ANDREI A. ZHDANOV

ESSAYS ON Literature, Philosophy, and Music

INTERNATIONAL PUBLISHERS NEW YORK

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Andrei A. Zhdanov was born in the Ukraine in 1896. During the fifty-two years of his life, he held many important positions, including secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, member of the presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R., and chairman of the Supreme Soviet of the Russian Soviet Republic. During World War II he was a lieutenant general in charge of the defense of Leningrad during the entire siege. He died in 1948.

ABOUT THE ESSAYS

Each of the essays in this book was delivered by Zhdanov as a speech or report on a particular occasion.

The first essay on literature was an official speech of greeting from the Central Committee of the Communist Party and the Soviet government to the first Congress of Soviet Writers in Moscow, August 17, 1934. The second essay on literature consists of the abridged and combined texts of two reports—one made at a meeting of Leningrad writers and the other at a meeting of active Communist Party members in the same city. These reports were part of the discussion in 1946 of certain literary trends exemplified by the work of several writers published in the literary journals, *Leningrad* and *Zvezda*. The English text was published in the December 1946 issue of *Political Affairs*.

The essay on philosophy, printed in English in *Political Affairs* for April 1948, was a speech delivered at a conference on philosophy called by the Central Committee of the Communist Party in June 1947. Discussion at this conference, in which a large number of philosophers took part, centered around the fundamental criticisms of the textbook by G. F. Alexandrov, *The History of Western European Philosophy*.

The essay on music was a speech delivered to a conference of leading Soviet musicians, also called by the Central Committee of the Communist Party in 1947. The English text was printed in No. 55 of *VOKS Bulletin*, publication of the All-Union Society for Cultural Relations.

LITERATURE

I

Your congress is convening at a time when the main difficulties confronting us in the work of socialist construction have already been overcome, when our country has finished laying the foundations of a socialist economy—achievements which go hand in hand with the victory of the policy of industrialization and the building of state and collective farms.

Your congress is convening at a time when under the leadership of the Communist Party, under the guiding genius of our great leader and teacher, Comrade Stalin, the socialist system has finally and irrevocably triumphed in our country. Consistently advancing from one stage to the next, from victory to victory, from the inferno of the Civil War to the period of restoration and from the period of restoration to the socialist reconstruction of the entire national economy, our party has led the country to victory over the capitalist elements, ousting them from all spheres of economic life.

The U.S.S.R. has become an advanced industrial country, a country whose socialist agriculture is organized on the largest scale in the world. The U.S.S.R. has become a country in which our Soviet culture is growing and developing in exuberant splendor.

The victory of the socialist system in our country has resulted in the abolition of parasite classes, the abolition of unemployment, the abolition of pauperism in the countryside, the abolition of city slums. The whole aspect of the Soviet land has changed. The consciousness of its people has been radically altered. The "great men" of our country have come to be the builders of socialism, the workers and collective farmers.

Closely linked with the victories of socialism in our country are the strengthening of the Soviet Union's position at home and abroad, the growth of its weight and authority in international affairs, its increased significance as the shock brigade of the world proletariat, as a mighty bulwark of the coming proletarian revolution.

At the Seventeenth Congress of the Communist Party, Comrade Stalin gave a masterful, unsurpassed analysis of our victories and of the factors conditioning them, of our position at the present time, and of the program for further work in completing the building of a classless socialist society. Comrade Stalin gave an exhaustive analysis of the backward sectors in our work and of the difficulties which the Communist Party and, under its leadership, the million-strong masses of the working class and collective farm peasantry, are waging a tireless, day-to-day struggle to overcome.

We must at all costs overcome the backward state of such vital branches of the national economy as railway and water transport, commodity circulation, nonferrous metallurgy. We must make all efforts to develop livestock breeding, which constitutes one of the most important sectors of our socialist agriculture.

Comrade Stalin laid bare the very roots of our difficulties and shortcomings. They result from the fact that our practical organizational work does not come up to the level which is required by the political line of the Communist Party, to the demands with which the carrying out of the Second Five-Year Plan confronts us. That is why the Seventeenth Party Congress set us the urgent task of raising our organizational work to the level of those tremendous political tasks with which we are faced. Under the leadership of Comrade Stalin, the Communist Party is organizing the masses for a struggle for the final liquidation of capitalist elements, for getting rid of the survivals of capitalism in economic life and in the consciousness of the people, for completing the

technical reconstruction of the national economy. Getting rid of the survivals of capitalism in the consciousness of the people means fighting against all relics of bourgeois influence over the proletariat, against laxity, frivolity, and idling, against petty-bourgeois individualism and lack of discipline, against an attitude of greed and dishonesty toward public property.

We have in our hands a sure weapon for overcoming all difficulties that stand in our way. This weapon is the great and invincible doctrine of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin, embodied in life by our Communist Party and Soviets.

The mighty cause of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin has triumphed. It is to the victory of this cause that we owe the fact that the first Congress of Soviet Writers has gathered here. Were it not for this victory, your congress would not be taking place. Such a congress can be convened by no one but us Bolsheviks.

The key to the success of Soviet literature is to be sought for in the success of socialist construction. Its growth is an expression of the successes and achievements of our socialist system. Our literature is the youngest of all literatures of all peoples and of all countries. At the same time it is the richest in ideas, the most advanced and the most revolutionary literature. Never before has there been a literature which has organized the toilers and the oppressed for the struggle to abolish once and for all every kind of exploitation and the yoke of wage slavery. Never before has there been a literature which has based the subject matter of its works on the life of the working class and peasantry and their fight for socialism. Nowhere, in no country in the world, has there been a literature which has defended and upheld the principle of equal rights for the toilers of all nations, the principle of equal rights for women. There is not, there cannot be in bourgeois countries a literature which consistently smashes every kind of obscurantism, every kind of mysticism, bigotry, and superstition, as our literature is doing.

Only Soviet literature, which is one flesh and blood with so-

cialist construction, could become, and has indeed become, a literature so rich in ideas, so advanced, and so revolutionary.

Soviet authors have already created more than a few works of talent, which correctly and truthfully depict the life of our Soviet country. Already there are several names of which we can be justly proud. Under the leadership of the Communist Party, with the thoughtful and daily guidance of the Central Committee and the untiring support and help of Comrade Stalin, a whole army of Soviet writers has rallied around the Soviet power and the Communist Party. And in the light of our Soviet literature's successes, we see standing out in yet sharper relief the full contrast between our system—the system of victorious socialism—and the system of dying, moldering capitalism.

What can the bourgeois author write about, what can he dream about, what inspiration can animate his thoughts, whence can he borrow his inspiration, when the worker in capitalist countries is uncertain of the morrow, when he does not know whether he will have work the next day, when the peasant does not know whether he will work on his plot of ground tomorrow or whether he will be chased off it by the capitalist crisis, when the intellectual worker is out of work today and does not know whether he will get work tomorrow?

What can the bourgeois author write about, what source of inspiration can there be for him, when the world, from one day to the next, may be plunged once more into the abyss of a new imperialist war?

The present state of bourgeois literature is such that it is no longer able to create great works of art. The decadence and disintegration of bourgeois literature, resulting from the collapse and decay of the capitalist system, represent the characteristic trait, the characteristic peculiarity of the state of bourgeois culture and bourgeois literature at the present time. Gone never to return are the times when bourgeois literature, reflecting the victory of

bourgeois society over feudalism, was able to create the great works of the period when capitalism was flourishing. Now everything is degenerating—themes, talents, authors, heroes.

In deathly terror of the proletarian revolution, fascism is wreaking its vengeance on civilization, turning humanity back to the most hideous and savage periods of history, burning in the bonfire and barbarously destroying the works of the greatest minds.

Characteristic of the decadence and decay of bourgeois culture are the orgies of mysticism and superstition, the passion for pornography. The "celebrities" of bourgeois literature—of that bourgeois literature which has sold its pen to capital—are now thieves, police sleuths, prostitutes, hooligans.

All this is characteristic of that section of bourgeois literature that is trying to conceal the decay of bourgeois society, that is vainly trying to prove that nothing has happened, that all is well in the "state of Denmark," that there is nothing rotten as yet in the system of capitalism. Those representatives of bourgeois literature who feel the state of things more acutely are absorbed in pessimism, doubt of the morrow, the eulogy of darkness; they extol pessimism as the theory and practice of art. And only a small section—the most honest and far-sighted writers—are trying to find a way out along other paths, in other directions, to link their destiny with the proletariat and its revolutionary struggle.

The proletariat of capitalist countries is already forging the army of its writers, of its artists—the revolutionary writers whose representatives we are glad to welcome here today at the first Congress of Soviet Writers. The detachment of revolutionary writers in capitalist countries is not large as yet, but it is growing and will continue to grow every day, as the class struggle becomes more intense, as the forces of the proletarian revolution grow stronger.

We firmly believe that the dozens of foreign comrades who

are here today represent the nucleus, the core of a mighty army of proletarian writers which will be created by the proletarian revolution in capitalist countries.

That is how matters stand in capitalist countries. Not so with us. Our Soviet writer derives the material for his works of art, his subject matter, images, language, and style, from the life and experience of the men and women of Dnieprostroy and Magnitostroy. Our writer draws his material from the heroic epic of the Chelyuskin expedition, from the experience of our collective farms, from the creative action that is seething in every corner of our country.

In our country the main heroes of works of literature are the active builders of a new life—working men and women, collective farmers, Communist Party members, business managers, engineers, members of the Young Communist League, Pioneers. Such are the chief types and the chief heroes of our Soviet literature. Our literature is impregnated with enthusiasm and the spirit of heroic deeds. It is optimistic, but not optimistic in accordance with any "inner" animal instinct. It is optimistic in essence, because it is the literature of the rising class of the proletariat, the only progressive and advanced class. Our Soviet literature is strong by virtue of the fact that it is serving a new cause—the cause of building socialism.

Comrade Stalin has called our writers engineers of human souls. What does this mean? What duties does the title confer upon you?

In the first place, it means knowing life so as to be able to depict it truthfully in works of art, to depict it not in a dead, scholastic way, not simply as "objective reality," but to depict reality in its revolutionary development.

In addition to this, the truthfulness and historical concreteness of the artistic portrayal should be combined with the ideological remolding and education of the working people in the spirit of socialism. This method in literature and literary criticism is what we call the method of socialist realism.

Our Soviet literature is not afraid of the charge of being "tendentious." Yes, Soviet literature is tendentious, for in an epoch of class struggle there is not and cannot be a literature which is not class literature, is not tendentious, is allegedly nonpolitical.

And I think that every one of our Soviet writers can say to any dull-witted bourgeois, to any philistine, to any bourgeois writer who may talk about our literature being tendentious: "Yes, our Soviet literature is tendentious, and we are proud of this fact, because the aim of our tendency is to liberate the toilers, to free all mankind from the yoke of capitalist slavery."

To be an engineer of human souls means standing with both feet firmly planted on the soil of real life. And this in its turn denotes a rupture with romanticism of the old type, which depicted a nonexistent life and nonexistent heroes, leading the reader away from the antagonisms and oppression of real life into a world of the impossible, into a world of utopian dreams. Our literature, which stands with both feet firmly planted on a solid materialist base, cannot be hostile to romanticism, but it must be a romanticism of a new type, revolutionary romanticism. We say that socialist realism is the basic method of Soviet literature and literary criticism, and this presupposes that revolutionary romanticism should enter into literary creation as a component part, for the whole life of our party, the whole life of the working class and its struggle consist in a combination of the most stern and sober practical work with a supreme spirit of heroic deeds and magnificent future prospects. Our Communist Party has always been strong by virtue of the fact that it has united and continues to unite a thoroughly businesslike and practical spirit with broad vision, with a constant urge forward, with a struggle for the building of communist society. Soviet literature should be able to portray our heroes; it should be able to glimpse our tomorrow. This will be no utopian dream, for our tomorrow is already being prepared today by conscious, planned work.

One cannot be an engineer of human souls without knowing the technique of literary work, and it must be noted that the

technique of the writer's work possesses a large number of specific peculiarities.

Your weapons are many. Soviet literature has every opportunity of employing these weapons of all kinds (genres, styles, forms, and methods of literary creation) in their diversity and fullness, selecting all the best that has been created in this sphere by all previous epochs. From this point of view, the mastery of the technique of writing, the critical assimilation of the literary heritage of all epochs, represents a task which you must fulfill without fail, if you wish to become engineers of human souls.

The proletariat, just as in other realms of material and spiritual culture, is the sole heir to all that is best in the treasury of world literature. The bourgeoisie has squandered its literary heritage; it is our duty to gather it carefully, to study it and, having critically assimilated it, to advance further.

To be engineers of human souls means to fight actively for a rich language, for works of a high quality. Our literature does not as yet come up to the requirements of our era. The weaknesses of our literature are a reflection of the fact that people's consciousness lags behind economic life—a defect from which our writers are not, of course, free. That is why untiring work at educating themselves and at improving their ideological equipment in the spirit of socialism is an indispensable condition without which Soviet writers cannot remold the consciousness of their readers and thereby become engineers of human souls.

We need complete mastery of the art of literature, and in this connection it is impossible to overrate the help that Maxim Gorky is rendering the Communist Party and the proletariat in the struggle for quality in literature and for a rich language.

And so our Soviet writers have all the conditions necessary for them to produce works which will be, as we say, in unity with our era, works from which the people of our times can learn and which will be the pride of future generations.

All the conditions have been created so that Soviet literature

can produce works that meet the accumulated needs of the masses on the cultural plane. Our literature, and only our literature, has the opportunity of being so closely connected with its readers, with the life of the working people—such is the case in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. The present congress is especially important in this respect. It was prepared not only by the writers, but by the whole country along with them. In these preparations were clearly expressed the love and attention with which the Communist Party, the workers, and the collective farm peasantry surround the Soviet writers, the consideration and at the same time the exacting demands which characterize the attitude of the working class and the collective farmers toward the Soviet writers. It is only in our country that literature and the writer are held in such esteem.

Therefore, organize the work of your congress and that of the Union of Soviet Writers in the future in such a way that the creative work of our writers may correspond to the victories that socialism has won. Create works of high attainment, of high ideological and artistic content. Help actively to remold the people's consciousness in the spirit of socialism.

Be in the front ranks of those who are fighting for a classless socialist society.

II

From the ruling of the Central Committee of the Communist Party it is clear that the grossest error of the journal *Zvezda* is the opening of its pages to the literary "creations" of Zoshchenko and Akhmatova. I think there is no need for me to cite here the "work" of Zoshchenko, "Adventures of a Monkey." Evidently you have all read it and know it better than I. The meaning of this "work" by Zoshchenko consists in this, that he depicts Soviet people as idlers and monsters, as silly and primi-

tive people. Zoshchenko takes absolutely no interest in the labor of the Soviet people, their exertions and heroism, their high social and moral qualities. With him this theme is always absent. Zoshchenko, like the philistine and vulgarian that he is, chose as his permanent theme the analysis of the basest and pettiest sides of life. This digging in the trivialities of life is not accidental. It is characteristic of all vulgar philistine writers, and hence of Zoshchenko. Gorky said a lot about this in his time. You remember how at the congress of Soviet writers in 1934 Gorky branded—excuse my saying so—"men of letters" who see nothing beyond the soot in the kitchen and bathhouse.

For Zoshchenko "Adventures of a Monkey" does not go beyond the framework of his usual writings. This "work" has come into the focus of criticism only as the clearest reflection of the whole negative tendency that exists in the "creative genius" of Zoshchenko. It is known that since the time of his return to Leningrad from evacuation Zoshchenko has written several things characterized by the fact that he is incapable of finding in the life of the Soviet people one positive phenomenon, one positive type. As in the "Adventures of a Monkey," Zoshchenko is accustomed to mock at Soviet life, Soviet ways, Soviet people, covering this mockery with a mask of vacuous diversion and pointless humor.

If you read attentively and think over the story, "Adventures of a Monkey," you will see that Zoshchenko casts the monkey in the role of supreme judge of our social customs and makes him read something on the order of a moral lesson to the Soviet people. The monkey is presented as some sort of rational element, whose job is to evaluate the behavior of the people. Zoshchenko needed to give a deliberately deformed, caricatured, and vulgar picture of the life of the Soviet people in order to insert in the mouth of the monkey the nasty, poisonous, anti-Soviet maxim to the effect that it is better to live in the zoo than at liberty, and that it is easier to breathe in a cage than among the Soviet people.

Is it possible to reach a lower stage of moral and political

decline, and how can the people of Leningrad tolerate in the pages of their journals such filth and indecency?

If "works" of this sort are presented to Soviet readers by the journal *Zvezda,* how weak must be the vigilance of those citizens of Leningrad in the leadership of *Zvezda* for it to have been possible to publish in this journal works that are poisoned with a zoological hostility to the Soviet order. Only the dregs of literature could produce such "works" and only blind and apolitical people could put them into circulation.

They say that Zoshchenko's story went the rounds of the Leningrad platforms. How greatly must the ideological leadership in Leningrad have weakened for such things to have taken place!

Zoshchenko, with his loathsome moral, succeeded in penetrating to the pages of a big Leningrad journal, and in settling himself there with all the conveniences. And the journal *Zvezda* is an organ whose duty it is to educate our youth. But how can a journal reckon with this task, when it gives shelter to such a vulgarian and un-Soviet writer as Zoshchenko? Can it be that Zoshchenko's physiognomy is unknown to the editorial board of *Zvezda?*

Yet, quite recently, in the beginning of 1944, Zoshchenko's tale, "Before Sunrise," written at the height of the liberation war of the Soviet people against the German invaders, was subjected to sharp criticism in the journal *Bolshevik.* In this tale Zoshchenko turned his vulgar and mean little soul inside out, doing so with delight, with relish, with the desire to show everyone: look, see what a hooligan I am.

It would be hard to find in our literature anything more repulsive than the "moral" preached by Zoshchenko in "Before Sunrise," which depicts people and himself as vile, lewd beasts without shame or conscience. And this moral he presented to Soviet readers in that period when our people were pouring out their blood in a war of unheard-of difficulty, when the life of the

Soviet state hung by a hair, when the Soviet people endured countless sacrifices in the name of victory over the Germans. But Zoshchenko, having dug himself in in Alma-Ata, deep in the rear, did nothing at that time to help the Soviet people in its struggle with the German invaders. With complete justice Zoshchenko was publicly spanked in the *Bolshevik* as a libeler and vulgarian, alien to Soviet literature. He spat on public opinion then, and now, less than two years later, before the ink with which the *Bolshevik* review was written has dried, the same Zoshchenko makes his triumphal entry into Leningrad and begins strolling freely in the pages of Leningrad journals. Not only *Zvezda,* but the journal *Leningrad* also prints him eagerly. They readily present him with theatrical auditoriums. More than that, they give him the opportunity to occupy a leading position in the Leningrad division of the Writers' Union and to play an active role in the literary affairs of Leningrad. On what basis do you allow Zoshchenko to stroll in the gardens and parks of Leningrad literature? Why have the active Communist Party workers of Leningrad, its writers' organization, permitted these shameful things?

The thoroughly rotten and corrupt socio-political and literary physiognomy of Zoshchenko was not formed in the most recent period. His contemporary "works" are by no means an accident. They are only the continuation of that whole literary "heritage" of Zoshchenko which dates back to the 1920's.

Who was Zoshchenko in the past? He was one of the organizers of the literary group of the so-called "Serapion brothers." What was the socio-political physiognomy of Zoshchenko in the period of organizing the "Serapion brothers"? Permit me to turn to the journal *Literaturnye Zapiski* (*Literary Notes*), No. 3 for 1922, in which the founders of this group set forth their credo. Among other revelations, Zoshchenko too has his "articles of faith" there in a piece called "About Myself and About Something Else." Feeling no constraint, Zoshchenko strips publicly and quite

frankly expresses his political, literary "views." Listen to what he said there:

"In general it is very troublesome to be a writer. Let us take ideology . . . Nowadays a writer is required to have an ideology . . . such a nuisance, really, to me. . . .

"Tell me, what sort of 'exact ideology' can I have if no party attracts me as a whole?

"From the point of view of party people I am an unprincipled man. All right, I myself shall speak for myself. I am not a Communist, not a Socialist-Revolutionary, not a monarchist, but simply a Russian and furthermore a politically amoral one. . . .

"I give you my word—I don't know to this day, well, let's take Guchkov*. . . what party is Guchkov in? The devil knows what party he's in. I know he's not a Bolshevik, but whether he is a Socialist-Revolutionary or a Cadet†—I don't know and I don't want to know. Etc., etc."

What do you say, comrades, about such an "ideology"? Twenty-five years have passed since Zoshchenko published this "confession." Has he changed since then? Not noticeably. During two and a half decades not only has he not learned anything and not only has he not changed in any way, but, on the contrary, with cynical frankness he continues to remain a preacher of ideological emptiness and vulgarity, an unprincipled and conscienceless literary hooligan. This means that now, as then, Zoshchenko does not like Soviet ways; now, as then, he is alien, and hostile to Soviet literature. If, with all this, Zoshchenko has become practically the coryphaeus of literature in Leningrad, if he is exalted in the Leningrad Parnassus, then one can only be amazed at the lack of principle, looseness, and slackness achieved by the people who paved the way for Zoshchenko and sing eulogies to him.

* A leader of the big bourgeoisie—*Ed.*

† The abbreviated name of the Constitutional-Democratic Party—the party of the so-called liberal bourgeoisie.—*Ed.*

Permit me to cite another illustration of the physiognomy of the so-called "Serapion brothers." In the same *Literaturnye zapiski,* No. 3 for 1922, another Serapionist, Lev Lunts, also tries to provide an ideological foundation for that tendency, harmful and alien to Soviet literature, which the "Serapion brothers" group represented. Lunts writes:

"We have gathered in days of revolutionary, in days of powerful political tension. 'He who is not with us is against us!'—we are told from right and left—whom are you with, Serapion brothers—with the Communists or against the Communists, for the revolution or against the revolution?

"Whom are we with, Serapion brothers? We are with the hermit Serapion.

"Too long and painfully has public opinion ruled Russian literature.... We do not want utilitarianism. We do not write for propaganda. Art is real, like life itself, and like life itself, it is without purpose and without meaning, it exists because it cannot not exist."

Such is the role which the "Serapion brothers" assign to art, taking from it its ideological content, its social significance, proclaiming the ideological emptiness of art, art for art's sake, art without purpose and without meaning. This is indeed the preaching of a rotten lack of political principle, philistinism, and vulgarity.

What conclusion follows from this? If Zoshchenko does not like Soviet ways, what is to be done: adapt oneself to Zoshchenko? It is not up to us to reconstruct our tastes. It is not up to us to reconstruct our way of life and our social order for Zoshchenko. Let him reform. And if he does not want to reform—let him get out of Soviet literature. In Soviet literature there is no place for rotten, empty, and vulgar works.

This then was the point of departure of the Central Committee of the Communist Party in adopting its decision on the journals *Zvezda* and *Leningrad.*

I pass on to the question of the literary "creative genius" of

Anna Akhmatova. Recently her works have been appearing in Leningrad journals along the lines of "extended reproduction." This is just as surprising and unnatural as if someone were now to start republishing Merezhkovsky, Viacheslav Ivanov, Mikhail Kuzmin, Andrei Belyi, Zinaida Hippius, Fedor Sologub, Zinovieva Annibal, and so forth, and so on, *i.e.*, all those who have always been considered by our advanced public opinion and literature to be representatives of reactionary obscurantism and renegacy in politics and art.

Gorky in his time said that the decade 1907-1917 deserved to be called the most disgraceful and most untalented decade in the history of the Russian intelligentsia, when after the 1905 revolution a considerable part of the intelligentsia turned away from the revolution, slid into a swamp of reactionary mysticism and pornography, proclaimed ideological emptiness as their banner, covering up their renegacy with the "beautiful" phrase: "And I burned everything to which I bowed, and bowed to what I burned." This was the decade in which there appeared such renegade works as *The Pale Horse* of Ropshin, the works of Vinnichenko and other deserters from the camp of revolution to the camp of reaction, who hastened to uncrown those high ideals for which the best, the advanced part of Russian society was fighting. There swam into view the symbolists, imagists, decadents of all hues, who repudiated the people, proclaimed the thesis, "art for art's sake," preached ideological emptiness in literature, covered their ideological and moral corruption by chasing after beautiful form without content. All of them were united by animal fear of the approaching proletarian revolution. Suffice it to recall that one of the biggest "ideologists" of these reactionary literary currents was Merezhkovsky, who called the approaching proletarian revolution the "approaching beast" and greeted the October Revolution with bestial malice.

Anna Akhmatova is one of the representatives of this reactionary literary swamp with its ideological emptiness. She belongs to the so-called literary group of "acmeists" which in its time

emerged from the ranks of the symbolists and is one of the standard bearers of poetry without ideas, of aristocratic-salon poetry, absolutely alien to Soviet literature. The acmeists represented the extreme individualist tendency in art. They preached the theory of "art for art's sake," "beauty for beauty's sake," they did not want to know anything about the people, their needs and interests, about social life.

In its social sources this was a nobility-bourgeois current in literature at that period when the days of the aristocracy and the bourgeoisie were numbered and when poets and ideologists of the ruling classes were seeking shelter from a hostile reality on cloudy heights, in mists of religious mysticism, in wretched personal experiences and digging in their own petty little souls. The acmeists, like the symbolists, decadents, and other representatives of decaying nobility-bourgeois ideology, were preachers of decadence, pessimism, and belief in another world.

Akhmatova's subject matter is altogether individualistic. The range of her poetry is limited to squalor—it is the poetry of a frenzied lady, dreaming between the boudoir and the chapel. Basic with her are amorous-erotic motifs, intertwined with motifs of sorrow, yearning, death, mysticism, a sense of doom. The feeling of being doomed—an understandable feeling for the social consciousness of a dying group; gloomy tones of death-bed hopelessness, mystical experiences coupled with eroticism—such is Akhmatova's spiritual world, a splinter from the world of the old culture of the nobility, the "good old times of Catherine," that have passed into eternity, never to return. Not exactly a nun, not exactly a harlot, but rather nun and harlot, with whom harlotry is mixed with prayer.

But I swear to you by the garden of angels
By the miraculous ikon I swear
And by the smoke of our flaming nights. . . .
(*"Anno Domini"*)

Such is Akhmatova with her little, narrow personal life, her insignificant experiences and religio-mystical eroticism.

Akhmatova's poetry is altogether remote from the people. This is the poetry of the ten thousand-strong upper crust of the old Russia, of the nobility, the doomed, for whom by this time nothing is left but to sigh over "the good old days." Manorial country seats of the days of Catherine, with avenues of age-old lime trees, with fountains, statues, and stone arches, hothouses, love bowers, and shabby coats of arms on the gates. The St. Petersburg of the nobility; Tsarskoe Selo; the railway station in Pavlovsk and other relics of the culture of the nobility. All this has vanished into the past, never to return! For the splinters of this remote culture, alien to the people, preserved by some miracle down to our times, there is now nothing left to do but to shut themselves up in themselves and live by fantasies. "All is despoiled, betrayed, sold out"—thus writes Akhmatova.

Concerning the socio-political and literary ideals of the acmeists one of the eminent representatives of this group, Osip Mandelshtam, wrote, not long before the revolution:

"Their love for the organism and organization the acmeists share with the physiologically brilliant Middle Ages. . . . The Middle Ages, determining in its own way the specific worth of a man, felt and recognized him as an individual quite independently of his merits. . . . Yes, Europe has gone through a labyrinth of tenuous culture, when being in the abstract, unadorned personal existence was valued as a feat. Hence the aristocratic intimacy that links all people and is so alien to the spirit of 'equality and fraternity' of the great revolution. . . . The Middle Ages is dear to us because it possessed in the highest degree the sense of limits and barriers. . . . The noble mixture of rationality and mysticism, and the perception of the world as a living equilibrium, relates us to this epoch and prompts us to draw strength from works that arose on the Romanic soil of about the year 1200."

In these utterances of Mandelshtam are unfolded the hopes and ideals of the acmeists. "Back to the Middle Ages"—such is the social ideal of this aristocratic-salon group. Back to the monkey is the antiphonal cry of Zoshchenko. Needless to say, the acmeists and the "Serapion brothers" are descended from common ancestors. For both acmeists and "Serapion brothers" the common progenitor was Hoffmann, one of the founders of aristocratic-salon decadence and mysticism.

Why was it suddenly necessary to popularize the poetry of Akhmatova? What relation has she to us, the Soviet people? Why must one offer a literary rostrum to all these decadent and profoundly alien literary tendencies?

From the history of Russian literature we know that more than once reactionary literary currents, including both symbolists and acmeists, have tried to preach crusades against the great revolutionary democratic traditions of Russian literature, against its advanced representatives; have tried to deprive literature of its high ideological and social significance, to lower it to the swamp of ideological emptiness and vulgarity. All these "fashionable" currents vanished into Lethe and were thrown into the past together with the classes whose ideology they reflected. All these symbolists, acmeists, "yellow shirts," "jacks of diamonds," etc.—what is left of them in our native Russian, Soviet literature? Exactly nothing, although their campaigns against the great representatives of Russian revolutionary-democratic literature—Belinsky, Dobroliubov, Chernyshevsky, Herzen, Saltykov-Shchedrin—were planned with great uproar and pretentiousness and their collapse was equally spectacular.

The acmeists proposed: "To introduce no corrections of existence and undertake no criticism of it." Why were they against introducing any corrections whatever of existence? Because they liked the old nobility-bourgeois existence, whereas the revolutionary people were getting ready to disturb this existence of theirs. In October, 1917, both the ruling classes and

their ideologists and songsters were tossed into the ash can of history.

And suddenly in the twenty-ninth year of the socialist revolution there reappear on the scene some museum rarities from the world of shadows who begin to teach our youth how one must live. Before Akhmatova the gates of a Leningrad journal are opened wide and she is freely provided with the opportunity to poison the consciousness of youth with the baneful spirit of her poetry.

In one of its issues, the journal *Leningrad* published a sort of anthology of works by Akhmatova from 1909 to 1944. There, along with the other rubbish, is one poem written while she was evacuated during the Great Patriotic War. In this poem she writes about her loneliness which she was obliged to share with a black cat. The black cat looks at her, like the eye of the century. The theme is not new. Akhmatova was writing about the black cat even in 1909. Moods of loneliness and futility, alien to Soviet literature, link together the whole historical path of Akhmatova's "creative genius."

What has this poetry in common with the interests of our people and state? Exactly nothing. Akhmatova's creative genius is a matter of the distant past; it is alien to modern Soviet actuality and cannot be tolerated in the pages of our journals. Our literature is not a private enterprise calculated to please the varied tastes of a literary market. We are in no way obliged to provide a place in our literature for tastes and tempers that have nothing in common with the ethics and qualities of Soviet people. What in the nature of instruction can Akhmatova's works give to our youth? Nothing, besides harm. These works can only sow despondency, low spirits, pessimism, the inclination to turn away from the burning questions of social life, to leave the highway of social life and activity for the narrow little world of personal experiences. How is it possible to turn over to her the upbringing of our youth? And yet Akhmatova has

been published with great readiness, now in *Zvezda,* now in *Leningrad,* has even been published in separate collections. This is a crude political error.

In view of all this, it is no accident that in Leningrad journals there have begun to appear the works of other writers who have started to slide down to the position of ideological emptiness and decadence. I have in mind such works as those of Sadofev and Komissarova. In some of their poems Sadofev and Komissarova have begun to sing in harmony with Akhmatova, have begun to cultivate the moods of despondency, yearning, and loneliness so beloved of Akhmatova's spirit.

There is no need to say that such moods or the preaching of such moods can have only a negative influence on our youth, can poison their consciousness with the rotten spirit of ideological emptiness, lack of political consciousness, despondency.

And what would have happened if we had brought up our youth in the spirit of despondency and lack of faith in our cause? In that case we would not have been victorious in the Great Patriotic War. Precisely for this reason the Soviet state and the Communist Party with the aid of Soviet literature have brought up our youth in the spirit of cheerfulness, of confidence in their own powers, and precisely for this reason we overcame the greatest difficulties in building socialism and achieved victory over the Germans and Japanese.

What follows from all this? From this it follows that the journal *Zvezda,* having inserted in its pages, along with fine, sanguine works with rich ideological content, works that are ideologically empty, vulgar, reactionary, became a journal without direction, became a journal that helped enemies to corrupt our youth. But our journals have always drawn their strength from their sanguine, revolutionary direction, not from eclecticism, not from ideological emptiness and lack of political consciousness. The propaganda of ideological emptiness was given full rights in *Zvezda.* More than that, it has been ascertained that

Zoshchenko acquired such power in the Leningrad writers' organization that he even yelled at those who disagreed with him and threatened to pillory his critics in one of the periodicals. He became something on the order of a literary dictator. He was surrounded by a group of worshipers building his glory.

The question arises, on what basis? Why did you permit this unnatural and reactionary business?

It is not accidental that in the literary journals of Leningrad one began to be infatuated with the base contemporary bourgeois literature of the West. Some of our writers began to look upon themselves not as teachers but as pupils of bourgeois-philistine writers, began to adopt a tone of obsequiousness and worship before philistine foreign literature. Is such obsequiousness becoming to us, Soviet patriots, to us, who have built the Soviet social order, which is a hundred times higher and better than any bourgeois social order? Does it become our advanced Soviet literature, the most revolutionary literature in the world, to bow low before the narrow philistine-bourgeois literature of the West?

A great shortcoming in the work of our writers is also withdrawal from contemporary Soviet themes, a one-sided infatuation with historical themes, on the one hand, and, on the other, an attempt to utilize only vacuous subjects of a purely diverting nature. Some writers, in justification of their neglect of great contemporary Soviet themes, say that the time has come when one must give the people empty, diverting literature, when one cannot pay heed to the ideological content of works. This is a profoundly untrue notion of our people, their demands and interests. Our people are waiting for Soviet writers to comprehend and generalize the tremendous experience gained by the people in the Great Patriotic War, for them to portray and generalize the heroism with which the people now work on the restoration of the national economy of the country after the expulsion of the enemy.

A few words on the journal *Leningrad*. Here, Zoshchenko's position is even more "stable" than in *Zvezda*, as Akhmatova's is also. Zoshchenko and Akhmatova have become an active literary force in both journals. Thus the journal *Leningrad* is responsible for opening its pages to such vulgarians as Zoshchenko and such salon poetesses as Akhmatova.

But the journal *Leningrad* has made further errors. Take, for example, the parody on *Eugene Onegin*, written by one Khazin. This thing is called "The Return of Onegin." They say that it was frequently heard on the boards of Leningrad platforms. It is incomprehensible why the people of Leningrad allowed their city to be defamed from the public rostrum, as was done by Khazin. For the sense of this whole so-called literary "parody" does not consist in empty grimaces in connection with the adventures of Onegin on his appearance in contemporary Leningrad. The sense of Khazin's lampoon is that it tries to compare our modern Leningrad with the Petersburg of the Pushkin epoch and prove that our age is worse than the age of Onegin. Glance at even a few lines of this "parody." Everything in our modern Leningrad displeases the author. He snorts with malice and slander against the Soviet people, against Leningrad. How different the age of Onegin—a golden age, in Khazin's opinion. But now—housing control, ration cards, permits appear on the scene. Girls, those unearthly ethereal creatures, in whom Onegin delighted before, now direct traffic, repair Leningrad houses, etc., etc. Permit me to quote only one passage from this "parody":

Now in the tram sits our Eugene
The gentle, O the poor dear man!
Such forms of rapid locomotion
His unenlightened age knew not.
Some fate looked out for our Eugene,
His foot alone was somewhat trampled.

And then just once a belly poke
Delivered with the words: "You fool!"
He, mindful of the ancient custom,
Thought by a duel to end the feud.
He felt his pocket. . . . But a thief
His gloves some time before had pilfered.
And so for lack of such as these
Onegin had to hold his peace.

There you see what Leningrad used to be and what it has now become: nasty, uncultured, crude, and what an unsightly appearance it presents to poor dear Onegin. This is how Leningrad and the people of Leningrad are presented by the vulgarian Khazin.

How much malice, vice, and decadence there is in this slanderous parody!

How is it possible that the editorial board of *Leningrad* could overlook this malicious slander against Leningrad and its excellent people? How is it possible to let Khazin into the pages of Leningrad journals?

Take another work—a parody on a parody of Nekrasov, so written as to constitute a direct insult to the memory of the great poet and public figure which Nekrasov was, an insult at which any enlightened person should feel indignant. Yet the editorial board of *Leningrad* readily gave room to this dirty concoction in its pages.

What else do we find in the journal *Leningrad?* A foreign anecdote, flat and vulgar, taken evidently from the old hackneyed anecdote collections of the end of the last century. Can it be that the journal *Leningrad* has nothing else to publish? Can it be that there is nothing to write about in the journal *Leningrad?* Take even a theme like the restoration of Leningrad. In the city magnificent work is going on, the city is healing the wounds inflicted by the blockade, the people of Leningrad are full of the

enthusiasm and pathos of postwar restoration. Has anything been written about this in the journal *Leningrad?* Will the people of Leningrad wait indefinitely for their feats of labor to be reflected in the journal's pages?

Take another theme, the Soviet woman. Surely one cannot cultivate among Soviet men and women readers the shameful views inherent in Akhmatova on the role and vocation of woman without giving a single truthful picture of the modern Soviet woman, of the Leningrad girl, of the woman heroine, particularly those who bore on their shoulders the enormous difficulties of the war years, and now labor self-sacrificingly to carry out the hard tasks of restoring the economy.

As we have seen, the state of affairs in the Leningrad section of the Writers' Union is such that at present there are plainly not enough good works for two literary-artistic journals. That is why the Central Committee of the Communist Party decided to close the journal *Leningrad,* so as to concentrate all the best literary forces in the journal *Zvezda.* This of course does not mean that under appropriate conditions Leningrad will not have a second or even a third journal. The question will be decided by the quantity of good works of high quality. If there are enough of them and there is no room for them in one journal, it will be possible to create a second and a third journal —only let our Leningrad writers produce works that are ideologically and artistically valuable.

Such are the crude errors and shortcomings that have been uncovered and recorded in the resolution of the Central Committee of the Communist Party on the work of the journals *Zvezda* and *Leningrad.*

What is the root of these errors and shortcomings? It lies in the fact that the editors of the journals named, who play an active role in our Soviet literature and are also leaders of our ideological front in Leningrad, have forgotten some fundamental postulates of Leninism on literature. Many writers, including

those who work in the capacity of responsible editors or occupy important posts in the Writers' Union, think that politics is the business of the government and the Central Committee. As for writers, it is not their business to occupy themselves with politics. A work is written well, artistically, beautifully—give it a start, regardless of the fact that it has rotten passages that disorient our youth and poison them. We demand that our comrades, both those who give leadership in the literary field and those who write, be guided by that without which the Soviet order cannot live, *i.e.*, by politics, so that our youth may be brought up not in a devil-may-care, nonideological spirit, but in a vigorous and revolutionary spirit.

It is known that Leninism embodies in itself all the best traditions of the Russian revolutionary democrats of the nineteenth century and that our Soviet culture arose, developed, and reached its flowering on the basis of the critically reworked cultural heritage from the past. In the sphere of literature the Communist Party, through the words of Lenin and Stalin, has more than once recognized the enormous significance of the great Russian revolutionary-democratic writers and critics—Belinsky, Dobroliubov, Chernyshevsky, Saltykov-Shchedrin, Plekhanov. Beginning with Belinsky, none of the best representatives of the revolutionary-democratic Russian intelligentsia recognized so-called "pure art," "art for art's sake," but were the spokesmen of art for the people; of its rich ideological content and social significance. Art cannot be separated from the people's fate. Remember Belinsky's famous "Letter to Gogol," in which the great critic, with all the passion inherent in him, lashed Gogol for his attempt to betray the cause of the people and go over to the side of the Tsar. Lenin called this letter one of the best products of the uncensored press, which has preserved a tremendous literary significance even for the present time.

Remember the literary articles of Dobroliubov, in which the social significance of literature is demonstrated with such

power. All our revolutionary-democratic publicists are saturated with mortal hatred of the tsarist order and permeated with a noble aspiration to fight for the basic interests of the people, for their enlightenment, for their culture, for their liberation from the bonds of the tsarist regime. A fighting art, conducting a struggle for the best ideals of the people—this was the conception of literature and art held by the great representatives of Russian literature. Chernyshevsky, who of all utopian socialists came closest to scientific socialism and from whose works, as Lenin pointed out, "there breathed the spirit of the class struggle," taught that the task of art is, besides perception of life, to teach people to evaluate correctly the various social phenomena. His closest friend and collaborator, Dobroliubov, pointed out that "it is not life that proceeds according to literary norms, but literature that adapts itself to the trends of life," and energetically propagandized the principles of realism and nationality in literature, considering that the foundation of art is actuality, that the latter is the source of creative genius, and that art has an active role in social life, in forming social consciousness. According to Dobroliubov, literature must serve society, must give the people answers to the sharpest questions of contemporary life, must march abreast of the ideas of the epoch.

Marxist literary criticism, which continues the great traditions of Belinsky, Chernyshevsky, Dobroliubov, was always the champion of realistic, socially directed art. Plekhanov did much work to expose the idealistic, antiscientific notion of literature and art and to defend the positions of our great Russian revolutionary democrats, who taught that one should see in literature a powerful means of serving the people.

V. I. Lenin was the first to formulate with utmost precision the attitude of advanced social thought to literature and art. I remind you of Lenin's well-known article, "Party Organization and Party Literature," written at the end of 1905, in which he

showed with characteristic force that literature cannot be non-partisan, that it must be an important component part of the general proletarian cause. In this article by Lenin are laid all the foundations on which the development of our Soviet literature is based. Lenin wrote:

"Literature must become Party literature. In contrast to bourgeois customs, in contrast to the privately owned and commercialized press, in contrast to bourgeois literary careerism and individualism, 'aristocratic anarchism' and rapacity—the socialist proletariat must advance the principle of *Party literature,* must develop this principle and put it into effect as fully and completely as possible.

"What is this principle of Party literature? It is not only that for the socialist proletariat literary activity cannot be a means of gain for individuals or groups of individuals, but that in general it cannot be the private affair of individuals, independent of the general interests of the proletariat. Down with non-Party publicists! Down with literary supermen! Literary activity must become *part* of the general proletarian cause."

And further on in the same article:

"You cannot live in a society and be free from society. The freedom of a bourgeois author, artist, or actress is nothing but masked (or hypocritically camouflaged) dependence on the moneybag, on corruption, on prostitution."*

The Leninist point of departure is that our literature cannot be apolitical, cannot be "art for art's sake," but is called upon to fill an important vanguard role in social life. Hence the Leninist principle of partisanship in literature—a most important contribution of V. I. Lenin to the science of literature.

Consequently, the best tradition of Soviet literature is a continuation of the best traditions of Russian literature of the nineteenth century, the traditions created by our great revolu-

* V. I. Lenin, "Party Organization and Party Literature," *Political Affairs,* June 1950.

tionary democrats—Belinsky, Dobroliubov, Chernyshevsky, Saltykov-Shchedrin—carried further by Plekhanov and scientifically elaborated and grounded by Lenin and Stalin.

Nekrasov called his poetry "the muse of vengeance and sorrow." Chernyshevsky and Dobroliubov looked upon literature as a sacred service to the people. Under the tsarist regime the best representatives of the Russian democratic intelligentsia perished for these high and noble ideas, went into penal servitude and exile. How is it possible to forget these glorious traditions? How is it possible to neglect them, how possible to permit Akhmatovas and Zoshchenkos to propagate surreptitiously the reactionary slogan, "art for art's sake," and, taking cover behind a mask of ideological emptiness, to spread alien ideas among the Soviet people?

Leninism recognizes that our literature has enormous significance for social transformation. If our Soviet literature were to permit a reduction of its enormous educational role—this would mean development backward, a return "to the stone age."

Comrade Stalin called our writers engineers of human souls. This definition has deep meaning. It speaks of the enormous responsibility of Soviet writers for the education of the people, for the education of the Soviet youth, for not tolerating waste in literary work.

To some it seems strange that the Central Committee of the Communist Party adopted such severe measures on a literary question. We are not used to this. They think that if waste is permitted in production or if a production program for articles of mass consumption or a wood storage plan is not fulfilled—then to place the blame for this is a natural thing, but if waste is permitted in the education of human souls, if waste is permitted in the business of educating the youth, here one must be tolerant. But actually, is not this a far graver fault than the non-fulfillment of a production assignment? By its decision the Central Committee has in view the bringing of the ideological front into line with all the other sectors of our work.

In the recent period big breaches and shortcomings have been exposed on the ideological front. Suffice it to remind you of the backwardness of our film art, of the littering of our theatrical repertoire with productions of poor quality, not to speak of what has gone on in the journals *Zvezda* and *Leningrad.*

The Central Committee was obliged to intervene and introduce decisive corrections. It did not have the right to soften its blow against those who forget their obligations toward the people, toward the education of the youth. If we want to turn the attention of our active workers to questions of ideological work and introduce order here, by giving clear direction in the work, we should be sharp, as befits Soviet people, as befits Bolsheviks, in criticizing errors and shortcomings in ideological work. Only then will we be able to correct matters.

Certain writers reason thus: Inasmuch as during the war the people were starving for literature, and few books were published, it follows that the reader will swallow any commodity, even a rotten one. But actually this is altogether false, and we cannot tolerate any literature that unscrupulous writers, editors, publishers will palm off on us. The Soviet people expect from Soviet writers genuine ideological armament, spiritual nourishment that will aid in fulfilling the plans for great socialist construction, for the restoration and further development of our country's national economy. The Soviet people make high demands on writers, they want satisfaction of their ideological and cultural claims.

The situation during the war made us unable to satisfy these burning needs. But the people want to comprehend the events that have taken place. Their ideological and cultural level has grown higher. They are frequently dissatisfied with the quality of the works of literature and art that we put forth. Some workers in literature, workers on the ideological front, have not understood this and do not want to understand it.

The level of the demands and tastes of our people has risen very high, and he who does not want to rise, or is incapable of

rising to this level, will be left behind. Literature is called upon not only to keep abreast of the demands of the people, but more than that—it is obligated to develop the people's tastes, to raise higher their demands, to enrich them with new ideas, to carry the people forward. He who is incapable of marching in step with the people, of satisfying their growing demands, of keeping up with the tasks of development of Soviet culture, will inevitably be retired.

Ideological inadequacy among the leading workers of *Zvezda* and *Leningrad* leads to a second big error. This is that some of our responsible workers have set up as a guide in their relations with writers not the interests of the political education of the Soviet people and the political direction of the writers, but interests of personal friendship. It is said that many ideologically harmful and artistically weak works have been allowed through the press because of a desire not to offend one or another writer. From the point of view of such responsible workers it is better to yield on the interests of the people, the interests of the state, in order not to offend some writer or other. This is absolutely incorrect and politically erroneous. It is just like exchanging a million for a penny.

In its decision the Central Committee of the Communist Party points out the very great harm involved in substituting relations of friendship for relations of principle in literature. Relations based on friendship rather than principle among some of our writers have played a profoundly negative role, have led to the lowering of the ideological level of many literary works, have facilitated the admission into literature of persons alien to Soviet literature. The absence of criticism on the part of leaders of the ideological front in Leningrad, on the part of leaders of the Leningrad journals, the substitution of relations based on friendship for relations based on principle at the expense of the people's interests, have done great harm.

Comrade Stalin teaches us that if we want to maintain our

cadres, to teach and educate them, we should not be afraid of offending anyone, we should not be afraid of principled, bold, frank, and objective criticism. Without criticism, any organization, including a literary organization, can decay. Without criticism, any disease can be driven deeper and it will be harder to deal with it. Only bold and open criticism helps our people to improve themselves, rouses them to march ahead, to overcome shortcomings in their work. Where there is no criticism, staleness and stagnation prevail, there is no fresh air, there is no room to move ahead.

Comrade Stalin frequently points out that a most important condition of our development is the necessity for every Soviet person to take stock of his work every day, fearlessly check on himself, analyze his work, courageously criticize his own shortcomings and errors, consider how to achieve better results in his work, and continuously work on his own improvement. This applies to writers as much as to any other workers. He who is afraid of criticizing his own work is a contemptible coward, unworthy of the people's respect.

An uncritical attitude toward one's own work, substitution of relations with writers based on friendship for relations based on principle are widespread also in the administration of the Union of Soviet Writers. The administration of the union and in particular its chairman, Comrade Tikhonov, are responsible for the situation recently disclosed in the journals *Zvezda* and *Leningrad*, are guilty not only of not impeding the penetration into Soviet literature of the harmful influences of Zoshchenko, Akhmatova, and other un-Soviet writers, but even of closing their eyes to the penetration into our journals of tendencies and mores alien to Soviet literature.

Among the shortcomings of the Leningrad journals a certain role was played by the system of irresponsiblity that evolved in the leadership of the journals; the situation on the editorial boards of the Leningrad journals was such that it was unknown

who was responsible for the journal as a whole and for its departments, and the most elementary order was missing. This shortcoming has to be corrected. This is why the Central Committee in its ruling appointed an editor-in-chief to the journal *Zvezda,* who is to be responsible for the direction of the journal, for the high ideological and artistic qualities of the works published in the journal.

In journals, as in any business, disorder and anarchy are intolerable. There must be a clear-cut responsibility for the direction of the journal and the content of published materials.

You must restore the glorious traditions of Leningrad literature and the Leningrad ideological front. It is bitter and offensive that the journals of Leningrad, which were always seed-beds for advanced ideas, advanced culture, became a refuge for ideological emptiness and vulgarity. One must restore the honor of Leningrad as an advanced ideological and cultural center. One must remember that Leningrad was the cradle of the Bolshevik Leninist organizations. Here Lenin and Stalin laid the foundations of the Bolshevik Party, the foundations of the Bolshevik world outlook, Bolshevik culture.

It is a matter of honor for the Leningrad writers, the active members of the Leningrad Party to restore and develop further these glorious traditions of Leningrad.

The task of workers on the ideological front in Leningrad, and principally of the writers, is to drive ideological emptiness and vulgarity out of Leningrad literature, to raise high the banner of advanced Soviet literature, to seize every opportunity for their own ideological and artistic growth, not to lag behind contemporary subject matter, not to lag behind the demands of the people, in every way to develop a bold criticism of their own shortcomings, a criticism that is not servile, not based on cliques or friendships, but a genuine, bold, and independent Bolshevik criticism based on principle.

Comrades, by now it should be clear to you how crude was

the blunder permitted by the Leningrad City Committee of the Communist Party, especially by its propaganda and agitation department and the secretary for propaganda, Comrade Shirokov, who was placed at the head of ideological work and who is the first to bear the responsibility for the collapse of the journals. The Leningrad Committee of the Communist Party permitted a crude political error in adopting at the end of June a decision on the new composition of the editorial board of the journal *Zvezda,* including Zoshchenko. Only political blindness can explain the fact that the secretary of the Communist Party's City Committee, Comrade Kapustin, and the propaganda secretary of the City Committee, Comrade Shirokov, passed such an erroneous decision. I repeat that all these errors must be corrected as quickly and decisively as possible, so as to restore the role of Leningrad in the ideological life of the party.

We all love Leningrad, we all love our Leningrad party organization as one of the advance detachments of the party. In Leningrad there should be no refuge for literary hangers-on and rogues who want to make use of Leningrad for their own purposes. Soviet Leningrad is not dear to Zoshchenko, Akhmatova, and their ilk. They want to see in it the personification of different socio-political customs, a different ideology. Old Petersburg, the Bronze Horseman as the image of this old Petersburg—that is what floats before their eyes. But we love Soviet Leningrad, Leningrad as the advanced center of Soviet culture. The glorious cohort of great revolutionary and democratic figures that issued from Leningrad—these are our direct ancestors, from whom we derive our family tree. The glorious traditions of modern Leningrad are the continuation of these great revolutionary democratic traditions, which we will not exchange for any other. Let the active workers of Leningrad analyze their errors boldly, without a backward glance, without reservations, so as to set matters right as best and as rapidly as possible and move our ideological work forward. Leningrad Bolsheviks must

once more occupy their proper place in the ranks of the pioneers and advanced workers in the cause of shaping Soviet ideology, Soviet social consciousness.

How could it happen that the Leningrad City Committee of the Communist Party allowed such a situation on the ideological front? Obviously it was distracted by current practical work on the restoration of the city and the upsurge of its industry and forgot about the importance of ideological-educational work, and this forgetfulness cost the Leningrad organization dear. One cannot forget ideological work! The spiritual wealth of our people is no less important than their material wealth. One cannot live blindly, without care for the morrow, either in the sphere of material production, or in the ideological sphere. Our Soviet people have grown to such an extent that they will not "swallow" any and every intellectual product that may be dumped on them. Workers in culture and art who do not reorganize themselves, who cannot satisfy the needs of the people, can rapidly lose the confidence of the people.

Comrades, our Soviet literature lives and should live by the interests of the people, the interests of our motherland. Literature is the proper business of the people. This is why your every success, every significant work is looked upon by the people as their own victory. This is why every successful work can be compared with a battle won or with a big victory on the economic front. Contrariwise, every failure in Soviet literature is deeply offensive and bitter to the people, the Communist Party, the state.

This is precisely the goal of the resolution of the Central Committee, which is concerned with the interests of the people, with the interests of literature, and which is extremely disturbed by the situation among the Leningrad writers.

If people without ideology want to deprive the Leningrad

detachment of Soviet writers of its foundation, if they want to undermine the ideological side of their work, to deprive the creative genius of the Leningrad writers of its socially transforming significance, then the Central Committee hopes that the Leningrad writers will find in themselves the forces to set a limit to all attempts to divert the literary detachment of Leningrad and its journals into the channel of ideological emptiness, lack of principle, lack of political consciousness. You are posted on the advanced line of the ideological front, you have enormous tasks of international significance, and this ought to heighten the sense of responsibility of every genuinely Soviet writer toward his people, state, and party, and make him conscious of the importance of his duty.

The bourgeois world is not pleased by our success both within our country and in the international arena. As a result of World War II the positions of socialism have been fortified. The question of socialism has been placed on the order of the day in many European countries. This displeases imperialists of all hues; they are afraid of socialism, afraid of our socialist country, which is a model for the whole of advanced humanity. The imperialists and their ideological henchmen, their writers and journalists, their politicians and diplomats strive in every way to slander our country, to present it in a false light, to slander socialism. In these conditions the task of Soviet literature is not only to reply, blow for blow, to all this base slander and the attacks on our Soviet culture, on socialism, but also boldly to lash and attack bourgeois culture, which is in a state of marasmus and corruption.

However outwardly beautiful the form that clothes the creations of the fashionable modern bourgeois western European and American writers, and also film and theatrical producers, they still cannot rescue or raise up their bourgeois culture, for its moral foundation is rotten and baneful, for this culture has been put at the service of private capitalist property, at the service of the

egoistic, selfish interests of the bourgeois upper layers of society. The whole host of bourgeois writers, film and theatrical producers is striving to distract the attention of the advanced strata of society from the acute questions of the political and social struggle and to divert their attention into the channel of vulgar, ideologically empty literature and art, replete with gangsters, chorus girls, eulogies of adultery, and of the doings of all sorts of adventurers and rogues.

Does it become us, representatives of advanced Soviet culture, Soviet patriots, to play the role of worshipers of bourgeois culture or the role of pupils? Certainly our literature, which reflects a social order higher than any bourgeois-democratic order and a culture many times higher than bourgeois culture, has the right to teach others a new universal morality. Where do you find people and a country like ours? Where do you find such magnificent qualities as our people displayed in the Great Patriotic War and as they display every day in their labor of transition for the peace-time development and restoration of their economy and culture? Every day raises our people higher and higher. Today we are not what we were yesterday, and tomorrow we will not be what we are today. We are no longer the Russians we were before 1917, and Russia is no longer the same, nor is our character. We have changed and grown along with the great transformations that have radically altered the face of our country.

To show these new high qualities of the Soviet people, to show our people not only as they are today, but also to give a glimpse of their tomorrow, to help illumine, with a searchlight the road ahead—such is the task of every conscientious Soviet writer. The writer cannot jog along at the tail of events, he must march in the forward ranks of the people, pointing out to them their path of development. Guided by the method of socialist realism, conscientiously and attentively studying our reality, striving to penetrate deeper into the essence of the processes of our development, the writer must educate the people

and arm them ideologically. While selecting the best feelings and qualities of the Soviet man and revealing his tomorrow, we must at the same time show our people what they must not be, we must castigate the remnants of yesterday, remnants that hinder the Soviet people in their forward march. Soviet writers must help the people, the state, and the party to educate our youth to be cheerful and confident of their own strength, unafraid of any difficulties.

No matter how bourgeois politicians and writers try to conceal from their own peoples the truth about the achievements of the Soviet order and Soviet culture, no matter how they try to erect an iron curtain, through which it would be impossible for the truth about the Soviet Union to penetrate abroad, no matter how they endeavor to belittle the actual growth and extent of Soviet culture—all these attempts are doomed to collapse. We know very well the power and advantage of our culture. Suffice it to recall the stunning successes of our cultural delegations abroad, our physical culture parade, etc. Is it for us to bow low before everything foreign or occupy a position of passive defense?

If the feudal social order and then the bourgeoisie in the period of their flowering could create an art and a literature that affirmed the establishment of the new order and hymned its flowering, then we, who represent a new, socialist order, the embodiment of all the best in the history of human civilization and culture, are all the more in a position to create the most advanced literature in the world, which will leave far behind the best examples of the creative genius of former times.

Comrades, what does the Central Committee of the Communist Party want and demand? The Central Committee of the party wants the active workers of Leningrad and the Leningrad writers to understand fully that the time has come when it is necessary to raise our ideological work to a high level. The young Soviet generation is faced with the task of intensifying the power and might of the socialist Soviet order, of fully utiliz-

ing the motive forces of Soviet society for a new, unprecedented blossoming of our well-being and culture. For these great tasks the young generation must be educated to be steadfast, cheerful, unafraid of obstacles, ready to meet these obstacles and overcome them. Our people must be educated people of a high ideological level, with high cultural and moral demands and tastes. To this end our literature, our journals must not stand aside from the tasks of contemporary life, but must help the party and the people educate the youth in the spirit of unreserved devotion to the Soviet social order, in the spirit of unreserved service to the interests of the people.

Soviet writers and all our ideological workers are today posted on the advanced line of fire, for in conditions of peaceful development there is no reduction, but on the contrary, there is an expansion of the tasks of the ideological front and principally of literature. The people, the state, the party want, not the withdrawal of literature from contemporary life, but its active invasion of all aspects of Soviet existence. Bolsheviks value literature highly. They see clearly its great historical mission and role in strengthening the moral and political unity of the people, in welding and educating the people. The Central Committee of the Communist Party wants us to have an abundance of spiritual culture, for in this wealth of culture it sees one of the main tasks of socialism.

The Central Committee of the Communist Party is confident that the Leningrad detachment of Soviet literature is morally and politically healthy and will speedily correct its errors and take its proper place in the ranks of Soviet literature.

The Central Committee is confident that the shortcomings in the work of the Leningrad writers will be overcome and that the ideological work of the Leningrad party organization will, in the shortest period, be raised to the height that is required today in the interests of the party, the people, the state.

PHILOSOPHY

The discussion of Comrade Alexandrov's book has gone beyond the immediate subject under debate. It has transcended it in breadth and depth, posing also more general problems of the situation on the philosophical front. The discussion has been transformed into a kind of all-Union conference on the status of scientific work in philosophy. This, of course, is quite natural and legitimate. The creation of a textbook on the history of philosophy, the first Marxist textbook in this sphere, represents a task of enormous scientific and political significance. Therefore, it is not accidental that the Central Committee of the Communist Party has given so much attention to this question and has organized the present discussion.

To write a good textbook on the history of philosophy means to equip our intellectuals, our cadres, our youth with a new, powerful ideological weapon and at the same time to take a great step forward in the development of Marxist-Leninist philosophy. Hence, the discussion expressed such high requirements for such a textbook. Extending the range of the discussion has, therefore, been very profitable. Its results will, without doubt, be great, the more so since we dealt not only with questions connected with the evaluation of the book, but also with the more general problems of philosophical work.

I shall permit myself to discuss both themes. It is far from my thoughts to summarize the discussion—this is the task of the author. I speak as a participant in the debate.

I ask in advance to be excused if I have recourse to quotations, although Comrade Baskin has repeatedly warned all of us against this procedure. Of course, it is easy for him, an old salt

on the sea of philosophy, to plow through philosophical seas and oceans without navigation instruments. But you will have to permit me, a novice, treading for the first time the unsteady deck of the philosophical ship in a time of terrible storm, to use quotations as a sort of compass which will help me to keep from losing my way.

I now pass on to the remarks on the textbook.

I believe that from a textbook on the history of philosophy we have a right to demand the fulfillment of the following conditions, which are, in my opinion, elementary.

First, the subject—the history of philosophy as a science—must be precisely defined.

Second, the textbook must be scientific—*i.e.*, based on present-day achievements of dialectical and historical materialism.

Third, it is essential that the exposition of the history of philosophy be a creative and not a scholastic work; it should be directly linked with the tasks of the present, should elucidate them, and should give perspectives for the further development of philosophy.

Fourth, the facts adduced should be fully verified.

Fifth, the style should be clear, precise, and convincing.

I consider that this textbook does not meet these requirements.

Let us begin with the subject of this science.

Comrade Kivenko has pointed out that Comrade Alexandrov does not present a clear idea of the subject of this science, and although the book contains a large number of definitions having individual importance, in that they illuminate only individual aspects of the question, one does not find in the work an exhaustive general definition. That observation is entirely correct. The subject of the history of philosophy as a science is not defined. The definition given on page 14 is not complete. The definition on incorrect. Should one agree with the author that "the history of page 22, italicized, apparently as a basic definition, is essentially

philosophy is the history of the progressive, ascending development of man's knowledge of the surrounding world," it would mean that the subject of the history of philosophy coincides with that of the history of science in general, and in this case philosophy itself would appear as the science of sciences. This conception was long ago rejected by Marxism.

The author's assertion that the history of philosophy is also the history of the rise and development of *many contemporary ideas* is likewise incorrect because the concept "contemporary" is here identified with the concept "scientific," which, naturally, is erroneous. In defining the subject of the history of philosophy it is necessary to proceed from the definition of philosophical science, given by Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin.

"This revolutionary side of Hegel's philosophy was adopted and developed by Marx. Dialectical materialism no longer needs any philosophy standing above the other sciences. Of former philosophy there remains the science of thought and its laws—formal logic and dialectics. And dialectics, as understood by Marx, and in conformity with Hegel, includes what is now called the theory of knowledge, or epistemology, which, too, must regard its subject matter historically, studying and generalizing the origin and development of knowledge, the transition from *non*-knowledge to knowledge."*

Consequently, a scientific history of philosophy is the history of the origin, rise, and development of the scientific materialist world outlook and its laws. Inasmuch as materialism grew and developed in the struggle with idealist currents, the history of philosophy is also the history of the struggle of materialism against idealism.

As to the scientific character of the book from the standpoint of utilizing contemporary attainments of dialectical and historical materialism, in this respect, too, it suffers from many serious inadequacies.

The author describes the history of philosophy and the de-

* V. I. Lenin, *Selected Works,* Vol. XI, p. 17, New York, 1943.

velopment of philosophical ideas and systems as a smooth, evolutionary process through the accumulation of quantitative changes. He creates the impression that Marxism arose simply as the successor to preceding progressive teachings—primarily the teachings of the French materialists, of English political economy, and the idealist school of Hegel.

On page 475 the author states that the philosophical theories formulated before Marx and Engels, although occasionally containing great discoveries, were not fully consistent and scientific in all their conclusions. Such a definition distinguishes Marxism from pre-Marxist philosophical systems only as a theory fully consistent and scientific in all its conclusions. Consequently, the difference between Marxism and pre-Marxist philosophical teachings consists only in that the latter were not fully consistent and scientific; the old philosophers merely "erred."

As you see, it is a question here only of quantitative changes. But that is metaphysics. The rise of Marxism was a genuine discovery, a revolution in philosophy. Like every discovery, like every leap, like every break in continuity, like every transition into a new condition, the rise of Marxism could not have occurred without the previous accumulation of quantitative changes—in this case, the development of philosophy before Marx and Engels. But the author evidently does not understand that Marx and Engels created a new philosophy, differing qualitatively from all antecedent philosophies, however progressive they were. The relationship of Marxist philosophy to all preceding philosophies and the basic change which Marxism effected in philosophy, in transforming it into a science, is well known. All the more strange, therefore, is the fact that the author focuses his attention, not on that which is new and revolutionary in Marxism but on that which unites it with the development of pre-Marxist philosophy. This, notwithstanding the statement of Marx and Engels that their discovery meant the end of the old philosophy.

Evidently the author does not understand the concrete historical process of the development of philosophy.

One of the essential shortcomings of the book, if not the principal one, is its ignoring of the fact that in the course of history not only do views on this or that philosophical question change, but the very range of these questions, the very subject of philosophy, undergoes a constant change, which is in complete conformity with the dialectical nature of human cognition and should be clear to all real dialecticians.

On page 24 of his book, expounding the philosophy of the ancient Greeks, Comrade Alexandrov writes: "Philosophy as an independent sphere of knowledge arose in the slave society of ancient Greece." And further, "Philosophy, arising in the sixth century [B.C.] as a special sphere of knowledge, attained wide dissemination."

But can we speak of the philosophy of the ancient Greeks as a special, differentiated sphere of knowledge? By no means. The philosophical views of the Greeks were so closely interwoven with their natural science and with their political views that we should not, and have no right to, transfer to Greek science our division of the sciences, the classification of the sciences which came later. Essentially, the Greeks knew only one, undifferentiated science, into which there entered also their philosophical conceptions. Whether we take Democritus, Epicurus, or Aristotle—all of them in equal degree confirm the thought of Engels that "the oldest Greek philosophers were at the same time investigators of nature."*

The unique character of the development of philosophy rests in the fact that from it, as the scientific knowledge of nature and society developed, the positive sciences branched off one after another. Consequently, the domain of philosophy was continually reduced on account of the development of the positive sciences. (It should be noted that this process has not ended even up to the

* Frederick Engels, *Dialectics of Nature*, p. 245, New York, 1940.

present time.) This emancipation of the natural and social sciences from the aegis of philosophy constitutes a progressive process, for the natural and social sciences, as well as for philosophy itself.

The creators of the philosophical systems of the past, who laid claim to the knowledge of absolute truth in the ultimate sense, were unable to further the development of the natural sciences, since aspiring to stand above the sciences, they mummified them with their schemes, imposing on living human understanding conclusions dictated, not by real life, but by the requirements of their philosophic system. And so philosophy was transformed into a museum in which were piled the most diverse facts, conclusions, hypotheses, and outright fantasies. If philosophy was none the less able to serve as a means of surveying phenomena, of contemplation, it still was not suitable as an instrument for practical action on the world, as an instrument for understanding the world.

The last system of this kind was the system of Hegel, who attempted to erect a philosophical structure subordinating all other sciences, pressing them into the Procrustean bed of its own categories. Hegel counted on solving all contradictions, but fell into a hopeless contradiction with the dialectical method which he himself had divined but not understood, and hence applied incorrectly.

But:

". . . As soon as we have once realized . . . that the task of philosophy thus stated means nothing but the task that a single philosopher should accomplish that which can only be accomplished by the entire human race in its progressive development —as soon as we realize that, there is an end of all philosophy in the hitherto accepted sense of the word. One leaves alone 'absolute truth,' which is unattainable along this path or by any single individual; instead, one pursues attainable, relative truths along the path of the positive sciences, and the summation of their results by means of dialectical thinking."*

* Frederick Engels, *Ludwig Feuerbach*, p. 25, New York, 1935.

The discovery of Marx and Engels represents the end of the old philosophy, *i.e.*, the end of that philosophy which claimed to give a universal explanation of the world.

Comrade Alexandrov's vague formulations blur the great revolutionary significance of the philosophical discovery of Marx and Engels, since he emphasizes that which connected Marx with the antecedent philosophers, but fails to show that with Marx there begins a completely new period in the history of philosophy—philosophy which for the first time has become science.

Closely connected with this error, we find in Alexandrov's book a non-Marxist treatment of the history of philosophy as the gradual change from one philosophical school to another. The appearance of Marxism as the scientific world outlook of the proletariat ends the old period in the history of philosophy, when philosophy was the occupation of isolated individuals, the possession of philosophical schools consisting of a small number of philosophers and their disciples, detached from life and the people, and alien to the people.

Marxism is not that kind of philosophical school. On the contrary, it supersedes the old philosophy that was the property of a small élite, the aristocracy of the intellect. It marked the beginning of a completely new period in the history of philosophy, when it became the scientific weapon in the hands of the proletarian masses in their struggle for emancipation from capitalism.

Marxist philosophy, as distinguished from preceding philosophical systems, is not a science dominating the other sciences; rather, it is an instrument of scientific investigation, a method, penetrating all natural and social sciences, enriching itself with their attainments in the course of their development. In this sense Marxist philosophy is the most complete and decisive negation of all preceding philosophy. But to negate, as Engels emphasized, does not mean merely to say "no." Negation includes continuity, signifies absorption, the critical reforming and unification in a new and higher synthesis of everything advanced and progressive that has been achieved in the history of human thought.

Hence, it follows that the history of philosophy, inasmuch as there exists the Marxist dialectical method, must include the history of the preparatory development of that method, showing that which conditioned its rise. Alexandrov's book does not give the history of logic and dialectics, does not show the development of the logical categories as the reflection of human practice; because of this the quotation from Lenin in the introduction to the book, to the effect that every category of dialectical logic should be considered a nodal point in the history of human thought, hangs in the air.

Entirely indefensible is the fact that the book brings the history of philosophy only up to the rise of Marxist philosophy, that is, to 1848. Without presenting the history of philosophy during the last hundred years, the work naturally cannot be considered a textbook. Why the author has so pitilessly wronged this period remains a mystery, and no explanation is to be found either in the preface or in the introduction.

Nor is a reason given for the failure to include the history of the development of Russian philosophy. It is not necessary to emphasize that this omission involves principle. Whatever the author's motives for excluding the history of Russian philosophy from a general history of philosophy, its omission objectively means belittling the role of Russian philosophy; it artificially divides the history of philosophy into the history of western European and of Russian philosophy. The author makes no attempt to explain the necessity for such a division. This separation perpetuates the bourgeois division of "western" and "eastern" culture and presents Marxism as a regional western current. On page 6 of the introduction, the author ardently argues the reverse position:

"Without studying diligently and utilizing the profound criticism of the philosophical systems of the past given by the classics of Russian philosophy, it is impossible to achieve a scientific understanding of the development of philosophic thought in western European countries."

Why then did the author fail to adhere to this correct position in his book? This remains absolutely incomprehensible and, taken together with the arbitrary termination at 1848, it produces a vexing impression.

The comrades who spoke in the discussion have also pointed out the gaps in the presentation of the history of the philosophy of the Orient.

It is clear that for this reason as well the book requires radical revision.

Some comrades have indicated that the introduction to the book, which obviously should present the author's credo, correctly defines the tasks and methods of the investigation of the subject, but that the author somehow has not fulfilled his promises. I believe that this criticism is inadequate; for the introduction itself is faulty and cannot stand up against criticism.

I have already mentioned the inexact definition of the subject of the history of philosophy. But that is not all. The introduction contains other theoretical errors. Some comrades have pointed out the strained manner in which the author, dealing with the foundations of the Marxist-Leninist history of philosophy, refers to Chernishevsky, Dobroliubov, and Lomonosov, who are dragged in by the hair and, of course, have no direct relation to the subject. The question, however, involves more than this. The quotations from the works of these great Russian scientists and philosophers were badly selected. The theoretical propositions which they contain are from the Marxist point of view incorrect and, I would add, even dangerous. And I do not in the slightest intend to cast any aspersion on the quoted authors, since the quotations were selected arbitrarily and are related to questions that have nothing in common with the subject with which the author is dealing. The point is that the author refers to Chernishevsky in order to show that the founders of different, although contradictory, philosophic systems must be tolerantly related one to another.

Allow me to cite the quotation from Chernishevsky:

"The continuers of scientific work rise against their prede-

cessors whose work served as the point of departure for their own labors. Thus, Aristotle took a hostile view of Plato, thus Socrates thoroughly humiliated the sophists, whose continuer he was. In modern times there are also many examples of this. But there are happy instances when founders of a new system understand clearly the connection of their judgments with the ideas of their predecessors, and modestly consider themselves their disciples; when in disclosing the inadequacy in the ideas of their predecessors, they at the same time clearly acknowledge how much those ideas contributed to the development of their own. Such was the case, for instance, in the relation of Spinoza to Descartes. To the honor of the founders of modern science, it must be said that they look upon their predecessors with respect and almost filial affection, fully acknowledging the greatness of their genius and the noble character of their teaching, in which they indicate the germs of their own views." (pp. 6-7.)

Inasmuch as the author offers this quotation without reservation, it obviously appears to be his own point of view. If that is so, the author actually takes the position of denying the principle of the party character of philosophy, inherent in Marxism-Leninism. It is well known with what passion and irreconcilability Marxism-Leninism has always conducted the sharpest struggle against all enemies of materialism. In this struggle Marxist-Leninists subject their opponents to ruthless criticism. An example of Bolshevik struggle against the opponents of materialism is Lenin's book, *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism,* in which every word is like a piercing sword, annihilating the opponent. Lenin wrote:

"The genius of Marx and Engels consisted in the very fact that in the course of a long period, *nearly half a century,* they developed materialism, that they further advanced one fundamental trend in philosophy, that they did not confine themselves to reiterating epistemological problems that had already been solved, but consistently applied—and showed *how* to apply—*this same*

materialism in the sphere of the social sciences, mercilessly brushing aside as litter and rubbish the pretentious rigmarole, the innumerable attempts to 'discover' a 'new' line in philosophy, to invent a 'new' trend and so forth. . . .

"And finally, take the various philosophical utterances by Marx in *Capital* and other works, and you will find an *invariable* basic motif, *viz.*, insistence upon *materialism* and contemptuous derision of all obscurantism, of all confusion and all deviations toward *idealism*. *All* Marx's philosophical utterances revolve within these fundamental opposites, and, in the eyes of professorial philosophy, their defect lies in this 'narrowness' and 'one-sidedness.' "*

Lenin, we know, did not spare his opponents. In all attempts to blur and reconcile the contradictions between philosophical tendencies, Lenin always saw the maneuver of reactionary professorial philosophy. How then after that could Comrade Alexandrov appear in his book like a preacher of toothless vegetarianism in relation to philosophical opponents, presenting unqualified tribute to professorial pseudo-objectivism, when Marxism arose, developed, and triumphed in a merciless struggle against all representatives of the idealist tendency?

Comrade Alexandrov does not confine himself to this. He constantly applies his objectivist ideas throughout the book. It is not accidental, therefore, that Comrade Alexandrov, before criticizing some bourgeois philosopher, pays "tribute" to his merits and burns incense to him. Let us take, for example, the teaching of Fourier on the four phases in the development of mankind.

The great achievement of the social philosophy of Fourier, says Comrade Alexandrov,

". . . is his theory of the development of mankind. In its development society passes, according to Fourier, through four phases: (1) ascending disintegration; (2) ascending harmony; (3) descending harmony; (4) descending disintegration. In the

* V. I. Lenin, *Selected Works*, Vol. XI, pp. 386-87.

last stage mankind experiences a period of senility, after which all life on earth comes to an end. Inasmuch as the development of society proceeds independently of human will, a higher stage of development arises just as unfailingly as the change of seasons. From this Fourier drew the conclusion of the inevitable transformation of the bourgeois system into a society in which free and collective labor would prevail. True, Fourier's theory of development of society was limited by the conception of the four phases, but for the period it represented a great step forward." (pp. 353-54.)

There is not a trace of Marxist analysis in this. By comparison with what does the theory of Fourier represent a step forward? If its limitation consisted in that it spoke of four phases of the development of mankind, with the fourth phase constituting descending disintegration, as a result of which all life on earth comes to an end, then how shall we understand the author's criticism of Fourier that his theory of social development is limited within the confines of the four phases, when the fifth phase for mankind could consist only of life in the hereafter?

Comrade Alexandrov finds it possible to say something good about almost every philosopher of the past. The more eminent the bourgeois philosopher, the greater the flattery that is offered him. All of this shows that Comrade Alexandrov, perhaps without being aware of it, is himself a captive of bourgeois historians, who proceed from the assumption that every philosopher is first of all an associate in the profession, and only secondarily an opponent. Such conceptions, if they should take hold among us, would inevitably lead to objectivism, to subservience to bourgeois philosophers and exaggeration of their services, toward depriving our philosophy of its militant offensive spirit. And that would mean departure from the basic principle of materialism—its principle of direction, its partisanship. Well did Lenin teach us that "materialism includes, so to speak, partisanship, *i.e.*, the obligation when

estimating any event to adopt directly and frankly the viewpoint of a definite social group."*

The exposition of philosophical views in Alexandrov's book is abstract, objectivist, neutral. Philosophical schools are placed one after another or one near the other in the book, but are not shown in struggle against one another. That, too, is a "tribute" to the academic professorial "tendency." In this connection, it is apparently not accidental that the author's exposition of the principle of partisanship in philosophy is not satisfactory. The author refers to the philosophy of Hegel as an example of partisanship in philosophy; and the struggle of antagonistic philosophies has for him its illustration in the struggle of the reactionary and progressive principles within Hegel himself. Such a method of demonstration is not only objectivist eclecticism, but it clearly embellishes Hegel, inasmuch as in this way one wants to show that in Hegel's philosophy there is as much progressive as there is reactionary content.

To conclude on this point, I may add that Comrade Alexandrov's method of evaluating various philosophical systems—"along with merits, there are also shortcomings," or "the following theory is also of importance"—is marked by extreme vagueness, is metaphysical, and can only confuse. It is incomprehensible why Comrade Alexandrov chose to pay tribute to the academic scientific traditions of the old bourgeois schools, forgetting the fundamental principle of materialism which demands irreconcilability in the struggle against one's opponents.

A further remark. A critical study of philosophical systems must have an orientation. Philosophical views and ideas long slain and buried should not attract much attention. On the other hand, philosophical systems and ideas still current, which, notwithstanding their reactionary character, are being utilized today by the enemies of Marxism, demand especially sharp criticism. This includes particularly neo-Kantianism, theology, old and new

* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. I, p. 276, Russian ed.

editions of agnosticism, the attempts to smuggle God into modern natural science, and every other cookery that has for its aim the freshening up of stale idealist merchandise for the market. That is the arsenal which the philosopher lackeys of imperialism make use of at the present time in order to bolster their masters in defeat.

The introduction to the book also contains an incorrect treatment of the notions of reactionary and progressive ideas and philosophical systems. The author states that the question of the reactionary or progressive character of one or another idea or philosophical system should be determined on the basis of historical conditions. But, time and again he ignores the established position of Marxism that the very same idea can be reactionary or progressive under different concrete historical conditions. The author, by obscuring this point, opens up a fissure for smuggling in the idealist conception of ideas as independent of history.

While the author correctly notes that the development of philosophical thought in the final analysis is determined by the material conditions of social life and that the development of philosophical thought has only relative independence, he repeatedly violates that basic position of scientific materialism. Time and again he presents the various philosophical systems without relating them to their actual historical environment, and without showing the social-class roots of this or that philosopher. That is the case, for instance, with his exposition of the philosophical views of Socrates, Democritus, Spinoza, Leibnitz, Feuerbach, and others. Such a method is, clearly, not scientific; it justifies the assumption that the author has slipped into the course of treating the development of philosophical ideas as independent of history, a distinguishing characteristic of idealist philosophy.

The failure to show the organic connection of this or that philosophical system with its historical environment is evident even where the author attempts an analysis of that environment. What we have in those instances is a purely mechanical, formal,

and not really organic connection. The sections and chapters dealing with the philosophical views of a particular epoch, and those discussing the historical circumstances, revolve upon parallel planes, while the presentation of the historical data—the link of causation between the basis and superstructure — is unscientific and slipshod. It does not provide material for analysis but rather presents an inadequate frame of reference. Such, for example, is the introduction to Chapter VI, entitled "Eighteenth Century France," which is utterly irrelevant and which in no way elucidates the sources of the ideas of French philosophy in the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries. Consequently, the ideas of the French philosophers lose their connection with the epoch and begin to appear as independent phenomena. Allow me to quote this part:

"Beginning with the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, France following behind England gradually takes the road to bourgeois development, experiencing radical changes for a hundred years in its economy, politics, and ideology. The country, although it was still backward, began to free itself from its feudal inertia. Like many other European states of that time, France entered the period of primary capitalist accumulation.

"The new bourgeois social structure was rapidly taking shape in all spheres of social life, quickly giving rise to a new ideology, a new culture. About that time we witness in France the beginning of a rapid growth of such cities as Paris, Lyons, Marseilles, and Havre, and of the development of a strong merchant fleet. International trading companies arose one after another, and military expeditions were organized which conquered a number of colonies. Trade grew rapidly. In the years 1784-1788 the turnover of external trade reached 1,011,600 livres, exceeding more than four times the trade of 1716-1720. The growth of trade was facilitated by the Treaty of Aachen [Aix-la-Chapelle] (1748) and the Treaty of Paris (1763). Especially significant was the trade in books. Thus, for instance, in 1774 the turnover in the book trade

in France reached 45 million francs, while in England it stood only at 12-13 million francs. France possessed nearly half the gold supply of Europe. At the same time France still remained an agrarian country. The overwhelming majority of the population was agrarian." (pp. 315-16.)

That, of course, is no analysis; it is merely an enumeration of a number of facts set forth without relation to one another, but simply in juxtaposition. It is obvious that from these data as "basis" one cannot derive any characteristic of French philosophy, the development of which appears detached from the historical conditions of the France of that period.

Let us take as a further example the description of the rise of German idealist philosophy. Alexandrov writes:

"Germany in the eighteenth and first half of the nineteenth centuries was a backward country with a reactionary political regime. Feudal-serf and artisan-guild relations prevailed. At the end of the eighteenth century the urban population was less than 25 per cent of the total, while the artisans constituted only four per cent. Corvée, quitrent, serfdom, and guild restrictions hindered the development of the embryonic capitalist relations. Moreover, the country was split up into numerous political segments."

Comrade Alexandrov cites the percentage of urban population in Germany to illustrate the backwardness of that country and the reactionary character of its state and social-political structure. But in that same period the urban population of France was less than 10 per cent of the whole; nevertheless, France was not a backward feudal land, as was Germany, but the center of the bourgeois revolutionary movement in Europe. Consequently, the percentage of urban population itself does not explain anything. More than that, the fact itself must be explained by the concrete historical conditions. This, too, is an example of the inept use of historical material to explain the rise and development of one or another form of ideology.

Alexandrov writes further:

"The most prominent ideologists of the German bourgeoisie of that period—Kant, and later Fichte and Hegel—expressed through their idealist philosophies, in an abstract form, conditioned by the narrowness of German reality, the ideology of the German bourgeoisie of that epoch."

Let us compare this cold, indifferent, objectivist statement of facts, from which it is impossible to understand the causes for the rise of German idealism, with the Marxist analysis of the conditions of that time in Germany, presented in a living, militant style, which stirs and convinces the reader. Here is how Engels characterizes the situation in Germany:

". . . It was all over one living mass of putrefaction and repulsive decay. Nobody felt himself at ease. The trade, commerce, industry and agriculture of the country were reduced to almost nothing; peasantry, tradesmen and manufacturers felt the double pressure of a blood-sucking government and bad trade; the nobility and princes found that their incomes, in spite of the squeezing of their inferiors, could not be made to keep pace with their increasing expenditure; everything was wrong, and a general uneasiness prevailed throughout the country. No education, no means of operating upon the minds of the masses, no free press, no public spirit, not even an extended commerce with other countries—nothing but meanness and selfishness—a mean, sneaking, miserable shopkeeping spirit pervading the whole people. Everything worn out, crumbling down, going fast to ruin, not even the slightest hope of a beneficial change, not even so much strength in the nation as might have sufficed for carrying away the putrid corpses of dead institutions."*

Compare this clear, sharp, exact, profoundly scientific characterization given by Engels with that of Alexandrov and you

* Frederick Engels, "The State of Germany" (original in English), *The Northern Star*, October 25, 1845; Marx-Engels, *Gesamtausgabe*, Erste Abteilung, Band IV, p. 482.

will see how badly Comrade Alexandrov utilizes the material at hand in the inexhaustible wealth left us by the founders of Marxism.

The author has failed to apply the materialist method to the exposition of the history of philosophy. This deprives the book of scientific character, making of it, to a considerable extent, an account of the biographies of the philosophers and their philosophic systems, unrelated to historical conditions. This violates the principle of historical materialism:

All history must be studied afresh, the conditions of existence of the different formations of society must be individually examined before the attempt is made to deduce from them the political, civil-legal, aesthetic, philosophic, religious, etc., notions corresponding to them."*

The author, further, sets forth unclearly and inadequately the purposes of the history of philosophy. Nowhere does he emphasize that one of the fundamental tasks of philosophy and its history is to continue the development of philosophy as a science, to deduce new laws, to verify its propositions in practice, to replace old theses with new ones. The author proceeds chiefly from a pedagogical conception of the history of philosophy, assigning to it a general cultural-educational task. And so he gives to the whole study of the history of philosophy a passive, contemplative, academic character. That, of course, does not correspond to the Marxist-Leninist definition of philosophical science, which, like every science, must continuously be developed, perfected, enriched by new propositions, while it discards the obsolete.

The author concentrates on the scholarly aspects, thus placing limitations on the development of the science, as though Marxism-Leninism had already reached its apex and as though the task of developing our theory were no longer a main task. Such reasoning is inconsistent with the spirit of Marxism-Leninism inasmuch as it introduces the metaphysical idea of Marxism as a completed

* Engels to Conrad Schmidt, August 5, 1890, *Marx-Engels, Selected Correspondence*, p. 473, New York, 1934.

and perfected theory; it can lead only to the drying up of living and inquiring philosophical thought.

Likewise unsatisfactory is the author's treatment of the development of the natural sciences in that period when the history of philosophy could not be separated from the progress of the natural sciences. Thus, Comrade Alexandrov fails to clarify the conditions for the rise and development of scientific materialism on the granite foundation of the achievements of modern natural science.

Alexandrov has managed to sever the history of philosophy from the history of the natural sciences. It is characteristic that the introduction, which sets forth the main premises of the book, fails to mention the interrelation of philosophy and the natural sciences. The author does not refer to the natural sciences even when such silence would seem impossible. Thus, on page 9, he writes: "Lenin in his works, particularly in *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism,* studied the Marxist theory of society in all its aspects and further developed it." In speaking of *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism,* Comrade Alexandrov managed to say nothing about the problems of natural science and its connection with philosophy.

One is struck by the extremely poor and abstract characterization of the level of natural science at various periods. Thus, about the natural science of the ancient Greeks, we read that there took place "the birth of the sciences of nature" (p. 26). About the epoch of the later scholasticism (twelfth and thirteenth centuries) we read that "there appeared many inventions and technical improvements" (p. 120).

Where the author attempts to clarify such vague formulations, we get only loose enumeration of the discoveries. Moreover, the book contains flagrant errors, disclosing an amazing ignorance of the questions of natural science. Of what value, for instance, is the description of the development of science in the epoch of the Renaissance:

"The learned Goerika constructed his famous pneumatic

pump, and the existence of atmospheric pressure which replaced the notion of vacuum, was demonstrated practically, at first through the experiment with hemispheres at Magdeburg. In the course of centuries people argued about the location of the 'center of the world,' and whether our planet was to be considered that center. But then Copernicus made his entrance into science, and later Galileo. The latter proved the existence of spots on the sun and their change of position. He saw in this, and other discoveries, confirmation of the teaching of Copernicus on the heliocentric structure of our solar system. The barometer taught people to forecast the weather. The microscope replaced the system of conjectures regarding the life of the minutest organisms and played a large part in the development of biology. The compass helped Columbus to prove by experience the spherical structure of our planet." (p. 135.)

Nearly every one of these sentences is absurd. How could atmospheric pressure replace the notion of vacuum? Does the existence of atmosphere negate the existence of vacuum? In what way did the movement of the sun spots confirm the teaching of Copernicus?

The idea that the barometer forecasts weather is in the same unscientific vein. Unfortunately, even today people have not yet fully learned how to forecast the weather, as is well known to all of you from the practices of our own Weather Bureau.

Further, can the microscope replace the system of conjecture? And, finally, what is this "spherical structure of our planet"? Until now it has seemed that *spherical* could refer only to shape.

Alexandrov's book is full of such pearls.

But the author is guilty of even more essential errors, touching on principle. He states (page 357) that the way was prepared for the dialectical method by the advances of natural science "as early as the second half of the eighteenth century." This basically contradicts Engels' well-known statement that the dialectical method was prepared for by the discovery of the cellular struc-

ture of organisms, by the theory of the conservation and transformation of energy, by the theory of Darwin. All these discoveries date from the nineteenth century. On this false assumption, the author proceeds to enumerate the discoveries of the eighteenth century and speaks extensively of Galvani, Laplace, and Lyell, but on the three great discoveries indicated by Engels he limits himself to the following:

"Thus, for instance, already during the life of Feuerbach, there was established the cellular theory, the theory of the transformation of energy, and there appeared the theory of Darwin on the origin of species through natural selection." (p. 427.)

Such are the basic weaknesses of the book. I shall not digress upon incidental and secondary weaknesses; neither will I repeat the highly valuable critical remarks from the theoretical and the practical standpoint, which have been made during the discussion.

The conclusion is that the textbook is bad, that it must be basically revised. But such revision means first of all overcoming the false and confused conceptions which are manifestly current among our philosophers, including leading ones. I now pass to the second question, the question of the situation on our philosophical front.

The fact that Comrade Alexandrov's book received recognition by the majority of our leading philosophical workers, that it was presented for the Stalin Prize, that it was recommended as a textbook and received many laudatory reviews, shows that other philosophical workers obviously share Comrade Alexandrov's mistakes. This bespeaks a most unsatisfactory situation on our theoretical front.

The fact that the book did not evoke any considerable protest, that it required the intervention of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, and particularly Comrade Stalin, to expose its inadequacies, shows the absence of developed Bolshevik

criticism and self-criticism on the philosophical front. The lack of creative discussions, of criticism and self-criticism, could not but have a harmful effect upon our scientific work in philosophy. It is known that philosophical works are entirely insufficient in quantity and weak in quality. Monographs and articles on philosophy are a rare occurrence.

Many have spoken here of the need for a philosophical journal. The need for such a journal is questionable. We have not yet forgotten the sad experience with the periodical, *Under the Banner of Marxism*. It seems to me that the present possibilities for publishing original monographs and articles are not utilized adequately.

Comrade Svetlov stated here that the reading public of *The Bolshevik* is not the public for theoretical works of a special character. I think that this is entirely incorrect and proceeds from an obvious underestimation of the high level of our readers and their demands. Such an opinion, it seems to me, comes from a failure to understand that our philosophy is not the property merely of a group of professional philosophers, but belongs to our entire Soviet intelligentsia. There was decidedly nothing bad in the tradition of the advanced Russian magazines of the pre-revolutionary epoch, which published, along with articles on literature and art, scientific works, including philosophical studies. Our magazine, *The Bolshevik*, speaks to a far larger audience than any philosophical journal, and to enclose the creative work of our philosophers in a specialized philosophical journal would, it seems to me, create the danger of narrowing the basis of our philosophical work. Please do not take me for an opponent of a journal. It seems to me that the paucity of philosophical studies in our magazines and in *The Bolshevik* invites us to begin to overcome this weakness in their pages first, especially in the magazines which from time to time even now publish philosophical articles having a scientific and social interest.

Our leading philosophical institute—the Institute of Philos-

ophy of the Academy of Sciences—in my opinion presents a rather unsatisfactory picture, too. It does not gather to itself the workers in the periphery, and, having no connection with them, is therefore not in reality an institution of an all-Union character. Philosophers in the provinces are left on their own, although they represent a great force which unfortunately is not utilized. Philosophical studies, including works submitted for university degrees, turn for their themes toward the past, toward quiet and less responsible historical subjects of the type of: "The Copernican Heresy—Past and Present." This leads toward a certain revival of scholasticism. From this point of view the dispute about Hegel which took place here appears strange. The participants in that dispute forced an open door. The question of Hegel was settled long ago. There is no reason whatsoever to pose it anew. No material was presented here beyond that which has already been analyzed and evaluated. The discussion itself was irritating in its scholasticism and as unproductive as the probings at one time in certain circles into such questions as whether one should cross oneself with two or with three fingers, or whether God can create a stone which he cannot lift, or whether the mother of God was a virgin. Problems of present-day actuality are hardly dealt with at all. All this taken together is pregnant with great dangers, much greater than you imagine. The gravest danger is the fact that some of you have already fallen into the habit of accepting these weaknesses.

Our philosophical work does not show either a militant spirit or a Bolshevik tempo. Considered in that light, some of the erroneous theses of Alexandrov's textbook reflect the lag on the whole philosophical front, thus constituting, not an isolated accidental factor, but a general phenomenon. We have often used in our discussion the term "philosophical front." But where, in actuality, is this front? When we speak of the philosophical front, it immediately suggests an organized detachment of militant philosophers, perfectly equipped with Marxist theory, waging

a determined offensive against hostile ideology abroad and against the survivals of bourgeois ideology in the consciousness of Soviet people within our country—a detachment ceaselessly advancing our science, arming the toilers of our socialist society with the consciousness of the correctness of our path, and with confidence, scientifically grounded, in the ultimate victory of our cause.

But does our philosophical front resemble a real front? It resembles rather a stagnant creek, or a bivouac at some distance from the battlefield. The field has not yet been conquered, for the most part contact has not been established with the enemy, there is no reconnaissance, the weapons are rusting, the soldiers are fighting at their own risk and peril; while the commanders are either intoxicated with past victories, or are debating whether they have sufficient forces for an offensive or should ask for aid from the outside, or are discussing to what extent consciousness can lag behind existence without appearing to lag too far.

This, at a time when our Communist Party urgently needs an upswing of philosophical work. The rapid changes which every new day brings into our socialist life are not generalized by our philosophers, not illuminated from the viewpoint of Marxist dialectics. This only renders more difficult the conditions for the further development of philosophical science. As a result, the development of philosophical thought proceeds to a considerable extent apart from our professional philosophers. This is entirely inadmissible.

Obviously, the cause for the lag on the philosophical front is not connected with any objective condition. The objective conditions are more favorable than ever. The material awaiting scientific analysis and generalization is unlimited. The causes for the lag on the philosophical front must be sought in the subjective sphere. These causes are basically the same as those disclosed by the Central Committee in analyzing the lag in other sectors of the ideological front.

As you will remember, the decisions of the Central Commit-

tee on ideological problems were directed against formalist and apolitical attitudes in literature and art, against the ignoring of present-day themes and withdrawal into the past, against bowing before foreign influences, and for the militant Bolshevik Party-character of literature and art. It is known that many groups of workers on our ideological front have already drawn proper conclusions from the decisions of the Central Committee and have made considerable advances along this path.

But our philosophers have lagged behind. Apparently they have not taken note of the absence of principle and idea-content in philosophical work, of the neglect of present-day themes, the existence of servility and fawning before bourgeois philosophy. Apparently they believe that a turn on the ideological front does not concern them. It is clear now that the turn is necessary.

A considerable share of responsibility for the fact that the philosophical front does not stand in the first ranks of our ideological work rests unfortunately upon Comrade Alexandrov. Regrettably, he does not possess the ability for sharply critical disclosure of the weaknesses of his work. He evidently overestimates his powers and does not rely on the experience and knowledge of the collective body of philosophers. Moreover, he relies too much in his work on a narrow circle of intimate collaborators and admirers. Philosophical activity has somehow been monopolized by a small group of philosophers, while a larger number, especially in the provinces, have not been brought into the work of leadership.

Thus, normal relationships among philosophers have been destroyed.

It is clear that the creation of such a work as a textbook on the history of philosophy is beyond the capacity of one man and that Comrade Alexandrov from the very beginning should have drawn upon a wide circle of authors—dialectical materialists, historical materialists, historians, natural scientists, and economists. In thus failing to rely upon a large group of competent people,

Comrade Alexandrov chose a poor method of preparing his book.

This fault must be corrected. Philosophical knowledge, naturally, is the property of the collective body of Soviet philosophers. The method of drawing in a large number of authors is now being applied to the editing of the textbook on political economy which should be ready in the near future. Into this work there have been drawn wide circles, not only of economists, but also of historians and philosophers. Such a method of creative work is the most reliable. This implies also another idea—that of uniting the efforts of ideological workers in various fields, who at present have insufficient contact with each other, for the solution of large problems of general scientific significance. Thus we secure reciprocal activity among the workers in various branches of ideology and are assured that we will advance, not helter-skelter, but in an organized unified manner, and consequently with the greatest guarantee of success.

What are the roots of the subjective errors of a number of leading workers on the philosophical front? Why did the representatives of the older generation of philosophers in the course of the discussion justly reproach some of the young philosophers for their premature senility, for their lack of militant tone, of combativeness? Obviously, there can be only one answer to this question—insufficient knowledge of the fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism and the presence of remnants of the influence of bourgeois ideology. This expresses itself also in the fact that many of our workers still do not understand that Marxism-Leninism is a living, creative theory, continuously developing, continuously enriching itself on the basis of the experience of socialist construction and the achievements of contemporary natural science. Such underestimation of this living revolutionary aspect of our theory cannot but lead to the abasement of philosophy and its role.

Precisely in this lack of militancy and fighting spirit we must look for the reasons why some of our philosophers fear to apply themselves to new problems—to present-day questions, to the solu-

tion of problems which are daily posed by practice, and to which philosophy is obligated to provide an answer. It is time to advance more courageously the theory of Soviet society, of the Soviet state, of contemporary natural science, of ethics and esthetics. It is necessary to put an end to a cowardice alien to Bolshevism. To permit a standstill in the development of theory means to dry up our philosophy, to deprive it of its most valuable feature—its capacity for development—and to transform it into a dead, barren dogma.

The question of Bolshevik criticism and self-criticism is for our philosophers not only a practical but a profoundly theoretical matter.

Since, as dialectics teaches us, the inner content of the process of development is the struggle of opposites, the struggle between the old and the new, between the dying and the rising, between the decaying and the developing, our Soviet philosophy must show how that law of dialectics operates in socialist society and what are the specific characteristics of its operation. We know that in a society divided into classes that law operates otherwise than in our Soviet society. Here is a broad field for scientific investigation, and none of our philosophers has cultivated that field. This, notwithstanding the fact that our party long ago discovered and placed at the service of socialism that particular form of revealing and overcoming the contradictions of socialist society (such contradictions exist and philosophy cannot avoid dealing with them)—that particular form of struggle between the old and the new, between the dying and the rising, in our Soviet society, which is known as criticism and self-criticism.

In our Soviet society, where antagonistic classes have been liquidated, the struggle between the old and the new, and consequently the development from the lower to the higher, proceeds not in the form of struggle between antagonistic classes and of cataclysms, as is the case under capitalism, but in the form of criticism and self-criticism, which is the real motive force of our

development, a powerful instrument in the hands of the Communist Party. This is incontestably a new aspect of movement, a new type of development, a new dialectical law.

Marx stated that earlier philosophers only explained the world, while the task today is to change the world. We have changed the old world and built a new one, but our philosophers, unfortunately, do not adequately explain this new world, nor do they adequately participate in transforming it. In the discussion there were several attempts, as it were "theoretically," to explain the causes of that lag. It was stated, for instance, that the philosophers worked too long as commentators, and for this reason did not pass in due time to original monographs. This explanation may sound well, but it is not convincing. Of course, the philosophers must now place creative work in the forefront, but that does not mean that the work of commentary, or rather of popularization, should be given up. Our people need this equally as much.

We must now quickly make up for lost time. The problems do not wait. The brilliant victory of socialism achieved in the Great Patriotic War, which was at the same time a brilliant victory for Marxism, is like a bone in the throat of the imperialists. Today the center of the struggle against Marxism has shifted to America and England. All the forces of obscurantism and reaction have now been placed at the service of the struggle against Marxism. Brought out anew and placed at the service of bourgeois philosophy are the instruments of atom-dollar democracy, the outworn armor of obscurantism and clericalism: the Vatican and racist theory, rabid nationalism and decayed idealist philosophy, the mercenary yellow press and depraved bourgeois art. But apparently all these do not suffice. Today under the banner of "ideological" struggle against Marxism large reserves are being mobilized. Gangsters, pimps, spies, and criminal elements are recruited. Let me take at random a recent example. As was reported a few days ago in *Izvestia,* the journal *Les Temps Modernes,* edited by the existentialist Sartre, lauds as some new revelation

a book by the writer Jean Genêt, *The Diary of a Thief,* which opens with the words: "Treason, theft, and homosexuality—these will be my key topics. There exists an organic connection between my taste for treason, the occupation of the thief, and my amorous adventures." The author manifestly knows his business. The plays of this Jean Genêt are presented with much glitter on the Parisian stage and Jean Genêt himself is showered with invitations to visit America. Such is the "last word" of bourgeois philosophy.

But the experience of our victory over fascism has already shown into what a blind alley idealist philosophy has led whole nations. Now it appears in its new, repulsively ugly character which reflects the whole depth, baseness, and loathsomeness of bourgeois decadence. Pimps and depraved criminals as philosophers—this is indeed the limit of decay and ruin. Nevertheless, these forces still have life, are still capable of poisoning the consciousness of the masses.

Contemporary bourgeois science supplies clericalism, supplies fideism, with new arguments which must be mercilessly exposed. We can take as an example the English astronomer Eddington's theory of the physical constants of the world, which leads directly to the Pythagorean mysticism of numbers and, from mathematical formulae, deduces such "essential constants" of the world as the apocalyptic number 666, etc. Many followers of Einstein, in their failure to understand the dialectical process of knowledge, the relationship of absolute and relative truth, transpose the results of the study of the laws of motion of the finite, limited sphere of the universe to the whole infinite universe and arrive at the idea of the finite nature of the world, its limitedness in time and space. The astronomer Milne has even "calculated" that the world was created two billion years ago. It would probably be correct to apply to these English scientists the words of their great countryman, the philosopher Bacon, about those who turn the impotence of their science into a libel against nature.

In like measure, the Kantian subterfuges of latter-day bour-

geois atomic physicists lead them to deductions on the "free will" of the electron and to attempts to represent matter as only some combination of waves and other such nonsense.

Here is a colossal field of activity for our philosophers, who should analyze and generalize the results of contemporary natural science, remembering the advice of Engels that materialism "with each epoch-making discovery even in the sphere of natural science . . . has to change its form. . . . "*

Upon whom, if not upon us—the land of victorious Marxism and its philosophers—devolves the task of heading the struggle against corrupt and base bourgeois ideology? Who if not we should strike crushing blows against it?

From the ashes of the war have arisen the new democracies and the national liberation movement of the colonial peoples. Socialism is on the order of the day in the life of the peoples. Who if not we—the land of victorious socialism and its philosophers—should help our friends and brothers beyond our borders to illuminate their struggle for a new society with the light of scientific socialist understanding? Who if not we should enlighten them and arm them with the ideological weapon of Marxism?

In our country we have the vast expansion of socialist economy and culture. The steadfast growth of the socialist understanding of the masses presents ever greater demands on our ideological work. What is taking place is a broad assault upon the vestiges of capitalism in the consciousness of people. Who but our philosophers should head the ranks of the workers on the ideological front, applying in full measure the Marxist theory of knowledge in generalizing the vast experience of socialist construction and in solving the new tasks of socialism!

In the face of these great tasks one might ask: Are our philosophers capable of taking these new burdens upon their shoulders? Is there enough powder in our philosophical powder-horns? Has not our philosophical power weakened? Are our scientific

* Frederick Engels, *Ludwig Feuerbach*, p. 36.

philosophical cadres capable, with their own inner strength, of overcoming the defects of their development and reconstructing their work anew? There can be but one answer to this question. The philosophical discussion has shown that we have these forces, that they are by no means small, that they are capable of exposing their errors in order to overcome them. We need only more confidence in our forces, more testing of our forces in active battles, in posing and solving the burning present-day problems. It is time to put an end to the nonmilitant tempo of our work, to shake off the old Adam and to begin to work as Marx, Engels, Lenin worked, as Stalin works.

As you may remember, Engels, in his time, greeted the appearance of a Marxist pamphlet in 2,000 or 3,000 copies and characterized this as a great political event of vast significance. From such a fact, insignificant by our standards, Engels drew the conclusion that Marxist philosophy had taken deep root in the working class. What are we to say of the penetration of Marxist philosophy into broad layers of our people; what would Marx and Engels have said if they knew that in our country philosophical works are distributed among the people in tens of millions of copies? This is a real triumph of Marxism, and it is a living testimony to the fact that the great teachings of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin have become in our land the teaching of the entire people.

On this foundation, which has no equal in the world, our philosophy should flourish. May you be worthy of our epoch, the epoch of Lenin and Stalin, the epoch of our people, our victorious people!

MUSIC

First of all, permit me to make a few remarks on the character of the discussion which has unfolded here.

The general appraisal of the situation in the realm of musical creation is that it is none too good. True, the speakers have expressed various shades of opinion. Some have said that things were particularly bad organizationally, and called attention to the unsatisfactory state of criticism and self-criticism and the incorrect management of musical affairs, especially in the Composers' Union. Others, while agreeing with the criticism of organizational methods and regime, have stressed the unsatisfactory situation with regard to the ideological trend of Soviet music. Still others have tried to minimize the urgency of the matter, or to pass over unpleasant questions in silence. However, for all these shades of difference in appraising the present situation, the gist of the discussion has been that things are not so good.

I have no intention of introducing dissonance or atonality into this appraisal, although "atonality" is now the fashion. Things really are in a bad way—worse even, in my opinion, than was stated here. I have no intention of denying the achievements of Soviet music. Of course, there have been achievements. But if we stop to think what achievements we could and should have had in Soviet music, if, also, we compare our successes in music with our achievements in other ideological spheres, we have to admit that the former are quite insignificant. In the case of literature, for instance, some of the big journals are at present hard pressed to find space in their coming numbers for all the material, perfectly suitable for publication, that has accumulated in their

editorial folders. I hardly think any of the speakers could boast of such an "overflow" in music. There has been progress in the realm of the cinema and the theater, but in the realm of music there has not been any perceptible progress.

Music has lagged behind—such is the gist of all the speeches made here. The situation in both the Composers' Union and the Committee on the Arts is decidedly abnormal. Little has been said about the Committee on the Arts; it has been insufficiently criticized. At any rate, the Composers' Union has been hauled over the coals at much greater length and more sharply. Yet the Committee on the Arts has played a very unseemly role. While pretending to stand fast for the realistic trend in music, the Committee has done its best to foster the formalistic trend, raising its exponents on high and so helping to disorganize and introduce ideological confusion into our composers' ranks. Itself ignorant and incompetent on problems of music, the Committee has drifted along with the current, in the wake of the formalistically inclined composers.

The Organizational Committee of the Composers' Union has been compared here to a monastery or a body of generals without an army. Both these statements can well go unchallenged. If the destiny of Soviet music is becoming the prerogative of an extremely narrow circle of prominent composers and critics (the latter chosen on the basis of how fervently they support their chiefs, thus creating a suffocating atmosphere of adulation around these composers), if creative discussion is absent, if the stuffy, musty practice of classifying composers as first- and second-rate has become firmly established in the Composers' Union, if the dominant style of its creative meetings is polite silence or reverent praise for the chosen few, if the leadership of the Organizational Committee keeps aloof from the mass of composers—then it cannot be denied that the situation on our musical "Mount Olympus" has indeed grown alarming.

Special mention must be made of the perverse trend of

criticism and the absence of creative discussion in the Composers' Union. When there is no creative discussion, no criticism and self-criticism, there can be no progress either. Creative discussion and objective, independent criticism—today this is axiomatic—are the most important prerequisites of creative growth. When criticism and creative discussion are lacking, the wellsprings of growth run dry and a hothouse atmosphere of stuffiness and stagnation is created. Yet our composers could need nothing less than this. No wonder people participating in a discussion on musical problems for the first time find it strange that such irreconcilable contradictions can exist side by side as the very conservative organizational regime of the Composers' Union and the supposedly ultraprogressive views (in the ideological, creative sphere) of its present leaders. We know that the leadership of the union has inscribed such highly promising slogans on its banner as a call for innovations, the rejection of outworn tradition, as the fight against "epigonism," and so on. But it is strange that the very people who wish to appear extremely radical and even arch-revolutionary in the matter of a creative platform, who pose as iconoclasts—that these same people prove extremely backward and unamenable to any novelty and change in so far as their participation in the activities of the Composers' Union is concerned. In their methods of work and leadership they are conservative, and in organizational questions often gladly subservient to bad traditions and despised "epigonism," cultivating the stalest and moldiest methods of leadership in the life and activity of their creative organization.

It is easy to explain why this is so. If bombastic talk about an allegedly new trend in Soviet music is accompanied by actions which by no means can be called progressive, this in itself warrants legitimate doubt as to the progressive nature of the ideological creative tenets being implanted by such reactionary methods.

The organizational aspect of any matter is very important,

as you all know quite well. The creative organizations of our composers and musicians apparently need a good airing. A fresh breeze is needed to clear the atmosphere in these organizations, so that normal conditions for creative work may be established.

However, the organizational question, important as it is, is not the basic question. The basic question is the trend of Soviet music. In the course it has taken, our discussion here has somewhat slurred over this question, and that is not right. Just as in music you seek the lucid musical phrase, so in the question of the trend of musical development we must also achieve clarity. To the question, "Is it a matter of two trends in music?" the discussion has given a perfectly definite answer: Yes, that is precisely the question. Although some comrades have avoided calling things by their right names, and there has been quite a bit of shadow-boxing, it is clear that a struggle is taking place between the trends and that attempts are being made to replace one trend by another.

Some of the comrades maintained that there are no grounds for bringing up the question of a struggle between trends, that no changes of a qualitative nature have taken place, and that all that is happening is the further development of the heritage of the classical school under Soviet conditions. They said that no revision of the principles of classical music is being made, and that consequently there was nothing to argue or get excited about. They made it seem that it was merely a question of correcting something here and there, of isolated cases of absorption with technique alone, of isolated naturalistic mistakes, and so on. Since there has been this kind of camouflage, the question of the fight between the two trends needs fuller treatment. Of course, it is not merely a question of making a few corrections, of a leak in the conservatory roof, and the need to mend it, on which need we cannot but agree with Comrade Shebalin. It is not only in the conservatory roof that there is a

hole; that can be readily fixed. There is a much bigger hole in the foundations of Soviet music. There cannot be two opinions on this score. All the speakers have pointed out that a definite group of composers is now playing the leading role in the creative activity of the Composers' Union. The composers in question are Comrades Shostakovich, Prokofieff, Miaskovsky, Khachaturian, Popov, Kabalevsky, Shebalin. Is there anyone else you think should be added to this group?

In speaking of the leading group which holds all the strings and keys of the "Executive Committee on Creative Work," these are the names most frequently mentioned. Let us consider these comrades the leading figures in the formalistic trend in music. And this trend is fundamentally wrong.

The comrades just named have also spoken here, and declared that they too are dissatisfied with the absence of a critical atmosphere in the Composers' Union, with their being praised too highly, that they are aware of a certain weakening of their contact with the main bulk of composers, and with the public, and so on. But to come out with all these truths, it was hardly necessary to wait for a not quite or not completely successful opera. These confessions might have been made much earlier. The point is that for the leading group of our formalistically inclined composers the regime which has existed until now in our musical organizations was, to put it mildly, "not altogether unpleasant." It took a meeting in the Central Committee of the Communist Party for the comrades to discover the fact that this regime has its negative sides. However that may be, until this meeting of the Central Committee, none of them thought of changing the state of affairs in the Composers' Union.

The forces of "traditionalism" and "epigonism" functioned smoothly. It has been said here that the time has come for a radical change. It is impossible not to concede this. Inasmuch as the commanding posts in Soviet music are held by the comrades named, inasmuch as it has been proven that attempts to

criticize them would have resulted, as Comrade Zakharov put it, in an explosion, in the immediate mobilization of all forces against this criticism, we must conclude that it was precisely these comrades who created that same unbearable hot-house atmosphere of stagnation and back-slapping that they are now inclined to declare undesirable.

The leaders of the Composers' Union alleged here that there is no oligarchy in the Composers' Union. If so, the question arises: Why do they hold so tenaciously to the leading posts in the union? Do they like domination for the sake of domination? In other words, have people taken power into their hands because they enjoy power for the sake of power, because the administrative itch got the better of them, and people simply want to lord it over others, like Vladimir Galitsky in *Prince Igor?* Or is this domination exercised for the sake of a definite trend in music? I think we can discard the first hypothesis; the second is valid. We have no reason to say that leadership in the union is not connected with a trend. No such charge can be made, for instance, against Shostakovich. *It follows, then, that it was domination for the sake of the trend.*

And, indeed, we are faced with a very acute, although outwardly concealed struggle between two trends in Soviet music. One trend represents the healthy, progressive principle in Soviet music, based upon recognition of the tremendous role of the classical heritage, and, in particular, the traditions of the Russian musical school, upon the combination of lofty idea content in music, its truthfulness and realism, with profound, organic ties with the people and their music and songs—all this combined with a high degree of professional mastery. The other trend is that of a formalism alien to Soviet art; it is marked by rejection of the classical heritage under the cover of apparent novelty, by rejection of popular music, by rejection of service to the people, all for the sake of catering to the highly individualistic emotions of a small group of select esthetes.

This latter trend substitutes music that is false, vulgar, and often simply pathological, for natural, beautiful, human music. At the same time it is typical of this latter trend that it avoids frontal attacks, preferring to conceal its revisionist activity behind a mask of seeming agreement with the fundamental tenets of socialist realism. Such "contraband" methods are not, of course, new. There are plenty of examples in history of revisionism pretending agreement with the fundamental tenets of the teaching that is being revised. All the more necessary, then, to expose the true essence of this latter trend, and the harm it is doing to the development of Soviet music.

Let us examine the question of attitude toward the classical heritage, for instance. Swear as the above-mentioned composers may that they stand with both feet on the soil of the classical heritage, there is nothing to prove that the adherents of the formalistic school are perpetuating and developing the traditions of classical music. Any listener will tell you that the work of the Soviet composers of the formalistic trend is totally unlike classical music. Classical music is characterized by its truthfulness and realism, by the ability to attain unity of brilliant artistic form with profound content, to combine great mastery with simplicity and comprehensibility. Classical music in general, and Russian classical music in particular, are strangers to formalism and crude naturalism. They are marked by lofty idea content, based upon recognition of the musical art of the people as the wellspring of classical music, by profound respect and love for the people, their music and songs.

What a step away from the highroad of our musical development our formalists take when, undermining the bases of real music, they compose false, ugly music, filled with idealistic emotions, alien to the broad masses of the people, and addressed not to the millions of Soviet people, but to the few, to a score or more chosen ones, to the "elite"! How this differs from Glinka, Tschaikovsky, Rimsky-Korsakov, Dargomyzhsky, and Mussorg-

sky, who looked upon their ability to express the spirit and character of the people in their works as the foundation of their artistic growth! The neglect of the demands of the people, their spirit, and their art means that the formalistic trend in music is definitely antipopular in character.

It is a simply terrible thing if the "theory" that "we will be understood fifty or a hundred years hence," that "our contemporaries may not understand us, but posterity will" is current among a certain section of Soviet composers. If this attitude has become habitual, it is a very dangerous habit.

This type of reasoning means isolation from the people. If I —writer, artist, man of letters, or Communist Party worker— cannot count upon being understood by my contemporaries, for whom do I live and work? This can only lead to spiritual vacuity, to a blind alley. It is said that certain sycophantic musical critics are whispering this kind of "consolation" to our composers especially now. But can composers listen to this advice coolly without feeling at least like dragging such advisers before a court of honor?

Remember how the classical composers felt about the needs of the people. We have begun to forget in what striking language the composers of the "Big Five,"* and the great music critic Stasov, who was affiliated with them, spoke of the popular element in music. We have begun to forget Glinka's wonderful words about the ties between the people and the artist: "Music is created by the people and we artists only arrange it." We forget that the great master did not stand aloof from any genres if these genres helped to bring music closer to the broad masses of people. You, on the other hand, hold aloof even from such a genre as the opera; you regard the opera as secondary, opposing it to instrumental symphonic music, to say nothing of the fact that you look down on song, choral and concert music; you consider it a dis-

* The "Big Five"—a group of Russian composers who emerged in the 1860's: Balakirev, Mussorgsky, Borodin, Rimski-Korsakov, Cui.—*Ed.*

grace to stoop to it and to satisfy the demands of the people. Yet Mussorgsky adapted the music of the *hopak*, while Glinka used the *komarinsky* for one of his finest compositions. Evidently, we shall have to admit that the landlord Glinka, the official Serov, and the aristocrat Stasov were more democratic than you. This is paradoxical, but it is a fact. Solemn vows that you are all for popular music are not enough. If you are, why do you make so little use of folk melodies in your musical works? Why are the defects, which were criticized long ago by Serov, when he said that "learned," that is, professional, music was developing parallel with and independent of folk music, repeating themselves? Can we really say that our instrumental symphonic music is developing in close interaction with folk music—be it song, concert, or choral music? No, we cannot say that. On the contrary, a gulf has unquestionably opened up here as the result of the underestimation of folk music by our symphonic composers. Let me remind you of how Serov defined his attitude to folk music. I am referring to his article *The Music of South Russian Songs* in which he said:

"Folk songs, as musical organisms, are by no means the work of individual musical talents, but the productions of a whole nation; their entire structure distinguishes them from the artificial music written in conscious imitation of models, coming out of schools, science, routine, and reflection. They are flowers that grow naturally in a given locale, that have appeared in the world of themselves and sprung to full beauty without the least thought of authorship or composition, and consequently, with little resemblance to the hothouse products of learned compositional activity. That is why the naïveté of creation, and the lofty wisdom of simplicity (as Gogol aptly expressed it in *Dead Souls*) which is the main charm and main secret of every artistic work, are most strikingly manifest in them.

"Just as the lily, in its glorious and chaste beauty, eclipses the brilliance of brocades and precious stones, so folk music, thanks

to its very childlike simplicity, is a thousand times richer and stronger than all the artifices of the learning taught by pedants in the conservatories and musical academies."*

How well, truly, and powerfully said! How aptly he expressed the fundamental principle that the development of music must take place on the basis of interaction, of enrichment of "learned" music by folk music! This subject has almost entirely disappeared from our present theoretical and critical articles. This again confirms the danger of the isolation of our foremost modern composers from the people, in view of their rejection of such a wonderful source of art as the folk song and folk melody. Such a gulf must not exist in Soviet music.

Allow me to pass on to the question of the relation of national music to foreign music. The comrades have correctly noted here that there is a predilection for and even a certain orientation toward modern western bourgeois music, toward decadent music, and that this, too, is one of the underlying features of the formalistic trend in Soviet music.

The relationship of Russian music to the music of western Europe was well defined by Stasov when he wrote, in his article, *Some Hindrances to the New Russian Art:*

"It would be ridiculous to deny science or knowledge in any realm, music included, but only the new Russian musicians, who do not have behind them a historical background inherited from previous centuries, from a long chain of scholastic periods in Europe, can look science bravely in the eye; they respect it, and enjoy the benefits it confers, but without overdoing it, without being obsequious about it. They deny the necessity of its dry, pedantic excesses, they deny its gymnastic diversions, to which thousands of people in Europe attach such importance, and do not believe that it is necessary to spend years on end doing nothing but humbly worshiping its sacred mysteries."†

* A. N. Serov, *Critical Articles,* Vol. III, 1931, Russian edition.
† V. V. Stasov, *Selected Works,* Vol. II, p. 233, Russian edition.

That was how Stasov spoke of western European classical music. As for modern bourgeois music, which has reached a state of decline and degeneration, there is nothing to take from it. All the more absurd and ridiculous then is this manifestation of subservience to such music.

If we examine the history of our Russian, and then Soviet music, we draw the conclusion that it developed and became a powerful force precisely because it succeeded in standing on its own feet and finding its own roads of development, which made it possible to reveal the rich inner world of our people. Those who think that the flowering of national music, whether Russian or that of the other peoples of the Soviet Union, means minimizing the significance of internationalism in art, are deeply mistaken. Internationalism in art arises not as a result of minimizing or impoverishing national art. On the contrary, internationalism arises from the very flowering of national art. To forget this truth is to lose sight of the guiding line, to lose one's own face, to become a homeless cosmopolitan. Only the nation which has its own highly developed musical culture can appreciate the music of other peoples. One cannot be an internationalist in music, or in any other realm, without being at the same time a genuine patriot of one's own country. If internationalism is founded on respect for other peoples, one cannot be an internationalist without respecting and loving one's own people.

The whole experience of the U.S.S.R. confirms this. It follows then that internationalism in music, respect for the art of other peoples, is developing in our country on the basis of the enrichment and development of national musical art, on the basis of such a flowering of this art that it has something to share with other peoples, and not on the basis of the impoverishment of national art, of blind imitation of foreign models and the erasing of the distinctive features of the national character in music. None of this should be forgotten when speaking of the relationship of Soviet music to foreign music.

Furthermore, in speaking of the departure of the formalistic trend from the principles of the classical heritage, we must not omit to mention the diminution of the role of *program music.* This has already been touched upon here, but the kernel of the problem has not been properly revealed. It is quite obvious that there is less program music, or almost none at all. Things have reached the point where the content of a new musical composition has to be interpreted after its performance. A new profession has come into being—that of the critics, friends of the composers, who try on the basis of personal intuition to decipher *post factum* the content of musical works already performed, the hazy idea of which, it is said, is not quite clear even to their composers.

The neglect of program music is also a retreat from progressive traditions. As you know, Russian classical music was, as a rule, program music.

The question of novelty has also come up here. The point was made that novelty was practically the principal distinguishing feature of the formalistic trend. But novelty is not an end in itself; the new must be better than the old, otherwise it is senseless. It seems to me that the followers of the formalistic school use this word chiefly to popularize bad music. We cannot call every attempt at originality, every distortion and trick in music, an innovation. Unless we merely wish to bandy words, we must give a clear account of what in the old should be abandoned, and precisely what new goal we should try to reach. Without that, the word novelty can mean only one thing and that is revision of the foundations of music. It can only mean breaking away from laws and standards of music which cannot be abandoned. That these cannot be abandoned does not imply conservatism; that they are abandoned does not mean novelty. Novelty does not always coincide with progress. Many young musicians are led astray by this bugbear of novelty. They are told that unless they are original, new—they are the slaves of conservative traditions. But since novelty is not the equivalent of progress, spread-

ing such ideas is tantamount to sowing abysmal confusion, if not to plain deceit.

Furthermore, the "novelty" of the formalists is by no means new, since this "novelty" smacks of the modern decadent bourgeois music of Europe and America. Here is where the real "epigonists" are to be found!

At one time, you remember, elementary and secondary schools went in for the "laboratory brigade method" and the "Dalton Plan," which reduced the role of the teacher in the schools to a minimum and gave each pupil the right to set the theme of the classwork at the beginning of each lesson. On arriving in the classroom, the teacher would ask the pupils: "What shall we study today?" The pupils would reply: "Tell us about the Arctic," "Tell us about the Antarctic," "Tell us about Chapayev," "Tell us about Dneprostroi." The teacher had to comply with all these demands. This was called the "laboratory brigade method," but actually it amounted to turning the organization of schooling completely topsy-turvy. The pupils became the directing force, and the teacher followed their lead. Once we had "loose-leaf textbooks," and the five-point system of marks was abandoned. All these things were novelties, but I ask you, did these novelties stand for progress?

The Communist Party canceled all these "novelties," as you know. Why? Because these "novelties," very "leftist" in form, were in actual fact extremely reactionary and led to the nullification of the school.

Or take this example. An Academy of Fine Arts was organized not so long ago. Painting is your sister, one of the muses. At one time, as you know, bourgeois influences were very strong in painting. They cropped up time and again under the most "leftist" flags, giving themselves such tags as futurism, cubism, modernism; "stagnant academicism" was "overthrown," and novelty proclaimed. This novelty expressed itself in insane carryings-on: for instance, a girl was depicted with one head on forty legs,

with one eye turned toward us, and the other toward the North Pole.

How did all this end? In the complete crash of the "new trend." The Communist Party fully restored the significance of the classical heritage of Repin, Briullov, Vereshchagin, Vasnetsov, and Surikov. Were we right in reinstating the treasures of classical painting, and routing the liquidators of painting?

Would not the continued existence of such "schools" have meant the nullification of painting? Did the Central Committee act "conservatively," was it under the influence of "traditionalism," of "epigonism" and so on, when it defended the classical heritage in painting? This is sheer nonsense!

The same applies to music. We do not affirm that the classical heritage is the absolute acme of musical culture. To say so would mean admitting that progress ended with the classics. But the classical models do remain unexcelled to this day. This means that we must learn and learn, that we must take from the classical musical heritage all that is best in it, all that is essential to the further development of Soviet music.

There is much empty talk about "epigonism" and the like; these words are used to intimidate the young and keep them from learning from the classics. The slogan is thrown out that the classics must be outstripped. That would be fine, of course. But to outstrip the classics they must first be overtaken, but you rule out the stage of "overtaking" as if you had already passed it. But to speak frankly and express the thoughts that are in the minds of the Soviet spectator and listener, it would not be so bad if we had more works now that resembled the classics in content and form, in grace, in beauty and musicality. If that is "epigonism," why, there's no disgrace, perhaps, in being that kind of an "epigonist"!

A word about naturalistic distortions. It was made clear here that the natural, healthy standards of music have been increasingly discarded. Elements of crude naturalism are being used

more and more in our music. Here is what Serov wrote ninety years ago, to warn his contemporaries against preoccupation with crude naturalism:

"In nature there is a sea of sound of the most diverse kind and quality, but all these sounds, known as noise, thunder, roaring, splitting, splashing, rumbling, droning, pealing, howling, creaking, whistling, murmuring, whispering, rustling, hissing, rippling, and so on, and others not denoted in speech . . . all these sounds either do not form the material of musical language, or enter it only as exceptions (the sound of bells, cymbals, triangles—the noise of drums, tambourines, etc.). The proper material of music is sound of a special quality. . . ."*

Is it not true, is it not correct that the noise of cymbals and drums should be the exception in musical composition and not the rule? Is it not clear that not every natural sound ought to be incorporated in musical composition? And yet how much inexcusable indulgence in vulgar naturalism, unquestionably a step backward, we find among us!

It must be frankly stated that quite a few works by modern composers are so saturated with naturalistic sounds that they make one think of a dentist's drill, if you will pardon the unesthetic comparison, or of a musical murder van. You have got to realize that they are simply impossible to listen to!

With this music we begin to pass beyond the confines of the rational, beyond the confines not only of normal human emotions, but also of normal human reason. True, there are fashionable theories nowadays which assert that the pathological state of man is a higher form, and that the schizophrenic and the paranoiac in their hallucinations can reach spiritual heights, which the ordinary man can never reach in his normal state. These "theories" are not accidental, of course. They are very characteristic of the epoch of decay and decomposition of bourgeois culture. But let us leave all these "refinements" to the insane. Let us

* N. Serov, *op. cit.* Vol. I, p. 504.

demand that our composers give us normal, human music.

What has been the result of forgetting the laws and canons on which musical creation is based? Music has wreaked its own vengeance on those who have tried to distort its nature. When music ceases to have content, to be highly artistic, when it becomes ungraceful, ugly, vulgar, it ceases to satisfy the needs for which it exists, it ceases to be itself.

Perhaps you are surprised that the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party is demanding that music be beautiful and graceful? What is this new idea? No, this was no slip of the tongue. We declare that we stand for beautiful, graceful music, for music capable of satisfying the esthetic demands and artistic tastes of the Soviet people. These demands and tastes have grown and developed immeasurably. The people appraise the value of a musical composition by how deeply it reflects the spirit of our day, the spirit of our people, by how comprehensible it is to the broad masses. What is genius in music? It is certainly not that which can be understood only by some one person or by a small group of esthetic gourmets. A musical composition is all the more a work of genius, the deeper and richer its content, the greater mastery it displays, the more people it reaches, the more people it is capable of inspiring. Not everything that is comprehensible is a work of genius, but every genuine work of genius is comprehensible, and it is all the more a work of genius, the more comprehensible it is to the broad masses of people.

A. N. Serov was absolutely right when he said: "Time is powerless against the truly beautiful in art—otherwise we would not still admire Homer, Dante, and Shakespeare, or Raphael, Titian, and Poussain, or Palestrina, Handel, and Gluck."*

The more chords of the human soul it moves to response, the greater a musical composition. From the standpoint of his musical perception, man is a wonderfully rich membrane, a radio receiver functioning on thousands of wave lengths—no doubt one

* N. Serov, *op. cit.* Vol. II, p. 1036.

could find a better comparison—so that for him the sounding of a single note, a single chord, a single emotion is not enough.

If the composer can make only one or several human chords vibrate, it is not enough, for modern man—especially our Soviet man—is a very complex perceptive being. Even Glinka, Tschaikovsky, and Serov wrote of the highly developed musical feeling of the Russian people, but at the time when they wrote of this the Russian people had not yet acquired an extensive knowledge of classical music. During the years of Soviet government the musical culture of the people has risen tremendously. If our people were distinguished by great musical feeling even in the old days, today their artistic taste has been enriched as a result of the popularization of classical music. If you have allowed music to be impoverished, if, as in the case of Muradeli's opera, the potentialities of the orchestra and abilities of the singers are not utilized, you have ceased to meet the musical needs of your listeners. Sow the wind, and reap the whirlwind. The composers whose work has proved incomprehensible to the people must not count on the people "growing up" to this music which they cannot understand. The people do not need music which they cannot understand. The composers have themselves and not the people to blame. They must critically re-evaluate their work and see why it has not met the requirements of the people, why it has not won the approval of the people, and what they must do so that the people will understand and approve of their compositions.

This is the line along which they must redirect their work.

I shall now pass on to the danger of losing professional mastery. If formalistic distortions make music poorer, they also entail another danger: the loss of professional mastery. In this connection it would be well to consider still another widespread misconception: the claim that classical music is supposedly simpler, and modern music more complex, and the complexity of modern technique represents a forward step, since development

always means progression from the simple to the complex, from the particular to the general. It is not true that every instance of complexity is a sign of increased mastery. Not every instance. It is a gross error to take every complexity for progress. Here is an example. Many foreign words are used, as you know, in Russian literary language. You also know how Lenin ridiculed the abuse of this habit, and how he fought to cleanse our native tongue of this foreign litter. The complication of the language through the introduction of a foreign word in place of a Russian word, when there was a perfectly good Russian word at hand, was never considered a sign of linguistic progress. The foreign word "lozung" (slogan) for instance, has been replaced now by the Russian word "prizyv," and is this not an improvement? The same is true of music. Beneath the camouflage of superficial complexity of compositional methods, hides a tendency to impoverish music. Musical language is becoming inexpressive. So much that is crude, vulgar, and false is being incorporated in music, that it is ceasing to perform its intrinsic function—to give pleasure. Is the esthetic role of music to be abolished? Is that the aim of innovation? Or is music to become a soliloquy on the part of the composer? If that is so, then why force it on the people? This music is becoming antipopular and rampantly individualistic, and the people do indeed have the right to feel indifferent to its fate, and they are beginning to do so. If the listener is expected to praise music that is crude, ungraceful, vulgar, based on atonality, on dissonance from beginning to end, music in which consonance is made the exception, and false notes and their combination the rule—this represents a direct retreat from basic musical canons. All these things combined threaten to wipe out music entirely, just as cubism and futurism in painting represent nothing more nor less than a threat to destroy painting. Music that deliberately ignores the normal human emotions, and shocks the mind and nervous system of man, cannot be popular, cannot be useful to society.

Mention was made here of the one-sided interest in instrumental symphonic music without words. It is wrong to consign the varied genres of music to oblivion. What this leads to can be seen in Muradeli's opera. You remember how generously the great masters of art varied their genres? They understood that the people demand variety. Why are you so unlike your great predecessors? You are much harsher than those, who, at the summits of art, wrote solo and choral songs and orchestral music for the people.

And now, with regard to the disappearance of melody in music. Modern music is characterized by a one-sided interest in rhythm to the detriment of melody. But we know that music is enjoyable only when all its elements—melody and rhythm—are present in definite harmonic combinations. The one-sided interest in one element of music at the expense of another results in a violation of the correct interrelation of the various elements and cannot, naturally, be agreeable to the normal ear.

Distortions are also allowed in the use of instruments in ways outside those properly intended for them: the piano, for instance, is converted into a percussion instrument. The role of vocal music is minimized for the benefit of the one-sided development of instrumental music. And vocal music itself conforms less and less to the canons of vocal art. The criticisms of the vocalists, expressed here by Comrades Derzhinskaya and Katulskaya, must be given full consideration.

All these and other digressions from the canons of musical art are a violation not only of the basic normal functioning of musical sound, but also of the physiological bases of normal hearing. Unfortunately, we have not sufficiently elaborated the realm of theory which deals with the physiological effect of music on the human organism. Nevertheless, we must take into account the fact that bad, disharmonious music unquestionably affects the correct psycho-physiological functioning of man.

In conclusion. The role of the classical heritage must be fully restored, normal human music must be fully restored. The

danger of the formalistic trend to the future of music must be stressed. This trend must be censured as an attempt like Herostratus' to destroy the temple of art* built by the great masters of musical culture. All our composers must change their position and turn to face their people. They must realize that our party, which expresses the interests of our state and our people, will support only a healthy and progressive trend in music, the trend of Soviet socialist realism.

If you cherish the lofty title of Soviet composer, you must prove that you are capable of serving your people better than you have done up until now. A serious examination awaits you. The formalistic trend in music was censured by the Communist Party twelve years ago. Since then the government has given many of you, including those who erred along formalistic lines, Stalin prizes. The fact that this honor was shown you was a great sign of trust. In doing so, we did not believe that your work was free of shortcomings, but we were patient, expecting our composers themselves to find the strength to choose the proper road. But it is now clear to all that the intervention of the Communist Party has become imperative. The Central Committee is now telling you plainly that if you continue on the creative road you have chosen, our music will never be a credit to us.

Two extremely important tasks now face Soviet composers. The chief task is to develop and perfect Soviet music. The second is to protect Soviet music from the infiltration of elements of bourgeois decadence. Let us not forget that the U.S.S.R. is now the guardian of universal musical culture, just as in all other respects it is the mainstay of human civilization and culture against bourgeois decadence and decomposition of culture. Let us remember that bourgeois influences from abroad will evoke in the minds of certain representatives of the Soviet intelligentsia survivals of capitalism, which express themselves in the thought-

* Herostratus is supposed to have burned the Temple of Diana at Ephesus in the hope of becoming famous.—*Ed.*

less and outlandish desire to exchange the treasures of Soviet musical culture for the sorry rags of modern bourgeois art. Therefore, not only the musical, but also the political, ear of Soviet composers must be very keen. Your contact with the people must be closer than ever before. Your musical "ear for criticism" must be highly developed. You must follow the processes taking place in western art. But your task is not only to prevent the infiltration of bourgeois influences into Soviet music. Your task is to prove the superiority of Soviet music, to create great Soviet music which will embody all that is best in the past development of music, which will reflect the Soviet society of today, and which will be capable of raising still higher the culture of our people and their communist consciousness.

We Bolsheviks do not reject the cultural heritage. On the contrary, we are critically assimilating the cultural heritage of all nations and all times in order to choose from it all that can inspire the working people of Soviet society to great exploits in labor, science, and culture. You must help the people in this. If you do not set yourself this task, if you do not throw yourself into it, heart and soul, with all your ardor and creative enthusiasm, you will not be fulfilling your historic role.

We want, we ardently want to have our own "Big Five." We want our musicians to be more numerous and stronger than that group which once amazed the world by its talent, and covered our nation with glory. In order to be strong, you must cast aside everything that can weaken you, and choose only those weapons which can help you to become strong and mighty. If you draw upon the inspired classical musical heritage to the full, and at the same time develop it in the spirit of the new requirements of our great age, you will become a Soviet "Big Five." We want you to overcome, as quickly as possible, the lag from which you are suffering, to transform yourselves as quickly as possible, and to develop into a glorious cohort of Soviet composers who will be the pride of the entire Soviet people.