned for help to the Head of his Department. His Excellency gave him a dressing down: the little man went home and died. In a grotesque and whimsical epilogue, the ghost of the clerk returns to earth and disrobes His Excellency, at night in a blizzard, of his magnificent beaver-collared overcoat. It is going too far to interpret Gogol's story as a symbolic vision of the vengeance which the humble and oppressed would

wreck on all the Excellencies almost a century later, a vision born in Gogol's schizophrenic mind and of the significance of which he was himself possibly not conscious?

In any event, the "obyvatel," while remaining an object of derision and blame became, at the same time, a pet of Russian literature, which prided itself on asserting the dignity and intrinsic value of the poor and humble. This attitude terminated in the long gallery of Chekhov's heroes -- most of them "obyvatels," or "superfluous" men, and most of them redeemed as human beings.

While this process of the gradual rehabilitation of the "obyvatel" went on in Russian prose, poetry remained essentially untouched by it. There, the polarisation of trends was characterised by the contrast between civic poetry and an attitude of "ivory tower" and "art for art's sake." Both trends had their roots in nineteenth-century romanticism. In both cases the poet claimed to serve a cause, either that of "increasing artistic values in the world," or of "contributing to social progress." Abusive allegations of philistinism were flung backwards and forwards between the two camps. Revolutionary heroics took over the traditions of romanticism without having undergone purification by the realistic vision so noticeable and so beneficial in Russian prose writing. Mayakovsky came as a Victor Hugo of the Russian Revolution. At their best moments, Russian poets were painfully conscious of their alienation from the source of real poetry. This is why Pushkin, who would write poetry as he breathed air, towered above them as a demi-god whose works would for ever remain unsurpassed.

In his rehabilitation of the "obyvatel" attitude which ends in an apotheosis, Pasternak takes his bearings from Pushkin. He makes his hero, who has found a temporary refuge with his family in the wastes of the eastern Urals, read and comment on Pushkin:

> "The fabulous is never anything but the commonplace touched by the hand of a genius. The best object lesson in this respect is Pushkin. What an ode to honest work, duty and the common round! The words 'bourgeois' and 'obyvatel' have only become terms of abuse nowadays, but Pushkin forestalled the implied reproach in his 'Family Tree': 'A bourgeois, a bourgeois is what I am!' and again in 'Onegin's Journey': Now my ideal is the housewife/My greatest wish, a quiet life/A fat tureen of cabbage soup.'"

The message of the novel is, to a large extent, an elaboration of this simple but surprising thought.

The comparison of "Dr. Zhivago" with Tolstoy's "War and Peace," which has already been made in the press, can only cause misunderstanding. Both epics are, of course, attempts on a large scale to reflect the character of an epoch, but this is the only ground for comparison. Tolstoy's novel was a reconstruction of a period based on certain preconceived ideas concerning the character of historical development and its real causes. "Dr. Zhivago" is an account of personal experience, and the unity of vision achieved by Pasternak is not conditioned by a theoretical approach to historical data as it was in the case of Tolstoy. It is the

unity of personal reminiscence and of poetical perception. Even had the novel not been so obviously autobiographical, it would have been personal and lyrical in this sense. It is focused on one of the protagonists, Dr. Zhivago, who is both the main hero and almost the narrator of the novel.

Zhivago's personality is so close to the author that their relationship can be compared to that of Proust and the "I" of "A la Recherche de Temps Perdu." The character emerges gradually and, even towards the end of the novel, it has still the same myopic vagueness of design which is characteristic of introspective self-knowledge. But of course, Pasternak's hero should not be identified with the author himself. He is something of Pasternak's super-ego, whose purity of purpose, dignity and humanity Pasternak obviously admires and can hardly hope to attain. For this admiration, Pasternak takes vengenance on his hero by reducing his social effectiveness to a minimum, by making him one of the great "superfluous men" of Russian literature.

Zhivago goes through life uncorrupted by the wickedness of the world, but also without leaving an imprint on it by his intentional actions. The women he loves -- and who love him even more -- he loses and is unable to help. He is no father to the children whom they have by him. In spite of his psychological insight and his goodwill towards his fellowmen, he is unable to help them in their tragedies, and the story of his personal relations as a whole is that of failure and disaster. It has been said that Pasternak referred to Turgenev's Rudin as to a distant literary ancestor of Zhivago, but he seems to have more in common with

Dostoevsky's "Idiot" and certain Chekhov characters. There is the same inability to transform knowledge and intention into action; and the same final triumph in failure, the triumph of the uncompromising attitude to reality, which will not be bribed by the promise of wordly success. This final justification and apotheosis of Zhivago's way of life comes towards the end of the book and finds its most powerful expression in the lament of Lara, the great love of his life, over his dead body in Moscow in 1929. No Russian writer before Pasternak has made this point clearer concerning the superfluous man. Unlike Dostoevsky's hero, however, Zhivago is not a Jesus-like figure. He is more like an apostle, one of those disciples who could not keep awake during the vigil of Gethsemane, referred to in the last poem at the end of the novel.

Zhivago's character develops against the background of the dissolution of Russian society which culminated in the revolution of 1917. His attitude towards the great social changes is that of a sympathising and enlightened "obyvatel." Although the problems of the historical destiny and of the social development of Russia were present in his mind from early youth, Zhivago never thought he could influence them directly by his actions. He did not seek contact with those who believed they could do so, and it is clear from his casual encounters with them that his attitude towards their belief was, at the best, pity for ignorant enthusiasts. This does not mean that he was indifferent to the Revolution. It affected him most profoundly, and his attitude towards political events is stated in the novel with extreme clarity. In a scene with Lara, long before their relationship had developed into a liaison,

Zhivago philosophises about the political conditions in Russia in the high summer of 1917, and expresses the typically "obyvatel" attitude to them, as if they were uncontrollable in the same way as the forces of nature itself. He says:

> "Last night, I was watching a public meeting. What an amazing spectacle! Old Mother Russia is on the move. She cannot stand still any longer; she walks and cannot stop walking; she talks and cannot stop talking; and it is not that the only speakers are the people; stars and trees have come together and are holding parleys; the flowers of the night are philosophising, stone buildings are taking part in public meetings."

The idea appeals to Lara, who says that she understands the trees and the stars who take part in meetings. She knows what he means and herself had such ideas. This objectivist, or naturalist attitude towards the social and revolutionary turmoil establishes the first intimate link between Zhivago and Lara, which then develops into the great love story of their lives.

It is remarkable that another eminent Russian poet whose later tragic destiny means so much to Pasternak -- Marina Tsvetaeva -- had pointed out Pasternak's peculiar attitude to the Revolution as early as 1924 in a review of his second book of poems, "My Sister -- Life." There Tsvetaeva wrote of Pasternak's perception of the Revolution:

> "Pasternak did not take cover hiding from the Revolution in one of the other of the basement

> haunts of the intelligentsia. (There are no basements in the Revolution, only open squares in open fields.) Pasternak and the Revolution did actually meet. He saw her for the first time in the distance in the glow of fires shooting into the air like a corn sheaf. He heard her in the groaning flight of the roads. The Revolution reached him and was assimilated by him like everything in his life, through nature. Pasternak will say his word about the Revolution as the Revolution herself will say it at some future time. In the summer of 1917 he marched in step with her and listened to her attentively."

Paradoxically, the more revolutionary events tended to interfere with Zhivago's personal life, the more conscious became his attitude of passive submissiveness to their blind elemental power. Pasternak makes this point again and again by combining every glimpse of the historical happenings of the autumn of 1917 with some entirely personal aspects of his hero's life. During the October days when indiscriminate shooting makes movement in the streets of Moscow practically impossible and visitors who drop in remain stranded for days in Zhivago's flat, a note of poignancy is introduced by the record of a seemingly alarming although, in the end, innocuous illness of his little son. When at last Zhivago is able to get out into the streets, he is once more overwhelmed, as he had been the summer before, by a feeling of the cosmic unity of natural and social upheavals:

"There was some kind of similarity between what was going on in the moral and in the physical world, between occurrences near and far away, on earth and in the atmosphere. Somewhere the last isolated shots of a broken resistance resound. Bubbles of weak, almost extinguished fires flare up and dissolve somewhere on the horizon and the blizzard chases the snow in rings and funnels of similar pattern along the steaming and wet pavements under Zhivago's feet."

It is in this mood that Zhivago gets hold of a news-sheet announcing the appointment of the People's Commissars and the first decrees of the Soviet government. He realises the momentous character of the news:

"...the greatness and the eternal significance of that moment shook him and knocked him out."

Zhivago enters the doorway of a block of flats to take cover and read the news. By one of his craftiest tricks, at exactly that moment Pasternak interrupts the story of Zhivago's reaction to what he is reading in order to introduce an unexpected personal element. There, on the stairs of an unknown house, he lets Zhivago meet a youth, a half-brother of his whom he had never met before and who plays a peculiar part in the construction of the novel, appearing at critical moments like the envoy of Destiny, who suggests and determines the line of behavior. By this device the author seems to remind us that historical events may be judged only in the light of their impact on individuals. And as if to drive this

lesson home, Pasternak makes another seemingly casual digression. On his way home, Dr. Zhivago takes advantage of the darkness to steal a log of wood from a heap of demolition timber guarded by a sentry and brings it home, where fuel has been used up during the days of street fighting. At home, Zhivago comments on the significance of the news:

"...the main thing is the streak of genius about it all. Had anybody been given the task of creating a new world, of beginning a new era, his first definite need would be to have the decks suitably cleared for action. Before getting down to the construction of new epochs he would have waited for the old to finish. He would have needed a round number, a new paragraph, a blank page. And here, look at it, this unprecedented thing, this miracle of history, this revelation, has been dropped in the midst of the continuing day-to-day life with a complete disregard for its course.

"The miracle has begun, not from the beginning, but from the middle. Not at a date which had been fixed in advance, but on an ordinary week-day in the very midst of the tramway traffic in the city. This is what strikes one most as a feat of genius. Only the very greatest can be so out of time and place."

The greatness of the revolutionary events and Zhivago's enthusiasm about them does not mean, however, that he approved of any of the intentions of the Revolution. Years later, after the whole family had fled from starving and typhus-infested Moscow to the Urals, where they hoped to settle down as market gardeners, Zhivago's father-in-law comments on what Zhivago said in the first days of the October Revolution. Zhivago tells his father-in-law that now that they have come into a part of the world where their relatives had owned a large property before the Revolution, they must be quite honest with each other about their hopes, desires and aspirations:

> "We must agree beforehand on the way in which to behave in certain circumstances, in order not to be ashamed of each other and not to put each other to shame."

What Zhivago means is obviously the attitude they should adopt in case of a counter-revolutionary coup (White Guard detachments were roaming quite near the station where the conversation took place), and whether they would, in this eventuality, claim any part of the property to which Zhivago's wife might be entitled.

Zhivago's father-in-law, Gromeko, answers:

> "Do you remember that winter blizzard night when you brought the news-sheet with the first decrees? Do you remember how that was absolutely final? Its uncompromising character subdued us: but such things live in their original purity only in the heads of their

> creators, and that only on the first day of their announcement. By the next day, the Jesuit hypocrisy of politics turns everything inside out. What can I tell you? This philosophy /that is, communism/ is alien to me. This government is against us. I was not asked whether I agreed to this general break-up. But they trusted me and the way I behaved, even if I acted under pressure, puts an obligation on me."

The old man explains to Zhivago that he is not going to claim any rights in the property of his in-laws, but will merely use his contacts in order to settle on the land and make a living out of it. "The history of private property in Russia," says old Gromeko, "has come to an end. And we personally, the Gromekos, had already said good-bye to the passion for acquisition in the Nineteenth Century."

This is the style in which Pasternak speaks of political reality affecting the private lives of his heroes. There is no criticism or discussion of the intentions, aspirations and political manoeuvring of those who claimed to direct revolutionary events. What concerns Pasternak is: what should a man like his hero do when faced with such changes, in order to preserve his moral integrity, and to survive without breaking up his personal identity?

Zhivago is contrasted with another character who appears in two different aspects. Pavel Antipov is a working-class boy, an orphan, brought up by a family of railway workers, a gifted, tormented mind who,

after completing his university studies and marrying a girl whom he considers socially superior to him, becomes an intellectual. The girl is the same Lara who later, when abandoned by him, becomes the grand amour of Zhivago. While Zhivago is the type of "obyvatel," Antipov is the "activist" par excellence. Pasternak sums up his character at the end of the first volume, in the following words:

"Two features, two passions were characteristic of him: his thinking was uncommonly clear and correct and, to an equally uncommon degree, he had the gift of moral purity and justice, and his feelings were warm and noble. But what stopped him becoming the kind of scholar who blazes new trails was that his brain lacked that talent for the arbitrary, that force which by unpredicted discoveries shatters the barren harmony of sterile predictions.

"And so far as doing good was concerned, though he was a man of principle, he was lacking in that unprincipledness of the heart which knows nothing of generalizations, concerning itself solely with individual instances, the heart whose greatness rests on the very littleness of its actions.

"From his early childhood, Pavel longed for the very highest and brightest ideals. In his view, life was a huge arena in which, honestly

adhering to the rules, men were competing in their progress to greater perfection.

"When he found out that this was not so, it did not occur to him that he had been wrong in having a much too simplified idea of the world order. [This obviously refers also to the failure of Pavel's marriage to Lara.] Having buried his grievance deep in his soul, he began playing with the idea of some time becoming supreme judge in the contest between life and the dark forces which corrupted it. He daydreamed of drawing his sword in defence of life and so of avenging it.

"Disappointment made him bitter. Revolution armed him."

Antipov turns up in the novel under a new identity and a new name, Strelnikov, as a leader of the Red Army forces in the Urals. Zhivago is arrested while wandering on the railway line by some Red Army men who believe him to be a spy. He is brought to Strelnikov, who realises that a mistake has been made and that Zhivago has been taken for somebody else. Strelnikov tells him that he will be freed, but asks him why he happens to be in this remote part of the Urals. Is he by chance the heir of the owners of the local factories? Zhivago admits that "his wife was, indeed...but what has this to do with it?" He has come to the Urals to find peace in the wilderness. Strelnikov presses Zhivago, asking him why he has not joined the Red Army, since he is a doctor.

"After all, you are a doctor, an Army doctor at that, and this is war-time. This concerns me directly. A deserter....The Green Partisans are also looking for quiet in the forests. What is your reason /for not being in the Army/?"

Zhivago: "I was wounded twice and invalided out of the Army."

Strelnikov/Antipov: "And now, I expect, you will produce a certificate from the People's Commissariat of Education or from the People's Commissariat of Health to attest that you are a completely dependable Soviet citizen, a sympathiser, and politically reliable. This, my dear sir, is the Last Judgment on earth. Beasts of the Apocalypse, winged and sword-bearing, are roaming about and not sympathising and politically reliable doctors. But I have told you already that you are free and I shall not go back on my word. But this is only for this time. I feel that we shall meet again and then the conversation might turn out differently. Be on your guard."

The threat does not affect Zhivago, and he answers:

"I know all you are thinking of me. From your point of view you might be quite right. The debate into which you are trying to draw me, I have

been carrying on all through my life with an imaginary accuser and, you will admit, I have had plenty of time to come to a conclusion of sorts. Allow me to go if I am indeed free and, if I am not, dispose of me. I do not have to justify any of my actions to you."

The two men part at this point and the significance of their encounter only becomes evident much later in the course of the narrative, when the second meeting between them takes place in the same area many months after the first.

Zhivago has, in the meantime, become the lover of Antipov's abandoned wife. He has been kidnapped by Red Partisans and has gone through the most cruel and inhuman campaign ever fought in the Russian Civil War, that of the Siberian Partisans. After his return to the Urals, in a fit of despair he has let the woman whom he loved go away to the Far East in order to save her from possible political complications in which he might become involved. He lives alone in the house where they had been happy together, and there he meets Strelnikov/Antipov again. Strelnikov's position has also changed in the meantime. Like so many of the ex-officers employed in the Civil War as defenders of the Soviet power, he was denounced as a traitor and a price was put on his head. He went into hiding in the forests, but is hounded down and, as a last resort, comes to the lonely house inhabited by Zhivago. The meeting of the two men marks the highest point of the drama in which they are involved. They establish a kind of brotherhood which calls to mind the last scene in Dostoevsky's "Idiot," the scene in Rogozhin's house near the corpse

of Nastasia Filipovna. Strelnikov shoots himself in the night, and Zhivago remains alive to go back on a long trek through Russia to Moscow, where he vegetates for a few years as a kind of free-lance educationalist and then ends up an intellectual tramp, an outcast of a society whose standards he cannot accept.

The contrast between the two characters -- Zhivago and Strelnikov/Antipov -- is the central ideological theme of the novel. It is the contrast between the "obyvatel," who possesses the qualities of heart necessary to do the microscopic good of which alone he feels that man is capable in this world, and the "activist" or fanatic. Both perish in the social turmoil ruled by laws which have nothing to do either with the emotions and the common-sense of Zhivago, or the high ideals and the stilted theories of Strelnikov/Antipov. Pasternak leaves us in no doubt where his sympathies lie in the contest between these two characters. Speaking of Antipov and his like earlier in the novel, he says:

> "For them, transitional periods, worlds in the making are ends in themselves. They are not trained for anything else, they don't know anything else. And do you know why there is this incessant whorl of never-ending preparations? It's because they have no specific natural talents, they are not gifted for anything. Man is born to live, not to prepare for life. Life itself -- the gift of life -- is such a breathtakingly serious thing -- so why substitute this childish harlequinade of adolescent phantasies, these schoolboy escapades?"

Because of this talent for life Zhivago is loved by all those to whose happiness he has been so tragically impotent to contribute. There is no selfish egotism in this man, as Pasternak shows. Weak and doomed to failure as he might appear when judged by the results of his ventures, his hero, the great "superfluous man," is the bearer of that tolerant, merciful attitude towards other human beings on which alone a human society not doomed to self-destruction can be founded. It is in the poetry at the end of the volume that this point is made most clearly. These twenty-five poems are, in a sense, the most important part of the work. Taken by themselves, however, they would have been only samples of personal, erotic and devotional lyric. By attaching them to his one hundred and forty thousand-word novel, Pasternak demonstrates the live connection of these poems with at least one possible set of individual human circumstances: those of his hero's life.

Who are the people to whom Pasternak is sending his message, and whom the Soviet authorities are now so eager to prevent hearing it? They are neither Communist "activists" nor revolutionaries who would rise up in arms in order to overthrow the Soviet regime and, in this sense, any accusation that the novel is "counter-revolutionary" is absurd. The people to whom Pasternak appeals are the Russian "obyvatel" of our days, mainly intellectuals and also the small, unimportant people who neither join actively in Party and Government campaigns nor resist them actively; and who, by their very passivity, preserve a certain degree of integrity of judgment and of emotional spontaneity. Such people, in fact the overwhelming majority of the population of the

U.S.S.R., have been taught to believe for the last 40 years that they are in every respect inferior to the selected active fighters for a better society. In the official view, those who dare to fight for social ideals may perish when they go wrong, but they have nevertheless led a conscious, purposeful life and they are far above any loyal and well-intentioned "obyvatel." The latter is destined for ever to remain a mere object of political action and it is his duty patiently to endure every discomfort and to acquiesce in the praise with which the "activists" reward their own efforts for the establishment of general happiness.

It is to this mass of passive sufferers, and mainly to those whose passivity is intentional, that Pasternak addresses his message. He does not urge them to activity, to an organized resistance, of which they are probably not capable. What he does is to instil in them a sense of dignity and superiority over the "activists," a superiority which he claims for his hero and of which he himself is so justifiably conscious.

But, although in no vulgar sense subversive, the novel certainly contains a most devastating criticism of the very foundations of official Soviet enthusiasm. The real danger it presents to the regime is that it destroys the position of moral superiority of the political "activists" and restores the confidence of those who are seeking nothing more than their right to love nature and to follow in their actions the inclinations of their heart. The compelling power of Pasternak's argument is not based on any theoretical view, but on a direct poetical vision of Soviet society and of the mechanism by which its ideological foundations are maintained.

In a scene towards the end of the novel, two friends of Dr. Zhivago, Dudorov and Gordon, are talking, and one of them who has just completed his first stay in a concentration camp and has been restored to his position as a university teacher explains how grateful he is to his G.P.U. interrogator and to his experience in prison and in the camp for having helped him to grow in stature. Pasternak describes Zhivago's reaction:

> "Dudorov's reasoning appealed to Gordon precisely because it was so hackneyed. He nodded in sympathy and agreed with everything. Dudorov said. He was touched by the very triteness of Dudorov's words and thoughts, and he took the second-hand nature of these copybook sentences as a sign of their human universality. Dudorov's virtuous words were in the spirit of the times, and it was just because they were so pre-ordained, so transparently sanctimonious, that Zhivago was revolted by them. A man who is not free always idealises his bondage. This is how it was in the Middle Ages and the Jesuits always made play with it. Zhivago could not stand the political mysticism of the Soviet intelligentsia which was the height of its achievement, or, as they would have said in those days, the spiritual ceiling of the epoch. "I found it painful to listen to you, Dudorov, when

you told us how you were re-educated and grew in stature while you were in gaol; it was like listening to a circus horse describing how it broke itself in.'"

It is hardly probable that such literary bureaucrats as Surkov could understand and estimate all the dangers Pasternak's novel presents for the ideological foundations for the regime. But they must instinctively realise that once a work of art of such spontaneity has reached the public, they will not be able to look their readers in the eye when repeating the hackneyed conventional phrases with which they fill their writings. The situation is made even more complicated by the well-known tendency of the Russian reader to identify himself with a literary type, sometimes without a shadow of justification. How many junior lieutenants of the Red Army have thought of themselves as Prince Andrey of "War and Peace"? How many passive, lazy, submissive, forever frightened "obyvatels," having read "Dr. Zhivago," will identify themselves with Pasternak's hero and become less manageable through having their self-respect and human dignity restored to them, as more than one hundred years ago Gogol tried to do for the oppressed and humiliated of his day in "The Overcoat"?

This may well be the reason why the "activists" of our day are trying to prevent the Russians from reading the greatest novel which has been written in their tongue in this century.

E N D

This article appeared in the May 1958 issue of Encounter, a monthly journal of opinion published in London. The writer, an outstanding scholar in the field of Soviet affairs, was one of the translators who rendered "Dr. Zhivago" into English. He is presently at the Russian Research Center at Harvard University on a fellowship.

II

EASTERN EUROPE

"We must eliminate the gap between the wishes of the unsophisticated masses and the superior claims of Socialist culture." -- 1958 directive of the Hungarian Communist Party

Tibor Dery, often referred to as the intellectual leader of Hungary's 1956 freedom uprising, was given a nine-year prison sentence in November, 1957, for what the Kadar regime called "leadership of an organization aimed at overthrowing state order." Long a prominent Hungarian writer, the aging Dery had been expelled from the Communist Party in the summer of 1956 for making statements critical of party practices.

GYORGY LUKACS: HUNGARY'S HERETICAL MARXIST

By Paul Landy

(Mr. Landy, one of the writers who left Hungary after that country's unsuccessful 1956 independence uprising, has written numerous articles on Eastern European affairs.)

Hungary's famous Marxist theoretician, writer and philosopher, Gyorgy Lukacs, is one of the best examples I know of what happens to Communist subjects whose thinking ranges too far from the party's ideological position at any given time.

This aging, internationally known scholar, who was exiled to Rumania after the Hungarian uprising, recently was denounced anew because he refused to recant his "revisionist" ideas concerning the rights of individuals in a Marxist state.

Specifically, Lukacs was attacked for making "wrong" statements about the Hungarian anti-Soviet rebellion of 1956 and for harboring various views on Marxism not in keeping with the party's interpretation.

As an object lesson to those intellectuals who still imagine that a certain amount of free thinking is permitted in Communist-ruled countries, Lukacs' experiences are particularly noteworthy.

Now in his mid-seventies, Lukacs' career has embraced the whole period of Soviet Communism. A scholarly student of both Marxism and literature who has produced a number of works on both subjects, he was one of the founders of the Hungarian Communist party, served as cultural

commissar in his country's short-lived 1919 Communist regime and, more recently, was Minister of Culture during the administration of Imre Nagy. Never a strict conformist to narrow party concepts, Lukacs was often at logger-heads with Marxist theorists in the Soviet Union, where he lived for a number of years.

Perhaps because he was so highly regarded by European students of Marxism, Lukacs escaped open attack by reigning Communist officials until the upsurge of Hungarian resistance to Soviet rule in 1956.

Regarded by some as the spiritual father of the Petofi literary group which helped spark the popular uprising in Budapest, Lukacs expressed views about that movement which he has consistently refused to renounce, despite the party's determined efforts to force him into confessing his past "errors."

Inquisitors of the current Kadar regime, apparently on Soviet orders, have attacked the venerable philosopher for insisting that the Hungarian freedom revolt was a genuine revolution, and not, as the regime claims, a counter-revolutionary plot sponsored by fascist or "imperialist" agents. They were particularly infuriated by Lukacs' statement, in October of 1956, that "real democracy, embodied in revolutionary youth, is capable of sweeping away the remnants of Stalinism. The enhancing of democratic freedom and self-autonomy is the real basis for determining the Hungarian road to socialism."

For expressing such heretical views, and because he was also a member of the Nagy government, Lukacs was exiled to Rumania along with Hungary's freedom premier and other associates.

Although spared the death penalty imposed later on Nagy, General Pal Maleter and other leaders of Hungary's uprising, Lukacs was brought back to his homeland in 1957 and given an ultimatum to recant his views and lend his support to the regime's activities.

Lukacs' refusal to cooperate was followed by a series of ideological attacks in the party press and the imposition of what can only be described as "internal exile." Whether or not Lukacs has been under actual house arrest, as reported, he is obviously being treated as a traitor to the Communist state. His future, barring a pressured confession, is no more promising that that of any other Communist subject who has been branded as a revisionist. Revisionists, of course, are those who refuse to accept every Communist party ideological pronouncement as unquestionable truth.

In the field of literary criticism, Lukacs' belief that "the task of Marxist science is to consider literary works objectively" is anathema to those Soviet and satellite leaders who have condemned Boris Pasternak and other writers for committing the crime of thinking for themselves. The Hungarian philosopher has been subjected to a particularly sharp series of attacks for rejecting the party's right to control literature and for daring to state that Lenin himself had no such permanent intention.

Ironically, the dilemma of Communism's official spokesmen has been intensified because, in spite of the campaign to discredit his views, Lukacs is still admired and respected by individual intellectuals throughout the Soviet bloc.

# # #

LET THE AUDIENCE DECIDE!

(A Hungarian Dramatist's Conclusion About Theatrical Propaganda)

By Janos Torok

(Mr. Torok, a young playwright and director who was intimately associated with Hungarian theatrical life for six years, left Hungary after his country's unsuccessful 1956 freedom revolt.)

I entered the Hungarian theatrical field in 1949 -- the year the Communist regime nationalized all the theaters which until then had operated under private management. Materially, nationalization benefited our theatrical people. The regime poured money into the theater. There was no unemployment among us. Theaters were opened throughout the provinces, in towns that had never before had a permanent, resident theatrical troupe. These provincial theaters were fully staffed, which meant security for actors and actresses who had grown accustomed to a precarious existence between jobs. The pay was good -- as a director, I earned between six thousand and seven thousand forints per month, or nearly ten times as much as the average laborer. And two of those twelve months were for vacation, with full pay.

We were important to the Communist regime -- state funds were lavished upon us. Half a million forints was not too great a sum to spend on the stage sets for a single play. A playwright who was commissioned to write a new work would receive an advance payment of thirty thousand forints, sometimes more, against his potential royalties. Even

without a specific commission, he could apply to the Writers' Union for the loan of a sum like ten thousand forints, which was provided without interest and deducted in easy instalments from his future income. If the playwright wanted to work in the quiet of the country, the Union would see to that too -- arranging minimal rates at one of the several luxury retreats set aside for the "new aristocracy."

The theater was a spearhead of Communist propaganda. That was why we belonged to the "new aristocracy." Consider what this meant in terms of practical economics. A ticket for the best seat in a Budapest theater cost eighteen forints -- the rates of admission were deliberately kept reasonable, to encourage attendance. It cost the management thirty-six forints per seat to raise the curtain each night. In view of the plays we were presenting, a theater would lose fourteen thousand forints per performance -- and continue night after night. Our theaters were operating at a loss.

The principal ingredient of a theatrical production is a play. But the playwright was operating at a loss too -- a loss of integrity and individuality. The substantial advance he received was for a play written to order. Here is how it worked: the leaders of the Writers' Union, or the manager of a theater, would suggest the theme for a play. Union leaders and theatrical managers, if not Communist Party members themselves, were responsible to the Party and acutely responsive to the Party line. The manager of one theater at which I worked in Budapest was a former trade union leader, qualified for this post only because he had taken part in amateur theatricals. In other words, he was not qualified at all, except as an acquiescent supporter of the regime. The play

proposed by such a figurehead had to be written fast -- while the theme he suggested was still politically valid. The most successful playwright was the one who could turn out a play overnight, or in a week's time. Otherwise the play might not be accepted, much less produced -- so rapidly did the Party line change.

The fact is that a playwright's economic security depended upon his political versatility -- the skill and speed with which he could custom-tailor the desired product. It was hackwork.

Some will argue that many plays in the theaters of the free world too, by and large, are tailored to suit the public taste. This misses the point. Under our system, plays were written to suit the official taste. A director and his cast would struggle to breathe vitality into the script they were given. Then the entire Party secretariat would appear at the dress rehearsal -- and the subsequent comments might delay an opening night for an entire week, while adjustments of script and presentation were made.

A theatrical performance, anywhere, is a dynamic thing -- adjustments are always made, both before and after the opening night. An audience fails to grasp the meaning of a piece of stage business -- you adjust the gesture or the scene to sharpen its dramatic truth. A line of dialogue, which you thought so telling, falls flat -- you rewrite it. But we were doing the opposite. Let the audience decide? We were adjusting dramatic truth to official truth. The bureaucrat's criticism replaced the weight of audience response. And so, when we presented our glittering, expensive, custom-built fabrications, the spectators -- whose taxes paid for the subsidized theater -- stayed away.

What happened in Moscow determined political validity in capitals like Budapest -- and these capitals were always behind the Moscow trend, which veered without warning. Often in disgust a playwright dropped his efforts at originality and turned to adaptations of Soviet plays. Such adaptations were safer to produce, and theater managers accepted them somewhat more readily than they accepted Hungarian originals. Adaptation of a Soviet play for stage or radio -- this was especially well paid.

It did not matter that Hungarian audiences were largely indifferent to such Soviet exports. They were by no means indifferent to the real merit of Russian dramatic art, which at its best is truly great. The dazzling Moscow theatrical company, like the Moscow ballet, won wide enthusiasm in Budapest. The classics of the Russian stage, presented as accomplished Soviet troupes present them, draw large audiences everywhere. But Soviet propaganda plays, however well adapted and staged, cannot hold a Hungarian audience.

On the screen and on stage we saw the heroics of the Bolshevik Revolution as that revolution is now officially portrayed -- the guerilla warfare, the triumph of partisan elements over organized military might. Hungarian authorities distributed free tickets to trade unions, to youth groups, to university students, to students at the Dramatic Arts Academy and the Institute of Cinematographic Arts.

I don't suggest that nobody used those free tickets, even though theaters in Budapest were half-empty when propaganda plays and films were shown. Seeing those plays and films, students and young workers learned the tactics of street fighting -- and applied the lesson to advantage during the uprising.

I have sometimes been asked why so many Hungarian theatrical personalities, individual artists who unlike myself took no active part in the revolt and were not sought by the hated secret police, left Hungary when the opportunity for flight came.

There is no question about the privileges we had in Hungary -- we were among the elite. I guess those of us who left, regardless of whether we had fought in the streets or not, simply did not want to be puppets in an official showcase any longer. We were tired of the subterfuge required of those who wanted to strike even the slightest note of originality and were willing to let the audience decide. We had enough of doctrine instead of dramatic art. We wanted a chance to be ourselves, professionally and personally.

I don't want to draw a picture of pure idealism. I imagine each of us wants to succeed in his field, be well paid again and enjoy public prestige -- I know I do. Whatever the country we are in, it is clearly not going to be easy. For stage or radio or television, one has to learn the language of the audience and the practices of the profession. That can be done. Hungarian actors and directors and writers have achieved success abroad in the past. Success or not, we want a chance to show what we can do -- and let the audience decide.

LITERARY OMENS IN EASTERN EUROPE

By Paul Landy

(Mr. Landy is a former Budapest writer and editor who left Hungary after his country's unsuccessful 1956 freedom re-bellion and now makes his home in Austria. He has written numerous articles about current conditions in Eastern Europe.)

Gradually, almost unnoticed as yet but promising to become profoundly significant, a new organization is taking shape in Eastern Europe. It is a sort of "Council for Mutual Cultural Assistance" which, with its sub-committees and inconspicuous communiques, bears a certain resemblance to the well-known Communist Council of Mutual Economic Assistance. Its undeclared but recognized purpose is to stifle and channelize intellectual ferment, to set the tone and pace of cultural development -- and to decide the measure of freedom to be allowed in the creative arts.

What seemed to be solitary developments in the field of so-called "cultural exchange," have now become part of an emerging pattern. The meeting of Soviet and satellite historians in East Germany last year, for example, was followed in quick succession by conferences of Communist architects, film and theater experts, representatives of the entertainment industries, jazz composers, circus and variety show directors. The communique issued after the Prague conference on entertainment and jazz, on October 29, 1958, called on Socialist musicians "to compose songs for the people which are imbued with the spirit of our Socialist present."

The visits of writers and cultural delegations to other Bloc countries have set a hitherto unprecedented pace. In one recent ten-month period, for instance, 12 official delegations, seven groups of artists and 370 cultural experts visited Soviet Russia from Hungary alone. Additionally, East German and Czech cultural functionaries have lectured Hungarian artists and writers on the lofty ideals of Socialist realism.

In 1959, from all indications, the output of publishing companies will be more tightly coordinated than ever before. Soviet, East German, Hungarian and other Communist-controlled countries have arranged for scores of joint publications and for the "comparing, exchanging and coordinating" of publication lists in advance. These measures are intended to repair the cultural facade of the Communist bloc, which was cracked by disintegration in the post-Stalin period.

Hungary, perhaps better than any other country, demonstrates the interdependent relationship between "brotherly criticism" by Soviet spokesmen and the internal anti-intellectual drive.

Recently, in a review of Hungarian theatrical life, the Moscow Literary Gazette warned that "no good can come for the building of Communism from such plays as "Teahouse of the August Moon" (which proved highly popular with Budapest audiences) or from the decadence of French existentialist plays." The Moscow critic added: "Some Hungarian theatrical workers are kow-towing to the decadent American theatre and are full of admiration for the art of Broadway."

Somewhat later, Elet es Irodalom interviewed Balint Magyar, the famed director of the Theater of the Army. Magyar defended his presentation of non-Communist plays by explaining that "our program expresses the ideals of humanism." Party critics immediately attacked Magyar's stand and charged that the Theater of the Army was not worthy of its name. As a result, three Budapest theater directors, including Balint Magyar, and five directors of provincial theatres were fired. Hungarian theaters now play heavily-subsidized propaganda plays, such as "Blindfolded," which concerns a young student who "turned against his own class during the counterrevolution."

The recently-published Communist cultural directives reaffirm that no totalitarian society can tolerate free expression. The general dilemma of creative artists is that of conforming to a myth of unknown proportions, which is commonly called "socialist realism." Ever since Maxim Gorki coined the term in the early thirties, Communist theorists have been arguing and differing as to the precise meaning, and content of these two vague words. There is still no clear cut general definition of whether they denote a method, trend or theory. But every "apparatchik" seems to know what socialist realism is not.

In theory at least, writers, painters and playwrights are supposed to be their own censors. But the State, which has all the printing and publishing facilities, has built up an elaborate structure of control to make sure there are no slips. A writer can write and submit any manuscript. Its publication, however, depends on the opinion, first of the trained copy-reader, then on officials in the Ministry of

Culture and the Party's Agit-Prop Department. The same applies to all aspects of the creative arts.

Recently, the Party also criticised the Fund of Creative Arts, which buys paintings. This organization bought, almost exclusively, landscapes and still life, paintings and drawings which "are permeated with naturalism and impressionism." Later, Nepszabadsag rebuked the School of Modern Arts, where there are merely 11 Party members out of 150 students. The young painters were accused of indulging in anti-realistic experiments.

"The Party does not demand that every writer create in the spirit of socialist realism," Communist cultural directives specify. "But it cannot tolerate a literature which advocates hopelessness, disillusionment, paralyzes the thinking of the people or nurtures nationalist, chauvinist and bourgeois remnants in the minds of the people." The choice of subject or approach, therefore, is limited and the individual artist is at the mercy of the Party's control-organs.

There are varying penalties for deviation from the approved line. Some offenders are merely rebuked, such as the promising young essayist, Mihaly Suekoesd, who wrote an enthusiastic introduction to a Hemingway novel, but forgot to point out "the author's ingrained pessimism and decadence;" or Gyula Illyes, the greatest living poet of Hungary, who, after a silence of two years, published a slender volume of his translations of Chinese poems. He was reprimanded, however, because he neglected to praise the "new China" in his introduction and because he failed to include works by Communist poets.

Other offenders are fired, such as Tamas Toeroek, a young and too original Radio Budapest script writer, and Geza Hegedues, director of a firm which dared to publish the poems and essays of "compromised" authors.

Some, such as Endre Gellert, Kossuth prize-winning director of the National Theatre, who committed suicide in September of 1958, cannot endure the intolerable strain of Communist censorship. But the majority of those who can be called truly creative artists, while forced to assume a cooperative exterior, continue to think and dream in private, hoping for a future time when they can work and produce as self-respecting individuals.

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SATELLITE THEATERGOERS REBEL AGAINST BOREDOM

By Paul Landy

(Mr. Landy is a former Budapest writer and editor who left Hungary after his country's unsuccessful 1956 freedom uprising. From his vantage point in Vienna, he is currently specializing as a commentator on East European affairs.)

Recent visitors to the satellite capitals of Eastern Europe have been surprised to find excited crowds lining up to buy tickets for performances of non-Communist films, plays and musicals.

Communist officials, however, have their own reasons for permitting this seemingly paradoxical state of affairs.

For one thing, satellite leaders apparently feel that the granting of minor entertainment concessions is a relatively harmless way of allowing the people an escape valve for their pent-up irritation and boredom.

Members of the Communist ruling apparatus, despite their insistence that "all is calm and under control," seem to realize that the boredom which appears to be an unavoidable accompaniment of the party's dictatorship must be prevented from developing into a more serious type of social unrest.

There is boredom with party jargon, boredom with the disparity between word and deed, boredom with the whole heritage of a Communist decade. The satellite regimes appear to be trying to counter this sense

of irritation and isolation from the rest of the world partly by economic concessions and partly by a more liberal attitude toward popular entertainment.

Communist officials, however, are finding that a solution for their self-created problem is far from simple.

An impressive list of facts points up the inherent dilemma of entertainment circles in the Communist states. Plays and films which receive official praise and recognition have proved to be flops, while films and theatrical products condemned for their "petty-bourgeois and decadent tendencies" have had popular runs. In Poland, out of a total of 3,400 motion picture theaters, only 96 have been profitable. In Hungary, 300 film theaters were on the verge of closing until a 30 percent increase in the price of tickets and a system of government subsidies saved them. In Bulgaria, the biggest box-office successes have been the locally produced "Legend of Love," "Year of Love" and "On A Little Island." However, these very films were censured by the Party's Central Committee for "undermining Communist ideology, distorting and wrongly representing the character of the people's revolutionists."

What, on the other hand, has been the fate of works rich in Communist ideology?

Some Hungarian provincial theaters which tried to conform with party guidance and filled their repertoires with Soviet productions and other straight propaganda plays finished their seasons in virtual bankruptcy. The National Theater of Miskolc, largest provincial town in

Hungary, played consistently before houses a quarter or half-filled during the last season. On one occasion only seven theater-goers turned up for a performance of "One Night" by Gorbatov. The Kecskemet Theater finished its season with a 50,000 dollar (one million forints) deficit. The National Theater of Gyor was given high official praise for its "excellent performances of Soviet and Czech plays." But the box-office results were so appalling that the manager resigned in the middle of the season. This theater went bankrupt despite heavy subsidies.

Conversely, those theaters and playhouses in Hungary and Poland whose managers bowed to popular demand have played to full houses. In Poland, 19 modern "western" plays had successful 1958 runs. In Hungary the plays of Tennessee Williams, Thornton Wilder and John Osborne, as well as pre-war operettas and light musical comedies, are unrivalled as box-office hits.

Party spokesmen have repeatedly scolded directors of cultural centers and theaters for saying "we go bankrupt with modern Socialist plays, for works with topical themes can be neither artistic, nor successful, so let's turn back to bourgeois entertainment."

The University Playhouse in Budapest has tried both ways. A series of shows about revolutionary songs and poets were produced for small audiences. The next program concentrated on popular folk songs and a recital of Burns' poems. As Nepszabadsag remarked, the directors "avoided with painful cautiousness the modern Soviet and Hungarian Socialist works, assuming that in doing so they could avoid the empty

houses." While the party paper scoffed at the unpolitical schedule, the series drew capacity audiences.

Recently a special commission investigated the program of 42 cultural centers and 10 factory clubs in Hungary. It concluded that operettas, folk songs and bourgeois plays are preponderant. When asked why this is so, the managers replied unanimously: "This is what our people want. Coming from work, they want light entertainment. And we need the income in order to finance our other programs."

The same argument is valid in other satellite countries, such as Rumania. Currently, a musical comedy has had a popular run in the Tanase Theater in Bucharest, although the director was accused by the party newspaper of having succumbed to bourgeois taste and ideology. Night clubs, such as the Lido, Ambassador and Continental in Bucharest have been reprimanded for playing decadent music -- although to full houses.

In Rumania and Hungary, regime authorities have started a massive campaign of persuasion and coercion to strengthen party guidance over a series of flourishing amateur theater ensembles. More than 4,000 Hungarian artists who tour in small groups, and are not affiliated with large theaters, are being screened by a special commission. Every single performance must be submitted to a Control Board 15 days before the scheduled showing. The cultural departments of the Municipal Councils also exercise control over songs and plays. In Rumania, roving inspectors supervise the local ensembles. The manager and director of the

Victoria Club in Cluj, for example, were discharged because they permitted presentation of a program "pervaded with petty bourgeois taste."

In general, professional or semi-professional theatrical groups in Hungary, Poland and to some extent in Rumania prefer one-act plays or musicals which are devoid of any propaganda and political angles. While heavily-subsidized regular theaters wrestle with chronic financial troubles, these ensembles, by meeting popular demand are immediately successful.

At the same time, however, satellite financial authorities demand box-office results from the theaters and movie houses, while regime cultural spokesmen seem determined to repress any tendencies toward artistic freedom. So the unhappy managers are forced to pay lip-service to the cause of "socialist realism" by advertising Soviet and other Communist plays and then filling their houses with school-children or workers bribed with free tickets. Simultaneously they try to balance their budgets by showing more "western" or non-political Hungarian plays.

"We must eliminate the gap between the wishes of the unsophisticated masses and the superior claims of Socialist culture," the recently-issued cultural directives of the Hungarian Communist Party warned. But the clash between the needs of the box office and those of party doctrine remain as sharp as ever. Meanwhile, satellite theater managers and directors are constantly tormented by the problem of either reaping official praise and going bankrupt or making money and running the risk of being labelled "politically unreliable."

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III

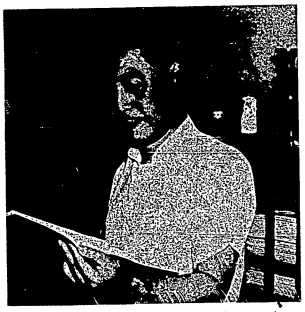
ASIA

"The subservience of art to politics is an objective law." -- Shao Ch'uan-lin, vice-chairman, Union of Chinese Writers

"When we say literature and art follow politics, we mean class politics." -- Mao Tse-tung

This Chinese artist, busily copying a portrait of Communist leader Mao Tse-tung, symbolizes the Communist Party's tendency to regard all creative endeavors as part of its political program. The portrait of former Soviet Premier Nikolai Bulganin, shown in the background, is an ironic reminder of the difficulties sometimes encountered by party cultural planners. Shortly after this picture was taken, Bulganin was condemned as one of the Soviet Communist Party's disgraced "anti-party" group.

Communist China's foremost woman writer, Ting Ling, winner of the Stalin Prize and a party member for more than 20 years, was accused of expressing anti-Communist literary opinions in 1957. Refusing to repudiate her "errors," Madame Ting was expelled from the National People's Congress in 1958.



Shen Yen-ping, better known by his pseudonym of "Mao Tun," came to prominence as Communist China's Minister of Culture and vice-chairman of the All-China Federation of Literary and Art Circles. He has been active as spokesman for Peiping's cultural policy requiring that writers and artists support the Communist Party's political objectives.

TASHKENT'S MEANING FOR THE WRITERS OF ASIA AND AFRICA

(A Special Report Based on the Observations of Khrishnalal Shridharani)

Some of the most astute observations yet to be voiced in connection with the Afro-Asian Writers Conference, held in October of 1958 at the Soviet city of Tashkent, have come from the Indian poet and playwright Khrishnalal Shridharani.

Dr. Shridharani, who attended the conference because of his keen interest in all matters pertinent to the development of Asian literature, has made no secret of his disappointment over what transpired at Tashkent.

In the first place, the Indian writer said shortly after returning from the Soviet Union, the Tashkent sessions turned out to be oppressively conformist. More important, the assembly failed to give anything like adequate consideration to questions affecting man's — and especially the writer's -- individuality and freedom.

Actually, Dr. Shridharani told a November meeting held under the auspices of the Indian Council of World Affairs, many conference participants were so preoccupied with routine communist propaganda subjects that the really significant issue of individualism was virtually ignored.

His personal conviction, the Indian author stated, is that writers are first of all individuals and it is their individuality which gives meaning to their work.

The remainder of this article quotes directly from a special critique written by Dr. Shridharani after he returned to India.

* * *

Two series of challenges have emerged from the Tashkent conference of Asian and African writers. The first one was faced by prospective participants before the conference began on October 7. The second set of challenges developed as a result of actual discussions between writers from Asian and African countries, most of whom were relatively unknown to one another, even by reputation, before Tashkent.

None of these challenges, it should be explained at the outset, is worth discussing unless it is assumed that the basic idea of an assembly of Asian and African writers, irrespective of who originated it and who manipulated it, has force and validity. Of course, the "to go, or not to go" dilemma disturbed only a certain number of writers from the uncommitted countries. Communists and their sympathizers from among the writers of the uncommitted nations of Asia and Africa had no such difficulty in making up their minds. Only those of us who still believe that a writer is a writer, either a good one or a poor one, and who think it is merely political to make a distinction between the "progressives" and "reactionaries", had to go through this mental agony.

Among the questions related to the first series of challenges mentioned earlier was a query running something like this: Why the Soviet Union as the venue for an Asian-African conference? Is Russia an Afro-Asian nation?

Actually, while the fact does not necessarily answer these questions, the Soviet Union is perhaps the only country in the world which is both Asian and European. In fact, its Asian sector this side of the Urals is larger, although the European part is more populous. Tashkent, itself, is

the center of a hauntingly Oriental region and the Soviet Union, while it likes to be called European in science and technology, prefers to be identified as Asian in cultural and "cold-war" politics.

Tashkent inspired many other questions.

Was the purpose behind the conference literary and cultural, or simply political? Were writers to be used as a collective mask for an additional move to discredit the West?

Underlying such doubts was the assumption that whatever the Communists touch becomes political, including a poem, let alone a conference. It would be ineffective, even for Communists, to brush aside this charge. While some Indians continued to call the Tashkent conference an "intellectual Bandung" and a child of the earlier Delhi meeting, Sharaf Roshidov, the Uzbek novelist who was the central figure at Tashkent, clearly traced the origin of the Asian and African Writers' Conference to a resolution of the Cairo Conference of the Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee. A representative of that committee offered to underwrite the initial expenses of the permanent bureau of the Afro-Asian Writers Conference and to have it in Cairo. Some delegations, spearheaded by the Indian one, defeated this move, but the political origin and purpose of the conference was thus laid there.

Why were African countries added to what started out at Delhi as a conference of Asian writers? The assumption underlying this objection was somewhat like this: There is a community of literary and cultural values so far as Asia is concerned. No equally strong literary and cultural bonds existed between the cultures of Asia and Africa. Thus, there was a cultural basis for a conference of Asian writers while there could be only a political basis for a conference of Afro-Asian writers.

As one who attended the Tashkent conference and found himself a solitary figure on many occasions there, I am not quite happy with the trend wherein a negative political experience serves as a spur for a literary movement. And yet I have a feeling that this wave cannot be checked; it can only be ridden in the hope of mastering it partially or completely.

There was also a practical predicament for prospective non-Communist participants in the Tashkent meeting. The party "cultural workers," it was charged, were packing the delegations with Communists and their cronies; instead of concentrating on real writers, they were encouraging persons ready to toe the party line. I do not know how delegations in other countries were selected, but in India there was a moment when real writers could have assumed the leadership. But Indian writers have no dedicated workers while the party's "cultural workers" have.

Still other questions arose from the discussions at Tashkent.

Is the best of the writers the best of the propagandists or the least of the propagandists? Should art be utilitarian?

These matters were never discussed at Tashkent because we were meeting in a cultural environment which assumes (as most of the delegates assumed) that art should have political and social purpose and it should fight against such things as "colonialists" and "war-mongers." Because of this political view of art, mainly "colonialism" was discussed, while the writer's craft was brought in by the back door as one more (political) weapon.

However, there is no reason why these questions cannot be discussed at future conferences. It is the existence of conflicting views

as to the role of art in a community which constitutes a major difference between democratic and totalitarian societies. A round-table discussion on the subject at future conferences could build bridges where none exist today.

Colonialism cannot altogether be avoided as an important concern of the writers of Asia and Africa. In this connection, however, I am reminded of this statement made by Tarashankar Banerjee, leader of the Indian delegation, at the Tashkent conference's plenary session:

"We have fought against colonialism and we shall continue to fight against it. We go even further. We are opposed to any form of domination of one country by another."

Although there was no applause for this sentiment at a conference where practically each paragraph of every speech was an occasion for an ovation, we can develop the point at some future conference. For the writer is concerned with the fundamental questions of individual freedom, and should be opposed to any form of oppression, new or old, which stultifies him and suffocates his creations. This is one of the post-Tashkent challenges. The case of Pasternak is another.

The importance to writers of such values as unity and solidarity, so often sung about at Tashkent, must be re-examined. What are the writers to unite for? A particular literary style, a special type of poem? And what are the writers to be solidly against? A particular writer or a particular play?

At a conference of writers, the artists need not be united or solid; in fact the more individualistic and liquid they are, the better.

Unity and solidarity might be great values in politics and economics, but in literature they can only be described as opium.

The final statement of a writers conference, if there must be such a statement, should represent the quintessence of the discussions in committees and commissions -- and not the insulated wisdom of the presidium. In fact, this prosidium business is highly insulting to the individual and equal dignity of the writers.

At Tashkent, however, the presidium started its behind-the-doors wrangles over the concluding "statement" even before the "discussions" of the various commissions had been concluded.

# # #

REVOLUTIONARY WRITERS IN CONFORMIST CHINA

By A.J. Roy
(Commentator on East Asian Cultural Affairs)

Chinese literature, intensely active and creative during the period between the two world wars, has lapsed into stagnant conformity. A comparison of the dominant figures in each period illustrates the enormous difference between Chinese literature in the 1930's and in the 1950's.

Lu Hsun was China's best-known modern writer from 1921 until his death in 1936. His brilliant, satirical stories and essays analyzed and criticized China's traditional society. He took part in heated debates about literature and politics, exploring new literary forms and expressing a lack of faith in political revolution.

His contemporaries were constantly exploring new styles and new ideas; they grouped and re-grouped in schools and factions, wrote hundreds of experimental novels and essays, and disputed actively with one another. The result was a large body of good literature and a few excellent books; a remarkable record, considering that Western literary forms and the spoken-Chinese style came into general use only after 1910.

Today the dominant figure in Chinese Communist literature is an ex-writer named Chou Yang, vice-director of the Central Propaganda Department of the Communist Party and the party's official literary theorist. Chou's attitude toward literary work was stated in the Peiping Kuang Ming

Daily for August 29, 1958, where he quoted Mao Tse-tung's statement that "party committees must assume leadership over literary and all other ideological work."

Chou added that "our literary and art works and literary criticism should help the people to increase their Communist consciousness and set up a Communist style, which is the greatest and most beautiful." The party -- which in practice often means Chou Yang himself -- decides whether a style is Communist or not, and consequently what is beautiful and what is not beautiful.

Nearly all important Chinese writers of the 1920's and 1930's were, in one way or another, revolutionary. Many, like the classical-minded liberal Hu Shih, advocated social changes but opposed violent change. Others, including the nihilist Pa Chin and Lu Hsun himself, had no faith in political revolution. Still others, like the woman novelist Ting Ling and writer-archeologist Kuo Mo-jo, accepted Marxist doctrine.

But before the Communists took power Chinese writers and intellectuals believed that it was their function and duty to observe, criticize, and comment on the society around them.

The communists encouraged this until 1949, when they became the ones running the society. Then everything changed. The contemporaries of Lu Hsun found it difficult to live and write in the era of Chou Yang. Revolution gave way to conformity.

Writers were required to undergo political indoctrination and confess that they had been guilty of "individualism" and had been contaminated by "bourgeois" ideas. The party then gave them its prescription for a new "proletarian" literature.

Chou Yang explained in the speech published by the Kuang Ming Daily that "The hero of the new age should be congenial to the collective. He too wants to reform his surroundings, but is not antagonistic to them -- he merely wants to improve them. Furthermore, he does not fight alone, but works in the common cause of reforming the world through collective effort and by pooling his resources with the collective."

In an attempt to ensure that all literary output satisfied its specifications, the party organized a Writers' Union, put all periodicals and publishing houses under party control, and did not permit anything to be published until party committees approved the text. The result was a relatively limited number of new literary works, and these were extremely dull. Only 38 full-length novels were published in 1957.

The life, originality and character so noticeable in Chinese writing during the 1920's and 1930's has vanished completely. The only books capable of generating any interest in the reader do not glorify "the hero of the new age" but attack defects in traditional Chinese society -- a subject which permits authors to remain in the revolutionary tradition.

On April 26, 1958 the party's official newspaper, the Peiping People's Daily, complained that "Some creative people who had come forward

with many works reflecting the march of the times during the period of the democratic revolution have become apathetic toward their work in the present period of socialist (Communist) revolution. Some of them have even felt very depressed and pessimistic. They seem to be completely foreign to the socialist spirit."

The writers' pessimism and criticisms were expressed during the "hundred flowers" period in 1957, when Mao Tse-tung briefly permitted intellectuals to speak frankly about the Peiping regime.

Pa Chin, who had been a prominent and prolific novelist before the Communists took over, indicated the reasons why he had written only one small book of sketches since then. According to the Shanghai Liberation Daily for May 8, 1957, Pa Chin said that although he was chairman of the Shanghai branch of the Union of Chinese Writers, he held the post in name only because he was subject to party orders.

The Shanghai Wen Hui Pao revealed on June 14, 1958 that Pa Chin had said that literature and art should be handed back to the people. He asked that artistic assessment of literary works should be made by the masses of the people and not by a few Communist officials.

Ting Ling, China's foremost woman writer, a Communist for over 20 years and the recipient of a Stalin Prize, opposed the party's control over literature and condemned the Communist literary leaders for "sectarianism" and "political blackmail."

A former deputy chief editor of the Peiping magazine People's Literature named Chin Chao-yang urged writers to "free themselves from the heavy shackles of dogmatism." The official New China News Agency

reported on July 10, 1958 that Chin had said that "writers are not free in their creation under the present society; while writing, the writers are apprehensive, ill at ease and always cautious, lest someone grab them from behind."

Chin said that under party control writers all "act according to current fashion, arrested by shadows and catching at the wind, sailing their boat down wind, and fear-stricken by current influences."

Writers who had criticized the regime during the brief "hundred flowers" period were bitterly attacked during the "anti-rightist" and "rectification" campaigns which followed. The People's Daily for August 27, 1957 called Ting Ling a "poisonous weed" and said that she had conspired with other writers to "disrupt the unity of Chinese writers" -- in other words, they disliked the party's control over literature.

Despite repeated "accusation" meetings, Ting Ling refused to bow to the party. She denied Communist charges that she had engaged in "anti-party activities" during the 1930's and 1940's. Writers and students all over mainland China, however, were required to echo the Party's condemnations of Ting Ling, and it is reported that she is now scrubbing floors in the headquarters of the Writers' Union. In late 1958 she was removed from the National Congress, Peiping's legislative body.

Chin Chao-yang and a number of other writers and editors were fired from their posts and sent to do manual work in factories and collective farms. Pa Chin was attacked repeatedly during 1958, apparently

as a continued warning to other writers with independent ideas. An article in the October 1958 issue of the Peiping magazine China Youth said that Pa Chin was "defending the evils of bourgeois ideology." The Communist press has not yet reported his fate.

Chinese writers can now be divided into two groups: bureaucrats who publish very little, and non-bureaucrats who also publish very little.

Prominent members of the first group are Shen Yen-ping (better known under his pen name of Mao Tun), the Minister of Culture, Chou Yang, and Kuo Mo-jo. Kuo appears constantly at meetings of cultural fronts and is the most diligent writer of the group, turning out numerous short poems in praise of Mao Tse-tung, Sino-Soviet Friendship, and the Second Five-year Plan.

Lao She is one of the most noted non-bureaucrats. Before the war he was for the most part inactive in politics, devoting himself to a series of humorous, observant novels. (His novel Rickshaw Boy had considerable success in Europe and America in the 1940's.) Since the Communists took power he has published only a few short plays and sketches.

The Communists have sponsored a number of younger writers like Chou Li-po, who won a Stalin Prize for his novel The Hurricane. Most of these, however, have turned out to be one-book authors who wrote about land reform or guerilla warfare but found it difficult to satisfy the party's requirements for books about "the hero of the new age."

Now the Communists are attempting to stimulate more production by calling on writers to join what the party calls the "great leap forward." They are ordered to set themselves quotas and follow schedules laid down by the Union of Writers.

The current literary scene in Communist China would undoubtedly sadden and anger Lu Hsun, if he were alive today. Lu would no doubt immediately seize a sheet of paper and write biting satires of literary mandarins like Chou Yang. But, in the conformist China of today, he would have no opportunity to publish them.

* * * * *

PEIPING'S IDEOLOGY OF LITERATURE

by Nils Stefansson
(Historian and Writer on Contemporary Asia)

Thousands of professional and amateur writers in every part of mainland China have been assigned quotas of poems, articles, and stories which are to be completed by October 1, 1959, the tenth anniversary of the Peiping regime's assumption of power.

The Union of Chinese Writers and the Central Propaganda Department of the Chinese Communist Party have drawn up specifications explaining exactly what kind of literature Peiping wants. Although developed from familiar Marxist ideas, Chinese literary doctrine, like many other aspects of Chinese Communist theory, has been carried to a unique degree of dogmatism.

Peiping's literary theorists begin with a denial that artistic creation can be an independent human activity. Shao Ch'uan-lin, vice-chairman of the party-controlled Union of Chinese Writers, declared in the official Peiping People's Daily for March 24, 1958 that "the subservience of art to politics is an objective law."

Chou Yang, vice-director of the party's Central Propaganda Department and Peiping's principal spokesman in literary matters, explained the consequences of this subservience. In an article in the Peiping Kuang Ming Daily for August 29, 1958, Chou said that "culture for culture's sake, and news for news' sake -- all this is the bourgeois line. According to revolutionary Marxism, culture, education and science all must serve revolutionary politics and Communism."

Who decides how revolutionary politics are to be served? The Communist Party, of course. Chou Yang went on to say that some writers "erroneously think that cultural enterprises should be left in the hands of the experts, writers and artists should lead literature and art, and so forth. Such a viewpoint amounts in effect to repudiation of party leadership for cultural enterprises."

He explained that "ideology and politics are the supreme commanders. Organizationally speaking, the assumption of command by politics means leadership by party committees."

Literary quality and skilful writing are good only to the extent that they contribute to the effectiveness of the party's propaganda message. Chou said that "all of our newspapers, periodicals and books should educate the people in the spirit of Communism."

"One particular task of literature and art," he added, "is to educate the people in the spirit of Communism through forms that evoke esthetic satisfaction....our literary works and literary criticism should help the people to increase their Communist consciousness and set up a Communist style, which is the greatest and most beautiful."

On April 26, 1958 the People's Daily specified the types of cultural works required: "Each and every writer and artist should take it as his obligatory duty to serve the interests of current political campaigns by supplying the masses quickly with songs, poems, and short dramas, acclaiming progressive personalities and advanced achievements."

In a speech published in the People's Daily on February 28, 1958 Chou Yang dismissed the Chinese literary tradition in these words: "Under

the leadership of the Communist Party, Chinese literature has always regarded socialist realism as the most correct principle of creation, and looked upon Soviet writings as models for it."

In mainland China the cult of quotas and statistics is practised with a fervor equalled nowhere else. Writers are not exempt. On March 7, 1958 the Writers' Union directed that "Any writer who has not mapped out a plan must immediately draw one up and present it to the Writers' Union or one of its branches....Each of us must know himself what and how much he wants to do, and so must the Writers' Union so that it may offer guidance and exercise supervision."

Well-known writers, most of whom began their careers in the 1920's and 1930's, have been required to participate in this literary "great leap forward." Along with the younger writers who began to publish only after the Communists took over, they were asked to guarantee production of a certain number of novels, plays, poems and film scripts before next October. Then they were told to raise their quotas.

The official New China News Agency (NCNA) reported on September 28, 1958 that more than 700 writers and artists had been sent to collective farms, communes, factories, and army companies. Two days later NCNA announced that newspapers, magazines, and publishing houses were to reduce their payments for contributions. Officially this was done in order to reduce the difference between mental and physical labor, but obviously it also reduced writers' independence and tended to make them more submissive to party orders.

While the Communists maintain pressure on established professional writers, they are also attempting to bypass them by recruiting amateurs, who presumably will produce literary propaganda with a more docile spirit.

Amateur writing has been the subject of one of Peiping's mass campaigns. NCNA claimed on November 30, 1958 that as of late October 880 million poems, stories, songs, and articles had been composed by the people. One peasant was said to have written more than 1,000 items in one year.

An "outstanding example" of this mass-produced poetry was quoted by NCNA on July 30, 1958:

"In the skies there are comets,
In China there has emerged Mao Tse-tung.
Chairman Mao's wisdom is higher than the skies,
The reactionaries are eliminated, fully eliminated."

NCNA explained the purpose of the amateur literary drives on September 28, 1958: "They inspire the revolutionary efforts and enthusiasm for labor of the broad masses. They help to boost production and educate the people and truly manifest the role of literature and art as a means of propaganda and education for the party."

As might be expected, Peiping's literary dogmas result in dull, stereotyped, doctrinaire books. The official press already has revealed indications of popular indifference toward the party's selections.

The Shanghai Wen Hui Pao reported on April 27, 1958 that "works of socialist realism could not be sold and are accumulating in warehouses." The newspaper added that according to the semi-annual report of a university library, the famous classical novel Dream of the Red Chamber had been borrowed

287 times, while Reclaiming Virgin Land was borrowed only 16 times during the same period despite the praise it received from party spokesmen.

Bored with current books, readers turn to pre-Communist literature. The Peiping Kuang Ming Daily for April 19, 1958 admitted, for example, that "students read more classics than modern works." In an attempt to censor the classics and supervise their distribution, a "Regulation and Planning Group for the Publication of the Classics" was established in Peiping in February 1958.

The Shanghai Wen Hui Pao for March 18, 1958 gave the principles to be followed by this "planning group." A conference of representatives of the New China Bookstore (the state bookselling monopoly) had resolved, the newspaper said, that "publication of political reading material must henceforth be strengthened; restrictions must be imposed upon the publication of books which have no educational value to the masses and those which do not assist in spreading political influence."

# # #

HO CHI MINH'S CULTURAL PROBLEM: INDIVIDUALISM IN ART

By Henry V. Burke

Writers, painters and musicians in North Vietnam, almost from the beginning of Communist rule in that area, have found it increasingly difficult to express themselves as individuals.

In radio broadcasts and other directives, the Ho Chi Minh government repeatedly insists that all cultural activities must be directed toward the building of Communism and that even music must reflect propaganda aspects of the "class struggle." This edict, obviously enough, has been aimed at those individuals who believe that art should be a personal expression of the artist's creative imagination.

When Ho visited the North Vietnam fine arts college on October 30, 1958, for example, he stressed the importance of a disciplinary plan designed "to do away with all vestiges of individualism."

Like their counterparts in the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe and Mainland China, Vietnamese writers, in particular, are expected to concentrate on works calculated to strengthen the image of Communism as the people's greatest hope for future advancement. Objective reporting of conditions as the writer sees them no more fits the Communist standards of "realism" in North Vietnam than it does in Moscow, Peiping or Budapest.

In matters of artistic discipline, it should be pointed out, the Ho Chi Minh regime follows the Chinese pattern, a tendency to be expected

of a government which has been closely controlled by Peiping from its beginning. The Chinese touch, for instance, is apparent in such North Vietnamese reform programs as manual labor assignments for cultural workers.

Aside from disciplinary techniques, however, the intellectuals of North Vietnam are confronted with a situation which seems to be common in all Communist countries.

Nevertheless, in spite of the Soviet examples of Vladimir Dudintsev and Boris Pasternak, purges of cultural leaders in Eastern Europe, and the lessons of Communist China's "hundred flowers" experiment, many of North Vietnam's intellectuals have been waging a stubborn campaign for at least some measure of independence.

One practical result of this resistance has been arrest and imprisonment for a number of Vietnamese writers -- and participation in a "reform through manual labor" program for others.

By coincidence, it has been reported that 66 North Vietnamese writers, painters and musicians began a three-month assignment at hard labor just a few hours before it was announced in Stockholm that Soviet poet and novelist Pasternak had been awarded the 1958 Nobel prize for literature. There appears to have been more than coincidence, however, in other parallels between the Soviet Union's treatment of its famous authors and the campaign of retroactive criticism directed against the Vietnamese writer Vu Bao, whose novel "Being About to Celebrate Marriage" has been called North Vietnam's "Dr. Zhivago."

Unlike Pasternak's "Dr. Zhivago," which was banned in the Soviet Union because of its general tone and occasional anti-Communist passages,

Vu Bao managed to get his novel published in September, 1957. The story of two young lovers caught up in the Communist land reform program, "Being About To Celebrate Marriage" actually received critical praise before party leaders belatedly realized that Vu Bao had utilized a romantic theme as the vehicle for a penetrating attack on Communist methods.

Later, therefore, in comments reminiscent of Soviet denunciations of Pasternak and Dudintsev, party spokesmen attempted to correct their earlier oversight.

"In the eyes of Vu Bao," the literary organ Van Hoc charged, "all our organizations from top to bottom were corrupted and spoiled. He featured the scenes of unjust torture, arrests and death sentences in a most discontented tone."

With this background in mind, any members of North Vietnam's artistic labor colony who heard Radio Peiping's broadcast of November 18, 1958 almost certainly thought of Vu Bao. On that date, almost a month after Pasternak had been condemned in the Soviet Union, Radio Peiping broke a long silence about this affair with a special Vietnamese language commentary accusing both Pasternak and the Nobel award committee of a deliberate attempt to discredit the Soviet Union. Pasternak, the broadcast asserted, "is not worthy of the name of Soviet writer and is a betrayer of Russian traditional literature and an enemy of the people, peace and Communism."

Many Vietnamese listeners to this broadcast probably also recalled the short but stimulating career of the now famous magazine, Nhan Van, whose title translates as "Humanism." Before its suppression in December, 1956 after only five issues, Nhan Van had managed to publish telling

criticisms of land reform techniques and other manifestations of Communist policy.

In its next to last issue, for example, Nhan Van revealed that "in the agrarian reform there were illegal arrests, imprisonments, investigations with barbarous tortures, executions, requisitions of property and the quarantining of landowners' houses or houses wrongly classified as landowners' which left innocent children to die of starvation."

Tran Dan, one of the contributors to Nhan Van, was imprisoned by Communist officials for such transgressions as falling in love with a Christian girl and attempting to justify his "reactionary" writings by quoting from Marx, Engels and Lenin.

A review of Nhan Van's five issues, in the light of current disciplinary measures, suggests that the publication's frequent inclusion of light, satirical pieces may have hastened its end.

One such piece was a vignette entitled "The Salary Principle," by Y Du. This was an account of a lower échelon Communist party member who suffered from tapeworm but was refused treatment at the state-run hospitals because his grade was too low.

Another sketch (Thanh Chau's "We Buy Goods From the State-Owned Trade Company") told of the difficulties encountered in trying to procure needed articles through bureaucratic Communist business channels.

The last issue of Nhan Van contained a particularly pointed literary satire, "The Robot Poet" by Cham Van Biem. This was a fantasy about a mechanical poet which was able to produce, upon order, thousands of stereotyped verses guaranteed to meet Communist party requirements.

Nhan Van was officially liquidated on December 15, 1956 and the plates already prepared for issue No. 6 were confiscated. Two associated publications, "Spring Literary Selections" and "Autumn Literary Selections", also were banned.

Afterward, a weekly literary journal called Van was started as a replacement but had to be suppressed too when it began to accept articles written by former Nhan Van contributors and to show other signs of satirical disrespect for the products of Communism.

The Ho Chi Minh government, still seeking a dependable vehicle for its literary policies, came up last May with a new journal entitled Van Hoc. This publication, which soon published a sharp criticism of Vu Bao, began under the editorial direction of Nguyen Dinh Tri, a cultural worker with a highly acceptable party background. Among Nguyen Dinh Tri's special qualifications is the fact that he was once chosen to address the Union of Soviet Wrtiers in Moscow.

Despite Ho Chi Minh's efforts, however, there is still no proof that North Vietnam's resourceful intellectuals have abandoned their fight against conformity.

# # #

COMMUNIST CHINA REVEALED IN HER ART

By Peggy Durdin

From The New York Times Magazine

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After a temporary "thaw," Peiping and Moscow are once more using their technique of "persuasion" to squeeze intellectuals back into a rigid Marxist-Leninist mold and make the artists among them produce great works by strict Communist Party formula.

Like Chinese restaurateurs fattening their famous Peking ducks, a dictatorship can certainly force-feed its scientists to get them laying fine, man-made moons bigger and faster than anybody else.

Art is different, however. No dictatorship of our time, including the Chinese and the Soviet, has yet been able to coddle, threaten or force-feed its people into creating artistic masterpieces. A Communist Government can starve artists; it can silence them; it can imprison or exile them; it can break them. But weekly injections of Marx have not made great artists fertile.

Under the Communist system, the arts have stood still at best. Generally, they have deteriorated. The law seems to be: decreasing artistic creativity under increasing party pressure. It can be illustrated by many arts in many Communist countries -- graphically, for instance, by Chinese painting.

Through more than ten centuries, China produced one of the greatest continuing schools of painting the world has ever known. To Chinese themselves, it was their second art, inferior only to calligraphy (the writing of their words, or characters). From calligraphy, Chinese painting directly derived its materials -- paper or [illegible], black ink and a fine-tipped brush; the extraordinarily difficult technical skill these materials demanded -- for instance, the absorbency of Chinese paper required lightning-fast brush strokes, as sure and delicate as a heart surgeon's knife -- and its artistic qualities: a superb sense of form and proportion never elsewhere surpassed; a line of infinite delicacy, nuance, strength and vitality; a use of empty space as decoration unequaled in the West; understatement, subtlety ("the hidden hint") and suggestion so masterful that a dozen strokes of brush and black ink can depict a venerable Taoist monk in meditation, or an ice-edged, desolate lake on a dank and bone-cold winter's day.

Say "Chinese classic painting" to anyone who loves it and he will think first of a landscape (literally, a "mountain-water"). Great mountains, some of their slopes bare rock, some pine-covered, push back and up into vast and limitless sky. A waterfall pours down one steep precipice. On another perches, precariously, a tiny inn, half shrouded

in mist. Below, from some far unknown source to some far unseen ending, a river winds through a quiet valley. Dwarfed by the towering hills and infinite heavens, a little man rows in his tiny boat upon the water.

There is more than "mountain-water" here; the onlooker, like the artist, holds, for a moment, "the universe in his hand." One wants to live with this painting because, in a Chinese phrase, it "nourishes the emotions, calms the troubled bosom, alleviates bitter suffering and sets free the restless heart." Whoever looks at it, said the great poet, Li Po, loses himself in eternity.

Of all the things Peiping will not permit an artist to lose himself in today, eternity and the universe rank pretty high. Say "Chinese Communist painting" to anyone who has seen much of it; he will visualize a canvas filled with Something Produced and The Masses, Producing. Front and center is The Factory or The Cooperative Farm or The Machine. Near by, tools in hand, higher than life, stand Happy Socialist Workers, Building a Happy Socialist Society, With Happy Socialist Smiles painted on their healthy faces.

By Communist fiat, triumphant struggle is the picture's theme. But the canvas has no life; for one thing, the artist has not mastered oils, the medium. There is as much empty space on the canvas as there is privacy in the Communist-controlled mind. Subtlety, proportion, suggestion are gone. The picture is a poster, its platitudes underlined and overstated.

The classis Sung-dynasty landscape is to this Mao-dynasty painting what Peiping's great and serene Altar of Heaven is to the shoddy,

jerry-built but utilitarian factories thrown up in the past few years outside the ancient Chinese captial.

The Communists are right when they say art reflects society. The dramatic contrast between classic Chinese painting and Chinese Communist painting stems from the diametrically opposed status and function of the artist in two diametrically opposed Chinese societies.

From the reign of the first Han emperor, 200 hundred years before the birth of Christ, through the nineteenth and even into our century, the Chinese considered their highest class not successful business men, not party members (as in the Soviet Union or Communist China), but "eggheads" -- including, of course, artists. Perhaps the clearest practical indication of this attitude was the fact that entrance to China's great civil service was not through party membership, royal patronage or social position but through an intellectual examination open to anyone, rich or poor -- a peasant's boy or the son of a Prime Minister. Taking fine calligraphy for granted, this examination included a thorough knowledge of Confucian ethics, the ability to write poetry and literary essays and, frequently, to paint pictures. Scholarship, culture, the ability to create beauty through word and line -- these mattered in ancient China.

As an honored member of a respected intelligentsia, the classic Chinese painter has real status. Men regarded paintings as "more priceless than gold or jade." Many "red sashes" -- high officials -- were famous painters, and not the Sunday afternoon variety. An emperor had more "face" if he were a real artist. Even generals made the grade

occasionally. Such high status was pleasant, like well-flavored food. But these Chinese also had what is as indispensable to art as oxygen to breathing -- freedom.

In ancient China, the painter, like everyone else, owed loyalty to the emperor. But he was no slave of the state. Men of learning, talent and culture even had the right to advise and "admonish" the Son of Heaven. In unequivocal speech to evil emperors, some Chinese intellectuals knowingly risked and even lost their lives. Like family heirlooms, like bits of precious jade, their stories have been handed down through generations of peasants and their names have rung clear and true, like temple bells at dusk, over the centuries.

For more than 2,000 years Chinese have spat on the name of Emperor Ch'in Shih Huang Ti because he tried to brainwash the intelligentsia, ordering his subjects to burn all books and blot the entire cultural legacy of the past from their memories. His version of today's "reform through labor" was giving the intransigent a four-year sentence to work on the Great Wall of China. This meant death. It is said so many men defied the royal mind-molder that the soil along the section of the Great Wall where they died remained particularly fertile for decades, causing "melon plants to blossom in the winter."

The artist, in Chinese classic society, was free to think and believe just as he pleased. He could be a Buddhist, a Confucian, a Taoist, a little of all three or a complete unbeliever and cynic. He could be a monk or mystic sitting cross-legged in meditation, or a

complete hedonist. Like many a Chinese poet, the painter could shrug off government and turn to things he considered more — and <u>really</u> — important.

In the golden days of Chinese painting the artist was free to live where and as he pleased; he could be a vagrant wanderer, a hermit in a lonely mountain hut, a provincial governor, a guest in the Imperial palace. No one objected if he were wealthy; no one cried havoc if he openly scorned money-making, saying: "Men who are dominated by <u>things</u> reap trouble in their hearts. The dust of the world beclouds their brush and ink and they walk into blind alleys."

The artist could talk and behave as he pleased. He could be conventional; since the Chinese admired eccentrics, he could be totally nonconformist. A very famous painter was affectionately characterized as "a threefold genius, excelling in wit, in painting and in foolishness."

A Chinese painter was free <u>not</u> to work, <u>not</u> to paint, <u>not</u> to say or do anything. He could feel as he liked and reflect his moods in his painting. He was free to be sad, depressed, moody or uncertain. He was free to wonder, to doubt, to scoff or laugh. He was free to weep if he must.

He was free above all to be at peace with himself and his world. The process of artistic creation, the Chinese believed, involved, not struggle, exhaustion and discord, but harmony and tranquillity. When painting, the artist came to terms with the universe instead of fighting it. Thus he was nourished and rejuvenated by his own creative process.

Therefore, the Chinese said, the hands of great painters never grew stiff and their hearts never grew old; they died at a ripe old age, peacefully, without illness or any "fading of the bright soul," their faces fresh and serene like that of young boys.

As they boast, the Communists have well and truly "overturned" this long enduring pattern of Chinese society. Today, no one dares shrug off the Government. Its masters, the members of the Communist Party, are the unquestioned elite of China; and they have demoted intellectuals to the very lowest rung of the ladder.

For the first time in China's long history, members of a whole class are labeled "Unclean" because of the accident of birth, like Indian Untouchables. Intellectuals come from "non-proletarian" families; this bourgeois parentage is a crime and, like the mark of Cain, irrevocable and ineradicable. Therefore, intellectuals can neither be permanently "saved" nor totally trusted. They must "work themselves over" and be worked over all the time but they remain on endless, insecure probation.

If the artist in China today is a pariah-on-trial as an intellectual, as a painter he is at best a party tool — and not one of the higher priced ones. Mao Tse-tung describes him simply as "part of our revolutionary machinery . . . a weapon with which to unite and educate our people, to attack and destroy our enemy." In effect he is a radio transmitter for carrying the party line to the masses — more trouble than the transmitter, less effective, and more casually discarded.

As Peiping's official art magazine recently pointed out, the justification for and value of a painting depend solely on how effectively it "helps the establishment of socialism" and the dictatorship of the party; how much it makes people work harder, eat less, work harder, economize more, work harder, use fewer clothes, work harder and complain and think less. "We judge a political party or a doctor by the practical results or the effects they achieve," Mao says. "We must judge a writer or artist in the same way."

Today, an artist, like every other Chinese, has to accept the dictatorship of the party in every sphere of life, commencing with his mind and spirit. In Communist China it is "rightist" -- near treason, which can any moment be labeled treason -- to say art and artists are outside or have no connection with politics. The painter must not only ceaselessly study the Marxist dogma; he must believe it; he must affirm and regurgitate it endlessly, and, of course, he must prove fervent orthodoxy through his productivity.

Their thoughts subjected to constant attention since the first big Communist " remolding" of the intelligentsia in 1952, Chinese artists and other intellectuals are now enduring a party campaign to break the will, empty and refill the mind with party gospel that makes all previous efforts look like amateur rehearsals. This, Peiping says, is "indeed a long-time struggle"; it will last at least ten years, and must "show no mercy."

The gamut of this purgatory of "persuasion" is by now as familiar to a Chinese of education, culture and artistic talent as are a lover's hands: false, public, vitriolic denunciation and accusation by party, petty enemies, associates, relatives and closest friends; abject public "self-criticism"; verbal and written admission of and apology for usually uncommitted sins; intensified "struggle" and study. For many, there follow social Coventry, demotion or loss of job, endless "reform through labor," "surveillance" and, of course, penal camps and jail. "Persuasion" -- gentle, kindly word -- has driven some men to the haven of suicide or insanity.

Painters, Peiping said recently, "Will follow the leadership of the party . . . . All will have to change their minds. . . . The struggle for artists' minds must go deeper and further. . . . No one can put his hands inside his sleeves and stand aside and look on. . . . With the approval of the group, each must examine his own self, must change his mind and must decide once for all whether or not he wants the party leadership, whether or not he really accepts the cultural orientation given by the party. This is the time. Each must answer YES or NO."

Struggle, not tranquillity, is the watchword for artists in Communist China today. The painter must struggle constantly with his own bourgeois tendencies and "unhealthy moods." He must see and feel life as a heroic, epic, life-affirming struggle. As in the Soviet Union, the echo of uncertainty is "slandering the party."

In Communist China every small detail of the artist's life is the business of the state. Eccentricity and nonconformity are sin. The painter has no negative freedoms; he must work, unless the state takes away his job. After discovering many "rightist conspirators" and "poisonous weeds" among artists and writers, Peiping has commenced shipping them off for life or "a comparatively long period" to factories, cooperative farms and frontier army posts. There, by "joining in the production struggle" (working with their hands), they will "experience life," unalienate themselves from the masses, and free themselves from "bourgeois individualism, liberalism and other errors."

Nobody, Emperors included, told classic Chinese painters what and how to paint. With no illusions that they could "tame" nature, Chinese artists tended far less than Europeans to make man the focus of the universe or the subject and center of a canvas. They painted man simply as they painted everything in the world, visible and invisible, that interested them: great sacred dragons coiling through a cloud-swept sky, a dragonfly on a water lily, horrid demons, horses, a bird on a leafless twig, Buddha, butterflies, prowling tigers, bamboos that bend but do not break before a storm, court ladies with magnificent, stylized hair and soft silken draperies, the Guardians of Hell, fat babies, eagles in flight, one bare rock, ghosts, an orchid, a twisted pine, emperors, ancestors, a beloved royal concubine, goldfish, monks. But the favorite subject was landscape painted "by the skill of the heart" -- mountain, sky and water in every season, weather, mood and every hour of day or night.

The Sung artist used his techniques -- subtlety, understatement, delicacy and suggestion -- simply as means to imprison on paper his own fleeting moment of insight into the essence, the spirit or the inner life of the object viewed -- and, indeed, of the whole tangible world. This process was by its nature highly individual: it was the individual artist expressing with his individual talent his individual reaction to the universe.

As a famous painter-monk said, "I am always myself and must be present in my work. . . . The lungs and bowels of the old masters cannot be transformed into my stomach. I express my own lungs and bowels and show my own beard and eyebrows."

Great classic paintings were, above all, real in the ultimate sense of the word. The poet Tu Fu wrote of imperial murals so alive that they "moved the palace walls." A fifth-century artist who had just finished a mural of four white dragons was asked, "But where are their eyes?"

"It isn't safe to give them sight," he replied.

A scoffer laughed. With a few strokes of the brush the artist endowed two of the sacred monsters with vision. "At once, the air became filled with thunder and lightning, the wall broke down and the dragons ascended to the clouds. But the two dragons without eyes remained in their places."

In Mao Tse-tung's China, officials order the subjects, techniques and philosophy of painting. Artists must glorify collectivization, labor heroes, the settlement of virgin lands, peasants plowing, reaping,

collecting fertilizer and killing pests by hand, masses voting, minority tribespeople looking picturesquely happy. Since the classic Chinese landscape is in reality anti-Marxist in both mood and philosophy, it has virtually disappeared — except for shipment abroad as cultural propaganda.

No one understands better than the Communists that for art, whose function is to solidify party control, spread party doctrines and further party policies among more than 500,000,000 largely illiterate workers, peasants and soldiers, the philosophy of classic painting is dangerous and its techniques useless. What is required to do the job is, as in the U.S.S.R., "Socialist realism" — representational, anecdotal art that teaches a Marxist moral, grossly oversimplifies and belabors the obvious.

To take "an emotional, intuitional approach" to the tangible world is directly counter to the basic Marxist concept of materialism. To express one's own "lungs and bowels" is "distorting reality."

That artists are aware of and unresigned to their predicament they made clear, to their own undoing, in the Peiping "thaw" that ended with bangs and whimpers a half year ago. Bitter, angry, frustrated, with nothing to lose but their integrity, the old-style Chinese painters recklessly criticized the party attitude on art. Piling apostasy on heresy, they said, in effect:

The Government has deliberately neglected classic painting for Western techniques, often taught by Russians. The party has discarded

and shamefully mistreated once-honored classic painters and teachers. It forces many students to study Western art; it often compels academy graduates to paint European-fashion. What little is taught as "classic painting" is slapstick use of Chinese brush and ink, with no emphasis on the essentials: "The poetic mood . . . and the effort to reach the inner life." The directors of the Government art schools know nothing about real Chinese art. Neither does the Ministry of Culture. Neither does the chief party paper. Neither, in fact, does the party.

All this the artists said — and retribution followed.

Well over 1,000 years ago, a penniless Chinese orphan named Wu Tao-tzu became so powerful a painter that a whole city would watch him complete a temple mural; people said, "A divine power works through him." One day he traced a magnificent landscape on the palace walls of the great Emperor Ming Huang. As the ruler stood admiring the finished picture, Wu pointed to a cave in the mural, walked through it and was never seen again.

How many artists in China today wish they had Wu Tao-tzu's magic talent, nobody knows.

E N D

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