

STALIN AND THE ARTS

INTRODUCTION -- ART AND SOCIETY

ART is a form of production in which the producer (the artist) strives by his product (the work of art) to create certain thoughts or feelings in the minds of its consumers.

A product which is exclusively artistic and has no other significant function is termed fine art. A product which is primarily functional may be secondarily a work of art if its producer has been concerned not merely with its function but also with creating certain thoughts or feelings in the minds of its users. Such art is termed applied art.

The content of a work of art is its subject

The form of a work of art is the manner or style in which the artist has presented the content of his work of art.

Realism is a trend in art which seeks to represent its subject faithfully and truthfully.

An artist is a member of society, so that the art of a particular time and place cannot but be influenced by the social environment existing in that time and place.

When and where a particular a social system is in harmony with the needs of the mass of the people, the prevailing thought tends to be rational, favourable to science and optimistic, while the prevailing art tends to be realistic.

When and where a particular social system has outlived its usefulness to the majority of the people, the prevailing thought tends to be irrational, unfavourable to science and pessimistic while the prevailing art tends to be unrealistic, tends to degenerate into a greater or lesser degree of abstraction.

SLIDE 1: MARGARITONE OF AREZZO: ALTAR-PIECE.

Thus, in Europe in the late Middle Ages, when the long-established social system of feudalism was in decline, the prevailing art was typically Byzantine in style -- like this altar-piece by Margaritone of Arezzo* in the National Gallery, painted in the late 13th century. Painting from real life had by this time come to be regarded as heretical, and artists tended to confine themselves to making copies of works of art previously approved by the Church. Thus, Byzantine art tended to be flat and lifeless.

Then, in the 14th century, above all in Italy, the embryonic capitalist class began to exert its influence, giving rise to that flowering of science, art and culture we call the Renaissance.

SLIDE 2: CARAVAGGIO : 'THE SUPPER AT EMMAUS'.

The difference between this picture by Caravaggio* and the previous one by Margaritone is not just a matter of improved technique, the use of light and shade, the mastery of perspective. The main difference is that it is no

longer based on previous works of art; it is painted from life and it glows with realism.

SLIDE 3: GIOVANNI BELLINI: 'THE DOGE LEONARDO LOREDANO'.

This sumptuous portrait of the Doge of Venice, by Giovanni Bellini*, conveys with realism all the pomp and prosperity of the wealthy state of Venice.

Most sitters of the Renaissance and the rising embryonic capitalist class felt self-confident, and did not demand that painters prettified them. Thus, Oliver Cromwell* ordered the painter Peter Lely* to paint him 'warts and all'.

SLIDE 4: ATTRIBUTED TO QUENTIN MASSYS: PORTRAIT OF AN OLD WOMAN.

And this sitter no doubt gave the same instructions to her painter.

SLIDE 5: PIETER DE HOOCH: 'INTERIOR OF A DUTCH HOUSE'.

In the 17th century we find Dutch painters like Pieter De Hooch* painting realistically the interiors of bourgeois houses like this, in which he expresses his joy in painting sunlight. The figure standing before the fireplace was an afterthought added to improve the design of the grouping, and that is why the black-and-white tiles of the floor can be seen through the woman's skirt.

But when a social system ceases to serve the interests of the majority of the people -- for example, in France in the years immediately preceding the French Revolution of 1792 -- sensitive artists, other than conscious revolutionaries, find reality too unpleasant and sordid to portray realistically, so that they tend to reject realism in favour of falsity.

SLIDE 6: JEAN-HONORÉ FRAGONARD: 'THE SWING'.

Jean Fragonard* was court painter at Versailles in the years just prior to the French Revolution. This painting, 'The Swing', is typical of the artificiality of his work. The decadent court is concealed in a completely false world of eternal youth and perpetual pleasure, of endless summer filled with laughter and the scent of flowers.

In the twentieth century, capitalism reached the stage of imperialism, where it became ever more clearly contrary to the interests of the mass of the people.

In such a period, revolutionary artists make use of realism to further the revolutionary cause. But the honest, sensitive artist who is not a revolutionary, who sees no way out of existing social problems, finds reality too painful to portray, and consequently moves away from realism.

Even in the 19th century, artists like William Turner* began to sense the poverty and exploitation which lay behind the surface of Victorian prosperity, and to move away from realism.

SLIDE 7: J. M. WILLIAM TURNER: 'RAIN, STEAM AND SPEED'.

In this late picture by Turner of a train crossing a viaduct, the train

is not the realistic assembly of gleaming pistons which would have brought joy to the heart of George Stephenson*. The train is no more than an impression, lost in the wild rush of colour of the elements and the steam from the engine.

Today capitalism has been in increasing decay for almost a century. Britain, once the workshop of the world, has been turned into an industrial museum; some four million people are out of work and school-leavers face the prospect of spending all their lives on social security; in the heart of London, thousands of people are forced to sleep in the open air winter and summer . . .

So, with the coming of imperialism, which is capitalism in its final stage, capitalism in decay, reality became uglier still, and honest, sensitive artists who are not socialists reject even the impression of reality.

Among the many non-realistic artistic trends which arose in the 20th century is Cubism, associated particularly with the name of Picasso*.

SLIDE 8: PABLO PICASSO: 'PORTRAIT OF M. KAHNWEILER'.

In later Cubism the image is first cut up into geometrical forms, then these are shifted around. In this portrait by Picasso, all we can recognise are fragmentary aspects of the sitter's waistcoat and face drowned in chaos.

SLIDE 9: SALVADOR DALI: 'SUBURBS OF THE PARANOIC-CRITICAL TOWN'.

Another 20th century non-realistic artistic trend was Surrealism, allegedly based on the unconscious mind, the dreams of which are declared to be more real than objective reality. The Spanish-born painter Salvador Dali* deserted Cubism for Surrealism. His paintings -- like this one, entitled 'Suburbs of the Paranoic-Critical Town' -- are naturalistic in appearance, but with objects in the weirdest juxtaposition -- a temple, an armchair, a horse's skull and a girl with a bunch of grapes.

Of course, this movement from realism is not confined to the visual arts. In the theatre, for instance, it has produced a whole trend known as 'the Theatre of the Absurd'. Here 'absurd' is used in the sense of 'incongruous', 'illogical', 'contrary to reason'. It is often humorous, but its humour comes not from satire on real life, but from incongruity. It is the humour of 'Monty Python'. It portrays life and the world as senseless and meaningless:

"The Theatre of the Absurd is . . . part of the 'anti-literary' movement of our time, which has found its expression in abstract painting".

(Martin J. Esslin: 'The Theatre of the Absurd'; Harmondsworth; 1977; p. 26).

A milestone in the development of 'the Theatre of the Absurd' was the play 'Waiting for Godot', written in French by the Irish playwright Samuel Beckett*, and first published in Paris in 1952.

The play is set in a country lane where two tramps are waiting for a mysterious person called Godot. As they wait, they converse in the manner of cross-talk comedians on the variety stage. Eventually a boy arrives and tells them that Godot is not coming that day. In the second act, they continue to talk as they wait for Godot, and again the boy comes to tell them that Godot won't be coming.

As one eminent critic has put it: 'Waiting for Godot' is a play in which nothing happens -- twice!

Here are the last few lines of the play:

RECORDING 1: EXTRACT: 'WAITING FOR GODOT'.

"Vladimir: We'll hang ourselves tomorrow. . . . Unless Godot comes.

Estragon: And if he comes?

Vladimir: We'll be saved.

Estragon: Well? Shall we go?

Vladimir: Pull on your trousers.

Estragon: What?

Vladimir: Pull on your trousers.

Estragon: You want me to pull off my trousers?

Vladimir: Pull ON your trousers.

Estragon: True.

Vladimir: Well? Shall we go?

Estragon: Yes, let's go".

(Samuel Beckett: 'En attendant Godot, pièce en deux actes'; London; 1966; p. 88).

They do not move, and the curtain falls.

The American playwright William Saroyan*, who greatly admires the play, says:

"The play is about nothing. All is nothing. All comes to nothing".

(William Saroyan: 'A Few Words about Samuel Beckett's "Waiting for Godot"': Record Sleeve).

In the field of music, the retreat from realism has taken the form of atonality. If you listen to this scale --

KEYBOARD DEMONSTRATION: INCOMPLETE DIATONIC SCALE.

-- something is clearly missing. We are left hanging in the air, unsatisfied, waiting for 'the other shoe' to drop. Tonality is a system of relations between tones having a tonic or central pitch as its most important element. In atonal music, all sense of key or resting place is lost. There are no longer 'consonances' and 'dissonances', but only varying degrees of dissonance.

Here is a piece of modern atonal music -- 'Duo for Two Violins in the Sixth-Tone System', by the Czech composer Alois Haba*.

RECORDING 2: EXTRACT: ALOIS HABA: 'DUO FOR TWO VIOLINS IN THE SIXTH-TONE SYSTEM'.

Atonal composers say that in rejecting tonality, they are liberating music from restrictions. Yet Bach, Beethoven and Mozart did not feel restricted by tonality.

The fact is that, unlike the music of Bach, Mozart and Beethoven, who did not feel themselves restricted by tonality, this kind of music fails to move listeners. It does not do so -- it is unloved -- because it has rejected melody, it has rejected realism.

What limits modern composers is not tonality, but paucity of ideas.

In some respects, the music of composers like Haba has its counterpart in the junk music of 'pop'.

Here is an extract of a group called 'The Swirlies' playing a piece called 'Blondatonaudiobaton' -- whatever that may mean.

RECORDING 3: EXTRACT: THE SWIRLIES: 'BLONDATONAUDIOBATON'.

It is not accidental that pop concerts have become associated with drugs -- for the music itself (if one can call it that) has many of the characteristics of a drug.

Capitalism in decay survives by means of the old Roman policy of 'Divide and Rule' -- by dividing black from white, office worker from manual worker, Protestant from Catholic, and -- as in the case of 'pop music' -- young from old. Indeed, in a society where there is hopeless mass unemployment the ideal young person is one who is too stoned to do anything more than stagger down to the chemist's and collect his methodone.

As George Melly* puts it, pop is

" . . . based on the corruption of standards deliberately engineered by skilful vested interests for their own gain. . . .

Pop is in many ways an ersatz culture feeding off its own publicity .

. . .

It draws no conclusions. It makes no comments. It proposes no solutions".

(George Melly: 'Revolt into Style: The Pop Arts in Britain'; Harmondsworth; 1972; p. 6, 7).

AESTHETICS IN THE SOVIET UNION (1917-1932)

Aesthetics is the science of quality in art.

Marx, Engels and Lenin did not develop a thoroughgoing theory of aesthetics, and even their passing comments on the subject were not systematically investigated until the 1930s.

After the Russian Socialist Revolution of November 1917, in the absence of any authoritative guidelines, all kinds of artistic trends flowered, including many from the West.

'Proletarian Culture' (1920-24)

There was general agreement in Soviet Russia that culture in a socialist state, a state of the dictatorship of the proletariat, should be 'proletarian culture'. But there was no agreement as to what 'proletarian culture' should consist of.

One influential view was that put forward by Aleksandr Bogdanov*, who became the leader of the 'Proletarian Cultural and Educational Associations' (Proletkult), formed in September 1917.

The leaders of Proletkult held that 'proletarian culture' must be a new, specially created culture:

"Its (Proletkult's -- Ed.) members actually denied the cultural legacy of the past, . . . isolated themselves from life and aimed at setting up a special 'proletarian culture'.
(Note to: Vladimir I. Lenin: 'Collected Works', Volume 31; Moscow; 1974; p. 567).

They also demanded that there should be no leadership of Proletkult by the Party:

"Proletkult continued to insist on independence, thus setting itself in opposition to the proletarian state".
(Note to: Vladimir I. Lenin: 'Collected Works', Volume 31; *ibid.*; p. 567).

Lenin was strongly opposed to Bogdanov's conception of 'proletarian culture', insisting that it should be a natural development of all that was best in previous world culture:

"Marxism . . . has . . . assimilated and refashioned everything of value in the more than two thousand years of the development of human thought and culture. Only further work on this basis and in this direction . . . can be recognised as the development of a genuine proletarian culture".
(Vladimir I. Lenin: 'On Proletarian Culture' (October 1920), in: 'Collected Works', Volume 31; *ibid.*; p. 317).

"Only a precise knowledge and transformation of the culture created by the entire development of mankind will enable us to create a proletarian culture. The latter . . . is not an invention of those who call themselves experts in proletarian culture. That is all nonsense. Proletarian culture must be the logical development of the store of knowledge mankind has accumulated under the yoke of capitalist, landowner and bureaucratic society".
(Vladimir I. Lenin: 'The Tasks of the Youth Leagues' (October 1920), in: 'Collected Works', Volume 31; *ibid.*; p. 287).

Lenin further demanded that

". . . all Proletkult organisations . . . accomplish their tasks under the general guidance of the Soviet authorities (specifically of the People's Commissariat of Education) and of the Russian Communist Party".
(Vladimir I. Lenin: 'On Proletarian Culture' (October 1920), in: 'Collected Works', Volume 31; *ibid.*; p. 317),

The Proletkult organisations declined in the 1920s,

" . . . ceasing to exist in 1932'.

(Note to: Vladimir I. Lenin: 'Collected Works', Volume 31; *ibid.*; p. 567).

The Period of Party Neutrality in Aesthetics (1925-1932)

In May 1925 Stalin put forward a view which expressed the basis of an objective Marxist-Leninist aesthetic -- that proletarian culture should be socialist in content and national in form:

"Proletarian culture . . . is socialist in content . . . national in form".

(Josef V. Stalin: 'The Political Tasks of the University of the Peoples of the East', in: 'Works', Volume 7; Moscow; 1954; p. 140).

However, the leadership of the Party rejected the conception of aesthetics put forward by Stalin, and in June 1925 adopted

" . . . a rambling, repetitious, verbose and pompous document".

(Edward J. Brown: 'The Proletarian Episode in Russian Literature: 1928-1932'; New York; 1935)(hereafter listed as 'Edward J. Brown (1935)'); p. 43).

This resolution was entitled 'On the Policy of the Party in the Field of Literature', and declared the Party's neutrality between aesthetic trends:

"The Party can in no way bind itself in adherence to any one direction in the sphere of artistic form. . . . All attempts to bind the Party to one direction at the present phase of cultural development of the country must be firmly rejected.

Therefore the Party must pronounce in favour of free competition between the various groupings and streams in this sphere. . . . Similarly unacceptable would be the passing of a decree or party decision awarding a legal monopoly in matters of literature and publishing to some group or literary organisation, . . . for this would mean . . . the destruction of proletarian literature".

(Resolution of CC, RCP, 'On the Party's Policy in the Field of Literature' (July 1925), in: C. Vaughan James: 'Soviet Socialist Realism'; London; 1973; p;. 118, 119).

Edward J. Brown* comments:

"As a result of that liberal policy, the years from 1921 to 1932 saw the growth of a literature in Russia which is thoroughly congenial to the tastes of Western intellectuals".

(Edward J. Brown: 'Russian Literature since the Revolution'; London; 1963 (hereafter listed as 'Edward J. Brown (1963)'; p. 23).

The adoption of this 'liberal' attitude towards aesthetics was due to the fact that the Party leadership at this time was dominated by revisionists, by concealed opponents of socialism. The Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party elected after the 13th Congress of the Party in June 1924 consisted of (in alphabetical order):

Nikolay I. Bukharin*;
Lev B. Kamenev*;
Aleksey I. Rykov*;
Josef V. Stalin;
Mikhail P. Tomsky*;
Lev D. Trotsky*;

Grigory E. Zinoviev*.
(Leonard Schapiro: 'The Communist Party of the Soviet Union';
London; 1960; p. 607).

The revisionist control over literature in the next period was exercised through the Russian Association of Proletarian Writers (RAPP), founded in 1920, which published the journal 'On Literary Guard' from 1926 to 1932. RAPP was headed by the concealed Trotskyist Leopold Averbakh*, who exercised a virtual dictatorship over literature.

"Averbakh exercised a virtual dictatorship over early Soviet Russian literature".
(Robert H. Stacy: 'Russian Literary Criticism: A Short History'; New York; 1974; p. 196).

"Averbakh's first book, published in 1923, . . . had appeared with a preface by Trotsky".
(Edward J. Brown (1963): op. cit.; p. 217).

"In 1937 Averbakh was unmasked as an agent of Trotsky, one whose errors formed a pattern of subversion in Soviet literature".
(Norah Levin: 'The Jews in the Soviet Union since 1917: Paradoxes of Survival', Volume 2; London; 1990; p. 863).

Averbakh was the brother-in-law of Genrikh Yagoda*, at this time Deputy Commissar for Internal Affairs, who later, in 1938, admitted in open court to treason:

"The main figure, Averbakh, had come under the protection of his relative by marriage, Yagoda. . . . Soon after Yagoda's arrest, he (Averbakh -- Ed.) was attacked as a Trotskyite".
(Robert Conquest: 'The Great Terror: Stalin's Purge of the Thirties'; Harmondsworth; 1971; p. 446).

"The RAPP leaders . . . were, shortly after the Moscow Trial of 1937, accused of having been themselves Trotskyists".
(Edward J. Brown (1935): op. cit.; p. 223).

In the absence of any Party guidance on aesthetics, the Trotskyites in the leadership of RAPP caused great harm to Soviet literature during the period of their domination, partly by their sectarianism:

"Averbakh was sectarian and oppressively dogmatic in his treatment of literary questions".
(Victor Terras: 'Handbook of Russian Literature'; New Haven (USA); 1985; p. 29).

For example, during the period of the First Five-Year Plan (1929-34) the leaders of RAPP decreed in 1930 that only literature which directly boosted the Plan should be published:

"'Literature should help the Five-Year Plan' was the slogan. . . . The depiction of the Five-Year Plan is the one and only problem of Soviet literature, proclaimed the organ of RAPP in 1930. . . . For about three years, the Five-Year Plan became the only subject of Soviet literature".
(Gleb Struve: 'Soviet Russian Literature'; London; 1935; p. 86, 229).

As might have been expected,

" . . . the result was a drying-up of the creative sources of Russian literature and a narrowing-down of its themes".
(Gleb Struve: *ibid.*; p. 229).

Even more serious, the leaders of RAPP used their positions to persecute writers who attempted to follow a socialist line in their art -- this extending even to such famous and outstanding artists as Maksim Gorky*, Mikhail Sholokhov* and Vladimir Mayakovsky*.

The Case of Maksim Gorky

The persecution of Maksim Gorky by the Soviet revisionists, particularly Grigory Zinoviev, became so serious that in 1921 Gorky was forced to leave Soviet Russia and move to Italy:

"His (Gorky's --Ed.) relations with Zinoviev, the local dictator at Petrograd, became so strained that he left Russia in the autumn of 1921. (Jeanne Vronskaya & Vladimir Chuguev: 'The Biographical Dictionary of the Former Soviet Union: Prominent People in All Fields from 1917 to the Present'; London; 1992; p. 157).

"Partly on account of his disagreements with the leading Bolsheviks (Zinoviev and Kamenev -- Ed.). Gorky went abroad again in 1921". (Anthony K. Thorlby (Ed.): 'Penguin Companion to Literature', Volume 2; Harmondsworth; 1969; p. 325).

"Gorky did make a dire enemy of one of the new masters: Zinoviev". (Dan Levin: 'Stormy Petrel: The Life and Work of Maksim Gorky'; London; 1967; p. 198).

in whose feud with Gorky

" . . . Zinoviev was supported by Kamenev. . . .
It was the weakening of Gorky's position in Soviet Russia, a growing sense of disillusionment and helplessness, that finally made him leave in 1921, not his health".
(Dan Levin: *ibid.*; p. 210).

In 1928 the attacks on Gorky were taken up by the still concealed revisionists in the leadership of RAPP, headed by Averbakh. For example, in February 1928 Gorky was being depicted in the RAPP journal as:

" . . . a man without class consciousness".
(*'On Literary Guard'*, February 1928; p. 94).

Averbakh's attacks on Gorky in *'On Literary Guard'* were echoed in the journal *'The Present'*, published by the Siberian writers' association, which had been founded by Semyon Rodov* (formerly of the RAPP triumvirate). This journal described Gorky as

" . . . a crafty, disguised enemy".
(*'The Present'*, Nos. 8 & 9, 1929, in: C. Vaughan James: *op. cit.*; p. 74).'

"In tirades of mounting fury, Gorky was called a class enemy and said to be protector of anti-Soviet elements".
(C. Vaughan James: *ibid.*; p 74).

But by this time the exposure of the Opposition had reached the point where these attacks could be countered:

"At this point the Party stepped in with a resolution 'On the Statement of Part of the Siberian Writers and Literary Organisations against Maksim Gorky'".
(C. Vaughan James: *ibid.*; p. 74).

and administered

" . . . a firm reprimand to the Communist fraction of the Siberian Proletkult".
(C. Vaughan James: *ibid.*; p. 74).

During Gorky's enforced absence abroad, Stalin continued to support him, writing to him, for example, in Italy in January 1930:

"I am told you need a physician from Russia, Is that so? Whom do you want? Let us know and we shall send him".
(J. V. Stalin: Letter to Maksim Gorky, January 1930, in: 'Works', Volume 12; Moscow; 1955; p. 183).

But by 1931 the revisionists seemed to have been finally defeated, and Gorky felt it safe to return to the Soviet Union. He

" . . . returned to Moscow in 1931 after the fall of his arch-enemy, Zinoviev".
(Jeanne Vronskaya and Vladimir Chuguev: *op. cit.*; p. 157).

since

" . . . the defeat of the Communist Opposition . . . must have seemed to Gorky the harbinger of unity. Zinoviev . . . had been . . . Gorky's arch-tormentor".
(Dan Levin: *op. cit.*; p. 264).

But concealed revisionists continued to plot against Gorky. By utilising the services of medical members of the conspiracy, Genrikh Yagoda -- who was Commissar for Internal Affairs from 1934 to 1936 -- had arranged the murder of Gorky's son, Maksim Peshkov, in 1934 and that of Gorky himself in 1936.

"YAGODA: Yenukidze* . . . told me that the centre had decided to undertake a number of terrorist acts against members of the Political Bureau and, in addition, against Maksim Gorky personally. . . . Yenukidze explained to me that the 'bloc of Rights and Trotskyites' . . . regarded Gorky as a dangerous figure. Gorky was a staunch supporter of Stalin's leadership, and in case the conspiracy was put into effect, he would undoubtedly raise his voice against us, the conspirators. . . .

VYSHINSKY: Do you admit being guilty of the murder of Alexey Maksimovich Gorky?

YAGODA: I do."

(Report of Court Proceedings in the Case of the Anti-Soviet 'Bloc of Rights and Trotskyites'; Moscow; 1938; p. 574, 577).

The physician Dmitry Pletnev told the Court:

"PLETNEV: No extraneous poisonous substances were introduced, but he (Gorky -- Ed.) was subjected to a regime which was harmful.

All the medicines were permissible, but in the individual case of Gorky they were harmful. . . .

VYSHINSKY: Formulate briefly the particulars of the plan which you drew up together with Levin (co-defendant physician Lev Levin -- Ed.) for the killing of Aleksey Maksimovich Gorky,

PLETNEV: To tire out the organism and thus lower its power of resistance.

VYSHINSKY: For what purpose?

PLETNEV: To bring about Gorky's death".

(Report of Court Proceedings in the Case of the Anti-Soviet 'Bloc of Rights and Trotskyites'; *ibid.*; p. 591, 593).

The Case of Mikhail Sholokhov

One of the finest Soviet novels is 'The Quiet Don', written in 1928-40 by the Cossack writer Mikhail Sholokhov who was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature for the work in 1965. An English translation of the novel was published in two parts, entitled respectively 'Quiet Flows the Don' and 'The Don Flows Home to the Sea'.

'The Quiet Don' is, above all,

" . . . a harsh denunciation of the policy pursued by the Trotskyites".

(Geir Kjetsaa et al: 'The Authorship of "The Quiet Don"'; Oslo; 1984; p. 17).

among the Cossacks.

Almost immediately after the publication of the first volume of the novel in the journal 'October' in 1929, rumours began to circulate that 'The Quiet Don' was a plagiarism, that it had been written not by Sholokhov, but by someone else -- the favourite candidate being another Cossack writer, Fedor Kryukov*:

"Rumours of plagiarism started to circulate as far back as 1928, simultaneously with the appearance of the first volume in the literary journal 'October'".

(Geir Kjetsaa et al: op. cit.; p. 15).

These rumours were, understandably, spread by

" . . . supporters of Trotsky. . . .

Even if Trotsky at that time had left the Soviet Union, some of his earlier adherents were still in power. One of them was S. I. Syrtsov* (1893-1938), . . . , an eager supporter of Trotsky's brutal policy towards the Cossacks".

(Geir Kjetsaa et al: op. cit.; p. 17).

As a result of these rumours,

" . . . at the beginning of 1929, . . . the editorial board (of 'October' -- Ed.), decided to discontinue the publication of the novel".

(Geir Kjetsaa et al: op. cit.; p. 16).

Sholokhov protested to the Party newspaper 'Pravda', which organised a special commission, headed by the writer Aleksandr Serafimovich*, to investigate the allegations. To this body, Sholokhov submitted his manuscripts and notes.

"At the end of March 1929, 'Pravda' published a letter in which the charges against Sholokhov were refuted as 'malicious slander' spread by enemies of the proletarian dictatorship".

('Pravda', 29 March 1929; p. 4).

In January 1930 Sholokhov had a meeting with Stalin, on which he (Sholokhov) commented:

"The conversation was very profitable to me and encouraged me to put

into practice new creative ideas".

(Herman Ermolaev: 'Mikhail Sholokhov and his Art'; Princeton (USA); 1982 (hereafter listed as 'Herman Ermolkav (1982); p. 29).

By 1934, as we have seen, the Soviet state security organs had come under the control of concealed revisionists, and in 1938

" . . . the NKVD began a large-scale operation against Sholokhov".
(Herman Ermolaev (1982): *ibid.*; p. 41).

Sholokhov was accused of

" . . . preparing an uprising of the . . . Cossacks against the Soviet regime".
(Herman Ermolaev (1982): *op. cit.*; p. 41).

In October 1938, the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPSU carried out an investigation, in which Stalin played a leading role, into the charges against Sholokhov. These were found to be groundless. Sholokhov said in 1969 that

" . . . Stalin looked closely into everything, and all the accusations against me were smashed to smithereens".
(Herman Ermolaev (1982): *op. cit.*; p.;, 42).

In the 1960s the charges of plagiarism against Sholokhov were renewed by the historian Roy Medvedev*, who admitted that

" . . . it is a fact that Fedor Kryukov's son was among the Cossacks who emigrated to the west and he never made any claims against Sholokhov. No such claims were made anywhere in émigré Cossack literature".
(Roy A. Medvedev: 'Problems in the Literary Biography of Mikhail Sholokhov'; Cambridge; 1966 (hereafter listed as 'Roy A. Medvedev (1966)'; p. 204).

Nevertheless, Medvedev concluded:

"While we must refrain as yet from any definitive solutions and conclusions, the mass of new data seems to us to speak in favour of the now familiar theory of the double authorship of 'The Quiet Don'".
(Roy A. Medvedev (1966): *op. cit.*; p.

The main reason presented for this conclusion was the view that

" . . . Sholokhov was too young to have produced such a mature piece of work".
(Roy A. Medvedev (1966): *op. cit.*; p. 202),

In 1974 the charges of plagiarism against Sholokhov were revived in an anonymous pamphlet published in Paris, with a foreword by Aleksander Solzhenitsyn*. The pamphlet, in Russian, was entitled 'The Current of "The Quiet Don: Riddles of the Novel''. Reviving the old, discredited slanders of the 1920s, it claimed that

" . . . the bulk of 'The Quiet Don' had been written not by Mikhail Sholokhov, but by . . . Fedor Kryukov".
(Geir Kjetsaa et al: *op. cit.*; p. 7).

A more recent study, published in 1982 by the American expert Herman Ermolaev*, based on computer textual analysis of the work of Sholokhov and Kryukov, concludes that

" . . . no evidence has so far been presented to show that Sholokhov utilised someone else's imaginative work for writing 'The Quiet Don'. . . . Until there is convincing evidence to the contrary, Sholokhov ought to be treated as the sole author of 'The Quiet Don'"
(Herman Ermolaev (1982): op. cit.; p. 300).

Similar computer textual analysis also compelled Kjetsaa et al. to conclude in 1984 that

" . . . the use of mathematical statistics permits us to exclude the possibility of Kryukov having written the novel, whereas Sholokhov cannot be excluded as the author".
(Geir Kjetsaa et al: op. cit. p. 152).

The Case of Vladimir Mayakovsky

The poet Vladimir Mayakovsky is regarded as

" . . . the real troubadour of the Revolution".
(Herbert Marshall (Ed.): 'Mayakovsky'; London; 1965 (henceforth listed as 'Herbert Marshall (Ed.) (1965)'); p. 18).

He wrote poems on topical matters, in ordinary everyday language, and travelled from town to town and village to village, reciting them.

In April 1930 Mayakovsky committed suicide by shooting himself, leaving a note.

The story was widely spread that he had

" . . . committed suicide because of a romantic and unfortunate love affair".
(Gleb Struve: op. cit.; p. 167).

Indeed, the official report of the investigation into his death his death (issued less than 24 hours after his death) was at pains to deny that death was connected with his social or literary activity:

"The preliminary data of the investigation show that the suicide was due to causes of a purely personal character, having nothing to do with the social or literary activity of the poet".
('Pravda', 15 April 1930, in: Herbert Marshall (Ed.) (1965): op. cit.; p. 28-29).

But, as Shakespeare expressed it:

"Men have died from time to time, and worms have eaten them, but not for love".
(William Shakespeare: 'As You like it', Act 4, Scene 1, in: 'The Complete Works', Feltham; 1979; p. 226).

In fact, it was in October 1929 that Mayakovsky was informed that the girl he thought himself in love with -- Tatiana Yalovleva*, the daughter of a White Russian emigrant living in Paris -- had married someone else:

"In October Lilya Brik* received a letter from her sister Elsa (Elsa Triolet* -- Ed.). . . : 'Tatyana has got married'".
(A. D. P. Briggs: 'Vladimir Mayakovsky: A Tragedy'; Oxford; 1979; p. 114).

His suicide occurred only in April of the following year -- six months later -- so that one must agree with Helen Muchnic* when she declares

"It is absurd to think, as some have done, that he 'died for love' in the sentimentally romantic sense".
(Helen Muchnic: 'From Gorky to Pasternak: Six Writers in Soviet Russia'; New York; 1961; p. 263).

It is clear that some event or events must have occurred in the spring of 1930 which were more immediate causes of his suicide.

In fact. in February 1930, with the aim of bringing himself closer to his audience, Mayakovsky had joined the Russian Association of Proletarian Writers (RAPP):

"Mayakovsky joined RAPP in order to get closer to his workers' auditorium".

(Viktor B. Shklovsky: 'O Mayakovskom' (On Mayakovsky); Moscow; 1940; p. 215).

But, as we have seen, RAPP had fallen under the control of a gang of concealed revisionists, headed by Leopold Averbakh, who exerted a reactionary dictatorship over the arts. Thus, in joining RAPP,

" . . . Mayakovsky . . . fell into a dead sea".

(Viktor B. Shklovsky: *ibid.*; p. 215),

Averbakh and his bureaucratic cronies made it clear that Mayakovsky was a far from welcome recruit to RAPP. They insisted that he required 're-education in proletarian ideology', making him feel isolated and depressed:

"There is no doubt that he felt his own increasing isolation and sensed the cloud of disapproval that in fact hung over him. . . .

The bureaucrats in control of RAPP . . . did not very much want him in their organisation. . . .

Mayakovsky was not warmly welcomed in RAPP and . . . in this mass organisation he felt isolated and alone. . . . From February until April 1930 the secretariat of RAPP constantly hauled Mayakovsky over the coals in a trivial and didactic fashion. . . . From the moment of his entry until his suicide, the 'secretariat' of that organisation occupied itself with 're-educating' him in the spirit of proletarian ideology, and literature, a truly depressing experience. Some people recalled that on the eve of his suicide . . . he was in a state of defenceless misery as a result of his sessions with the talentless dogmatists and petty literary tyrants whose organisation he had joined".

(Edward J. Brown: 'Mayakovsky: A Poet in the Revolution'; Princeton (USA): 1973 (hereafter listed as 'Edward J. Brown; (1973)'); p. 362-63, 366, 367).

"The whole set of vindictive attacks on Mayakovsky, of all people, on the ground of insufficient closeness to and concern for the masses -- arguments that read so absurdly at this distance of time, but which then momentarily hounded and isolated him -- bear the smell precisely of those methods. Mayakovsky was indirectly the victim of the same hands that later directly slew the great Soviet writer of the generation that preceded him, Gorky".

(Herbert Marshall (Ed.): 'Mayakovsky and his Poetry'; London; 1945 (hereafter listed as 'Herbert Marshall (Ed.): 1945'); p. 6).

When 'An Exhibition of the Life and Work of Mayakovsky' took place in Moscow in February and in Leningrad in March, it

" . . . was boycotted by official and unofficial bodies, poets and critics; more and more bitter and scathing attacks were being made on him".

(Herbert Marshall (Ed.) (1965); p. 23).

RAPP's attacks on Mayakovsky continued -- intensified -- after his death:

"The cloud that had settled over Mayakovsky's reputation during the last years of his life was not dispelled by his senseless death".
(Edward J. Brown (Ed.) (1963): op. cit.; p. 369).

"They hounded him also after his death. His works only appeared in restricted editions, no new works published, no research, no production of his plays, his books and portraits were removed from libraries".
(Herbert Marshall (Ed.) (1965); p. 39).

"For a time after Mayakovsky's death, RAPP's clique, by exploiting his suicide, even succeeded in hindering the publication of his works, delaying the opening of his museum, and removing his name from the school curricula".
(Herbert Marshall (Ed.) (1945); p. 6).

When Elsa Triolet attended the Writers' Congress in Moscow in 1934, she complained to 'one of these petty bureaucrats' about the neglect of Mayakovsky in the Soviet Union and was told:

"There's a cult of Mayakovsky, and we're fighting against that cult".
(Elsa Triolet: 'Mayakovsky: Poet of Russia', in: 'New Writing', New Series 3; London; 1939; p. 222-23).

On Stalin's initiative, as we shall see, RAPP was liquidated in April 1932.

In 1935 Lilya and Osip Brik* wrote to Stalin to complain of the neglect of Mayakovsky in the Soviet Union.
(Edward J. Brown (Ed.) (1973); p. 370).

Stalin replied promptly:

"Mayakovsky was and remains the finest, most talented poet of our Soviet age. Indifference to his memory and his works is a crime".
(J. V. Stalin, in: A. D. P. Briggs: op. cit.; p. 121-22).

As a result of Stalin's initiative, Mayakovsky's prestige was immediately restored:

"At once things began to happen, Mayakovsky's ashes were reinterred in a place of honour alongside the remains of Gogol. Statues of the poet sprang up everywhere. His works were reissued and translated".
(A. D. P. Briggs: op. cit.; p. 122).

One final point: the Trotskyist revisionists who drove Mayakovsky to his death plead not guilty to the crime. The American Trotskyist Max Eastman*, for example, cannot deny Mayakovsky's talent nor the role of Averbakh and his gang in his persecution, so he simply inverts the truth by presenting Averbakh as

" . . . the young adjutant of Stalin".
(Max Eastman: 'Artists in Uniform: A Study of Literature and Bureaucratism'; London; 1934; p. 35).

AESTHETICS IN THE SOVIET UNION (1932-1953)

The Reformation of the Artistic Organisation (1932)

We have seen that in 1924 Stalin was the only Marxist-Leninist on the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. This situation was rectified by a carefully planned strategy of cooperating with the less dangerous revisionists in the leadership in order to remove the more dangerous. As a result of this strategy, the Political Bureau elected after the 17th Congress of the CPSU in February 1934 consisted of (in alphabetical order):

Andrey Andreyev*;
Lazar Kaganovich*;
Mikhail Kalinin*;
Sergey Kirov*;
Stanislav Kosior*
Valerian Kuibyshev*;
Vyacheslav Molotov*;
Grigory Ordzhonikidze*
Josef Stalin;
Kliment Voroshilov*.
(Leonard Schapiro: op. cit.; p. 607).

That is, it was composed of eight Marxist-Leninists and two still concealed revisionists. Thus, by the 1930s Marxist-Leninists had won a majority of the seats on the Political Bureau.

It is customary for learned professors to present the defeated revisionists as 'brilliant intellectuals' and Stalin as 'a clod from the Caucasian backwoods'. The objective history of Stalin's successful struggle against the Opposition belies such an analysis.

Having liquidated open revisionism in the political field, the Marxist-Leninists now in the leadership of the CPSU turned their attention to the development of a genuine proletarian culture.

The first step was to liquidate the existing cultural organisations under revisionist domination and to form new broad organisations in each field of culture -- organisations open to all cultural workers who supported Soviet power and socialist construction, with a Communist Party fraction in each to give Marxist Leninist leadership.

Thus, in April 1932, the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party adopted a Decision 'On the Reformation of Literary-Artistic Organisations':

"The framework of the existing proletarian literary-artistic organisations . . . appears to be too narrow and to seriously restrict the scope of artistic creativity. . . .

Consequently the Central Committee of the ACP (b) resolves:

- 1) to liquidate the association of proletarian writers . . .;
- 2) to unite all writers supporting the platform of Soviet power and aspiring to participate in the building of socialism into one union of Soviet, socialist writers with a communist fraction in it;
- 3) to carry out analogous changes with regard to the other forms of

art".

(C. Vaughan James: op. cit. p. 120).

The fact that this radical decision was taken on Stalin's personal initiative was revealed by Lazar Kaganovich at the 17th Congress of the CPSU in January-February 1934:

"A group of Communist writers, taking advantage of RAPP as an organisational instrument, incorrectly utilised the power of their Communist influence on the literary front, and instead of unifying and organising around RAPP the broad masses of writers, held back and impeded the development of the writers' creative powers. . . .

It might have been possible to bring out a resolution on the tasks of the Communists in literature; it might have been possible to suggest that the RAPP people alter their policy. But this might have remained merely a good intention. Comrade Stalin posed the question differently: it is necessary, he said, to alter the situation in an organisational way". (Lazar Kaganovich: Speech at 17th Congress, CPSU, in: Edward J. Brown (1935): op. cit.; p. 201).

The American music critic Boris Schwarz* tells us that

" . . . the Resolution . . . was received with widespread approval".

(Boris Schwarz: 'Music and Musical Life in Soviet Russia: 1917-1970'; London; 1972; p. 110).

The single organisation created by this decree in the field of literature was the Union of Soviet Writers, in the field of music the Union of Soviet Composers.

It remained to lay down the principles of aesthetics which Soviet artists would be expected to follow -- principles which came to be known as 'the method of socialist realism'.

The Origin of the Term 'Socialist Realism'

The first known use of the term 'socialist realism' was in an article in the 'Literary Gazette' in May 1932:

"The basic method of Soviet literature is the method of socialist realism"
(*'Literary Gazette'*, 23 May 1932, in: Herman Ermolaev: *'Soviet Literary Theories: 1917-1934'*; Berkeley (USA); 1963 (hereafter listed as *'Herman Ermolaev (1963)'*); p. 144).

Five months later, in October 1932, at an informal meeting in Gorky's flat, Stalin gave his support to the term:

"If the artist is going to depict our life correctly, he cannot fail to observe and point out what is leading towards socialism. So this will be . . . socialist realism".
(Josef V. Stalin, in: C. Vaughan James: *op. cit.*; p. 86).

The Characteristics of Socialist Realism

Realism, as we have said, is a trend in art which seeks to represent its subject faithfully and truthfully.

It must be distinguished from naturalism, which represents reality only superficially and statically. In fact, the world is in process of constant change, so that a work of art which fails to hint at the forces working beneath the surface of reality is not a realist, but a naturalist, work.

For example, Russia in 1907 lay under the 'Stolypin* Reaction': the organisations of the working class were being destroyed; the prisons were filled with revolutionaries; Black Hundred terror raged unchecked. On the surface, it was a picture of unrelieved, hopeless gloom for the mass of the people. Yet less than ten years later the whole rotten system of Tsarism had been swept away in the October Revolution. Consequently, a novel set in Russia in 1907 which failed to hint at the revolutionary social forces operating beneath the surface would be a work not of realism, but of naturalism.

Marxist-Leninists understand that monopoly capitalism, imperialism, is moribund capitalism, capitalism which has outlived its social usefulness to the mass of the people. Consequently, a 20th-century work of art which fails to suggest the underlying forces of the working class, of socialism, which will bring about the socialist revolution, is not a realist work: 20th century realism must be socialist realism.

The key word here is 'suggest': a socialist realist work of art must not give the impression of being propaganda. As Engels expressed it in 1888:

"The more the opinions of the author remain hidden, the better the work of art".

(Friedrich Engels: Letter to Margaret Harkness* (April 1888). in: Karl Marx & Friedrich Engels: 'On Literature and Art'; Moscow; 1976; p.91).

Thus, the Constitution of the Union of Soviet Writers adopted at the 1st All-Union Congress of Soviet Writers in 1934 declares:

"Socialist realism demands from the author a true and historically concrete depiction of reality in its revolutionary development".

(Constitution of Union of Soviet Writers, in: C. Vaughan James: op. cit.; p. 88).

Socialist realist art does not exclude distortion and exaggeration, so long as this departure from naturalism assists in bringing out the truth about the subject. Thus, a caricature of Margaret Thatcher* showing her as a vulture with bloody talons would be much more realistic than a naturalistic portrait showing her as a sweet, silver-haired grandmother.

Socialist realist art is not, however, just a passive reflection of reality; it must play an active role in building socialist consciousness:

"The relationship between art and reality is twofold. . . . Socialist Realism demands a profound and true perception of reality and reflection of its chief and most progressive tendencies ; but it is itself a powerful weapon for changing reality. . . . Artistic truth facilitates the development of communist awareness, and education in the spirit of

communism is possible only through a true reflection of life".
(C. Vaughan Jamnes: *ibid.*; p. 80).

In Stalin's famous phrase, socialist realist artists are 'engineers of human souls':

"Comrade Stalin has called our writers engineers of human souls".

(Andrey A. Zhdanov: 'Soviet Literature -- the Richest in Ideas, the Most Advanced Literature' (hereafter listed as 'Andrey A. Zhdanov (1934)', in: H. G. Scott (Ed.): 'Problems of Soviet Literature'; London; 1935; p. 21).

Socialist realist art is, therefore, 'tendentious', 'partisan'. Far from pretending to be neutral in the class struggle, it consciously sides with the working people:

"Soviet literature is tendentious, for in an epoch of class struggle there is not and cannot be a literature which is . . . not tendentious"..
(Andrey A. Zhdanov (1934): *ibid.*; p. 21).

Of course, all art is selective in its subject matter. There may be a millionaire who gives away all his money to the poor; but he would be so exceptional that a work of art with him as subject would give a completely false picture of millionaires. It would not be truly realist. True realism, socialist realism, requires typicality in its selection of subject matter:

"Realism . . . implies, besides truth of detail, the truthful reproduction of typical characters under typical circumstances".
(Friedrich Engels: Letter to 'Margaret Harkness', (April 1888), in: Karl Marx & Friedrich Engels: *op. cit.*; p. 90).

Romanticism is a form of art expressing intense emotion. However, in the majority of cases romanticism became linked with idealist soarings into metaphysics. Socialist realist art makes use of romanticism, but shorn of its metaphysical tendencies to give revolutionary romanticism:

"Romanticism of the old type . . . depicted a non-existent life and non-existent heroes, leading the reader away from . . . real life into . . . a world of utopian dreams. Our literature . . . cannot be hostile to romanticism, but it must be romanticism of a new type, revolutionary romanticism.
(Andrey A. Zhdanov (1934): *op. cit.*; p. 21).

We have seen that the form of a work of art is the manner or style in which the artist has presented the content of his work of art. Where the artist gives priority to form over content, we encounter a deviation from realism known as formalism.

Finally, socialist realist art must be national in form, not cosmopolitan:

"Proletarian culture . . . is . . . national in form".
(Josef V. Stalin: 'The Political Tasks of the University of the Peoples of the East', in: 'Works', Volume 7; *op. cit.*; p. 140).

"Internationalism in art does not spring from depletion and impoverishment of national art; on the contrary, internationalism grows

where national culture flourishes. To forget this is . . . to become a cosmopolitan without a country. . . .

Our internationalism . . . is therefore based on the enrichment of our national . . . culture, which we can share with other nations, and is not based on an impoverishment of our national art, blind imitation of foreign styles, and the eradication of all national characteristics".
(Andrey A. Zhdanov: p. 61, 63).

The First Congress of Soviet Writers (1934)

The First Congress of Soviet Writers, held in Moscow in August 1934 resolved that socialist realism

" . . . become the officially sponsored method, first in literature and subsequently in the arts in general".
(C. Vaughan James: op. cit.; p. 87).

Thus, by 1935 it could be reported truthfully:

"The Union of Soviet Writers comprises all those writers, living and writing in Soviet Russia, who adhere to the platform of the Soviet Government, support Socialist construction and accept the method of Socialist Realism".
(Gleb Struve: op. cit.; p. 231).

However, revisionism in the arts had not been completely defeated. Papers were presented at the congress not only by the Marxist-Leninists Andrey Zhdanov and Maksim Gorky, but also by the still concealed revisionists Nikolay Bukharin, Karl Radek* and Aleksey Stetsky*:

"Bukharin . . . dismissed officially acclaimed 'agitational poets' as obsolete, and praised at length disfavoured lyrical poets, particularly the defiantly apolitical Pasternak*".
(Stephen F. Cohen: 'Bukharin and the Bolshevik Revolution: A Political Biography: 1888-1938'; London; 1974; p, 356),

Thus, the battle of ideas between Marxist-Leninists and revisionists in the field of the arts did not end in 1934, but continued.

The Case of Dmitry Shostakovich (1936)

In November 1934 a new opera by Dmitry Shostakovich*, 'Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk', had its premiere. The libretto was based on a short story by Nikolay Leskov* entitled 'Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District'. It tells the story of Katerina Ismailova, the wife of a provincial merchant, who has an affair with a clerk in her husband's office, poisons her father-in-law, then joins her lover in strangling her husband and, finally, murders her little nephew. For Leskov Katerina was a depraved criminal, but Shostakovich presented the story as a tribute to woman's liberation. While

" . . . for Leskov, Katerina was a squalid, selfish criminal -- deserving of the condemnation which she encountered. . . . Shostakovich, as he later said, intended his music to minimise her own guilt. 'The musical language of the whole opera is intended to exonerate Katerina', he declared".
(Norman Kay: 'Shostakovich'; London; 1971; p. 26).

The opera caused a sensation in the United States:

"A Western critic coined the word 'pornophony' to describe . . . the bedroom scene".
(Boris Schwarz: op. cit.; p. 371),

And the 'New York Sun' agreed:

"Shostakovich is without doubt the foremost composer of pornographic music in the history of the opera".
(Boris Schwarz: ibid.; p. 120).

In January 1936, however,

" . . . when Stalin finally saw 'Lady Macbeth', he did not like it, . . . he walked out before it was over".
(Victor I. Serov: 'Dmitry Shostakovich: The Life and Background of a Soviet Composer'; New York; 1943; p. 220).

"For Stalin the opera was a painful experience".
(Robert Stradling: 'Shostakovich and the Soviet System', in: Christopher Norris (Ed.): 'Shostakovich: The Man and his Music'; London; 1982; p. 197).

A few days later, 'Pravda' carried a leading article entitled 'Chaos instead of Music' which, as its title indicates, was strongly critical of the opera.

Shostakovich himself insisted that the article

" . . . actually expressed the opinion of Stalin".
(Solomon Volkov (Ed.): 'Testimony: The Memoirs of Dmitry Shostakovich'; London; 1981; p. 113).

and the editor of his memoirs, Solomon Volkov, agrees that the article was

" . . . dictated, in fact, by Stalin".
(Solomon Volkov: Introduction to: 'Testimony: The Memoirs of Dmitry Shostakovich'; op. cit.; p. xxix).

The article declared:

"From the first moment, the listener is knocked over the head by an incoherent chaotic stream of sounds. The fragments of melody, the germs of musical phrases, are drowned in a sea of bangs, rasping noises and squeals. It is difficult to follow such 'music'; it is impossible to remember it. . . . And so it goes on, almost right through the opera. Screams take the place of singing. If, once in a while, the composer finds his way on to a clear melodic path, he immediately dashes aside into the jungle of chaos, which sometimes becomes pure cacophony. . . . Expressiveness . . . is replaced by a crazy rhythm. Musical noise is supposed to express passion.

All this is not because the composer lacks talent, or because he is incapable of expressing 'strong and simple emotions' in musical terms. This music is just deliberately written 'inside-out', so that nothing should remind the listener of classical opera . . . and simple, easily accessible musical speech. . . . The danger of this 'Leftism' in music comes from the same source as all 'Leftist' ugliness in painting, poetry, education and science. Petit-bourgeois 'innovation' produces divorce from real art, from real literature. . . .

Shostakovich, in reality, produces nothing but the crudest naturalism.. . . It is crude, primitive and vulgar".
(Leading Article, in: 'Pravda', 28 January 1936, in: Alexander Werth: 'Musical Uproar in Moscow'; London; 1949 (hereafter listed as 'Alexander Werth (1949)'; p. 48-49).

A few days later, in February, 'Pravda' published another leading article, this time strongly critical of Shostakovich's ballet 'The Limpid Stream':

"The music is without character; it jingles; it means nothing".
(Leading Article, 'Pravda, 6 February 1936, in: Victor I. Serov: op. cit.; p. 208).

Shostakovich did not respond publicly:

"Shostakovich . . . suffered in silence".
(Stanley Sadie (Ed.): 'New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians', Volume 17; London; 1980; p. 265).

but he took note of the criticism:

"In December 1936 he withdrew his 4th Symphony, . . . saying that he was dissatisfied with the finale".
(James Devlin: 'Shostakovich'; Sevenoaks; 1983; p. 9).

Most Western musicologists agree with Peter Heyworth*, who holds that the Marxist-Leninist criticism of Shostakovich and other composers

". . . did immense damage to the cultural life of the Soviet Union".
(Peter Heyworth: 'Shostakovich without Ideology', in: Gervase Hughes & Herbert Van Thal (Eds.): 'The Music Lover's Companion'; London; 1971; p. 201).

In fact, criticism of a work of art by the Marxist-Leninist Party of a socialist state is not criticism by 'politicians', but represents the collective opinion of the most advanced cultural leaders of the country:

"Whereas Western criticism represents the subjective opinion of an individual critic, Soviet criticism is a collective opinion expressed in the words of an individual critic".
(Boris Schwarz: op. cit.; p. 320).

And the view that the constructive Marxist-Leninist criticism was 'harmful' is discounted by the fact that in November 1937 the first performance took place of Shostakovich's 5th Symphony, inscribed:

" . . . 'Creative Reply of a Soviet Artist to Just Criticism'".
(Peter Heyworth: ibid.; p. 202).

RECORDING 4: EXCERPT: DMITRY SHOSTAKOVICH: SYMPHONY NO. 5.

Although this inscription did not originate with the composer,

" . . . Shostakovich . . . accepted it".
(Stanley Sadie (Ed.): op. cit., Volume 17; p. 265).

And this new symphony, written in the light of the Marxist-Leninist criticism, proved to be his finest work to date:

"The Fifth . . . to this day remains Shostakovich's most admired work".
(Solomon Volkov: op. cit.; p. xxxi).

"Its first movement is Shostakovich at his best . . . and shows a new maturity; this maturity reaches its greatest depth and power in the third movement, the now famous Largo. The entire symphony seems, indeed, to satisfy the demand of the Soviet people that their new music should be 'powerful and intelligible'. . . . Dmitry's triumph could be compared only with the comeback of an idol of the prize-ring".
(Victor I. Serov: op. cit.; p. 231-32).

"The 5th Symphony was received with unanimous praise and the critics rushed to acclaim it".
(James Devlin: op. cit.; p. 10).

"Shostakovich's 5th Symphony takes its place amongst the most profound and significant works of world symphonic music. At the same time, all its ethical and aesthetic elements, as well as the underlying idea and its embodiment in music, belong to Soviet art".
(David Rabinovich: 'Dmitry Shostakovich'; London; 1959; p. 50).

"It (the 5th Symphony -- Ed.) proved to be Shostakovich's first fully mature work. Naturally enough, the Party's cultural officials were jubilant. Had not their criticism been admitted by its object as deserved? Better still, had it not yielded fruit in the shape of the finest score that Shostakovich had yet written?".
(Peter Heyworth: op. cit.; p. 202).

As a result, even Peter Heyworth feels compelled to point out:

"If Shostakovich's weaknesses as a composer are to be attributed to the stultifying dogmas enforced by Zhdanov, why is his Symphony No. 12, written in the full flood of Khrushchev's thaw, by far his worst".
(Peter Heyworth: op. cit.; p. 199).

Of course, Shostakovich was not sincere in paying tribute to the constructive criticism of the Party. He says in his memoirs:

"Stalin never had any ideology or convictions or ideas or principles.

. . .

Stalin could definitely be called superstitious. . . .

Stalin was half mad".

(Solomon Volkov (Ed.): op. cit.; p. 187, 192).

The Wartime and Post-War Situation (1941-45)

During the Second World War, when Marxist-Leninists were primarily concerned with victory over the fascist invaders, revisionists were able to spread their ideas, in concealed form, in Soviet society to a considerable extent:

"Two famous decrees, one of August 1941, the other of December 1941, . . . made it possible for any soldier 'who had distinguished himself in battle' to join the Party with the minimum of formalities. . . . He could become a candidate member almost automatically and a full member in a much shorter time than usual. No serious ideological training was expected from him -- in fact, practically none at all. . . .

As the war was nearing its end, there was growing anxiety among the older Party members at the thought that the Party had been diluted by millions of patriotic young soldiers with no ideological training to speak of. . . .

The general 'ideological' level of these organisations sharply declined in many cases after the war as a result of this influx". (Alexander Werth: 'Russia: The Post-War Years'; London; 1971 (hereafter listed as 'Alexander Werth (1971)'; p. 100, 102, 103).

In the summer of 1944, the writer Vsevolod Vishnevsky* drew this picture of 'cultural coexistence' after the war:

"When the war is over, . . . there will be much coming and going, a lot of contacts with the West. Everybody will be allowed to read whatever he likes. There will be exchanges of students, and foreign travel for Soviet citizens will be made easy".

(Vsevolod Vishnevsky, in: Alexander Werth (1971): op. cit.; p. 99).

and Alexander Werth* himself says:

"All kinds of other 'Western' ideas were being toyed with -- for instance, a project for publishing 'escapist' literature, including a series of hundreds of thrillers and detective stories, translated from the English and published under the general editorship of that great lover of thrillers, Sergey Eisenstein*. A lot of light and entertaining books, plays and films would also be produced. Already in 1944 there were signs of 'decadence' in Moscow -- amusingly 'escapist' films with frivolous songs . . . and even concerts of highly 'decadent' songs sung by Aleksandr Vertinsky*".

(Alexander Werth (1971): op. cit.; p. 99).

In June 1946 a poetry evening was organised in Moscow in honour of the revisionist poets Boris Pasternak* and Anna Akhmatova*.

"The young people of Moscow -- above all its students -- gave a tremendous ovation to . . . Boris Pasternak and Anna Akhmatova".

(Alexander Werth (1971): op. cit. p. 201).

It was following this incident that the Marxist-Leninists launched a determined counter-attack against revisionism in the arts. Or, as Werth expresses it,

" . . . Zhdanovism blossomed out suddenly in August 1946".

(Alexander Werth (1971): op. cit.; p. 201).

Incidentally, in 1944 Picasso joined the French Communist Party. But those who imagined that this might influence his art in the direction of socialist realism were sadly disappointed. The French Communist Party was already deep in the mire of revisionism -- and not only in the sphere of the arts -- and praised Picasso's art unreservedly. When Stalin died in 1953, the Party commissioned Picasso to do a portrait of him for their literary journal 'Les Lettres Francaises':

SLIDE 10: PABLO PICASSO: 'STALIN'.

Although, unlike many paintings by Picasso, this portrait is recognisably that of a human being, its publication brought a host of angry letters from readers and the editors were compelled to print an apology for having published it.

reactionary morass in literature. . . . She is one of the standard-bearers of the meaningless, empty-headed, aristocrat-salon school of poetry, which has no place whatever in Soviet literature. . . .

Akhmatova's subject matter is individualistic to the core. The range of her poetry is sadly limited; it is the poetry of a spoiled woman-aristocrat, frenziedly vacillating between boudoir and chapel, Her main emphasis is on erotic love-themes, interwoven with notes of sadness, longing, death, mysticism, fatality. . . . It would be hard to say whether she is a nun or a fallen woman; better, perhaps, say she is a bit of each, her desires and prayers intertwined. . . .

Her poetry is far removed from the people, It is the poetry of the ten thousand members of the elite society of the old aristocratic Russia, whose hour has long since struck and left them nothing to do but sigh for 'the good old days'".

(Andrey A. Zhdanov: op. cit.; p. 25, 26, 27).

The Soviet journalist David Zaslavsky* told a delegation of British writers in 1947:

"All these thirty years he (Zoshchenko -- Ed.) has been writing and rewriting his one theme, portraying always that same petty, ignorant, mercenary character. His wit petered out. Laughter changed into vicious grumbling and the slandering of Soviet life. In latter years he had no success whatever among readers, and instead of writing short stories, he turned to mediocre and vulgar works of an allegedly philosophical nature, having nothing in common with either literature or science".

(Edgell Rickword (Ed.): 'Soviet Writers reply to English Writers' Questions'; London; 1948; p. p. 41-42).

N.B. p 34 LOST

The Struggle against Revisionism in the Theatre (1946-52)

In August 1946 the Central Committee of the CPSU adopted a resolution entitled 'On the Theatrical Repertory and Measures to improve it'. This resolution strongly criticised the paucity of Soviet plays in the repertory of Soviet theatres and the presentation of British and American bourgeois plays:

"The Committee on Arts and Theatres is guilty of a grave political error in sponsoring the staging and publication of foreign plays such as George S. Kaufman's* 'The Man Who came to Dinner' and Maugham's* 'Penelope', which are examples of bourgeois dramaturgy, bound to poison the minds of the Soviet public and to revive vestiges of capitalist mentality".

(Avrahm Yarmolinsky: 'Literature under Communism: The Literary Policy of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union from the End of World War II to the Death of Stalin', in: 'Russian and Eastern European Series', Volume 20; 1957; p. 18).

The Party placed the principal blame for this situation on the leadership of the Union of Soviet Writers, which

" . . . has virtually ceased to direct the work of the playwright and does nothing to raise the level of their compositions".
(Avrahm Yarmolinsky: *ibid.*; p. 18).

while

" . . . acting and writing are poor, and drab, inartistic shows are the outcome".
(Avrahm Yarmolinsky: *ibid.*; p. 18).

In January 1949 'Pravda' continued the offensive against revisionism in the theatre by publishing a leading article entitled 'Concerning an Anti-Patriotic Group of Theatrical Critics'. It alleged that a group of critics were condemning good socialist realist plays on the false grounds of their alleged technical defects:

"An anti-patriotic group has developed in theatrical criticism. It consists of followers of bourgeois aestheticism. . . . These critics . . . are bearers of a homeless cosmopolitanism which is deeply repulsive to Soviet man and hostile to him. . . .

Such critics attempt to discredit the progressive phenomena of our literature and art, furiously attacking precisely the patriotic and politically purposive works, under the pretext of their alleged artistic imperfection. . . .

The sting of aesthetic-formalist criticism is directed not against the really harmful and inferior works, but against the advanced and best ones which depict Soviet patriots. It is precisely this which attests to the fact that aesthetic formalism merely serves as camouflage for anti-patriotic substance".

('Pravda', 28 January 1949, in 'Current Digest of the Soviet Press', Volume 1, No. 5 (1 March 1949); p. 58, 59).

According to the new Constitution of the Soviet Union, adopted in 1935,

" . . . Soviet society consists of two friendly classes -- the workers and peasants".

('History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks): Short Course'; Moscow; 1939; p. 344).

After the Second World War, the revisionists distorted this formulation in the field of aesthetics into the so-called 'no-conflict theory' -- the theory that, in the realist drama of the new socialist society, no conflict should be shown.

In April 1952 'Pravda' published a leading article sharply critical of the 'no-conflict theory', and of the state of Soviet dramaturgy generally:.

"The struggle between the new and old calls forth the most diverse living conflicts, without which there would be no life and hence no art.

. . .
The chief reason for the feebleness of dramaturgy and the weakness of many plays is that the playwrights do not build their work around the profound conflicts of life, but evade them. If one were to judge by plays of this kind, . . . everything is ideal, there are no conflicts. . . .

This approach is wrong. To behave thus is . . . to sin against truth.

Not everything we have is ideal; we have negative types; there is no little evil in our life and no few false people, . . .

The play must show living conflict; there can be no play without that.

. . .
The gross 'theory' of the dying out of conflicts . . . has had a harmful effect on the playwrights' work. . . .

The breath of life is lacking in the plays written according to the 'conflictless dramaturgy' recipe. . . .

Our dramatists must expose and mercilessly scourge the survivals of capitalism, the manifesting of political unconcern, bureaucracy, stagnation, servility, vainglory, arrogance, conceit, graft, an unconscientious approach to duties, a heedless attitude to socialist property; they must expose all that is vulgar and backward and hinders the progress of Soviet society".

('Overcome the Lag in Dramaturgy', in: 'Pravda', 7 April 1952, in: 'Current Digest of the Soviet Press', Volume 4, No. 11 (26 April 1952); p. 3, 4).

The Struggle against Revisionism in Historiography (1934-36)

Before 1932, the organisation of historiography in the Soviet Union was, like the organisation of the arts, dominated by revisionists -- headed by Mikhail Pokrovsky*, until his death from cancer in 1932:

"The main centres of . . . historical study and discussion -- the History Section of the Institute of Red Professors, the Society of Marxist Historians, and (from 1929) the Institute of History at the Communist Academy -- were all directed by him".
(John D. Barber: 'Soviet Historians in Crisis: 1928-1932'; London; 1981; p. 21).

"Pokrovsky . . . became the virtual dictator of historical science in the Soviet Union".
(Jeanne Vronskaya & Vladimir Chuguev: op. cit.; p. 408).

Genuine Marxist-Leninists have always accepted Marx's view that capitalist colonial expansion in the pre-imperialist period could have a progressive aspect, as Marx pointed out in the case of pre-imperialist British colonial expansion into the Indian sub-continent:

"England . . . in causing a social revolution in Hindustan was actuated only by the vilest interests. . . . But that is not the question. The question is: can mankind fulfil its destiny without a fundamental evolution in the social state of Asia? If not, whatever may have been the crime of England she was the unconscious tool of history in bringing about that revolution".
(Karl Marx: 'The British Rule in India', in: 'Selected Works', Volume 2; London; 1943; p.656).

"England has had to fulfil a double mission in India: one destructive and the other regenerating -- the annihilation of old Asiatic society and the laying of the material foundations of Western society in Asia. . . .
The political unity of India . . . was the first condition of its regeneration. That unity, imposed by the British sword, will now be strengthened and perpetuated by the electric telegraph. The native army, organised and trained by the British drill-sergeant, was the sine qua non of Indian self-emancipation, and of India ceasing to be the prey of the first foreign intruder. The free press, introduced for the first time into Asiatic society and managed principally by the common offspring of Hindus and Europeans, is a new and powerful agent of reconstruction. The Zemindaree and Ryotwar themselves, abominable as they are, involve two distinct forms of private property in land -- the great desideratum of Asiatic society. From the Indian natives, . . . under English superintendence, a fresh class is springing, endowed with the requirements for government and imbued with English science. Steam has brought India into regular and rapid communication with Europe, has connected its chief ports with those of the whole south-eastern ocean and has revindicated it from the isolated position which was the prime law of its stagnation".
(Karl Marx: 'The Future Results of British Rule in India', in: *ibid.*, Volume 2; p. 658-59).

Soviet Marxist-Leninists, following Marx, applied Marx's analysis to pre-revolutionary Russia to hold that Russia's colonial expansion into Asia had a progressive aspect, so that local chieftains who resisted this expansion --

like the famous Shamil* in the Caucasus -- played a reactionary role.

Furthermore, genuine Marxist-Leninists hold that, under certain conditions, individuals may play a significant role in history. As Stalin said in his interview with the German writer Emil Ludwig* in December 1931:

"Marxism does not at all deny the role played by outstanding individuals. . . . But . . . every new generation encounters definite conditions already existing. . . . Great people are worth anything at all only to the extent that they are able correctly to understand these conditions, to understand how to change them. If they fail to understand these conditions and want to alter them according to the promptings of their imagination, they will land themselves in the situation of Don Quixote. . . .

Marxism has never denied the role of heroes. On the contrary, it admits that they play a considerable role, but with the reservations I have just made".

(Josef V. Stalin: Talk with the German Author Emil Ludwig, in: 'Works', Volume 13; Moscow; 1955; p. 107-08).

However, the historian Pokrovsky and his school took an opposite view. They held that Russian colonial expansion into Asia was wholly reactionary, and that local chieftains who resisted it played a progressive role:.

"Pokrovsky's main reason for denying the validity of the cultural mission (of imperial Russia in Asia -- Ed.) was that he considered Russian cultural attainments to be of of very low order, inferior in most cases to those of the conquered peoples. . . .

Pokrovsky scoffed at the idea, regarding everyone who saw progressive results of tsarist conquests as a Great Russian chauvinist".

(Lowell Tillett: 'The Great Friendship: Soviet Historians on the Non-Russian Nationalities'; Chapel Hill (USA); 1969; p. 30, 360).

Also,

". . . Pokrovsky ignored the role of individual personalities".

(Konstantin P. Shteppa: 'Russian Historians and the Soviet State'; New Brunswick (USA); 1962; p. 114).

With the defeat of open revisionism in the Soviet Union,

". . . the halcyon days of Pokrovsky's school faded completely away".

(Anatole G. Mazour: 'An Outline of Russian Historiography'; Berkeley (USA); 1939 (hereafter listed as 'Anatole G. Mazour (1939)'; p. 91).

In 1931 Stalin intervened with a letter to the magazine 'Proletarian Revolution' protesting

". . . against the publication . . . of Slutsky's anti-Party and semi-Trotskyist article, 'The Bolsheviks on German Social-Democracy in the Period of its Pre-War Crisis'".

(Josef V. Stalin: 'Some Questions concerning the History of Bolshevism', in: 'Works', Volume 13; Moscow; 1955; p. 86).

"A little more than two years after Stalin's intervention, official attacks on Pokrovsky's ideas began, leading to total demolition of his

reputation".

(John D. Barber: op. cit.; p. 142).

In May 1934 the Central Committee of the CPSU and the USSR Council of People's Commissars adopted a joint decree 'Concerning the Teaching of History in the Schools of the USSR', signed by Molotov and Stalin. This stated that

" . . . the teaching of history in the schools of the USSR is not administered satisfactorily. . . . The students are given abstract definitions of social-economic structures, thus substituting obscure schemes for coherent narration of civic history".

(CC, CPSU & USSR CPC: 'Concerning the Teaching of History in the Schools of the USSR', in: Anatole G. Mazour: 'Modern Russian Historiography'; Princeton (USA); 1958 (hereafter listed as 'Anatole G. Mazour (1958)'; p. 87).

The decree ordered new textbooks to be prepared for each field of history. It did not mention Pokrovsky by name,

" . . . but the implied criticism of him was plain".

(John D. Barber: op. cit.; p. 139).

Eventually,

" . . . in January 1936, Pokrovsky's influence was officially attacked".

(John D. Barber: op. cit.; p. 139).

"Under Kaganovich's leadership, and with Stalin's support, a . . . campaign was launched against . . . M. N. Pokrovsky".

(Roy A. Medvedev: 'Let History Judge: The Origins and Consequences of Stalinism'; London; 1971 (hereafter listed as 'Roy A. Medvedev (1971)'; p. 143).

During 1936-37 the Society of Marxist Historians, the Institute of Red Professors and the Institute of History were all closed down.

(John D. Barber: op. cit.. p. 139).

"Among the charges made against Pokrovsky was precisely that of having degraded personality to the status of a marionette controlled by the economic process".

(Klaus Mehnert: 'Stalin versus Marx: The Stalinist Historical Doctrine'; London; 1952; p. 76).

In November 1938 the Central Committee of the Party adopted a resolution

" . . . condemning Pokrovsky's school for 'anti-Marxist distortions' and 'vulgarisation'"

(John D. Barber: op. cit.; p. 140).

"Pokrovsky's school . . . began to be associated with the . . . teachings of the opposition. . . . Disciples of Pokrovsky were now proclaimed . . . 'contemptible Trotskyist-Bukharinist agents of fascism', who were trying to smuggle anti-Marxist, anti-Leninist ideas of Pokrovsky into historical literature".

(Anatole G. Mazour (1939): op. cit.; p. 91).

"It is not accidental that the so-called school of Pokrovsky became a base for wrecking, as the NKVD has discovered; a base for enemies of the people, for Trotskyite-Bukharinite hirelings of fascism; for wreckers, spies and terrorists, who cleverly disguised themselves with the harmful anti-Leninist concepts of M. M. Pokrovsky".

('Protiv istoricheskoi kontseptsy M. N. Pokrovskogo' (Against the Historical Conceptions of M. N. Pokrovsky'); Moscow; 1939; p. 5).

This controversy in the field of historiography had important repercussions in fields of the arts -- in the fields of historical fiction, historical drama and historical cinema.

The Struggle against Revisionism in the Cinema (1946)

In September 1946 the Central Committee of the CPSU adopted a resolution entitled 'On the Film "The Great Life"'. The resolution criticised the film named in the resolution, but banned outright another film -- 'Ivan the Terrible', Part Two, directed by Sergey Eisenstein -- on the grounds of historical inaccuracy:

"Eisenstein . . . exhibited ignorance of historical facts by portraying the progressive army of the Oprichniki as a band of degenerates, similar to the American Ku Klux Klan, and Ivan the Terrible, a man of strong will and character, as weak and spineless, something like Hamlet".
(Boris Schwarz: op. cit.; p. 208).

The 'New Encyclopaedia Britannica' notes that

". . . his nickname, 'the Terrible', is actually a mistranslation of the Russian word 'grozny', which more properly means 'awe-inspiring'; Ivan was no more brutal than many of his contemporaries".
('New Encyclopaedia Britannica: Macropaedia', Volume 9; Chicago; 1983; p. 1,179).

In October 1946 Eisenstein admitted the justification of the criticism of his film:

"We forgot that the main consideration in art is its ideological content and historical truth. . . .

In the second part of 'Ivan the Terrible' we permitted a distortion of historical facts which made the film ideologically worthless and vicious".

(Sergey M. Eisenstein: Article in 'Kultura i Zhizn' (Culture and Life), 20 October 1946, in: George S. Counts & Nucia Lodge: 'The Country of the Blind: The Soviet System of Mind Control'; Boston (USA); 1949; p. 147).

In February 1947 Eisenstein and the actor Nikolay Cherkasov* met Stalin, Molotov and Zhdanov to discuss the film, after which, Cherkasov relates,

". . . we were then given full opportunity to correct the second part of 'Ivan the Terrible' . . . without any limits as to time or expense. S. M. Eisenstein was positively overjoyed at the prospect and thought about it unceasingly. . . . His premature death prevented him from undertaking the task".

(Nikolay Cherkasov: Interview with Stalin, in: Sergey Eisenstein: 'Ivan the Terrible'; London; 1989; p. 19-20).

However, after viewing the film in company with the director Vladimir Petrov*, they agreed that

". . . there could be no question of correcting the material we had just seen; we would have to reshoot the whole of the second part".
(Nikolay Cherkasov: *ibid.*; p. 20).

The Struggle against Revisionism in Music (1948)

In February 1948 the Central Committee of the CPSU adopted a resolution 'On the Opera "The Great Friendship"', which was sharply critical of the opera of that name by Vano Muradeli*, which had been given a private performance to the Central Committee at the New Year.

The decree declared:

"This opera is chaotic and inharmonious, full of continuous discords which hurt one's ears.

The Central Committee considers that the failure of Muradeli's opera is the result of his having followed the formalist road -- a road that has been so pernicious to the work of Soviet composers".

(CC Decree: 'On the Opera "The Great Friendship"', in: Alexander Werth (1949): op. cit.; p. 29).

The decree asserted that the Union of Soviet Composers was dominated by a clique of composers who used their influence to foster formalism:

"The Central Committee has . . . in mind those composers who persistently adhere to the formalist and anti-people school -- a school which has found its fullest expression in the work of composers like Comrades Shostakovich, Prokofiev*, Khachaturian*, Shebalin*, Popov*, Myaskovsky* and others. Their works are marked by formalist perversions, anti-democratic tendencies which are alien to the Soviet people and their artistic tastes. . . .

These composers have been indulging in the rotten 'theory' that the people are not sufficiently 'grown up' to appreciate their music. . . . This is a thoroughly individualist and anti-people theory, and it has encouraged some of our composers to retire into their own shell. . . .

The Organisational Committee of the Union of Soviet Composers became a weapon in the hands of the group of formalist composers and a source of formalist perversions".

(CC Decree: 'On the Opera "The Great Friendship"', in: Alexander Werth (1949): op. cit.; p. 29,30,33).

Zhdanov had already made these points in January 1948 to a conference of music workers:

"Domination (of the Union of Soviet Composers -- Ed.) was maintained in the interests of a trend".

(Andrey A. Zhdanov, in: Alexander Werth (1949): *ibid.*; p. 57).

Zhdanov insisted that the music of every nation should be developed upon the folk music of that nation:

"The development of music must proceed . . . by enriching 'academic' music from folk music".

(Andrey A. Zhdanov, in: Alexander Werth (1949): *ibid.* p. 61).

and cited with approval the saying of the Russian composer Mikhail Glinka*:

"The people create the music -- we, the artists, merely arrange".

(Mikhail I. Glinka, in: Alexander Werth (1949): *ibid.*; p. 60).

He accused the formalist composers of

" . . . a rejection of the classical heritage under the banner of innovation, a rejection of the idea of the popular origin of music and of service to the people, in order to gratify the individualistic emotions of a small group of select aesthetes",
(Andrey A. Zhdanov, in: Alexander Werth (1949): *ibid.*; p. 57-58).

of imitating Western bourgeois music:

"A certain orientation towards contemporary Western bourgeois music . . . represents one of the basic features of the formalist trend in Soviet music. . . .

As regards contemporary bourgeois music, it would be useless to try and profit from it, since it is in a state of decay and degradation and the grovelling attitude towards it is ridiculous".
(Andrey A. Zhdanov, in: Alexander Werth (1949): *ibid.*; : *op. cit.*; p. 61).

and of neglecting melody:

"Melodiousness is beginning to disappear. A passionate emphasis on rhythm at the expense of melody is characteristic of modern music. Yet we know that music can give pleasure only if it contains the essential elements in a specific harmonic combination. One-sided emphasis leads to a violation of the correct interaction of the various elements of music and cannot, of course, be accepted by the normal human ear".
(Andrey A. Zhdanov, in: Alexander Werth (1948): *ibid.*; p. 72).

Shostakovich issued a statement expressing his agreement with and gratitude for the Party's criticism:

"Certain negative characteristics pertaining to my musical thought prevented me from making the turn. . . . I again deviated in the direction of formalism, and began to speak a language incomprehensible to the people. . . . I know that the Party is right. . . . I am deeply grateful . . . for all the criticism contained in the Resolution".
(Dmitry Shostakovich: Statement, in: Boris Schwarz: *op. cit.*; p. 244).

Muradeli had already admitted:

"Comrades, in the name of the Party and the Government, Andrey Aleksandrovich (Zhdanov -- Ed.) rightly and sharply criticised my opera 'The Great Friendship'. . . .

As a man, as a citizen and as a Communist, I must say that I agree with what he said".

(Vano Muradeli, in: Alexander Werth (1949): *op. cit.*; p. 51).

while Prokofiev declared:

"However painful this may be to many composers, including myself, I welcome the Decree, which creates conditions for restoring the health of Soviet music. The Decree is valuable in having demonstrated how alien formalism is to the Soviet peoples".

(Sergey S. Prokofiev: Statement, in: Alexander Werth (1971): *op. cit.*; p. 373).

In April 1948 a new directorate of the Union of Soviet Composers was elected, with the composer Tikhon Khrennikov* as General Secretary.

STALIN AND THE ARTS

Stalin's concern for art and artists led him frequently to offer his personal assistance to artists, and to intervene where he became aware that officials were acting in reactionary or stupid ways.

The Case of Ilya Ehrenburg (1941)

After the signing in 1939 of the Soviet-German Non-Aggression Pact, Soviet censorship officials prohibited any mention in literature of the words 'Fascism' or 'Nazism'. In April 1941 the publication of the second part of the novel 'The Fall of Paris' by Ilya Ehrenburg* was held up for this reason. Ehrenburg describes what occurred:

"On 24th April . . . a telephone call came from Stalin's secretariat. I was told to dial a certain number: 'Comrade Stalin wishes to speak to you'. . . .

Stalin said that he had read the beginning of my novel and found it interesting; he wanted to send me a manuscript -- a translation of André Simon's book -- which might be useful to me. . . .

Stalin asked me whether I intended to denounce the German Fascists. I said that the last part of the novel, on which I was now working, dealt with . . . the invasion of France by the Nazis. . . . I added that I was afraid the third part would not be passed, for I was not allowed to use the word 'Fascists' even where the French were concerned. Stalin said jocularly: 'Just go on writing; you and I will try to push the third part through'".

(Ilya Ehrenburg: 'Men, Years -- Life', Volume 4: 'Eve of War: 1933-1941'; London; 1963; p. 274-75).

Stalin's Policy towards Openly Anti-Socialist Artists

Stalin stood firmly on the Marxist-Leninist principle that the maintenance of the dictatorship of the proletariat was essential for the construction of socialism, so that the exhibition and circulation of anti-socialist art must be prohibited by law.

Naturally, anti-socialist artists could not but regard this prohibition as 'persecution'. The playwright Mikhail Bulgakov* described it as

" . . . tantamount to being buried alive",
(Julie A. E. Curtis: 'Manuscripts don't burn: Mikhail Bulgakov: A Life in Letters and Diaries'; London; 1991; p. 109).

and the writer Evgeny Zamyatin* as his

" . . . death sentence . . . as a writer".
(Evgeny Zamyatin, in: Alex M. Shane: 'The Life and Works of Evgeny Zamyatin'; Berkeley (USA); 1968; p. 78).

In fact, Stalin's policy towards openly anti-socialist artists was to try to assist them, where possible, to utilise their artistic talents in ways that would not be harmful to socialist society. For example, anti-socialist authors who were linguistically qualified were assisted to work as translators, rendering the classics of world literature into Russian (as in the case of Boris Pasternak); anti-socialist writers who were not so qualified were permitted, if they so wished, to go abroad (as in the case of Evgeny Zamyatin); anti-socialist playwrights were assisted to work in the theatre as directors (as in the case of Mikhail Bulgakov).

The Case of Marina Tsvetaeva

So widespread is the myth of the 'persecution' of artists in the time of Stalin that even when an artist committed suicide for what were clearly domestic or personal reasons -- as in the case of the poet Marina Tsvetaeva* in August 1941 -- efforts were made by anti-socialist propagandists to attribute the tragedy to 'persecution'.

It is clear that Tsvetaeva's wartime evacuation to the Tartar Republic was at her own request:

"She had already formed the idea of going off to the Tartar region",
(Elaine Feinstein: 'A Captive Lion: The Life of Marina Tsvetaeva';
London; 1987; p. 266).

and that she did not lack the material necessities of life:

"She was not without material resources".
(Elaine Feinstein: *ibid.*; p. 269).

Her biographers place the blame for the despair that led to her suicide on the attitude of her highly self-centred son:

"It is hard to evaluate the mood of Tsvetaeva on the last day of her life because the key is most likely in her relationship with her son and we don't know what went on between them in her last days. Dmitry Sezeman, who was Georgy Efron's (Tsvetaeva's son -- Ed.) friend, describes him as monstrously egotistical, with no concern whatsoever for anyone's feelings. . . . The Bredelshchikovs (Tsvetaeva's landlords -- Ed.) reported hearing violent arguments between mother and son in French, and his constant reproaches and demands for luxuries she could not provide".
(Simon Karlinsky: 'Marina Tsvetaeva: The Woman, her World and her Poetry'; Cambridge; 1985; p. 244).

"It was no longer possible to mistake the hostility that Mur (her son Georgy -- Ed.), his face sullen, felt for her.

On Saturday, 30 August, he could be heard quarrelling violently with her. He reproached her for a lifetime of irresponsibility".
(Elaine Feinstein: *op. cit.*; p. 269).

Miscarriages of Justice

During Stalin's lifetime there were cases where artists who were in no way involved with counter-revolutionary activity were wrongly sentenced for such crimes. The Soviet revisionist leader Nikita Khrushchev* blames Stalin for these miscarriages of justice, but there is a contradiction in this charge. For Khrushchov admits that

" . . . all this which we have discussed was done during Stalin's lifetime under his leadership and with his concurrence; here Stalin was convinced that this was necessary for the defence of the interests of the working classes against the plotting of enemies and against the attack of the imperialist camp".

(Nikita S. Khrushchev: Secret Speech to 20th Congress, CPSU:, in: Russian Institute, Columbia University (Ed.): 'The Anti-Stalin Campaign and International Communism'; New York; 1956; p. 85).

But it is imposssible to accept the absurd idea that Stalin could believe that the defence of socialism would be assisted by the fabrication of false charges against innocent persons. Since such miscarriages of justice could not fail to arouse the hostility of honest people who became aware of the truth, so weakening socialist society, the only people to benefit from them would be enemies of socialism.

To qualify as a candidate for such a frame-up, an artist had to be innocent of actual links with the counter-revolutionary conspiracy and be regarded as highly unlikely to make such links in the future -- for the conspiracy aimed to protect such people as far as was possible. He had, however, to have had a 'suspicious' history that would lend at least some degree of credibility to charges of counter-revolutionary activity -- for example, a former, terminated association with the Opposition, the production of a work of art expressing hostility to Stalin (this serving particularly that aspect of the conspiracy which aimed to create, and later denounce, a 'cult of personality' around Stalin), etc.

Such miscarriages of justice occurred especially during the period from 1934 to 1938, when concealed revisionists were in control of the security forces, as in the cases of the writers Boris Pilnyak* and Osip Mandelshtam*. For obvious reasons, these fabricated cases -- unlike the genuine treason cases of the 1930s -- were invariably 'tried' in camera.

The Case of Boris Pilnyak

The writer Boris Pilnyak was openly anti-socialist. He regarded the leaders of the Soviet Union

" . . . as barbarians who had let loose the age-old forces of anarchy upon the country".

(Robert Payne: Introduction to: Boris Pilnyak: 'The Tale of the Unextinguished Moon and Other Stories;'; New York; 1967; p. xv).

"His true political convictions are best described as unstable, with a strong undercurrent of anti-Soviet feelings. . . .

He always remained antagonistic towards the Party and the government, . . .

Pilnyak's apoliticism sprang directly from his antagonism towards the Soviet regime".

(Vera T. Reck: op. cit.; p. 95, 102, 103).

In October 1925 Milhail Frunze*, the Soviet People's Commissar of Defence, died in hospital after abdominal surgery, and in May 1926 the literary journal 'Novy Mir' (New World) published a story by Boris Pilnyak entitled 'The Tale of the Unextinguished Moon':

"The boldest attempt of the Opposition to use the open press was the publication in the literary journal 'New World' of 'The Tale of the Unextinguished Moon' . . . was a barely disguised version of the death on 21 October 1926 of Trotsky's successor in the post of Commissar of Defence, Frunze. He had been operated on for a gastric complaint, began to recover, then died. . . . The rumours that Stalin had murdered Frunze obviously served the Opposition. One plausible theory is that Karl Radek, a friend of Trotsky who had lost his membership in the Central Committee in 1924, inspired the novelist. . . . The offending issue of the journal was withdrawn and apologies for such 'error' and 'slander', which 'could play into the hands of the small-minded counter-revolutionary', were forthcoming from both editors who were involved and the author".

(Robert H. McNeal: op. cit.; p. 102-03).

"Radek was probably one of Pilnyak's sources of rumours that surrounded the death of Frunze. Almost certainly these rumours first originated among Stalin's enemies in the Kremlin".

(Vera T. Reck: op. cit.; p. 41).

Pilnyak's disclaiming preface (dated January 1926) reads:

"The plot of this story suggests the idea that the occasion and the material for writing it was provided by the death of M. V. Frunze. I do not know the real circumstances of his death, and they are not very important for me, since reportage about the death of the People's Commissar for Defence was no part of the purpose of my story. I consider it necessary to inform the reader of all this so that the reader may not look in it for genuine facts and living persons".

(Boris Pilnyak: Disclaimer. in: Edward H. Carr: 'Pilnyak and the Death of Frunze', in: 'Soviet Studies', No. 2, 1958; p. 162).

Six months later (in November 1926) the journal 'Novy Mir' carried a letter from Pilnyak:

"I never expected that this tale would play into the hands of the small-minded counter-revolutionary and would be used in a disgusting way to harm the Party; I did not for a single moment imagine that I was writing a malicious slander. I now see that I committed grievous errors not perceived by me when I was writing; I now know that much written by me in the tale consists of malicious invention".

(Boris Pilnyak: Letter to 'Novy Mir', (25 November 1926), in: Edward H. Carr: *ibid.*; p. 163-64).

It was impossible to take these disclaimers seriously in view of the close and detailed resemblance between the real Frunze and Pilnyak's 'fictitious' 'Gavrilov':

"Gavrilov's personal history -- lightly sketched in by Pilnyak -- owes nearly everything to Frunze's biography".
(Vera T. Reck: *op. cit.*; p. 24).

Pilnyak's biographer, although hostile to Stalin, feels that rumours of foul play in connection Frunze's death can be dismissed as groundless:

"The question 'was it murder?' can probably be answered 'No'. . .

Stalin highly esteemed Frunze. . . .

The physicians were probably blameless in the death of the Commissar".
(Vera T. Reck: *op. cit.* p. 17, 18, 19).

Although Pilnyak's story was clearly a criminal libel under Soviet law, no action was taken against its author:

"Nothing happened at that time to Pilnyak or to the editor. . . .

Stalin chose not to react to a libel which . . . would have provided ample grounds for criminal proceedings against its author and publisher".
(Adam B. Ulam: 'Stalin: The Man and his Era'; London 1989; p. 260-261).

"Pilnyak went unpunished. He continued to write and to publish his works, and from time to time to travel abroad".
(Robert Payne: Introduction to: Boris Pilnyak (1967): *op. cit.*; p. xviii).

Indeed, when there was a delay in issuing him with an exit permit for one of his foreign trips, it was Stalin who intervened to assist him in obtaining it:

"Pilnyak . . . wrote to Khozain, the Boss himself (Stalin -- Eds.) asking him if there was any reasons why he should not be granted a visa. A reply came from Stalin to the effect that, after consulting his colleagues, he saw no reason why a visa should not be granted".
(Vera T. Reck" *op. cit.* p. 182).

It is clear that Pilnyak had all the necessary qualifications to be a candidate for 'frame-up' by the revisionist conspirators:

"He (Pilnyak -- Ed.) had made two trips to the Far East, spent five months in the United States, travelled through much of Europe, and ventured into the Middle East. While in Japan the first time, he was a 'correspondent' for 'Asahi Shimbun', a giant among Japanese dailies. . . . He had had contacts with the Japanese-Russian Literary Arts Society . . .

. founded in 1925. His trip to the United States had been sponsored and paid for, in part, by the 'Hearst's International Cosmopolitan'. . . . For a time Pilnyak was under contract to Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer as a writer and lived in Southern California. He had made many friends in the United States".

(Vera T. Reck: op. cit.; p. 3-4).

Accordingly, the revisionist conspirators arranged that Pilnyak should be arrested and

" . . . charged with espionage for Japan".

(Jeanne Vronskaya & Vladimir Chuguev: op. cit. p. 402).

He was

" . . . shot soon afterwards in 1937".

(Vera T. Reck: op. cit.; p. 2).

"Pilnyak . . . was arrested and shot in 1937".

(Robert H. McNeal: op. cit.; p. 103).

The Case of Osip Mandelshtam

Another artist who, like Pilnyak, was the victim of a revisionist frame-up was the poet Osip Mandelshtam.

In April 1934 Mandelshtam had recited to presumed friends a slanderous poem he had written about the leaders of the Party, and Stalin in particular, accusing them of being 'murderers':

"And every killing is a treat
For the broad chested Ossete".

(Osip Mandelstam: Poem, in: Olga Ivinskaya: 'A Captive of Time: My Years with Pasternak'; London; 1978; p. 65).

Under Soviet law, this could have been interpreted as criminal libel:

"Under Article 161 of the Penal Code, libel, i.e., the spreading of false information about another person, is punishable by compulsory labour for a term of up to 6 months or a fine of up to 500 roubles".
(David Zaslavsky: op. cit. p. 40).

However, it was a minor offence that honest and sensible people would have felt it best to ignore.

But, unfortunately for Mandelshtam, at this time the Soviet security forces were not under the control of honest and sensible people. The Marxist-Leninist Commissar of Internal Affairs, Vyacheslav Menszhinsky*, had been for some time

" . . . no longer responsible, as he was very ill and was now merely the nominal head of OGPU".
(Boris Levytsky: 'The Uses of Terror: The Soviet Secret Service: 1917-1970'; London; 1971; p. 72-73).

The man ultimately responsible for security was thus the Deputy Commissar, Genrikh Yagoda, who, as we have seen, was a concealed revisionist. In these circumstances, Mandelshtam was arrested. However, Stalin personally intervened:

"So great was his respect for poetic talent that he dealt personally with the case of Osip Mandelshtam, . . . who in 1934 had rashly recited to presumed friends a short poem that referred to Stalin as 'the Kremlin mountaineer', with fingers 'fat as worms', a killer surrounded by 'half-men'. Stalin phoned Boris Pasternak . . . to ask if the culprit was really a genius. . . . Stalin at one point said that Mandelshtam would be 'all right'".
(Robert H. McNeal: 'Stalin: Man and Ruler'; Basingstoke; 1988; p. 230).

"Stalin began by telling Pasternak that Mandelshtam's case had been reviewed and that everything would be all right. This was followed by a strange reproach: why hadn't Pasternak approached the writers' organisations or him (Stalin) and why hadn't he tried to do something for Mandelshtam? 'If I were a poet and a poet friend of mine were in trouble, I would do anything to help him'".
(Nadezhda Mandelshtam: 'Hope against Hope: A Memoir'; London; 1971; p. 140).

As a result of Stalin's intervention,

" . . . Mandelshtam . . . was released from arrest'.
(Robert H. McNeal: *ibid.*; p. 230).

and

" . . . was given a 'minus twelve' exile, i.e., he could reside in any but twelve major urban centres".
(Adam B. Ulam: 'Stalin: The Man and His Era;'; London; 1989; p.391).

The Mandelshtams chose to live in Voronezh until Mandelshtam's sentence of exile expired in May 1938, although he suffered a heart attack in the autumn of 1937. But in the month before his release (in April 1938) a new order for Mandelshtam's arrest had been issued.

(Clarence Brown: 'Mandelstam'; Cambridge; 1973; p. 133).

As a result, in August 1938 Mandelshtam was

" . . . sentenced to five years' imprisonment for counter-revolutionary activity".
(Clarence Brown: *ibid.* p. 133).

In December 1938 he died of heart failure in the

" . . . perfectly decent and clean two-storey hospital"
(Nadezhda Mandelshtam: *op. cit.* p. 396),

of a transit camp in Vladivostok.

His widow was told by the novelist Aleksandr Fadayev* that Mandelshtam's sentence had been ordered by the concealed revisionist Andrey Andreyev:

"Fadayev during the war whispered to me that it was Andreyev who had signed M's sentence".
(Nadezhda Mandelshtam: *ibid.*; p. 355).

"Mme. Mandelshtam records the inside information that it was Andreyev who ordered the second and fatal imprisonment of her husband".
(Adam B. Ulam: *op. cit.*; p. 439).

The Case of Milkail Bulgakov

Let us return now to the question of Stalin's policy towards anti-socialist artists.

The first novel of Mikhail Bulgakov, 'The White Guard' (1921-22), adapted for the stage in 1926 as 'The Days of the Turbins', presented the counter-revolutionary Whites as heroes:

"It describes the war from the White side. Its central characters, the Turbin brothers, are members of the White Guard. . . .

Bulgakov's treatment of the Whites as patriots and idealists, his refusal to glamorise the revolutionary proletariat, and the playing on the legendary opening night of the old Russian national anthem . . ."

(John Wakeman (Ed.): 'World Authors: 1950-1970'; New York; 1975; p. 239).

aroused

" . . . a storm of controversy".

(John Wakeman (Ed.): *ibid.*; p. 239).

Despite this, in July 1929 Stalin wrote to the dramatist Vladimir Bill-Belotserkovsky* to defend the play in that it was objectively progressive in spite of the author's subjective intentions:

"'Days of the Turbins' . . . is not such a bad play, because it does more good than harm. Don't forget that the chief impression it leaves with the spectator is one that is favourable to the Bolsheviks. 'If even such people as the Turbins are compelled to lay down their arms and submit to the will of the people because they realise that their cause is definitely lost, then the Bolsheviks must be invincible and there is nothing to be done about it. 'Days of the Turbins' is a demonstration of the all-conquering power of Bolshevism.

Of course, the author is altogether 'innocent' of this demonstration. But that is not our affair.

(Josef V. Stalin: Reply to Bill-Belotserkovsky (February 1929), in: 'Works', Volume 11: Moscow; 1954; p. 343).

In fact,

" . . . Stalin was evidently very fond of the play (Bulgakov's 'The Days of the Turbins' -- Ed.); the Arts Council's records indicate that he went to see it no fewer than 15 times".

(Julie A. E. Curtis: *op. cit.*; p.70).

However, the revisionists in influential positions in the arts seized upon another passage in Stalin's letter --

"Why are Bulgakov's plays staged so often? Presumably because we have not enough of our own plays suitable for staging".

(Josef V. Stalin: Reply to Bill-Belotserkovsky (February 1929), in: 'Works', Volume 11; *op. cit.*; p. 342-33).

-- to force the withdrawal of all Bulgakov's plays from production.

So, in spite of Stalin's favourable comments on 'The Days of the Turbins',

" . . . the actual effect of his February 1929 letter was to put an end to all the productions of Bulgakov's works in Moscow. . . . These developments completed the elimination of Bulgakov from the Soviet stage".
(Julie A. E. Curtis: op. cit.; p. 70-71).

In the spring of 1930 Bulgakov completed a new play 'Molière', which used historical events to make an attack on the principle of censorship. It depicted

". . . the relationship . . . between Molière and Louis XIV, Bulgakov's portrayal of which was naturally read by his contemporaries as suggesting analogies to the modern world".
(Julie A. E. Curtis: ibid.; p. 72).

In March 1930,

" . . . the Repertory Committee informed him that the play would not be licensed for performance".
(Julie A. E. Curtis: op. cit.; p. 72).

Later the same month he wrote a letter to the Soviet Government:

"After the banning of all my works, I begin to hear voices among many citizens of my acquaintance, all giving me one and the same piece of advice: that I should write a 'Communist play' . . . and that quite apart from that I should address to the Government of the USSR a penitential letter, which should contain a renunciation of my previous opinions, as expressed in my literary works, and assurances that henceforth I was going to work as a fellow-travelling writer loyal to the idea of Communism. . . .

I did not follow that advice. I would scarcely have succeeded in appearing in a favourable light in the eyes of the Government of the USSR by writing a mendacious letter, which would have represented a sordid and indeed naive political somersault. . . .

The entire press of the USSR, together with all the institutions to whom control of the repertory has been entrusted, throughout all the years of my literary career, has unanimously and with EXTRAORDINARY FURY demonstrated that the works of Mikhail Bulgakov cannot exist in the USSR.

I declare that the Soviet press is ABSOLUTELY CORRECT. . . .

For me, not being allowed to write is tantamount to being buried alive.

I REQUEST THAT THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT GIVE ORDERS FOR ME TO LEAVE THE TERRITORY OF THE USSR AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, TOGETHER WITH MY WIFE LYUBOV YEVGENYEVNA BULKAKOVA. . . .

If, on the other hand, . . . I am to be condemned to lifelong silence in the USSR, then I would request the Soviet Government to give me a job for which I am qualified and to second me to some theatre to work as a director on their staff".

(Mikhail A. Bulgakov: Letter to Soviet Government (28 March 1930), in: Julie A. E. Curtis: op. cit.; p. 103-04, 105, 109).

Three weeks later (on 18 April 1930), Stalin telephoned Bulgakov at his home:

"Stalin's first question was whether Bulgakov really wanted to go abroad. Bulgakov, somewhat stunned and unprepared, replied: 'I have

thought a great deal recently about the question of whether a Russian writer can live outside his homeland. And it seems to me he can't'. . . . Stalin . . . next asked him where he would like to work -- what about the Moscow Arts Theatre? Bulgakov explained that he had asked about that and had been refused, at which Stalin suggested that he should try applying again. . . . Thirdly, Stalin proposed that he and Bulgakov should meet some time and have a talk. . . .

Stalin's telephone call . . . was immediately followed by the Moscow Arts Theatre's taking Bulgakov on its staff as an assistant director". (Julie A. E. Curtis: *ibid.*,; p. 111-12, 113).

The Case of Evgeny Zamyatin

In June 1931 the openly anti-socialist writer Evgeny Zamyatin, who had no experience in translation, wrote to Stalin asking for his intercession to be allowed to go abroad:

"I ask to be permitted to go abroad with my wife . . . with the right to return as soon as it becomes possible to serve the great ideas in literature without fawning on small people. . . . I do not wish to conceal that the fundamental reason for my request to go abroad together with my wife is . . . the death sentence which has been passed on me here as writer".

(Evgeny Zamyatin: Letter to Josef V. Stalin (June 1931), in: Alex M. Shane: 'The Life and Works of Evgeny Zamyatin'; Berkeley (USA); 1968; p. 78).

As a result of Stalin's intervention,

" . . . Zamyatin and his wife were granted an exit permit and were allowed to go abroad. . . .

In November 1931 . . . he went abroad with the consent of Stalin himself. . . .

During his years abroad Zamyatin did not publicly attack the Soviet regime".

(Alex M. Shane: *ibid.* p. 78-79, i, 82).

In March 1937

" . . . Evgeny Zamyatin died in self-imposed exile in Paris".
(Alex M. Shane: *ibid.*; p. i).

CONCLUSION

The principles of Marxist-Leninist aesthetics elaborated by Zhdanov on the basis of theses put forward by Stalin have permanent importance for all societies in the world. Stalin fought to maintain socialist realism as the principled method of Soviet art.

Even Alexander Werth felt compelled to admit:

"There is an incontrovertible basis of truth in the Russian case. . . . The West cannot afford to ignore some of its own weaknesses, and it is not enough to sneer at Zhdanov's theses and to pretend that all is well with Western art and Western literature".
(Alexander Werth (1949): op. cit.; p. 16).

It is clear that the picture commonly drawn in anti-socialist writings of artists in the time of Stalin suffering 'persecution' because of their artistic creations, is based only on presenting the non-publication and non-circulation of anti-socialist art, and constructive criticism of other art, as 'persecution'. In fact, the artists most strongly criticised -- such as the composers Prokofiev and Shostakovich and the writers Akhmatova, Bulgakov, Pasternak and Zoshchenko -- all died peacefully in their beds.

The first case in the Soviet Union of criminal proceedings against artists in connection with their work occurred long after Stalin's death -- in 1966, in the time of the revisionist Leonid Brezhnev*, when Andrey Sinyavsky* and Yuli Daniel* faced charges in connection with their writings. The trial of Sinyavsky and Daniel

" . . . was unique in Russian history. Neither under the tsars nor . . . under Stalin had ever there ever been any proceedings in which the main corpus delicti consisted of the actual contents of works of imaginative literature".
(Max Hayward: 'Writers in Russia: 1917-1978'; London; 1983; p. 278).

It was

" . . . unprecedented in the annals of not only Russian but world literature".
(Leopold Labedz & Max Hayward (Eds.): 'On Trial: The Case of Sinyavsky (Tertz) and Daniel (Arzhak)'; London; 1967; p. 17).

"The Sinyavsky-Daniel case . . . was unprecedented in modern Soviet history. . . . None (no intellectual -- Ed.) had ever before been held criminally responsible for the political effects of their literary works".
(Frances C. Locher (Ed.): 'Contemporary Authors', Volumes 85-88; Detroit; 1980; p. 550).

"A large part of the attention attracted by the Sinyavsky-Daniel case was due . . . to its precedent-setting nature".
(Hal May (Ed.): 'Contemporary Authors', Volume 116; Detroit; 1986; p. 100).

In fact, we have seen that Stalin had respect for artists who were honestly anti-socialist, did not regard them as significantly dangerous to socialism, and on many recorded occasions assisted them in ways that would not

be harmful to socialist society.

The people for whom he had no respect and whom he regarded as a serious danger to socialism were the concealed enemies of socialism who posed as Marxist-Leninists in order to attain positions of influence.

THE HISTORY OF THE LAST FORTY YEARS HAS SHOWN THE CORRECTNESS OF STALIN'S VIEW.

(This is an extended and annotated version of a lecture given by Bill Bland to the Stalin Society in London in May 1993).

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

- AKIMATOVA, Anna A., Soviet poet (1889-1966).
- ANDREYEV, Andrey A., Soviet revisionist politician (1895-1971); USSR Commissar of Transport (1931-35); Member, Political Bureau/Presidium, CPSU (1932-52, 1956-71); USSR Commissar of Agriculture (1943-46); USSR Deputy Premier (1945-53); Adviser to Presidium of Supreme Soviet (1962-71);
- ARAGON, Louis, French novelist and poet (1897-1982).
- AVERBAKH, Leopold L., Soviet literary critic (1903-38).
- BECKETT, Samuel, Irish-born playwright (1906-89); in Paris (1937-89); awarded Nobel Prize for Literature (1969).
- BELLINI, Giovanni, Venetian Renaissance painter (c1420-1516).
- BILL-BELOTSERKOVSKY, Vladimir N., Soviet dramatist (1884-1970).
- BOGDANOV, Aleksandr A., Soviet philosopher, literary critic and writer (1873-1928).
- BREZHNEV, Leonid, Soviet revisionist politician (1906-82); Member, Secretariat, CPSU (1952-53, 1956-60, 1963-82); Member, Politburo/Presidium, CPSU (1957-82); 1st. Secretary, CPSU (1964-66); General Secretary, CPSU (1966-82); USSR President (1977-82).
- BRIK, Lilya: Russian-born French painter and sculptor (1891-1978).
- BRIK, Osip M., Russian-born French critic and playwright (1888-1945).
- BROWN, Edward J., American Slavist (1909-); Associate Professor (1953-55), Professor (1955-65), of Russian, University of Indiana (USA); Professor of Slavic Languages and Literature, Brown University (USA) (1969-).
- BUKHARIN, Nicolay I., Soviet revisionist politician (1888-1938); Chairman, Comintern (1926-29); Member, Politburo (1924-29); arrested (1937); admitted to treason at public trial and executed (1938).
- BULGAKOV, Mikhail A., Soviet writer (1891-1940).
- 'CARAVAGGIO' (= Michelangelo Merisi), Italian Renaissance painter (1573-1610).
- CHERKASOV, Nicolay K., Soviet film actor (1903-66).
- CROMWELL, Oliver, British bourgeois revolutionary soldier and statesman (1599-1658).
- DALI, Salvador, Spanish-born painter (1904-89); to France , then to USA (1940); returned to Spain (1955) and became supporter of Franco regime.
- DANIEL, Yuli M. (= 'ARZHOV, Nikolay'), Soviet poet (1925-88); imprisoned (1966); released (1970).
- EASTMAN, Max, American journalist, author and editor (1883-1969).
- EHRENBURG, Ilya G., Soviet writer (1891-1967); in France (1921-28); in Germany (1924-28); in Soviet Union (1928-36); in Spain (1936-39); in France (1939-40); in Soviet Union (1940-67).
- EISENSTEIN, Sergey M., Soviet film director (1898-1948)..
- ERMOLAEV, Herman S., Russian-born American lecturer (1924-), instructor (1959-60), assistant professor (1960-66), associate professor (1966-67), professor (1970-), of Russian Literature, Princeton University.
- 'FADAYEV' (= BULYGA), Aleksandr A., Soviet novelist (1901-56); committed suicide (1956).
- FRAGONARD, Jean-Honoré, French painter and engraver (1732-1806).
- FRUNZE, Mikhail V., Soviet Marxist-Leninist military officer and politician (1885-1925); Chief of Staff and USSR Commissar of Defence (1924-25).
- GLINKA, Mikhail I., Russian composer (1804-57).
- 'GORKY, Maksim' (= PESHKOV, Aleksey M.) Soviet writer (1868-1936); to Italy (1924); returned to Soviet Union (1931).
- HABA, Alois, Czech atonal composer (1893-1973).
- HEYWORTH, Peter L. F., American-born British music critic (1921-91); music critic, 'Times Educational Supplement' (1950-55), 'Observer' (1955-77).
- HOOCH, Pieter de, Dutch painter (1629-?85).

- KAGANOVICH, Lazar M., Soviet Marxist-Leninist politician (1893-1991); USSR Commissar for Oil Industry (1939-40); Member, State Defence Committee (1941-44); USSR Minister of Building Materials Industry (1946-47, 1956-57); 1st Secretary, CP Ukraine (1953-55); dismissed from all posts by revisionists (1956).
- KALININ, Mikhail I., Soviet Marxist-Leninist politician (1875-1946); Soviet Russia, President (1919-38), USSR (1938-46); ; Member, Political Bureau/Presidium, CPSU (1925-46).
- KAMENEV, Lev B., Soviet revisionist politician (1883-1936); Member of Politburo (1919-25); Ambassador to Italy (1926-27); arrested (1935); admitted to treason at his public trial and executed (1936).
- KAUFMAN, George S., American playwright (1880-1961).
- KHACHATURIAN, Aram I., Soviet composer (1903-78).
- KHRENNIKOV, Tikhon N., Soviet composer (1913-).
- KHRUSHCHEV, Nikita S., Soviet revisionist politician (1894-1971); Member, Political Bureau, CPSU (1939-64); 1st Secretary, CPSU (1953-64); USSR Premier (1958-64).
- KIROV, Sergey M., Soviet Marxist-Leninist politician (1886-1934); 1st Secretary, CPSU, Leningrad (1926-34); Member, Political Bureau, CPSU (1934); murdered by revisionists (1934).
- KOSIOR, Stanislaw V., Soviet revisionist politician (1889-1939); Member, Political Bureau, CPSU (1930-38); Chairman, USSR State Planning Committee (1934-35).
- KRYUKOV, Fedor D., Russian (Cossack) author (1870-1920).
- KUIBYSHEV, Valerian V., Soviet Marxist-Leninist politician (1888-1935); Chairman, USSR State Planning Committee (1930-35); USSR Deputy Premier (1930-35); murdered by revisionists (1935).
- LELY, Peter, German-born British painter (1618-81).
- LESKOV, Nikolay S., Russian writer (1831-95).
- LEVIN, Dan, Russian-born American journalist (1914-).
- LUDWIG, Emil, German playwright and biographer (1881-1948).
- MANDELSHTAM, Osip E., Polish-born Soviet poet (1891-1938); victim of charges fabricated by revisionists and died in imprisonment (1938).
- MARGARITO OF AREZZO, Italian painter (fl. 1262).
- MARSHALL, Herbert, British writer and translator (1906-91).
- MAUGHAM, W. Somerset, British playwright and novelist (1874-1965).
- MAYAKOVSKY, Vladimir V., Soviet poet (1893-1930).
- MAZOUR, Anatole G., Russian-born American historian (1900-); Professor of Russian history (1946-66), Professor Emeritus (1966-), Stanford University.
- MEDVEDEV, Roy A., Soviet historian (1925-).
- MELLY, George, British singer, musician, journalist and music critic (1926-).
- MENZHINSKY, Vyacheslav R., Soviet Marxist-Leninist politician (1874-1934); Deputy Chairman, OGPU (1926-34); Chairman, OGPU (192-34); murdered by revisionists (1934).
- MOLOTOV, Vyacheslav M., Soviet Marxist-Leninist politician (1890-1896); USSR Premier (1930-41); USSR Deputy Premier (1941-57); USSR Minister of Foreign Affairs (1941-49, 1943-56); USSR Ambassador to Mongolia (1957-60); USSR Representative, International Atomic Agency (1960-62); dismissed from all posts and expelled from Party by revisionists (1962).
- MUCHNIC, Helen L., Russian-born American Slavist (1903-); Professor of Russian (1947-69). Professor Emeritus (1969-), Smith College ((USA).
- MURADELI, Vano I., Soviet composer (1908-70).
- MYASKOVSKY, Nicolay Y., Soviet composer (1881-1950).
- ORDZHONIKIDZE, Grigory K., Soviet Marxist-Leninist politician (1886-1937); Member, Political Bureau, CPSU (1930-37); USSR Commissar for Heavy Industry (1932-37); committed suicide (1937).

- PASTERNAK, Boris L., Soviet poet and novelist (1890-1960); awarded Nobel Prize for Literature for novel 'Dr. Zhivago' (1958).
- PETROV, Vladimir M., Soviet film director (1896-1966).
- PICASSO, Pablo, Spanish painter (1881-1973); worked in Paris (1901-73); founder of Cubism.
- 'PILNYAK' (= VOGAU), Boris A., Soviet novelist (1894-1937); victim of charges fabricated by revisionists; died in imprisonment (1937).
- POKROVSKY, Mikhail N., Soviet historian (1868-1932).
- POPOV, Gavril N., Soviet pianist and composer (1904-72).
- PROKOFIEV, Sergey S., Soviet composer (1891-1953).
- RADEK, Karl B., Soviet revisionist politician (1885-1939); expelled from CPSU (1927); readmitted (1930); re-expelled (1937); tried and imprisoned (1937); died in prison (1937).
- RODOV, Semyon A., Soviet literary critic (1893-1968).
- RYKOV, Aleksey I., Soviet revisionist politician (1881-1938); Member, Politburo (1923); USSR Premier (1924-29); USSR Commissar for Posts and Telegraphs (1931-36); expelled from Party, arrested (1937); convicted of treason and executed (1938).
- SAROYAN, William, American playwright (1908-81).
- SCHWARZ, Boris, Russian-born American violinist, conductor and musicologist (1906-83); assistant professor (1947-57), associate professor (1957-58), professor of music (1958-70), City University of New York.
- SERAFIMOVICH, Aleksandr, Soviet writer and journalist (1863-1949).
- SHAMIL, Caucasian military and religious leader (1798?-1871); Imam of Dagestan (1834-59).
- SHEBALIN, Vissarion Y., Soviet composer (1913-63).
- SHKLOVSKY, Viktor B., Soviet literary critic (1883-1984).
- SHOLOKHOV, Mikhail A., Soviet novelist and journalist (1905-84).
- SHOSTAKOVICH, Dmitry D., Soviet composer (1906-75).
- SINYAVSKY, Andrey D. (= 'TERTZ, Abram') Soviet writer (1925-); Lecturer, Russian literature, Moscow University (1952-66); imprisoned (1966); released (1971); Professor of Slavic Studies, Sorbonne (1973-).
- SOLZHENITSYN, Aleksandr I., Soviet physicist and author (1918-); imprisoned for attempting to form rival political party to Communist Party (1945-53); expelled from Union of Soviet Writers (1969); awarded Nobel Prize for Literature (1970); deported from USSR (1974); to Western Europe, then (1979) to USA.
- STEPHENSON, George, British inventor (1781-1848),
- STETSKY, Aleksey I., Soviet revisionist politician (1896-1938); died in prison (1838).
- STOLYPIN, Pyotr A., Russian politician (1862-1911).
- SYRTOV, Sergey I., Soviet journalist and politician (1893-1938); RSFSR Premier (1929-30); arrested (1938); died in prison (1938).
- THATCHER, Margaret H., British Conservative politician (1925-); Secretary of State for Education and Science (1970-74); Leader of Conservative Party (1975-90); Premier (1979-90).
- THORLBY, Anthony K., British lecturer (1928-); assistant lecturer (1956-57), lecturer in German (1957-61), University College of Swansea; lecturer in German, University of Sussex (1961-63); Reader in Comparative Literature (1963-66), Professor of Comparative Literature, University of Sussex (1966-).
- TOMSKY, Mikhail P., Soviet trade union leader (1880-1930); committed suicide to evade arrest (1936).
- TRIOLET, Elsa: Russian-born French novelist and translator (1896-1970). ;

- TROTSKY, Lev D., Soviet revisionist politician (1879-1940); Commissar of Foreign Affairs (1917-58); Commissar of Defence War (1918-25); Member, Politburo (1920-27); expelled from Party (1928); exiled to Alma Ata (1928); deported from USSR (1929); to Turkey (1929-33); to France (1933-35); to Mexico (1937).
- TSVETAeva, Marina I., Soviet poet (1892-1941); committed suicide (1941).
- TURNER, J. M. William, British painter, especially of landscapes (1775-1851).
- VERTINSKY, Aleksandr N., Soviet variety artist (1889-1957).
- VISHNEVSKY, Vsevolod V., Soviet journalist and playwright (1900-51).
- VOROSHILOV, Kliment E., Soviet military officer and Marxist-Leninist politician (1881-1969); Member, Political Bureau (1926-52); USSR Commissar of Defence 1934-40); USSR Deputy Premier (1946-53); USSR President (1953-60); Member, Politburo/Presidium, CPSU (1926-69).
- WERTH, Alexander, Russian-born British journalist (1901-69).
- YAGODA, Genrikh G., Soviet revisionist politician (1891-1938); USSR Commissar for Internal Affairs (1934-36); arrested (1937); admitted to treason at public trial, executed (1938).
- YAKOVLEVA, Tatiana A., Russian-born French (later American) hat designer.
- YENUKIDZE, Avel S., Soviet civil servant (1877-1937); Secretary, USSR Central Executive Committee (1923-35); expelled from CPSU (1935); tried and sentenced to death (1937).
- ZAMYATIN, Evgeny I., Soviet writer and literary critic (1884-1937); to Western Europe (1931).
- ZASLAVSKY, David I., Soviet writer and literary critic (1880-1965).
- ZHDANOV, Andrey A., Soviet Marxist-Leninist politician (1896-1948); 1st Secretary, Leningrad, CPSU (1934-44); Secretary, CC, CPSU (1944-48); murdered by revisionists (1948).
- ZINOVIEV, Grigory E., Soviet revisionist politician (1883-1936); Member, Politburo (1921-26); Chairman, Comintern (1919-26); admitted to treason at public trial and executed (1936).
- ZOSHCHENKO, Milhail M., Soviet writer (1895- 1958); expelled from Union of Soviet Writers (1946).

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