Aesthetics of Alienation

REASSESSMENT OF EARLY SOVIET
CULTURAL THEORIES

Evgeny Dobrenko

Translated from the Russian by Jesse M. Savage

NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY PRESS / EVANSTON, ILLINOIS

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This book is dedicated to the memory of
Galina Andreevna Belaia (1931–2004)

Anyone in Russia who has left the path
of pure negation has fallen.

—Dmitrii Pisarev

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Translator's Note

Throughout this text, I have used a simplified spelling of surnames and in some cases omitted the first names (except in quoted matter and the works cited) of the following persons: Dostoyevsky (Fedor Mikhailovich Dostoevskii); Gogol (Nikolai Vasil'evich Gogol'); Gorky (Maksim [Aleksei Maksimovich] Gor'kii); Mayakovsky (Vladimir Vladimirovich Maiakovskii); Pushkin (Aleksandr Sergeevich Pushkin); Tolstoy (Lev Nikolaevich Tolstoi); and Trotsky (Lev Davidovich Trotskii). The rationale for this was twofold: first, in most cases specialists and nonspecialists alike will be familiar with these spellings (and persons) and may not even notice the absence of first names; and second, the simplification avoids "diacritical overload" for some of the names used frequently in the possessive form (thus "Gorky's," not "Gor'kii's").

Similarly, the word "Proletkul't" has been spelled without the "soft sign" diacritic, thus "Proletkult."

All other Russian words, including other proper names, are fully transliterated according to the Library of Congress system, though they are printed without that system's ligatures. First names or initials are used when available and appropriate for all other persons.

Introduction

This book arose at the crossroads of two interconnected projects examining the sociology of the literary process in Soviet Russia: a history of the shaping of the Soviet reader[1] and a history of the birth of the Soviet writer.[2] In the attempt to understand the social origins of Stalinist culture and to discover the social dimension of Socialist Realism, I immersed myself (in the book about the reader) in the world of the operations of Soviet libraries, schools, and publishing—the enormous institutional mechanism for producing and promoting books in Soviet Russia; and (in the book about the writer) I delved deeply into the world of the "subcultural" creative activity of self-taught writers, literary "circles" and studios, of the "mass literary movement" and the "call of shock workers into literature," and of "literary training" in the 1920s and 1930s—institutions created and measures taken by the new authorities to create a "new type of writer." But this also required me to immerse myself in the world of the aesthetic polemics in which these years, so formative for Soviet culture, abounded.

Just as there is a sociology of reading and a sociology of the writing, so is there a sociology of literary theories, or a sociology of criticism—which the language of the 1920s and 1930s would call the sociology of ideological constructs. Analysis of the social dimension of the self-reflection or introspection of culture (I use this term in the traditionally restricted sense of artistic and literary culture)—of cultural theories (including literary theories)—can be regarded as a sort of apex of the sociological analysis of aesthetic phenomena. Without it, the sociology of literature cannot be considered complete: between the writer and the reader exists a most significant cultural institution, which under Soviet conditions had its own specifics. In fact, the idea for this book was born out of the necessity to determine the social parameters of the aesthetic debates.

The problematics of this book (although it almost exclusively discusses theories) are far from being purely academic. On the contrary, the attitude toward revolutionary culture and the Stalinist culture that grew out of it are absolutely the most ideologically explosive points in Russian literary history

of the twentieth century. Debates about the fate of the "silver age," about the avant-garde, formalism, proletarian culture, the Marxist approach to culture, and about tradition—in the perspective of Soviet experience—continued to seethe, dispersing the debating parties to different sides of the barricades. Today, these debates seem even more unresolved than they did in the past because the answers that took shape over many decades to the key questions—about political control, Party pressure, "fierce censorship," and the like—have been revealed as inadequate. Historical reality turns out to be much more complex than the familiar black and white picture. In the book about the Soviet reader, I attempted to show, for example, that pressure was exerted not only from above but from below as well (and it is difficult to say which was more decisive—the "horizon of expectations" of yesterday's still-illiterate reader or the Party's directives, which in fact only gave shape to the demands placed by the masses on literature being created in the Soviet Union). In the book about the Soviet writer, I tried to demonstrate that the problem of Soviet culture was not political control and fierce censorship (though of course no one would deny the existence of either), but rather the creation of a new type of author who would need *no* control and *no* censor, that the history of the formation of the Soviet writer was that of transforming the writer into his own censor. In a word, many of the traditional postulates that earlier seemed unshakable truths have in the post-Soviet era shown themselves in need of, if not replacement, then at least rethinking and reappraisal. This applies not only in the sphere of reception and literary practice, but also in the sphere of literary criticism and cultural theory. A number of mechanisms that hinder adequate understanding and appraisal of one or another aesthetic theory continue to operate.

First, the attitude toward early Soviet cultural theories can least of all be called historical and academically neutral. From the very beginning, this attitude has been purely estimative—and it remains so to this day. For some, the 1920s are the bright era of the avant-garde, after which the somber reign of Socialist Realism arrived (in accordance with this view, the activities of leftist artists and ideologues is promoted in every way—aesthetically, ethically, and politically—as progressive and fruitful); for others, on the contrary, leftist cultural experimentation is interesting not for its elitist futurism, but for the mass-oriented Proletkult (accordingly, the activities of Proletkult artists and ideologues are interpreted as being progressive and fruitful); yet others consider the 1920s leftist experiment valuable because the human face of socialism was revealed in it (thus the creative work of the fellow travelers advances to the foreground, and the "humanism" in their approach to revolution is in every way emphasized); still others see Socialist Realism and the avant-garde as practically the same thing (and the avant-garde is accordingly perceived as practically the forerunner of totalitarian culture). One could go on with this list. Behind each of these stances are specific names, specific

studies that lay at the heart of one tradition or another in its approach to the problem. The only thing that unites them is an approach to early Soviet aesthetic theories from the positions of these theories *themselves,* the lack of what Mikhail Bakhtin called the "position of the outsider" (*pozitsiia vnenakhodimosti*). In other words, it is as if scholars were still carrying on the ideological debates that remained unsettled in the 1920s, playing roles and seeing in the material they are analyzing a convenient opportunity either to affirm their own political views or to refute the views of their opponents. This path is tempting, although judging by its results unproductive.

Second, no system has been perceived in the 1920s theories (resulting precisely from the supra-ideological approach to them): everything seems more or less important. And since the polemics of those years touched on practically the entire spectrum of the problems of culture, the positions of this or that group on issues varying greatly in character and significance are all lumped together. Thus, emphasis is laid on the avant-garde's aspiration to novelty and on their struggle against tradition, on the "massism" of Proletkult theories, on the fellow travelers' humanism, and the like. As a result, various theories are compared on the basis of completely differing parameters, which totally skews the picture of the ideological and aesthetic struggle of those years.

Third, the traditional approach to the literary struggle of the 1920s and early 1930s, such as it developed in the West (roughly speaking, in a broad range from Herman Ermolaev to Boris Groys), is most often focused on yet another condemnation of Socialist Realism, and not on elucidating the variety of this era itself: its diversity and fullness, its inner impulses, its drama and real contradictions, are yet again sacrificed, leveled beneath the face of the monster it gave birth to, Socialist Realism. The result is that the inner cultural logic of the era—neither its sources, nor its consequences—is not subjected to analysis.

Fourth, since literary criticism in the Soviet era was inextricably tied to literary politics, the various traditional approaches are characterized by an amazing unity in their understanding of the role of politics in the literary struggle of those years. Literary politics is understood as something located *above* literature (or at least *outside of* literature), not something produced from *within* it. Accordingly, the strong and active politicians and ideologues of the 1920s literary groups are regarded as simply puppets of the literary policy of the Party. Nevertheless, the diversity of the aesthetic theories of the postrevolutionary era cannot be understood without taking the relativity of these theories themselves into account. Beyond the literary struggle we should see an ideological struggle, and beyond the ideological struggle a political struggle, a struggle for power. In the final analysis, one theory or another very frequently turned out to be simply a veil that obscured a larger struggle between cultural elites.

To suppose that in the struggle of those years there were the innocent and the guilty, executioners and victims, ardent utopianists and unprincipled politicians (the drama of the situation was that there were no innocents who were not also guilty, no victims who were not executioners, no utopianists who were not also politicians), to think that the participants of this struggle were purely puppets of an all-powerful Party, or to derive (as is traditionally done) Socialist Realism from the 1920s by means of selecting similar quotations of one kind or another without distinguishing between the practices and theories of their sources, means leaving our understanding of the era of the formation of Soviet culture at the same level at which it has been for at least half a century.

We must first overcome a naive faith in theory and a curious idealism that do not allow us to discern the real social origins of these theories and ideas, to see beyond the struggle of ideas a struggle among people. For many years, revolutionary culture has too often been viewed as a self-generating process, and its history, replaced by theories, was depicted as a clock without a spring: the social energies, the real political will, and the political agendas that shaped this culture were ignored. Ideas and theories do not live in a vacuum, nor are they fed only by ideas and theories. The revolutionary era was an era of material aesthetics, an era that—in its fashion—sought and found a materialistic explanation for everything, sought and found, as Marx said, interests behind ideals. This skill, alas, was lost both in the West and in Soviet Russia.

The search for the interests of the participants of the cultural process (the discovery of these interests could not of course be complete at the time that those who sought them were themselves participants in the process) was replaced by ideological magic, which easily transforms the 1920s first into a bright era of cultural renaissance, then into a gloomy period of stifled freedom, then into a sort of threshold of Socialist Realism, proclaimed to be the realization of the aspirations of modernism and the Russian forerunner of postmodernism. Each of these views is supported by theories, which are accepted on faith and not subjected to social analysis as ideological constructs developed with particular goals in mind.

But revolution is not accomplished by theories. It is accomplished *with their help.* No more—but also no less. Revolution is a struggle for power. Theories are the expression and product of this struggle—furthermore, they are not a chief product at all, but indeed a secondary one (which of course makes them no less valuable and—with accurate appraisal of their status—possessed of a significant explanatory potential). But if theories are not grounded in reality, if their social origins and the logic of their development are unclear, then they will remain an ideal (both figuratively and literally) foundation for historical myth-making.

Nonetheless, never again in the history of Russian culture has aesthetics been so *personal* a thing for all the participants of the cultural process—personal in the sense that the polychromatic theoretical struggle was the expression, foundation, and rationalization of the struggle that the participants waged for their own power in the cultural arena that had been suddenly cleansed by revolution. Neither traditions, innovation, massism, nor humanism were at the center, but rather the issue of creativity as such, and its boundaries—in the final analysis, the boundaries of freedom. The issues discussed in these polemics—the whole spectrum of them—were derived from these central problems: creativity, the creative personality, and freedom of creation. The history of literary struggle was the history of a struggle against an alienating force that powerfully constricted the boundaries of freedom, and in the flood of cultural programs we should see a common thread: the essence of revolutionary culture is the alienation of not only the products of creativity, but also of creativity itself. Revolutionary culture possesses such an enormous destructive potential that in destroying everything surrounding it, it destroys itself. And then Socialist Realism comes to replace it. Such is the inexorable logic of self-destruction of an aesthetic of alienation.

Aesthetics of Alienation

Chapter One

The Academy of Poetry and Russian Society

THE FATE of Aleksandr Leonidovich Chizhevskii is conspicuously unusual and, at the same time, amazingly familiar. Graduating in 1917 from the Moscow Archeological Institute with the title of Archeologist, he defended his dissertation, "Russian Lyrics of the 18th Century," the following year. He was then actively researching in the area of the natural sciences, particularly focused on the activity of the sun. He was simultaneously a student in the Natural Sciences and Medicine faculties of Moscow University and attended lectures on mathematics, physics, and chemistry at Moscow Commercial University and the A. L. Shaniavskii People's University.

Chizhevskii has been called the founder of major trends in biophysics, the creator of aeroionification—the theory and practice of the artificial ionization of air. As early as the 1920s and 1930s, he had become an honorary professor and academician in many universities and academies worldwide. His books were published in France, the United States, Belgium, Switzerland, Italy, Turkey, England, and Brazil.

Then came the Northern Urals and Karaganda.

Then—"rehabilitation."

Then—new books about the cosmos and the sun and . . . books of poetry.

Chizhevskii's poems are a curious exemplar of the "lyricism" of a physicist. Their main characters are The Universe, The Sun, and The Cosmos.[1] Chizhevskii was never a "professional poet."

His scholarly works have been called ahead of their time. Chizhevskii was a great dreamer, and it is not by chance that he was connected to Konstantin Tsiolkovskii, founder of the science of space travel, by a long-standing close friendship. Indeed, the city of Kaluga, "fatherland of space travel," became his second home (he went there with his family in 1913, at the age of 17, and left in 1929 as an already world-famous scientist).

It was also there that Chizhevskii published a brochure, under the auspices of the Cultural-Educational Commission of the Kaluga Infantry Officers' Training Courses, in 1918. The brochure's coarse gray paper bore

the title "An Academy of Poetry (A Project)" ("Akademiia Poezii [Proekt]"). No, this was no longer cosmic sonnets: one can sense a kind of truly monumental sweep in this work. But for now, let us leave the ecstatic condition of the 19-year-old youth in 1918 aside. Chizhevskii's "Project" has brought much more than his verses to us from that era of grandiose utopias.

Educated on Russian classical poetry, the author talks about the contemporary state of poetic creativity with simultaneous hope and sorrow: although musical and artistic schools and colleges existed, as well as conservatories and an Academy of Arts, there were no poetry schools, nor any "academy of poetry": "Artists, musicians, and architects can all get an education in accordance with their calling, and only poets are doomed to be self-taught, regardless of the fact that, first, of all the arts poetry is closer and more familiar to man, and second, the most difficult and least developed art of all is poetry."[2]

Chizhevskii was not suggesting, however, turning the "self-taught" into poets (we have yet to address this subject). His challenge was far more traditional: "So that our poets should not get dirtied by the slime of petty existence in their work, but rather in moving together with progress could give mankind examples of truly high art that would serve the greatest aims of civilization, education, and nurturing of our hearts, we should ourselves be concerned about this, and therefore *I call upon our Russian society and upon all to whom poetry is dear to step up to the task of building an Academy of Poetry—a center of the poetic, artistic, and cultural life of Russia.*"[3]

The noble zeal of addressing "our Russian society" (in 1918!) unexpectedly alternates with quite sober calculations, which only makes even more evident the total fantasy of what is described in the scheme: the "Project," rather than beginning with a definition of the proposed Academy's status or with the goal of creating it, begins with a description of—its building. Thus, it is explained, the Academy should of course be located in Moscow, since Moscow is "both the center of Russia and the heart of the Russian people, and the center of poetic activity."[4] It would of course be a "majestic building[,] . . . the largest construction not only in Russia but in all of Europe. . . . [A]bsolutely all of what is truly poetic in the country should be collected in the Academy of Poetry. The gazes of all poets and of those who love Poetry should be riveted to this hallowed place, for the Academy will be the stronghold of Russian art and [quite noteworthy!] the Russian state."[5]

The appearance of this building:

> The construction of the Academy of Poetry should be executed in one of the majestic styles of Greece and should rise above the surrounding locality like a temple. Surrounded by other small buildings in the same classical style, let

it remind the spectator of the Athenian Acropolis or the Roman Forum! Distanced from the noise of the city and bordered on all sides by a park, it will seem even more solemn and mysterious. . . .

In front of the main entrance on a high pillar will rise a statue of Poetry—a beautiful woman, crowned with a laurel wreath and holding in her slightly raised hands a lyre, upon the strings of which the human heart shines with golden rays.

Broad steps the whole length of the building, Parthenon steps, will lead to the main entrance into the Academy.

To the right and left of the entrance hall will be placed a lobby, closed off with heavy curtains.

From here a broad staircase will lead to the second floor—straight to the main hall, whose glass ceiling will be supported by columns, and between them statues of the greatest poets of all times and peoples. This is the Hall of Dedications, similar to the inner sanctuary of the Parthenon. Here, in front of the statue of Poetry, as in front of Phydias' Athena, the dedications to poets will take place. Along the sides are museum halls: the museum of Russian poetry, the museums of Western, Eastern, and Slavic poetry in precisely consistent styles. The Russian one in the style of an old Russian vaulted chamber, the Western one in the spirit of Roman halls, etc. Here, busts of eminent poets and various relics from their lives will be placed.

Alongside will be the library and the main reading hall of the Academy.

To the left of the Hall of Dedications, a theater in which the poets will read their works, and present performances and concerts.

Near the theater, the Assembly Hall of the Academy members, and a salon for exhibits.

The lower floor will be allotted to auditoriums, recreation halls, professors' studies, a reading room with Russian and foreign periodical literature, and an archive.

All the halls and auditoriums in the strict style of the building.

From the other side of the Academy, fountains will gush and a broad avenue will lead to two other symmetrically constructed buildings. In these, of course, the poet-president of the Academy, professors, lecturers and poets will live, if they like, and a printing house will also be equipped. A certain number of the apartments should be reserved for the indigent, which will become a moral support for them, and perhaps the greatest gifts will not perish without shelter. . . .

These two wings will serve as the beginning for other houses grouped around the Academy, and ultimately there will be a sort of "poetic settlement," an example of which exists in France.

This so-called Abbey in Créteil, near Paris, is on the banks of the Marne. There, writers, artists, and sculptors meet. . . . The venerable park where

they live, occupying an estate that had belonged to a certain aristocratic family of France, is decorated with pavilions, fountains, and an open-air theater; the artists and sculptors have opened a continuous exhibit in the main building, and the writers have outfitted a printing house, where they print their own works, thus making a living for themselves. . . . The surroundings, marvelous nature, quiet, and serenity all dispose the priests of art to the most sincere and elevated creativity.

It would be good if we in Russia could find people who would take upon themselves the hallowed labor of uniting our native art. It would be good if other buildings were begun behind these two buildings constructed at the Academy of Poetry; poets, musicians, and artists would occupy them. A commonality of calling would bring them all close into a single harmonious choir singing hymns to art. . . .

Thus, you see, we will not lag behind the "Abbey" near Paris, and we will lay out pavilions in the park, we will build fountains and play areas, an open-air theater. In the summer, new plays will be put on in it, and concerts will be held. Poets and writers will come before the public, reading their works, in the intermissions music will resound, and the population of Moscow and the surrounding area will visit the Academy of Poetry to hear the best poets and to enjoy the stately surroundings of this temple of Art. In the winter, poets will be able to organize public lectures on art, and concerts and balls as well, to which "all Moscow" will flock.

Artistic and public life will commingle into a single channel.[6]

This verbose quote could be taken from any issue of *Arkhitektura SSSR* (*USSR Architecture*) from the 1930s or 1940s, presenting as it were an interesting hybrid of the Palace of the Soviets and the All-Union Agricultural Exhibition. Such designs abounded in the era of Stalinist Empire style, having already been carried out graphically (and cinematographically). We could of course suppose that the inflamed mind of a young man reproduced these pictures in 1918 according to readymade models (and the references to the "Abbey" near Paris would not be coincidental), but this unprecedented undertaking was quite thoroughly thought out by Chizhevskii with an enthusiasm bordering on madness. He calculated, for example, that the construction of the building would take no less than six to eight years; development and approval of the design, as well as the collection of funds, would take about two years; and, thus, if begun in 1919, the project would be finished no earlier than 1929. This "great undertaking" must be, according to Chizhevskii's design, facilitated by "the Government [this word was capitalized throughout], in whose hands the Academy of Poetry will obviously be." There should be no problem with the means, the author suggests, since "Russia, which has in recent years suffered so many misfortunes and squab-

bles, looks forward to a magnificent heyday, and therefore there can be no doubt regarding a search for the means for such a high State [!] matter."[7]

According to the design, the Academy should be both a teaching and scientific establishment as well as a cultural enterprise. It should "give students a finished education in all subjects related to both Poetry and literature," "present itself as the center of poetic activity in Russia," "popularize art in the State, by directing the establishment of poetic education in the middle and lower schools," "exert itself to develop and systematize all issues of the theory of poetic creation," and publish poetry journals and print poems "acknowledged by the Council of Poetry to be outstanding"; in addition to all this, it should "at an annual festival gathering of the Academy, crown the most outstanding Russian poet for a certain period (one, two, or three years) in the Hall of Dedications with the honor of 'King of the Poets.'"[8] As a result, "poets earlier scattered about will be involuntarily drawn to this sanctuary of the beloved art and thus will unite for common productive labor" and "all the literary-artistic circles and educational organizations will join together with the Poets."[9] The Academy would have students, "masters of Poetry," and "contributing members of the Academy." It should be guided by a "Council of Poets" headed by the "Poet-President of the Academy" (one of the last points of the proposed regulations proclaims: "There will be quarters established for the Poet-President of the Academy and for outstanding Poets (as well as for other executives) as set up by the Academy's Council."[10])

Chizhevskii asked "Russian society" to respond to his design by sending observations and suggestions to him, and he promised to collect and publish them ("when there is a sufficient number of responses") as a special book with the title "Russian Society and the Academy of Poetry."

This second book was never issued.

However, the daydream did not end with this: "Russian society" did respond to the suggestion. An Academy of Poetry was created by the hand of the "Government" (including even the "quarters . . . for the Poet-President . . . [and] other executives").

We will try to collect the responses in this book. They were numerous and far-reaching, much broader and more radical than Chizhevskii's individual utopia. We shall examine *revolutionary theories of creation* as a *crucial problem of the literary and critical consciousness of the 1920s*. This problem has of course been touched on in many existing works but has been viewed either in the context of other revolutionary-era aesthetic ideas, or in connection with the theories of particular literary groups, most often without taking into account the practice of these groups.[11] The "practical" aspects (aesthetic, social/institutional, and artistic), however, are extremely important, since the era that we are studying is characterized by unprece-

dented speed in the "realization" of politico-aesthetic programs. Within the sweeping aesthetic programs of the Proletkult, RAPP (Russian Association of Proletarian Writers), LEF (Left Front of Arts), and Pereval groups,[12] it is precisely this as yet little-pondered connection that will interest us. As we shall see, these theories were the center from which, as a rule, the general creation of aesthetic programs radiated.

Revolution brought a subcultural current to the surface of cultural life, one that led to a curious short circuit in the larger historico-cultural current. The rather smooth, closed (and self-sufficient) process of artistic-aesthetic transformations was destroyed. The subcultural impulse received an unheard-of acceleration, entered a new cultural arena, and acquired a new status. Aesthetic ideas and practices that had always remained outside or on the periphery of high culture got the opportunity to become institutionalized, and their development according to their own historically untested agenda began. Masses of people who had never before been participants in the artistic process found themselves drawn into it, which greatly amplified the role of "ideologues" and "organizers." Precisely in this process, as we may imagine, is to be sought an explanation for the phenomenon of the 1920s literary struggle.

The struggles between literary groups, as well as the boundaries between them, were never absolute. Fresh ideas constantly flowed (often together with people) from one group to another, undergoing a multitude of transformations. There were by far more connections than were imagined in the 1920s. Yet something else is important: *the battle of ideas is nothing other than a battle among people.* In the final analysis, what was at stake was the necessity for the new elite groups in the revolutionary cultural arena to justify their places and roles. These were new places and new roles (not just unexpected vacancies in the old hierarchy)—with new spectators.[13] Ultimately, the new elites could not accept the former theories (and practices) of creativity because these theories had no place set aside for them. Hence the intense creation of political-aesthetic agendas. Hence the ecstasy of thinking and the posing of art's ultimate questions. Hence also the new theories of creativity.

Two central aspects of this dilemma will occupy our attention as we examine of the cultural theories engendered by revolution. They are both connected to the utopian vision of the era that gave rise to them as well as with the (in this context) fundamental human dimension of revolutionary ideas.

The first aspect is "practical-utopian." If one attempts to define the central theme of the literary debates of the 1920s, stripping it of the somewhat secondary subplots, one could say that the main *practical* question was that of *the possibility of replacing the entire corpus of literature.* In other

words, was it possible to radically change all notions of literature in such a way that its main figures would be *new* (literally: different) authors and poets, that in evaluating their products completely *new* (literally: different) aesthetic criteria and norms would apply and that completely *new* (literally: different) paths and laws of creativity, creative behavior, and literary environments would be legitimized?

Hence the second aspect, "theoretical-utopian." The main question of all theories of creativity is in the final analysis that of "freedom of creation." This very phrase seems so hackneyed that it requires at least some attention. Strictly speaking, freedom of creation is a tautological construction, for creation *is* freedom.[14] "Un-free creation" is a phenomenon of a qualitatively different order. In Mikhail Bakhtin's writings on "aesthetic activity" and "art and responsibility" from the 1920s, the concepts of creativity and freedom as responsibility are clearly expounded. "Un-free creation" can be regarded in this context as *irresponsible creation*, or as "pure art" properly speaking. The central point of the fundamental revolutionary-era theories of creativity is the aspiration to deprive creativity of freedom or to conceive of *creativity outside of or without freedom.* In other words, it is not the issue of "political control" that is foregrounded, but rather the issue of the *internal* (organic, so to speak) impossibility of creativity.

Both these aspects are so revolutionary, so radically utopian, that we can quite believe in the very possibility of their realization within the framework of the future Academy of Poetry.

Chapter Two

Proletkult: "The Music of Revolution"; or, Creation Without Creators

WHEN TALKING about various kinds of projects, utopias, manifestos, and theories of creativity, one should keep in mind that they are all the products of complex historical combinations. Their realization might seem as simple as this: they are conceived in the minds of theoreticians, then they fall into the hands of popularizers and then of ideologues, then of organizers and executives, and thus they "come to life." But in fact the success or failure of their realization, and even more so the very choice (or, more precisely, the selection) of this or that project, is conditioned by processes that transpire outside the minds of theoreticians and not in the hands of ideologues or organizers. What was called the "social mandate" in the 1920s could be more accurately defined as the mandate of history, or *the mandate of the people and social groups who were more or less influential within the bounds of their era*. Ideas (and theories, projects, and utopias) must be *required* by someone. History is economical: "necessary and sufficient" historical prerequisites are needed in order for certain ideas (indeed, some but not others) to seem not simply in tune with the times but also necessary for living.

For this reason, we will distinguish between the immanent logic of the development of various aesthetic projects and their actual functioning. Of course there exists a direct connection between these processes: when one aesthetic concept or another turns out to be needed, it acquires an abrupt "push" in its development; and, inversely, those that remain unnecessary for "here and now" wither away. But if they develop under favorable conditions, these plans as a rule undergo the same stages of development: radicalization at first, and later interpolation with other "ideas of the times."

All of this, it goes without saying, applies to theories of impersonal creativity as well. These theories, which enjoyed an unprecedented popularity in revolutionary Russia, could confidently be classed with those same "ideas of the times" that were "in the air." They could also be found in contexts other than Russian aesthetic thinking. Suffice it to recall, for example, the early treatise of T. S. Eliot, "Tradition and Individual Talent," wherein the

"impersonal theory" of poetic creativity was developed, and the gradual extinction of the creative personality was expounded. However, this was already 1919, when the "impersonal theories" had ceased to be simply theories in Russia.

Many of the premises of the future theories of impersonal creativity were contained in the aesthetic manifestos of the Russian Silver Age. Foremost in these was a zeal for the rejection of tradition, which was disdained as "positivism." In a work that set the later program of symbolism, "On the Reasons for Decadence and on New Trends in Contemporary Russian Literature" ("O prichinakh upadka i o novykh techeniiakh sovremennoi russkoi literatury," 1893), Dmitrii Merezhkovskii maintained that the force of a few lyrical verses exceeds that of "a whole series of grandiose epic novels"—which are alive only because "the prevailing taste of the mob until now has been for realism"—and that the force of symbolist verse was on the contrary in "rebellion" against "artistic materialism." When Merezhkovskii penned this essay, it was not simply the usual personal manifesto (later, of course, having become author of numerous "grandiose epic novels" himself, Merezhkovskii asserted nothing of the kind), but an outright rejection of tradition: "In fact, the whole generation at the end of the nineteenth century harbors in its breast the same rebellion against stifling deathly positivism, which lies like a stone on our hearts. It is very possible that they will die and will succeed at nothing. But others are on the way and will nonetheless continue their cause, because this cause is *alive.*"[1]

Merezhkovskii could not of course imagine what "others" exactly were to come and continue to keep the "cause alive." Nor could Valerii Briusov, who in his assertion (in an article that was also seminal for symbolism) that "the goal of creative work is not intercourse [*obshchenie*] but only self-affirmation and self-comprehension"[2] was only a step away (as always between extremes) from the "opposite" idea of impersonal creativity. Briusov asked questions ("What is art? How is it both useful and useless? Serving beauty, but often ugly? A means of intercourse, but making the artist secluded?") and answered thus: "The only method that can hope to settle these issues is intuition, inspired guessing," since the "higher and only calling of art" is to be cognition of the world "beyond rational forms, beyond thinking in terms of causality."[3] This reasoning not only paved the way to futurism but also followed a historically and logically quite developed path—the path of "not A, therefore B, and therefore C."

It is worth noting that Briusov, being a thoroughly educated and brilliant philologist, was extremely rational in his "epistemology of art," far from relying on the "intuition, inspired guessing" that he proclaimed. In a paradoxical way (yet another lesson of history), this very path ("not A, therefore B, and therefore C") was followed by Briusov himself (who, by the way, knew

Chizhevskii) when he, one of the pillars of Russian symbolism, became a member of the Communist Party, actively participated in the state's organs of censorship,[4] and developed programs and curricula for the Higher Literary-Artistic Institute (prototype of the Gorky Literary Institute) that he created and of which he was head. Briusov's courses would be taken by many future Soviet poets—"newcomers [*vykhodtsy*] from the masses." Briusov's journey from extreme individualism to the radical collectivism of "literary training" was characteristic: theories and theoreticians are selected in accordance with the logic of the historical process. Those who did not want to change, left; those like Briusov who were ready for "lively creativity" remained in the cultural arena, playing in a new drama. This applies not only to theoreticians, but also to theories themselves.

The flowering of impersonal theories of creativity in revolutionary Russia was tied to the central problem of the Revolution itself—the problem of freedom of creation (in the broadest sense, of historical creation) and its boundaries. Since freedom is inherent in personality, the "liberation" of creation (including of course artistic creation) from personality meant a corresponding solution to the problem of "freedom of creation." What separated symbolist aesthetics from the aesthetics of Proletkult was not an abyss, but rather a valley.

The social-aesthetic utopia of Aleksandr Bogdanov, who was the "philosophical conscience" of revolutionary aesthetics,[5] was quite a logical movement along the "not A, therefore B, and therefore C" path of the fight against "literary disintegration": Bogdanov's revolution in aesthetics was tied only to the replacement of the subject according to the same solipsistic logic, when the "collective/class" was inserted into the "slot" of the individual, which led to a *complete* replacement of the signs, while *fully preserving* the paradigm. The simplicity of this replacement is impressive: "A person does not create out of nothing, rather the great is created out of the great: an ideal that is capable of becoming life is from life itself, [and a] social ideal is from the existence of the collective. All social ideals are 'subjective' by origin; only their 'subject' is not the individual, but rather a condition, group, or class; in them, each such collective 'idealizes' its own real-life 'tektology' [*tektologiia*]; and the ideal itself is an ideological solidification of the forms and methods of this tektology."[6] Hence the necessity for the proletariat to occupy itself with the creation of its own culture, and more broadly, with "its own ideological creation,"[7] and also hence the rejection of "intuition, inspired guessing": "Socialism is a matter of method. . . . Socialism will be realized when the old cultural world with its experience of millennia and fully established methods are opposed by not only a political force and 'economic plan' but also a new world of culture with new, higher methods. In order to conquer societal arbitrariness, the working class must overcome the arbi-

traviness of its own development."[8] It seems, then, that "collective creativity" is a "method" for attaining an "ideal." But Bogdanov's ideal not only had to replace art with life-building (in place of the "bourgeois" theory of art as a "method for *cognition* of life," the "proletarian" theory of art as a "method for *construction* of life" was advanced); it was also to remain forever an ideal, to be a utopia by definition with no change of modality—but in this case, life-building would become a permanent process.

This can explain the fact that Bogdanov never managed to see his ideal realized; after the Revolution, he declared: "Now they suggest that we 'try to recognize' the coming socialism in the disgusting caricature of it engendered by war and the old order. We do not agree with this. Fortunately for us, our socialism is beautiful in all the stages of its historical incarnation. It does not hide behind a vampire's mask, and no particular effort is required to recognize it in the intensifying break with the old world, amid the tragic circumstances of the era. Such is our understanding of the ideal."[9] Fundamental incompleteness is the constructive principle of life-building. The life-builder cannot come to terms with the completion of the construction, since in this instance he would have to resign himself to his own superfluousness in "life." But by always seeing it as a "disgusting caricature" of the ideal, he allows the project to remain a project forever, thus substantiating his function as "project-maker."

When aesthetic plans come into contact with reality, they begin to live their own lives. Thus it happened with Bogdanov's utopia, which was required by the revolutionary era. Of course this utopia had arisen not only by repulsion from the "individualistic solipsism" of symbolist aesthetics, but also tangentially to the later ideas of Viacheslav Ivanov about a "people's theater." Ivanov's "theory of ecumenicity [*sobornost'*]" was an intracultural response to the situation (as opposed to Bogdanov's subcultural utopia). This theory obviously had the most direct influence on the theory and practice of Proletkult,[10] which would (in Pavel Markov's acute observation) "destroy the very concept of 'theatricality' and reject a division into spectators and actors—a division that blatantly contradicts the concept of common 'collective' creativity."[11] This process of turning spectators into actors (as well as turning readers into writers) is just what the strategy of "collective creativity" is.

Since the realization of this plan was fullest in Proletkult theater,[12] it is worth pausing to look at the "scenic aspect" of this "new ecumenicity." In 1918, Platon Kerzhentsev, one of Proletkult's leading theoreticians, published *Creative Theater* (*Tvorcheskii teatr*), which was to go through five editions by 1925. He asserted in this work that revolutionary theatrical art, which embodies and develops the "creative artistic instinct of the broad masses," does not require either full-time troupes or professional actors,

since workers themselves would be the creators of the new theater, as well as the participants in it (meanwhile "remaining in the factories, remaining workers . . . living close-knit with their class"). In this, "the principle of amateur work must be preserved to the highest degree possible."[13] Kerzhentsev saw this process of creation as follows:

> From among the plays written by the workers . . . a special jury will select all of the most valuable. Perhaps each block and each factory in the city will be granted the right to put on their choice of a play of their own dramatist's. The theater will not have professional troupes full time. Each play will have its own set of people chosen, those who want to act, directors, decorators, artists, and musicians. Or then again, troupes selected by individual unions, societies, factories, or blocks from among themselves, would alternate.
>
> Part of the decorations and props are made by school children, and the costumes are often homemade. An actor might put on a costume not only when he is rehearsing a role, but even wear it at home and on the street, to get used to it and identify himself with the part. . . .
>
> Rehearsals are open to all. . . . Rehearsals . . . train new cadres of experienced dramatists, actors, and decorators.
>
> When an opera is being staged, rehearsals popularize the tunes in advance and make the theater's work more accessible to the audience. Thanks to this, it becomes possible to pull the audience into the play during an opera or dramatic performance, to turn them into players, a chorus, part of the crowd acting on the stage.[14]

What we see here is a program for *deprofessionalizing art.* We could say that the essence of amateur theater, which according to the ideas of Proletkult ideologues was supposed to replace professional theater, is that "the performer always plays himself and is incapable of transformation," as the directors of the Working-Class Youth Theater explained.[15] So the actor is incapable of transforming himself, in other words, incapable of creating the fundamental event of theatrical activity. Thus theory was created according to the *new* event on the stage (or in literature)—not the other way around. According to this theory, theater should become "the masses' activity," and literature should acquire the nature of workers' rhythmic communal chants.

Throughout the era of revolutionary culture, one and the same contradiction is always at work: the norm of artistic comprehension (the receptive threshold) aspires to become the censor of the artistic process,[16] but the creative threshold of the creators of artistic texts gives rise to a norm that each time fails to correspond to the norm of artistic comprehension. This conflict was removed only in Socialist Realism.

This "removal" costs culture dearly, since culture in consequence has to return to a situation of *pre*-art. The traditional dynamic relations between professional art and the amateur creative work that always accompanies it are destroyed. A sort of marginal type of artistic activity takes shape in which the natural laws of folklore development operate: among these laws, according to V. B. Blok, a historian of amateur postrevolutionary theater, are "inseparability from everyday life [*byt*] and the utilitarianism connected with it; variability; collectivism and anonymity; canonization of performance and its variability; indivisibility and togetherness of performers and their audience in the act of creation/performance; regionality of dispersal."[17] The process of the folklorization of art, which Proletkult aesthetics led to, turned out to be mostly an uncontrolled process in the framework of *this* aesthetic program; and this became the real reason for the subsequent rejection of this aesthetic project. Nonetheless, the "injection" of folklore became fatal to the new art during the latter's Sovietization.

But perhaps even more significant is the fact that folklore is characterized by a completely unique status of the author and the recipient: it "primarily exists for the creators and performers themselves, for the masses themselves, and only after this for listeners and spectators."[18] Could this in fact *be* the most logical definition of "pure art"?

Let us also note that this kind of "unity of object and subject of artistic activity, of the object and subject of aesthetic experience" leads to a situation wherein "the aesthetic criterion for determination of the aesthetic value of works of folklore is found in folklore itself."[19] Is this not the problem that anyone who undertakes the analysis of a product of Socialist Realism comes up against?

One cannot but agree with V. B. Blok: "Without recognition of the reliance of the post-October artistic creativity of millions on a folkloric consciousness, one cannot study the connection between new amateur activities and traditional amateurism seriously."[20] One might boldly extend this idea: since amateurism exerted a most serious influence on Soviet "professional art," Soviet art itself cannot be seriously studied without an analysis of the connection between these phenomena.

The connection between the impersonal character of the new art and its preprofessionalism is not only (and perhaps is not even very) "ideological." It is not so much a matter of the internal logic of "ideas" as it is of their necessity to the times: the masses, drawn by revolution into far-ranging social creation, could not "rise" to art, and therefore art had to be "lowered" down to the masses. The theories that served this fundamental process can therefore be understood primarily as being extremely functional.

It is from just this functionality, that is, from the "pollination" of theories by life, that the radicalization of aesthetic projects proceeds; these proj-

ects quickly replace the former project-makers who are not prepared to "dive deeper into revolution." But revolution ("life") has its own requirements, and the appeal to "life" and condemnation of "individualistic art" in the name of "life" acquired an ominous nuance in the pronouncements of "life-builders": "As far as the conversations about violence are concerned, they are all trifles, childish twaddle. With violence we took political power from the bourgeoisie, and with violence we broke down [their] economic domination; and in the spiritual arena as well, we cannot avoid some violence. But this violence is not of the Party, nor of individual persons, rather it is the violence against the past of the new life being born. Violence of the same order as that of bourgeois ideology over the religious-scholastic thought of the Middle Ages." Even more definitively: "The petty bourgeois are not persuaded by articles and observations but by life, when it crushes them with its heavy tread."[21] It was in such terms that Valerian Lebedev-Polianskii, one of the leaders and theoreticians of Proletkult and afterward organizer and leader of Glavlit (1922–35),[22] "polemicized" against the Serapion Brothers. The evolution of the future academician from Proletkult leader to the country's chief censor was completely natural: Glavlit was after all the institutionalized victory of "life" over "individualistic creativity."[23] But "life" required a radical change of the viewpoint itself of art and the nature of creativity in order to bring this viewpoint into correspondence with the demands of what Lenin called "the lively creativity of the masses."

The first thing that had to be beaten down by the blows of "life" was the bastion of "beauty." Criticism of the bourgeois nature of earlier notions of beauty had its own strong tradition, which had poured forth in Russian aesthetics in the constant debate about "beauty and utility." The debate about the classical "legacy" was only a manifestation of this same struggle. Traditionally, only a few external "claims" to the "legacy," staked by the ideologues of the 1920s themselves, have been noted; but what concerns us here is only a rationalization of the basic contradiction of revolutionary culture: the complete discord between traditional notions of the nature of creativity and of the functions of art on the one hand, and the new functions "dictated by life" and the new "masses of creators" coming out to do creative work on the other.

There is no need to enumerate the arguments of the adepts of the new culture (be they Proletkultists or LEFists) against "the old junk":[24] "Nihilism with respect to the artistic legacy was the common thread that eclipsed the 'class' disagreements allegedly existing between Proletkult and the 'left front' and proclaimed by both."[25] This "allegedly" should be applied to any assessment of the nature of the disagreements between the "new" figures coming from the subculture (Proletkult) and those coming from tradition itself (LEF). Both groups operated with negativistic agendas: for example,

Proletkultists maintained that "the forms of classical art are acceptable, but its content is ideologically alien to the proletariat"; LEFists rejected "both form and content" of the classics, since both "extend their negativism even to the category of types and genres of the art of the past, and in general to art as a form of social consciousness."[26] Analysis of these agendas shows that in essence we are dealing with the same complex in both cases: the heirs' refusal to accept the classics is an expression of their powerlessness before them.

Powerlessness cannot yield a positive program. Hence the counter-agendas that can all be reduced to the attempt to conceal this fundamental complex. Negativistic programs have by their nature a compensatory character. The difference between the Proletkultists' "nihilism" and that of the LEFists was only that the former did not fully realize their powerlessness in relation to the classics they disdained, while the latter were completely aware of their own. This is why "Proletkult nihilism" was rather quickly overcome (in RAPP) when the authorities removed this complex by setting the new creators up in "literary training," but LEFist "nihilism" still remained irreparable: powerlessness before the classics is the beginning and end (or endlessness) of a modernist aesthetic project. In one way or another, the barrenness of these political-aesthetic programs, the synthesis of which yielded the thunderous hybrid of Socialist Realism, is the result of just this creative powerlessness from which they suffered.

Nonetheless, this deep-seated revolution-era dimension of aesthetic *programming* is often overshadowed by the external aspects of aesthetic *proclamations*. Thus Anatolii Mazaev, for example, attempts to give a psychological basis for Proletkult negativism:

> Feeling no support on the side of the Party, the Proletkultists saw the cohesion of the old world in close-up and were sincerely indignant when they read the old slogan lifted high by that side: "The proletariat is the barbarian of culture." They heard the names of Pushkin, Dostoyevsky, Tolstoy, Vrubel', and Rerikh mentioned in the arguments against "Red boors." The melancholy groans of the bourgeois intelligentsia and the former art [with] its words and colors flowed together into a single whole for Proletkult ideologues, and were inconceivably mixed up and confused. The unabated discussions in the pages of private-sector publications about the "bewitching story" and the "dreamland" to which painting, poetry, and theater allegedly lead the soul that was wearied by revolutionary shocks, tormented them. In their eyes, all of Russian culture and art was a sort of "mystical fantasy." And the confused mind of the Proletkult ideologues concluded: "Art is dangerous precisely because under bright clothes it . . . conceals the rotting body of bourgeois ideology . . ." The social/psychological complex, half comprised of devotion to

> revolution and its ideals and half of lack of faith and confusion in the face of the difficulties of socialist construction, was what engendered Proletkult's maximalist programs.[27]

(This explanation, in differing variants, can be found in a multitude of studies of proletarian culture undertaken by authors sympathetic to the leftist experiment.)

One could say, however, that the "social/psychological complex" that directly led Proletkultists to "rejection of the heritage" was not made up of "devotion to revolution and its ideals" nor of "lack of faith and confusion in the face of the difficulties of socialist construction," but rather of confusion when faced by the necessity to create, by their own unpreparedness to do so, and often by their own complete lack of talent as well, for the status of "classic" was always a desired but unattainable fruit for Proletkult.

Yes, "their whole aesthetic was infused with methods of compulsory education,"[28] but this education was for the recipient (the spectator or reader), who had to be compelled to prefer the amateur Working-Class Youth Theater to the Moscow Artistic Academic Theater, to prefer the graphomania of the "proletarian poets" to "classics." *Hence* the idea of rejection of art as such. This idea is an expression of the inability to compel the consumer to acknowledge the Proletkult product as a worthy replacement for the "classical heritage." Herein lie the sources of "LEFist nihilism" as well. Not "ideals" but the *interests* of the elites, the *struggle* to mold a consumer for their own products—this is what "dictated aesthetic programs" and determined the essential maximalism of these programs.

This is exactly how the slogans and warnings of the ideologues of impersonal creativity against a "program of democratization of art" read. "The objects of artistic creation are made as accessible as possible to everyone: concert halls, theaters, and painting galleries are filled with the working masses. Again people are 'immersed in contemplation,' they 'experience vicariously'—instead of understanding a poem as the first attempt to organize living human language, or the theater as the first stimulus to the rhythmics of the joint construction of life, and so on," Sergei Tret'iakov noted with distress.[29] And if a reader refused to accept a poem as an "attempt to organize living human language" or a spectator did not wish to see theater as a "stimulus to the rhythmics of the joint construction of life," at that point the idea of the rejection of art is born (first, only of the "classics," and then, when one's own efforts encounter the disapproval of the recipient, of art in general).

The traditional approach to the problem was formulated with amazing accuracy by the aforementioned Mazaev: "The subjectively sincere aspiration of the theoreticians of 'productionism' [*proizvodstvennichestvo*] to re-

move the breach between art and practical life, between professional creative work and amateur work, turns on a militant rejection of art as such; and the hunger for a 'new' culture, on its nihilistic simplification and on ignoring [both] the necessity of assimilating the greatest cultural values of the past and the very task of aesthetic education of the masses, a task which requires for its completion many years of tireless day-to-day work."[30] Nonetheless, Mazaev's own description of the process he calls "social myth-making" is itself just such a myth about the "subjectively sincere" "ardent revolutionaries." For the cause and effect relationship to correspond, this description *must be read in reverse*: from the unpreparedness (and inability) of the masses (no matter how many years of "tireless day-to-day work" are spent) to assimilate the "greatest cultural values of the past" arises the hunger for one's own creativity, a hunger that leads to nihilism with respect to the "classics"; and this leads further to rejection of professional creative work and to its replacement with amateur work, and further still, to the rejection of art as such; but on the surface (at the level of aesthetic manifestos), the issue is removal of "the breach between art and practical life."

Thus the trajectory was not from manifestos to an understanding of aesthetic projects and the political goals standing behind them, but rather from the new functions, goals, and understanding of art and creativity promoted by the era and its creators to an understanding of aesthetic plans and to an understanding that the manifestos were intended not so much to disclose as to *conceal* the problems addressed by their ideologue authors.

For example, the Proletkult slogan "'Beauty' has been pushed aside by 'His Majesty Labor'" should not of course be taken literally. It should be read thus: since we cannot create "Beauty," we abolish it and convince consumers that "beauty" is by far not the main thing in art. But when such art (without the "beauty" that mass taste demanded) ends up being repudiated by the consumer, the declaration is made that art itself must be abolished as well. There is no other meaning in such slogans: the Proletkult utopia did not "independently mature in the bosom of proletarian romanticism,"[31] rather this romanticism was itself the veil that concealed the difficult battle of the advocates of a "different beauty" for a place in literature and art.

Rejection of the classics was not well thought-out aesthetically by the Proletkult theoreticians: they had nothing to contrast to the "beauty" they had "pushed aside." Later, the RAPP ideologues would realize that nothing was needed to contrast to it, for Merezhkovskii was right when he asserted in the symbolist manifesto already cited: "The predominant taste of the mob has until now been for realism. Artistic materialism corresponds to scientific and moral materialism. The vulgar aspect of rejection, the absence of a higher, ideal culture, and civilized barbarianism amid the grandiose inventions of technology—all this has imposed a peculiar stamp on the relation-

ship of the contemporary mob to art."[32] If we discard the tone of this observation, its essence can be summed up: "classical beauty" ("realism," in Merezhkovskii's terms, or "philistinism" in those of Proletkult and LEF ideologues) is exactly what the masses like, and therefore one should not "kick the chair" out from under the poet. On the contrary, the chair should be steadied by taking away the contradiction between beauty and utility.

Anatolii Lunacharskii would define this precisely when he had abandoned "life-building" fantasies:

> We have no need to fear the word "utilitarianism." The petty philistine time impose[d] its own nickel-and-dime [*vershkovye i groshovye*] features on its own "utility." But for us every utility, even the smallest one, is ultimately related to a gigantic usefulness—namely, to socialist construction in its entirety. For us, being useful does not at all mean being lowered from the height of great ideology to some kind of service to dreary everyday needs; on the contrary, being useful means for us being included in social life in one of its most beautiful, most decisive moments in the history of mankind. Being useless means for our times being cast out of the only important thing, the only magnificent thing—out of our construction. And no matter what masks might cover such uselessness, it will in any case be seen as crippled and feeble under the light-rays of the new world—the world of our socialist dawn.[33]

Socialist Realism would become this kind of new dawn, and in its synthesis the contradiction between beauty and utility would finally be removed.

However, for the meantime, "beauty" ("the classics") remained the principal target of Proletkult aesthetic counterprogramming. After all, the "Art of the Future" had to be accommodated on this "battleground," and these very places, those of the "generals of the classics," had to be occupied by new creators. These creators and their ideologues rejected the classics and classical authors to the constant accompaniment of assertions of *their own* right to occupy their places. There was a theoretical basis for this as well, of course, developed in Bogdanov's philosophy, wherein "psychoideology" constituted the essence of art, which in and of itself rejected the possibility of an author having a conscious position (not to mention the possibility of his having a class reorientation). Bogdanov's complete equation of existence and consciousness led to, as Larisa Novozhilova has said, a "fatal" determination of all the levels of consciousness and the entire psychological life of a person (including an artist) by his social origin or the "class composition of his blood."[34] And from Bogdanov's conclusion that an artist cannot in principle switch over to the ideology of a different class followed his pronouncement: "In poetry even less than in politics, should the proletariat count on allies who come from outside."[35] Later this idea became propitious and fell into the hands of organizers and ideologues:

Pavel Bessal'ko: "Proletarian culture is created by *workers themselves*, and not by intelligentsia who whether or not by chance have caught up with the ideas of the proletariat."[36]

In the slogans of Proletkult's International Bureau: "If we recognize the relatively important task of the soonest possible development of self-organization of the emotions [*sic*] of proletarian art, then this can be carried out by *the proletariat itself*: it must itself bring out its own scholars, writers, poets, painters, artists, etc."[37]

Valerian Lebedev-Polianskii: "The intelligentsia promotes very few artist-painters, poets, dramatists, and belle-lettrists; *the proletariat itself* takes on this role more often, rising from the depths and lower strata. The intelligentsia communist creates his images by observing the worker's life, by acquiring his material, so to speak, secondhand; the working-class writer directly embodies his own experiences, feelings, apprehensions, and ideas into images. . . . A new literature can be created only by the working class and the peasantry" (the latter, however, only so far as "it plays a colossal role in the life of our country").[38]

Valerian Pletnev: "The foundation of proletarian artistic culture is for us the proletarian artist *with a pure class outlook.* And we put the creation of such a proletarian artist at the cornerstone of creation of our proletarian culture."[39]

Pletnev's proclamation that art was "dying out" ("It is time to put . . . art into the curiosity cabinet, for the edification of posterity: 'look at it, children' and do not create nonsense in general, particularly artistic-critical nonsense")[40] was to become a peculiar rationalization of Proletkult's fear of the impossibility of creating a homunculus with a "pure . . . outlook." But the very premise according to which "an artist of the old world cannot and will not be an artist of the revolution"[41] revealed the prospect of creating a proletarian artist who would "simultaneously be *both an artist and a worker.*" Lenin's laconically expressive label of the latter statement was "Drivel." So yet again both "rightist" and "leftist" criticism of Proletkult must be reexamined.

Lenin's attitude toward Bogdanov was (to put it in the mildest terms) jealously malevolent. But even if we put aside this attitude, even if we discount Lenin's personal tastes, who by his own admission regarded the "aesthetic nihilism" of Proletkult and LEF ideologues with "merciless hostility,"[42] we would do well to remember that Lenin's criticism was primarily the criticism of someone in power. Lenin also disagreed with Bogdanov about the main thing—the revolution that brought Lenin to the apex of power (Bogdanov's evaluation of the revolution was cited above). Lenin, as opposed to Bogdanov, was neither an idealist nor a utopianist, but primarily a politician (and consequently a pragmatist). He (as opposed to Bogdanov) cherished no illusions in his attitude to the masses in general, and to the Russian proletariat in particular. In the article in *Pravda* that began the

breakup of Proletkult, taken directly from Lenin's own words by Iakov Iakovlev and edited by Lenin himself, the *fundamental* argument against the theory of proletarian culture is characteristic: the masses, including the proletariat, are at an extremely low level of culture, and consequently there can be no question of the proletariat's "conquest of avant-garde positions in culture." Lenin's dictum was not to "create," but to "study, study, and study." As a clear-minded politician who well understood what "the lively creativity of the masses" *meant,* Lenin saw the necessity of constant rigid direction of this creativity. And although Lenin did not have a positive cultural agenda (credit for developing one in the Soviet era undoubtedly belongs to Stalin), it is well known what he would *not* accept (his agenda in fact amounted to "culture-mongering" [*kul'turnichestvo*], essentially from the intelligentsia tradition, but cruelly Bolshevist in its methods).

Be that as it may, Lenin considered the masses appearing at the forefront the least likely candidates for creators of "new culture," not to mention "new art." His attitude toward art was traditionalist, if not to say conservative. In a famous conversation with Clara Zetkin, he expressed this quite clearly when discussing the mass-oriented holiday pageants so beloved by Proletkult and all leftist art: "As far as pageants go—let them have them! I don't object. But don't let them forget meantime that pageants are not genuine great art, but rather more or less pretty entertainment. . . . Surely our workers and peasants deserve something more than pageants."[43] However, these same "workers and peasants" could not create "something more," and consequently, as Lenin saw it, the creation of "genuine great art" remained in the hands of professionals.

Nor was Lenin a "toady to the people." In the same conversation with Zetkin, his democratism went only far enough to state that "art belongs to the people": it must "go out into the very thick of the broad laboring masses with its own most profound roots. It must be understandable to these masses and loved by them. It must unite the feelings, thinking, and will of these masses, and uplift them. It must stimulate their artists and develop them."[44] But at the same time art is a phenomenon located *outside* the masses, and "we must direct it according to a plan" and "shape its results."[45] Furthermore, in the aforementioned canonical text of Lenin's opinions about art, there is a mistake that was discovered only in the 1970s. There was an incorrect translation (from German) of the phrase "it [art] must be *understandable to* the masses," while in fact Lenin had said that art "must be *understood by* the masses" (emphases mine).[46] The first variant speaks of art (and the level of its accessibility) and the second, of the masses (and the level of their capability to understand art). Meanwhile, beginning with the Central Committee's 1925 resolution "On the Policy of the Party in the Area of Artistic Literature" (*"O politike partii v oblasti khudozhestvennoi liter-*

atury"), art and its "accessibility for the masses" are central, which of course little accords with Lenin's artistic traditionalism.

Quite another matter is criticism of Proletkult "from the left," from Trotsky, which combines the most clear-minded political and organizational calculation with a truly ineradicable utopianism. Trotsky rejected proletarian culture, not of course because (as was maintained in the Soviet era) "he did not believe in the strength of the proletariat," but on the contrary because he, even more than Proletkultists, overestimated this strength: "in the era of dictatorship, there is no need to speak of the creation of new culture, i.e., of the construction of a supreme historical standard; but the cultural construction incomparable with anything past, which will begin when the necessity for the iron vise of the dictatorship passes away, will no longer have a class-oriented nature. Hence we should generally conclude that not only is there no proletarian culture, but there also will be none; and there is truly no reason to regret this: the proletariat seized power specifically to do away with class-oriented culture forever and to pave the way for a human culture."[47]

The boundaries within which the Proletkult utopia developed lay between these two extremes. The central problem of this utopia was the "creative personality." *The act of transcending the personality of the creator was the fundamental collision of the Proletkult drama.* The world of the Proletkult utopia was a truly artistic world. Within it, the harmony between strictly artistic discourse and aesthetic-project discourse was truly remarkable. We find an identical conception of the "proletarian/creator" in both the artistic products and the aesthetic manifestos of the Proletkult poets (they were of course ideologues as well). But besides that, this reflected an attempt at an idealized self-portrait. This trinity (character—author of the future—idealized self-portrait) imbues the Proletkult utopia with a truly rare aesthetic completeness. In this trinity, the author is a character in his own artistic product and simultaneously a modeled projection of the "artist of the future."

Aleksei Gastev's proletarian who "grows out of iron," for example, in no way differs from the images invoked by Gastev in articles about Proletkult's creative work, wherein it was stated that the proletarian (and consequently the proletarian artist) "does not have an individual human face, but even has normalized footsteps, faces [*sic*] without expressions, a soul deprived of lyricism, emotion measured not by a shout or laughter, but by a manometer and taxometer"; this was because Proletkult artists were "moving toward an unprecedentedly objective demonstration of things, of mechanized crowds and of an astounding open grandiosity which knows nothing intimate and lyrical."[48] When Gastev suggested the introduction of mechanization "even into intimate life, down to the level of the aesthetic, mental, and sexual demands of the proletariat," stating that the proletarian, "no matter where he works: in Germany, San Francisco, Australia, Siberia . . . has

only common psychological formulas" that compress any psychological processes "into a complicated patterned complex," when he insisted that "a striking anonymity that allows one to qualify an individual proletarian unit as A, B, or C, or as 325, 075, and 0, etc." is characteristic of proletarian psychology, when he predicted that "this tendency will imperceptibly create the impossibility of individual thinking, being transformed into the objective psychology of an entire class with systems of psychological switching-on, switching-off, and short-circuiting," and when he concluded, "The manifestations of this mechanized collectivism are so alien to personality, so anonymous, that the movements of these collectives/complexes come close to being the movement of things," he had completed the creation of the homunculus that was simultaneously character and author.[49] Also in accordance with this idea, Valerian Pletnev demanded that stock be taken of "the value of *an individual as a little screw in the system* of the grandiose machine of the USSR,"[50] suggesting an agenda for an art whose author (this "individual/little screw") would change all the spheres of artistic creativity in a radical way.[51]

In his article against Pletnev, Iakov Iakovlev wrote that for Pletnev, "proletarian culture is something like a chemical reagent that can be obtained in the retort of Proletkult."[52] This tradition of regarding Proletkult as a kind of "laboratory," which goes back to the early 1920s and exists even today, must finally be reexamined.

The Proletkult idea of the "mechanical person/artist" was itself a product of the era of laboratory experimentation. It is no less utopian than, for example, Lenin's "plan of monumental propaganda." We must finally admit that this was not "pure research": a rigid "social mandate" was at work. Proletkult accepted the challenge and provided a distinctly articulated foundation for the "lively creativity of the masses" before the latter's entrance into the phase of "socialist construction." And if this project looks like a utopia, or alchemy, then the issue is not the project but rather the project makers: what today appears to be pure fantasy had completely defined sociopsychological premises that to this day have not been recognized. At issue was the founding of an aesthetic "based on oneself," the creation of an art by the cultivation of the kind of aesthetic norms wherein the "mechanical man" would be accepted as a "creator." From our latter-day perspective, it is clear that the problem being solved was programmed from the beginning to have a negative result, a fact that these very "hostages of the times" sometimes understood as well; they often failed to distinguish fully between the characters they themselves created ("artists of the future") and their own self-portraits. Hence their frequently amazing blindness.

This can be seen in Gastev, when he supposed that the portrait of the proletarian he painted was the portrait of an artist. His portrait is both an artistic image and an aesthetic treatise at the threshold of a new art that he

saw as "an unprecedentedly objective demonstration of things, of mechanized crowds and of an astounding open grandiosity which knows nothing intimate and lyrical."[53] Even this picture, which today is shown as an image of "groundlessness," "alchemy," and "aesthetic reductionism," was understood by Gastev (who had even discussed "our classic artists of the people,"meaning presumably the self-taught authors) to be a *complex* one: "From the aspect of the internal content of new proletarian art we must proceed to the discovery of . . . complex growing psychological experiences."[54]

It is actually an extremely complicated exercise to imagine the artist who was being constructed by the Proletkult planners. The modeling of creative work without creators, despite all its "iron logic," was amazingly defective. It is difficult to imagine that people theorizing about the problems of art understood its essence *so little;* it is hard to believe that people themselves occupied with creative work felt its nature *so little.* In the Proletkult context, separating creators from ideologues has no meaning—practically all its theoreticians were themselves authors. One can only suppose that the source of this lack of understanding and feeling was the organic origins of their creative work. One can only suppose as well that there was not a massive blinding involved, but rather above all a fight for the place in culture that was "promised" by the Revolution, "promised" by the social upheaval that brought the masses into collective creative activity. The radicalism of the projects was supposed to compensate for the lack of the necessary prerequisites for creative activity. But the disparity of the results of this activity to the classical ideal that was so sought after and so unattainable, and hence rejected and maligned, led to ideas of "abolition of art"—the clearer the lack of perspective in the fight, the more radical the rejection of art as such (specifically because of this, it seems, Proletkult theoreticians developed a great weakness for "productionist" ideas, according to which art was replaced by the making of utilitarian "things" [*veshchi*]). This is especially apparent in Bogdanov's theoretical constructs.

To the traditional understanding of the nature of creativity, Bogdanov contrasted an understanding of the creative process in which any specificity of artistic creation properly speaking was removed: "In the sphere of artistic creation, old culture is characterized by indistinctness and failure to acknowledge methods ("inspiration" and the like), by the isolation of these methods from those of labor practice, from methods of creation in other areas. Although the proletariat is still only making its first steps in this area, its general characteristic tendencies are already clearly noticeable. Monism is revealed in the effort to fuse art with working life, to make art the tool of its activist/aesthetic transformation in all respects."[55] Accordingly, there is no difference between the "methods of art" and the methods of any other "labor": "The methods of proletarian creative work have their grounding in

the methods of proletarian labor, i.e., of the type of work that is typical of workers in the newest large-scale industry."[56] Bogdanov's twelve theses on the "paths of proletarian creative work" are in this sense a quite complete exemplar of "aesthetic reductionism."

Bogdanov's construction is as follows. Any kind of creativity is a type of labor, and furthermore "there is not, nor can there be, a strict boundary between creativity and simply labor." "Human labor is always *collective*. . . . Creative work is also like this." "All methods of labor, including creative work as well, lie within the same framework." The "nature of effort" is everywhere the same—"neural-muscular." At the heart of proletarian creative work lies a removal of "partitions between workers; and with this uniformity the actual concertedness of labor becomes the basis for *comradely*, i.e., consciously collective, relations between them." Consequently, "the methods of proletarian labor are developing in the direction of *monism and deliberateness.* And in the same direction, naturally, the methods of proletarian creative work are taking shape." Hence, "deliberate collectivism is transforming the whole meaning of the artist's work by giving it new stimuli. The earlier artist saw a manifestation of his own individuality in his labor; the new one will understand and feel that in it and through it a great whole—the collective—is creating something." Such a "realization of collectivism" will, while developing, lead to "unmediated collectivism in creative work, i.e., to the direct collaboration of many in it, to the level of mass creative work."[57]

In assessing Bogdanov's theory, one should first of all consider its functionality. It was not some sort of abstract ("alchemical") theory. On the contrary, it was a theory based on specific creators. Its meaning is only that it elevated the graphomania of illiterate Proletkult studio poets to the status of literature, the amateurish work of Proletkult theatrical studios to the level of theater, and the like. In such a way, according to Proletkult recipes, a workers' chant was proclaimed to be poetry, a mass pageant to be a theatrical presentation, and the like.

This "agitation by the ruins" constituted the true essence of the Proletkult theory of creation. But all the discussions about "labor" (a word that, as Mazaev so precisely put it, "wormed its way" into Proletkult theories[58]), and the widely proclaimed aspiration to orient art to the proletariat, were only the sound effects behind which Proletkult theoreticians "excluded aesthetic enjoyment from the arsenal of art and of aesthetic science."[59] The purpose of this aesthetic revolution was to "facilitate the vulgar replacement of genuine art by 'ersatz art.'"[60] But let us draw away from evaluational characterizations such as "genuine art" and "ersatz art"—the *purpose* of the replacement is defined quite accurately by Mazaev.

It is clear, therefore, that creative work itself must also be evaluated in categories of labor processes. Proletkult criticism constantly speaks of "methods of treatment," "mastering of expertise" (*ovladenie masterstvom*),

"technical training," "use of devices," "assimilation," "application," and other such technical aspects of creative work, which should be as it were "applied" to "inner self-expression"; but "outwardly," as Proletkult theoreticians supposed, art "forms of itself."[61] Or, put another way, "Only when the internal process of creation is completed by the necessity of manifesting an idea . . . do the form and technique of art act as a secondary stage."[62]

The contradiction lay in the fact that on the one hand Proletkult theoreticians (as opposed to their RAPPist successors) had no intention of involving themselves in "training" or "mastering of expertise" ("No, 'older brother,' " Bessal'ko argued with Gorky, "the working-class writer should not study, but create. That is, manifest himself, his originality, and his class essence").[63] On the other hand, it was maintained that one "must discard as a bourgeois prejudice [the idea] that only those who are 'burned by the holy word' and who are endowed with a special gift of inspiration can occupy themselves with literature. Talent of course remains talent, but the majority in literature are simple possessors of contemporary technique."[64] Here the Proletkultists' real understanding of art is expressed rather frankly. They already proclaimed talent an "unnecessary thing," but their thinking did not yet extend to "literary training."

Among other reasons, art still failed to "form" because in Proletkult theory the most important issues of "the creative process" nonetheless remained unresolved. Although they saw the writer/worker "not as prophet, not as leader, but as articulator of his class" and asserted that "intuition and the subconscious play an enormous role in creativity," Proletkultists nonetheless explained the uncontrolled subconscious via "consciousness": "For an intelligentsia communist writer, subconscious experience often contradicts already-acknowledged experience, but for a working-class writer, it is more often in harmony, since his subconsciousness and consciousness are fed by a single medium, in the factory and plant, while the intelligentsia person has much petty-bourgeois experience."[65] Preference was given of course (by virtue of his greater conscientiousness) to the working-class writer, who should know that comprehension and reflection in art are impossible "without verification by consciousness, moreover by a harmonious and steadfast consciousness. . . . The results of comprehension require verification and often correction" (on the part of consciousness).[66] The pre-eminence of consciousness was directly tied in Proletkult thinking to Bogdanov's "psychoideology," which doomed the author to passivity. But therefrom followed the conclusion of the inevitability of the working-class writer's final victory in the course of the cultural fight against the intelligentsia. Here also, theory demonstrated its utility: at issue was not the unconsciousness at all, but rather the development of one more argument advantageous to the victory of "their own."

And so every time we examine any of the theses of the aesthetic agen-

das of the revolutionary era, we will invariably see their profound functionality. There was no requirement whatsoever that one or another stance be true or false, nor that it be at all logical. The chief thing was that it serve in the fight with one's opponents, becoming (as in RAPP) one of the series of alternating slogans.

The "collectivism" that permeated both the creations of Proletkultists and their theory of creativity was aimed primarily against the "individualism" that reigned in earlier aesthetic theories and practices, and "against the creative personality," in the words of Osip Brik, whose stance we have yet to examine. Collective creativity is literally impersonal creativity. Proletkult ideologues did not of course immediately arrive at such an understanding of it. At first, it was only a coup against "individualism," which in their opinion led to "degeneration" and "literary disintegration." The radicalization of the idea of collective creativity was an expression of the crisis of the Proletkult theory and practice of creativity. Brought to life by revolution, these ideas reached their peak in the civil war era; but afterward, having been all used up, they were no longer in accord with "the demands of life."

In a concrete (for literature) exposition, these ideas (by now in the hands of organizers) appeared approximately as follows in a description by Platon Kerzhentsev in the journal *Proletarskaia kul'tura* (Proletarian culture). In an article on the "organization of literary creative work," he attempted to prove the "historical inevitability" of the new ways of organizing the creative process. In the era of serfdom, he pointed out, an author would write in the minutes of a rest period, which induced "sluggishness and lack of planning in the creative process," and consequently "the work of a writer had a sort of incidental, orderless, disorganized character" (the favorite example: Goncharov took ten years to write each of his novels); hence the "individualistic isolation" of writers who "knew almost nothing of editorial control and direction, nor of collective literary work."[67] Only the bourgeois stratum introduced systematization into this chaotic process. Periodical publications, especially newspapers, "required a strict adherence to plan and coordination of work, and created an analogy of the factory for writers." The idea of the "factory" was of course dear to Kerzhentsev, as was the idea of impersonal collectivism, for after all it was particularly in newspaper work that "an element of collectivism in creative work is manifested with particular power." Besides, "an individual staff member of the newspaper, be it an editor, 'feature writer,' chronicler, or correspondent, totally loses his individuality, even his name."[68]

From Kerzhentsev's viewpoint, it was just such conditions that were the closest to those of socialism. As a result, "the place of the office, where literary work proceeds in complete isolation, will be occupied by a literary studio in which the separate parts of the creative process will be done by various persons, but with complete internal coordination. . . . The proletarian

studio, operating in the spirit of the socialist ideal, will publish collective works."[69] At the foundation of "genuinely unmediated creative work, collective authorship" would be criticism. "In accordance with an absurd tradition and bourgeois stagnation, [a writer] never answers to criticism, and what is more, never reworks his artistic products under the influence of remarks made" by the critic; but the proletarian studio, on the contrary, "aspires by means of criticism of the works it reads to introduce a certain corrective into the work of a particular fellow member. It intervenes in the still unfinished writing work of an author, and expects a most lively response from him to its observations and directions. The comembers of the studio, in doing criticism, themselves add links to the chain of elements that create a work. . . . Between the writer's office and the editor or typesetter's will stand a studio or other critical collective crucible which will subject the work to a purifying ordeal by fire."[70]

Proletkult, however, was to go further in reforming the creative process. Simple development of the attainments of bourgeois culture turned out to be insufficient. The activities of the studios, as Kerzhentsev saw it, should decisively destroy the "bastion of individualism."

> The first thing is the choice of a theme, a plot, an assignment. Many authors possess a peculiar ability to seek out a gratifying plot, combined with a complete inability to develop it more or less tolerably [*snosno*]. Let them give their themes to others. Let these themes and plots, and maybe individual parts of these plots as well (scenes, pictures, episodes, different types and situations), enter the studio. Others will mine from this treasury of inventions; these themes will be developed by everyone who feels attracted to them.
>
> The themes themselves will be subject to discussion and critical evaluation. Thereby the form that will be most suitable for this or that conception will be noted, of course in its most general features. One plot will be suitable for a drama, another would be better used for a short story; this theme is good for a story, that one for a poem. . . .
>
> Right here, during the studio sessions, some themes will be converted into literary works. Right then and there the staff of the studio, in the room next door, will draft a poem, short story, or scene based on the theme in question, and these works, still incomplete, unfinished, will be brought out again for the studio's discussion, analyzed, corrected, and maybe finished by some other person or persons.[71]

Thus, in the minds of the Proletkult organizers, creative work would take place "'in the open,' with the participation of others, with comradely cooperation of listeners and coauthors." Thus was to be born the "collective work marked with a stamp of internal unity and artistic value."[72]

So the idea of a new type of creativity had been deduced from the

chain of Bogdanov's axioms: proletarian art is an "organizational act that unites the links of the living chain more strongly, and consolidates the unity of the host of laborers"; "the beauty of a work of art is the unity of the creative effort whereby it is created."[73] This unity is in "laborers' militant comradeship." The goal of proletarian art is the "development of a new human type, harmoniously whole and free from the former narrowness engendered by the 'splitting' of the person into specialties, free from the individual isolation of will and feeling engendered by economic disparity and battle"; the further goal is to "move away from a haphazard creative work to a conscientious one, from the individual to the collective." In order to do this, "we must fully mine the old ways of creativity": "harmony is not possible for a personality in any way other than in labor for the collective good, when, moreover, one regards one's own business as the fruit of collective efforts assembled into one."[74]

All of these definitions and recipes for creative work are given in the laconic language of commands. And they were, in fact, a "guide to action," or, more precisely, regulations that while formulated by ideologues were in fact created by an organization of people with specific goals. The goals would become perfectly clear when, as a result of mutations and internal breakdowns, "proletarian culture" would enter the RAPPist stage of development, in which many of Bogdanov's early ideas would be branded as "leftist"—and when another theory of creativity would be advanced, at the heart of which however would lie the same idea of the impersonal nature of art and artistic creativity, only arranged in a new way.

Chapter Three

RAPP: The Aesthetics of Restraint; or, Worldview as Creation

IDEAS REQUIRED by the times begin to move according to their own orbits with a constant acceleration—and they become radicalized. This process is distinctly visible in the situation we are examining. In theories of creation, revolutionary culture rationalizes and objectivizes itself, and in them one can discern a not unsuccessful attempt at self-realization and self-identification of the subject of revolutionary creation. In this sense, the theories of creation developed in Proletkult, the Smithy, "October,"[1] and RAPP are the peculiar "legs" of a single long journey. On an institutional level, this is a constant process of branching off: a group of the most radical poets who realize that the path of Proletkult, which is becoming one of the structures of the People's Commissariat of Enlightenment, is not theirs, breaks off and forms the Smithy. Then a group of young poets and ideologues, seeing that the Smiths are not prepared to "dive deeper into the revolution" in the NEP era but instead are casting ever farther from the Party's new line, branches off from the Smithy. Thus the Young Guard [*Molodaia gvardiia*] is formed, and afterward "October," organizations that in fact advance proletarian literature into the bosom of authority and in return attain Party support. Thus RAPP is born.

But these organizational disturbances were only the outward signs of profound mutations in revolutionary culture. Without doubt, this process reached a fundamentally important point in RAPP: here, at last, was born the "Party-minded literature" that had been modeled by Lenin two decades earlier. For the first time, a breach in revolutionary culture was made; a window into the future, into a Soviet culture, into Socialist Realism, was opened. Finally, the Party replaced an independent class; an all-controlling authority replaced the capricious masses. The era of self-determining ideologues was drawing to a close.

This process *was not imposed on* revolutionary culture. It matured in this culture, although adepts of the culture were not aware of the transition. Only very few were able to recognize the reasons for this culture's crisis. Among these few was Aleksandr Voronskii. In a 1923 article on the prose

writers and poets of the Smithy, he had already seen the connection of the Smiths with Proletkult and with Bogdanov's conception of creativity, and had spoken of the individualism and subjectivism of the "cosmists" who dissolved the ego into the collective and the cosmos, and had rejected their right to "present this cosmism . . . as the only genuine, only real new proletarian attitude."[2] From the viewpoint of "Marxist communism," Voronskii correctly discerned in the Proletkult doctrine that the Smithy was trying to fortify and develop a crisis of subjectivism and arbitrariness (which led the Bogdanov wing of Proletkult, and later the Smithy as well, away from the State). Behind the "beautiful acathistuses, beautiful psalms and glorifications,"[3] Voronskii saw something unnoticed by his contemporaries: "Revolutionary phraseology—the dissolution of personality into the collective, into the cosmos—cannot . . . hide the true content of these ideas. Their roots are mystical and individualistic. In essence we are dealing with a flight from one's own ego, a striving to lean on something big and all-encompassing because of one's own orphaned state, a desire to escape from life's contradictions, from struggle, and from the thick of everyday life."[4]

It would be difficult, it seems, to choose a more exact image: *leaning on something big.* The "something big" was authority, embodied in the Party. *Thus* RAPPist doctrine was born.

The Smithy, continuing Proletkult tradition, relied on an amorphous "class" (a word that increasingly was being transformed to justify the Party's authority), not seeing that this reliance was becoming, as Voronskii said, ever more "mystical." The Smithy took Proletkult doctrine to its logical conclusion by casting Bogdanov's maxims about collective creativity into a formula: "The artist is the creative medium of his class . . . [and] a function of the proletariat." In this regard, the Smiths understood the function of the "medium" literally: "As much as a class can breathe into its chest for life-building, as much as it can hold to give form to what is comprehended, it breathes out and shapes via its artist. Proletarian art is a prism wherein the face of the class is concentrated, a mirror in which the working masses look at themselves, at what they have gone through and created, at what is being created and at the future."[5]

However, precisely at the boundaries of the most radical aesthetic doctrines, the "readiness" of these programs for mutation is especially visible. In an extreme Smithy assertion —"there are no goals of personality in the broad sense of this word: there are only the goals of the class"[6]—everything needed to transcend these theories of creativity was already present (as was, in fact, everything needed to take them into a more radical phase). After all, one needed only to refuse the Smiths the right (as Voronskii did) to pass off their own "attitude" as "the only genuine, only real new proletarian attitude" in order for the "class" to be replaced by what could express this "proletar-

ian attitude" in the best form—the Party. The widely held thesis that the Proletkultists "politicized aesthetics" should not of course be understood literally. Strictly speaking, their aesthetics were in fact politics. That is the way revolutionary political literature is. Soviet (Party-minded) literature is based on the separation of politics from the artist. One can say that Soviet culture is a depoliticized culture, for real political relations, that is, relations of power, are taken completely beyond the limits of the artist's creativity and are given over to the Party. Proletkult, as embodied in its most principled activists united in the Smithy, could not cross this boundary, which doomed it to perish at the threshold of Soviet (Party-minded) literature.

The entire evolution of the Smithy "on creative issues" remained a movement within the old class paradigm, with aspirations toward real political creativity. The drama of the situation, however, was that the era of "political creativity" was drawing to a close. The Smiths were found to be unprepared for further drift and were therefore doomed. "The detachment did not notice the loss of a soldier"—more flexible fighters took up the banner that had been dropped to advance it. Nonetheless, the days of the RAPPists, who supposed that they would take up the banner to the end, were also numbered. In 1932, when it became clear that the new standard-bearers were taking the banner to the wrong peak, authority took its leave of them as well. As Stalin said in 1917, pouncing on Gorky's *Untimely Thoughts* [*Nesvoevremennye mysli*], "revolution can neither pity nor bury its corpses."[7]

All the same, the Smithy remained a RAPPist shadow, no matter what the sun's position, lying to the "left" of RAPP. This "frozen" state doomed the Smithy to marginality in the literary process as early as the mid-1920s. But then RAPP was accused of betraying the class purity of Proletkult doctrine: "On the one side, the RAPPist 'theory' of creativity grew up with feeble intelligentsia imitation, with bourgeois decadence, and on the other, with futuristic déclassé hackwork. This fact bespeaks their lack of principles, the result of which was that the only way out was the opportunism of the Onlitguardists."[8]

Meanwhile, the theory of creativity that was being developed in the Smithy was a real bridge to "Party-minded literature."

It was first a matter of their understanding of the nature of art: "To be able to see the unadorned truth of our heroic reality—this is the fundamental, foremost task of proletarian art . . . We interpret the art of seeing not as the art of 'revealing direct impressions of reality from underneath the dross and so forth,' in so doing surpassing its [reality's—*Trans.*] 'commonplace, philistine' aspect, but as the art of all-round cognition of reality, of genuine penetration into its gigantic world of thoughts, feelings, and will."[9] This assertion was directed against RAPPist "amateurism" in discussing the

"cognitive" character of art. As is well known, RAPP was obliged to reject the theory of "direct impressions" (about which more later) not least of all because this theory led them away from both "heroic reality" and from the Party line that dialectically combined "the truth of life" with "revolutionary romanticism." Such a "balancing act" was always "uncontrollable" in revolutionary culture—the merger of the principles of "typification" and of Party-mindedness would take place only in Socialist Realism; only in it would the necessary alloy be produced.

Second, at issue was the Smiths' solution to the problem of the roles of the conscious and the subconscious in the creative process. Here the Smiths preferred the conscious, or more precisely, "conscientiousness" (from which RAPPist "restraint" was only a step away), viewing the "first distinctive feature of proletarian literature" as "a conscientious attitude toward one's surroundings, the striving to reshape the chaos of life into an organized force capable of developing according to a plan. Proletarian literature begins where the unconscientious attitude toward the world ends."[10]

Third, the Smiths' understanding of the role of individuality in the creative process, one that was close to the Proletkult understanding, led to this assertion: "Talent first and foremost bespeaks the class's manifestation of its brightest creative forces. Beyond the achievements of the class, there is no talent."[11] Such an understanding of "talent" was based on the understanding of the nature of "creative labor" that had already been expressed in the Smithy's first manifesto: "Similar to the way that you will better and more quickly fashion a new form out of a new material . . . if you know where and how to hammer material in general, so also in poetic technique [*masterstvo*] we must become skilled hands at higher organizational technical means and methods, and only then will we fashion our thoughts and feelings into original poetic forms, will we create original proletarian poetry."[12] "Become skilled hands at . . . technical means" was a recurring theme of the programs that espoused the conception of impersonal creation, from Proletkult and the Smithy, up to LEF. But only RAPP would methodically shape it into the slogan "learn from the classics" and would make it a practice in their "circles"; and Socialist Realism would bring it to life, putting "literary training" on the conveyor belt.

Fourth and finally, the Smithy's theory and practice are distinguished by a "programmatic" aestheticization of reality: "Poetry is the practical work of the proletariat. . . . Daily creative work, hourly adaptation of world conditions to oneself and adaptation of oneself as a builder to them, this amazing virtuosic mastery of organizing and destroying, this practical work of creating is the poetry of the proletariat. Its practical work is its poetry."[13] And this was a true step toward RAPPist "opportunism," toward union with LEF, and toward the later RAPPist idea of "polytechnicization of the writer."

Thus the authorities' not unsuccessful attempt to subordinate Proletkult led to the exodus of the most radical proletarian poets from it, and to the formation of the Smithy, but the gulf between the "proletarian state" and the "proletarian poet" could not remain forever, partly because of the nature of the "proletarian state" itself, which strove to swallow up any enclaves of autonomy, and partly because of the nature of "proletarian creativity," from which the creative personality had been removed already at the Proletkult stage. It was inevitable that this gulf was to be bridged. Indeed, nothing stood in the way of bridging it: the support of authority was assured, and the "artist," being a "medium" deprived of freedom (and not a creator), was also unable to oppose the process. Under such conditions, Onguardism was doomed to triumph.[14]

"Leaning on" the Party was not, however, so simple; the Party took up an extremely pragmatic position in the struggle between the groups and was in no hurry to ally itself with any one of them in particular—the more so with one so aggressively divisive of the "literary front" as the Onguardists were.[15] Since the Party line was not yet "monolithic" (it matured to such uniformity only in the late 1920s), the Onguardists themselves had to be flexible to a certain degree.

No, the Onguardists were never "furious zealots of proletarian purity," as one of their chief figures, Iurii Libedinskii, later asserted (they originally replaced "class purity" with "Party" purity).[16] Their "fury" was always unprincipled and opportunistic (perhaps the Smiths were correct about this). And their "flexibility" did them a disservice: in trying to be "more flexible" than the Party line and getting drawn onto the slippery and dangerous path of political "improvisation," when they had fulfilled their function of breaking up practically all the literary groupings at the dawn of the 1930s, they themselves were finally overwhelmed as well by "life," which demanded a decisive rejection of any kind of "improvisation."

However, "flexibility" was an integral part of Onguardist doctrine. It was embedded in the RAPPist conception of creativity. This "flexibility" was in fact a prototype of a key principle of Socialist Realism, the principle of Party-mindedness (characteristically, even RAPP's tactics for literary battle were in full accord with the tactics of political authority: in just the same way, the Party and the Onguardists invented enemies on both the "left" and the "right," in order to ascribe to them their own past theories and slogans that were currently proclaimed to be "false.") In essence, the transfer of the revolutionary doctrine of "class-mindedness of art" to the Soviet theory of "Party-mindedness of art" was realized by RAPP itself; that is why one should approach the class terminology in the RAPPist orchestration with preventive caution, because what we here are provisionally calling the "RAPPist theory of creativity" could be more accurately called a theory of

"control of the creative process." In the Onguardist daydream, "It is evident that someday the artistic process will be constructed just as conscientiously as we now construct our economy according to a five-year plan."[17]

The struggle for the "hegemony of proletarian literature" was waged by the Onguardists and theoreticalized by them. It attracted many who wanted to "lean on something big" to RAPP (and there turned out to be many of these, since the new creators, who had rejected creative freedom or had no idea what it was, needed a "source of inspiration" and protection). It is precisely the "creative" aspect of this theoreticalization that seems central to us, and thus it will occupy our attention.

One can definitely say that the RAPPist theory of creativity, through all its changes, remained always a theory of impersonal creation. On this point, the RAPPists remained followers of Proletkultism (in fact, their theory is only a stage—although in many respects a culminating stage—in the mutagenesis of revolutionary culture). In this respect they converged with the LEFists, who were "alien" to them, and the leaders of RAPP remained at one with the "new left" opposition within RAPP (Litfront) as well.

The RAPPist concept of "creative individuality" was best articulated by one of the early Onguardist theoreticians, Grigorii Lelevich, in 1925: "The old textbooks of literary history usually portrayed literary development as a chain of great writers, one replacing the other. There is no doubt that such a structure of literary history is only an adaptation to a particular area of the overall bourgeois-gentry idealistic teaching that history is made by heroes and leaders. In fact, great writers not only were the articulators of the aspirations and sentiments of one or another social class in one or another historical era, but they also concentrated, summed up, and generalized all the aspirations of their contemporary literary movement. The Pushkins, Schillers, Shakespeares, and Byrons stood not only on the shoulders of their own class as a whole, but also on the shoulders of the other less outstanding writers of their class. When one or two writers of genius do creative work, we cannot say that this is a flowering and advance of literature, but only when these writers of genius grow out of the ranks of a broad and uninterrupted literary movement."[18] Thus the RAPPist practice of the "mass literary movement" was given its grounding, and the goal of this movement was defined—only *within it* would Pushkins, Schillers, Shakespeares, and Byrons be "reared."

The RAPPists continued repeating the Proletkult idea of "the inseparable link between the writer and the class," along with, precisely within this concept, a by-now conscious rejection of the very notion of "talent"—and the further this rejection went, the more radical it became. What was a "classic" in the RAPPist interpretation? We discover that (from the viewpoint of "class ideology") it only "most completely expresses and fortifies in its art the

worldview of the class that promotes it," and only "formulates" this class ideology "with the greatest formal mastery"; moreover, this only can be "within the confines of the style inherent in the artistic practice of the given social group." But since "a classic is not in and of itself valuable, but rather is so only as an acme of a given style," they saw the goal of "studying the classics" as "critically assimilating particular styles. . . . The classics are taken only as the most brilliant representatives" of these styles.[19] There was a certain pragmatism in this and a healthy dose of "common sense"—talent cannot be "learned" (neither by "literary training" nor "studying the classics"). The "debate about talent" concluded in the course of the discussion of Pereval, in which I. S. Grossman-Roshchin explained the Perevalists' much-beloved idea of "Mozartianism" as the idea of "pure art":

> "He will not leave us an heir"—it is the lack of an historical heir that horrifies Salieri in the genial Mozart. . . . Yes, the problem of the lack of pure art's historical heir has been raised. Mozart is unmasked. In the historical sense, Mozart is now just a fact, but not an historical factor. Mozart is historically already a corpse. History has already carried out the death penalty. In this regard, therefore, a genius and a murderer are compatible things, since killing Mozart means only helping history, and then: "So let him vanish! The sooner the better!" This is how we think the issue of Mozartianism stands.[20]

This was the verdict of the "descendants": at the height of the "call of shock-workers into literature," the RAPPists solved the "problem of talent" in just this way. And no matter how the RAPPist political stance might change, the rejection of the artist's independence and inherent worth was there to stay: "So let him vanish! The sooner the better!" To talent as something individual and not susceptible to outside controls, RAPP contrasted "restraint." At the foundation of this lay the same old idea of impersonal creativity, now transformed into a rejection of the traditional understanding of art as "cognition of life." Class determinism was replaced by Party determinism, but the complete passivity of the artist was preserved. This understanding of art diverged fundamentally from the "Marxist orthodoxy" of the early twenties. The divergences between the Onguardists and Voronskii also began with a polemic on this issue. The RAPPists were obliged to retreat in this polemic, and advocated a "theory of direct impressions," which in fact repeated the ideas of Voronskii, the "enemy of proletarian literature." But as has been said already, the Onguardists were never logical (in their lack of principles and their eclecticism, they came closest of all to Socialist Realist "syntheticism"). Although they were repeating Voronskii's ideas, they fought in every way his concept of art as "cognition of life," opposing to it the idea of "active" art that "restructures the world." But even this idea did not of

course belong to the Onguardists themselves. The "transforming function of art" that they postulated was in essence a fragment from the life-constructing fantasies of Proletkult and LEF. But Grossman-Roshchin, in his *The Art of Changing the World* (*Iskusstvo izmeniat' mir*), published as if in response to Voronskii's *The Art of Seeing the World* (*Iskusstvo videt' mir*), called LEF's method "a pitiful mongrel of the positivism that flirts with formalism, which itself is a deformed hybrid of idealism and 'technicalism.'"[21] Then, continuing the typical RAPPist method of polemic (a "label" is pinned on the opponent—LEF, Voronskii, or Proletkult—but then the opponent's ideas "go to work" in justifying the "paths of proletarian literature"), he goes on to state that Marxism, "which allegedly so mercilessly steals the autonomy of art and gives it to class utility to be torn apart," in fact "precisely preserves the specific nature of art, and cautions against turning art into the maidservant of cognition."[22] The RAPPist theoretician did not forget to stress here that "the exposure of the social nature of creativity is the path to understanding the specific nature of art. There is no other path, and we, only we, are at the center of the true study of art."[23]

This confidence ("we, only we, are at the center") did not, however, obviate the necessity of replying to Voronskii's question about the "objectivity" of the "picture of the world" created by the artist. Grossman-Roshchin responded to this as well: "The question of whether the artist sees the world objectively and what the degree of this objectivity is—the answer is not that the artist liquidates his own vested interests and turns into a photographic apparatus. Nor is it that the artist unselfishly and lovingly gives himself over to the world and reshapes himself. The question of objectivity is resolved depending on which social class—to put it simply—gives the artist a mandate."[24] So the matter stood with a "mandate" that—"to put it simply"—had already been given to RAPP.

But at this juncture, another question arose: what was to be done if the "picture" still did not correspond to the one that was required? Only "restraint" remained. Lunacharskii had this to say on the subject: "The goals of the writer-Marxist imbued with a quite definite and real [*sic*!] worldview should be to act just as a statistician or publicist would when he encounters facts that contradict the analysis and the understanding of current life that are developed by the Party, that is, above all to examine whether these facts have been understood in all their detail, whether they are truly typical, whether there might not be unusual deviations that produce unforeseen results. The aspiration of the writer-Marxist should be precisely, insofar as is possible, to draw conclusions from his own observations and artistic creativity that support his overall outlook, for, after all, we all cannot fail to be imbued with the opinion that in everything fundamental and important, our Party views represent the most pure, most apt, and most objective truth regarding social life

that mankind now has at its disposal." But at the same time Lunacharskii was not yet completely free of the ideals of the Proletkult outlaws, and thus he insisted that there was no "pious Marxist monastery," and therefore one should not "break down the facts of life to suit a preconceived theory," "be blind to that which seems contradictory in it," nor "replace looking at life with a stereotype," since "our theory and our program are far-ranging."[25]

The Onguardists did not allow themselves to be so "far-ranging." They saw the advantage of the "proletarian writer" as being always ready, in the name of "one hundred percent restraint," to "trample on his own song" (the RAPPist attitude toward the song of "the others" is all the more understandable): "A conscientious attitude toward his own creativity, an acknowledgement of it as a weapon of class struggle—and hence the ability to renounce a theme unacceptable to the class—these are the huge advantage[s] of the proletarian artist."[26] If we consider that for Libedinskii "the theme is an assignment of the class,"[27] then it is clear that a full circle of the "creative process" is involved. This "turnaround" stopped once and for all in the RAPPist program of creativity, which pronounced the Onguardist constructs to be amazingly illogical: "The proletarian artist," Aleksandr Fadeev writes, "must not rationalistically imbue nature and society with such characteristics as he himself has not yet seen or felt, but with those that according to the teaching of Marxism are inherent in nature and society; on the contrary, he must be so adept at the Marxist method that with its help he can find in reality itself concrete forms and phenomena that affirm the liveliness and truth of a materialist understanding of the world."[28] Thus, one should not proceed from an ideological construct to life, but "on the contrary" (!?) from an ideological construct to its "affirmation."

Vladimir Akimov, who has done the most detailed analysis of the Onguardists' "creative program," writes: "For the RAPPists, rationalistic, conceptual-logical contact with reality seemed from the very beginning the only path to participation in the revolutionary process."[29] One need only add that all the RAPPist prescriptions for "creative mastering [*ovladenie*] of reality" were more rationalistic than is generally supposed—rationalistic in a special sense, which obliges us to dwell on this.

It has become accepted that the basis of the Onguardist theory of creativity was the "theory of direct impressions" advanced by Libedinskii. This theory itself, however, was a later—and, as always with the Onguardists, eclectic—attempt to hybridize the RAPPist "categorical imperative" of service to the Party with the traditional theory of creativity defended by Voronskii. But the pure early-Onguardist doctrine was developed by Libedinskii in his rarely mentioned article "On the Issue of the Artist's Personality" ("K voprosu o lichnosti khudozhnika"), wherein a "positive program" was suggested; this program could be summarized as follows: "The artist does not

acknowledge his own social function. Individualism, promulgation of freedom of personality, and the fear of competition that is characteristic of the worldview of any bourgeois person, is complicated in him by a peculiar feeling of being chosen, of messianism."[30] Herein begins the artist's conflict with the new order, since "the proletarian revolution, having gotten firmly established and having begun to sum up surplus value in the hands of the proletarian state, advances a new stratum of readers. This is the stratum of the proletarian intelligentsia that is taking shape, an ever growing stratum of workers with great cultural needs: workers' correspondents, club workers and cultural workers, members of the Party-cell offices and local Party committees, labor-union workers, Communist-school students [*komvuzovtsy*], Komsomol members and activists."[31] The result of the conflict is that the fellow traveler (read: "artist") ends up on the side roads, off the "high road."

But the "high road" belongs to proletarian literature, beginning "at the moment that the new stratum of readers advances its own proletarian writer and establishes with this writer a new type of bond via the writer's acknowledgement of the social significance of his works."[32] "The bond via the proletarian writer's responsibility for every line he writes is being established by the class via its vanguard in the plan to conscientiously guide proletarian literature."[33] The future of the proletarian writers is well known: "They are strongly bonded with the beginning working-class writer whom they will replace and in whom they will dissolve."[34] Since these new writers are "conscientiously bonded with the proletarian vanguard" (the Party), they possess a "pure proletarian worldview." But a struggle with the fellow travelers awaits them, for the new writer ("yesterday's factory worker, workers' correspondent, Red Army man, political worker, and the like") was coming to a market occupied by professionals. And so it was necessary not only to grant the new writer a "policy of most-favored status," but also to exclude the laws of the market in general, since the proletarian writer was not guided by the market, but by his "bond with the vanguard." Libedinskii asserted that the attempt (contrary to this) to subject the new writer to the laws of the market, to "commodity-money fetishes" (as did Voronskii), leads to the degeneration of this writer, to his transformation into a "bourgeois artist."

This was the program, or, in the language of the times, the "creative platform." But like all such "platforms" they served only to defend the economic and ideological privileges of the "proletarian elite." In this sense, RAPP was not a "proletarian episode in Russian literature," as Edward Brown defined it, but a powerful organization in whose bosom the new Soviet literary culture was in fact given shape.

The "theory of direct impressions" later advanced by Libedinskii was a "response" to criticism of the RAPPist platform. The obscurity of the central thesis of this theory obliges us to examine it further. The problem is not

the "process of creation" as "painted" by Libedinskii (or rather as retold "after Voronskii"), but the rationalism of this doctrine. Here contemporary researchers are unanimous with the 1920s critics who accused the RAPPists of rationalism. The criticism of this theory amounted to (and still does) the supposition that the artist's consciousness was "excluded" from the creative process taking place within it. However, it was not this "exclusion" but rather the *replacement* of creative freedom with the same restraint that was in this context called a "worldview" (and herein the Socialist Realist theory of creativity preserved a direct continuity with RAPPist theory). According to this theory, the "consciousness of the artist" should already be "correct" before beginning an "act of creation." Only then could he be "free" ("direct"). The rationalism of RAPPist theory, as we can see, is "removed": it is not postulated but is suggested from the first and in this case is no longer "rationalism" but completely accords with the Marxist understanding of freedom as acknowledged necessity. The RAPPist theory of creation is constructed by this sleight-of-hand: "In order to accomplish a generalizing [*obobshchaiushchaia*] work, it is necessary to possess a very profound worldview. Only a worldview allows an artist to lift a direct impression of reality from beneath the husk of philistine opinions, where this direct impression is sometimes hidden."[35] But "only by possessing a progressive revolutionary worldview can the proletariat's artist select the necessary and vital from out of the colossal torrent of direct impressions"—and the "process of creation" goes along its way on its own.[36] Thus, what the critics of RAPP called rationalism does not exist: it is already included in the creative process, dissolved in a "worldview." But what does exist is the expression of the direct impressions of the writer who correctly (as regards his worldview) "sees the world."

The rationalism of the RAPPist doctrine of creation is so profound that the Litfrontists who criticized the Onguardists "from the left" could readily take this rationalism to its opposite extreme, accusing their opponents of its contrary: "The theory of direct impressions," wrote Anatolii Kamegulov, "is Bergson's theory, and not Marx's," and "if one takes Fadeev's viewpoint, according to which the essence of social phenomena is revealed in art by direct impressions, then in art the always leading role of consciousness is rejected, and art becomes the pitiful naturalism [*bytovizm*] of the pitiful empiricist."[37] "We do not say, and as materialists cannot say, that some kind of cognition is possible outside these 'direct impressions,' outside sensory cognition of the world. But the person who wants to proclaim the 'hegemony' of this initial lower form is doing an objectively reactionary thing, is slipping toward idealism and intuitivism."[38]

But the Onlitguardists, on the contrary, saw all these same "sins" in Voronskii and accused the Perevalists of a "creeping intuitivism" that "sprang up" out of their "priestly-aristocratic approach to creativity" and their "sup-

port of the grand gentleman in literature and in artistic creation."[39] The "theoretical debate," as always in the 1920s, had a completely utilitarian nature: RAPP, in its practice of mass-producing "Red Leo Tolstoys," could not of course at all reconcile to the Perevalist "gentry." For this very reason the RAPPists rebelled against the Perevalist demand for "sincerity" in literature: "The byword 'sincerity' is the first mask of bourgeois liberalism. . . . Dialectical materialism has nothing in common with this criterion, essentially subjectivist, of abstract vapid [!?] sincerity. The only true, only objective criterion of artistic quality can be the criterion of artistic truthfulness, i.e., the criterion of art's correspondence to objective reality, which acts as the correspondence of form and content. . . . The term 'sincerity' is idle talk, nonsense."[40] The resolution of the "communist academics" resounded like a judge's sentence: "The raising of the issue of 'sincerity' in Pereval has no other meaning except that it *stands opposed to* the issue of the class-political direction of creativity."

"Sincerity" did not exist for the RAPPists, nor for the "communist academics" close to them, since *the very raising of this issue* revealed a certain gap between "worldview and creativity," although from their point of view, if one regards their stance in the extreme, *a worldview is creativity.*[41]

In evaluating the RAPPist theory of creativity, one could say that the rationalism of which it has been and continues to be accused was inherent not so much in the "proletarian artist" that they were shaping as it was *in the theory itself*. Its obvious reductionism and idealism were born of the utopianism of RAPPist ideologues who supposed that the Proletkult homunculus who was deprived of freedom but who "leaned on" the Party could nonetheless become a writer. As Viola Eidinova acutely observed, "the majority of RAPPist critics did not include the subject of creativity 'within' artistic creation, and therefore this subject is most often regarded in the plane of the psychology of creativity, in a channel of 'empirical' or 'biographical' personality, and not in that of the transformed . . . personality."[42]

As did their predecessors, the RAPPists regarded the issue of the subconscious and its role in creativity with suspicion. Their mission, as they saw it, was to "illuminate and electrify the huge damp basement of the subconscious," to invade the subconscious in order to "consciously guide it";[43] or they asserted that "the commanding role of the intellect in the society created by the proletariat assures an elevation of the weight given to a concept in the new art."[44] But it was no accident that "rationalism" was always included in the RAPPist demonology and was never given as a "recipe for creation": RAPP's theoreticians strove to dissolve rationalism in consciousness. Nonfreedom had to be acknowledged to be freedom, which in fact occurred in Socialist Realism (by Mikhail Sholokhov's famous formulation, the Soviet writer writes by the orders of his heart, but his heart belongs to the Party and

the people).[45] A profoundly utopian rationalism united all the groups within RAPP that were in conflict. Thus the Perevalists were the sole enemy of both the Onlitguardists and the Litfrontists. We read in the Novosibirsk journal *Nastoiashchee* (*The Present*), inclined to "Litfrontist positions:" "The short meaning of Gorbov's long speeches is but one—in our era an artist cannot be a communist, and a communist cannot be an artist. But we say that only someone who looks at the world through the eyes of the proletariat, from a Marxist fire tower, can be a genuine artist of the age. . . . The artist of the proletariat must have complete inner harmony with his class."[46] "Must have" and "has"—there was not even a theoretical difference between these two states in RAPPist doctrine. This "vision" was based on a utopian rationalism that "removed" the problems in the area of creativity *per se,* replacing it with "worldview."[47]

In a 1929 article entitled "On Global Dimensions and Private Makars" ("O tselostnykh masshtabakh i chastnykh Makarakh"), directed against Andrei Platonov's short story "Makar Who Doubted" ("Usomnivshisia Makar"), RAPP leader Leopol'd Averbakh formulated the idea of "restraint" with his characteristic categoricalness: "Writers who want to be Soviet must clearly understand that nihilistic licentiousness and anarchic-individualistic opposition are no less alien to proletarian revolution than a direct counterrevolution with fascist slogans."[48] And although the "counterrevolution with fascist slogans" was beaten back, the problem of the "private Makars" still remained. The "leftist opposition" within RAPP did not allow the Onlitguardists to forget it.

The "leftist opposition" discovered that the central hero of "proletarian psychologism" was "a person split in two, broken in two by the opposing aspirations of his psyche, who keenly feels this disharmony."[49] They feared that the "psychological literature" being spread by the Onguardists was resuscitating "biologism":

> Such an excessive encroachment of subconscious arbitrariness into artistic literature signifies, ultimately, nothing other than the revival in it of the classes squeezed out by revolution or those situated outside the proletariat. The triumph of the "biological" man and in particular the breach of the "biological" man through proletarian/class-oriented consciousness—what is this, ultimately? How can it not be a self-contradiction of the nonproletarian social layers of the conscientiousness of the proletariat as a class, a sort of involuntary protest against its rationalistic approach to the construction of life, against which petty bourgeois arbitrariness revolts behind the mask of "the subconscious" and "biology," consolidating itself on the front of artistic literature?[50]

All of this, from the viewpoint of the "leftist opposition," was the result of incorrect "orientation" of the writer, of an incorrect theory of creativity.

Turning from the characters of books to their authors, Litfrontists discovered an "identity of the artist from the school of 'prolet-pyschologism' with the pivotal image of the whole trend": "Is not the writer himself, like his characters, falling apart into two halves? Of course he is! . . . The man of our days who is split in two—with a communist reasoning and a petty bourgeois 'insides'—and who takes up artistic creation and strains all his psychological nerves in it, will inevitably create dual, double-element works."[51]

Although they had spoken out against Onguardist opportunism, the "leftists" nonetheless saw in their adversaries' activities "the expression of the psychology of a most interesting social stratum of our times—newcomers [*vykhodtsy*] from among the petty bourgeois drawn by revolution into the orbit of the ideological-political movement of the proletariat."[52] But the Litfrontist recipes for creativity ("to ascend to the height of a Marxist-Leninist worldview, to attain the predominance of conscientiousness over arbitrariness"[53]) were also in fact replicas of the ideas of Proletkultists and of the Smiths. The "leftists" lost in the skirmish with their Onguardist opportunists because the time of "class independence" passed, and the "man split in two"—both author and literary character—became an actual character of the era. It was only necessary to admit that the "conscientiousness of creativity" had limits. These limits were dictated not by an abstract "ideology of a class," but by the ideology of an authority that took "the interests of all the people" into account. Because of this, the RAPPist "worldview" was a flexible phenomenon and required a "dialectical-materialist method" (primarily dialectical) and a consideration of the changing ideology of authority.

In other words, it required the principle of Party-mindedness. The "medium of the class" was supposed to be an ideologue, whereas the "medium of the Party," far from being an artist, was the Central Committee. It was unnecessary to "deprive the writer of freedom"—instead, a new writer who saw freedom in necessity had to be created. This was why RAPP had such a hard time dealing with the "fellow travelers" and, conversely, why it so easily related to members of the "literary circles" and to shock workers. The required synthesis would take place in Socialist Realism, with the appearance of an author who combined the consciousness and experience of a shock worker with the "expertise of the writer," or, in other words, with the "birth of the master," a time when shock workers would "learn expertise" from the former "fellow travelers," and the latter would acquire their "worldview" from the "participants of socialist construction."

The RAPPist theory of creation, in changing over the course of almost ten years, absorbed a broad spectrum of "ideas of the times," both Proletkult and LEFist. Although it was astonishingly eclectic, it simultaneously remained, in its own way, logical. This was primarily true as regards its understanding of the nature and character of writing: in a series of articles called

How Is Artistic Literature Written? (*Kak pishetsia khudozhestvennaia literatura?*), Libedinskii teaches that "Literary work is very complex. It consists of a whole range of constituent productive processes, and the final result of the work, its product, seems simple only to a person who does not imagine the processes themselves."[54] Hence the explanation of these "constituent productive processes" for people who, it seems, had for the first time taken up the reading of works of art, but who nevertheless aimed to become writers: "Anyone who works at a lathe or a joiner's bench knows that each worker usually has his own *knack,* his own approach to work, his own system of experience. . . . Likewise in the writer's work, a knack plays a much greater role than for the most backward handicraftsman, because the whole 'production process' of creating a literary work takes place in a writer's head. It is imperceptible because its speed and success are determined by a special organization of the brain."[55] Given such an understanding of "literary work" (as a "knack"), it is natural that there is "nothing 'magical' " in its peculiarities. Moreover, "these peculiarities are inherent in every normal person."[56] But as Libedinskii explains to "beginning writers," to think that the process of literary creation is simple and easy is "just as untrue as when a person who does not know, for example, metallurgy, thinks that a certain finished metallic device—a gear or a spindle—is 'simple.' "[57]

Using Dem'ian Bednyi as an example, Libedinskii explained the "production operations" of which the "creative process" is composed. "The main artistic device," he advised, is an "image": it seems that an image is born out of "nothing," and as a result, "bourgeois writers and poets . . . consider themselves 'chosen' people who are illumined by a sort of divine grace. This is of course nonsense and bourgeois deceit." One should take as an example a typesetter in a printing house—he does everything unconsciously, as it were, but this "skill" is only the result of training, of a knack.[58] So it is a question of skill and besides of some kind of "convolutions of the brain" because, after all, "a person who has even the weak beginnings of these convolutions can by constant practice develop them, and gradually the process of accumulation of images passes over to the area of the subconscious." In order to write "in the proletarian manner," one need only newly outfit his "creative lathe."[59] Thus, since the "capacity to think and feel in images . . . is inherent in every normal person,"[60] it remained only to assimilate the "fundamental 'production processes' of artistic creation." This is how "artistic literature is written."

This is the still-early, 1925 model of the RAPPist theory of creativity. The issue of "literary training" has already arisen in this model. Of course, the RAPPist approach to this training is broader than Proletkult's, but it too relies on the same "mastery of devices" and "utilization" of the mastery of the classics. One must learn from Tolstoy, for example, but since one must not succumb to an ideologically alien influence (the Proletkult school), one

must while studying simultaneously fight the teacher. Furthermore, the more talented the exemplar, the more persistent must be the battle. In the case of Tolstoy, the matter stood thus: "Tolstoy is a colossal ocean of talent, against which one must fight very deliberately."[61] Evaluating the RAPPist theory of "literary training," Akimov writes: "The most exalted heights of Russian and world literature were transformed into dead 'dummies' for exercises, the art of the classics became a collection of 'technical' cheat-sheets, and talent is an obstacle that one must fight against, moreover 'very deliberately'!"[62] The RAPPist attitude toward talent, however, we already know well: "So let him vanish! The sooner the better!" And it would hardly be worth talking about the *theory* of literary training had not RAPP created its *practices.* The RAPPist school of literary training became one of the chief contributions of revolutionary culture to Soviet culture.

But RAPP did not simply inherit Proletkult doctrine—it radicalized and enriched it, methodologized it, and hybridized it with LEFist activism. Of particular interest in this perspective are the ideas of Viktor Pertsov, who came into RAPP from LEF in the early thirties. When the RAPPists printed Pertsov's articles in their own publications, they noted "the author's aspiration to a decisive reexamination of LEFist methodology and to assimilation of the Marxist-Leninist method."[63] But Pertsov stated that "for the proletariat as a class that affirms itself in constant struggle, the activist aspect of art comes to the foreground. The proletariat's artist does not contrast himself to an activist as a contemplator does to a practitioner. . . . He acts as a practitioner, not only in his own specific area but also as a real participant in the process of the production of material life. His art is the product of this participation, therefore it is impossible without this participation. He returns to practice in a refashioned and, so to speak, amplified and generalized form, what it gives him directly and concretely. . . . [H]e is not a contemplator who creates in an ideal world, but a practitioner working in the real conditions of society."[64] Thus the LEFist idea of the "writer/practitioner" was hybridized with the Smithy's declaration that "Poetry is the practical work of the proletariat."

The idea of "the proletarian polytechnical organization of literature" and that of "the polytechnicalism of the proletarian writer" were developed in Pertsov's articles. According to Pertsov, "Proletarian literary cadres must be assembled not on the basis of professional isolation, but on the basis of the polytechnical inclusion of literature among the number of skills necessary for the builder of a socialist society. It is not the number of proletarian professional writers that should grow, but the sum of literary skills of the proletariat as a class. A part of this sum will be, of course, individual items [*slagaemye*] as well, like individual working-class authors, whose value will exceed any literary value whatsoever of the old world." "By virtue of a single

law, as it were, of large numbers," Pertsov supposed, "the number of gifted people whom the mass of laborers will produce from their nuclei will exceed by many times the limited selection that existed in bourgeois society. . . . If earlier three thousand professional writers seemed a huge number, then now, given a different postulation of the goal of literary work, the number of working-class authors will assume dimensions on the order of tens and hundreds of thousands, and still will not be in any way exaggerated."[65] But what would this enormous "writing mass" produce? Not a lot, it seems: "In the literary movement that will encompass ever broader strata of shock workers, the individual author with many books will not be the rule, but many authors (a collective of authors) with a single book. . . . Let us have more good books and fewer good writers. Literature will only gain by this."[66] And the working-class writers were supposed to "regard their work as writers as volunteer social work."[67]

And although the Onguardists published the LEFist apostate's articles in their own publications, their attitude toward the ideas expounded there by Pertsov was nonetheless suspicious: he was still charged with "dragging out old LEFist theories."[68] Nonetheless, the RAPPist practice of "calling shock workers into literature" can also be understood as an attempt to fill the old Proletkult-LEF skins with new wine: at the heart of the RAPPist "call" lay an aspiration to "win literature away" from the professional writers (fellow travelers) by flooding it with "new cadres from the factory." Pertsov himself understood this as well when he stated, "The call of shock workers into literature should redraw our literary map to a point of unrecognizability."[69]

Meanwhile, the former LEFist interpreted the "literary production of shock workers" both functionally ("The books of working-class authors are a guide to action, a means of transmitting social-industrial experience, education by a living example," since being issued in printings of two hundred thousand, they broaden the scope of educatory and mobilizational influence on the class[70]) and in a genre context ("The germ of the literary form to which working-class authors' books are closest is not even the feature story, but rather the worker-correspondent's sketch. The worker-correspondent's sketch [*rabkorovskaia zametka*] easily combines lyric poetry and autobiography with figures, reports, and other elements of business reporting."[71]). The "autobiographical element" occupies an essential place in the series of characteristics.

The LEFist "injection" into the RAPPist conception of creativity had the most influence in the conception of the "creative personality." The process of "disembodying" the author was conditioned by the "specifics of the moment": "the era of class struggle escalation does not recognize an author—a social-political 'Anonymous.'"[72] The splitting of the "creative per-

sonality" (into "man in the world"/"artist") was proclaimed to be unacceptable "under the new historical conditions." This split clouded the relationship between the author and the recipient ("in apprehending a literary work, the reader as it were checks the reality of the author's mandate"[73]). The "literary environment" became integrated into the processes of creation and reception themselves. The author became *personally responsible* for his text; any aesthetic distance between the personal and the literary was removed.

This kind of antiaestheticism, which passed directly from RAPPist doctrine into Socialist Realism (a writer must "correspond" to literature with *his own life*), was introduced into RAPP by former LEFists. But it had already been recognized by contemporaries. Lidiia Ginzburg recalls a conversation with Osip Brik that occurred in the fall of 1926 about "literary ethics": "The literature of facts that Brik believes in (if he does believe) needs ethics instead of (bourgeois) aesthetics. It must be honest. A writer can commit forgery of feelings and then be accused of spreading false tears and sighs. Brik told me the story of a certain man's claim. The man read Shklovskii's *The Third Factory* [*Tret'ia fabrika*] and was moved; then he saw Viktor Borisovich, solidly built and jolly—and was offended. And Brik says the reader is right, it is unethical to deceive a reader. In this theory," Ginzburg concludes, "its patent absurdity wins us over. It is so antiliterary that you feel the need to get to its sensible roots."[74]

The roots were where they were supposed to be—at the bottom, on both the social and the genre scale: the worker-correspondent's sketch (the "industrial-socialist story," as RAPPist criticism called it shamefully at the time[75]) that Pertsov wrote about did in fact become the "genre mold" in which Russian literature was to be shaped by the exertions of shock workers. The cost of the replacement (as compared with the latter's scale) was enormous: the concurrence of literature and life in the personality of an author. "It is impossible to correctly evaluate a literary work, impossible to establish a correct attitude toward it as a social phenomenon," Pertsov insisted, "without knowing the author's biography. . . . [U]nder the conditions of open class collision, a literary work ever more acutely begins to be understood not only as a result of class struggle, but also as its immediate act. . . . The same word sounds different depending on who is saying it. At the present time, as never before, the political accountability of a writer and his responsibility, so to speak, are increasing. . . . Books that aspire to be a guide to action give first place to the unity of theory and practice. In other words, the writer and the activist must be merged in a single person. . . . [B]ooks about shock work should be written by shock workers themselves. . . . This is the rationale for calling shock workers into literature."[76] This was the only way of removing "the new reader's legitimate distrust of the professional writer, who is not connected organically to life and who has lost his authority in the fundamental issues of life."[77]

We will not treat the predictions arising from this (according to Pertsov, in the future each enterprise would have its own "factory writer," not unlike a paid secretary of the Party cell, for "a factory where 10,000 workers work is an audience equal to the average printing of a thick journal or belles-lettres book, the difference being that the former has an organized reader";[78] the "factory writers" would alternate, for "with a polytechnical organization of literary labor, the writer will with enormous pleasure move from literary work to the real experience of life and construction, and then again to literary work";[79] professional literature, it goes without saying, was to have no place in this system). The main thing that Pertsov noted was correct: "political accountability" (and the concomitant "responsibility") of the writer. In essence, Pertsov was already moving in a zone of Socialist Realist aesthetics.

The problem of "the writer and industry" itself originated in the early 1930s in RAPP, and there (predictably) it spilled over into a slogan, "Writers—to industry!" (by this slogan, precisely, the "literature of the first five-year plan" was born—the classic Soviet "industrial novel" of the first half of the 1930s). This slogan itself then dissolved into the "call of shock workers into literature" that it encountered. However, Pertsov's attempt to base an idea of collective creativity in a channel of RAPPist doctrine is itself interesting. This Proletkult idea was on the whole alien to RAPP, although it was enthusiastically developed in LEF. In educating the cadres of proletarian writers, the RAPPists tried to give this idea grounding in the "worldview" of the individual writer. But "collective" creative activity seemed to them a sort of ideal dream when the proletarian writers who had a "pure worldview" merged into this activity. The dream was so beautiful that even the aged Aleksandr Serafimovich, that "patriarch" of proletarian literature, mused: "The methods and devices of artistic creation must change completely. And with a steely necessity, these changes lead to a single thing: the solitary artist, the handicraft artist, or the individualist artist, is doomed to perish. Inevitably and mercilessly doomed to perish, no matter how foolishly he might resist. Coming to replace him is collective labor, collective authorial labor. . . . It is too late for the old-man writers to see the joys of collective creativity; in this respect, they are in the past. But the young ones . . ."[80]

But the young ones fantasized. Pertsov talks about a "collective book about liquidation of the holdup" in production that was created at one of the factories. In his article about the "collective author," he concedes that the individual author should not of course be "abolished," but "a collective book in which a worker in a carriage-building shop has written about this shop, [or one in which] someone famous for what he has done in a smithy writes about a smithy, [or one in which] someone who saved a weld from a lack of oxygen writes about an autogenous welding shop, etc.—such a book acquires the supplemental resources of influence [*sic*]. These resources are, first, the indubitable authority of the authors of each of its constituent parts, and sec-

ond, those connections with the masses which arise through these numerous authors." This was not, however, a "haphazard" undertaking: the work was to involve "the entire factory (or shop) triangle [that is, administration, Party organizations, and labor-union organizations—*E.D.*], and the book should be a guide to action." And then the endless cycle of collective creativity begins:

> A factory reader writes a review of a factory author's book [written] directly from living deeds.
> A factory reader can create in response a "polemical" book about what the workers of this factory did in their industry (or in their lives overall) under the influence of the book he obtained.
> Thus a literary work [!] goes from being a method of "reflection" of socialist competition to simply one of the methods of socialist competition.
> A literary work becomes as it were a challenge to socialist competition; it is included actively, from within, in the life of industry.
> Perhaps as a result of the book, factories will arrive at a concrete agreement on socialist competition among themselves.
> The connection between the factories can grow stronger; a correspondence between the literary action groups of both factories will be struck up. From this correspondence . . . in some cases it will be possible to publish a book in a peculiar epistolary form.[81]

The current of "collective creative activity" flowed into the infinity of life-building. It was 1931. The agenda for the immediate future was clear: the shock worker was entering literature "with a confident step."

A sort of beautiful picture of the distant future was envisioned. We find it in its most perfected form in the influential "communist academic" Vladimir Friche, who was highly honored by RAPPists. Assuming that in the future industry would possess "not symbols and images, but beautiful and useful things," Friche suggested that the place of the artist would be occupied by an engineer, and that "art, insofar as it remains intact," will be an "element of the decoration of life, an object of comfort," but "the hegemony will be held by science and technology" (we have yet to suggest that it would indeed be communism that was destined to give rise to "pure art").[82] As far as literature was concerned, Friche saw a movement toward "turning 'bookish' products into 'oral' ones"; and he predicted the death of "the most recent intelligentsia poetry" and the transformation of poetry under communism into "a means of aestheticizing labor processes and a festive triumph of the labor collective."[83]

It is difficult to say what loomed larger in this picture: Arvatov's industrial fantasies or Bogdanov's daydreams. And this picture should probably be

called instead a "mosaic," composed of the fragments of almost all the revolutionary political-ideological schemes of the early twentieth century. In this profound alliance of utopian ideas, in their hybridization and mutual sustenance, the real connection between the "implacably struggling" groups and aesthetic programs of the 1920s is made manifest. This process occurred not only within the groups of neophytes newly risen out of the cultural underground, but also within the groups that had matured in the culture itself. In one way or another, their roots should be sought in the interests of people, not in "manifestos" and "platforms."

There is a remarkable statement made by Viktor Shklovskii, reported in Ginzburg's sketches: "What, industrial art? Rodchenko's photomontages. As a result, the Briks have their walls covered with photographs, and Lilia is beautiful in them. Only the motivation has changed."[84]

The master of discovering motivations was, as always, correct.

Chapter Four

LEF: *The Third Factory* as "New Aesthetic Enterprise"

> There are two paths now. Retreat, entrench oneself, earn money by something other than literature, and write for oneself at home.
>
> There is [the second] path—go out and describe life and conscientiously seek a new way of life and a correct worldview.
>
> There is no third path. But we need to follow it. An artist should not follow the tram lines.
>
> The third path is to work in the newspapers and journals, every day, not taking care of oneself but of the work—to change, mix oneself with the material, change again, mix oneself with the material, and then there will be literature.[1]

The key phrase in this passage from Shklovskii's *The Third Factory* was immediately snatched up by contemporaries: "There is no third path. But we need to follow it." To change—mix oneself—change—mix oneself. . . . The path that does not exist. "Then there will be literature"—Shklovskii.

Mayakovsky wrote at about the same time, "I clean myself in view of Lenin, in order to swim farther into revolution." One of the chapters of *The Third Factory* is called "I write about the fact that existence defines consciousness, but conscience remains uneasy."

At the height of his work on *The Third Factory* (a "third path" of sorts?), Shklovskii took part in the debate about Karl Radek's paper about the Soviet press with a sharp criticism of "the Party's policy in the area of belles lettres": "One has to know how to order something. One must know the limits of prohibition, otherwise writers will cease writing and take up other professions. You ordered goods that we cannot make with our instruments. Artisans are desperate, and this is why they are drinking. Our writers cannot make the goods you order, and therefore there is no literature at present . . . One should not order a person to describe prosperity when it does not exist. One writer said, 'Allow us to know our own dénouements. Allow us to play our instruments the way we know how . . .' Learn how to talk to writers."[2] The reaction to Shklovskii's stance was extremely negative outside LEFist circles.[3]

Let us turn our attention, in any case, to the topics brought up by Shklovskii: the writer (more precisely, "artisans"), the "order," and finally, "conscience." This last "plot line" exists, by the way, in Shklovskii's lyric prose, and has an incontestable relationship to the evolution of his personal stance at the moment of crisis connected with his return to his homeland. But this topic is deliberately absent in what has customarily been called the "socioliterary stance" of both Shklovskii and the LEFist figures close to him. One might say that the "third path" designated by Shklovskii spilled over into the real aesthetic practice of LEF in an attempt to get past the "uneasy conscience" at the expense of "easing" the relations between the "artisan" and the "order writer" [*zakazchik*].

The LEFist concept of creativity, like that of Proletkult or RAPP, was primarily a rationalization of the sociopsychological problems of its adepts, and only afterward was shaped into a sort of "philosophy of art." One should regard all such "philosophies" with a healthy suspicion, and this is particularly true of LEFist ideas. The distinction between the ideas of the "leftist front" and Proletkult-RAPPist doctrines is not by any means contained in the discussions of "What is art?," nor of course in the sort of "class distinctions" that were foregrounded in the former and the latter. The only distinction is that the former saw their strength in being "specialists" [*spetsy*] and the latter in the power they had won. What they had in common was something much more significant—the struggle for power (which was to remain with whoever could sway the Party to their side). It would be no exaggeration, therefore, to say that the "literary struggle of the 1920s" is only an "aesthetic euphemism." There was no *literary* struggle—there was a struggle among people and groups for their own interests, a struggle for power. And many—not only in the LEF milieu (like Shklovskii) but also among "proletarian writers"—were obliged to "do something" with their "uneasy consciences": the idea that "existence defines consciousness" did not set well with many.

The new character of revolutionary creative activity led to a profound crisis of key aesthetic ideas, including that of the "creative personality." It goes without saying that the recipes for creative activity that appeared in great quantities at this time, and that were essentially the basis of the 1920s "creative platforms," were attempts to get beyond this crisis. Since ideas of impersonal creativity were closest to revolutionary thinking, all the answers clearly revolved around this group of ideas. This hybridization of the same ideas and concepts belonging not only to *different* literary groups, but to *hostile* ones, forces us to ask: In the matter of the so-called literary struggle of the 1920s, should the researcher's interest be focused on the evolution and mutual influence of *immanent aesthetic ideas* or primarily on the *interests of the people fighting to defend these ideas*?

In other words, is it at all worthwhile to consider seriously all these

"theories" as something of inherent worth and as self-developing, if their goal (power—or "hegemony"—in literature) lay outside them, and their development likewise extended according to an agenda (the logic of political struggle) external to them? In them, a process of mutation of revolutionary culture actually occurred: change—mix—change—mix.

LEF constructed a theory of art that was *not parallel* to that of Proletkult and RAPP, but rather one that intersected it. The real issue for many LEFist ideologues (from Arvatov and Nikolai Chuzhak to Tret'iakov and Pertsov) was also "proletarian culture." All of them had the same enemies—"the creative personality," "freedom of creation" as traditionally understood, and the "classical art" that arose on the basis of these. It is another matter that the LEFist theories were in their own way a challenge to (or "deviation" from) orthodox Proletkultism and later RAPPism. This fact is easily explained: Proletkultists and RAPPists proceeded "from lathe to easel" (and of course knew the lathe much better than the easel), but LEFists went the opposite way, "from easel to lathe." Naturally, the former were greater pragmatists (despite their extreme utopianism, which was somewhat reduced at the RAPPist stage), and better knew their consumer, while the latter were greater idealists (and were therefore doomed in this struggle) and better knew the producer.

Hence the difference in understanding of the prospects of literary development: the former demanded "realism," the latter, a "literature of fact" in which the "uneasy conscience" of the producer could be, if not put at rest, at least brought beyond the framework of the "creative process," which of course required the creation of a "theory" of such a "process of creation."

Hence the historical fantasizing (we will thus designate the "artistic method" of the LEFist ideologues' historical/art-criticism studies). The LEFist rereading of the history of art, however, has its own inherent interest: a utopia grows out of the "accursed past," which not only binds the avant-garde securely to the museum it had hoped to escape, but also reveals the reason for this completely romantic "attempt to flee": the museum was not stuffy for the avant-garde—it was *terrifying.* The museum was not so much a "history exhibit" as it was a market, with competition, struggle, and pricing. But LEFists preferred to move the battle over into life and the future, be it in disregarding the fact that power (and thus the future as well) belongs to those that own *the past,* or in overestimating the potential of revolution.

Here is the traditional perspective on the problem: "From the viewpoint of the tension of social struggle, to which the 1920s generation of artistic intelligentsia fully gave themselves over, there is nothing utopian in LEF's ideal. But the utopianism lay in the fact that the LEFists wanted to make people, according to the standard of this ideal, out of the whole mass of par-

ticipants in the revolution, and wanted to do this quickly, without waiting for the prerequisites for this to be created, and partly even in spite of this, according to a principle of 'forge the steel while it is still hot,' . . . before the revolution . . . became harmless as a factor shaping the new man."[4] But what was the reason for (or interest in!) this "historical haste"? It may be definitively asserted that the "new man" interested the LEFists exclusively as a consumer for their goods. In other words, LEF (regardless of the subjective aspirations of the practitioners and ideologues of leftist art) preserved the continuity of the "era of *Sturm und Drang*" not in the forward-lookingness of their ideas, but in an orientation toward the consumer, whom the LEFists either did not know or else despised: the consumer would not forgive the yellow blouses, the "slap in the face to philistines," or the "spitting in their faces"—only in the exultation of the early revolutionary years could he accept the shapeless lumps on the streets as "images of proletarians" or a lopsided tower as a "symbol of the revolutionary spirit." This is why the voices of the unrecognized producers were never silenced in the works of leftist artists and ideologues. And the more they aspired to "merge with the masses," or to provide "all the resonant strength of the poet to the attacking class," the louder the voice of rejection was heard. Herein lies the source of LEFist theories: the fact is, the traditional explanation goes, that "To replace past art, which from their viewpoint allegedly reflected nature and social life passively, the LEFists wanted to create such an 'art' that would 'actively' transcend natural and social material. The 'art' that was invented was likewise supposed to, according to the LEFists' conception, resolve the contradiction in which traditional art had ended up with its conditional character, and consequently, [with] its 'illusory' relationship to real life-building."[5]

As we can see, the fact of market competition, in the ferment of which all leftist art arose, is not taken into account at all. Nonetheless, the "life-building art" invented by the LEFists and lovingly fostered by them (in this sense the LEF "factory" was very similar to Proletkult's alchemy "laboratory," which produced "new ideological superstructures") was in no way intended to "transcend natural and social material" nor the conditional character and "relationship" problem of traditional art (these were all "manifests"), but rather was designed *to replace the earlier goods in the market*—traditional art. There was an endless chain of allegedly "insuperable" contradictions and blind alleys, invented by leftist theoreticians, into which traditional art was led; one ought to regard these distractions as forms of advertising, designed by the theoreticians to palm off their own goods, which became less necessary to consumers—the masses, and accordingly the authorities—the more time passed.

We should notice also that in the LEFist discussions, the issue was not really even art, but the "creative personality," which was fatefully fettered to

history. When this "personality" detoured deep into one of these blind alleys (with history in tow), it led (or rather "carried off") art so far away from its previous functions (which were moreover unclear) that only some sort of powerful explosion, a "bomb" placed under both the "creative personality" and art itself, could blast them out of the impasse.

Out of the multitude of historical/art-criticism treatises produced by leftist theoreticians, we will pause to look at only one of the most brilliant, Boris Arvatov's *Art and Production* (*Iskusstvo i proizvodstvo*) (not least because Arvatov was simultaneously both a LEF and Proletkult theoretician).

From Arvatov, we learn that in private production there is no place for free creativity since "the fundamental current of social development is separated from the artist by a Wall of China. Art ends up in the hands of intelligentsia specialists. . . . [A]n author is separated from the masses by an impassable boundary, and develops into a refined individualist. Having lost his connection to the collective, he trains himself to see something of inherent worth in his creative work, something isolated in himself, and accordingly changes the devices and forms for working on works of art."[6] This does not mean, however, that Arvatov demands the return of "freedom," which was impossible even earlier, or that he is advocating the democratization of art. On the contrary, he proclaims, for example in connection with folklore, "It must be emphasized most decisively that there is no 'folk' creation, nor has there been. It is time to discard this 'socialist-revolutionary' [*eserovskaia*] utopia and understand that the art that is called 'folk' is nothing other than the art of the patriarchal, technologically backward, private-property, petty-bourgeois countryside."[7] Thus it is unknown to whom "art should belong"—not to professionals, but not to nonprofessionals either (Arvatov refused to consider the population of the Russian countryside in a country that was up to 80 percent peasants as the source of folklore, as the "socialist-revolutionary utopia" did).

An immersion into history begins: it turns out that way back in the times of the "shop system," the artist-craftsman differed from the ordinary craftsman only in the fact that "he was a more qualified worker than all the rest. The notion of artistry at that time was almost synonymous with the notion of greater qualifications . . . and its products were deemed better than others because they were better made."[8] The key concept: there was no "art," rather there were more or less "skillfully made" objects. But an artist was a craftsman. And only in the seventeenth century did "the artist/industrial-worker [break] off from industry and, together with this, [lose] all possibility of being guided in his creative work by industrial-technological practices," subordinating the process of artistic development to the "consumer interests of the merchant oligarchy" and becoming "a member of bourgeois society, . . . his tastes coincid[ing] with the tastes of bourgeois society."[9] As a result, "aesthetics became social-consumeristic," the products "from that time onward

had to satisfy not the demands of daily life but the demands of the eye," and art was transformed "into a sort of universal beauty treatment."[10]

Let us note the change of optics: art changes because the social status of the artist changes. "The artist, who at one time by his essence had been an organizer of daily life, no longer had a direct connection with it—the new master of society awaited him: the capricious, indiscriminate, and impersonal market, with its all-powerful template. There remained a single solitary islet of organized daily life: the royal court, which preserved the native traditions of the feudal aristocracy and systematically regulated its social existence, and therefore needed a conscious material formulation of this existence, i.e., art."[11] As a result "art became a complete mockery of the meaning and goal of production, of the laboring activity of mankind."[12]

So then the object of the mythological "historicization" becomes not "the artist" but "art." The "artist" is a victim, art a Moloch: the unfortunate artist "turned into a solitary craftsman, working for a market and creating suprautilitarian antiindustrial things; his creative work was just as dissimilar to the social process of production as some kind of watercolor landscape to a steam engine."[13] Hence follows a critique of style that is similar to RAPP's, as we have seen. But although the RAPPists saw the "impersonal" basis of style as the most important thing (to counterbalance the traditional "individualistic" concept of it—"The style is the man"), Arvatov foregrounds a historical critique of style: "Style originated in a stylization that found protection and refuge in the academies. There, for the want of anything better, the canons and clichés of buried centuries were preserved, mummies instead of living creations, and petrified forms whose goal was to serve the 'ideal of beauty' and the criterion of 'genuine' art."[14]

This was the point at which the RAPPist and LEFist positions diverged: to the RAPPist aspiration to subordinate art to the will of the Party (or the will of the class, in early Proletkult doctrines), the LEFists countered a rejection of art as such. And this is understandable because this was the LEFists' territory. As opposed to the neophytes of the Proletkult-RAPPist stripe, LEFists saw in art a patrimony that had ceased to pay tribute, not realizing that the estate had passed on to a different heir, one that had learned, indeed very well, how to get what it demanded from it.

But the LEFists continued to reject a theory that Chernyshevskii had "dug out from under the heap of the centuries," the "Platonic-Aristotelian theory that proclaimed any art to be an imitation of nature."[15] From Arvatov's constructs the call to "discard the aesthetics of contemplation and admiration and leave behind the individualistically inspired daydreams about life, and instead of this to undertake the construction of life itself, its material forms," naturally followed; accordingly, "Art should become utilitarian from start to finish."[16]

This immediately removed as well the problem of the "creative per-

sonality," which was again transformed into the artisan: "Social-technological expediency—this is the only law, the only criterion of artistic, i.e., form giving, activity. The more qualified a thing is in this regard, and only in this regard," the LEFists asserted, "the more artistic it is."[17] Then the classical Marxist fight against "fetishes" began: "The fetishism of aesthetic devices, forms, and goals must be destroyed. . . . The fetishism of aesthetic materials must be destroyed. . . . The fetishism of aesthetic implements must be destroyed."[18]

Hence followed an almost "correct conclusion": "Normalization of the processes of artistic creativity, their rationalization, and the conscientious establishment of both the goals and methods of art construction [*iskusstvostroenie*]—this is the artistic policy of the proletariat."[19] It only remained to replace the "policy of the proletariat" with the "policy of the Party," a replacement that occurred in RAPP and that was consolidated in Socialist Realism.

Nonetheless, it would be a gross oversimplification to maintain, as Boris Groys does, that the avant-garde political-aesthetic project was realized in Socialist Realism. The debut idea of "impersonal creativity" had to go through quite a few stages of "revolutionary reforging" in order to become, in merging with "the master-writers of Soviet literature" and "the Socialist Realism classic," the Socialist Realist theory of creativity. Examination of the fragments of the various types of revolutionary culture is so important because Socialist Realism is the result of mutagenesis of *all of revolutionary culture* (not only the avant-garde variety, as Groys states, nor only the RAPPist one) and because Socialist Realism is a synthetic and composite culture (in a certain sense, a product of revolutionary eclecticism). And Socialist Realism did satisfy both the masses and the authorities, and ultimately the writers themselves, because it painstakingly smoothed (or "broke off"—often together with heads) the "sharp corners" of revolutionary culture that for various reasons did not satisfy the demands of either the masses (whose tastes went unnoticed in various revolutionary doctrines), the authorities (whose functions—control, normalization, surveillance, terror, and so on—were independently appropriated by this or that group struggling for "hegemony" in the 1920s), or writers (some of whom wished to be confirmed in this status, others to be published, or others simply to survive, which required that their worldview be "brought into line" with "the demands of life").

As one might see from Arvatov's treatise, a contradictory attitude toward "professional creative activity" lay at the heart of the LEFist theory of creativity. On the one hand, professionalism was energetically rejected. Arvatov based this rejection on the history of the development of art, and Sergei Tret'iakov, for example, on the requirement to "merge" with the masses. But the essence was the same—professionalism carried a minus

sign. On the other hand, LEF particularly was the most sensitive to the problems of "expertise" (as opposed to, for example, Proletkult or the Smithy). This duality constitutes one of the undoubtedly most interesting aspects of the LEFist theory of creativity—not least because it was precisely this theory that was actively incorporated into the practice of shaping the Soviet writer, and because it had an enormous influence on all subsequent development of "Soviet aesthetic thinking" (both in what Soviet criticism understood by the terms "artistic expertise," "creative laboratory," and "artistic means," and in what the Soviet school methodologized, and as regards the "fruitful" use of many of these ideas—without reference to their genesis, of course—in the 1930s, the era of struggle against "vulgar sociologizing").

Antiprofessionalism in art, which had been actively propagated by the most radical LEF theoreticians, in all probability grew out of their aspiration to consolidate their own "inimitability" (a sort of antithesis to "imitable" art?): if the leftists' creations were inimitable, it would mean that it was unreasonable to judge them by previous scales of value. Hence (and not the other way around!) the LEFist theory of "life-building" (a term invented by Nikolai Chuzhak) grew to become the basis of a new scale of aesthetic values. To be convinced of this we need only examine Chuzhak's article/manifesto "Under the Banner of Life-Building" ("Pod znakom zhiznestroeniia").

As Chuzhak stated it, his contemporaries found themselves "facing the inevitable absorption of art into life," and art was "only a timid apprenticeship facing an enormously developing created life." Hence his questions, "Is it worthwhile cultivating theater as a sort of boxed-in biomechanics, or music as a sort of condensed barrel-organ noise, or the art of the word as a sort of laboratory of workers' chants, when authentic real life beats with thousands of better rhythms and noises, and the dance of this life is immeasurably more whimsical than art's cleverest pony translations!?"[20] Who could appreciate these products of "life-building"? The proletariat, of course—"the last class," the only one (an essential feature!) that possessed the gift of "anticipating future norms."[21] Having passed through the "laboratory/formal" and "rostrum/poster" stages, and finally the stage of "merging art with production" (or, as Arvatov said, "the creation of life" or "the art of life"[22]), the new "art of life-building" was growing into a futurism that was at that time curiously conceived—it was "not a school [of art], but rather a sort of tendency that reorganizes man in the aspiration to 'futurism.'"[23] On the horizon stood the accomplished utopia: "The masses are joyfully and freely drawn into the process of creation. No longer are there 'temples' and shrines of art where hallowed absolutes shrouded in the incense of priests dwell. There are workshops, factories, plants, and streets—where in a general festive process of production, commodity-treasures . . . are created."[24] And finally, the slogans: "A new science of art will go forth under the banner of

life-building. . . . The era of life-knowledge will be put away in the museum. . . . Art . . . is the production of values (and things) necessary to the class and to humanity," and the like.[25]

The text we are examining here is a typical LEFist proclamation. Logic is replaced by a whole series of propagandistic devices: history is fit into a series of eras, the specifics of the subject are consciously simplified, and so on; there is an assortment of "stylistic figures of speech" (rhetorical questions, contrasting comparisons, formulated "directives," "pictures," slogans, and the like). Obviously, it is unproductive to approach such texts with the standards of any "-isms" whatsoever. One should not approach them with questions about the "philosophical basis" of the given ideas, but with the more "down to earth" question formulated by Vsevolod Kochetov in the title of his famous novel, *So What Do You Want?* (*Chego zhe ty khochesh'?*). Then we would see that Chuzhak is utterly frank: he wants the possessor of contemporary norms—and more so of "future norms"—to realize that instead of art he should accept LEFist "life-building." With no regrets, he relegates even the old "futuristic trash" (the biomechanics and propaganda-art type) to the museum as being inappropriate to the requirements of the consumer. The museum is meanwhile prudently locked, since along with the "trash" it also contains "art" itself. So ideas of this type are not "based" on a "Machist identity of the material and the spiritual," but on an absolutely practical "life-building."

In response to Lev Lunts, who had in the name of the Serapion Brothers declared a rejection of "deliberateness" [*narochitost'*], Arvatov stated, "An artist who does not work with the collective and for the collective will always turn away from 'deliberateness,' since 'deliberateness' is after all the fulfillment of collective aims by an individual personality that should be able to use collectivist methods of creativity to [fulfill them]."[26] Toward the mid-1920s LEF ideologues no longer understood "collective aims" the way they had in the early years after the Revolution. "Propaganda art is only half the solution to the problem," Tret'iakov would proclaim in 1923: art should be seen as a "means of emotion-organizing influence on the psyche in connection with the aims of class struggle. The distinction between the notions of 'form' and 'content,' and their contrast, must be reduced to study of the means of developing material into the necessary thing, study of the purpose of this thing and the means of its assimilation."[27]

While formulating his remarks on Bezymenskii's propaganda poetry, Chuzhak in passing explained these "collective aims." Chuzhak had been obliged to be at the helm of an outright "war of the floors" for three years (this involved the usual apartment squabble, with "nonworking citizens," residents' cooperatives, overcrowding of communal apartments, and the like—Soviet communal problems, so it seems, were not at all extraliterary).

Bezymenskii wrote the poem "War of the Floors" ("Voina etazhei"), which resounded with, as Chuzhak said, an "unnecessary irritating dissonance." And the problem was, as Chuzhak explained with dissatisfaction, "we needed a workers' correspondent at that time—for poetry or prose, it didn't matter—who would be with us, would notice our fight and failures every day, 'inspire' us, damn it . . . and in every way generally move our fight along with us in poetry or prose, until it was completely finished."[28]

Theorizing on this subject (no longer in reference to the problems of communal apartment living), Arvatov categorically insisted that "The literary creative work of the working class is possible only in two dimensions: either as industrial-utilitarian creativity (newspapers and such) or as representational-utilitarian creativity, i.e., as the creativity of consciously influencing forms (until now only two types of these latter have been known: the boulevard and detective novels)"[29]—a wide range for the new art, from "newspapers and such" to "boulevard" novels. If we compare Arvatov's program for literature with his program for theater ("the director must be transformed into a master of ceremonies of labor and daily life," "the actor must be transformed into a classified person"), we will see that art had to in fact be absorbed into life, leaving in its place either the most marginal forms of art or totally extra-artistic ones. When according to Arvatov's notion the declining and moribund forms would disappear in the general "mass activity" of organized labor, when masses of people would step up to a general theatricalized labor, then "the other life" of art would begin (in the form of either "newspapers and such" or "boulevard" novels). Was not constructivism, which contrasted itself to LEF, born in this dead end because its adherents refused to "join the newspapers"?[30] But even this "organizational-rationalistic" program bore the stamp of "restoration."

The LEFists understood, however, that they were indebted to the Revolution for everything. "Were it not for revolution, futurism would easily degenerate into a toy to satisfy the surfeited salon. Outside of revolution, futurism would never go further than the anarchic attacks of individuals and the mute terror of words and paint in its forging of the human personality . . . . Revolution has advanced the practical aims of influencing the psyche of the masses and organizing the will of the class. The tournaments in the arenas of aesthetics ended, and a living life had to be made. Futurism dived right into . . . 'applied' everyday living."[31] "Applied everyday living," maturing into a "conception of applied art," was actually a rationalization of the barrenness of the new creators. And there was more: "The artist's ingenuity must serve not the aims of ornamentation of all kinds, but must be applied to all industrial processes. The masterly making of a useful and expedient thing—this is the purpose of the artist, who by so doing drops out of the creators' caste and lands in the appropriate labor union."[32] But all this discussion was merely a

justification and cautionary self-amnesty of the LEFists' fruitless attempts to "be heard by the masses," for if the "purpose of the artist" consists only of the "masterly making" of useful things, then what really is the distinction between an artist and an artisan? Granted, he will "drop out of the creators' caste," but if the "theory of art" leaves nothing but "processes of production," then why is it a theory of art and not of ordinary production? When it came down to such questions, the answers became more and more evasive: "Practical life itself must be decorated with art. . . . The aim of the poet is to make the living, concretely necessary language of his times. . . . [A]rt for everyone—not as a product of consumption, but as an industrial skill, . . . art will . . . decorate every word, movement, and thing created by man, will become a joyous effort penetrating industrial processes, although at the cost of the loss of today's such specialized products of art as poetry, painting, the novel, the sonata, and the like."[33] This utopia is too radical, this "painting in words" is too picturesque, to be taken seriously as an answer.

But in that case why did LEF formulate the "aims of *aesthetics,*" and how were these "aesthetics" supposed to differ from the artisan's training? The answer is in the question itself: "To fight within art, using its means for its destruction—so that poetry, the purpose of which is apparently to 'easily and gently pamper,' would explode like a gun-cotton bomb in the consumer's stomach."[34] This fully Bolshevist logic depended on Bolshevist ethics: "Shouldn't the Russian Communist Party teach this brilliant practical dialectic that creates a new ethics—winning the victories no matter what, in the name of extreme accomplishments that are as stable as the North Star?!"[35] Finally, "the art worker must become a pyschoengineer, a psychoconstructor."[36] This is Stalin's source for "engineer of human souls," but in the latter instance, art is preserved—a far more logical stance. The authorities turned out to be much more decisive than the leftists (although they condemned the latter's "devil-may-care attitude toward the historical past" and "liquidationism as regards art"): the leftists, it seems, were too professional, and for this very reason they feared competition—their aggressiveness only disguised a fear of failure. But the authorities, having "restructured literary-artistic organizations" and created the only "creative unions," were not afraid of any competition and knew no shame whatsoever in the face of possible failure. The heirs simply proclaimed their rights to the classics: now there was *no shame* in having Semen Babaevskii in the same literary ranks as Tolstoy; Petr Pavlenko was *not afraid* of competing with Dostoyevsky; and Nikolai Gribachev felt himself to be the *heir* of Pushkin. Neither Proletkultists, RAPPists, nor LEFists had gone this far, even in their wildest dreams. Moreover, they could hardly have imagined that in the "literature of

the future" a Babaevskii or Gribachev would be representative of the revolutionary culture they had fostered.

But for the meantime, regardless of the subjective intentions of the participants, the preparation of a specifically Soviet cultural situation had been completed, in accordance with a principle well known in politics: "If you don't break it, you can't fix it." As one could see, all the revolutionary theories had some "broken" places like this (the "fixing" and some sobering-up would come only in the early 1930s). This is particularly true of LEF, which acted as a force born *within* the culture rather than coming to it from a subculture (as did the "proletarian writers," for example). Nonetheless, there was a similarity: marginality and a déclassé quality were common to both LEF and these other groups. Futurism—the "festering of bourgeois culture," as defined in Socialist Realism—matured within tradition, as a product of its crisis and "disintegration." Revolution brought it to the surface. Nonetheless, LEFists remained lumpen artists who created a lumpen aesthetic. The only difference between them and the "proletarian writers" was that the former wanted to "lower" art, and the latter to "raise" it to their own level. The essence of the debate between them could be reduced to the issue of a common level. Socialist Realism established a balance, but the commonality of movement of these two currents within revolutionary culture cannot be doubted.

In this respect, LEF's attitude toward the nascent Party-mindedness of RAPP is particularly interesting. The battle for "the Party line in the area of belles lettres" was waged not only by Onguardists, but by LEFists as well, although this theme in the latter's history is rarely examined. "Comrade Trotsky, among others, says the Party cannot rely on seeking and striving. Why? We will take anything in development, but this does not hinder us from relying on things. The Party can construct art, but in constructing it, seeking is inevitably necessary. Give the living a direction," was Chuzhak's challenge.[37] The LEFists, as well as the Onguardists, urged the Party leadership in 1923–24 to work out a "Party platform" in the area of literature. Chuzhak at this time spoke of a "goal" and opined that in the NEP era "the Party is particularly obliged to vigilantly stand guard, using all methods to edge its way into life, in the interests of organization: exercising the proletariat's will for *victory* in every way, fostering a *taste* for construction and for life, and *standardizing* literature under the banner of the victory to come. Resolute standardization of literature—this is the elementary tactical assignment of the Party *today.*"[38] The only difference between the Onguardists' and the LEFists' battles for the "Party line" was that the former were less independent in their fantasies because they were Party functionaries. However, the LEFists understood Party-mindedness in a detached way: they took the writer out of the zone of "personal responsibility." "The Party,"

wrote Tret'iakov, "always, in tireless contact with the current situation, formulates current slogans and directives. These directives encompass the ever greater expanse of political and daily-life relationships. It is silly for the solitary writer to even think about his own philosophical hegemony alongside this collective brain of revolution."[39]

To a great extent, the ideologues of LEF and RAPP understood Party-mindedness differently. Not by chance did the theoreticians of "leftist art" prefer to operate with a concept of "expediency," elevating it to the rank of an aesthetic category. "Expediency," wrote Aleksei Gan, one of the fathers of Russian Constructivism, "must be understood by starting out from the organic properties and demands of communism. . . . [I]t must be regarded from the viewpoint of the current situation of the proletarian revolution."[40] At issue was a phenomenon very close to Party-mindedness, that is, the "dialectical" flexibility of the artist in light of the "requirements of the situation." But there was no question of the Party giving direction, like a compass, to the artist. "The Party" was needed by the left as the opposite of "independent art" and of the "creative personality" that considered itself (especially in Russian tradition) "the teacher of life": "It is laughable to hope for a 'Red Tolstoy' in the role of 'teacher of life' with such a slow Tolstoyan approach, when nowadays flexibility in social maneuvering must be utmost, and the directive changeable according to the daily situation."[41] Hence the quite literal "life-building"—working in a newspaper:

> We have no reason to hope for Tolstoys, for we have our own epic.
>
> Our epic is the newspaper.
>
> Tolstoy, deprived of his teaching role, is a writer engaged in writing on a large scale. But any single person would give up when faced by the scale at which a newspaper encompasses facts. . . . From any Tolstoy, i.e., person writing novels (even if he hastens the speed of his work a hundredfold), Zorich would grab the theme, and Sosnovskii would intercept the organizational conclusion. . . . The whole nameless mass, from workers' correspondent to central editor—this is the collective Tolstoy of our time.[42]

The ideal seemed quite close: "The essence of the newspaper is anonymity, and keeping names under individual sections of its content is a throwback to the old belles lettres imperialism."

Rejection of the "creative personality," the *idée fixe* of all the revolutionary theories of creativity, found among the LEFists the most radical and logical supporters. The "creative personality" was in and of itself dangerous. "Driving" it into newspaper work meant solving many problems at once. The newspaper arose among the LEFists by a principle of repulsion (as originally nonart had arisen), attracting them by the question of *accountability* that it

naturally raised. The newspaper represents collective accountability. The only thing needed was to "fling wide the doors of the newspapers to the most trustworthy artists of the word—so that the new work can swallow up a number of serious experts who are now strolling about basically as do-nothings and occupying themselves with the realization of invented facts."[43] Besides this, the newspaper fulfills a *controlling* function, and since "creative personalities" are always suspect, they need the newspaper as corrective work: there is "a complete lack in their practice of any proven means that would give any reader the chance to control their subject matter. The writer/inventor is a shaman, and the poor reader is defenseless against him."[44]

In Tret'iakov's call to transform poets and novelists into "literate essayists and reporters" such as he himself was, one can discern the desire to not only bring them down to his level, but also to lift himself up to theirs.[45] The "literature of fact" became dear to leftists *because* the "creative personality" dies a natural death when occupied with transcription of facts. "Who is LEF sinking its teeth into?" a 1923 LEFist manifesto asks. The answer was already known: "Those who substitute the metaphysics of prophecy and priestliness for the dialectic of artistic labor."[46]

Newspapers and the "literature of fact" were a radical cure for "priestliness." Osip Brik, who had a little earlier called for artists to "spit on the altar of art daily,"[47] entitled one of his programmatic-propagandistic articles "Against the 'Creative' Personality" ("Protiv 'tvorcheskoi' lichnosti"). Then, as if taking up the baton from Brik, Tret'iakov writes:

> The writer's primitive individualism inevitably engenders . . . mistrust of intelligible sociopolitical thinking, mistrust of directives, and attempts to justify and defend the right to this mistrust. . . . Deindividualization and deprofessionalization of the writer are the two paths along which it is possible to break the dangerous resistance of the aesthetic caste. . . . If an "artistic" book bears the surname or mark of its "creator," then this is only a mirage. . . . A book product can be planned in advance, like textiles and ferrous metals. We are lacking too many books. We wish to be the masters of our lives. We need to draw up an inventory of the socialist economy we are building.[48]

And Iurii Libedinskii would make such a list of "themes waiting for their authors"; this list, however, would be contemptuously rejected by LEFists, for "ideology is not in the material that art uses. Ideology is in the means of developing this material, ideology is in form. Only expediently formulated material can become a work with a direct social purpose. Changing the theme is worthless."[49] And one assertion made by Tret'iakov sounded as if it were specially aimed at the RAPPist "call of shock workers into literature": "We do not think that the ability to write should be concentrated in a

small group of lit specialists; on the contrary, the ability to be a writer should become just as basic a cultural quality as is the ability to read. . . . Our worker-correspondent's movement is the deprofessionalization of the newspaper man. Why cannot work on books be deprofessionalized?"[50]

Thus, the polemic between LEF and RAPP boiled down to the problem of "individualistic artistic literature," which according to LEF should be "replaced with business literature, newspaper and magazine literature"; but RAPP had "gone over to the position of the Voronskiis and Polonskiis," which threatened to "lead proletarian writing youth astray on a false and perilous path."[51] In contrast to RAPP's "little individualistic ideas," Tret'iakov advocated a "collectivist" model of creativity: in the "literary artel," the functions would be broken down into "collecting material, literary reworking of it, and testing whether the thing [thus produced] works." The artel would be made up of "specialists of an extraliterary sort" and "transcribers" [*fiksatory*] (to obtain material), "literary formulators," and finally "experts" (to test the "scientific-technical conception of the work"). As for "testing the sociopolitical effect"—this would be done by censorship. In the process of "deprofessionalizing the writers themselves," the publishing houses would be transformed from "buyers" into "order-writers" that were "intertwined with the artels," which would give them the opportunity to "systematically fulfill the assignments of the socialist five-year plans in the area of literature." This would be, in Tret'iakov's thinking, "the nascent socialist sector of our literary industry, as opposed to the private-entrepreneurial, unregulated, and market-driven industry."[52]

Developing these ideas further, one M. Vostorgin suggested the creation of "literary workshops" whose purpose would be to "absorb solitary writers in the same way that primitive industrialists were in their own time absorbed by factory-and-workshop industry." With this aim, "points designated in advance for the preparation of artistic-literary raw material" would be created, after which, in the course of discussions, a "formulation of plots" would take place. Heading the workshop would be a "literary producer" who would hand out assignments to specialists in writing dialogs and descriptions; writers "returning from literary procurements" would write "by the episode," and then they would provide "motivation" for the finished "thing." For this enterprise, a specific type of criticism was required: one that would "finally and fully assure the realization of Party management, . . . reduce writers' political mistakes to a minimum, and maximize the difficulty of class-alien influences' penetration into literature." Attached to the workshops would be a "school for new cadres," and writers "in a very short time will catch up with and pass writers of capitalist countries as regards literary expertise." Ultimately, Vostorgin supposed, "spreading such workshops" would be tantamount to "dizziness of success." But there was really no need to

"spread" them—"solitary writers will themselves join the literary-artistic workshops when they are convinced that they cannot compete" with them. As a result, the "liquidation of handicraftsmen writers as a class" (more precisely, "self-liquidation") would occur. It remained to create a "writers' labor union." Since the workshops would operate "according to a definite plan," "publishers will have the possibility of concluding collective agreements with writers, and the literary-artistic works will be able to pay writers fixed wages."[53]

And in practice there was in fact a correspondence to the idea of this literary kolkhoz. The organizational utopia was not realized in literature, however, but in the Leningrad publisher Izogiz. There, under the direction of one G. Brylov, an artistic workshop was created, the work of which was based on the following principles:

1. Working conditions of a regulated workday, hourly pay for labor, and defined norms for output;
2. Socialization of the implements and means of production;
3. Collectivization of labor;
4. One-man management as a form of guiding the work;
5. Review of the issue of authorial right.[54]

In accordance with the "natural division of the artistic-creative process into (1) a plan (project), (2) preliminary artistic workup (draft), and (3) final execution of the work (originals or original polygraphic forms)," three special work-brigades were created in this workshop—planning, composition, and execution. Each brigade had a team leader who gave the artists individual assignments and tasks—"but within the bounds of the concrete assignment, each artist in his allotted work is granted full creative initiative and independence." If for example the artists "diverged in their views," either the rule of the majority or "the order of one-man management" would be enacted: "The essence of the industrial discipline of the collective workshop is that decisions on arguable industrial questions made by all the artists as conscientious members of the industrial collective and in opposition to individualistic aspirations are carried out without further discussion." Thus "the dialectical transformation of necessity into freedom of creation takes place," and thus the "artistic factory" is born.[55]

When the Communist Academy's journal *Literatura i iskusstvo* (*Literature and Art*) published Brylov's article, it prefaced it with a wide-ranging editorial "analysis" entitled "An Attempt at Collectivization of Artistic Labor: A Platform Devoid of Ideals and of Undefined Responsibility" ("Opyt kollektivizatsii khudozhestvennogo truda: Platforma bezydeinosti i obezlichki"). Here the journal spoke out against "the transforma-

tion of literature into an enormous factory of depersonalized trite hackwork," and branded Vostorgin's "theory" and Brylov's "practice" as "the harebrained ventures of LEFist imitators."[56] However, the LEFist ABC's deserve some attention: "(A) art is a device; (B) the quality of the artist is the quality of his devices; (C) consequently, proletarian artists are bad not because they have this or that ideology (is it not all the same, whichever?), but because they are poor experts; (D) finally, it is quite possible to have brilliant expertise no matter what the ideology, including Party ideology."[57]

We have already mentioned the internal contradiction of the LEFist theory of art. Let us now turn to the second aspect of this theory—the demand for professionalism and "expertise," which always sounds strange in the context of the LEFist call for the absorption of art into life. This demand was introduced into LEF by the formalists of OPOIaZ (Society for the Study of Poetic Language). Among all the other "ideas of the times" from which the mosaic of LEFist doctrine was constructed, this idea (particularly in the OPOIaZ orchestration) was undoubtedly dear to LEFists for its harmony with their "artisan" interpretation (in a literal sense, as we have seen) of the nature of art.

After all, Russian Formalism was born within Symbolism as a "working theory of creativity."[58] "The originality of Russian Formalism of the early periods," an academic history of Russian literary studies states, "was precisely in its unique and dramatic 'dualism' ":

> The fact is that Russian Formalism—and in this is one of its first genetic-psychological distinctions from Western formalism—took shape not as a school of literary studies, but as a working theory of creativity. Our formalism was begun by poets.
>
> Everyone familiar with the basic characteristics of formalism understands how strange and internally antinomic this fact is.
>
> Emphasis on technique and striving for precise methods, for testing harmony with algebra, and even for "scientific poetry" (Briusov) itself; the categories that traditionally arise in our mind with the word "poet" (a Symbolist poet, no less!), of inspiration, impulse, harmony, or rapture and ecstasy; devices, devices of devices, devices of devices of devices, and the directness and integrity of lyric experience and of the whole manner of living that we expect from a poet; the "unintelligible language" (Khlebnikov, Kruchenykh) of self-valuable words and numbers, drawings and parabolas, "constructs" (of future "structures") and "forces"; and the freshness of the green tree of life, are [all] to the highest degree characteristic of poetry.[59]

These antinomies would be removed in Russian Formalism precisely in the stage of "LEFization" of OPOIaZ figures. Strictly speaking, this process

brought the ideas of OPOIaZ into the context of new antinomies, and in so doing rid them of their "unique and dramatic 'dualism' ": instead of the opposition "algebra : harmony" there arose a new opposition—"algebra : everyday living." *At this juncture,* and not later, formalism came to an end: it was overthrown not in Socialist Realism, but here, earlier, in revolutionary culture—the difference between *explaining* "how 'The Overcoat' was made" and *attempting to teach* "how to make 'The Overcoat' " is truly staggering.

However, it was precisely within LEF that OPOIaZ made its claims as a teacher. In fact, this was brought home in the journal entitled *LEF*: "OPOIaZ is the best educator for literary proletarian youth. . . . OPOIaZ will help our comrades the proletarian poets move beyond the tradition of bourgeois literature by scientifically demonstrating its moribundity and counterrevolutionary nature. . . . OPOIaZ is the gravedigger for poetic idealism."[60]

Such "creative advertising" was of course a sign and result of decadence, but it also indicated the death of formalism as a scientific concept, as well as its regeneration as an ideological doctrine. It is no coincidence that the advertiser was not Iurii Tynianov or Boris Eikhenbaum, nor even Shklovskii—but Brik. Members of OPOIaZ were attracted to LEF by "class" similarity, so to speak (both groups had or aspired to the role of "specialists"); it is obvious, however, that they were also attracted by a "sociopsychological" similarity (both felt themselves to be destroyers: the futurists, of traditional art, and the formalists, of positivist aesthetics). Be that as it may, reformism was on the whole alien to both. Nonetheless, no "synthesis" occurred. The demand for professionalism impressed perhaps only such atypical LEFists as Mayakovsky, who stated that "only a *difference in . . . methods of processing* makes a difference between poets; only knowledge, perfection, and accumulation and diversification of literary devices makes a person a professional writer."[61] There was little of the LEFist in this pronouncement, except perhaps the first few words: "only a difference in . . . methods."

For the ideologues of LEF (Tret'iakov, Chuzhak, Brik, Mikhail Levidov, and others), the exact opposite was important: "It is not important that his [a Futurist's] name will be forgotten—it is important that his inventions have become part of a living expression";[62] "The poet is a master of words . . . who serves his class, his social group. . . . Proletarian poets are still afflicted with a greedy self-promotion. They are breaking away from their own class by the minute. . . . A great artist does not promote himself, but only carries out the social mandate."[63] Such an understanding of the nature of creativity had been born, as is well known, long before the "literary struggle" began. As far back as 1918, Mayakovsky had proclaimed:

Who is greater, a poet
or a technician

who
brings people to material gain?
Both.
Our hearts are the same motors.
Our soul is the same clever engine.
We are equal.
Comrades in the working-class masses.
Proletarians of body and soul.
Only together
will we decorate the universe
and force it to march."[64]

From the other side, a response came from Aleksandr Bezymenskii, a future founder of Young Guard and one of RAPP's activists:

Let us discard, discard
The rotting autumn
Of the old
Word "poet"!
There is no such name!
The glow of a world rebellious
Erased all the paint of the refined brush.
Dried up leaves of life,
Broken off
Are the shreds
Of the past
From the gloom:
We have grown up,
The workers
Of words.
Our soul is the factory.
The heart is a living cupola furnace.
Thoughts are the humming gears.
The poem is our mould or galley.
The new builders
Will be
Ready.
Do you hear the shop whistles,
The workers
Of words?
Listen to the music of life calling:
You there! To work, worrrrrk. . . . [65]

When LEF and RAPP came into being, their paths diverged: LEF would promote a theory of "social mandate," as if dooming the poet to the role of "specialist" (which impressed, as is well known, many active LEFists), but RAPP would proclaim through Bezymenskii's lips:

> We don't want to be
> Communists in one instance,
> Poets in another,
> Social activists in a third,
> Journalists in a tenth . . .
> We want to be:
> communists, doing the Party's work in the area
> of artistic literature.[66]

The LEFist demand for professionalism and "expertise" had, however, Futurist roots as well. Boris Kushner had already declared in the Futurists' newspaper *Iskusstvo kommuny* (*The Art of the Commune*): "They thought art was beauty. . . . Nobody dared suggest that art is simply work: skill, a profession, expertise!"[67] This is the characteristic logic of radical thinking: not "this, and this," but "not this, but this." There is however another aspect of the problem: "expertise" was supposed to serve to "enliven" art (as Arvatov said of the theater).

Pavel Markov, one of the most outstanding theater historians and critics of the 1920s, explained the "tasks of expertise" in Meierhold's theater thus: "The actor's art is more and more transitioning from an ability to construct an image, to create a clearly reminiscent type, and to portray life 'conventionally' or 'realistically,' to a discovery of the ability to master the external qualities of his expertise, and to influence the spectator propagandistically by their agency. When the question is thus formulated, there are a number of contradictions that bring the necessity and expediency of theater into doubt."[68] In other words, it was necessary to master a device "expertly" so that in "laying it bare" art could be "transcended." Thus, "expertise" should become the "gravedigger for art." Here we see the exact parallel to the Bolshevist "revolutionary dialectic": before the revolution, as is well known, the Bolsheviks required "bourgeois freedoms" so that by these freedoms they could bring down the bourgeois state itself.

Still, it is important to ask: Where did such radicalism in these theories come from? We can hardly answer this question simply by assuming some kind of "philosophical" premises upon which these theories might be based. There is, however, one consistent feature worth noting: *the more profound the rift between the consumer and the artistic products of this or that group, the more radical the group's theories.* In this a curious mechanism of com-

pensation operates. No, it was not the "gnoseological contradiction between real existence (technical and social/domestic construction) and aesthetic existence (art)," nor the "sociological contradiction, i.e., the rift between the aesthetic consciousness of the masses and professional artistic creativity"[69] that the intelligentsia elites doing battle in the 1920s were trying to resolve. The battle was fought over self-affirmation in art, in full accordance with "the laws of a revolutionary time" and the "revolutionary sense of justice"—without prior arrangement.

It is noteworthy that the real "literature of the 1920s" as it were passed *over the heads* of the warring parties. These factions were actually at the periphery of the literary process, in a zone where literature and power influenced each other directly. As Mayakovsky so precisely put it, LEF "made a new aesthetic enterprise, closed in upon itself, out of revolutionary literature."[70] The fact is, however, that essentially all the literary groupings of the 1920s were such "aesthetic enterprises." But we should still keep in mind that the "stockholders" here were the writers themselves, who in no wise could agree on who the owner of the "controlling interest" should be, and so it passed first to the Smithy, then to Pereval, to LEF, to RAPP, and so on, until "according to the laws of a revolutionary time" the property of the "literary-artistic organizations" was confiscated and nationalized.

It is obviously not the case that only "ersatz art," as it was opposed to "real art," can be created according to the recipes of one or another group of theoreticians, or that one should see a "vulgar devaluation of true artistic values"[71] in their theories—these theories are capable of bringing *any* aesthetic judgment into doubt. But the fact is that the ideologues of these groups were also writers in their fashion, and in novelty of ideas their articles lose nothing in comparison with the novelty of the artistic forms engendered by the revolutionary era. However, what truly makes the various literary groups of the 1920s similar is their profound utopianism. Indeed, a utopian vision is capable of giving rise to this kind of aesthetic discourse. The highest utopia was defined not so much by a conviction that it was possible to "create art" by using one recipe or another, as it was by a conviction that it was at all possible to "create" art by an external exertion of will.

But here serious doubts arise: could these project makers themselves really not have understood this? Can we really take all these fantasies, from Proletkult to LEF, "at face value"? Is there not really an aggression that bulges out through (or tears apart) the fabric of all these theories—be they of Proletkult, RAPP, or LEF—an aggression of people in the "concrete historical conditions" created by revolution, rushing to take by storm the "altar of art" by means of "dispersal of the Constituent Assembly" and demonstrative "spitting" on this altar, squeezing out their rivals in the process? The utopian plans of the "new creators" were born out of the attempt to carry the second Bolshevist revolution over into art, and therein—in the identification

of political power with "power in art," and of political methods with methods of literary struggle—probably, is the ultimate utopia of revolutionary culture.

We find in *Iskusstvo kommuny* an article by Vsevolod Dmitriev, "The First Result" ("Pervyi itog"). The "result" turned out pitifully—for the Futurists. Quoting Mayakovsky, Dmitriev wrote, "For me, 'the streets are our brushes, the squares our palettes,' are absolutely no longer words, but deeds, the basic and only deed that art now has. . . . Easel painting is dead. . . . Futurism as well is dead, as the last acute condition suffered by an individualism ultimately used up. We say 'creativity of the masses,' and if this is not idle talk, then more than anything else it means the elimination and disappearance of separate personalities; there will be a grandiose sea, but there will not be any separate puddles or drops. . . . For this reason, the 'Futurist,' as a particularly sharply outspoken individualist, is our mortal enemy, a more dangerous enemy than the whole herd of the last-born of realism and impressionism. . . . Art and painting in the sense that they were understood earlier are yielding their places to craftsmanship. . . . Craftsmanship—the manufacture of furniture, dishes, signboards . . . as a genuine real-life creativity—is becoming the foundation for a new inspiration, is becoming the basis and meaning of art. . . . We must definitively say the hell with portrait studios, we must definitively forget about individuals, even if distinguished, like Tatlin, Malevich, Al'tman. . . . [W]e must definitively go into craftsmanship, into work on signboards, trunks, and pots, since only through this sacrifice and drastic shift can we find the hands and strength for the construction of new communist art."[72]

But Dmitriev had "buried" Futurism too early, since only formally had it "left the stage": in Soviet history, nothing "leaves the stage" for good—everything is incorporated into the process of mutagenesis. The "miraculous transformations" of Futurism should be understood in precisely this context. Everything is turned upside down. A. N. Men'shutin and A. D. Siniavskii described it thus: "Futurism, in trying to 'be useful,' was transformed into its opposite, and at the same time it preserved something of its former appearance, as if turned inside out." These authors noted a number of "strange 'metamorphoses' that this milieu abounded in":

the "self-valuable word" was replaced by a "social mandate";
people who had recently asserted the genius's right to "create for himself only" and who had understood art as "the free emanation of a subjective consciousness" that has no points of contact with the objective world, joined the ranks of artisans and began making objective, material objects for mass consumption;
abstract painting turned into a concrete "thing";
conventionality, in breaking all ties with real life, led to the destruction of all conventionality;

the rejection of realism, which in the Futurists' opinion only duplicates reality and becomes like photography (a rejection that led them to the extreme forms of abstractionism), culminated in "leftist" practice, in that the photograph was elevated to the status of an exemplar;

"transrationalism" [*zaum'*], i.e., intentionally meaningless speech incomprehensible to anyone, which had attracted Futurists specifically by its incomprehensibility, lack of content, and its being an "end in itself" . . . was now considered to be a language "understandable to all peoples," and therefore was transformed . . . into a thing that was sensible to the highest degree, and socially useful.[73]

Sympathetic appraisal of these "metamorphoses" was highly typical. It traditionally marked a liberal stance of researchers: "The traditionally Russian civic-mindedness, renewed by revolution, the aspiration toward a popular 'utility,' and the readiness to put oneself at the service of a most vital, simple, and real cause, all intervened here and at times were expressed quite clearly. Hence the features of selfless devotion, stern duty, and conscious self-restraint, with which these calls to 'action' and even the extremes of this trend were frequently marked, features expressed in an emphatic disdain for 'beauty' and 'the refined,' and in the attitude toward art as an 'illicit luxury,' a 'whim,' or a 'bagatelle.'"[74]

This is of course an obvious mythologization: "self-restraint" was least of all characteristic of the activists of revolutionary culture, and "selfless devotion" was not evident except perhaps in unrestrained self-advertising. What can be read most clearly in the descriptions of these "metamorphoses" is the LEFist ideologues' striking lack of principles. In RAPP such lack of principles was elevated to the principle that subsequently acquired the title "the principle of Party-mindedness." This lack of principles results in both cases from the fact that both groups were composed primarily of politicians. But in politics and in the struggle for power, as is well known, it is not principles that operate, but interests. And only Socialist Realism succeeded in gathering these interests into a single bundle in such a way that they did not contradict the interests of the masses and authority.

At the end of the 1920s, Tret'iakov wrote bitterly: "The continual misfortune of us LEFists was that on the map of literature we were a river that stopped short without reaching the sea. *Iskusstvo kommuny* came to an abrupt end in 1919; the old LEF dried up in 1924; the 'New LEF' [*Novyi LEF*] was cut off in 1928–29. And we are not worth twopence if we do not flow into the sea—the sea of massism [*massovost'*]."[75] Nonetheless, he concluded optimistically, "a river cannot help flowing into the sea."

If only Tret'iakov had known *what kind of sea* the river of the avant-garde was yet to flow into.

Chapter Five

Pereval: "Organic Creativity"; or, Hands for the Hourglass

PROBABLY THE MOST DRAMATIC aspect of the 1920s literary groups was the striking blindness of their ideologues.

Proletkult continued to work at creating its collectivist homunculus, not only while understanding full well (judging from Bogdanov's opinions) the character of the revolution that had taken place, but also while knowing the uncompromising attitude of the leader of this revolution toward Proletkultism, his personal hostility to the leaders of the movement, and his apprehension that this movement would slip out from under Party control. Could the Proletkult activists (all "ardent revolutionaries") really not have known how the political struggle would end after the Revolution, this game without rules?

The Smiths, who elected to remain with the "class" when power during the Revolution went not to the classes but to the Party, who left the Party and proclaimed the end of the Revolution in NEP, and who continued to feed on their own Cosmist fantasies—were they not really members of the Bolshevist Party? Could they really not have known what the "new type of party" was? The result: the Young Guard, "October," and RAPP. The "scrap-heap of history."

The RAPPists, these professional Party functionaries who assumed a monopolistic position in literature toward the end of the 1920s, absorbing or demoralizing all the literary groups, continued to battle for their own "dialectical-materialist method" and—at the very peak of their power—were themselves "liquidated" as the result of the "restructuring of literary-artistic organizations" that seemed to burst from the heavens. The result: the "scrap-heap of history."

The LEFists—who demanded a "literature of fact" and asserted their own status as "specialists" in literature even in the early 1930s, when the authorities demanded not "facts" and not "cinematic truth" but "Party-minded evaluation" of events, and at precisely this time demonstrated their attitude toward the Party-less "specialists" by the "Shakhty trial"—did not understand, failed to see. . . . The result: self-dispersal. The "scrap-heap of history."

The Perevalists, continuing to search for Galatea, to demand "Mozartianism," "sincerity," "aesthetic culture," and "a new humanism," and to argue about freedom of creation, incorrectly evaluated the "historical situation," did not understand the "requirements of the current moment," did not see or learn. . . . The result: the "scrap-heap of history."

We are talking now only about the most significant literary groups, disregarding the smaller ones (from the "Serapion Brothers" to the ephemeral groups within the avant-garde, which are impossible to count). What kind of tragic *mass* blinding was this? Could no one really have seen "which millennium it is"? After all, almost all the ideologues of these groups were experienced politicians. They had all studied Party history—and not by the "Short Course"—and knew that the "dispersal of the Constituent Assembly" had been at the beginning, which meant that ultimately the sailor Zhelezniak *could not fail to appear* on the scene.

And when a certain "man with a rifle" unknown to all—Ivan Gronskii—emerged from Stalin's office, proclaimed "Socialist Realism," and took up the head post of the Organizational Committee of the Union of Soviet Writers, apparently even then not everyone understood that this was again a case of "the watchmen are tired." Why did the ideologues of the literary groups not understand this? Why had they not foreseen it? Partly because they themselves were also "Zhelezniaks" that had in their time dispersed the Constituent Assembly. And the "sailor" always thinks that his own "watch" is the last one. The "sailor" has a short memory. But Kronstadt inevitably arrives—such is the "sailor's lot." And the "ship of contemporaneity" is no exception. And even the "sailor" Gronskii turned up (in a few years) in the gulag alongside the "little brothers" from the first call—Smiths, LEFists, RAPPists.

Toward the end or denouement of these various plays with the repeating plot, one observes the repetition of one and the same course of events—radicalization of ideas, and correspondingly of actions. Thus the RAPPists engage in suicidal debates with "the comrades in charge at the Central Committee" and even *Pravda* cannot reason with them; the LEFists agree to "self-liquidation" (a completely logical step after they had proclaimed the "liquidation of art"); the Perevalists begin to speak of "self-contained freedom." It is as if each wished to say the most sacred thing just before its death. It goes without saying that this "sacred" thing related not to the sphere of literature, but in fact to that of politics, or of "ideological superstructures," in the language of Proletkult. As is well known, the literary groups did not create literature. What did LEF create besides Tret'iakov's essays, which were the matrix for a "literature of fact"? What did RAPP create except Libedinskii's *The Birth of a Hero* (*Rozhdenie geroia*), this textbook for a course on the "theory of the living person"? What did Pereval create besides Petr Sletov's *Mastery* (*Masterstvo*), this history of "Mozart-

ianism"? The theories and recipes were only a by-product of the activities of the literary groups that were born primarily to protect the interests of the writers that at various times joined them (or, in Voronskii's terms, temporarily "leaned on" them). The practical work of the groups was struggle (in RAPPist language, "scuffling").

However, the scuffling factions did not seem to notice that they shared a battleground with authority. Moreover, even if they had taken this fact into account, the essence of the matter would not have changed: no one is allowed to "jump out of" his own time. But the Revolution, which demanded that the artist, as Mayakovsky said, "tread on the neck of his own song," could not but infringe upon his interests. In fact, these interests were the last freedom, given the conditions wherein a "secret freedom" was lacking. For this very reason the destiny of the literary groups was foreordained; and for the same reason the "literary struggle of the 1920s" did not develop in accordance with the "logic of ideas" ascribed to it by later researchers, but rather in accordance with the logic of development of revolutionary culture.

The "scrap-heap of history." A strange spatio-temporal continuum established by Soviet culture. A place wherein time is located.

The museum is the "scrap-heap of history."

Socialist Realism is the museum of revolutionary culture, where the displays, wax figures living in time past, captivate us even today. Only by realizing this can one approach analysis of the movements in revolutionary culture, including Pereval—in relation to which there has been a shift from censure to apologetics. The apologia for Pereval was a reaction to the completely inadequate and deliberately unconscientious appraisal of Perevalists in the 1920s and in Socialist Realism. Pereval was first "read" through the liberal glasses of the second half of the twentieth century in the West[1]; then this view also spread among Soviet historians of literature: at first, with reservations, Pereval's merits were contrasted to RAPPist "deviations,"[2] and then Pereval was decisively proclaimed the forerunner of some kind of "Gorkyist school" from which "good" Socialist Realism was born.[3] The view of Perevalists as "Don Quixotes of the 1920s"[4] was an attempt to bridge these extremes. Against this backdrop, the figure of Pereval leader Aleksandr Voronskii has been increasingly iconicized. Despite all the seriousness of the sixties-era interpretation of Perevalist ideas, this interpretation could not but reflect the duality that lay at the foundation of Perevalist doctrine itself. This foundation is what will occupy our attention: the theory of creativity was Pereval's central theory. Perevalists themselves were aware of this: "Our disagreements with VAPP arise not because we are writing different resolutions and declarations; our disagreements are about a different approach to the writer. The whole matter boils down to this."[5]

The view of the Perevalists as "Don Quixotes" can be considered

justifiable, but with a single corrective: the "debate about the reality of the ideal" was the central problem of the *whole* literary struggle. And in this sense (regardless of our own opinions about these ideals), the Proletkultists, Smiths, LEFists, and others were no lesser "Don Quixotes." "At the end of the 20s, the ideals of revolution remained as before the ideals of the Perevalists"[6]—but everyone understood the "ideals of revolution" differently. Let us assume that for Perevalists they signified "a return to the idea of morality common to all mankind, recognition of the cleansing force of tragic art, liberation of humanism from the insulting and inhuman epithet 'abstract,' and elevation of the writer's sincerity to a natural and immutable norm of his existence"[7]—and for Proletkultists something else, and for LEFists and others, yet other things. This blindness ("Quixotism") was *widespread* and was related to the unpreparedness of revolutionary culture's activists to integrate the "*ideals* of revolution" with the "*laws* of revolution"; almost principal among the latter was the "law" formulated back in the days of the French Revolution: "Revolution eats up its own children."

Pereval was almost the only literary group of the 1920s (among the significant ones) that did not advance its own claims to "creation of a new writer." Perevalists did not engage in "laboratory experiments," nor did they issue "directives" for creativity. The Perevalist concept, as a theory of creativity, was shaped rather late and was in fact a *response* to the challenges of LEF and Onguardism. Organizationally, Pereval arose from the *current* crisis of proletarian literature. Before Pereval, as is well known, there was only Voronskii, who was essentially (before his fall from grace in 1927) the Party's chief commissar in literature, appointed by Lenin. This determined a great deal both in the evolution of Perevalist ideas and in the Perevalist battle strategy. The solidity of Voronskii's position was based on his "flexibility" within the boundaries determined by "Party policy in the area of artistic literature." In the absence of a unified "Party line," the Party was not interested at that time in "cultural revolution." On the contrary, its goals lay in attracting the prerevolutionary literary intelligentsia to the side of its new authority, searching for and supporting new authors, and "assimilating" and "reeducating" the "fellow travelers." Voronskii remained primarily a practical organizer of the literary process, editor, critic, and of course a professional politician who clearly saw the "arrangement of forces" in literature.

"In opposition to the 'old men' who were almost all White Guards and whiners, I took on the task of providing and 'bringing to light' a group of young belle lettrists, both ours and those close to us," Voronskii wrote, explaining the policy of *Krasnaia nov'* (*Red Virgin Soil*), of which he was editor, in a letter to Lenin. "All of them [referring to Vsevolod Ivanov, Libedinskii, Nikitin, Fedin, and others] are from the Red Army, from the real lower strata, with Red Army stars. . . . Against the 'old men' I am organizing youth. This is

necessary, the circumstances are developing such that belles lettres will in the very near future play a very great role—such are the times. Talents from the lower strata are trudging straight out—they only need to be given a direction, be organized ideologically. . . . [W]e must produce our own brood. . . . Vsevolod Ivanov is the first bomb to have exploded already among the Zaitsevs and Zamiatins. I'm sure there will be others as well."[8]

Voronskii "accepted" anyone who was not against the new authority (a "necessary and sufficient" condition, at the time). He was not of course the "enemy of proletarian literature" that the Onguardists accused him of being: he simply corresponded ideally to the Party line in the early stage of the revolutionary literary process, advocating equal rights within the new literature, to which RAPPist activists could not resign themselves since such "rules of the game" were not to their advantage in the marketplace. Neither did leftists forgive Voronskii his breadth of views: his activities provided a second wind for the "realistic trend" that was literally disappearing in the early postrevolutionary years as a result of leftist preponderance. Herein lay the sources of the LEF–RAPP union against Voronskii.

Meanwhile, Voronskii was apparently the strongest figure in the literary process at the moment that the Onguardists and LEFists turned their attacks on him. As is well known, Voronskii was not only a politician, but also a "buyer" of writers (on behalf of the authorities). As Vsevolod Ivanov recalled, "when appointed editor of *Krasnaia nov'*, Voronskii brought a briefcase tightly packed with money from Moscow to Petrograd, and did not hide the fact that he wanted to buy young writers."[9] Having delegated Voronskii the right to "purchase" anyone talented and interesting in literature, and having turned him into a "shareholder," the authorities left the Proletkultists, who had essentially been broken up in the early 1920s (and who likewise did not simply claim a piece of the "pie," but also supposed that "their revolution" should share with them not proportionally, but on a favored basis), to the mercy of fate. It took three years for a "literary group" that demanded its own piece of the "pie" to be shaped in the space between literature and the Agitprop apparatus, out of the fragments of post-Proletkult groups (Smithy, Young Guard, "October," and "Workers' Spring" [*Rabochaia vesna*]). Vikentii Veresaev formulated with precise accuracy the essence of the "literary discussions" that preceded the 1925 resolutions of the Central Committee: "The debates that so terribly agitated certain literary circles over the last two years raged over the question: Can a small group of untalented writers lay claim to dictatorial powers in the area of Russian literature?"[10]

The Onguardists' demand for a "Party line" was—indisputably—a demand for a new "line" satisfying *their own* interests, a "line" that would allow the "briefcase tightly packed with money" to end up in their hands. It goes without saying that the Party had no reason at the time to give a stake to this

noisy and aggressive group of "untalented writers." Indeed, practical considerations were involved: the Onguardists had always belonged to the Party—in any case they had nowhere to go—but it still remained to "win over" the fellow travelers. For this reason, Voronskii could feel confident. But perhaps precisely because he sensed a certain "temporariness" in such a situation, he also began to respond to the Onguardists in order to defend his own position. Hence, "Perevalism" began precisely as a position in the "literary scuffle": like all revolutionary "theories," it was born out of the clash of interests and the entirely practical needs of political struggle.

Perevalist theory was originally based on existing literary material, and therein lay its fundamental difference from the doctrines of Pereval's opponents. Voronskii was not making models: he was substantiating literary practice itself, not ideas. However, since this practice was really opposed to the life-building fantasies of Proletkult and LEF, Voronskii also grounded himself in completely traditional aesthetics. Hence his key definition: "Art is primarily *cognition* of life."[11] Hence also the assertions that "a real artist is a person who *sees* ideas" and "an artist must have *his own* eyes."[12] These are "common sense" formulas. But Voronskii was not a "theoretician"—he was not creating a "platform" nor "blazing new trails" but rather starting out from Marxist tradition, sometimes taking it to extremes. Today, for example, it is difficult to understand what the following statement means: "Just like science, art yields *objective truths*; genuine art demands precision because it deals with an object; it is proficient. . . . Artistic cognition can be objective and precise, like any scientific discipline."[13] In foregrounding some sort of "objectivity of art," Voronskii formulated for the first time the problem that neither Pereval thinking nor later Soviet leftist-liberal thinking was able to come to terms with: "The basic issue . . . is that subjectivism, ideology, and *publitsistika* not distort the writer's artistic creations, that *subjective opinions correspond to the nature of an object*, and that *publitsistika* and politics be at the same time at the level of the best ideals of humanity."[14] But the fundamental problem was also contained in the words Voronskii emphasized: What if these "subjective opinions" *do not correspond to* "the nature of an object," and what is more, who can know how "objective" this "nature" is?

Voronskii posed questions that were *by definition* insoluble, and this doomed his position to be perpetually resistant to clarification. His attempts to "clarify" this problem, which was in fact a central one, every time led him back to the "ABC's of communism": "Consciously or unconsciously, the scientist and artist fulfill the assignments of their class. The products of their work primarily go to satisfy the interests of this class. Success, character, direction, and methods of scientific and artistic activity are conditioned by the reigning psychology of one or another class, a psychology that in the final analysis depends on the condition of the industrial forces of the society in

question; consequently, by studying and showing reality, the artist and scientist examine this reality through a psychological class prism."[15] For this reason Voronskii turns to the "arsenal of Marxist criticism," above all to Georgii Plekhanov, and formulates "aesthetic laws" that by definition could not be corroborated: "Aesthetic evaluation in art corresponds to logical evaluation in science. . . . Evaluating a work aesthetically means determining to what degree content corresponds to form, or, to put it another way, to what degree content corresponds to objective artistic truth, for an artist thinks in images: an image should be artistically truthful, i.e., must correspond to the nature of what is being portrayed. Herein lies the perfection and beauty in the work of an artist. *A false idea or false content cannot find a perfected form,* i.e., it cannot profoundly grip us or 'infect' us aesthetically."[16] Here the familiar fantasizing begins: "The Bunins and Merezhkovskiis became literary impotents because they 'defined themselves' in the direction of obscurantism. . . . '[S]elf-definition' in the direction of communist political literacy leads the artist to learn the best ideal that humanity has reached . . . so that the reader will say 'This is artistically truthful and true.'"[17]

And although Voronskii clearly discerned the real reasons behind the Onguardist and LEFist attacks, he continued to assert that "the confusion of our comrades [Onguardists and LEFists] that led to their being forced to cross out old and new art with the exception of a single very small and very young group, happens because of the same inability to apply the theory of class struggle to questions of art."[18] Nonetheless, the only true way that the "theory of class struggle" could be applied to "questions of art" was precisely the way that Arvatov and Chuzhak used, rejecting the "creative personality," since in this theory there is nothing except the rationalization of revolutionary practice. But on political questions Voronskii was much more direct, understanding quite well *what* the Onguardists were trying to attain, and asserting that "many of the 'communist epics' will only become fertilizer, for despite all their excellent ideological qualities, artistically they are very weak" and that "inordinately obliging critics" wanted to keep readers on a diet of "third-rate" reading.[19] This "third-rate" material, according to Voronskii, is born when a writer lacks *"his own view of the world."*

The "art of seeing the world" has in Voronskii's orchestration various polar opposites, each of which neutralizes the other. On the one hand he asserts that "in order to give free rein to artistic potential, one must become ignorant and stupid, and renounce everything that brings the intellect into the original impression," stressing here that an intellectual vision of the world often leads to a state wherein "the most original, characteristic, distinctive, and concrete [features] become obscured and elusive. . . . They are discovered best and most often by the most direct impressions."[20] But in as-

serting that "artistic creativity is intuitive in its origins," he immediately insists on a leading role for the intellect, and demands that the artist "define his relationship to contemporary revolutionary battles."[21] Thus is born the "truth of life" that after passing through the crucible of RAPPist theories of "direct impressions," "the living person," and "unmasking," and then being enriched with Gorky's "revolutionary romanticism," hardens—in the course of "revolutionary development"—into the chiseled formulas of Socialist Realism.

"It is time we understood that real revolutionary proletarian art is not [to be found in] shouting out current topical slogans, nor [in] descriptions of gallant Komsomolians striding with a proud step, nor [in] photographs of conferences where selfless people's commissars and executives 'break into pieces' and die at their desks, nor in the cunning deceptions of Glavlit and editors. . . . [T]he main question, the question of all questions, now boils down to the artist's attitude toward the world. . . . The world must appear in his works as it is, in and of itself, so that the beautiful and the ugly, the sweet and the disgusting, the joyful and the sorrowful, appear to us as such not because the artist wants it so, but because they are contained and exist in living life."[22] But still, this "living life" is already conceived of in a Soviet-perfected way; it has already been allowed to pass through the magical crystal of Glavlit.

Thus arose the theme of "organic creativity." The "organic method in art" and "sincerity in art" are the fundamental insoluble problems of Soviet culture. The RAPPists "rationalistically" imposed a "progressive worldview" on the artist, thus removing the problem of "taking possession of him"; but the Perevalists took the problem of worldview over to the plane of "a problem of creativity." A progressive worldview must be *organic* for the writer, and not rationally adopted by him (as the RAPPists would have it); moreover, it must not be something external for the writer, as would follow from the ideas of LEFist "specialists." However, there was no answer to the question of what to do if this worldview was not completely progressive—and within the framework of the revolutionary understanding of freedom, there could be none. This was a "false alternative," and the debate was *dead-ended from the beginning.*

Perevalist ideas are interesting, however, specifically because of their "frontier" character. Pereval's activists earnestly approached the questions of "the source of harmony" and freedom of creation that Blok had posed early on, in his famous 1921 speech about Pushkin, as well as the notion of "secret freedom," and tried to adapt "freedom of creation" to revolutionary conditions and to unite service to a "progressive worldview" with "secret freedom." They tried to formulate some limitations for this "secret freedom" that would not destroy it altogether. But these limitations were (and could not but be)

objectively *external* to the act of creation itself, no matter how much the Perevalists talked about integrity and Mozartianism: "In any social undertaking, including art, a personality can accomplish anything whatsoever simply by approaching his undertaking creatively, i.e., with all integrity. . . . Such a personality is a Mozart, no matter what area it creates in. A Salieri attempts to express the same thing, but does this mechanically, fragmentedly—he has no integrity and is incapable of action as an expression of his own integrity. . . . The rebirth that takes place within a person—this is what produced tragic art, the most effective, most active, most profound type of art. . . . Tragedy was a humanistic art, and it is a humanistic art."[23] Thus wrote Dmitrii Gorbov, and Abram Lezhnev explained that tragic art is an art that is "a stranger to cheap happiness and bureaucratic loyalty; it does not try to cover everything with the rosy lacquer of an idyll but rather to reconcile the irreconcilable and to allow inevitable virtue to triumph. And if it is joyous, its right to joy is dearly bought. Do you want to know what tragic art is, in a word? This is the kind of art in which Zharovs and Bezymenskiis are impossible."[24]

Lezhnev refused to see, however, that the "Zharovs and Bezymenskiis" (Komsomol poets close to RAPP) were indeed "integral" figures and were in complete accord with the principle of "sincerity in art." In this regard the majority of Soviet writers—from Zharov to Sofronov, Panferov to Babaevskii—were sincerely Soviet (which is quite apparent in the polemic, provoked by Vladimir Pomerantsev's article about "sincerity in literature," that unfolded later at the dawn of the thaw era). The fact is that "sincerity" is not, of course, a "principle of art." The problem of "sincerity," like that of "organicity," is a *completely Soviet problem.*

"A proletarian artist," Gorbov asserted, "must always be with his own class. But he is obliged to follow a subjective path, not satisfying a single demand until it has entered his internal world, until it has become his internal gesture [*zhest*]. In this the proletarian artist must be haughty in a Pushkinesque way."[25] And what could one do if the writing of verses for literally every date on the "red-letter days calendar" became just this kind of "internal gesture" for Zharov? After all, this is not a matter of expertise . . .

Absolutely not of expertise, the Perevalists said: Lezhnev explains that art "is not so much expertise as creativity"; furthermore, "a mechanical [*remeslennoe*] understanding of art, its reduction to a device, is particularly characteristic of eras of stagnation and decadence."[26] Voronskii was talking about this as well, when he spoke out against the "energetic literary campaign against the interpretation of art as a creative act" deployed by LEF.[27] For this reason, in Pereval the fight "for expertise" and "against the cliché" spilled over into the fight against "toadying," about which the Perevalists wrote often and not without pleasure. Their criticism was perceived by opponents to be "enemy criticism,"[28] which is of course unjust. It was the *crit-*

icism of a bystander: the "honest Soviet artist" invented by Perevalists was no less utopian than the Proletkult homunculus. Having begun with reliance on available literature, Perevalists went further and further into ideological fantasizing.

Much in this metamorphosis is explained by Voronskii's stance on the issues of the conscious versus the unconscious and intuition in creative activity. It is conventionally supposed that Voronskii moved further into acceptance of the Freudian concept of creativity than almost anyone else. Following this idea, however, it is overlooked that the background of this "advance" was provided by Friche and Lebedev-Polianskii. Also conventionally supposed is that in making rationalism fit into his concept of creativity, Voronskii in fact rejected the right of "rationalistic art" to exist. To be sure, Voronskii spoke more of intuition than others did, but the "intuitiveness" he proclaimed was always prudently surrounded by references to "intellect."[29] He was even more cautious when he spoke of "the subconscious." His work on "Freudianism and art," which is always adduced as an example of Voronskii's "broad-mindedness," is directed *against* Freudianism—and this cannot be missed. Of course, he did not reject Freudianism "without grounds," but then very few did reject the "Vienna theory" (as it was called at the time) "without grounds"—even in the Communist Academy.[30] They selected that small bit of Freud that *did not contradict* the reigning class-oriented approach to art. It is hardly necessary to state that Voronskii's verdict on Freud was "subjectivism," "idealism." His conclusion in the final words of the work: "Freudianism as a system of views is incompatible with the Marxist understanding of art."[31] Apparently this was too little for Voronskii, and he added a postscript to his text, on the analysis of the discussion of Freudianism in the Communist Academy. His evaluation: "Comrade Friche's notions we believe to be true, as well as his conclusion regarding the incompatibility of Marxism with Freudianism." Pereverzev is quoted sympathetically: "To consider Freudianism a materialist system akin to Marxism is a most profound illusion. Freudianism and psychoanalysis are idealistic systems throughout."[32]

Nonetheless, Voronskii's criticism of Freudianism is of indubitable interest. For Voronskii, the "basement of the subconscious" was not (as it was for RAPPists) "damp" and "gloomy." On the contrary, it was "joyful" and "bright"—presumably because Voronskii's artist, this jolly Mozart, since he was "organic," had no reason to "fear" the subconscious. On this issue, Voronskii was of course more logical than the RAPPists, who although they also combined worldview with creativity in their "artist," nonetheless feared the "damp basement," as we remember. And they were justified to fear it: an artist modeled by the Perevalists was too bright and "organic" to be a "living person" in the revolutionary era.

More fitting to the era, as may be imagined, was the position taken by Viacheslav Polonskii, who was in solidarity with Perevalists on many issues, but who assumed a peculiar position in the debate about consciousness and creativity. Polonskii tried to remove the Perevalist dichotomy of "Mozart vs. Salieri" by reconciling them: "Salierism . . . is not a lowly 'profession' opposed to 'art,' not a 'technique' that rejects 'inspiration,' and not an 'expertise' that excludes 'creativity.' Salieri simply represents *a different kind of art*. . . . Therefore 'Salierism' must not be contrasted to 'Mozartianism' as 'non-art' to 'art,' " because "there is no 'art' without a 'profession,' " and therefore "the contrast of 'expertise' to 'creativity' is groundless."[33] Polonskii's theory of creativity was an attempt to navigate between the Scylla of RAPPist "rationalism" and the Charybdis of Perevalist "intuitionism." But Polonskii was not a theoretician of art; he was primarily a journalist, critic, and organizer of the literary process, which gave him indubitable advantages as compared to the ideologues of these groups that had vested interests. His "objectivism" and outsider status allowed him to provide very precise correctives to "ideas of the times." Thus Polonskii can be credited with a most essential corrective to Voronskii's theory of "art as cognition of life." In a polemic against Lelevich, Polonskii observes that "comrade Voronskii's formula is too narrow" because "a person does not simply 'get to know life' in art, but primarily *reflects himself in it.* Looking into the mirror of art, he sees not only life but also himself, and perhaps primarily himself. *Art is not only cognition of life, but the self-knowledge of a social human being.*"[34] Polonskii succeeded in bringing the Perevalist concept of creativity around even more face-to-face with the artist, by coming close to Mikhail Gershenzon's formula, which was so alien to all theoreticians of revolutionary culture: "An artist sees on the outside not what is, but what is completed within himself."[35] He wrote this as if to affirm once more the correctness of Perevalist opinions of the idea of "collective creativity," about which "many superfluous things, as well as much nonsense, have too often been said" (as Voronskii put it),[36] and as if to once more force the reader to ponder the possibility of "organic creativity" in a revolutionary age.

The concept of "organic creation" was on the whole a "common sense" response to the ostracism that the traditional understanding of creativity had suffered in revolutionary culture. It was most often a response on behalf of *living* literature. And for precisely this reason, the Perevalists (as opposed to the Proletkultists, RAPPists, and LEFists) did not occupy themselves with "creation of writers"—they already had an existing corpus of writers, the best that existed in 1920s literature. Precisely for this reason, the Perevalist concept of creativity (most often) was an explanatory concept, not one that issued decrees: they really did have *something* to lean on and *something* to

explain. The curious "magic" of the Perevalist stance in 1920s literature is explained by a number of circumstances:

First, this theory is an extension of the intelligentsia utopia of "socialism with a human face," and a transference of this utopia into literature. However, this did not take into account the fact that "in one country" socialism arose from a revolutionary situation that "organically" and fatally "struck at the rights" of personality: the "freedom of creation" declared by Perevalists was under revolutionary-era conditions comparable perhaps only to the Stalinist constitution that proclaimed all manner of freedoms at the height of the Great Terror.

Second, the theory is attractive because it turned out to be almost the only "defense" of literature at this time. However, there are no distinctions within it between literary theory and literary practice: it did not at all follow that since Voronskii was the best postrevolutionary-era editor of the best literary journal, his theory was "correct." Voronskii was first and foremost a brilliant editor and critic who was keenly sensitive to literature, but his theories (and those of Perevalist critics close to him) continue to evoke interest and sympathy because the "1920s literary struggle" continued right up until the 1990s—at the heart of this "aesthetic" lay, from the very beginning, politics (the former collision always implicitly remained in Soviet culture).

Third, this is a "militant" theory (born as both response and countertheory), which made it attractive to those who did not sympathize with the Perevalists' adversaries (of which there were not a few). It was not taken into account, however, that any "militant" theory is productive only within the paradigm of the "battle" in question. As soon as one steps outside these confines, countless contradictions appear, the contradictions to which such theories are doomed by their "obligation" to the adversaries that in effect dictate rules and paradigms to those in conflict with them.

In this perspective it becomes obvious that the concept of "organic creativity" was a concept born in the fracture or abyss that formed in revolutionary culture when "secret freedom" and (as Lenin said) "truly free Party-minded literature" became unbridgeable shores. In this standoff, Perevalist theory stood, undoubtedly, on the *Soviet* bank. More precisely, it was a completely utopian attempt, born *within* revolutionary culture, to find a "ford through the flames." Its dead-endedness and romanticism became particularly manifest when the Perevalists approached the last "extreme," the "accursed problems."

"A valuable artistic image that is determined by and matures within the *self-contained freedom* of the artist's interior life always and invariably justifies itself not only by its relative value but also by its essence and by its very content, from the viewpoint of a greater real-life construction, such as the construction in our country is," Gorbov wrote in 1928.[37] The problem is

not, however, that the Perevalists failed to understand the atmosphere of the late 1920s, but that they did not understand the impossibility of "self-contained freedom" under revolutionary conditions. Insofar as Pereval's theory of creativity was a product of revolutionary culture, it was an "impossible aesthetic." It was an undertaking that from the start was doomed to fail. The true service rendered to history by the Perevalists was the revelation of this abyss.

Nonetheless, many Perevalist ideas, when "expropriated" by RAPPists, in fact became part of Socialist Realism (in a strongly transformed shape, of course). During the last discussion at the Communist Academy in April 1930, the Perevalists themselves left the RAPPists "holding the bag": "Undoubtedly, Fadeev, Libedinskii, Ermilov, and Averbakh to a significant extent borrowed a great many catchwords from Pereval over the period from 1926 to 1930, including the catchwords 'psychologism' and 'the living man,' " said Abram Lezhnev. "And one should not claim that we are fighting proletarian literature when we maintain that the leaders of proletarian literary organizations have taken up the greater part of our catchwords. This is simply a discrepancy."[38] And although the RAPPists maintained that Lezhnev wanted to "smear RAPPist gates with Pereval tar,"[39] it was hard to argue with the Perevalists on this point.

One should not, however, overlook another aspect of intracultural interaction: the contraposition of Mozartianism and Salierism (creativity vs. profession), taken to the limits by Perevalists, came together in a paradoxical way with the LEFist concept of creativity by a "reverse" principle. And in this "link" there was a rejection (no matter how paradoxical this sounds in relation to Pereval) of the validity of aesthetic experience, a rejection already well known in all the revolutionary theories of creativity: Perevalist theory pushed the artist into such tight "embraces" of reality that no space remained to aesthetically assimilate it, and thus, instead of a creative act, writing was left to be "life-construction." As we know, the argument against the Perevalists was that art is not a means of "seeing the world" but rather a means of remaking it. Excluded from this perspective was the fact that art is self-knowledge—a means of "seeing" not only "the world" but oneself in this world as well (if not primarily oneself). Such "egocentrism" was alien to both Perevalists and their opponents: in the first place, the debate was not about substance but was based on political motives, and in the second place, the valid dimension of personality was totally alien to revolutionary culture.

The RAPPists and LEFists affirmed (in Perevalist terms) Salierism and "workmanship." To this Pereval counterposed Mozartianism and "creativity." But this opposition itself was a product of revolutionary fission. "Mozart and Salieri" is a Pushkin myth within the terms of which Perevalists functioned, unable to counterpose anything to the "rationalists" except the

same old "fragmented art": the 1920s debates were unresolvable, just as the theories of creation born and defended at that time were; the debates were only a rationalization of political struggle. But art developed beyond them and alongside them (it does not at all follow that since Voronskii published Esenin, Babel, Leonov, and Vsevolod Ivanov in *Krasnaia nov'*, these writers had any relationship to Perevalist theories). The fact that *all* these theories (although to differing degrees) ended up "beyond" literature is proof not only of their genetic affinity, but of their future affinity: their meeting "in the next world" (Socialist Realism) was made ready for all of them.

There are no escape routes in revolutionary culture—all of the revolutionary theories of creativity led to dead ends. In their "battles," however, were reflected different facets of a single political-aesthetic project. And no matter what colors might be seen playing on this reflective crystal, the impersonal imperative continued to hang over literature like the sword of Damocles.

Chapter Six

The "Social Mandate"; or, Flexion in an Inflexible Time

REVOLUTIONARY CULTURE is traditionally distinguished from postrevolutionary (Socialist Realist) culture by its absence of norms and a canon. In fact, revolutionary culture had many different "aesthetic norms," proclaimed by various literary groups. But if we factor all of these "norms" down to a common denominator, we can see from what the Socialist Realist canon later emerged. The shaping of the Socialist Realist norm must be traced precisely to the "non-normative" revolutionary culture.

"Uncanonical" revolutionary culture was a "framed" culture. The cultural frame is that range through which in essence a unidirectional "aesthetic search" proceeded. Within its boundaries a rather wide spectrum of stylistic manifestations (from Aseev to Bezymenskii, Poletaev to Sel'vinskii, Fadeev to Tret'iakov) and political-aesthetic manifestations (from the Smithy to LEF, Proletkult to Pereval, the Constructivists to RAPP) can appear, but all of this motion is realized *inside* the cultural frame. Beyond the "pluralism" and "flood" of the 1920s, beyond what separated the literary groups, we should see what in fact *united* them, by letting ourselves awake from the hypnosis of the "literary struggle of the 1920s."

They were united by the "boundaries of freedom" assigned in revolutionary culture, and they were divided by different understandings of freedom within the *assigned* boundaries. But the appropriateness of the boundaries was almost never called into doubt by the ideologues of revolutionary culture. They all moved *within* this space—some (like RAPP) penetrated toward the center, and some (like Pereval) moved along the very edge, testing the boundaries and dramatically experiencing the situation.

In one way or another, this boundary (frame) played an extremely important role: *no one* (no matter how strong their creative personality) could remain neutral about it. One had to define one's relationship to "the age." The collision of these relationships not only filled the 1920s era with true tragedy, but also *revealed* the boundaries themselves, *emphasized* them, and to a large extent defined the processes that flowed within them.

The main distinction between the revolutionary and Soviet cultures is

that in pre-Socialist Realist culture these boundaries were still personalized to a great degree: an artist could still define himself in relation to them. And although within this cultural space, as we have seen, the extremely intensive process aimed at depriving the artist (both institutionally and personally) of this right was afoot, it ended only when revolutionary culture did. And in Soviet culture self-determination became impossible. Anyone who attempted to define himself found that he was outside Soviet culture. In this sense, Socialist Realism is a curiously expansive aesthetic space within which the transformation of the impersonal imperative into a personal sense of obligation took place. In this sense, the Soviet writer is only one of many "workers": a "*toiler* of the word," "*engineer* of human souls," and "*fighter* on the ideological front." It is not coincidental that he is characterized as the "simple Soviet person": the strategy of authority in relation to him at first glance does not at all differ from its general strategy in relation to the masses. The only difference is that with him it makes itself felt more strictly and imperatively. This is understandable, since the Soviet writer had to become the "conveyor of Party ideas to the masses," and in order to carry out the strategy of authority *it was incumbent on him to become an authority.* The phenomenon of this transformation is indeed the mechanism that shaped the Soviet writer. But it did not originate in Soviet culture, where it became "life," nor even in revolutionary culture, where it was the problem in "literary discussions," but at least two decades before the Revolution itself—in Lenin's 1905 article "Party Organization and Party-Minded Literature" ("Partiinaia organizatsiia i partiinaia literatura"). Indeed, the "principle of the Party-mindedness of literature" was set forth here for the first time, a principle that Onguardists dragged out of a twenty-year oblivion in the mid-1920s during their struggle for a "Party line in literature."[1]

At first, the Onguardists wielded this "dangerous weapon" awkwardly, by attempting to mechanically apply the principle of "restraint" (the 1920s pseudonym for Party-mindedness). This made them a convenient target for "fellow traveler" criticism. But the debates of 1922–25 were only the first tremors. When the problem of the "impersonal imperative" ended up in the center of revolutionary culture, no one could stay uninvolved. Everyone tried to solve the problem in his own way. For the "leftist artists" who emerged from the crisis of traditional culture, it was especially important since it was through this problem that the mutation of the "leftist artists" themselves took place—from Futurism to *komfuty,* from the *Iskusstvo kommuny* era to LEF, and from LEF to the "State Plan for Literature."

In LEF, this collision received the name of "social mandate." In this definition itself, the LEFist understanding of the functions of literature in the new cultural situation found its expression. However, it is not so much

worth turning our attention to the "utilitarianism" of the LEFist theory as it is to its profound utopianism. The most serious LEF activists saw a true drama here. As early as 1924, Shklovskii would write, concerning Andrei Belyi's work: "When an external ideology not fortified by the technical prerequisites of expertise intrudes into the writer's area, then no work of art is obtained."[2] And although Shklovskii here spoke of "external ideology" in reference to Belyi's "anthroposophy," his observation was far more relevant to the *new* "anthroposophy." The conflict in Shklovskii's *Third Factory,* as we remember, ended with what amounted to a coup: Shklovskii suggested that the artist follow a "third path" that did not exist and asserted: "I fear yielding to my times. Everything will come out alright, and then suddenly it will turn out that you have agreed that 'it's better without legs.'"[3]

Meanwhile, there were not a few among the LEFists who wanted to solve the problem, so to speak, "constructively." Though Shklovskii announced to Karl Radek that the authorities did not know how to "make orders" or how to "address a writer,"[4] Brik was far more flexible. "Some of the men of letters, those who hold firmly to their artistic expertise, have tried to push away . . . the new thematic assignments. They have maintained that these assignments have too much of a topical or temporary character, and therefore are not subject to artistic formulation."[5] Here Brik is speaking of his own colleagues (including former leftists) who, it turned out, were unprepared to "dive deeper into revolution." To them Brik contrasts certain "critics" in whose transparent descriptions one easily discerns RAPPist profiles: "Our critics have perceived political sabotage in this refusal to carry out today's assignment. They have asserted that these authors plainly and simply do not want to carry out these assignments, and that the aim of artistic policy is to force them, in one way or another, to carry out these assignments."[6] But (with a patent allusion to Perevalist "liberals") "a third group of critics has turned up: they, vaguely sensing the incorrectness of such an approach, have begun to assert that authors should have the right to refuse an assignment and the right to independent creative work. They have said that any imposition on the creative freedom of an author is artistically harmful and inexpedient."[7]

But Brik himself selected the "third path," evidently believing, as opposed to Shklovskii, that such a path existed: "The question is not whether authors want to carry out today's thematic assignments or not, but whether they know how to do this. It is quite obvious that they do not know how—and they do not know because earlier, before the Revolution, this is not what they did. Therefore the goal of our artistic policy is not a question of political pressure or patience, but the question of how to teach authors to fulfill the assignments proposed to them."[8] Here we see a clear Socialist Realist

perspective, in which the very question of wanting to "carry out today's thematic assignments" is removed. Pragmatically, this was the only possible way of stating the issue under those "historical conditions."

In its own theory of the social mandate, LEF assumed the most radical position. In Proletkult theories, the author is necessary as the "medium of the class," as an "active conveyor of the collective consciousness"; in RAPPist doctrine, he is allotted the role of "expressing the Party line"; but in LEFist theory, his role is not only passive but ultimately eliminated, obliterated. However, by excluding the author from the sphere of ideological creativity and "switching him over" to the sphere of "expertise" and "knowledge," the LEFists not only liberated him from responsibility (for which their critics could not forgive them) but also created a *radical* aesthetic utopia, since in revolutionary culture an artist *cannot* leave the sphere of ideological creativity. Such an outcome became possible only in postrevolutionary culture—Socialist Realism.

Meanwhile, LEFists not only defended the author's "lack of responsibility," but (since it was a key aesthetic problem) transferred their own understanding of creativity to the evaluation of its products. *Hence* (and not the other way around) was born the idea of art's "indifference" to "the color of the flag over the town": "The gross confusion of the ideological nature of an author with the ideological effect of a work of art reveals an elementary misunderstanding among our critics of the laws of artistic creativity," wrote Brik in the earlier cited article refuting the "'creative' personality." "Of course one must not say that the author's role in his work is not greater than the role of a master-craftsman working in a metallurgical plant. However, in exactly the same way that the ideology of a shell developed in a cannon factory says nothing about the imperialistic intentions of the workers who crafted this shell, one or another ideology of a literary work says nothing about the ideology of its author."[9] The specialists' striving to remove the responsibility for the "ideological quality" of the products from themselves was an indubitable expression of their unwillingness to share the responsibility with *those giving the orders.* It should be emphasized that it was not a "mistaken understanding of the nature of art" that led Brik to his famous maxim ("If Pushkin had not existed, *Evgenii Onegin* would have been written all the same. . . . A great poet does not manifest himself, he only fulfills the social mandate"[10]). Quite on the contrary: an appropriate explanation of the nature of art was *selected* by LEFists (just as it was, incidentally, by other ideologues of revolutionary culture) to match the current, completely pragmatic concerns.

It was no coincidence that the idea of a "social mandate" was so persistently and staunchly defended by the LEFists, beginning literally with their first manifesto—an editorial in the first issue of *LEF* ("We Are Not Priests/Creators, But Master Executors of the Social Mandate" ["My ne zhretsy-tvortsy, a mastera-ispolniteli sotsial'nogo zakaza"])[11] —and continu-

ing right up through the self-dissolution of LEF. The last variation on this theme was heard in the famous discussion about the social mandate organized by Polonskii in *Pechat' i Revoliutsiia* (*The Press and the Revolution*), of which he was editor. In this discussion, LEF was represented by Brik, who sincerely admitted that "the theory of the social mandate . . . is the admission by the LEFists of their own social necessity."[12] The only license the LEFists allowed themselves, since they were still agents of a revolutionary culture and not a Socialist Realist one, was the recognition of an author's freedom of movement within a certain assigned ideological zone, which in fact allowed freedom of authorial self-determination within the class paradigm: "When speaking of a mandate, LEFists do not envision a mandate issued by individual representatives of the class, nor even by individual institutions in which the will of the class is expressed; rather they speak of an independent understanding of this social mandate that can oppose the real mandate of individual representatives of the class."[13]

This "loophole" could not of course fool anyone: the fact that a dead end had been reached had become clear as early as 1920, when the authorities broke up Proletkult, which had aspired to understand the "mandate of the class" in its own way and not to be guided by ready-made directives worked out by "individual institutions in which the will of the class is expressed." But it was precisely this "loophole" that allowed the long life of the theory of the social mandate to begin. It is usually supposed that the LEFists created their theory directly to "fit" Socialist Realism, as it were. In fact, the spectacle of an artist upon whom some kind of outsider's "mandate" is imposed could not fail to inflame liberal hearts. This is how this LEFist theory has been read by all the critics of Socialist Realism, an interpretation that found its energetic conclusion in the famous conception of Boris Groys, who summed up this "mandate" in the brilliant aphorism "Socialist Realism is the avant-garde, Stalin style." Nonetheless, it was not the critics of Socialist Realism who were right about this, but rather its own adepts. We cannot but agree with the Soviet researcher Vladimir Akimov: "Party-mindedness is the requirement of integrity of an artist's personality, of an organic unity of his intellect and feelings, and of his social and artistic experiences."[14] In fact, the Soviet writer is truly organic—according to Sholokhov's above-cited formula, he "writes by the orders of his heart, but his heart belongs to the Party and the people."

Socialist Realism is the heir to *all of revolutionary culture* (and not to any single branch of it). Credit for the theory of the social mandate becoming part of Socialist Realism does not only belong to the LEFists. This theory was destined to become flexible and to recognize *authority* unquestionably as the only *customer*. This path was followed through in RAPP. This mandate, however, had to become not external to the artist (which was the essence of the matter in LEF), but "organic," for which a lion's share of the

credit is Pereval's. It was only from this cauldron of revolutionary culture that the "principle of Communist Party-mindedness" crystallized as the most powerful source of the Soviet artist's creative behavior. Socialist Realism—this great alloy of revolutionary culture—*synthesized* the imperative energy of LEFists, the Party-minded flexibility of RAPPists, and the "organicity" of Perevalists, creating a new type of "creator." The most important leg of this journey was the RAPPist interpretation of the social mandate.

The RAPPists not only brought the theory of the social mandate closer "to life," but also utilitarianized it. It goes without saying that one could not "directly dictate" this mandate, but, as Averbakh opined, it was necessary to "help" the author "realize" it. LEFists drew the artist/specialist out of the zone of responsibility for what he had created in art, but the RAPPists returned him to it, transforming him into an "active participant in socialist construction." The RAPPist writer, Averbakh wrote, "considers that in providing a work of art he is participating in social life in a definite way, is influencing it. In this sense, a utilitarian approach to creativity is unquestionably inherent in our writer, for our writer is the writer of the proletariat, of the rising class to whom the future belongs. This 'utilitarianism' lies at the heart of our organization's work."[15]

The most logical theorists in this respect were the Litfrontists (the "leftist opposition" in RAPP), who did not even pass judgment on the problem of the social mandate itself: "The social mandate is the pressure on a personality that the environment makes its own mouthpiece of social or class demands," wrote Georgii Gorbachev. "Everything that meets with any kind of far-reaching social response is made by an individual according to a realized or unrealized social mandate." However, in distinction to the LEFists, the Litfrontists insisted that "for the genuinely artistic execution of such a mandate manifested from the outside, an internal concurrence of the author's sentiments with the demands of the customer is necessary." Nonetheless, they saw the problem of "nonconcurrence" only on the level of "results of creative activity": "When there is nonconcurrence of the inner inclinations and intentions of the artist with the interests of the customer, what results is either an inferior article or intentional or unintentional deceit of the customer." As one can see, the situation of "unmandated" creative activity was simply ignored. Other variants were calculated: "a direct mandate from the proletariat," "the organic commonality of the artist's ideas and sentiments with the needs of the customer," or, at worst, "incomplete ideological concurrence."[16] Characteristically, the Litfront theoretician fully realized that only the market can give an artist a "free" mandate, though "the artist who has learned that freedom is understood and who has accepted necessity understands his role more clearly than others."[17] As we can see, it was not at all the artist's "independence" from the consumer that followed from

the recognition of "market" laws (fully in keeping with the Leninist understanding of the writer's lack of freedom in bourgeois society), but, incredibly, the obligation to transfer the "necessity" of the market that was "accepted" into the sphere of "creating ideological superstructures."

RAPPists refused to debate the theory of the social mandate as such. They simply saw something in the social mandate that was quite distinct from what LEFists saw: "For proletarian writers, the fulfillment of the social mandate of the era, and the reflection of the ideology of one's class, are one and the same matter, indivisible and organic."[18] LEFists looked unattractive in this light—like renegades wishing to "earn extra" from the "conqueror class." But the RAPPists informed these "specialists" that "the proletariat does not need outsiders, but rather people working with the proletariat, ideologically bonded with them, not regarding themselves as outside the proletariat and outside its philosophy."[19] But again, the roots of the debate between LEFists and RAPPists about the social mandate were not so much ideological as deeply pragmatic: for LEFists, the debate meant a possibility of freedom from responsibility for the mandate itself; for RAPPists, it primarily meant power—they themselves longed to become part of the "conqueror class," so as to make the orders on its behalf, and for this reason they considered it so important that responsibility for the "product" be borne by the "supplier," not the "customer." This was the basis of the RAPPist position on the issue of the social mandate.

The chief opponent of the LEFists in this debate, who was close to RAPP and the Communist Academy, was Isaak Nusinov. His primary emphasis was the revelation of the LEFists' "class essence." Nusinov reproduced (quite accurately, it should be said) the picture that grew out of the LEFist interpretation of the social mandate thus: "The ruling class sends its requirements to the labor exchange, where the unemployed writers are waiting, and the latter choose orders and fulfill them. Whoever is next in line fulfills the order. Today there is an order to agitate for an imperialistic war, to 'artistically infect' people with hatred for Germans, tomorrow to agitate in favor of October; and the unemployed writers at the labor exchange, obedient in everything and capable of anything, fulfill the master's order."[20] Or: "You need films to get people charged up, 'cash down!' and we will do it, but as far as our 'intimate thoughts and feelings,' well, be so good as to let us keep that to ourselves."[21] Nusinov insisted that what is important in a work is "class passions," not "bare technique." This is where criticism of "specialists from literature,"[22] "formal/specialist ideology," and "the ideology of the bourgeois/technical-minded intelligentsia person" began; the exponents of these ideologies were of course leftists.[23]

Hence also the conclusion that "The LEFist interpretation of the social mandate is an expression of leftists' readiness to serve any master."[24] This was

of course a great exaggeration: leftists were not prepared to serve just "*any* master," only those that would suit their "futuristic temperament" (as Nusinov himself noted in another context). The problem for LEF at this time was especially acute: the "master" had already made it known that he did not need its services. Nusinov also sensed this "industrial collision" keenly: "The ideology of the leftists comes from a déclassé intelligentsia that had always been opposed to the bourgeoisie, unable and unwilling to apprentice themselves to capitalism. . . . The LEFist treatment of the social mandate exposes the point of view of the déclassé unemployed person, who has every time lost his job because he could not get along with the masters, but who finally found work with a good master; he loves this master, is pleased with and devoted to him, and is ready to help the well-being of his affairs with all his might."[25] And although Nusinov knew that the leftists were ready to submit, he likewise knew that "it is not easy for any social group to reject its own social freedom. As a result, we have gotten a great variety of literary service to the Revolution—from the right-wing fellow travelers to Mayakovsky and Aseev, from the complaints of Marietta Shaginian ('We will fill your order, only let us take a short rest' ['The writer is sick']) to the mechanical LEFist fireman's readiness to 'build the thing,' but without 'intimate thoughts and feelings,' without 'experiences,' using only Rodchenko's photographic apparatus."[26]

In the course of the discussion unfolding on this subject in the Communist Academy—this Party synod of 1920s Soviet literature—Valerian Pereverzev also took part. The chief "vulgar sociologist" of that time presented a sharp criticism of the theory of the social mandate, maintaining that this very term "has always been both theoretically and practically harmful." But the harm was by no means in its "lack of organicity" (Pereverzev, as is well known, did not suffer from the illness of "organic creativity" at all), rather in its "inadequacy": "It would be more correct not to create a theory of social mandate, but would be logical to create in a Marxist way a theory of social command, and even more precisely, a theory of class command."[27] And just what was a "mandate"? Pereverzev said that it was a "mutual transaction." It means, in his opinion, that "the poet assumes the role of a sort of demiurge, a free artist, absolutely free in his creative work: if I want to, I will create something, and if I don't, I won't; everything completely depends on me. This is purest mysticism, a completely metaphysical notion of poetry."[28]

Hence the practical conclusion: "We must reject the theory of the social mandate, because the Marxist theory of social conditionality, of the social determinacy of poetic creativity, with which it is totally incompatible, demands this."[29] Hence also the "philosophical" conclusion: "To imagine the relationship between the consumer and the creator of ideological valuables as that of customer and producer of goods means, in spite of the external materialist terminology, to have a completely idealist view of ideological cre-

ativity."[30] Pereverzev proclaimed that one must not reject inspiration (as the LEFists did, replacing it with an "order" from a "customer"): "This is equivalent to baying the moon." However, he suggested that one should understand inspiration as a *generally impersonal phenomenon*: "Inspiration is the voice of the class, resonating throughout the entire sphere of the subconscious. . . . That whole subconscious sphere of the psyche that powerfully defines the creative process in terms of itself, often even in spite of the conscious aspirations of the person . . . is nothing other than the voice of the class resonating in the individual, [a voice] from which there is no escape."[31]

This was a fully Proletkult-like solution to the problem, but note that neither Proletkultists, Smiths, nor even RAPPists had arrived at the conclusions arising from such a viewpoint—it dawned upon Pereverzev that

> the class, which wants to have its own literature and which knows . . . that history has put it in the position of leader of a cultural movement, has every reason and the full right to give orders in the process of fighting for the new culture. The creator himself makes his own things, he does not order them from others, but he demands that his business not be interfered with, he forbids doing the things that stand in the way of his creative work, he makes a commander's, not a customer's, orders. This order will often mean a very simple thing, that fully half of all the possible singers be silent. Shut up, enough! We don't need your song. If a singer says that he wants to sing in such a way that he gets in tune, the one giving the orders can say: oh, alright, give it a try, we'll listen to how you sing. Sometimes it will be necessary to cancel this song at the very moment of its origin, as being harmful, and sometimes to let it out in the world as harmless, knowing that it is not worth twopence and hoping for other songs. . . . This is what the theory of social command [*sotsial'nyi prikaz*] is. . . . We do not make a customer's order to LEFists nor to VAPPists, we as the holders of power simply order those who know how to sing, to sing the necessary songs, and those who don't know how, to be silent. We give these orders because the objective course of things is up to us, and the material forces that move history are the support of our cultural aspirations.[32]

How expressive this language is, how energetic! Declamation reaches its limit in the transition from the third person ("*it*, the class") to the first person ("*we* as the holders of power" make "a commander's, not a customer's, orders"). It was 1928: less than a year before the breakup of the "little Pereverzevist school," and still ten years before the concentration camp for Pereverzev himself.

The chronic illness of all the revolutionary ideologues was fancying themselves the producers of the commands, and not understanding that they were only the conveyors of them: "In anticipation of the great 'commander of the guard,' halt!" (as Tret'iakov aptly predicted). And Pereverzev's

position in the debate about the social mandate would hardly be worth remembering today, if it were not for the fact that he was actually the *only one* to clearly articulate the content of this "theory." He took the theory to the limit beyond which its *absolute uselessness to postrevolutionary (Soviet) culture became evident.* Lacking in this theory was a chief element for Socialist Realism, with its strategy of synthesis—the element of a *bond* between authority and the writer. The historical credit for the introduction of such a bond belongs (perhaps without their wanting it) to Pereval activists.

The theory of the social mandate contradicted fundamental Perevalist postulates, primarily the demand for "sincerity." "Pereval has no reason to reject its past," wrote Lezhnev when Pereval had already in fact retreated into the past. "It maintains its ideas now about the organicity of creativity, the fusibility of philosophy with disposition, the necessity of being sincere in art to the end, and the fight against toadying, time-serving, and bureaucracy, just as it maintained them earlier. . . . Art demands the whole artist, not just his hands. It severely chastises one for hypocrisy and reasonable caution. What is dictated by motives extraneous to the writer will remain apart from literature. The problem of sincerity is not a moral, but an artistic problem."[33] This passionate defense of "sincerity" as an "*artistic* problem" finally became a treasured part of Soviet liberalism. But the alternative was truly false: to the LEFist suggestion to "sell the manuscript," Perevalists responded with a demand to "sell the soul."

At the same time, Perevalist "sincerity" was a utilitarian category: "In advocating a watchword of sincerity, we are acting specifically against time-serving,"[34] Lezhnev proclaimed. Indeed, in the fight against "hackwork," Perevalists truly made a considerable contribution. Much was written about "Red hackwork" by Voronskii, Lezhnev, and Boris Guber, and in Perevalist critic Solomon Pakentreiger's collection of articles there was even a special section devoted to "hackwork studies." In fact, the "fight against hackwork" became the only application of this lofty theory. Such a nonconcurrence (when the theory of creativity turns out to be useful only for negative criticism) was not accidental.

Indubitably, "the 'social mandate,' from the moment of its appearance, was perceived by Perevalists as something imposed from without, lying heavily on creativity, and hostile to it,"[35] but the "false alternative" was contained *precisely within it.* If one agrees that "the breach between 'proletarian ideology' and the 'inner world' of the artist seemed to them [Perevalists] the greatest transgression against life and art"[36] (and indeed, the situation stood *just this way*), then it remains to explain what the Perevalists could use to replace the "external ideology" that in their recension did not assume the shape of the LEFist "mandate" nor of Pereverzev's "command," but rather that of "proletarian ideology." We can find the answer in these same Perevalist theoreticians: "Yes," wrote Voronskii, "the new class, asserting its rights

and authority, issues its own social mandate to the artist," but "the artist should feel that he is freely, by his own choice and by his own free will, fulfilling this mandate."[37] If one translates this to Shklovskii's language, the result is "it's better without legs."

It must be acknowledged that in fighting the theory of the social mandate, Perevalists required even more of the artist's investment than the LEFists or Pereverzev did: both modeled a customer (or commander)—and thereby the artist was distanced from this figure—but the Perevalists modeled the artist himself, having already transformed the "impersonal imperative" into a "personal obligation." In essence, this was the *already-complete* Soviet writer. Objectively, the entire Perevalist theory of creativity (and of course the part that concerned criticism of the social mandate) was the theory that *directly engendered and "inspired" Socialist Realism.* We must also admit that the Socialist Realist polemic against the avant-garde and "formalism" was fed by Perevalist "spiritual" roots. Therein was the real tragedy of the Perevalists' position: their moderation, out of which their criticism of revolutionariness grew, suited the zeal of Socialist Realism itself—the zeal for restoration. And in truth, was it not really in the name of that same "organicism" that Socialist Realists fought against "soulless," "lifeless" formalism?

Lezhnev maintained that the problem of "the role and permissibility of a mandate in art must not be solved monolithically. Everything depends on whether the mandate meets the theme that possesses the writer halfway, or even on whether the writer has such a theme, or is he a blank slate awaiting the hand of experience, which would cover him with signs? Those who are waiting will be deceived. Experience replies only to those who question it."[38] It is all right if the mandate "meets halfway"—but what if it does not? Another variant was offered to replace it: the writer is a "blank slate." Yes, there were not a few "blank slates" in the 1920s, but after all a theory of creativity cannot orient itself only to such an alternative without noticing the chief collision—the *discrepancy* between "experience" and the "mandate." Did the Perevalists fail to notice this, or did they wish not to? Alas, they wished not to—because it was impossible not to notice, when, as Veresaev said, "a general groaning pervades almost the entire front of contemporary Russian literature."[39] But one should not demand more of the Perevalists: they were theoreticians of *revolutionary* culture and thus always created the same *framed* aesthetics.

It is precisely because of this that Perevalist demands of the author, despite all their external correctness, are so often lifeless. How, for example, should the following demand made by Dmitrii Gorbov be understood?

> The only condition for the proletarian artist's successful work is . . . arrogant strictness in regard to himself. This, precisely, helps the proletarian artist to find within himself the social mandate of his own class, which appears not as

> something imposed from without, "put on" by the affected VAPPist merchant woman, but as a living fact of the interior world proper of the artist. The artist must not separate himself from this genuine social mandate for even a minute. Moreover, he should direct all his creative energy toward obeying it, expressing it. A proletarian artist cannot be an individualist. He must always remain with his own class. But he is obliged to follow a subjective path, not satisfying a single demand until it has become a part of his interior world, until it has become his internal gesture. The proletarian artist must be arrogant about this in a Pushkinesque way. And above all he must be clearly aware of whom he wants to be with.
>
> With the Galatea of genuine art?
>
> Or with the fat merchant woman of VAPPist prosperity?[40]

Here we see the usual Perevalist "alternative." However, if we remove the rhetoric (who would want to be with the "fat merchant woman," anyway?), what remains? After all, the Perevalist "Galatea" stands only as a symbol of the transition of the "genuine social mandate" (what would a "nongenuine" one be?) into the "interior world" and "internal gesture." Gorbov invokes Pushkin, but for Pushkin the "sources of harmony" are "in you yourself. You yourself are your own higher court, the exacting artist." But Gorbov, in invoking a Pushkinesque "arrogant strictness" in regard to oneself, finds these sources, as we can see, *outside* the interior world of the artist, and in trying to prove that "it's better without legs" attempts to fit "external ideology" into the "interior world of the artist." As it turns out, there is no alternative: the artist in any case must "always remain with his own class." So one must follow the third path, which does not exist. . . . Thus, every time, Perevalist "alternatives" are transformed into philosophizing before our very eyes—despite all their attractiveness, they turn out to be absolutely useless. This rhetoric is the reverse side of the "framed" space within which the Perevalists constructed their aesthetics.

But since the Perevalists moved along the very border of the "cultural frame," here too (especially in the later stage of their activities) they almost exceeded its bounds. Significant in this regard is Pakentreiger's book *Mandate for Inspiration* (*Zakaz na vdokhnovenie*). According to its author, "a great artist does not orient himself to the topical maneuvering of his class. Such an orientation lacks perspective, diminishes his strength, sterilizes him, and enslaves his imagination."[41] Pakentreiger saw an "alert inspiration" as the "mandate of our shocked era"; only through inspiration are "enrichment by the most complex social feelings, recovery of the sight of collective thought, and awakening of the act of creation" possible for the artist:

> Inspiration, which is discussed among us as a prejudice, as something obsolete and without value, is a courageous and intrepid force. It guides the man

> and artist when he leads his convictions through art. Let him be incorrect, let him err, but even error and incorrectness, when permeated with artistic conviction, open the souls and eyes of others, evoking solidarity and resistance.
>
> Uncontroversial art is not art. Uncontroversial literature is not literature. Uncontroversial literature is moribund, melancholy, loyal, barren for its contemporaries, and ultimately will never flare up in the memory of successive generations.[42]

As soon as the "external ideology" is left behind, the Perevalist position acquires weight, in fact draws close to Zamiatin's understanding of the artist's role in society as a heretic. Then the Perevalist criticism of "normative art" is born: "No matter what norms and methods the dullards and scholastics might contrive, they will remain within the confines of hermetic chambers, academies, circles, and groups."[43] Here too was born the demand for an artist's independent vision:

> Any person who does not have and cannot find his own imagined plan is not an artist. Simply by moving according to this plan the most sober and merciless realist will produce unheard-of images, will approach innovation and make it an objective artistic fact, will provide the dynamic of all the argumentative forces of life, formation, and the signs of the formation of this world, beyond the creation of which he, to use Belinskii's words, "found humanity."
>
> No matter what he is—a barbarian or a madman reared and nurtured by the life stages of the developing world—he will only accept the mandate for inspiration directly from this world, from the age, from life: the mandate for the most courageous force that tears art out of its stagnation, out of crisis, and that opens up a space for imagination for the creation of the man of the workers' era.
>
> All other mandates will be pseudomandates.[44]

But alas, this is only a breach in the "frame," not the center of the Perevalists' position (one can find similar breaches, let us note here, in the opposing camps as well, for example among leftists).

At this intersection (and the theory of the social mandate did indeed become a nerve center in the battles of the revolutionary theories of creativity) are two characteristic positions that lay outside the predominant literary groups. These are typified by the critics who did not belong to these groups and occupied "intermediate positions" in the "scuffle"—Petr S. Kogan and Viacheslav Polonskii.

Kogan, author of numerous books on Western European and ancient literatures, and on Russian literature from the nineteenth century up to the proletarian poets, apparently called the entire "arsenal" of world literature

and art to the defense of his position—from Michelangelo and Molière, to Goethe, Hugo, and Hauptmann. The essence of his position was that writing according to a commission [*zakaz*] was neither "insulting" nor "demeaning"—this was "simply a prejudice." Molière, for example, was as great as he was because "he felt no constraint upon himself in a commission."[45] As a person who was, in any case, far removed from literary politics, Kogan, as if unaware of the battle and apparently not even completely consciously, verbalized the unresolved points contained in the positions of the debating camps. Kogan did not clarify these positions—he simultaneously supported the various groups and their opponents.

"Any great artist is always a supplier, and is inconceivable without a customer. True, the relations between an artist and his customer are not as simple as those between a buyer and a shop clerk, but notwithstanding, in essence, by their nature these relations are nonetheless the relations of an order [*zakaz*]. . . . We must tear away the remaining shrouds of idealization from the poet's 'brow,' from the 'servant of the Muses' and the 'priest of Apollo.' We must study more prosaically the boundary that divides the artist from the craftsman. After all, the difference here is quantitative, and not qualitative."[46] This balm was for LEFists.

"Are orders [*zakazy*] really accepted only from rulers? We know of a number of ages wherein the artist filled orders for the oppressed. . . . And if twenty years ago some proletarian poet like Nechaev went hungry, but landed in a respected position after [the] October [Revolution], then this does not mean that twenty years ago he had no customers. His course was against the rulers, but together with his customer."[47] This balm was for RAPPists.

"To be sure, the class must at a certain stage of its development have an artistic formulation of its ideas and attitudes. This is a fact that does not depend upon incidentals, a natural fact. But whose lot it falls to, to become the formulator and ideologue of the class in question in artistic form, is a fact that often depends on chance, as well as a fact that has no significance for the study of the laws of literary development. To think that the ideologue of the working class can only be a born worker is an error."[48] This was balm for Perevalists and "poison" for RAPPists.

"It is time we left behind the legend about innovators 'unrecognized' by contemporaries and 'recognized' by later generations."[49] This "poison" was for LEFists.

"The more freely a craftsman takes on a commission [*zakaz*], the greater the element of inspiration in it is. . . . [W]hat makes a writer 'real' is the capability of consciously or unconsciously hearing the commission of his class, and consciously or unconsciously fulfilling it."[50] This seemed to be especially for Perevalists.

But then an unexpected synthesis arose out of this strange eclecticism:

> If Molière, a poet of the era of the greatest flowering of absolutism, considered it an honor to be an executor of 'his Majesty's' orders, then why can the contemporary poet not be an executor of the orders of the new master of life? [Cf. LEF.] And if in so doing, Molière not only did not feel separated from the class he served, but on the contrary was an organic part of it, and for just this reason fulfilled its orders so beautifully, then this good example could be followed . . . by our poets as well. [Cf. RAPP.] The poet who feels himself to be an organic part of the proletariat, the poet who does not contradict it nor study it from the sidelines, or the poet who has already perceived the mood of the proletariat organically—only he alone can be the real executor of its order [Cf. Pereval.].[51]

Before our eyes is the encounter of different revolutionary theories of creativity and—simultaneously—an exemplar of Socialist Realism's compromise between them (with some "beheadings," of course).

However, the central figure in the discussion about the social mandate was Viacheslav Polonskii. His attitude toward the theory of the social mandate was categorically negative: "This theory . . . misinterprets the relations between the class and the artist," it reduces them to the level of the relations "between craftsman and proprietor, between merchant and handicraftsman, between a Maecenas and an artist, between an establishment and a person fulfilling commissions," and not only "separates the artist from his class," but ignores the fact that artists are "living members of their classes."[52] From this "Marxist belltower" Polonskii rained down all his zeal against the leftists who, from his point of view, "defend the theory of the 'social mandate' because it allows them to assert that their long-standing rebellion against the old aesthetic canons is the *'mandate' of the proletariat.*"[53] He maintained that leftists are representatives of a "déclassé intelligentsia" that "wants to fill the gulf between itself and the proletariat by creating a theory of 'social mandate,' by offering it [the proletariat—*Trans.*] the role of 'master' and 'breadwinner' and leaving for itself the functions of the 'worker' and 'artisan' who complete its [the proletariat's—*Trans.*] assignments," and that "this theory was created at the behest of a narrow stratum of déclassé artists who have lost their old social base and are seeking a new base."[54] Polonskii was particularly irritated by the aspiration of this "déclassé intelligentsia" to "preserve its own social independence."[55] The result was deplorable:

> Yesterday's bourgeois poets, aesthetes, bohemians, nihilists, poseurs, and simply talentless daubers, elbowing one another, vying with each other, breathless, panting, hurry and rush to satisfy the new "social customer"; they scribble odes, welcoming speeches, "restrained" (in 60 quires) novels, heroic tales, ideological short stories; they flatter, glorify, and do hackwork, under the ban-

> ner of the "social mandate." But all of this is done superficially, insincerely, not by virtue of an organic necessity to write this way and not otherwise, but as the consequence of considerations of an openly "economic" nature. The theory of the "social mandate" has "ideologically" justified the right to do hackwork, to literary toadying, and to the fabrication of forgeries.[56]

Polonskii stopped just short of reducing the whole problem to "hackwork," but even more energetically than Perevalists he demanded that "the Soviet intelligentsia man yield himself prisoner"—requiring his "sincere and honest transition" so that "this service would be out of 'conscience,' and not out of 'fear.' So that this work would not be dependant on the fact that the presses and money are in the hands of the proletariat."[57] Quickly moving past Perevalist demands ("the era demands of the artisan an organic merger with the working class"[58]), Polonskii arrived at a conclusion that could have been inscribed on the sacred tablets of Socialist Realism:

> The "theory of the social mandate" cannot be accepted by those young writers whom our era is promoting from the proletarian and peasant milieu. The "proletarian" and "peasant" writers, bonded by blood ties to the mother class, do not need air bridges thrown up between themselves and this class. They do not set themselves up as "experts" who fulfill the "social mandate" from the sidelines, they simply feel themselves to be just those cells of the collective brain to whose lot fall the functions of artistic contemplation and reflection of the collective consciousness in images. They perceive themselves to be the loudspeaker through which the collective that created them speaks.[59]

Calling the LEFist theory of the social mandate a "sorry multiplication table that goes no further than 'two times two,' "[60] Polonskii essentially rejected the possibility of harmonizing the then-current literature with the proletariat (an idea with which it is of course hard to disagree): "The internal development of art with a change of social relations brings forth as the result of most profound molecular processes, artists with a new view of the world, a new psychology.[61] But this truly futuristic "symphony of joy" sounded like a requiem for the literature contemporary to Polonskii. This critic tried to see what was ahead, but in the harmonious and bright future that he envisioned, there could be no possibility of a place for the idea that had only once occurred to Polonskii in the course of the whole discussion, an idea that no one discussed any longer—criticizing the theory of the social mandate from seemingly all the possible points of view, and asserting that he knows of "no other theory that would contradict the principles of Marxist teaching about

art as much." Polonskii proclaimed: "Without metaphysics the theory of the 'social mandate' will not be able to explain the appearance and existence of artist-revolutionaries, innovators, and champions against the dominant views of their eras. . . . Art is advanced not by uncomplaining executors of 'mandates' but indeed by rebels, subverters of old tastes, destroyers of recognized idols, repudiators of canonized forms."[62] Indeed, the discussion revolved around those who, in the words of the times, "advanced" art. Moreover, it was upon them that the moderate and intelligent Polonskii, without wishing to at all, "passed sentence."

Meanwhile, the writers themselves were not of course simply passive observers of the debates boiling up "on their behalf." In concluding our examination of the revolutionary theories of creativity, we will limit ourselves here to only two "outbreaks" of writers' activism: the reactions of the "writers' community" to the 1925 resolution of the Central Committee, and to the discussion of the social mandate, both being events that too painfully touched the "framework" of creativity and creative behavior to be ignored by writers.

A number of responses to the Central Committee's 1925 resolution were collected by the editors of *Zhurnalist* (*Journalist*) in August through October of that same year. Several of these stood out because they far exceeded the bounds of the "assigned topic" and had a direct relationship to problems of creativity (and not just to appraisals of the resolution). Two of the writers, Vikentii Veresaev and Ivan Novikov, who were both involved in literature before the Revolution, were particularly outspoken and directly opposed to "guidance [*rukovodstvo*] of literature." "For me as a writer and artist," Novikov wrote, "one concept is alien: the concept of guidance . . . in the area of literature. . . . A literary work only lives a full life when it has arisen organically, without a tendentious course chosen premeditatedly and by pure reason alone. . . . The writer's business is to be artistically true to himself and truthful to the end: this is the only way to create truly valuable work."[63]

Veresaev was even more categorical when he proclaimed that "a disease has profoundly eaten away at contemporary Russian belles lettres." He saw the "contemporary writer's lack of *artistic honesty*" as the origin of this problem:

> This disease is caused by the absolutely impossible demands made on the writer by the institutions that publication of his work depends on. . . .
>
> A general groaning pervades almost the entire front of contemporary Russian literature: "We cannot be ourselves, our artistic conscience is constantly violated, more and more our creative work is becoming two-tiered; we write one thing for ourselves, and another for the press." This is a most enor-

> mous misfortune for literature, and it can become fatal: such systematic violation of the artistic conscience will not leave the writer unscathed.[64]

Two years later, Veresaev would discover the "schizophrenia of creativity and conscience" and the birth of "internal censorship." "At present the friendly critics prescribe a completely determined range of attitudes for the proletarian poet: a militant calling, faith in oneself and in one's class, a cheerful spirit, joy of life. Good for the poet if he has these! But woe to him if he does not, for he will try to coach himself in appropriate attitudes, with the goal of becoming the true voice of the proletariat, its recognized spokesman. He will cease to be himself, i.e., a poet, and will end up being nobody's spokesman. . . . An artist must be himself—there is no other path to true art."[65] Veresaev's basis for this statement was that "for the most part, artistic work takes place in the profound subconscious area of the human soul and reflects precisely this subconscious life of a person—his fundamental 'internal' relationship to life and the world—which is often entirely unclear to the person himself, and completely discordant with his cerebral views and convictions."[66]

It is not difficult to see that both these writers speak in "Perevalist maxims" (organicity, honesty, hackwork, and so on), but in the context of writers' pronouncements these "maxims" have a completely different value—they have no "framework": the writers look at the "frame" from the outside (on the other hand, the "staleness" of such a position is clearly evident as early as the mid-1920s). But the distinction between writers' and Perevalists' opinions is fundamental: Perevalists called for sincerity, having in mind an artist's voluntary (organic, sincere) inclusion of "external ideology" in his inner world; but writers, using literally the same words, were talking about the refusal to accept this ideology (or at least about the freedom to choose to do so).

If Veresaev and Novikov represented, in Polonskii's terms, the "old phalanx," then Nikolai Aseev and Boris Pasternak expressed the attitude of the new generation toward the 1925 resolution. This attitude was also extremely negative. Aseev proclaimed categorically that "a literary product is not an object to be assigned," and called the desire to create a literature "calculated for the true mass reader" (a goal set forth in the resolution) hardly realizable. Such a literature, to quote Aseev, was a "psalter": "Does this mean that we should aspire to create a 'Soviet psalter'? I think not. We should not be ultimately satisfied by our way of life, nor traditions, nor our state." Nonetheless, Aseev did not minimize the problem of the "mandate," but rather took it over from Glavlit into the heart of the writer's milieu: "Normalization of the production of artistic writing depends on appraisal of this writing by writers themselves, on the development of a feeling of responsibility,

self-criticism, and mutual criticism in their milieu, and not on the transfer of this responsibility to the shoulders of comrades in literature who have power."[67]

As we can see, the writers' reaction on the whole did not overstep the bounds of the "literary milieu." Against this background, Pasternak's "response" stands out the most sharply in its statement of the most profound and serious problems facing art and the artist in the revolutionary era. Pasternak's attitude toward the resolution, in the opinion of Lazar' Fleishman, was "indubitably negative, and the formulations in which Pasternak clothed his presentation are striking for their unprecedented acerbity and sarcasm."[68]

Pasternak did not talk about "sincerity" or "responsibility," even less about Glavlit. He spoke of "how history can fully be history and how I can fully be a person in it," about the imminent "cultural reaction," and about the new "middle" [*seredinnyi*] style in which the new era was already enveloped. Convinced that "art must become the extreme of the era, not its equinox," Pasternak posed questions that were by definition unanswerable (or already answered?): "Am I admissible or not admissible? Am I lacking enough in quality to . . . rejoice in the composition of the golden mean? The right to authorship in the current style not long ago belonged to the censor. Now he has shared it with the contemporary publisher. The philosophy of circulation cooperates with the philosophy of admissibility. They have seized the entire horizon. I have nothing to do. The style of the era is already created. That is my response."[69] The idea of the impossibility of creativity had at last acquired a finished form.

A few years later, writers were again "invited to the discussion." Although the issue this time was the "social mandate," the plot was in fact the same as before. The "outbursts" of 1925 were no longer permitted: the "social mandate" could be, and had to be, "critiqued." What many writers understood this euphemism to mean (regardless of the different currents in literature to which they related) is quite clear from their statements:

Fedor Gladkov: the theory of the social mandate is a theory for "seasonal worker" writers, and "it is time to put an end to the free-and-easy illiteracy of the 'proletarian' theoreticians of art, and to pull the weedpatch called the 'social mandate' out of our garden";[70]

Leonid Leonov: "The social mandate has become some sort of bugbear for the writer, a fright and bogeyman, and finally a snare wherein his premature death is concealed." It was invented by "criticism's menials";[71]

Boris Pil'niak: "A person cannot transfer the orders in the cortex of his higher brain into the subcortical centers. This results in the castration of art. . . . A writer is valuable only when he is beyond a system. . . . The essential mandate [*nakaz*] for every writer is to be talented and to take care of his gift—and to reckon only with it";[72]

Il'ia Sel'vinskii: the theory of the social mandate cannot explain "the inevitable heresy inherent to some degree in all great works of world literature, since in them the artist expresses, with the greatest sincerity and strength, direct feelings free of those judicious adjustments that are made out of respect to the powers that be or to public opinion";[73]

Konstantin Fedin: "They have let the axe of the 'social mandate' fall over the literary oak groves. . . . After all, a mandate must be given to someone by someone. And we are all so well trained for directives! . . . But in what manner does the class give artists its 'mandate'? By means of its avant-garde. Well, what about the avant-garde? Probably by means of its executive organs. And the executive organs—apparently by the agency of its staff. . . . Thus the issues of the philosophy of history end up being resolved by bureaucratic clerks."[74]

By an irony of "the philosophy of history," Fedin would after three decades become the chief "clerk" of Soviet literature—head of the Union of Soviet Writers. But at that time, 1929, he cautiously suggested: "It would be wonderful if as a result of the discussion of the 'social mandate' the theoreticians and critics of literature would strike this clumsy term from common use and in future invent terminology more circumspectly."[75]

The "clumsy term" was replaced. New terminology, as is well known, was not the holdup.

Chapter Seven

Socialist Realism: The Petrified Utopia

THE UTOPIAS OF CREATION that the Revolution engendered were not "transcended" in Socialist Realism, but were assimilated by it. In the Socialist Realist theory of creativity we find fragments of practically *all* the aesthetic projects of the revolutionary era. The populism of Soviet art is inconceivable without the contribution of the RAPPists who continued the Proletkult experiment and, afterward, under the aegis of the state, brought the "army of poets" out into the literary arena. The Party-mindedness that comprises the "living soul" of Socialist Realism arose from a synthesis of RAPPist "restraint" with Perevalist "organicity." Finally, the Stalinist directive regarding professionalism ("expertise" [*masterstvo*]) had strong support in the literature of the leftist "specialists." The "ardent revolutionaries" brought their projects to the altar of Socialist Realism. We will not enumerate the victims (historians of Soviet culture have been busy doing this for half a century). Far more important is recognizing the profound naturalness of the genesis of the Socialist Realist aesthetic, its synthetic nature.

Like any battle, the "literary struggle" of the 1920s was waged in the name of victory. Nevertheless, the victory of a utopia means its death, since in victory the modal status of the utopian vision is transcended—the gap between the "real" and the "vital" is removed. The battle of the utopias is thus a battle for self-annihilation. In victory, life-creating conflict and dynamism are transcended. Petrifaction begins.

A new building is constructed over the ruins. Thus revolutionary culture congeals in Socialist Realism—the petrified utopia. From the multitude of real preconditions (the inner crisis of revolutionary culture, the sense of overall crisis in literature as the 1930s neared, the authorities' recognition of the necessity for the real inclusion of literature in the new political-aesthetic project, the exhaustion of literary institutions' characteristic means of functioning in revolutionary culture, "readers' requirements," and so on), not one can be chosen as defining. The defining factor was their *confluence.*

Such confluence could not but be natural, for each of the preconditions had its own genesis. This cultural situation obliges one to speak of the

necessity of Socialist Realism, which was not "imposed on art" (as traditional Sovietology has maintained, and as the situation is conceptualized in postmodernist criticism of Socialist Realism[1]), but was a natural and historically inevitable phase of the development of revolutionary culture.

The utopianism of revolutionary culture, as we have seen, was in the constant modeling of some kind of future art despite the fundamental impossibility of developing any productive theory of creativity in the framework of the political-aesthetic project assigned by the Revolution. This state of impasse at times endows the search within this cultural project with high drama. However, the utopian impulse also emanated from a constant dissatisfaction with the "artistic potential of revolution" that was "available." This dissatisfaction (in turn) was an expression of the struggle of elite groups (which had recognized the value of "ideological creative work" in the revolutionary project) for "hegemony." All of this gave rise to the view of current literature (with frequently contrasting appraisals) as something temporary, as a sort of "prologue" to the art of the future. Such future-orientedness is especially apparent in the first postrevolutionary years, when the zeal of worldwide revolution still gripped the minds of the adepts of the new culture.

This is above all true of the concept of cultural development advocated by Trotsky. As is well known, his *Literature and Revolution* (*Literatura i revoliutsiia*), published in 1923, was the first book in Soviet criticism that attempted to present an integral view of current literature that transcended literary groups (within the lines of demarcation inside the new culture itself, of course). Trotsky was an opponent of "proletarian culture" because in it he saw a disregard for the "mission of the proletariat"—creating a "classless culture" in the future "leaderless commune." His whole concept, in his own words, was "under the banner of European and worldwide revolution." Hence his conclusion: "Our era is not yet the era of the new culture, but only the threshold to it."[2] Trotsky's view was not accepted by Proletkult ideologues because it apportioned no place for *them*—everything was moved forward into the future. Trotsky painted this future thus:

> That the proletariat will impose its own stamp upon culture during the time of dictatorship is incontestable. But from here it is still a very long way to proletarian culture, if we understand it as a developed and internally harmonized system of knowledge and skill in all areas of material and spiritual creativity. The fact alone that tens of millions of people possess the skill[s] of reading and writing and the four rules of arithmetic will in and of itself become a new cultural reality, and an enormous one at that. After all, the new culture will be by its very essence not an aristocratic one for a privileged minority, but for the

> masses, all encompassing, for the people. Quantity here will become quality: together with the growth of the massiveness of culture, its level will be raised, and its whole aspect will be changed. But this process will unfold only in a series of historical stages. In step with its successes, the class bond of the proletariat will weaken, and consequently the basis for proletarian culture will disappear as well.[3]

Something very familiar can be seen in this picture: this is a still-hesitant outline of a properly *Soviet* culture for "all the people." And although Trotsky projected this picture into the future, experience suggested to him that "the first wave of this art" could appear soon, for "socialist art grows out of the art of the transitional era."[4] The imagination of the utopian *cum* practical man had already painted a captivating picture. We will quote it almost in full, with the hope that the passion and colorfulness of this picture will counterbalance the length of the excerpt:

> The socialist man wants to and will command nature in all its breadth. . . . He will indicate where the mountains should be, and where they should part. He will change the direction of rivers and will create rules for the oceans. . . . The man who learns to move rivers and mountains, to raise the people's palaces to the heights of Mont Blanc and [to put them] on the bottom of the Atlantic will already be able, of course, to endow his daily life not only with richness, brightness, and intensity, but also with a greater dynamism. . . .
>
> [This] man will set himself the goal[s] of controlling his own feelings, raising his instincts to the height of consciousness, making them transparent, extending conduits [*provoda*] of will into what is latent and secret, and thereby raising himself to a new level—creating a higher socio-biological type, if you will—a superman. . . . Man will become incomparably stronger, more intelligent, more refined. His body more harmonious, movements more rhythmical, voice more musical, and the forms of daily life will acquire a dynamic theatricality. The average human type will rise to the level of Aristotle, Goethe, and Marx. Above this mountain ridge, new elevations will arise.
>
> All the spheres of life—tilling the soil, planning of human populations, creation of theaters, methods of public education for children, solution of scientific problems, creation of a new style—will touch all and every one to the quick. People will divide into "parties" on the issues of a new gigantic canal, sharing the oases in the Sahara—such an issue *will* arise—regulating the weather and climate, a new theater, a chemical hypothesis, two opposing tendencies in music, a better system of sports. These groupings will not be poisoned by any class or caste self-interest. Everyone will be equally interested in the success of the whole. Struggle will have a purely ideological char-

> acter. It will lack all of what makes up the soul of "competition" in a class society. But this in no way hinders the struggle from being captivating, dramatic, and passionate. And since in a socialist society all issues—including those that were earlier solved arbitrarily and automatically (daily life) or else were under the control of special priestly castes (art)—will become the property of all, then one can say with conviction that there will be a most broad field and a limitless number of occasions for collective interests and passions and for individual competition. Consequently, art will not suffer from the lack of those discharges of public nervous energy, of those collective psychic stimuli that oblige us to create new artistic trends and to change styles. The aesthetic schools in turn will group their own "parties" around themselves, i.e., groupings of temperaments, tastes, and frames of mind. In this unselfish and intense battle on a continually rising foundation of culture, the human personality, with its priceless basic quality—to be satisfied with nothing that is [already] accomplished—will grow and become polished along all its facets. To be sure, we have no reason to fear that personality will be lulled to sleep, nor that art will be impoverished, in a socialist society.[5]

This picture is no longer simply one that is definitively reminiscent of Soviet culture, but in fact recalls a sort of dramatic monologue from some Soviet play. Meanwhile, this grandiose fantasy attracted few at that time: urgent political passions and the struggle for one's own place in the current literature did not allow the groups' ideologues to fantasize with such scope (as we have seen, their fantasies were carried no further than self-advertising).

The scope of fantasizing was facilitated by the "restructuring of literary-artistic organizations" and the proclamation of Socialist Realism. Lezhnev reflected on this as early as 1935: "Socialist Realism is not a style in the organic sense that Symbolism and Futurism were. It is not a school with an artist's credo that has the details worked out, nor the possessor of a miraculous secret that is exclusive and intolerant by its nature. It is a far-ranging directive, opening into a great expanse of time, capable of accommodating a whole spectrum of schools and nuances. It should rather be compared with the art of the Renaissance, which despite a commonality of basic aspirations, had a huge variety of styles and trends."[6] In Lezhnev's opinion, it was a real *Gesamtkunstwerk* "foreseen by Wagner and Verhaeren. It has its precursor in Beethoven, whose symphonies approached more closely than anything else the majestic and dynamic ideal of the future, as yet unseen. I have in mind the Wagnerian synthesis of the arts and Beethoven's dynamism. Greek tragedy enters here at a higher level of development. . . . Just as Wagner and Beethoven were in a certain sense the development and transcendence of Greek tragedy, so in the art of socialism much of what was noted in Beethoven and Wagner will be developed, transcended, and raised

to a higher level. This is not an old brick that is laid down on a structure in a ready form. It is the continuity of the juices that a plant draws from the soil. Changed, they are assimilated by the organism and continue a new life within it."[7] Aesthetic projects such as this were just as fantastic in 1935 as they had been in the early 1920s (Trotsky's visions) and in as the Perevalist reflections on "self-contained freedom" in 1928.

This utopianism that had flourished in revolutionary culture remained forever a part of Soviet culture, flaring up anew in Sixtyism. Communism, as is well known, in the mid-1960s again became "visible," like a "Promised Land." Utopian political-aesthetic project making was reborn anew as well, induced by the downfall of the previous (Socialist Realist) scheme. At about this time, the true waning of Socialist Realism itself began, its drift toward a "historically open aesthetic system" and the loss of its "shores."[8] It is appropriate here to recall the theory of the famous Soviet philosopher Iurii Davydov, who at this time asserted that "the identification of beauty with utility," though fatal to art, in bourgeois society is a form of protest and hence even justified, for it cultivates within itself a peculiar aesthetic sensitivity inimical to the crippled utilitarianism of bourgeois society. Under communism, on the contrary, the narrow practicality of human activity is reshaped into a "truly human sensitivity free of any self-interest," and "aesthetic sensitivity," which under capitalism shapes a caste of creators and a defined sphere of "aesthetic objects," will under communism develop into an "all-encompassing type of social sensitivity."[9] This was the curious response of Sixtyism to the "productionist" challenge of the 1920s,[10] which not only contained an appraisal of the aesthetic utilitarianism engendered by the revolutionary era as a relapse of bourgeois behavior, not only gave a "second wind" to revolutionary romanticism, but also supplied a new base for the concept of creativity under the conditions of the socialism that was already fraught with "communism in twenty years."

Davydov rejected the "frame-bound" condition of art, maintaining that it is inappropriate for eras of revolutionary upheavals, since in remaining a "narrowly specialized area of spiritual production," such art is "incapable of giving the revolutionary feeling and revolutionary passion of the masses of people an adequate form."[11] In other words, it is incapable of becoming mass-oriented. And only under socialism (and even more so under communism) will art escape from the former narrow framework of its social function and from the form of "narrowly spiritual activity" to be transformed into, one must suppose, life itself, merging with "the life of the people." In the 1960s, it turns out that "art will be able to become mass-oriented not by virtue of its functional-utilitarian tendency [as the "productionists" had suggested in the 1920s] but owing to the transformation of art into an all-encompassing form of intercourse and vital activity."[12] History had com-

pleted a fantastic zigzag: the rejection of Arvatov had turned out to be a sham, resuscitating as an alternative, of all things, the ideas of Viacheslav Ivanov. But the latter, as we have seen, turned out to be a curious "precursor" of Arvatov ("in reverse"). The connection between the two aesthetic projects lies in one and the same theory of creativity, according to which creative activity must lose not only its independence, but also any specificity.

Speaking out in 1920 against the Proletkult ideas of "new culture," Lenin advanced a counter-program that went beyond the framework of the polemic with Proletkult and had a broader implication: "Not *invention* of a new proletarian culture, but *development* of the best examples, traditions, and results of *existing* culture from the *point of view* of Marxism's worldview and of the conditions of life and of the proletariat's struggle in the era of its dictatorship."[13] If we transfer this formula from the early 20s to the early 30s, we obtain the strategy of Socialist Realism. And in fact, it was not necessary to "invent" anything: revolutionary culture served as the "existing culture"; the main thing, from "the point of view of the proletariat" in the era of "reconstruction," was the demand to synthesize "the best examples, traditions, and results" of the preceding revolutionary culture. As we know, there were few synthesizing tendencies in this culture, but as often happens, when history "calls," quite peripheral phenomena advance to the foreground (let us remember that revolutionary culture itself was "brought to life" in the same way).

Observing the battle of the literary groups, Briusov, also in 1920, observed prophetically: "At present all the separate groups in literature are fighting among themselves—Imagists against Futurists, Futurists against the proletarian poets, etc.; each claims that it alone has taken the true path. But it is unlikely that [only] one of these groups will become the core from which the future literary school, in the true sense of this word, will grow. More likely is that all of them together, without realizing it, are preparing the foundation for this school. Different currents of our literature, in the near future, must merge into a single broad torrent that will give us what we all are so waiting for: an expression of the contemporary disposition in new forms appropriate to it. This will be poetry that is again for all the people and accessible to all."[14]

However, similar tendencies were maturing inside these groups as well. For example, Voronskii wrote that, in perspective, "the basic predominant style of writing will be neorealism, a peculiar combination of romanticism and symbolism with realism," and that a "reworking . . . of the old style and the old forms" would take place.[15] And even Averbakh (in a RAPPist orchestration, of course) asserted something similar: "The goal is to cook realism and romanticism once more in a kettle with proletarian content, having made our goal the creation of a new proletarian form and a new proletarian

style."[16] Similar thoughts occurred to Lunacharskii as well: "What we need now in literature, theater, painting, music, and posters and drawings, literally like bread, is realism, and furthermore, a realism that would derive approximately from Peredvizhnik and classical-realist roots, but that of course would only derive from it and would be sharper, more demonstrative, more monumental, with a slight movement toward passion on the one hand, and toward farce on the other."[17] Gorky also wrote about this: "Reality is monumental, it has long since been worthy of broad canvases, broad generalizations in images. . . . Can the contemporary writer, given the technique, given the devices that he possesses[,] . . . provide these generalizations, these syntheses? Shouldn't we look for a possibility of uniting realism and romanticism into a third something, capable of portraying the heroic present in brighter colors and of talking about it in a higher tone, one worthy of it?"[18]

Perhaps Kornei Chukovskii most pointedly expressed this hope for synthesis when he was discussing the creative paths of Akhmatova and Mayakovsky: "The time for synthesis of these two elements has come. . . . This synthesis was long ago foreordained by history, and the sooner it is realized, the better. . . . All of Russia has yearned for it. These elements can no longer be separate, they are inexorably rushing toward merger. In future they can exist only by having merged, otherwise each of them will inevitably perish."[19] And although it was precisely the inevitable "merger" of these "elements" that led to their destruction, these calls for synthesis themselves were always alien to revolutionary culture, were always located at its periphery. And only inside Socialist Realist theory was it clear that "the theoretical dogmatism of the groups was one of the chief obstacles on the path to a fruitful theory for a method of Socialist Realism," and that only beyond the boundaries of the literary groups, only after the removal of "group boundaries" did a "common aesthetic language" become possible.[20]

The makings of a "common aesthetic language" were "in the air" as early as the mid-1920s. The "style of the era" that Pasternak wrote about was recognized with horror (although for different reasons) by the radical theoreticians of revolutionary culture. Chuzhak wrote about a coming "re-sto-ra-tion" (he drew this frightening word out like this, into syllables [*re-sta-vra-tsiia*]). Arvatov spoke of the "new classicism" and saw its main features as "unprincipled eclecticism, a mishmash of whatever currents you like, stylization from no particular era, just the first one you happened on, or complete resignation to what has been achieved before." Arvatov wrote, "Our classicism is literally some kind of never-ending museum of nasty copies—from the savages, via the naturalists, up to futurism, under the banner and watchword of 'realism.' The result is the so called 'accessible' art that lacks creative originality, but has of course a gaudy stereotypicalization of devices. Still unable to reach the heights, artists have made them-

selves academics: they chose the shortest path—lumping together what has been done before."[21]

Socialist Realism was still almost a decade away, but to foresee it, it would have been sufficient to understand that revolutionary culture is a mechanism of self-destruction. It still remained to finish building the utopia on the existing ruins (as Arvatov said, "lumping together what has been done before"). Adaptation of the revolutionary theories of creativity took place in the mid-1930s. The most noticeable place in this process was occupied by *Literaturnyi kritik* (*Literary Critic*). The role of this journal in the 1930s was very similar to the role of Pereval in the 1920s—here precisely, in this moderate intelligentsia circle, the crystallization of a new theory of creativity—this time a Socialist Realist one—took place. Within its pages, a discussion about worldview and creativity was unfolding. Without touching on the other aspects of the journal's broad aesthetic agenda, we will briefly pause on this discussion, in the course of which the Socialist Realist theory of creativity was ultimately formulated.[22]

The principals in this discussion were a group of young philosophers headed by the executive secretary of *Literaturnyi kritik,* Mikhail Rozental', and a group of "Red professors" from the Communist Academy headed by Nusinov. Among the participants were Pavel Iudin, Mikhail Livshits, Lunacharskii, and Georg Lukács. Without touching on the peripeties of the discussion, which lasted several years,[23] we will note that the fight against "vulgar sociologism" that became the aesthetic agenda of *Literaturnyi kritik* was, of course, an attempt to transcend the most orthodox forms of revolutionariness (each of the participants, of course, had his own motives and aesthetic platforms—from the Hegelianism of Lukács to the moderation of Lunacharskii and the traditionalism of Livshits). The debate was about whether an identity of worldview and "method" really existed, as the RAPPists claimed, or if a contradiction between them was possible in creative work. It is impossible to disagree with Galina Belaia: "For the early 1930s, even this formulation of the question was fruitful: it meant a rejection of the RAPPist call for straightforward introduction of dialectical materialism into artistic creative work."[24] But one must not fail to consider that this essentially "restorationist" position itself completely suited a strategy of power at this moment, in its breadth and "syntheticism." Having fulfilled its function, *Literaturnyi kritik* also bowed out of the Soviet cultural arena, when the ideologues no longer required an authority. But the significance of the discussion, which ended in a "complete rout of vulgar sociologism," was the defeat of radical—"non-organic"—revolutionary theories of creativity. In other words, the synthesis of the Perevalist idea of "organic creativity" with the RAPPist principle of Party-mindedness had taken place.

In 1936, an "aesthetic counterrevolution" occurred—the beginning

of Socialist Realist culture proper can confidently be dated to this year. The revolutionary theories of creativity were finally transcended in the "fight against formalism" (as detailed in a series of articles in *Pravda* against formalism in art) and against "vulgar sociologism." During the course of this "counterrevolution," the principle of class consciousness [*klassovost'*] was also in fact removed.

In light of the problems we are studying, the position of the victors is particularly interesting. This position was formulated in the book by Rozental', *Against Vulgar Sociologism in Literary Theory* (*Protiv vul'garnoi sotsiologii v literaturnoi teorii*). The "anti-vulgar theory" dissociated worldview and creative work, but only at first glance was the artist "liberated" by this: earlier, only a "correct worldview" and the consequent "correct creative work" were required; but now the artist found himself in a situation wherein it was impossible to simply "reconcile" one with the other. The contradiction had to be removed with one's own life—"organicity"—for, no matter what, "realism will out even in spite of the artist's views."[25] Determinism remained at the very heart of the new theory of creativity. Now it was asserted that "not every worldview comes into dissension with reality"—a "scientific worldview" cannot contradict "the reality known by the artist." But since Soviet literature was to develop on the basis of the "scientific worldview of the proletariat," clearly it "will not know those torturous contradictions that had remained always the property of the past."[26] The organicity of Party-mindedness arose inevitably from this logic. It was still ten years before Vladimir Ermilov's classic Socialist Realist formula "the beautiful is our life," but everything was already prepared for it.

To replace the "mechanical, automatic, and absolute bond without contradictions," a complex system of dialectical mediations was introduced, at the heart of which was "the artist's organic worldview" (even an artist who had "false ideas"[27]). The notions about the "class isolation of the writer, doomed to forever translate his own 'psychoideology' into artistic images," were now determined to be "mistaken and harmful[,] . . . high-sounding nonsense";[28] the RAPPist view of the writer (in essence a view characteristic of the entire revolutionary culture) as a student who must take "a primary-school course in dialectical materialism" was now called groundless, since such a "schoolchild's mastery of the new worldview" is incapable of "advancing" a writer into "organically" Party-minded creative work.[29] In place of the theory of "direct impressions," the theory of "the artist's direct bond with objective reality"[30] appeared. "Political analysis" of the "vulgar sociologists" was replaced with a counter-methodology: for a "worldview" that was "non-organic" to the writer (a worldview that was finally torn away from "creative work"), one was to substitute a "dialectically developing life" (in the "stormy sea" of which the principle of Party-mindedness helped one navi-

gate), for "the era of socialism should and will be an era of dialectical reshaping of the whole history of thought, science, and art,"[31] and "only with this condition does analysis acquire great force, become filled with the blood and flesh of life, and reflect reality in all its complexity."[32]

This was of course not only a rejection of independent political thought and unchecked ideological creativity, but also a complete change in optics in the approach to analysis of creativity. Debate constantly centered on Tolstoy, Gogol, and Balzac, which however did not at all mean that the "inappropriateness" characteristic of the classic writers was possible for the Soviet writer, since proletarian ideology itself "is objectively appropriate to the onward march of history." Therefore the answer that Rozental' provided to his own question, "Can a Soviet writer with a proletarian worldview arrive at a contradiction of the historical tendencies of social development, as this occurred with a number of writers of other classes?" had to be "Of course not!"[33] The "ultramaterialism of the vulgar sociologists" was now defined as "the most authentic idealism, idealistic tyranny, subjective shamelessness in the treatment of facts, and metaphysical stagnation and stupidity."[34]

But according to the law of Socialist Realism that "life finishes writing the book," the Socialist Realist theory of creativity spills over into "the practice of creation." And not only the practice of "making things" but also of "making people"—the creators themselves. It is remarkable that Trotsky, even in drawing the picture of the future literature and refusing to judge what it would concretely be like, nonetheless definitely asserted that "the future great style will be not an adorning style, but a molding style."[35]

Socialist Realism acknowledged itself to be the heir to *all* previous culture (both prerevolutionary and revolutionary), but the bond with revolutionary culture was of a special kind: as we have seen, practically the entire aesthetic platform of the "new method" was set forth and developed in revolutionary culture. Nevertheless, Socialist Realism constantly erases this cultural-historical code without recognizing the right of the "ardent revolutionaries" to innovation. It is because of this that Socialist Realism found political accusations for all the 1920s groups (Proletkultists—"Bogdanovism" and "leftism"; RAPPists—"Trotskyism" and "pure administration"; Perevalists—"Trotskyism" and "rightist deviation"; LEFists—"leftism" and "separation of art from the masses"; the Serapion Brothers—"aestheticism" and "political indifference"; and so forth), in fact repudiating all of literary development before 1934, and particularly the layer of it upon which Socialist Realism itself arose.

Socialist Realism—this "scrap-heap of history"—is a real "museum of revolution," but a museum of a particular type. "How, precisely, is one to assimilate the cultural legacy?" Shaginian asked herself while reminiscing about her classes with the literary shock workers. As it turned out, "the stu-

dents did not want to relate to my experience as a *finished* thing, a museum exhibit, something that had been and that had passed by, and that it was necessary to learn and hear about. . . . [T]hey wanted to relate to my experience as a continuing thing, as a living instrument whose action and significance it is alright to verify in reality, and for which there is an urgent need." From this Shaginian drew a conclusion that is fundamentally important to the understanding of the history of literature and of the nature of creativity in Socialist Realism: "This attitude toward experience of the past, when it is regarded not as completed in the past but as verifiable and continuing into the present, is in fact an authentic attitude toward the cultural legacy and the only true method of assimilating it," since "no matter how a museum might be arranged, it in principle will remain unchanged, similar to the way a herbarium and a collection of butterflies remain unchanged: it is a *cemetery of objects.* An exhibit that ends up in a museum must *die in its functioning* [*umeret' v svoei funktsii*] *so that it can be continuously preserved for a long time in its new role as a museum object.*" In this kind of museum "one mustn't pick up anything, 'touching is forbidden,' nothing can be seen in action"; such a museum "deprives a person of the opportunity to participate in any way in the functional destiny of the collected objects."[36]

Socialist Realism preserves an unusual kind of activism, assuming that an author is a subject, constantly evolving—and primarily outside of and beyond his "creative work" proper. "Making life" merges into a "creative process" in which the subject of creation himself forever remains a student of "life." This is precisely where Gorky's and Stalin's urgings of the Soviet writers to "learn from life" come from. Shaginian also talked about this, reflecting on the muteness of the museum: "Heavy fetters of personal inactivity, a personal switched-off state, several hours of forced historical inactivity of a person faced with another's action [that is] accumulated in things and signs—this is what heavily burdens you, what makes a stroll in a museum slightly wearying; and viewing exhibits is almost like viewing corpses. Hence it follows that the easiest assimilation of another's experience, and the best means for learning something, lie in the necessary creative self-revelation of the student."[37] This is why Shaginian insisted on the rehabilitation of the idea of "creativity," so that it might stand in opposition to the idea of "work" that arose out of the aesthetics of the 1920s. The "bond of the times," however, was far from evident here.

As an example, we will examine two articles written by Sergei Mstislavskii—a little-known writer, but a man with an amazing fate. Son of a military academy professor and graduate of Petersburg University, he contributed to a number of encyclopedic publications and worked actively as a publicist. As a member of the socialist-revolutionaries party and of the Central Committee of the All-Russian Officers' Union, he actively took part

in the revolutionary movement and, during the October Revolution, arrested the Tsar's family. After leaving the socialist-revolutionaries party, he occupied various leading posts in the system of cultural administration. In 1924, Mstislavskii published an article in the journal *Kniga o knigakh* (*The Book About Books*) entitled "The Writer of the 'Only Book' " ("Pisatel' 'edinstvennoi knigi' "). Even against the contemporary backdrop, this article's radicalism is striking. Mstislavskii began with an ordinary statement: "Literature as a profession should no longer exist, there is no longer a place in our life for such a profession: the former 'many-volumed' author of the pretentious 'complete collected works'—one speaking for many about what he sees—must yield his place to the many, each speaking for himself about what each of them *knows.*" But then he concluded that "art . . . is a process of creative realization of life. Creative, i.e., creating new real-life values, a new real-life reality—a 'life closer to truth than the most real reality.' "[38] The process of creativity is given over to the masses: "as the number of active participants of social life is proportionally multiplied, the number of its creators, [and] by the same token the circle of writers, should logically open up endlessly wider as well: since the art of the word integrally accompanies real-life creativity, we go out to the mass writer."[39] From this followed a conclusion, however, that was neither Proletkultist nor LEFist: literature should not go from "word to word," dying in words, but should arise from a "direct, unmediated practical deed—in labor and revolution." A writer must "participate in struggle, . . . not watch, but make." The verb "make" here does not have, however, a "productionist" implication, but something unexpected: it indicates the act of being a participant in political struggle. Those who watch a revolution from the sidelines, who do not participate in it, are doomed to feeble imitation and hackwork. Nothing will remain of them "except names recorded somewhere in the long scroll of trophies of the Revolution." This was a warning to those who "even now are being drawn away from direct real-life action, from deeds, to 'the literary profession,' to 'contemplative' writing from the sidelines."[40]

Thus, it was a matter of dissolving the "activity of the writer" into "public activity." Such a type of "life-creation" revealed itself unexpectedly and forcefully in Socialist Realism. *Novyi mir* in 1940 printed "as a matter for discussion" Mstislavskii's article "Mastery of Life and Masters of the Word" ("Masterstvo zhizni i mastera slova"), which evoked a remarkable response not only because of its critical passion, but also through its conclusions. The article was timed to coincide with the founding of the Stalin Prizes. The author asserted that "the art of writing is primarily the art of living. Before becoming a master of the word, one must become a master of life." It was just toward this transformation that the "thorough and long-lasting educational work carried out with the greatest tolerance by the Party" was aimed, a work

that reshaped the correlation between prerevolutionary professional writers and the new generation of writers who arrived after the Revolution and "brought literary work close to the Party- and state-activist type of writer."[41] The ideas of "personal political accountability" and "responsibility of the writer" (as Pertsov said) permeate the entire new theory of creativity: "for a writer who is a Party and state worker, personal and public life are indivisible. . . . [A] writer's own personal subject matter is advanced only by his own life, by mastery of this life, and not by anything else. . . . [O]nly a writer who stands at the ideological and cultural level that assures the correctness of his imagination, i.e., its truth, can possess the 'right to imagination.'"[42]

The chief danger that Mstislavskii saw, then, was the "persistence of bourgeois 'professional writing.'" All the blame for this was imputed to the editorial boards of literary journals, which had not yet been transformed into "militant centers of the movement, organizing and directing" forces, nor had they become "'headquarters' for the separate armies of the united literary front on the march, on the offensive." But there was hope: "the board of directors of the Union of Soviet Writers should serve as the general headquarters" of this united front, and expectation was great for the chief literary institution—the Union of Soviet Writers, the usual "restructuring" of which was taking place just at this time.[43] However, Mstislavskii stated that until writers began to "realize themselves not in declarations, but in real-life practice as Party and state workers" and until they "take their place with them in a single rank, under the same requirements, under the same obligations and subject to the same accountability," "no amount of the Union's refocusing on 'exclusively creative issues' will help."[44] Mstislavskii's attention to the issues of "educating the cadres" was therefore natural. He refused to take seriously the discussions about a "second profession" for writers (a well-known favorite subject of the revolutionary culture). Moreover, he asserted that "special institutions of higher literary studies, as the thrice-repeated Soviet experiment spanning twenty years has shown, from the Briusov Institute to today's Gorky Literary Institute, have given no positive results."[45] The model he suggested was strict: "From the moment that professionalization occurs, the question of a 'second profession' fades away all by itself. The profession of writer is so important and responsible that it would be absurd to have to prove its right to an independent existence." By becoming a professional, the writer should be transformed into an "active participant of the overall work of the state and the Party. This is what the path to mastery of life is, the path to becoming a master of Socialist Realism in literature."[46]

So, then, the Soviet writer is not an author of books, but first and foremost a "public figure" (a member of Presidiums and committees, a deputy, and the like; in a word, a "state and Party worker," a representative of the Party-Soviet *nomenklatura*), and it is chiefly by this that his place in

literature is defined (in the Soviet tradition, his "place in the ranks"), and precisely this distinguishes his status from that of a writer in the revolutionary culture: being a "figure" in the revolutionary culture meant being a politician or ideologue (since this culture was a political culture), but being a "figure" in Soviet culture meant being a functionary (since Soviet culture is depoliticized, political power being appropriated elsewhere).

The Socialist Realist theory of creativity is a sort of "engendering aesthetic" aimed at, to quote Aleksei Tolstoi, "scientificalization [*onauchivanie*] of the artistic reflexes" of the writer. This is the kind of "life-creating" aesthetic that we find in the 1930s. This is why it could so boldly provide answers to almost all the questions that were raised in the revolutionary theories of creativity. It encompassed not only the problem of worldview and creativity, but also the question of the conscious and the unconscious in creative work. "The participation of consciousness in the very act of artistic creation is one of the basic indicators of Socialist Realism,"[47] as Shaginian put it. Her categorical assertion grew out of her "methodology of the new aesthetic," according to which "the 'right to the unconscious,' which seems a primary gift to the artist, inherent in him from birth, turns out in the light of artistic training, regarded historically, to be far from a natural-born gift, but rather something that is acquired. The 'unconscious,' from the point of view of training, is not a primal element, but a condition attained to by dint of an enormous amount of personal and public practical work."[48] Even RAPPists, as we recall, had not argued their way to this degree of categoricalness. However, here again it was not a question of ideas but of people. The "cultural burden" (a trauma suffered not only by Shaginian) obliged one to reach conclusions of the most radical nature: "The 'element of the unconscious' that surrounds us at every step, so tempting to the great masters, is an element of a *finished past,* an element of the *large-scale prefabrications* of the old culture that we made it our goal to transcend. . . . [I]f we thoughtlessly take advantage of the 'right to the unconscious,' *we will end up in the prison of the large-scale prefabrications of the past,* and they will do us a malicious turn."[49]

At the height of the popularity of "literary training," this kind of "nihilism" turned on the "teachers" themselves: "Older writers' classes with beginning authors—among whom almost everywhere the literary shock worker, working-class man, or new man predominates—these classes are in fact one of the true paths to a correct method of developing our socialist aesthetic."[50] This stance had its own logic. It originated, as we remember, from the opinions of Rozental' about the inadequacy of the "schoolchild's . . . worldview." This worldview, according to Shaginian, is not at all inherent in the literary shock workers, but rather in the representatives of the "old writers' phalanx," for "the higher-institution student assimilated Leninism as a system—he does not pull ideas out of the overall concept but assimilates with it a special style

of expression that points to a precise understanding of place, time, meaning, and the purpose of this or that assertion of Lenin's. . . . Our children easily and simply master precisely the 'general' thing we do not have. What for us is a difficult abracadabra, for them has already become a simple methodology as necessary as a multiplication table."[51] And therefore, one must suppose, they are precisely the ones in whom "organic creativity" would also be inherent (such is the irony of history). One had to learn from life—the collective—not from books. By this Shaginian understood "not a collective in general, and not our collective, . . . but certainly such a collective wherein workers, living builders of socialism, would be, who would constantly teach and remind us that theory is necessary for practice, but that the practice of Marxism is revolution and the overthrow of capital."[52] Such was the "dialectic."

However, when Anton Makarenko wrote passionately about it, he saw "our collective" as a crucible for "reforging" writers. Makarenko was the author of *Pedagogical Poem* (*Pedagogicheskaia poema*), a book about a collective of criminals who "reforge human material" under the direction of a writer *cum* Cheka officer. He asked writers in 1937, "What does being an engineer of souls mean?" And he answered them: "This means educating people. Our common state socialist goal: educating the collectivist, educating the man of the new era. How can we do this if we ourselves are not collectivists, if we ourselves are isolated? If we do not manage to observe soon enough this sad and perhaps for ourselves fatal unpleasantness, then the people will observe it later, the Party will observe it and will pay the most serious kind of attention to it."[53] The solution: "The traditional seclusion of the writer must be decisively unmasked, we must fight it as the worst vestige of the old world, as the most terrible sign of our creative sickness."[54] Makarenko confessed that he had always dreamed of "being a member of some kind of permanent writers' brigade, not of a group and not of a grouplet and not of a little artel, but of a special registered . . . writers' brigade, a brigade named for Gorky" that would be made up of people who "would want to subordinate their own interests, their own glory, and their own fame to the brigade. . . . I would want all my works and the works of my comrades in the brigade to be printed just so—'Gorky Brigade,' and then in small letters, 'Makarenko.'" In this scenario, Makarenko mused, "we will finally get rid of our solitary pride and our solitary yearning." Therefore one should not "boast of the creative nature of our work. Nowadays we are not the only ones creating; nowadays every Stakhanovite is a creator, and every Stakhanovite brigade is a creative brigade." And if that was so, then the Union of Soviet Writers must create "a good industrial-technical control system: a reject?—throw it away; a possible reject?—remake it; a good product?—print it."[55] This was the "response" of the "productionist art" ideas in Socialist Realism.

"Brigade creative work," this rudiment of the revolutionary culture,

also found itself a place in the "new aesthetic," which was wholly oriented toward the "personal accountability" of the producers. The main thing required here was "a keen sense of the front, a correct choice of a deployment point for those who want to fight for socialism in a decisive moment in a decisive quarter"—thus Shaginian wrote in her letter to *Pravda,* in which she joined the challenge to students at Timiriazev Agricultural Institute to "make oneself available for the summer to the political departments of the machine-and-tractor station" before the end of the harvest campaign.[56] All of this is very reminiscent of the ideas of "polytechnicalism," which as we remember were developed by Pertsov in LEF, and afterward in RAPP. The "polytechnicalized" writer (of which Shaginian is the best confirmation) would understand that:

> "not one segment of time we have lived through exists outside the coefficient of time, space, and Party watchwords"[57] ;
> "there is no detail in our country that could not be conceived of socialistically if our art touched it"[58] ;
> "a criterion [of the social utility of a writer's creative work] arises when the creator himself becomes a social consumer of his own work, expressing by his attitude toward the work what the unfailing instinct of the growing mass consumer *demands* of it."[59]

Thus the generative cycle of the "new aesthetic" is complete: the consumer becomes a creator, and the creator a consumer. There is no end to creativity. It has no obstacles. It is actually popular and "organic": "Art cannot be considered real art if it does not become profoundly popular, necessary to the people and loved by them. The people do not want to smother anyone's artistic individuality. They stand behind an organic, great, free, and content-rich creativity. But the people do not want to waste state and people's money on all sorts of gewgaws that interest maybe two or three dozen people brain-damaged in childhood."[60]

Fadeev said this in 1938, when Voronskii and Lezhnev had already been silenced, but "organicity," which had definitively hardened into "Party-mindedness" in Socialist Realism, was manifest in the form of "Leninist precepts for Soviet writers." The main precept of this kind was "the aesthetic principle of timeliness" of a work (from Lenin's famous remark about Gorky's novel *Mother* [*Mat'*]), for, after all, as it had now become clear, "the timeliness of a literary work is tied to its contemporaneity."[61] Contemporaneity in turn was tied to "the needfulness of an artist's work to the Soviet people." "Needfulness" was defined by authority: "A political, Party-minded evaluation of a writer's activity is one of the most important aesthetic principles of Leninism."[62] The "new artist" could follow these precepts, as Shaginian asserted,

not burdened by either the old "conscience" or even the old "unconscious." The "Leninist precepts for Soviet writers" in the 1940s-model Socialist Realist construct could "light the way like inextinguishable guiding stars. By checking his creative path according to them, the writer will never stray from the only true Leninist-Stalinist road of communist construction."[63]

These "precepts" were self-sufficient. The writer in the traditional sense is an "other" in relation to authority and to the masses. In the process of "communist construction," authority appropriated this function of the "other" for itself. The writer is deprived of his own optics in surrendering them to authority, which, when speaking with the voice of the Soviet writer and assuming the qualities of a personality (in Lenin's famous definition, "the Party is the mind, honor, and conscience of our era"), cannot express the position of the "other" in relation to itself but only pronounces a constant monologue. Indubitably, this impersonal optics required an absolutely special kind of creator. And he emerged from revolutionary culture, either no longer knowing the doubts that Blok had voiced (in a speech about Pushkin) or having stifled them within himself, and feeling only his own "blood ties to the people," since "the writing of Socialist Realism is constructed like a machine for encoding the torrent of desires of the masses" and "the author as one whose individual experience engenders the connection between things and words is disappearing," he dissolved into the multitude of "Gorkys."[64]

This unprecedented aesthetic project was accomplished not least of all because Socialist Realism grew out of a powerful and vital revolutionary culture. As the product of this culture, Socialist Realism absorbed its life-building passion more than anything else did. We should not be troubled by the fact that "life" appeared "distorted" in the mirror of the Socialist Realist aesthetic norm (which has always concerned critics of Socialist Realism both in the USSR and in the West more than anything else): stylistic manifestation is not the issue. It is worth remembering that the most radical life-building concepts developed in revolutionary culture were tied to the kind of stylistic systems (from Cosmism to Constructivism) that assumed no "verisimilitude" at all. The stylistic norm of Socialist Realism (not through the magic crystal of Cosmist fantasies, but through the prisms of "Party slogans") simply provided a different stock of clichés. But no matter how interesting these clichés might be in their own right, the specific nature of Socialist Realism is not to be found in them. Stylistic norm setting is the usual practice of (in the language of Socialist Realism) "progress in art": any "artistic system" is crystallized in its "norms." But the Socialist Realist canon is not only a particular set of character attributes, a defined assortment of thematic molds, a particular stylistic strategy, a corresponding genre paradigm, and the like. Above all, it encompasses *boundaries* of norm setting, for what is perceived as the specific nature of Socialist Realism is only the reflected light of a norm.

Socialist Realism is a normative aesthetic of a particular kind. It is an aesthetic norm promoted "into life"—and this is where its specific nature should be sought. This norm does not define "creativity," as is usually done, but rather the *situation of creativity* itself. If (by projection onto tradition) we turn Pushkin's famous formula around, we can say that Socialist Realism begins at the moment that "Apollo *does not demand* a poet for a holy sacrifice." The stylistic consequence of such activity is not aesthetics, but life itself, in the sense that "life-building" does not leave a place for the creative act as traditionally understood. It turns the creative act into a deed, and a deed into an aesthetic phenomenon. In this sense, the product of Socialist Realism is life itself (in full accord with the revolutionary theories of creativity), and the author is only a fragment of this life/text, only a character in it. In this capacity, he "draws art from life." This is the deep-down, text-engendering mechanism (and canon) of Socialist Realism.

Blok had asked in 1921 what hindered the people from placing obstacles for the poet not only on the path to "bringing . . . harmony out into the external world" but also on the path to "liberating sounds from [their] native unprincipled anarchy" and "bringing these sounds into harmony." He sought an answer to the question of why the people had not found means of "muddying the very sources of harmony." He did not know what "restrained" the people—"slow-wittedness, timidity, or conscience?"

At that time, the 84th anniversary of Pushkin's death was being observed. The "music of revolution" had not yet deafened everyone. It was still a long time until the 100th anniversary, which was to be "observed by all of Soviet society in an unprecedentedly widespread fashion." Besides, questions like these were no longer up for discussion in 1937. This was not only because of censorship: there was no longer anything to "restrain" people.

Notes

INTRODUCTION

1. Dobrenko, *The Making of the State Reader*.
2. Dobrenko, *The Making of the State Writer*.

CHAPTER ONE

1. For more detail, see Bez"iazychnyi, "Poeziia nauki i nauka poezii."
2. Chizhevskii, *Akademiia Poezii: Proekt,* pp. 10–11.
3. Ibid., p. 20.
4. Ibid., p. 21.
5. Ibid., pp. 21–23.
6. Ibid., pp. 24–25.
7. Ibid., pp. 23–24.
8. Ibid., pp. 25–26.
9. Ibid., p. 26.
10. Ibid., p. 31.
11. Various aspects of 1920s aesthetic concepts have been examined in the following representative works: "industrial art" (Mazaev, *Kontseptsiia "proizvodstvennogo iskusstva" 20-kh godov*), the sociology of art (Novozhilova, *Sotsiologiia iskusstva*), the problem of tradition (Aliev, *Problema klassicheskogo naslediia*), concepts of style (Eidinova, *Stil' khudozhnika*), and the "artistic method" (Akimov, *V sporakh o khudozhestvennom metode*, Ermolaev, *Soviet Literary Theories*, and others). Important works on Proletkult (Mally, *Culture of the Future*), RAPP (Brown, *The Proletarian Episode in Russian Literature*; Sheshukov, *Neistovye revniteli*), Pereval (Maguire, *Red Virgin Soil*; Belaia, *Don-Kikhoty 20-kh godov*), and the Serapion Brothers (Oulanoff, *The Serapion Brothers*) have viewed 1920s aesthetic problems as integral to the context of these groups' "common ideas." LEFists, constructivists, and other groups have received similar treatments.
12. In Russian, RAPP is Rossiiskaia assotsiatsiia proletarskikh pisatelei, and LEF is Levyi front iskusstv. The full name of Pereval is the "Pereval" All-Union Organization of Worker-Peasant Writers (Vsesoiuznoe ob"edine-

nie raboche-krest'ianskikh pisatelei "Pereval"). The word "pereval" means "crossing" or "pass."

13. See Dobrenko, *The Making of the State Reader.*

14. This idea was laconically formulated by Arkadii Belinkov: "The artist differs from the nonartist in that he writes what he sees, and in other artistic eras what he knows, and never what others tell him" (Belinkov, *Sdacha i gibel' sovetskogo intelligenta,* p. 22–23).

CHAPTER TWO

1. Merezhkovskii, "O prichinakh upadka," pp. 12–13.

2. Briusov, "Istiny (Nachala i nameki)," p. 60.

3. Briusov, "Kliuchi tain," pp. 91–92.

4. See Blium, *Za kulisami "Ministerstva pravdy."*

5. Mazaev, *Kontseptsiia "proizvodstvennogo iskusstva" 20-kh godov,* p. 222.

6. Bogdanov, "Sovremennye idealy (1917)," p. 285.

7. Bogdanov, "Voprosy sotsializma," p. 332.

8. Ibid., p. 334.

9. Ibid., p. 350.

10. For an analysis of Ivanov's theory in this context, see Mazaev, *Prazdnik kak sotsial'no-khudozhestvennoe iavlenie,* pp. 135–59.

11. Markov, "Revoliutsionnyi teatr," p. 373.

12. See V. B. Blok, "Khudozhestvennoe tvorchestvo mass."

13. Kerzhentsev, *Tvorcheskii teatr,* pp. 67, 78, 89.

14. Ibid., pp. 71–72.

15. Quoted in V. B. Blok, "Khudozhestvennoe tvorchestvo mass," p. 137.

16. I have attempted to demonstrate this on the basis of Soviet literary material in *The Making of the State Reader* (particularly in chapter 3).

17. V. B. Blok, "Khudozhestvennoe tvorchestvo mass," p. 117.

18. Gusev, *Estetika fol'klora,* p. 269.

19. Ibid., p. 270.

20. V. B. Blok, "Khudozhestvennoe tvorchestvo mass," p. 119.

21. Lebedev-Polianskii, "Ob ideologii v literature," pp. 99, 107.

22. See Blium, *Za kulisami "Ministerstva pravdy,"* pp. 92–93.

23. Mikhail Iampol'skii's formulation: "Censorship as the triumph of life."

24. See Aliev, *Problema klassicheskogo naslediia v russkoi sovetskoi literaturnoi kritike 20-kh godov.*

25. Mazaev, *Kontseptsiia "proizvodstvennogo iskusstva" 20-kh godov,* p. 36.

26. Ibid., p. 36.

27. Ibid., pp. 82–83.

28. Ibid., p. 84.

29. Tret'iakov, "Iskusstvo v revoliutsii i revoliutsiia v iskusstve," p. 116.

30. Mazaev, *Kontseptsiia "proizvodstvennogo iskusstva" 20-kh godov,* p. 87.

31. Ibid., p. 34.

32. Merezhkovskii, "O prichinakh upadka," p. 11.

33. Lunacharskii, "Sotsialisticheskoe stroitel'stvo i iskusstvo," p. 118.

34. Novozhilova, *Sotsiologiia iskusstva,* p. 63.

35. Bogdanov, *O proletarskoi kul'ture,* p. 138.

36. Bessal'ko, "Futurizm i proletarskaia kul'tura," p. 10.

37. *Literaturnye manifesty. Ot simvolizma k Oktiabriu,* t. 1, pp. 143–44.

38. Lebedev-Polianskii, "Voprosy sovremennoi kritiki," p. xx–xxi.

39. Pletnev, "O professionalizme," p. 34.

40. Pletnev, "Sovremennyi moment i zadachi Proletkul'ta," p. 25.

41. Pletnev, "Na ideologicheskom fronte," p. 3.

42. Lenin, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii,* t. 38, p. 368.

43. *V. I. Lenin o kul'ture i iskusstve,* p. 522.

44. Ibid., p. 520.

45. Ibid.

46. See Rudnitskii et al., "Iskusstvo, rozhdennoe revoliutsiei," p. 32.

47. Trotsky, *Literatura i revoliutsiia,* p. 147.

48. Gastev, "O tendentsiiakh proletarskoi kul'tury," p. 45.

49. Ibid.

50. Pletnev, "Proletarskii byt: Staroe i novoe," p. 75.

51. See Pletnev, "Na ideologicheskom fronte."

52. Iakovlev, Iakov, "O 'proletarskoi kul'ture' i Proletkul'te," p. 3.

53. Gastev, "O tendentsiiakh proletarskoi kul'tury," p. 46.

54. Ibid.

55. Bogdanov, *O proletarskoi kul'ture,* p. 196.

56. Ibid., p. 194. Compare: "We are all artists, and we all create art every day. . . . An artist does the very same thing that the average man does constantly: by means of a gesture, he expresses the products of his thinking in images" (Shmit, *Iskusstvo. Problemy metodologii iskusstvovedeniia,* p. 26).

57. Bogdanov, "Puti proletarskogo tvorchestva," p. 7.

58. Mazaev, *Kontseptsiia "proizvodstvennogo iskusstva" 20-kh godov,* p. 219.

59. Ibid., p. 221.

60. Ibid., p. 222.

61. "We manifest ourselves internally, but externally, art forms of itself" (Bessal'ko and Kalinin, *Problemy proletarskoi literatury,* p. 14).

62. Pletnev, "O professionalizme," p. 43.

63. Quoted in Muratova, *Gor'kii v bor'be za razvitie sovetskoi literatury,* p. 73.

64. *Pamiati F. Kalinina,* p. 80.

65. Lebedev-Polianskii, "Voprosy sovremennoi kritiki," p. xx.

66. Lebedev-Polianskii, "Ob ideologii v literature," p. 106. For more detail on the attitude toward the problem of the subconscious in Proletkult theory, see Akimov, *V sporakh o khudozhestvennom metode,* pp. 104–5.

67. Kerzhentsev, "Organizatsiia literaturnogo tvorchestva," p. 23.

68. Ibid., p. 24.

69. Ibid., p. 25.

70. Ibid., p. 25.

71. Ibid., pp. 25–26.

72. Ibid., p. 26.

73. Bogdanov, "Iskusstvo i rabochii klass," p. 418.

74. Bogdanov, "Predislovie k knige V. O. Likhtenshtadta *Gete,*" p. 465.

CHAPTER THREE

1. Smithy and "October": The immediately following sentences in the text explain the basic evolution of these groups. Smithy is *Kuznitsa* in Russian (also the title of their journal), its members *kuznetsy* ("[black]smiths"); as "Smith" is of course not a Russian surname, the word "Smiths" will be used (with initial capital and *without* quotation marks) in this text to denote members of this group. The latter group (and journal) is of course *Oktiabr'* in Russian, and the English word (in quotation marks to avoid possible ambiguity with the name of the month, especially in its "shorthand" usage for the totality of the October Revolution) will be used to denote the group.—*Trans.*

2. Voronskii, "Prozaiki i poety 'Kuznetsy,' " p. 430.

3. Ibid., p. 426.

4. Ibid., p. 430.

5. "Deklaratsiia proletarskikh pisatelei 'Kuznitsa'," p. 163.

6. Liashko, "Osnovnye otlichitel'nye priznaki proletarskoi literatury," p. 5.

7. Quoted in Vainberg, "Gor'kii, znakomyi i neznakomyi," p. 41.

8. "O tvorcheskikh putiakh proletarskoi literatury," p. 18.

9. "O tekushchikh zadachakh proletarskoi literatury," p. 273.

10. Liashko, "Osnovnye otlichitel'nye priznaki proletarskoi literatury," p. 5.

11. "O tekushchikh zadachakh proletarskoi literatury," p. 256.

12. "Kuznitsa," p. 4.

13. "Deklaratsiia proletarskikh pisatelei 'Kuznitsa,' " p. 164.

14. Onguardism: The theories of the group gathered around the journal *Na postu* (*On Guard*). Similarly, "Onlitguardists" refers to those grouped around *Na literaturnom postu* (*On Literary Guard*).

15. See Aimermakher, "Sovetskaia literaturnaia politika mezhdu 1917-m i 1932-m."

16. Libedinskii, *Sovremenniki: Vospominaniia,* p. 42.

17. Driagin, K. V., "K voprosu o dialektike razvitiia proletliteratury," p. 63.

18. Lelevich, *O proletarskom literaturnom molodniake,* p. 25.

19. Mikhailov, A., "O literaturnom nasledii i uchebe u 'klassikov,' " pp. 12, 14, 17, 18.

20. *Protiv burzhuaznogo liberalizma v khudozhestvennoi literature,* p. 50.

21. Grossman-Roshchin, *Iskusstvo izmeniat' mir,* p. 203.

22. Ibid., p. 75. Mikhail Gel'fand was even more laconic, when he defined the cognitive conception of art as "a curious form of passive contemplation and a form of negation of revolutionary activity" (in *Protiv burzhuaznogo liberalizma v khudozhestvennoi literature,* p. 22).

23. Grossman-Roshchin, *Iskusstvo izmeniat' mir,* p. 16.

24. Ibid., p. 18.

25. Lunacharskii, "Mark Kolosov," pp. 53–54.

26. Libedinskii, "Kak pishutsia khudozhestvennye proizvedeniia," p. 15.

27. Ibid., p. 13.

28. Fadeev, "Stolbovaia doroga proletarskoi literatury," p. 30.

29. Akimov, *V sporakh o khudozhestvennom metode,* p. 210.

30. Libedinskii, "K voprosu o lichnosti khudozhnika," p. 50.

31. Ibid., p. 55.

32. Ibid., p. 56.

33. Ibid., p. 60.

34. Ibid., p. 61.

35. Libedinskii, "Khudozhestvennaia platforma RAPPa," p. 47.

36. Fadeev, "Za khudozhnika materialista-dialektika," p. 83.

37. Kamegulov, *Na literaturnom fronte,* p. 77.

38. Gel'fand, *O tvorcheskom metode proletarskoi literatrury i ob oshibkakh napostovtsev,* p. 66.

39. *Protiv burzhuaznogo liberalizma v khudozhestvennoi literature,* pp. 14, 21.

40. Ibid., pp. 16, 47.

41. And really, how else could we read the classic RAPPist formula: "Direct impressions, taken in the light of a particular worldview and of a particular idea, when they have been subjected to selection [*otbor*] and have found their own literary expression . . . in a literary work, already cease to be direct in the literal sense, [since] they are fitted into images, into a system of images. But this is also what sets art apart, that these images and their whole system must preserve the appearance of directness, the illusion of real life, else the work will not be artistic" (Fadeev, "Za khudozhnika materialista-dialektika," p. 82)? If we factor out the "direct impressions" constants from this equation, it turns out that "artistry" is in fact equal to worldview.

42. Eidinova, *Stil' khudozhnika,* p. 94.

43. *Na literaturnom postu,* no. 6 (1929), p. 19.

44. Pertsov, "Sozertsatel' i praktik," p. 202.
45. *Vtoroi Vsesoiuznyi s"ezd sovetskikh pisatelei,* p. 378.
46. "Redaktsionnyi bloknot," p. 1.
47. See Averbakh, "Tvorcheskie puti proletarskoi literatury"; Zonin, "Kakaia nam nuzhna shkola."
48. Averbakh, "O tselostnykh masshtabakh i chastnykh Makarakh," p. 17.
49. Bek and Toom, "O psikhologizme i 'stolbovoi doroge,' " p. 209.
50. Friche, "V zashchitu ratsionalisticheskogo cheloveka," p. 4.
51. Bek and Toom, "O psikhologizme i 'stolbovoi doroge,' " pp. 215, 218.
52. Ibid., p. 223.
53. Ibid., p. 224.
54. Libedinskii, "Kak pishetsia khudozhestvennaia literatura. Beseda pervaia," p. 16.
55. Ibid.
56. Ibid.
57. Ibid.
58. Ibid., p. 18.
59. Ibid., p. 19.
60. Libedinskii, "Kak pishetsia khudozhestvennaia literatura. Beseda vtoraia," p. 12.
61. Libedinskii, "Realisticheskii pokaz lichnosti," p. 28.
62. Akimov, *V sporakh o khudozhestvennom metode,* p. 242.
63. Pertsov, "Sozertsatel' i praktik," p. 200.
64. Ibid., pp. 203, 204.
65. Pertsov, "Pisatel' na proizvodstve," pp. 11–12.
66. Ibid., p. 13.
67. Ibid., p. 13.
68. Ibid. ("Primechanie redaktsii"), p. 31.
69. Ibid., p. 31.
70. Ibid., p. 14.
71. Ibid., p. 18.
72. Ibid., p. 19.
73. Ibid., p. 19.
74. Ginzburg, *Chelovek za pis'mennym stolom,* p. 30.
75. The notion of an "industrial-socialist genre" was introduced by Friche, an influential academic in the RAPPist milieu, in his 1929 article "On the Issue of Narrative Genres of Proletarian Literature" ("K voprosu o povestvovatel'nykh zhanrakh proletliteratury").
76. Pertsov, "Pisatel' na proizvodstve," p. 19.
77. Ibid., p. 19.
78. Ibid., p. 21.
79. Ibid., p. 22.

80. Serafimovich, "Kollektivnoe tvorchestvo (1930–31)," p. 201.
81. Pertsov, "Kollektivnyi avtor," pp. 21–22.
82. Friche, *Ocherki sotsial'noi istorii iskusstva,* pp. 210–11. See the criticism of Friche's concept of art in Rakov, *Iz istorii sovetskogo literaturovedeniia.*
83. Friche, "Oktiabr' i poeziia," pp. 109, 111.
84. Ginzburg, *Chelovek za pis'mennym stolom,* p. 38.

CHAPTER FOUR

1. Shklovskii, *Gamburgskii schet,* p. 313.
2. *Zhurnalist,* no. 1 (1926), p. 41.
3. See A. Galushkin's comments in Shklovskii, *Gamburgskii schet,* pp. 518–19.
4. Mazaev, *Kontseptsiia "proizvodstvennogo iskusstva" 20-kh godov,* pp. 197–98.
5. Ibid., p. 191.
6. Arvatov, *Iskusstvo i proizvodstvo,* pp. 4–5
7. Ibid., p. 10.
8. Ibid., p. 13.
9. Ibid., p. 15.
10. Ibid., pp. 17, 19.
11. Ibid., pp. 20–21.
12. Ibid., p. 27.
13. Ibid., p. 29.
14. Ibid., p. 39.
15. Ibid., p. 56.
16. Ibid., p. 89.
17. Ibid., p. 90.
18. Ibid., pp. 98–99.
19. Ibid., pp. 107.
20. Chuzhak, "Pod znakom zhiznestroeniia," pp. 12–13.
21. Ibid., p. 16.
22. Arvatov, *Iskusstvo i klassy,* pp. 55, 65.
23. Chuzhak, "Pod znakom zhiznestroeniia," p. 21.
24. Ibid., p. 36.
25. Ibid., pp. 37–39.
26. Arvatov, "Serapionovtsy i utilitarnost'," p. 167.
27. Tret'iakov, "Otkuda i kuda?," p. 199.
28. Chuzhak, "Pisatel'skaia pamiatka," p. 16.
29. Arvatov, "Serapionovtsy i utilitarnost'," p. 171.
30. See Zelinskii, "Konstruktivizm i sotsializm."
31. Tret'iakov, "Otkuda i kuda?," p. 197.

32. Ibid., p. 197.
33. Ibid., pp. 198–99.
34. Ibid., p. 199.
35. Ibid., p. 201.
36. Ibid., p. 202.
37. Chuzhak, "Partiia i iskusstvo," p. 87.
38. Chuzhak, "'Bez rulia i bez vetril,' " p. 47.
39. Tret'iakov, "Novyi Lev Tolstoi," pp. 30–31.
40. Gan, *Konstruktivizm*, p. 60.
41. Tret'iakov, "Novyi Lev Tolstoi," p. 31.
42. Ibid., pp. 31–33.
43. Chuzhak, "Literatura zhiznestroeniia," p. 62.
44. Ibid., p. 57.
45. Tret'iakov, "S novym godom! S 'Novym LEFom'!," p. 4.
46. "Programma," p. 3.
47. Brik, "Utselevshii bog," p. 2.
48. Tret'iakov, "Prodolzhenie sleduet," pp. 264–67.
49. Tret'iakov, "S novym godom! S 'Novym LEFom'!," p. 3.
50. Tret'iakov, "Prodolzhenie sleduet," p. 268.
51. Brik, "Protiv 'tvorcheskoi' lichnosti," p. 78.
52. Tret'iakov, "Prodolzhenie sleduet," pp. 266–67.
53. Vostorgin, "Rekonstruktsiia literatury," pp. 17–21.
54. Brylov, "Ustanovka khudozhestvennoi masterskoi," p. 131.
55. Ibid., p. 132.
56. "Opyt kollektivizatsii khudozhestvennogo truda," p. 126.
57. Arvatov, "Serapionovtsy i utilitarnost'," p. 170.
58. See the preface to Zhirmunskii, *Voprosy teorii literatury.*
59. Gusev, "Rannie formalisticheskie tendentsii," p. 237. See also Erlich, *Russian Formalism* (particularly the chapter "Approaches to Formalism: From the 'Forest of Symbols' to the 'Self-Valuable Word,' " pp. 33–50).
60. Brik, "T. n. 'formal'nyi metod,' " pp. 214–15.
61. Mayakovsky, "Kak delat' stikhi," p. 117.
62. Tret'iakov, "Otkuda i kuda?," p. 197.
63. Brik, "T. n. 'formal'nyi metod,' " p. 214.
64. Mayakovsky, "Poet-rabochii," p. 19.
65. Bezymenskii, *K solntsu*, pp. 27–28.
66. *Na postu*, no. 4 (1923), p. 64.
67. Kushner, "Bozhestvennoe proizvedenie," p. 2.
68. Markov, *Noveishie teatral'nye techeniia,* p. 54.
69. Mazaev, *Kontseptsiia "proizvodstvennogo iskusstva" 20-kh godov,* p. 168.
70. Mayakovsky, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v 13-ti tt.,* t. 12, p. 411.

71. Mazaev, *Kontseptsiia "proizvodstvennogo iskusstva" 20-kh godov,* pp. 199, 269.

72. Dmitriev, "Pervyi itog," p. 9.

73. Men'shutin and Siniavskii, *Poeziia pervykh let revoliutsii,* p. 102.

74. Ibid., p. 103.

75. Tret'iakov, "Prodolzhenie sleduet," p. 269.

CHAPTER FIVE

1. See Maguire, *Red Virgin Soil.* The Perevalists, Maguire suggests, represented the "first serious attempt—in the context of Marxism—to create a specific program for literature" (p. 259).

2. See Sheshukov, *Neistovye revniteli.*

3. See Akimov, *V sporakh o khudozhestvennom metode.*

4. See Belaia, *Don-Kikhoty 20-kh godov.*

5. Quoted in Akimov, *V sporakh o khudozhestvennom metode,* p. 307.

6. Belaia, *Don-Kikhoty 20-kh godov,* p. 322.

7. Ibid., p. 323.

8. Voronskii, *Iskusstvo videt' mir,* pp. 356–57.

9. Ivanov, "Pochemu Stalin ubil Gor'kogo?," p.107.

10. "Chto govoriat pisateli o postanovlenii TsK RKP," no. 8–9, p. 30.

11. Voronskii, *Iskusstvo videt' mir,* p. 365.

12. Ibid., pp. 365, 366.

13. Ibid., pp. 366–67.

14. Ibid., p. 368.

15. Ibid., p. 378.

16. Ibid., p. 381.

17. Ibid., p. 382.

18. Ibid., p. 384.

19. Ibid., p. 390.

20. Ibid., pp. 546, 548.

21. Ibid., p. 549.

22. Ibid., p. 554.

23. *Protiv burzhuaznogo liberalizma v khudozhestvennoi literature,* p. 60.

24. Lezhnev, *O literature,* p. 140.

25. Gorbov, *Poiski Galatei,* p. 48.

26. Lezhnev, *O literature,* pp. 130, 137.

27. Voronskii, *Iskusstvo videt' mir,* p. 461.

28. *Protiv burzhuaznogo liberalizma v khudozhestvennoi literature,* p. 91.

29. See Voronskii, *Iskusstvo videt' mir,* pp. 460–67 (the first part of his article "Ob iskusstve pisatelia," entitled "Intuitsiia i tekhnika").

30. See the transcript of Friche's speech and of the discussion on "Freudianism and Art" in the Academy in *Vestnik Kommunisticheskoi Akademii,* no. 12 (1925).

31. Voronskii, *Iskusstvo videt' mir,* p. 506.

32. Ibid., pp. 506–07.

33. Polonskii, "Problemy marksistskogo literaturovedeniia," pp. 139–41.

34. Polonskii, *O literature,* p. 359.

35. Gershenzon, *Videnie poeta,* p. 10

36. Voronskii, *Iskusstvo videt' mir,* p. 466.

37. Gorbov, *U nas i za rubezhom,* p. 218.

38. *Protiv burzhuaznogo liberalizma v khudozhestvennoi literature,* pp. 34–35.

39. Ibid., p. 47.

CHAPTER SIX

1. See Dobrenko, "'Literatura dolzhna stat' chast'iu . . .' "

2. Shklovskii, *Gamburgskii schet,* p. 213.

3. Ibid., p. 518.

4. Ibid.

5. Brik, "Uchit' pisatelei," pp. 181–82.

6. Ibid., p. 182.

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid.

9. Brik, "Protiv 'tvorcheskoi' lichnosti," p. 78.

10. Brik, "T. n. 'formal'nyi metod'," pp. 213–14.

11. "Nasha slovesnaia rabota," p. 41.

12. Brik, "Ne teoriia, a lozung," p. 28.

13. Ibid., p. 29.

14. Akimov, *V sporakh o khudozhestvennom metode,* p. 190.

15. *Na literaturnom postu,* no. 10 (1927), p. 8.

16. Gorbachev, "Sotsial'nyi zakaz i khudozhestvennaia literatura v rabochem gosudarstve," p. 38.

17. Ibid., p. 39.

18. Shteinman, "K sporu o sotsial'nom zakaze," p. 46.

19. Ibid., p. 45.

20. Nusinov, "Sotsial'nyi zakaz," p. 8.

21. Nusinov, "Postoiannye i peremennye velichiny v literature," p. 55.

22. Nusinov, "Sotsial'nyi zakaz," p. 13.

23. Nusinov, "Postoiannye i peremennye velichiny v literature," p. 57.

24. Nusinov, "Sotsial'nyi zakaz," p. 22.

25. Ibid.

26. Nusinov, "Postoiannye i peremennye velichiny v literature," p. 59.
27. Pereverzev, "O teorii sotsial'nogo zakaza," p. 60.
28. Ibid., pp. 60–61.
29. Ibid., p. 61.
30. Ibid., p. 60.
31. Ibid., pp. 62–63.
32. Ibid., pp. 61–62.
33. Lezhnev, *O literature,* pp. 131–32.
34. *Protiv burzhuaznogo liberalizma v khudozhestvennoi literature,* p. 33.
35. Belaia, *Don-Kikhoty 20-kh godov,* p. 70.
36. Ibid., p. 71.
37. Voronskii, *Literaturnye zapisi,* p. 71.
38. Lezhnev, *O literature,* p. 364.
39. "Chto govoriat pisateli o postanovlenii TsK RKP," no. 8–9, p. 30.
40. Gorbov, *Poiski Galatei,* pp. 47–48.
41. Pakentreiger, *Zakaz na vdokhnovenie,* p. 10.
42. Ibid., pp. 11, 14.
43. Ibid., p. 24.
44. Ibid., p. 25.
45. Kogan, "O sotsial'nom zakaze," p. 31.
46. Ibid., pp. 32, 35–36.
47. Ibid., pp. 32–33.
48. Ibid., p. 35.
49. Ibid., p. 33.
50. Ibid., p. 36.
51. Ibid., p. 37.
52. Polonskii, "Khudozhnik i klassy," pp. 169–71.
53. Polonskii, "Khudozhestevennoe tvorchestvo i obshchestvennye klassy," p. 21.
54. Polonskii, "Khudozhnik i klassy," p. 173.
55. Ibid., p. 176.
56. Polonskii, "Khudozhestevennoe tvorchestvo i obshchestvennye klassy," p. 33.
57. Ibid., pp. 34–35.
58. Polonskii, "Khudozhnik i klassy," p. 175.
59. Ibid., p. 176.
60. Polonskii, "Khudozhestevennoe tvorchestvo i obshchestvennye klassy," p. 22.
61. Ibid., p. 35.
62. Polonskii, "Khudozhnik i klassy," pp. 170, 172.
63. "Chto govoriat pisateli o postanovlenii TsK RKP," no. 8–9, p. 32.
64. Ibid., p. 30.

65. Veresaev, "Chto nuzhno dlia togo, chtoby byt' pisatelem," p. 59.
66. Ibid., p. 50.
67. "Chto govoriat pisateli o postanovlenii TsK RKP," no. 10, p. 7.
68. Fleishman, *Boris Pasternak v dvadtsatye gody*, p. 48.
69. "Chto govoriat pisateli o postanovlenii TsK RKP," no. 10, p. 10–11.
70. "Pisateli o sotsial'nom zakaze," pp. 66, 67.
71. Ibid., pp. 68, 69.
72. Ibid., pp. 70, 71.
73. Ibid., p. 72.
74. Ibid., p. 75.
75. Ibid.

CHAPTER SEVEN

1. Boris Groys, for example, suggests that Socialist Realism was alien to the "actual tastes of the people" but was imposed by Stalin and that, like "anything canonized by Stalin," such as the phonetic "transrational" poetry in the spirit of Khlebnikov and Kruchenykh, or perhaps painting in the spirit of Malevich's *Black Square,* it would have been accepted with the same success and "greeted with equal enthusiasm" (Groys, *The Total Art of Stalinism,* pp. 8–9).
2. Trotsky, *Literatura i revoliutsiia,* pp. 150, 151.
3. Ibid., p. 152.
4. Ibid., p. 178.
5. Ibid., pp. 179, 194, 196, 197.
6. Lezhnev, *O literature,* p. 362.
7. Ibid., p. 416.
8. See Lahusen, "Socialist Realism in Search of Its Shores."
9. Davydov, *Esteticheskii ideal i kommunizm,* p. 147.
10. See Novozhilova, *Sotsiologiia iskusstva,* pp. 38–41.
11. Davydov, *Iskusstvo i elita,* p. 132.
12. See Novozhilova, *Sotsiologiia iskusstva,* p. 41.
13. Lenin, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii,* t. 41, p. 462.
14. Briusov, "Smysl sovremennoi poezii," p. 46.
15. Voronskii, *Iskusstvo i zhizn',* pp. 69, 78–79.
16. Averbakh, *Kul'turnaia revoliutsiia i voprosy sovremennoi literatury,* p. 75.
17. Lunacharskii, "Neizdannye materialy," p. 243.
18. Gorky, "O literature i prochem," pp. 52–53.
19. Chukovskii, "Akhmatova i Maiakovskii," p. 305.
20. Akimov, *V sporakh o khudozhestvennom metode,* p. 64.
21. Arvatov, "Sovremennyi klassitsizm," p. 7.
22. See Belaia, "Literaturnyi kritik"; Günther, *Die Verstaatlichung der Literatur.*

23. See Günther, *Die Verstaatlichung der Literatur.*
24. Belaia, "Literaturnyi kritik," p. 232.
25. Rozental', *Protiv vul'garnoi sotsiologii v literaturnoi teorii,* p. 86.
26. Ibid., pp. 125–26.
27. Ibid., p. 101.
28. Ibid., p. 6.
29. Ibid., p. 57.
30. Ibid., pp. 78–79.
31. Ibid., p. 52.
32. Ibid., p. 36.
33. Ibid., p. 124.
34. Ibid., pp. 155–56.
35. Trotsky, *Literatura i revoliutsiia,* p. 192.
36. Shaginian, "Besedy s nachinaiushchim avtorom," no. 1, pp. 264–65.
37. Ibid., p. 265.
38. Mstislavskii, "Pisatel' 'edinstvennoi knigi,' " p. 16.
39. Ibid., p. 17.
40. Ibid., p. 18.
41. Mstislavskii, "Masterstvo zhizni i mastera slova," p. 268.
42. Ibid., pp. 270, 277, 278.
43. See Garrard and Garrard, *Inside the Soviet Writers' Union,* pp. 45–75.
44. Mstislavskii, "Masterstvo zhizni i mastera slova," p. 287.
45. Ibid., p. 288.
46. Ibid.
47. Shaginian, *Literatura i plan,* p. 148.
48. Shaginian, "Besedy s nachinaiushchim avtorom," no. 1, p. 260.
49. Ibid., p. 262.
50. Ibid., p. 263.
51. Shaginian, *Literatura i plan,* p. 117.
52. Ibid., p. 123.
53. Makarenko, *O literature,* p. 31.
54. Ibid., p. 35.
55. Ibid., pp. 34–35.
56. Shaginian, *Literatura i plan,* p. 78.
57. Ibid., p. 94.
58. Ibid., p. 112.
59. Shaginian, "Besedy s nachinaiushchim avtorom," no. 3, p. 210.
60. Fadeev, *Za tridtsat' let,* p. 182.
61. Iakovlev, Boris, "Leninskie zavety sovetskim pisateliam," p. 168.
62. Ibid.
63. Ibid.
64. Nadtochii, "Druk, tovarishch i Bart," p. 115.

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