

On Comradely Persuasion and the Discursive Practice of Soviet Thought, 1953-1958

by

Julie Ella Ruch
BA, University of Victoria, 2011

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

in the Department of History

© Julie Ella Ruch, 2013
University of Victoria

All rights reserved. This thesis may not be reproduced in whole or in part, by photocopy or other means, without the permission of the author.

Supervisory Committee

On Comradely Persuasion and the Discursive Practice of Soviet Thought, 1953-1958

by

Julie Ella Ruch
BA, University of Victoria, 2011

Supervisory Committee

Dr. Serhy Yekelchuk (Department of History)
Supervisor

Dr. Jill Walshaw (Department of History)
Departmental Member

Abstract

Supervisory Committee

Dr. Serhy Yekelchuk (Department of History)
Supervisor

Dr. Jill Walshaw (Department of History)
Departmental Member

In the written histories of the Soviet Union, discord and rebellion mark the cultural form of the “Khrushchev Thaw.” Following the U.S.S.R.’s loss of its Great Leader in 1953, a diffusion of political authority met a re-evaluation of established ideology; the dominant discourse of Soviet socialism shifted and, through the subsequent clash of orthodox and liberal forces, imparted a critical aesthetic to 1950s Soviet culture. But while the narrative of dissonance privileged by most historical texts cites the sharpness of post-Stalinist art, poetry, and literature as external evidence of a struggle, little attention has been paid to the internal logic of cultural production. This thesis argues that Soviet cultural communication based itself on a mutual mythology which followed both a dialogue of inclusivity and a sense of mutual accountability. By re-examining how producers of culture managed their responsibilities to the state, to the public, and to their art against the Soviet ideal of the collective and its discourse of comradely persuasion, it pursues the expression of Soviet thought by way of Soviet ideology into the malleable discourse of 1953-1958.

Table of Contents

Supervisory Committee.....	ii
Abstract	iii
Table of Contents.....	iv
Introduction	1
Chapter One: On ‘Fellow Workers’ and the Impetus for Change	11
Chapter Two: On Cultivating Khrushchevism (Or, the Narrative of the Secret Speech)..	27
Chapter Three: On the Performance of Collective Leadership	43
Conclusion.....	64
Bibliography	72
Primary Documents	72
Secondary Sources.....	76

Introduction

In the twenty-odd years since the collapse of the U.S.S.R., the annals of Soviet historiography have told a brackish tale of revolution. In the first instance, the peculiar, the exceptional, and the nonconformist have commanded the attentions of academics by tearing into the fabric of a society said to be based on collective unity, and exposing the flesh and blood that lies underneath. In the second, the “whisperers” of the Stalin era, the dissidents of the “Thaw generation,” and the “children of glasnost” have formed a chorus of beleaguered voices of conscience, simultaneously set apart for challenging the party-state apparatus and made to represent a wider Soviet ‘lived experience.’ This protracted search for the ‘experiential mean’ of Soviet society between the ‘unnatural’ impositions of official discourse and the ‘uncompromising’ criticisms of unofficial forces has had the effect of restricting legitimate political action to the highest reaches of the Soviet Union, and thereby implying an inherent dissidence to popular political movements. Moreover, it has frequently paralleled the forward march of Communism with the Soviet Union’s collision course towards the ‘ash heap of history.’¹

This trend has become particularly troubling in analyses of the “Khrushchev Thaw.” A period of rapid-cycling liberalism located at the centre of discussions on the shaping and re-shaping of Soviet culture, the Thaw is typically accessed through the

¹ In recent years, intellectual histories have pursued a more complex representation of unofficial culture. Yitzakh Brudny’s *Reinventing Russia: Russian Nationalism and the Soviet State, 1953-1991* revitalized politics by culture through a Soviet “politics of inclusion”—the relationship of the average citizen with political and ideological discourse (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000). Similarly, Oleg Kharkhordin’s *The Collective and the Individual in Russia* complicated the relationship between official and unofficial forces by arguing that Soviet ‘subcultures’ depended on a degree of institutionalization—or, in simpler terms, on survival by means of dissimulation (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1999). But if the concept of the “unofficial” has been complicated intellectually, and narrativized in various cultural works as a more complex ‘Soviet reality,’ analysis of the “official” has developed much more slowly and received far less attention in the historical community. Therefore, the official/unofficial binary remains.

literature that christened it and framed as a clash between the forces of art and ideology—what Ann Komaromi has described as “crucial motors propelling the structure and function of unofficial culture.”² The stories and experiences of official writers are connected to underground movements of *samizdat* and *tamizdat* (self-publication and publication abroad) as a means of ‘unveiling’ an undercurrent of critical thought in Soviet society. Indeed, Soviet authors are overwhelmingly considered to have derived their literary standing through their criticism of the state or their unwillingness to bend to its literary requirements—a stature that stems from rejection of, rather than connection with, official literary institutions and grants the politically ‘illegitimate’ a social legitimacy while discounting the politically ‘legitimate’ as Socialist Realist fabrication.

Yet the reality is more complex than such clear-cut distinctions will allow. While Soviet authors in general—and those of the 1950s and 60s in particular—certainly challenged the form and function of literature, the production of Soviet culture concerned itself with impositions from the ‘bottom-up’ and from the ‘top-down.’ Writers felt a responsibility to their readers, to their art, and to the realities of Soviet life as much as they responded to Communist ideology, showed themselves attentive to official directives, and proved dependent on the collaborative milieu provided by literary institutions. Indeed, they pursued a Soviet “plurality of self” as individuals, as professionals, and as patriots, and participated on several levels in discussions of ‘Sovietness’—a space controlled by mutual argument, influence, and disagreement that belonged, quite legitimately, to Soviet politics at all levels of society.

Lenin’s 1917 directive, “The Tasks of the Proletariat in our Revolution,” established early on that the work of the Soviet citizen relied on a form of intellectual

² Ann Komaromi, "The Unofficial Field of Late Soviet Culture," *Slavic Review* 66, no. 4 (2007), 606.

peer-pressure tactfully christened ‘comradely persuasion.’³ It follows that the argumentative, the coercive, and the unconventional of Soviet historiography existed as the ordinary, the accepted, and even the expected. This concept became particularly apposite under the Khrushchev regime, which invited Leninist principles of collective leadership to subsume Stalin’s cult of personality. As Graeme Gill demonstrated in his *Symbols and Legitimacy in Soviet Politics*, the image of Stalin had functioned as a keystone in the Soviet socialist metanarrative, holding together and giving meaning to the multifarious myths it conserved.⁴ Following the Great Leader’s death, the regime’s symbolic message could only be contained if the keystone was replaced—if Stalin’s leadership passed symbolically to the Party, which became a repository of the charismatic authority that he had formerly embodied. Leadership and authority would have to be expressed through “the norm of party and state life,” defined by the Central Committee as “the regular convocation of party congresses, [Central Committee] plena, all elected organs of the party, general popular discussion of the most important questions of state, economic and party construction, wide consultation with workers in different branches of the national economy and culture...⁵

Importantly, if this abundance of meetings was directed towards a Leninist sense of cooperation as a deliberate rejection or replacement of Stalinist precepts, this was less a transformation of political policies than the more consistent application of their form. As exemplified by the works of such historians as Aleksei Kojevnikov and J. Arch Getty, the political meetings of the Stalin era functioned less as repetitious assemblies with pre-

³ Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, *The Lenin Anthology*, ed. Robert C. Tucker (New York, NY: Norton, 1975), 334.

⁴ Graeme Gill, *Symbols and Legitimacy in Soviet Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 166.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 169.

determined outcomes than as highly symbolic events that maintained a viable sense of intra-party “democracy.”⁶ Three discursive forms dictated the rules of interaction. The first, *diskussii* or disputation, and signalled an invitation to “demonstrate polemical skills in a theoretical matter which had not yet been decided by authorities” by allowing temporary, public disagreement over political questions. The second, *s’ezd* or party congress, settled disputes “once and forever” by popular vote and signalled to the opposition or losing party to “stop any further polemics with the majority.” The third, exercises in *kritika i samokritika* or criticism and self-criticism, functioned as a public justification for either positive or negative results within the political system. Thus, the gatherings of the Soviet state under Stalin not only maintained the illusion of collective discussion but actually negotiated the realm of expectation (rather than the starkly-constituted and oppositional world of ideals and realities).⁷ Indeed, they relied on both the ideal of discussion and the expectation of discussion to maintain a sense of internal consistency to their politics—a sense of collectivity and cooperation that greatly informed the Khrushchev regime’s more thorough application of such principles.

Having, then, rejected the centrality of a struggle between official and unofficial, or legitimate and dissident; identified a continuation of ideological precepts from the Stalin era to the years of Khrushchev’s governance; and accepted that Soviet culture was produced with intent, through the lens of a particular ideology, this thesis addresses the U.S.S.R.’s post-Stalinist culture with a new set of questions—or, more to the point, with old questions asked in a new manner. By what means was Soviet cultural production

⁶ See Alexei Kojevnikov, "Rituals of Stalinist Culture at Work: Science and the Games of Intraparty Democracy Circa 1948," *Russian Review* 57, no. 1 (1998), 25-52.; J. Arch Getty, "Samokritika Rituals in the Stalinist Central Committee, 1933-38," *The Russian Review* 58, no. 1 (1999), 49-70.

⁷ Kojevnikov, "Rituals of Stalinist Culture at Work," 33-34.

negotiated and made to look coherent from the inside out? And by what means did the people, the bureaucracy, and the Party-state apparatus interact with one another in the production of a single, suitably “Soviet” culture? The answer, here, is ‘old’ as well though it must be given new direction: in the literary realm of the Soviet Union, which carefully and consciously situated itself between the pronouncements of the state and the interests of the people.

Soviet policies on newspapers, books, articles, pamphlets, and libraries were based on the conviction that reading mattered not just to the individual but to the country as a whole, as a social phenomenon whose social functions expressed themselves through the reader’s political awareness, aesthetic tastes, and moral qualities. If Lenin affixed this “great force” to the banner of *partiinnost’* or party-mindedness, Stalin further strengthened and ‘corrected’ the relationship between literature and ideology over the course of the 1930s by implementing a patriarchal model in which the state took upon itself the responsibility of encouraging socialist maturity via the cultural realm. This was executed by way of socialist realism, a complete theory of art whose mandate was the truthful and historically concrete depiction of Soviet life in its revolutionary development. Socialist realism based itself on three principles: *narodnost’*, portraying the aspirations of the common people and making literature accessible to the masses in a linguistic and stylistic sense; *ideinnost’*, the presence of a mature, correct, and fully-formed ideology (eliminating ideas of creating art for art’s sake); and *partiinnost’*, the instillation of current Party ideals and policies. These values coincided with those of the New Soviet Man and, especially,

with the hope (or, in some historical texts, the reality⁸) of creating an ideal state reader who desired only that which would advance his political education and consciousness.

By extension, the Soviet author existed as a mouthpiece for ideology whom the state—eminently mindful of the adversarial relationship between authors and the authorities in bourgeois societies, where an author’s works were frequently hated by the state in direct proportion to how much they were revered by the people—learned to embrace as an ally. Of course, this relationship was in no way a relationship between equals. On 23 April 1932, a decree from the Central Committee dissolved all existing art groups and replaced them with a single, national organization: the Union of Soviet Writers. Shortly thereafter, the Central Committee began a process of homogenizing writers’ ideological identities by decreeing that the Union should be formed “with a Communist faction therein.”⁹ And, by 1936, the Communist Party officially declared itself as a “directing nucleus.”¹⁰ Membership in the Union became all but obligatory for professional writers since exclusion meant an essential ban on publication, and the thoroughly bureaucratized Soviet writer found himself at the disposal of the state. However, this position was not as completely constraining as the dramatists of Soviet (and, particularly, Stalinist) history would have us believe.

If the bureaucratization of literature resulted in the promotion and publication of “hack writers” who simply adhered to the letter of Socialist Realist law, a great many authors continued to uphold the political, philosophical, and social roles with which

⁸ See Evgeny Dobrenko, *The Making of the State Reader: Social and Aesthetic Contexts of the Reception of Soviet Literature* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997).

⁹ Central Committee of the VKP, "On Restructuring Literary-Artistic Organizations," <http://www.sovlit.com/decreel1932/> (accessed December 13, 2010).

¹⁰ Jack F. Matlock, "The 'Governing Organs' of the Union of Soviet Writers," *American Slavic and East European Review* 15, no. 3 (1956), 394.

literary texts and their authors had been traditionally imbued.¹¹ Insofar as the Soviet author viewed life through a Soviet lens, then, the principle of “party work” and ideological education became intertwined with the rather more spiritual responsibility of the author towards his readers—a peculiar relationship fully recognized by the state. As Central Committee Secretary Dmitri Shepilov explained on 24 July 1957, the Party’s attempts to guide culture amounted to an attempt to influence its “masters of culture” by the “all-conquering truth of Marxist-Leninist ideas, to help this section of the intelligentsia and each of its members separately in the great and complex matter of forming a scientific world outlook, to proceed from the fact that the chief method of guidance is comradely persuasion.”¹²

Where Khrushchev’s years in power are concerned, this left the literary realm open but not entirely beholden to the political fluctuations that have been the subject of much historical debate. Contemporary scholarship seems almost evenly divided on whether or not the era’s most notable symbols of change, de-Stalinization and collective leadership, were genuine attempts at reform or rhetorical tools whose acceptance or rejection depended on Khrushchev’s political position. But whether legitimately constituted or shrewdly exploited, it is critical to remember that Khrushchev’s rhetoric existed beyond the realm of high politics and therefore exerted a tangible effect on Soviet society.

Here, Mikhail Bakhtin’s theory of dialogic addressivity is particularly salient, not only for having been developed in the political-cultural context of the 1950s and 60s but

¹¹ For a good discussion of this see Kathleen Parthé, *Russia's Dangerous Texts: Politics between the Lines* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004).

¹² “For Leninist Adherence to Principle in Questions of Literature and the Arts,” *Kommunist* no. 10, July 1957, 13-22. Translated, condensed text in: “Shepilov is Blamed for ‘Liberalism’ in the Arts,” *The Current Digest of the Soviet Press* 9, no. 33 (1957), 6.

for recognizing the intertwined nature of cultural production and political directive in the production of literature. Arguing that literary work is a part of “social reality,” Bakhtin asserts the presence of three interlocutors in any conversation: a speaker and listener who formally participate in the communication process, as well as a more nebulous political, cultural, and ideological force—a ‘superaddressee’—that strives for influence over the dialogue. On the one hand, both speaker and listener are subject to the limits imposed by this third interlocutor on their dialogic possibilities. On the other, however, these limits are not part of “nature” and, therefore, not always entirely discernible.¹³

Accepting Soviet readers as listeners, Soviet authors as speakers, and the Soviet party-state apparatus as a nebulous third interlocutor, we see the author-reader relationship as one distinct from, but influenced by, the State’s official pronouncements on literature which could be, intellectually at least, both accepted and rejected. We also see a difference between Stalinist and Khrushchevian politics that maintains a continuous evolution of socialist thought without implying a stark ideological ‘break.’ If, as Evgeny Dobrenko phrases it, a “death of dialogue”¹⁴ occurred under Stalin, this was not because dialogue itself ceased but, rather, because Soviet authorities made the most of their position as ‘superaddressee,’ following an ambition “so all-encompassing and fortified by such powerful arguments that the participants in the dialogue were left practically no possibility for self-determination.”¹⁵ By contrast, Khrushchev’s rhetoric of de-Stalinization and collective leadership, combined with a comparative disinterest in the

¹³ Mikhail Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 94.

¹⁴ Used here in a Bakhtinian sense of monologism—a single-thought discourse that rejects all but those signifying practices, ideologies, and values that it deems significant; a transcendental perspective that does not recognize each subject’s ability to produce autonomous meaning or, in some cases, the possibility of an ‘other’ consciousness; a ‘truth’ that “gravitates towards itself and its referential object.” (Ibid., 229.)

¹⁵ Dobrenko, *The Making of the State Reader*, 374.

continual policing of cultural production, allowed for a stronger relationship between the author and the reader that pursued—quite legitimately—an increasingly expansive definition of Soviet culture and identity.

The goal of this thesis is, then, to understand the production of culture as a conversation (or, indeed, several simultaneous conversations); to consider Soviet ideology as a ‘moral’ compass in the pursuit of appropriate comradely behaviour; and to explore the Soviet writer’s sense of accountability to his art, to his peers, and to his ideology. In this, it bases itself on three arguments. Firstly, that Soviet culture was produced by way of collective leadership—a discourse of discussion—bounded by way of comradely persuasion. Secondly, that the Soviet state under Khrushchev sought a balance between freedom and restraint in order to facilitate an atmosphere conducive to the development of good literature tailored to official purposes. And thirdly, that Soviet cultural subjectivities were often cultivated, as Jochen Hellbeck has noted, “outside of the immediate gaze of the state and prior to its intervention”—that political ‘freezes’ can be isolated as incidents in which the Soviet state assumed its role as a Bakhtinian guiding force and ‘dissident action’ appealed to a normative expression of politically-legitimate strategies of resistance.¹⁶

This work’s central purview follows neither the full expanse of the Khrushchev regime nor that of the Thaw but, in an effort to pre-empt the common conflation of these two timelines into a watershed moment (the “Khrushchev Thaw”), runs from the earliest disassembly of Stalinist precepts in 1953 to the establishment of markedly Khrushchevian cultural policies in 1958. More specifically, it focuses on discussion

¹⁶ Jochen Hellbeck, “Speaking Out: Languages of Affirmation and Dissent in Stalinist Russia,” *Kritika* 1, no. 1 (2000), 92.

surrounding three ‘turning points’ central to historical narratives of Thaw culture: the re-emergence of opportunity following Stalin’s death in the spring of 1953, changes to the politicization of Socialist Realist art following the Second Congress of Soviet Writers in 1954 and the Twentieth Congress of the Soviet Union in 1956, and the definition of Khrushchevian bounds to Soviet discourse surrounding the Pasternak Affair of 1956-8. Its chronology is far from neat and its sense of development is imperfect. However, in stretching historical attention beyond the fluctuations of multifarious ‘thaws’ and ‘freezes’ set about by ‘official’ and ‘dissident’ forces, its hope is to bring new subtleties to a chronology of established wisdom.

Chapter One: On ‘Fellow Workers’ and the Impetus for Change

The book is as anticipated:
 A new technique just demonstrated,
 A play-safe technician,
 T.U. Sec with a mission,
 And of course a dear old man
 Who'll live till Communism if he can.
 He and She—both splendid workers,
 Production starts, there are no shirkers,
 The Party steps in just when needed,
 Frenzied efforts, plan exceeded.
 The Minister tours the factory,
 Congratulations, revelry.
 These books are not quite out of true:
 Such things could happen and sometimes do.
 But read them—in your throat they stick,
 You want to scream, you feel quite sick.

Aleksandr Tvardovsky, “Horizon beyond Horizon” (1954)

On 26 April 1953, some six weeks after Joseph Stalin suffered a fatal haemorrhage at his dacha on the outskirts of Moscow, the children’s writer Kornei Chukovsky took to his diary in a state of aggravation:

[Pushkin scholar Sergei] Bondi’s wife called at the house yesterday, bubbling over with news about “the new order.” The Kremlin will be open to one and all; Stalin Prizes will be abolished; there will be no more state bonds; kolkhoz conditions will be improved; the Writers’ Union will be disbanded; Fadeev has been removed from office; the militia will be slashed to nearly a fifth of its present size, and so on and so forth. Everything the philistines want is being touted as governmental policy.¹⁷

The Soviet rumour mill had wasted no time in taking up its wearying grind, but made quick grist of the hopes and fears that sprang up across the U.S.S.R. Following the Soviet

¹⁷ Kornei Chukovsky, *Diary, 1901-1969*, trans. Michael Heim (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005), 374.

Union's loss of its Great Leader, an important sense of political agency arose across society as Soviet citizens seized this inherent promise of possibility to reassess their party-state apparatus according to the questions, desires, and concerns that had been with them for years. Acts of political conjecture took place across small social circles with a set of similar interests—Bondi's wife and Chukovsky's pen focused on things that were of import to them generally, as Soviet citizens, and specifically, as individuals connected to the literary realm¹⁸—then extended across the public sphere.

In the literary world, members of the Union of Soviet Writers took advantage of the state of disarray in which the party-state apparatus (and, most particularly, its system of punishment) found itself to reclaim a fuller share of authority in the production of an official Soviet culture. Between 1946 and 1952 Stalin's chief spokesman on cultural affairs, Andrei Zhdanov, had re-defined the responsibility of culture producers in the battle between 'imperialism' and 'democracy.' A new, highly restrictive "Zhdanovite criteria" was introduced to Socialist Realist literature.¹⁹ But, rather than allow the Union's mandate of debate and discussion to leave space for the reconfiguration of Zhdanovite principles in future, the *zhdanovshchina* established itself as a new cultural practice that corrupted the Union's collective by emphasizing, as John and Carol Garrard have argued, that the "collectivization of literature had come to mean collective guilt."²⁰ Members of the Union were expected to 'earn their keep' by participating in a new

¹⁸ Noting the state of the Writers' Union, and most particularly of its chairman Aleksandr Fadeyev, would have been of relative interest to individuals outside of the Soviet literary sphere

¹⁹ The phrase is Diana Spechler's, from her monograph *Permitted Dissent in the USSR: Novy mir and the Soviet Regime* (New York, N.Y.: Praeger, 1982). This Zhdanovite criteria demanded of literary works an overt statement of political and ideological issues; support of the Party line enhanced by a display of "Party spirit"; an educational message; condemnation of bourgeois society, culture, and values; expressions of "deep hostility" to "bourgeois nationalism" (except in the case of Russian nationalism); emphasis on the present rather than the past, replete with a sense of optimism and progress; and characters of a "pure" and readily-identifiable "type" rather than complex or contradictory figures.

²⁰ John Garrard and Carol Garrard, *Inside the Soviet Writers' Union* (New York, NY: Tauris, 1990), 63.

cultural crackdown that revived the Great Purge's atmosphere of suspicious scrutiny and scapegoating. By the early 1950s, then, the Writers' Union operated on a state of almost default allegiance to Zhdanovite principles but the campaign's brutality had thoroughly underscored the artificial impositions of Socialist Realism—particularly its canonization in 1930 as an outgrowth of Stalinism rather than pure Communism. If fear, more than faith, was the *zhdanovshchina*'s legacy, the Great Leader's death in 1953 afforded the Writers' Union an opportunity for change.

The process was gradual and, initially at least, careful to function according to a sort of dissent 'within the limits.' In articles and editorials, writers relied on established rituals of collective discussion to praise policy tendencies that found support at the top and articulated some of the intelligentsia's broader concerns and aspirations rather than criticize government programmes that threatened their interests.²¹ In literary works themselves, the blame for artistic limitations carefully shifted away from the typical bogeymen of the literary world—the editor and the critic—to a series of “external conditions” (read: political and legal pressures) that had engendered fear and, by extension, restraint in society.²² Within months, a carefully revealed sense of disappointment was galvanized and channelled into a search for solutions.

On 26 October 1953, the literary newspaper *Literaturnaya gazeta* published an open letter penned by a collective of prominent Soviet authors that addressed both the policies and the practices of the cultural realm. In an appeal “To Fellow Workers,” Veniamin Kaverin, Emmanuil Kazakevich, Mikhail Lukonin, Samuil Marshak,

²¹ Spechler, *Permitted Dissent in the U.S.S.R.*, 3.

²² Harold Swayze, *Political Control of Literature in the U.S.S.R., 1946-1959* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962), 84.

Konstantin Paustovsky, Nikolai Pogodin, and Stepan Shchipachev sought a dialogue on the subject of the Union of Soviet Writers and its organizational “defects.”²³

Year after year our party and literary press and our meetings and conferences resound with justified complaints that [the Union’s] work is ineffective, that the clumsy apparatus is incapable of understanding the complex phenomena of our literature, that the board of the Union of Soviet Writers is not well acquainted with the life and work of the writers and fails to take into account their genuine professional interests. ... [And] it seems to us from long and bitter experience that it is impossible to correct [these defects] under the present set-up of the Writers’ Union, which has been converted from a professional organization into a kind of [government or administrative] department on literary affairs.²⁴

The Union of Soviet Writers, established on a foundation of self-regulation by way of internal criticism, regularly opened itself up to the grievances of its members, as well as the Party and the public, to address the possibility of shortcomings. However, in the space of twenty years, Maksim Gorky’s vision of a community of professionals “made aware of their collective strength” had gradually become a bureaucratic institution with greater interest in regulation, efficiency, and control than in perfecting the processes by which good, socially-conscious literature was generated.²⁵ By expressing concern for the writer’s creative atmosphere and artistic product, Kaverin, Kazakevich, Lukonin, Marshak, Paustovsky, Pogodin, and Shchipachev not only argued that the Writers’ Union had failed to accomplish its central resolution of creating a community of writers for writers, but that an institution responsible for the production of Soviet culture, the exemplification of Soviet identity, and the representation of Soviet dreams, had failed in its central task by systematically weakening the authority of the authorial community on which it relied.

²³ Veniamin Kaverin, Emmanuil Kazakevich, Mikhail Lukonin, Samuil Marshak, Konstantin Paustovsky, Nikolai Pogodin, and Stepan Shchipachev, “To Fellow Workers,” *Literaturnaya gazeta*, 26 October 1953, p.2. Translated text in: *The Current Digest of the Soviet Press* 6, no.44 (1953), 13.

²⁴ *Ibid*, 13.

²⁵ Garrard and Garrard, *Inside the Soviet Writers' Union*, 41.

This letter was the clarion call of a new movement in the cultural realm of the Soviet Union. Arguing that the vital interests of the writer sprung up where literary work was done—“that is, in the magazine, the publishing house, the annual ... [where] the exchange of experience and the direct contact between literary production and the public” could take place—Kaverin *et al.* set themselves against the “fruitless work” of Union sessions attempting to foster that self-same exchange.²⁶ In their eyes, endless bureaucratic gatherings had actively distracted talented and experienced writers from nurturing creativity or originality in Soviet literature; considering literary production at some remove from literary consumption had consigned socialist realist literature to a state of ideologically-correct tedium that had little relevance outside the walls of the Union’s meeting rooms. The letter’s decisive tone thus transcended the typically remedial brand of Soviet criticism which placed full faith in the possibility of self-improvement, to strike at the incongruities between the public purpose and private functioning of the Union of Soviet Writers. At the same time, it created a new, informal discussion space in which writers, editors, and literary critics could assume their roles as arbiters of official culture and express their thoughts regarding their responsibility towards each-other and towards society at large within the bounds of the dominant Soviet discourse.

Within three days, Kaverin, Kazakevich, Lukonin, Marshak, Paustovsky, Pogodin, and Shchipachev’s call for dialogue worked its way into discussions at the Fourteenth Plenum of the Board of the Union of Soviet Writers. To be sure, plena of the board were not known for their ability to generate ‘actual business’; although originally conceived as thrice-yearly supplements to the all-Soviet writers’ congresses, these meetings had lost much of their direction (as well as three out of every four reunions)

²⁶ Kaverin *et al.*, “To Fellow Workers,” 13.

once it was made clear that the First Congress of Soviet writers in 1934 may well have been an isolated affair.²⁷ However, the impetus for such discussion at the plenum came from Aleksandr Fadeyev, the Chairman of the Writers' Union himself.

A "son of his time," Fadeyev seemed perpetually torn between his duty as a good Party soldier and his duty as an author, a colleague, and a friend.²⁸ Motivated by self-interest and conviction in equal measures, the Chairman fell in line with a rising tide of criticism directed towards the Union for which he was nominally responsible, and admitted that "a total dissatisfaction with literature and the arts existed amongst the people and the best representatives of literature and the arts had the same feeling."²⁹ If discussing the purpose of the Writers' Union was a relatively common theme in meetings of the Board (the Soviet model of self-regulation was, after all, based on perpetual self-evaluation and self-improvement), Fadeyev's tone departed from the usual blandishments of *mea culpas* to a rather clear-eyed view of the situation at hand. Having recognized the Party's dedication to teaching the Soviet writer to "strive tirelessly and persistently for a fuller grasp of ideological and artistic values and attain ever higher standards of artistic excellence"³⁰ and educate the Soviet people in the spirit of Communism, his speech bypassed the usual praise for good Soviet writers and their good Soviet works in order to address the problems that plagued the Writers' Union: a lack of participation, of community, and of mentorship, more simply described as a disconnect between the Union's creative aspirations and its bureaucratic realities.

²⁷ Maria Zezina, "Crisis in the Union of Soviet Writers in the Early 1950s," *Europe-Asia Studies* 46, no. 4 (1994), 650.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 650.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 655.

³⁰ Aleksandr Fadeyev, "The Work of the Union of Soviet Writers: Speech Given at the Fourteenth Plenum of the Board of the Writers' Union, 29 October 1953." Translated text in: *Soviet Literature* no.2 (1953), 115.

Any criticism would have typically functioned as an implicit confession of guilt for the chairman of the Writers' Union, but Fadeyev successfully presented an image of the Union as a community of writers rather than a body of disparate departments of which he was the head. Only then did he launch into his argument that the Union had failed to attract writers and make good use of their experience to nurture creativity "rather than simply criticize aesthetic and ideological failings."³¹ Arguing in the same vein as Kaverin, Kazakevich, Lukonin, Marshak, Paustovsky, Pogodin, and Shchipachev, he recognized the unreality of any kind of mentorship or community in the Union as such and concluded that, as a literary institution, the Union obviously did not "evinced a proper understanding of the purpose and function of Soviet criticism."³²

For Fadeyev, the key to fostering a community of true professionals within the Union itself lay in once again recognizing as "true artistry" the digesting and conquering of the "resistant new material furnished by life" and striving to meet the ideological and artistic standards of Soviet literature. Even while he warned that the Union could not and must not countenance the "lordly, contemptuous attitude" adopted by some writers, and while the call to self-improvement was certainly not a new exhortation, his anger at the primarily "useful" ideas that encouraged even veteran writers to "write hurriedly" lent a new urgency to the call for writers to "develop habits of painstaking effort and a critical attitude to what they produce." Implied in this was recognition of the fact that the Union of Writers' decidedly bureaucratic methods had replaced a genuine collective of craftsmen with a "bustle of 'activity'" that produced neither good literature nor valuable discussion on that subject. In seeking to avoid any kind of confrontation on political or

³¹ Ibid., 118.

³² Ibid., 118.

ideological grounds, the Union had directly contributed to the artistic failure and creative despondency of its members.³³

By addressing such problems in the Plenum of the Board, a large meeting whose speeches would be widely published, Fadeyev took one of the first steps in reviving discussion of the Union of Writers' mandate and extending discussion of literary protocol across the Union and in full view of the U.S.S.R.'s artistically-inclined citizenry. Moreover, for such a high-profile figure to actively and accurately identify the flaws that threatened the Writers' Union central purpose of educating Soviet citizens sent a powerful signal for the Soviet literary establishment's re-examination of arguments established through a 20-year canon of work.

Within days of the Plenum, several prominent authors began writing in to literary newspapers across the nation. On 11 November, Vasily Azhaev, author of the 1948 production novel *Far from Moscow* published a response in *Literaturnaya gazeta* that, in many ways, illustrated the complaints brought up in the letter penned by Kaverin *et al.* Without denying the existence of organizational faults, Azhaev generally ignored the charges made against the Writers' Union and, citing the "nihilism of bystander writers who try not to notice or to write off what is good and valuable in Soviet literature itself," focused on criticizing the letter's authors for their disdainful attitude towards the Union.³⁴ To Azhaev, the Union of Writers' trouble—"the root of its mistakes and shortcomings"—lay in the way "two or three dozen people pull[ed] the entire cart" while others felt

³³ Ibid., 121.

³⁴ Vasily Azhaev, "Respect your 'Literary Workshop,'" *Literaturnaya gazeta*, 11 November 1953, pp.2-3. Condensed. Translated text in: "Appeal to Reorganize Writers' Union Stirs Controversy: Azhaev's Reply." *The Current Digest of the Soviet Press* 6, no.50 (1953), 3.

themselves free to criticize without engaging in any “constructive” work.³⁵ For many years, Union officials and the hundreds of writers who formed the Union’s base membership “underestimated the importance of the organizational side” and suffered from a “lack of faith” that the Writers’ Union could be reorganized in some way. This, ultimately, led Union leaders to do everything themselves, “plugging up endless holes by their own efforts” in a “confused, rushed atmosphere” that more than justified any shortcomings in the Union’s most recent history.³⁶

Kaverin, Kazakevich, Lukonin, Marshak, Paustovsky, Pogodin, and Shchipachev were taken to task for their own lapsed involvement in a series of pointed attacks culminating in an oblique condemnation of the high-profile writer M. A. Sholokhov as a prime example of one who had made a mistake in “pointedly avoiding his union and its day-to-day work for many years” and whose art surely suffered as a consequence of his shutting out the “friendship and wise counsel of comrades.”³⁷ In this, Azhaev made clear his purpose: to separate the authors of this letter from the centre of Soviet literary activity and, by denying them a place in any authorial community, lessen the consequence of their views. “Frequently,” he argued, “writers who mention the Writers’ Union with irritation and who at a first glance appear to raise some questions about shortcomings in its work are moved not by concern for the state of their organization but by some private reason.”³⁸

On 13 November, Azhaev was supported by the arch-Stalinists Aleksandr Bezymensky and Yuri Korolkov who wrote in to *Literaturnaya gazeta* to agree that the

³⁵ Ibid., 3.

³⁶ Ibid., 3.

³⁷ Ibid., 4-5.

³⁸ Ibid., 3.

authors of the open letter had used “too heavy colors” in their evaluations of the Union of Writers’s failings and drawn from this a “very strange and inaccurate conclusion” that unsatisfactory work stemmed from the apparatus of the Union rather than the writers themselves.³⁹ It was, they contended, too often forgotten that members of the Union’s Secretariat and Presidium were engaged in a “Sisyphean labor,” as the “instrument of Party influence on creative processes in literature,” and that an “incorrect and negligent attitude” focused on re-organization only worsened their task.”⁴⁰ Criticism of this nature therefore transgressed against the entire collective of writers and their best interests.

Such arguments were based on an understanding of collectivism as comradeship, and comradeship as a Party-regulated state of interaction. As Philip Boobbyer points out in his *Conscience, Dissent, and Reform in Soviet Russia*, however, informal networks had long before gained traction in the Soviet Union through the economic system created by Stalin. To avoid the inefficiencies of central planning, factory directors frequently set up “alternative sources of supply; eventually the whole economic system was so riddled with inefficiency that informal networks became a vital element of the way it functioned. People resorted to ‘*blat*,’ the personalized system of exchange that flourished and was intimately linked to people’s social circles.”⁴¹ With some small amendments to suit the nature of the ‘product’ being manufactured, this was very much the case in the Writers’ Union.

It follows that, when Vitaly Zakrutkin, Anatoly Kalinin, and Mikhail Sokolov joined the conversation on 19 November, their stated objective of defending Mikhail

³⁹ Aleksandr Bezymensky and Yuri Korolkov. “For Real Democracy in the Writers’ Union.” *Literaturnaya gazeta*, 13 November 1953, p.3. Condensed, translated text in: “Appeal to Reorganize Writers’ Union Stirs Controversy: In Support of Azhaev.” *The Current Digest of the Soviet Press* 6, no.50 (1953), 5.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁴¹ Philip Boobbyer, *Conscience, Dissent and Reform in Soviet Russia* (London: Routledge, 2005), 58.

Sholokhov doubled as a pointed remark on the existence of an authorial community outside of the Union structure. Insisting that “V. Azhayev pretends that he does not know what everyone else knows,” Zakrutin, Kalinin, and Sokolov reminded both Azhayev and their readers that “many people come by car and on foot to Mikhail Sholokhov at Veshenskaya” for “advice, help and support.”⁴² That statement alone challenged the argument that the Union of Writers’ shortcomings were derived from a lack of community between writers, or that the Union was the sole seat of any tightly-knit community. Indeed, it asserted the ideologically correct nature of this ‘extra-institutional’ collective against the Union’s ineffectiveness in an attempt to shift the centre of official culture from the ruins of the Soviet Writers’ Union to the seat of a professional collective truly deserving of the word.

By 23 November, Kazakevich, Pogodin, Shchipachev, Marshak, Kaverin, Paustovsky, and Lukonin responded to Azhaev themselves. Accusing him of resorting to “questionable parallels and obscure allusions,” they denied any interest in dismantling the Union but re-emphasized the need to shift its centre to “vital matters, to literary production” by “bringing it closer to the publishing houses and magazines through strengthening editorial boards with the best literary cadres.”⁴³ In their opinion, the Board, Presidium, and Secretariat could and should be “the collective director of Soviet literature, including the publications of the Union” but had no business directing the

⁴² Vitaly Zakrutin, Anatoly Kalinin, and Mikhail Sokolov, “Letter to the Editor,” *Literaturnaya gazeta*, 18 November 1953, p.5. Condensed, translated text in: “Appeal to Reorganize Writers’ Union Stirs Controversy: Sholokhov Defended.” *The Current Digest of the Soviet Press* 6, no.50 (1953), 6.

⁴³ Emmanuil Kazakevich, Nikolai Pogodin, Stepan Shchipachev, Samuil Marshak, Veniamin Kaverin, Konstantin Paustovsky, and Mikhail Lukonin, “Reply to Comrade Azhaev,” *Literaturnaya gazeta*, 23 November 1953, 2. Condensed, translated text in: “Appeal to Reorganize Writers’ Union Stirs Controversy: Rebuttal to Azhaev.” *The Current Digest of the Soviet Press* 6, no.50 (1953), 6.

creative work of the writer.⁴⁴ To equate the Union's bureaucracy with any literary achievements, as Azhaev had, was "the viewpoint not of a writer but of a pen-pusher stirred by bureaucratic frenzy."⁴⁵ Moreover, it was not from a position of external criticism that the authors wrote their letter; the authors responded to Azhaev's attempt to push them to the fringe of literary activity by listing the full extent of Paustovsky, Shchipachev, Pogodin, and Marshak's personal involvement in the Union's organizational aspects.

When Azhaev replied on 4 December, it was in a defensive tone that made only small arguments. Following a weak reminder of the support he had received from Stalinist corners, his denunciation softened into a general lamentation that, in considering the weaknesses of the Union, "one involuntarily thinks of the most prominent of our writers, who could decisively change the situation for the better if they tackled the matter as they should."⁴⁶

Opinions concerning the Union of Writers' organizational structure clearly depended upon different approaches to the 'creative collective' in which Soviet writers were thought to thrive. For staunch Stalinists, a well-regulated Union preserved the purest relationship between Soviet literature and Party policy; the compartmentalization of responsibility prevented ideological errors—innocent and deliberate—from becoming systemic. But, as evidenced by the Zhdanov campaigns, a Writers' Union centered on the author/state relationship inherently distrusted the Soviet writer and cultivated in him an artistically-crippling fear of failure. By contrast, emphasizing the author/audience

⁴⁴ Ibid., 6.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 7.

⁴⁶ Vasily Azhaev, "Answer to the Reply," *Literaturnaya gazeta*, 4 December 1953, p.3. Condensed, translated text in: "Appeal to Reorganize Writers' Union Stirs Controversy: Azhaev's Rebuttal." *The Current Digest of the Soviet Press* 6, no.50 (1953), 8.

relationship emphasized the artist's strong sense of responsibility to his craft and sought to re-establish a level of trust in the producers of Soviet culture that Zhdanov's endless culls, purges, and reprimands had failed to create. For all its criticism of the Union of Soviet Writers, the U.S.S.R.'s authorial community—that famous “second government”—did not set itself on a collision course with the party-state apparatus. Quite the contrary; its push for greater independence from bureaucratic politicking sought to revitalize the energy, creativity, and community through which true socialism was said to develop.

The connection between the author's work and the author's task was, therefore, brought to the forefront of literary conversations in the winter of 1953. In October, *Novyi mir* published Ilya Ehrenburg's “The Writer's Work” which, after decades of factory-produced literature by Stalin's ‘engineers of the human soul,’ rejected the idea of the writer as a machine “mechanically registering events.”

The writer writes a book, not because he can write, or because he is a member of the Union of Soviet Writers and may be asked why he has not published anything for so long, [but] because he has something of his own that he must say to people, because he has become 'infected' with his book because he has seen people, things and feelings which he cannot leave undescribed. This is how passionate books are born and ... such books invariably move the reader.⁴⁷

Ehrenburg charged members of the Soviet literary world with producing “the emotional cement of society” by writing books that left readers feeling enriched, as if they understood themselves more deeply. Shortly thereafter, in December, Vladimir Pomerantsev pushed Ehrenburg's ideas to their logical extremes in his controversial essay, “On Sincerity in Literature.” With a similar intention but a more violent turn of phrase, Pomerantsev called for writers to discard any “manner or mannerism of writing”

⁴⁷ Ehrenburg, “The Writer's Work,” 416-419.

that might evade “two-edged” or difficult questions but recognize that it was “precisely on these difficulties” that the writer should help, having received “a clear programme for the country’s development.”

Our literature needs builders, not professional bards. A bard spends his time extolling gladness, a builder creates it. The writer who derives his enthusiasm not from royalties but from our great achievements and plans, will never hush up problems, he will seek to solve any problem of our complex and most interesting times.⁴⁸

Pomerantsev stressed the writer’s need to generate new ideas rather than simply replicate existent ones, and defined the only worthy heroes as “searchers”: “They open our eyes; they make policy. Not only is their thought not fettered, but they also stimulate ours.”⁴⁹

In the minds of both authors, the literary establishment’s culture of fear hindered, more than it preserved, pure Soviet aspirations. Ehrenburg criticized those members of the bureaucracy who would scrutinize a novel “like examiners” disinterested in the holistic quality of a work, and ignore its greater purpose.⁵⁰

In socialist society the link of the writer with the people does not merely exist; it is conscious; it has sometimes been called the fulfilment of a social order. In the minds of certain editors and critics, however, the epithet 'social' has faded into the background, while the word 'order' which is useful but hardly applicable to the work of a writer has remained. ... To us our work as writers is a most responsible public activity: we know that books change people, that they change life. Literature educates the reader, helps him to live better, develops his feelings and makes him more considerate towards everyone else—those near to him and his comrades.⁵¹

Likewise, Pomerantsev condemned the Union of Writers, the editorial boards of official journals and publishing houses, literary critics—and, more controversially, extended his

⁴⁸ Vladimir Pomerantsev, “Sincerity in Literature,” *Novyi mir* no.12, 1953. Condensed, translated text in R. S. “From Soviet Publications: Three Soviet Artists on the Present Needs of Soviet Art.” *Soviet Studies* 6, no.4 (April 1954), 436.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 441.

⁵⁰ Ehrenburg, “The Writer’s Work,” 417.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 419-425.

displeasure to authors who chose mediocrity in order to preserve their prestige, their income, and even their physical safety.⁵² And, in this, both received the support of the reading public. A 5 October opinion piece published by *Literaturnaya gazeta* saw readers criticize Ehrenburg's recently-published novella, *The Thaw*, as a novelette that "raises many problems, but solves few of them" even as they defended its merit as a work imbued with great artistic purpose.⁵³ Similarly, on 17 March, students and young professionals at Moscow University wrote to *Komsomolskaya pravda* in support of Pomerantsev's searching work. Despite noting some "careless formulations of many most important formulations," they supported the basic correctness of his motivations—unlike the "elements of crude browbeating" in professional critiques of his work which sought to suppress a "burning discussion of our literature." The Soviet reader, they warned, "carefully watches our writers' creative work."⁵⁴

Stalinist culture had relied on a series of conditioned reflexes to take the place of culture in Soviet society and doublethink, what 1970s *samizdat* writer Dmitrii Nelidov called the "formal ideological display window" of Soviet life, became the means by which individuals presented a suitably correct front despite their frequently contradictory feelings. But, in 1953, the normal pattern of Soviet life was palpably altered. Stalin's death initiated an important manifestation of political-ideological agency that reinvested

⁵² The writer who focused on satisfying his critic was "less than a true writer," Pomerantsev insisted, for Soviet art could advance and improve only by existing in a state of eternal conflict with the forces of the literary bureaucracy. The writer who feared subjects that had not been pre-approved betrayed creativity on the altar of conventionality and curtailed the development of Soviet socialism.

⁵³ "It seems to me," wrote V. Chechik, "that in describing the dark sides of life the author of 'The Thaw' calls upon the reader to fight them, to strive toward the pure and bright." "On I. Ehrenburg's Novelette 'The Thaw,'" *Literaturnaya gazeta*, 5 October 1954. Translated, condensed text in: "Readers Join in Controversy Over 'The Thaw,'" *The Current Digest of the Soviet Press* 6, no. 49 (1954), 13-14.

⁵⁴ "A Letter to the Editor: Hushing Up Acute Problems," *Komsomolskaya pravda*, 17 March 1954. Translated text in: J. M., "The 'Official' Intervention in the Literary Battle," *Soviet Studies* 6, no. 2 (1954), 99-100.

confidence in passion, simplicity, and honesty. And as official writers reclaimed their voices, doublethink—alongside its inevitable by-product, doublespeak—was made increasingly anathema to the ideologically-mandated frankness of a comradely, Communist way of speaking.

Chapter Two: On Cultivating Khrushchevism (Or, the Narrative of the Secret Speech)

And what is a writer today?
 He is not a creator, but the guardian of thoughts.
 Yes, change, yes, but behind the speeches
 There's some kind of shady game.
 We talk about what yesterday we kept quiet,
 And keep quiet about what we did yesterday.

Yevgeny Yevtushenko, "Zima Station" (1956)

In the early hours of 25 February 1956, the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union filtered into its eleventh consecutive assembly day. Officially, the Congress's formal proceedings had come to a conclusion hours ago; journalists, guests, and delegates from 'fraternal parties' outside the U.S.S.R. had all been sent home. However, following a special vote in the Central Committee plenum, Soviet delegates were called back to the Kremlin to attend an additional closed session. The doors to the Great Hall were secured at midnight and Nikolai Bulganin, Chairman of the Soviet Council of Ministers, called the meeting to order. Since there was no stenographer present to keep official records of the proceedings and private note-taking had been strictly forbidden, the audience's attention was fully focused on the figure of Nikita Khrushchev who took the stage immediately after Bulganin's introduction and began to read from a pre-prepared text. His report, "On the Cult of Personality and its Consequences," was a four-hour long affair. It openly attacked Stalin's person, his political policies, and his place in the socialist order; it induced and endured the removal of members of the audience due to illness, as well as the acute disorientation (as

witnesses would later testify) of those remaining in their seats; and, it precluded any immediate debate or discussion to follow.

Historiography has memorialized this secret speech as an aggressive assault on the Soviet psyche that marked an official start to the ideological upheavals of the “Khrushchev Thaw.” On the one hand, it provided the first stable symbol for the dismantling of Stalin’s arbitrary and punitive political machine, the replacement of his cult of the individual with a ‘cult of the collective,’ and the institution of greater freedom of thought in Soviet society. On the other, it represented an irreversible admission of guilt that undermined the authority of Party ideology, exposed the fallibility of the Soviet system, and turned a corner on the ability of the few to lead the many. But although this defining moment of change was made central to a narrative of abrupt deconstruction ‘from above,’ it was in actuality less a sudden turning point than a point of climax in a protracted narrative of change. Khrushchev’s anti-Stalinist rhetoric emerged as a logical conclusion to his political strategy of 1953-1956: increasing personal prestige by gaining that which his maligned political ‘competitors’ lost.⁵⁵ Having gathered supporters in various political clans and rejected any notion of a ‘ruling troika,’ the U.S.S.R.’s perspicacious new First Secretary set his sights on replacing Stalin in the minds, if not the hearts, of the Soviet populace by way of gradual political criticism and ideological displacement.

In this, the cultural realm proved central—particularly where questions of censorship, so intimately tied to repression, were concerned. Acting as a self-appointed

⁵⁵ Nikolai Mitrokhin, "The Rise of Political Clans in the Era of Nikita Khrushchev," in *Khrushchev in the Kremlin: Policy and Government in the Soviet Union, 1953–64*, eds. Jeremy Smith and Melanie Ilic (New York, NY: Routledge, 2011), 27.

“chief spokesman”⁵⁶ on literary matters, Khrushchev initiated a re-evaluation of previously censored works, the rehabilitation of previously banned authors, and an almost wholesale amendment—if not removal—of Stalin’s presence in works of fiction and non-fiction alike as early as 1954. Indeed, while the establishment of a ‘Khrushchevian regime’ began with a *reversal* of Stalin’s rules of play as an indication of political succession (or, indeed, lack thereof), it was by way of a *re-definition* of these rules that Khrushchev established a set of ideological policies by which he could distinguish himself.

Herein lay the great struggle of 1954-1957, a period commonly characterized by its rapid-cycling ‘thaws’ and ‘freezes.’ Historical knowledge typically asserts that the secret speech deconstructed Stalinist precepts with such force that Khrushchev would spend the bulk of his years in power trying to quell its after-shocks. The more artists pushed against the boundaries of Soviet ideology, the more Khrushchev made a point of asserting Party authority over the arts. By appealing to a pre-existent narrative of springtime instability in the post-Stalin political realm, however, the benefits of a careful chronological and contextual analysis of his politics and the altogether different picture that such an exercise can paint has been repeatedly neglected. Casting clashes between writers and the state as isolated incidents has had the effect of emphasizing deviations from the ‘Party line’ as laid out in the secret speech—in colloquial terms, exemplifying a change of heart.

In actuality, Khrushchev’s policies found an important consistency at their base by seeking to establish a ‘middle path’ between conservative *apparatchiks* and revisionist liberals. While deviations were certainly made according to various political ‘moods,’

⁵⁶ The phrase is Herman Ermolaev’s.

these never lasted for long and certainly not without ultimately curbing overly-vocal enthusiasms of one camp or another. Moreover, Khrushchev's rejection of Stalinist repression continued to make space for politically-legitimate strategies of resistance—a fact which, in and of itself, challenges any notion of 'thaws' and 'freezes' appearing as uncontrollable shifts in the political weather.

As argued in the previous chapter, Stalin's death led Soviet writers to re-consider their organizational ideals and re-evaluate the question of 'who speaks for whom, and how.' This changed the tone of the relationship between the Soviet literary and political worlds; as Vera Dunham has noted, between 1953 and 1954, four elements combined to form "some sort of common denominator" among the artists:

(1) An unusual spirit of solidarity developed in the two leading liberal groups: the Moscow literary elite and the Leningrad literary elite. (2) Questions of autonomy of art were raised as against subservience to extrinsic purposes such as the "practical" demands of the government. (3) The new social critics attacked the Stalin era's old apple-polishers and called them *lakirovshchiki*, those who cover reality with lacquer and polish. (4) In the very texture of the output, problems of individualism versus the system and society were raised.⁵⁷

The relationship between the state and its writers took on a telling new dynamic—compromise by way of mutual disinterest for, while the literary world learned to examine itself one step removed from the world of pure Party politics, the state made no pretense of maintaining a Stalinist brand of perpetual control over cultural affairs.

In the lead-up to the Second Congress of Soviet Writers, held 15-26 December 1954, senior secretary of the Union of Soviet Writers Aleksei Surkov attempted to establish this balance as Party directive. On 12 April, his *Pravda* editorial on the one hand rebuked those who painted Soviet reality in "idyllic tones" and ignored the many shortcomings in literature and, on the other, criticized those who went to "the opposite

⁵⁷ Vera Dunham, "Insights from Soviet Literature," *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 8, no. 4 (1964), 387.

extreme” and described only “negative phenomena.”⁵⁸ In these early days of what Dunham so colourfully described as “‘corrective-liberal’ anti-Stalinist posture,” such a balanced approach caused several newspapers to err on the side of caution—most notably, *Literaturnaya gazeta* attacked Pomerantsev’s article “On Sincerity in Literature” while *Komsomolskaya pravda* declared itself mistaken in publishing Moscow University students’ letter in defense of Pomerantsev and seemed to compensate for its errors by attacking (in what J. M. called “the traditional manner of bullying as distinct from reasoned criticism”⁵⁹) Ehrenburg’s *Thaw*. However, such an about-face did not meet with official approval for, three weeks later, at an open meeting of Moscow writers, Surkov deprecated the manner of such attacks and, though critical of Pomerantsev and his ilk, was careful to employ more moderate terms.⁶⁰

This middle road was further pursued when the Second Congress of Writers began, a “trial balloon” for the secret speech that tested the general political atmosphere by clearing a path of compromise between orthodoxy and institutional-ideological reformation.⁶¹ On the one hand, its organizational processes retained the form of Stalinist days. Olga Forsh opened the meeting by calling on delegates to “express deep respect for the memory of Joseph Vissarionovich Stalin by standing.”⁶² Shortly thereafter, fervent *apparatchiks* reiterated that the “principal problem” of literature was “the education of the youth in the spirit of Communist morality ... in the spirit of boundless devotion to the

⁵⁸ “State and Tasks of Soviet Literature, Report by Comrade A. A. Surkov,” *Literaturnaya gazeta*, 16 December 1954, 3-5. Translated in “Surkov’s Keynote Speech at the Writers’ Congress-1,” *The Current Digest of the Soviet Press* 6, no. 50, 9-11.

⁵⁹ J. M., *The 'Official' Intervention in the Literary Battle*, 180.

⁶⁰ It is also significant to note that, during this period, Konstantin Simonov also criticized Ehrenburg’s *Thaw* but did so in a manner that focused on an appeal to the artist’s “reason” rather than authority and prejudice. Clearly, the Stalinist model of bullying authors was already being re-evaluated at a popular level.

⁶¹ Garrard and Garrard, *Inside the Soviet Writers' Union*, 65.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 65.

socialist motherland and the proletarian Internationale.”⁶³ On the other hand, however, liberal forces were given ample space to sound off against both the form and function of socialist realism. Mikhail Sholokhov’s speech disrupted seven days’ worth of his fellow writers’ “slight but stillborn animation” by criticizing the “drab stream of colorless, mediocre literature [that] continues to gush forth from the pages of the literary magazines and flood the market.”⁶⁴ Similarly, Konstantin Simonov attacked the “vulgarizing” tendency of critics to view socialist realism as a “single, unified style” and any failure to meet its standards as an example of wickedness and evil. Konstantin Fedin openly mocked those who would assemble Socialist Realist work according to a formula: “50 percent positive hero, 5 percent negative character, 1 percent social contradictions, 1 percent romantic enthusiasm, and 100 percent aquavit. ... Art is not created from recipes.”⁶⁵ Moreover, this notion of art being produced by way of talent and effort rather than step-by-step guides led Ilya Ehrenburg to condemn “capricious judgements” of literary works by “non-writers,” and insist that the aim of literary criticism should be to compare differing points of view:

It is right and proper to disagree about these issues, but discussing a book is not like arguing a case in court, and the judgment of this or that Union secretary should not be regarded as a sentence, with all the consequences that flow from such a verdict.⁶⁶

This clear re-evaluation of the process by which Soviet authors spoke for Communist ideology, and simultaneously defined the bounds of Soviet identity, was rounded off by a rather frank response from Surkov, this time concerning the need for a

⁶³ Ludmilla Turkevich, "The Second Congress of Soviet Writers," *Books Abroad* 30, no. 1 (1956), 31-34.

⁶⁴ Sholokhov, Mikhail Sholokhov, "Speech of M.A. Sholokhov to 2nd Congress of Soviet Writers, December 1954," <http://www.sovlit.com/2ndcongress/sholokhov.html> (accessed Feb/27, 2011).

⁶⁵ Garrard and Garrard, *Inside the Soviet Writers' Union*, 169.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 169.

return to a stronger sense of community and greater emphasis on the practice of criticism and self-criticism—which is to say, internal regulation.

No honest Soviet literary worker who has made mistakes of a cosmopolitan nature, be he writer or critic, is barred—if he revises his erroneous stand—from fruitful and friendly work with the entire family of Soviet writers for the benefit of the development of our literature. Relapses into alien and hostile tendencies in the practice and theory of literature have manifested themselves in “leftist” methods in criticism reviving the worst remnants [of] “proletkultism” and “RAPP” harshness. ... While unalterably opposed to all symptoms of alien ideology, at the same time, when criticizing works or articles containing errors, in the interests of literature we must not turn our criticisms into loud-mouthed campaigns belaboring writers. ... We must always remember that in dealing with a writer as a living being whose work is useful for literature and the community, we fight not him but his errors. By patiently explaining the nature of his errors, we are fighting for him as for a Soviet writer. We must have such an atmosphere in our literary criticism that, with regard to Soviet books by Soviet authors, we will erase once and for all such examples of petty-bourgeois attitudes as “mauling” authors, even when the books or manuscripts in question contain errors which should be severely and uncompromisingly criticized.⁶⁷

From an official perspective, the constant ideological scrutiny of the Stalin era had limited the natural development of Soviet culture; the hope seemed to be for the replacement of continuous policing ‘from above’ with a self-governing organization. Indeed, in March 1953, a number of administrative branches were added to the Ministry of Culture: artistic, cultural, and educational institutions; cinematography; broadcasting; television; and publishing fell into specific divisions, with the Ministry taking on quite a general directorial role in the activities of the unions of Soviet writers, composers, artists, and architects.⁶⁸ By championing a model of comradely persuasion as a circular space for discussion—a space which functioned on a basis of internal censorship by way of criticism, self-criticism, and recantation as a ritual of reconciliation—the Party rejected

⁶⁷ “Report on the Meeting of Moscow Writers,” *Literaturnaya gazeta*, 15 June 1954. Translated, condensed text in: M., *The 'Official' Intervention in the Literary Battle*, 19-20.

⁶⁸ Herman Ermolaev, *Censorship in Soviet Literature, 1917-1991* (Landham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1996), 144.

ensorship as an uneven dialogue between ‘judge’ and ‘defendant’ and, in effect, announced the end to a rhetoric of infallibility, which argued that perfection was both definable and reliably achieved in the Soviet Union.

These precepts led almost directly to the Twentieth Party Congress where, clearly, Khrushchev’s speech could not have arrived as a complete left-turn; more accurate to say that his assertion of the fact that collective leadership was “the sole correct form of Party leadership” emboldened already existent liberal leanings.⁶⁹ Works of literature adopted styles and contemplated subjects previously unheard of in Soviet literature. In 1956, Daniil Granin’s *Personal Opinion* addressed the space between ‘correctness’ and ‘honesty’ by discussing the clash between an enthusiastic young engineer and the disillusioned, self-interested head of a research institute. Aleksandr Yashin’s *Levers* pit peasant against partisan to portray Party leaders as arrogant, duplicitous, pedantic bureaucrats. Stalin-era abuses were taken up with gusto in Yury Nagibin’s *Light Window*, where a luxurious set of rooms is kept unused, and at great expense, to indulge the capricious son of a high official. And, perhaps most famously, Vladimir Dudintsev’s *Not by Bread Alone* championed creativity in the face of bureaucratic hostility in the tale of an engineer fighting to see his invention implemented by Party officials. At the same time, works of literary criticism took on an increasingly audacious tone in denouncing the current system of censorship as “intolerable” (Aleksandr Bek), demanding greater creative freedom (Konstantin Simonov), and even discussing the benefits to be gleaned from an international roundtable of writers (Mikhail Sholokhov).

⁶⁹ Ibid., 141.

Khrushchev's pronouncements on de-Stalinization fuelled the re-evaluation of past precepts but did not direct the shape or pace of this revisionism. As the historian B. Malnick noted,

Party spokesmen at the second Congress have tried ... to integrate the new insistence on individual character (not judgment) into the old insistence on collective purpose. ... It remains to be seen whether the writer's intrinsic and sometimes idiosyncratic interest in human character and situation, now admitted to be one of the chief components of his art, will be able to achieve the optimistic balance reasserted at the Congress.⁷⁰

This apparent willingness to give up the reins of de-Stalinization was not entirely intentional; between critiques of Stalinist failures, Khrushchev's speech had in fact condemned efforts to apply the principle of "peaceful coexistence" to the sphere of ideology and rebuked the "attacks in various forms against party leadership in literature and the arts" at the Twentieth Party Congress.⁷¹ However, the regime's cultural spokesmen appeared as outnumbered forces attempting to appease a rear-guard action; writers continually refused to acknowledge official signals. In the months following the Second Congress, it seems, already established discussions of 'who speaks for whom, and how' were extended to include consideration of 'who answers to whom, and over what' and resulted in an unexpectedly rapid diffusion of authority.

It is not surprising, then, that this surge in apparent cultural 'disobedience' would be connected with the apparent 'freeze' that soon followed. At the first All-Union Congress of Soviet Artists on 28 February 1957, Dmitri Shepilov noted briefly that "some art scholars" had simplified the question of the bond between art and politics:

⁷⁰ Malnick, *Current Problems of Soviet Literature*, 4.

⁷¹ Nikita Khrushchev, "De-Stalinization: Speech by N. S. Khrushchev on the Stalin Cult Delivered Feb. 25, 1956, at a Closed Session of the 20th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party," in *Khrushchev Speaks*, ed. Thomas Whitney (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 1963), 264.

For example, it would be wrong to regard the mere fact that an artist has chosen a topical theme as incontestable proof of the ties between his creative work and politics, between his work and life. It would be just as wrong and ridiculous to declare a superbly executed landscape as a work divorced from politics or lacking in ideas.⁷²

By February, *Kommunist* published an editorial on “The Party and the Development of Soviet Literature and Art” that softened the line on Stalinist excesses and the importance of enforcing Soviet ideals on behalf of the Central Committee:

Our enemies slander us, asserting that in the Soviet Union there has been established a “supervision” by the Party over literature and art. But that is the nature of enemies, to use every weapon against us; as we see, they do not disdain to use dirty slander. However, the actual fact is that Leninist principles of leadership in the sphere of literature and art are directed specifically against any “supervision,” against interference in the process of artistic creations. Of course, the consequences of the cult of personality could not but be reflected in literature and art. In the period of the cult of personality of J. V. Stalin, there were elements of administrative excess and groundlessly sharp criticism, etc. But was this fundamental, as they try to present it? Exaggerations are exaggerations, but the basic direction in the leadership of literature and art in that period consisted of the implementation of Marxist-Leninist principles in this sphere. It is expressed in the well-known resolutions of the Party Central Committee of 1946-1948 on questions of literature and art.⁷³

Indeed, the rest of the article went so far as to defend the notorious Zhdanov decrees and assert that the literary scene of 1956 had come to parallel that of 1946.

[C]an it be said that the publication of ideologically questionable works, such as took place in 1946, is not being repeated today? Unfortunately, it is impossible to say this. The facts show that there is sometimes insufficient responsibility and principle. This is particularly true of the journal *Novyi mir*. ... The example of *Novyi mir* shows that the resolution of the Central Committee “On the Journals *Zvezda* and *Leningrad*,” in part directed against the publication of ideologically bankrupt, harmful works, is still being carried out weakly, and not by all journals.⁷⁴

⁷² R. S., “A Note on the Congresses of Artists,” *Soviet Studies* 9, no. 1 (1957), 108-111.

⁷³ Edith Rogovin Frankel, “Literature and Politics Under Khrushchev: The Return of Tvardovskii to *Novyi Mir*, July 1958,” *Russian Review* 35, no. 2 (1976), 159.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 159.

At the Third Plenary Session of the Board of the U.S.S.R.'s Writers' Union, held 16-22 May 1957, it was duly noted that "the right of the Party to guide literature" had come under sharp attack from "the reactionary camp and from certain literary figures in Hungary and Poland."⁷⁵ The events of late 1956—rebellions in Poland and Hungary, the first inklings of an 'anti-Party' coup against Khrushchev—engendered a stark evaluation of the power invested in literary works. I. Anisimov was not the only one to speak of attacks on socialist realism which, though they had "failed completely" and provided "a great victory for us," nonetheless involved the attempted defection of "unstable elements."⁷⁶ A 19 December 1956 Central Committee letter on "The Intensification of the Political Work of Party Organizations among the Masses" had already drawn, according to Denis Kozlov, "unambiguous parallels between the Hungarian events and the activities of 'anti-Soviet elements' in Soviet literature, arts, humanities, and the media."⁷⁷ However, the conservative elements of the literary world moved swiftly now to show their support for this pronouncement and ensure its ratification in everyday literary politics. Speeches like B. Polevoi's "Friends and Enemies of Soviet Literature Abroad," P. Brovka's "Write more Penetratingly about the Homeland, the Party and Soviet Man," L. Novichenko's "Keep your Powder Dry," Ye. Dolmatovsky's "Constructive Experience

⁷⁵ "Concerning Certain Questions of the Development of Soviet Literature since the 20th Party Congress," *Literaturnaya gazeta*, 16 May 1957, 1-2. Translated, condensed text in: "Report to Writers' Session Defends Socialist Realism," *The Current Digest of the Soviet Press* 6, no. 21 (1957), 13.

⁷⁶ "For Party Principle, For Unity of Forces in Soviet Literature!," *Literaturnaya gazeta*, 21 May 1957, 1-3. Translated, condensed text in: "Moscow Writers Attacked at Nationwide Session," *The Current Digest of the Soviet Press* 6, no. 22 (1957), 3-10.

⁷⁷ Denis Kozlov, "Naming the Social Evil: The Readers of Novyi Mir and Vladimir Dudintsev's Not by Bread Alone, 1956-59 and Beyond," in *The Dilemmas of De-Stalinization: Negotiating Cultural and Social Change in the Khrushchev Era*, ed. Polly Jones (London: Routledge, 2006b), 87. This was by all accounts a warning that repeated and unchecked assault on the bounds of Soviet socialism would not be tolerated. Khrushchevism depended on the simultaneous enactment of "criticism and uncriticism," as Dunham so aptly phrased it, by showing itself no more inclined to endure literature focused on the flaws and faults of Soviet reality than it was willing to stomach Stalinist cultural products that beatified Soviet life. More importantly, it would not hesitate to act in the face of a heretofore unsurpassed solidarity between members of the cultural elite in Leningrad and Moscow.

to the Firing Line,” A. Timonen’s “Don’t Put Weapons in the Enemy’s Hands,” I. Anisimov’s “A Lack of Perspective,” Ye. Popovkin’s “Such Books Hinder our Work,” and N. Chertova’s “An Expensive Lesson” not only abounded with militaristic phrases that hinted at an ideological-political war, but abounded *tout court*.

The discursive prominence of what the Report of the Third Plenary Session called the “events that happened last year” formed the absolute centre of literary criticism in 1957.⁷⁸ The Central Committee’s rather straightforward association of dissidence in Poland and Hungary with the over-zealous criticism of socialist realism by ‘liberal factions’ signalled a new cautiousness in the regime that conservative elements quickly learned to appeal to. What it did not indicate was the beginning of a conscious ‘re-Stalinization’ in the cultural realm, beginning with *Kommunist*’s official warning in February and culminating with Khrushchev’s August dicta on the arts emphasizing “two sides to Comrade Stalin’s activity.”⁷⁹ Already in 1976, Edith Rogovin Frankel recognized that historical narratives established July 1957 as a ‘turning point’ in the drive for ideological orthodoxy—a ‘vigorous reaffirmation’ of party control over the arts, and a lead-up to Khrushchev’s partial rehabilitation of Stalin within a month’s time.⁸⁰ Indeed, historians typically followed one of two narrative tracks: that 1957’s general assault against Soviet writers functioned as a backlash against overly enthusiastic de-

⁷⁸ Ibid., 13-15.

⁷⁹ Nikita Khrushchev, “For Close Ties between Literature and Art and the Life of the People,” *Kommunist* no. 12, August, 11-29. Translated in: “Khrushchev on Stalinism, Literature and the Arts,” *The Current Digest of the Soviet Press* 9, no. 35 (1957), 4.

⁸⁰ See, for example, Max Hayward and Edward Crownley, *Soviet Literature in the Sixties* (New York, NY: Praeger Publishers, 1964).; Abraham Rothberg, *Heirs of Stalin: Dissidence and the Soviet Regime, 1953-70* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1972).; Chaké der Melkonian-Minassian, *Politiques Littéraires En U.R.S.S.* (Montréal, QC: Les Presses de l’Université du Québec, 1978).; Edith Rogovin Frankel, “Literature and Politics Under Khrushchev: The Return of Tvardovskii to *Novyi Mir*, July 1958,” *Russian Review* 35, no. 2 (1976); and Swayze, *Political Control of Literature in the U.S.S.R., 1946-1959* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962).

Stalinization⁸¹ or as a re-assertion of authority following Khrushchev's power struggle with the anti-Party group. But, as Frankel noted, connecting *Kommunist's* July publication to its earlier February arguments suggested a rather less charged narrative. The Central Committee's interest in Soviet literature rose and fell in accordance with current affairs, indicating that official pronouncements belonged to the heat of the moment more than a deliberate attempt to freeze the liberal Thaw. If in February the Central Committee's proclamations warned off domestic artistic groups, the July editorial signalled an end to hostilities by shifting its attacks from liberal writers to the Secretary of the Central Committee, former editor of *Pravda*, and supposed factionalist of the anti-Party group, Dmitri Shepilov, for spreading "unsound tendencies among a part of the art intelligentsia."

At the helm of the ideological sphere, Shepilov betrayed the trust of the Central Committee. He retreated from the line charted by the 20th Party Congress in questions of literature and the arts and took a liberal position that was at variance with Leninist adherence to principle. He was also two-faced in questions of art. In public statements and especially in his practical work he tolerated the unsound tendencies of some writers and art figures. ... Shepilov made pretenses of speaking from Party positions for giving free scope to the activities of the art intelligentsia, ignoring the fundamental demands on the ideological and artistic standard of creative work and implacability toward everything alien. ... In reality, Shepilov did not stand for genuine freedom of creative work but made concessions to anarchic elements. Highly indicative of Shepilov's positions are his speeches to the artists' and composers' congresses. Of course there is much that is correct in these speeches. Obviously! But the general tone of them is a liberal one. They lack a principled, Party presentation of a number of issues.⁸²

As Frankel noted, shifting blame for the encouragement of intellectual experimentation from the logical target that was Khrushchev (and, by extension, his policy of de-Stalinization) to Shepilov indirectly absolved Khrushchev from responsibility for "the

⁸¹ Typically supported by *Kommunist's* July publication, which condemned "the demagogues who before the congresses permitted themselves to attack Party guidance and the decisions of the Party Central Committee."

⁸² "For Leninist Adherence to Principle in Questions of Literature and the Arts," 4.

entire East European episode.”⁸³ Indeed, having retroactively associating the Hungarian debacle with the anti-Party group by way of Shepilov (despite the fact that, from November 1956 to February 1957, he had not in fact been concerned with cultural affairs), *Kommunist* only vaguely reiterated its February warning to domestic liberal artists.

The events in Hungary have demonstrated the consequences of completely disregarding Leninist adherence to principle in the question of the guidance of literature and art. The liberal attitude displayed toward demagogues by the former Party leadership had the result that a section of the writers caused great harm to ideological work in Hungary and contributed to the preparation of the counter-revolutionary uprising. Shepilov did not draw the necessary conclusions from this sad example and took a conciliatory attitude toward the unhealthy sentiments. As a result, some of the demagogic elements among the art intelligentsia were able to go to the limit.⁸⁴

Of course, one cannot focus exclusively on official pronouncements made via literary magazines and newspapers when Khrushchev himself took part in this spring and summer of literary debate, giving speeches at the writers’ conference of May 13; the reception of writers, artists, sculptors, and composers on May 19; and at a meeting of the Party *aktiv* in July. But for those historians who would point to these speeches as proof positive of Khrushchev demonstrating his involvement in—and authority over—the arts, Frankel notes quite simply that two of these speeches (the most strident of the lot) were, in fact, made months before the demise of the anti-Party group. And perhaps even more damaging to such a thesis is the response made by ‘errant’ writers and editors themselves, whose failure to capitulate in the face of conservatism has been characterized by the likes

⁸³ Frankel, “Literature and Politics Under Khrushchev,” 163.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 163.

of A. Gaev and Abraham Rothberg as a “conspiracy of silence.”⁸⁵ According to a 6 June report in *Literaturnaya gazeta*,

[Kaverin] spoke extremely one-sidedly about the work of the editorial board of *Literary Moscow*. He defended works published in the second volume.... In a speech of E. Kazakevich there was no sign of a wish to admit honestly the errors committed. ... [A. Yashin] acted as if even by this time he could not be certain what was wrong with ‘The Levers.’⁸⁶

Meanwhile, in Leningrad, out-and-out boycotts took place: “Many important writers simply did not honor our meeting with their presence.”⁸⁷ The writers’ intransigence in the face of a conservative backlash should, of course, be attributed at least in part to dedication to their craft and was by no means universal among liberals; eventually, a small group recanted at a June meeting of Moscow writers, having been singled out by Khrushchev himself. It seems, however, unlikely that such a small subset of writers would take on the full force of the party-state apparatus should it have truly been the directing force behind a resurgence of orthodoxy in 1957.

At any rate, by August, the state seemed satisfied with its pronouncements on the matter for it once again pursued balance in the cultural realm. Khrushchev’s speeches were edited down to a moderate tone and published as a single pamphlet: “For Close Ties between Literature, Art and the Life of the People.” The text was such that even Central Intelligence Agency recognized that the First Secretary was “holding out the olive branch to the nonconformists.”⁸⁸ “Any man can make mistakes,” he assured writers. It was “necessary to see not only what the man did yesterday, but also what he is capable of

⁸⁵ Rothberg, *Heirs of Stalin: Dissidence and the Soviet Regime, 1953-70*, 23; Hayward and Crownley, *Soviet Literature in the Sixties*, 20

⁸⁶ George Gibian, *Interval of Freedom: Soviet Literature during the Thaw, 1954-1957* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1960), 18.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 19.

⁸⁸ Office of Current Intelligence, *Soviet Staff Study: The Soviet Writer and Soviet Cultural Policy* Center for the Study of Intelligence, CIA, ([15 September 1959]). <http://www.foia.cia.gov/collection/caesar-polo-and-esau-papers>.

doing tomorrow.”⁸⁹ Indeed, while reiterating sharp comments about Margarita Aliger and Vladimir Dudintsev to emphasize the fact that he would not hesitate to apply direct pressure if creative artists remained out of line, he spoke approvingly of Aleksandr Tvardovsky and Fyodor Panferov, whose past work had come under sharp official criticism, and made favorable comments about the nonparty writer Sobolyev’s elevation to a leading position in the literary bureaucracy. More importantly, the pamphlet concluded with the Party once again taking a step back from literary matters. Having recognized the disruptive powers of the Moscow branch of the Union of Writers, Khrushchev heartily supported the formation of a new literary organization for the R.S.F.S.R. that would dilute the power of the Moscow-Leningrad liberals and pull conservative-liberal factionalist arguments back within the halls of the Writers’ Union. If anything, the goal was to cut down conservative attacks by defusing the threat of liberalism—reorganizing writers’ boards, editorships, and other Union-affiliated positions while bringing in young writers from the provinces to drown out ‘dissident’ voices.

This forcible interference did not indicate a shift away from the ideals of the Thaw but demonstrated the regime’s commitment to the principles of collective leadership. Having adjudicated a political-ideological matter, Khrushchev restored to the Writers’ Union a balance of power and invested it with guidelines to successful internal regulation—the ‘treatment’ rather than punishment of members for their transgressions. However stern in execution, this approach reintroduced the most basic principles of comradeship to the Soviet collective. This was post-Stalinism in action.

⁸⁹ Frankel, “Literature and Politics Under Khrushchev,” 165.

Chapter Three: On the Performance of Collective Leadership

Not more than one week had passed
 Since Jesus rode into the city,
 And palm branches were strewn in his path.
 Hosannas resounded in greeting.

Yet each day brought new gloom and fresh menace.
 Hearts untouched by love were unmelted,
 And eyebrows were clenched in contempt.
 And then came the postlude, the ending.

And the yards of the town were oppressed
 By skies filled with leaden foreboding,
 While Pharisees sought for their proofs
 And fawned like vixen before him.

And sinister powers of the temple
 Deferred to the judgment of scoundrels,
 And now he was damned with a fervour
 No less than the praise that resounded.

And there in the neighbouring gateway
 A throng of spectators now crowded,
 And they heaved and surged back and forth
 And jostled, awaiting the outcome...

Boris Pasternak, "The Evil Days" (1949)

By 1957, Khrushchev's commitment to the principle of collective leadership was well established and the general spirit of the Secret Speech clearly being borne out. But for members of the Writers' Union, the rules of interaction within this newly-invigorated community remained impressionistic at best. On the one hand, the concept of the collective encouraged comradely debate and the re-evaluation of existing artistic and ideological limits of thought. On the other, the ideal of leadership required a cohesive political mandate—particularly in the face of external threats, as the state's strict

behaviour during crises in Poland, Hungary, and the Kremlin itself had made very clear. “Collective leadership” existed, then, as a discursive space in which twinned concepts of cooperation and consolidation operated side-by-side, but advanced no clear mandate for official writers who balanced post-Stalinist debate against Khrushchevian political ‘moods’ and the shifting ‘signals’ they sent out.

This lack of clarity in the relationship between writers and the state became a central theme of 1956 and 1958, when the Soviet literary realm found itself thrust into an international spotlight by the ‘Pasternak affair,’ the international press’s *cause célèbre* of Soviet progressivism. In 1956, Soviet writer Boris Pasternak garnered international repute with the publication of his epic novel, *Doctor Zhivago*, and became the center of attention following his candidacy for the 1958 Nobel Prize in Literature. However, mounting interest in Pasternak’s work had little to do with a celebration of Soviet authorship; following a highly unusual editing process, *Doctor Zhivago* had been published and widely distributed across Europe, the Americas, and parts of Asia *before* receiving official approval in the Soviet Union. At the level of domestic affairs, this transgression against literary norms both highlighted and defied the survival of Stalinist restrictions on Soviet authors. *Tamizdat* had been a common means of securing international publication rights in the early 1920s but, following the implementation of ‘Socialism in One Country’ as a doctrine of ideological purity by way of intellectual isolation, publication abroad attracted accusations of “anti-Soviet behaviour” at best and arrest for “anti-revolutionary activity” at worst.⁹⁰ At the same time, at the level of

⁹⁰ The first refers to Boris Zamyatin’s Berlin publication of *We*, a CPSU satire and futuristic dystopia, in 1927. When copies began making their way back into the U.S.S.R., the Soviet state orchestrated a mass offensive against the author for anti-Soviet behaviour and banned all future publication of his works. The second refers to Boris Pilnyak’s 1929 publication of the Trotskyite novel *Mahogany* through a Berlin

international affairs, *Doctor Zhivago*'s lack of domestic publication provided the state's detractors with accusations of 'cultural backwardness' and released Pasternak's risqué evaluation of the October Revolution as an uncensored attack on the founding myth of Soviet socialism from within Soviet quarters.⁹¹ The international press's sensationalist reportage on this 'dissident' novel 'smuggled' out of Russia for causing "soviet heads ... fear and trembling" was also soon followed by a Nobel Prize nomination—or, as those selfsame soviet heads considered it, led directly to the international promotion of dissent against the Soviet state.⁹²

The question of cultural rights versus political interests thus invited large power plays to the relatively small arena of Soviet literature, and brought to extremes an otherwise routine exploration of Khrushchevism. The role of the press, both domestic and foreign, became particularly important in deciding the discursive meaning and political direction of the Pasternak affair. Between 1956 and 1958, the global news service's sensationalist reportage established a strong narrative: Pasternak, embodying the characteristics of Pomerantsev's 'true writer,' challenged literary convention by acting in the best interest of his art while the Soviet state regressed to a Stalinist brand of paranoia and coercion to maintain an image of consistent identity. Thus, the Soviet state was condemned for continuing to continue to pursue "the totalitarian's way"⁹³ while Pasternak became a symbol of the fact that, even in the Soviet Union, "man's free spirit

émigré press. His work attracted an attack similar to Zamyatin's but, if Pilnyak remained prolific, it was only until his arrest and purge for "anti-revolutionary activities" a few years later.

⁹¹ Roscoe Drummond, "Pasternak's Book... Why Soviet Heads View it with Fear and Trembling," *The Washington Post* 1958, Nov 5.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Marc Slonim, "But Man's Free Spirit Still Abides," *New York Times*, 7 Sep 1957.

still abides.”⁹⁴ This dynamic was soon inscribed into the historical record, through the publication of Robert Conquest’s 1961 manuscript, *The Courage of Genius: The Pasternak Affair*.⁹⁵ Since then, historians have struggled to look beyond a tale of ‘conviction versus tyranny,’ arguing that any attempt to contextualize the affair would depreciate the hardships Pasternak suffered in the production and protection of his art. The Pasternak affair therefore exists as an almost wholly moralistic, rather than cultural, event.

And yet, the Pasternak affair had never exclusively been ‘Pasternak’s affair.’ From the outset, the international press and Central Committee of the Soviet Union imbued both Pasternak’s person and his work with emblematic significance. And, at its conclusion, Pasternak’s public trial would take on all the markings of a modern-day Soviet *charivari*: an apparent transgression against the community whose campaign of denunciation (what New York Times journalist Max Frankel called an “over-all impression ... that Mr. Pasternak would be ostracized but not otherwise molested”⁹⁶) revolved around themes of betrayal against, punishment by, and restitution to the collective. If the human element must be carefully acknowledged, it is critical to consider the idea that this incident was a highly symbolic moment in which the Soviet writer and

⁹⁴ As New York Times journalist Marc Slonim put it, “Even if we admit that communism represents a part of Russian life, mentality and history, it does not encompass all the country’s traditions and aspirations. A whole world of passion, yearnings, ideals and creativity exists next to or underneath the Communist mechanism. It lives, it stirs, it grows. [Pasternak and his *Doctor Zhivago* are] the genuine voice of this other Russia.” (*But Man’s Free Spirit Still Abides*, BR1).

⁹⁵ Robert Maguire commented of Conquest’s analysis, “If genius is courageous because it stands apart, [then] a society like the Soviet which demands total involvement subjects genius to especially severe tests of courage. Pasternak’s whole creative life, as Robert Conquest sees it, was a series of increasingly difficult tests; *Dr. Zhivago* showed that he had passed them all” (“The Pasternak Affair (Book Review),” *Russian Review* 21, no. 3 (1962), 292).

⁹⁶ Max Frankel, “Soviet’s Writers Assail Pasternak: Colleagues Heap Scorn Upon Nobel Prize Novelist as He ‘Joyfully’ Accepts Honor,” *The New York Times*, 26 Oct 1958.

Soviet state established the dynamics for their newly-reaffirmed sense of collective leadership.

In 1956—during the surge of liberalism that followed Khrushchev’s Secret Speech but preceded the Central Committee’s *Kommunist* editorials—Boris Pasternak released a full, uncensored manuscript of his latest novel to Sergio d’Angelo, a visiting journalist from the Italian section of Radio Moscow and impresario for Milan publisher Giangiacomo Feltrinelli. Pasternak’s work had received little attention from literary agents in recent months and the author, fearing that such a drawn-out process would not result in acceptable editorial requests, seized the initiative to bring his novel to an audience. This decision to bypass the proper channels was a risk; the author laughed, while handing d’Angelo his manuscript, that the Italian was “hereby invited to watch [him] face the firing squad.”⁹⁷ And, perhaps more importantly, this risk was difficult to defend. Friends and family chided Pasternak for his hasty behaviour while Nikolai Bannikov, editor at Goslitizdat (the state publishing house for literature), was astounded by his conduct: “But what has he done! Doesn’t he know this is a period when the novel might eventually be published?”⁹⁸ Bannikov warned that Pasternak had not just risked the publication of *Doctor Zhivago*, but ruined his chances with Goslitizdat’s plans to publish a large one-volume edition of his verse—which is to say, ruined his chances for much-needed financial support.⁹⁹

⁹⁷ Lazar Fleishman, *Boris Pasternak: The Poet and His Politics* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990), 275.

⁹⁸ Ivinskaya, *A Captive of Time*, 203.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 203.

The thought process behind Pasternak's challenge to the literary bureaucracy was—and, indeed, is—difficult to qualify.¹⁰⁰ However, some shade of remorse clearly enticed the author to reconsider his actions. At Pasternak's request, his mistress and 'literary agent' Olga Ivinskaya asked d'Angelo to return the manuscript. But the journalist had already passed it on to Feltrinelli who, sensing an opportunity, now refused to send it back. Ivinskaya therefore sought out Vadim Kozhevnikov, a close friend and editor at *Znamia* who had already published some verses excised from *Doctor Zhivago*. Kozhevnikov clearly sensed the possibility of a scandal, for he immediately referred Ivinskaya to the head of the Cultural Department of the Central Committee, Dmitri Polikarpov. And Polikarpov, in turn, immediately set about rushing domestic publication. Anatoli Kotov, director of Goslitizdat, was instructed to "have a look at the novel, appoint someone to edit it, and make a contract with Pasternak. The editor should think about what passages to change or cut out, and what can be left unchanged."¹⁰¹ Simultaneously, a variety of stalling tactics were directed towards Feltrinelli: the Italian Communist Party was asked to persuade him to reconsider publication; Goslitizdat confirmed their plans to publish and asked him to hold off until the book had appeared in the Soviet Union; Pasternak himself was urged¹⁰² to telegram a plea that he return the manuscript "for revision"; and, in October, Surkov unexpectedly joined a group of Soviet poets on their visit to Italy in order to meet with the publisher personally.

¹⁰⁰ According to Olga Ivinskaya, his mistress and oft-unreliable biographer, Pasternak often acted hastily and without much thought for the effects his actions might have. There is certainly precedent for a certain impulsiveness to Pasternak's actions, but it seems exceedingly unlikely that the author would have defied the literary bureaucracy so clearly without sparing a thought as to the spirit in which it might be received—and, indeed, punished.

¹⁰¹ Ivinskaya, *A Captive of Time*, 203.

¹⁰² Under "insistent pressure" according to Ivinskaya, and under threat of arrest according to Guy de Mallac's *Boris Pasternak, His Life and Art* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1981).

If Feltrinelli was at first amenable to delaying publication until the book was released in the Soviet Union, his patience wore thin following a series of delays and, when Goslitizdat failed to meet its publication deadline of September 1957, he refused further negotiation.¹⁰³ The world premiere of *Doctor Zhivago* took place in Italy on 23 November 1957. The original printing of 6,000 copies sold out that very day; within six months, the novel spread across the globe and went through eleven printings.¹⁰⁴ And all along, the global news service trumpeted the “lesson of Zhivago”—that Communist tyranny could “neither abide nor withstand Pasternak’s ‘irresistible power of unarmed truth.’”¹⁰⁵

Conversely, in the U.S.S.R., the push for a domestic release dwindled to nothing. As d’Angelo commented in his memoir, “it would now seem that Pasternak no longer exists. The newspapers make no mention of him, nor is anything of his being published, notwithstanding the fact that it was announced some time ago that two volumes of his poetry were soon to come out.”¹⁰⁶ As far as the literary establishment was concerned, the damage was done and Pasternak would be made to fall into literary obscurity.¹⁰⁷

Despite a measure of editorial posturing in the international press, the Soviet state did not immediately let loose its wrath against Pasternak for challenging the established

¹⁰³ Most notably, editorial concerns and Pasternak’s poor health—although these were transparent stalling tactics as well. Of greatest consequence was the fact that Aleksei Surkov, then senior secretary of the Union of Soviet Writers, held a generally poor opinion of Pasternak (likely fuelled by jealousy) and was hostile to the publication of his work.

¹⁰⁴ Ivinskaya, *A Captive of Time*, 212.

¹⁰⁵ William Henry Chamberlin, “Lesson of Zhivago,” *The Wall Street Journal* (Nov 4, 1958), 8.

¹⁰⁶ Sergio d’Angelo, *The Pasternak Affair*, 2007), 130. <http://www.pasternakbydangelo.com>.

The “guardians of literature” remained ever vigilant; d’Angelo received reports of attempts to block *Doctor Zhivago*’s publication in other countries, with Surkov going to Gallimard in Paris and Fyodor Panferov visiting Collins in London. However, these efforts came to naught.

¹⁰⁷ Pasternak wrote to his sister Josephine in the summer of 1958 of “a constant, though temporarily alleviated *political* threat” to his position; his translation contracts had been almost entirely suspended and his mere presence at literary events continually threatened to give local hacks an occasion to voice their disapproval. (Christopher Barnes, *Boris Pasternak, A Literary Biography*, Vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 338.)

order of things. Certainly, his actions concerning the manuscript's release were condemned: after the news of his encounter with d'Angelo reached literary officials, an enlarged meeting of the secretariat of the Writers' Union convened to discuss his "unseemly behavior." However, cries of "treachery" had been met with equal praise for "an impeccable work of literature which could reflect glory on the Russian people" and even Surkov, his most strident critic, could not help but agree that it seemed "quite in character" for Pasternak to have acted out of spontaneity rather than malice.¹⁰⁸ The author was, then, disassociated from the incident with Feltrinelli and not held responsible for the international stature of this incident.

Indeed, Pasternak experienced next to no repercussions—despite proving far from amenable to the literary establishment's meddling in his creative work. When informed that Polikarpov had secured *Doctor Zhivago*'s publication through Goslitizdat, he dashed off a memo:

I am glad that Anat[oli] Konst[antinovich] will read the novel (though he will not like it). I am by no means intent on the novel being published at the moment, when it cannot be brought out in its original form.

I have other wishes:

- 1) That my translation of *Maria Stuart* should be published. (Why does Yemelyanikov [(presumably another editor at Goslitizdat)] object? Doesn't he like the translation?)
- 2) That the volume of my selected verse should be brought out in a large edition.¹⁰⁹

Some weeks later, when Aleksandr Surkov angered the author by demanding that he send a telegram asking Feltrinelli not to publish the novel at all, d'Angelo recalls that

[h]e was in a very stubborn mood and responded to our pleas with irritation. Neither our friendship nor sympathy for him, he said, almost shouting, entitled us to speak in favor of this move: we did not respect him and were treating him like a man without dignity. And what would Feltrinelli think of him after he had just

¹⁰⁸ Ivinskaya, *A Captive of Time*, 216-217.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 204.

written to say that the publication of *Doctor Zhivago* was the main aim in his life? Wouldn't he think him either a fool or a coward?¹¹⁰

Pasternak composed and sent the telegram; however, this was not done without some subterfuge—the text was in Russian, while Pasternak and Feltrinelli had an understanding that only telegrams sent in French should be trusted. For good measure, Pasternak also urged d'Angelo to tell Feltrinelli “not to say one word in response to this bogus correspondence, to ignore it completely,” and “to make sure that this type of coercion does not fool anyone, that no country pays any attention to this request, and that the books come out as soon as possible.”¹¹¹ He even wrote to Feltrinelli himself on 2

November:

I can find no adequate words with which to express my gratitude to you. The future will reward both of us for the shameful humiliations we have suffered. Oh, how happy I am that neither you, nor Gallimard, nor Collins was fooled by those idiotic, brutal appeals accompanied by my signatures (!), signatures that were all but false and counterfeit because they were extorted from me by fraud and violence... Soon there will be Italian, French, English and German *Zhivagos*, and perhaps one fine day, although geographically distant, Russian *Zhivagos*!!¹¹²

Private intransigence by way of artistic pride proved a standard of Pasternak's relationship with the U.S.S.R.'s cultural bosses. In 1954, while looking back on the Stalin years, Pasternak had written to his cousin: “You cannot imagine the liberties I allowed myself: My future was shaped in precisely the way I myself shaped it.”¹¹³ Now, as Conquest intoned, Pasternak continued to pluck up all manner of courage to preserve the rights of his genius.

But it is precisely this question of rights that gave the Pasternak affair its particularly discursive configuration. If the author escaped a great deal of trouble in the

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 210.

¹¹¹ d'Angelo, *The Pasternak Affair*, 107.

¹¹² Ibid., 110-111.

¹¹³ Fleishman, *Boris Pasternak: The Poet and His Politics*, 275.

1940s, it was largely by way of Stalin's instruction that no one touch "this cloud-dweller" and Pasternak's own resolution to "live more and more as though in an attic."¹¹⁴ By contrast, the author's situation under Khrushchev allowed him to claim at least some small measure of authority in debating the publication of a novel he had all but forced onto the state. In this clash of rights and interests, Pasternak, members of the literary establishment, and administrators of state actively pursued the give-and-take of collaboration. It was only once the '*Doctor Zhivago* incident' took on the proportions of the 'Pasternak affair'—or, as Max Freedman so aptly contended, once Pasternak was considered less as a man than as "a bludgeon in the cold war"—that cooperation as a form of mutual coercion turned into out-and-out intimidation.¹¹⁵

The process was a gradual one. When the Swedish Academy awarded Boris Pasternak the Nobel Prize in Literature for his "important achievement both in contemporary lyrical poetry, and in the field of the great Russian epic tradition," the party-state apparatus had immediately found occasion to pause.¹¹⁶ United States Secretary of State John Foster Dulles was hardly the only one to believe that the Nobel Prize had been awarded for the novel *Doctor Zhivago*, "condemned and not printed in the Soviet

¹¹⁴ Ivinskaya, *A Captive of Time*, 248.

¹¹⁵ "Pasternak's Exploitation Criticized by Newsman." *The Times Herald* 17 Apr 1959.

¹¹⁶ "The Nobel Prize in Literature 1958: Boris Pasternak." Official Web Site of the Nobel Prize, http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/literature/laureates/1958/press.html

In and of itself, Pasternak's nomination was no cause for suspicion; his name has been proposed almost every year since 1946. However, the citation's emphasis on the breadth of his work, rather than his most recent literary contributions, seemed prematurely defensive. Whether the Swedish Academy contemplated the political ramifications of this award before granting it or not is a matter of some debate in historiography; historians such as Guy de Mallac and Lazar Fleishman have asserted that Minister of Foreign Affairs Andrei Gromyko had been approached "about the Soviet government's attitude towards this idea," while the more contemporary Christopher Barnes asserts that the Swedish Academy had "never tailored its awards to political considerations" and that "rumours of behind-the-schemes enquiries about the appropriateness of this or any other award have been vigorously denied." (Barnes, *Boris Pasternak, A Literary Biography*, 340). In either case, however, it is significant that Pasternak's position in the running for the Prize was no more a surprise than a delight—and also, at this stage, no more than a nuisance.

Union.” Indeed, the situation was described to Khrushchev in almost identical terms.¹¹⁷ The cultural establishment, however, pursued a more diplomatic tact: Minister of Foreign Affairs Andrei Gromyko commented quite early on that, although Pasternak’s latest novel was his only work of note in upwards of 10 years and a weak and mediocre one at that, the author himself deserved recognition for his talents as a poet and translator.¹¹⁸ At the same time, the Central Committee quietly began considering contingency measures in the event of Pasternak’s victory. In early October, Surkov and the writer Boris Polevoi proposed a limited run of 5,000-10,000 copies of *Doctor Zhivago* to address the question of cultural ‘backwardness’¹¹⁹ while, by contrast, Polikarpov and Propaganda Chief Leonid Ilyichev deliberated on the means by which Pasternak could be prevailed upon to reject the award.¹²⁰ No fury, no ideological bluster, and no reprisal against Pasternak showed itself as of yet; the party-state apparatus measured its reactions.

In fact, the motivation behind such planning lay in the fact that the Central Committee’s actions depended in large part upon Pasternak’s; even for one so far from being a free agent, the decision-making process could only ever be ‘helped along.’ On the very day that Pasternak’s award was made public, Polikarpov ordered Fedin to visit the writer at his Peredelkino dacha and urge him to both reject the Nobel Prize and distance himself from his novel. The move was a well-calculated one; asking Pasternak to refuse

¹¹⁷ Evgeny Pasternak, *Boris Pasternak: The Tragic Years, 1930-1960*, trans. Michael Duncan (London: Collins Harvill, 1990), 235.

¹¹⁸ Fleishman, *Boris Pasternak: The Poet and His Politics*, 288.

¹¹⁹ Barnes, *Boris Pasternak, A Literary Biography*, 339.

¹²⁰ According to Pasternak’s long-time correspondent Jacqueline de Proyart, the terms were as follows: 1) publication of the *Novy mir* letter rejecting *Doctor Zhivago*, a Writers’ Union letter condemning the award, and Pasternak’s correspondence with Feltrinelli requesting that *Zhivago*’s publication be cancelled; 2) if the award were shared by Pasternak and Sholokhov, demonstrative refusal by the latter; 3) if Pasternak were sole winner, persuading Fedin and Ivanov to prevail on him, as friends, to reject the Prize. See: Jacqueline de Proyart, *Le dossier de l’affaire Pasternak: Archives du comité central et du Politburo* (Paris: Gallimard, 1995).

his prize struck at his authorial pride, and the mere fact of Fedin's participation in such an endeavour sent a strong message. However, Pasternak responded with more fury than fear, rejecting both Fedin's suggestion to reject the prize and his request that the two return to his dacha, where Polikarpov waited. The very next day, he telegraphed Anders Österling his acceptance of the award: "Immensely thankful, touched, proud, astonished, abashed."¹²¹

In the eyes of the Central Committee and the upper echelons of the cultural establishment, this was an unqualified affront to the interests of the Soviet state. Despite a having been presented with a clear association of his Nobel award with *Doctor Zhivago* and associated *Doctor Zhivago* with political rather than literary interest, Pasternak failed to distance himself from the political discourse of the Western press. The question was not, then, one of suppressing liberal thought but one of loyalty, of unity, and of comradely behaviour.

In the face of such individual aspiration and the threat of international embarrassment, the Khrushchev regime sought a corrective in banning *Doctor Zhivago* for 'anti-Soviet' content and condemning Pasternak in the U.S.S.R.'s domestic press. Such efforts would hardly pre-empt a global conversation on the state of artistic freedom in the U.S.S.R.—but in exhibiting a sense of ideological commitment and political purpose, the Soviet state could rework its international appearance from a defensive to an active station. From that point forward, there followed a consistent stream of abuse directed at Pasternak as an individual, as an author, and as a Soviet citizen. On 25 October 1958, *Literaturnaya gazeta* published an editorial denouncing him as a "traitor,"

¹²¹ "The Nobel Prize in Literature 1958: Boris Pasternak."

a “malicious philistine,” a “slanderer,” a “Judas,” and an “enemy hireling.”¹²² It also ran the full text of *Doctor Zhivago*’s rejection letter, as penned by the Board of Editors of *Novyi mir*. The next day, 26 October, a vitriolic personal assault in *Pravda* charged Pasternak as a “bourgeois ‘individualist ... who opposes his narcissist ‘I’ to the mighty socialist feeling of ‘we,’ [and] imagines himself a ‘hero’ of individualism,” a “superfluous person, a lone individual,” a “self-enamored Narcissus” whose “dark nook of individualism” arranged for him “a kind of émigré existence [and] severed vital ties with the collective of Soviet writers.”¹²³ On 27 October, discussion turned into action: a joint meeting of the Presidium of the Board of the Union of Writers of the U.S.S.R., the Bureau of the Organizational Committee of the Union of Writers of the R.S.F.S.R., and the Presidium of the Board of the Moscow Section of the Union of Writers of the R.S.F.S.R. voted to expel Pasternak from the cultural community to which he now had only barely belonged. The language of condemnation emerging from official quarters was manifestly the language of segregation, branding Pasternak a “black sheep” whose literary activity had “long run dry in egocentric seclusion, in self-isolation from the people and the times”¹²⁴ as a means of explaining his ‘betrayal.’

In order to address the charges laid against him, Pasternak appealed heavily to the concept of comradeship to give context to—or, in simpler terms, justify—his behaviour. This was initially done by laying claim to the rights of the individual within the

¹²² B. Agapov, B. Lavrenev, K. Fedin, K. Simonov, and A. Krivitsky, “Letter from the Members of the Editorial Board of *Novy Mir* to B. Pasternak,” *Literaturnaya gazeta*, 25 October 1958, 3-5. Translated in: “*Novy Mir* Editors’ Letter Rejecting ‘*Doctor Zhivago*,’” *The Current Digest of the Soviet Press* 10, no. 43 (1958), 6.

¹²³ D. Zaslavsky, “Reactionary Propaganda’s Clamor Over a Literary Weed,” *Pravda*, 26 October 1958, 6-7. Translated in: “*Pravda* Denounces Pasternak and the Nobel Award,” *The Current Digest of the Soviet Press* 10, no. 39 (1958), 6.

¹²⁴ “Voice of Moscow Writers – Resolution of General Meeting of Moscow Writers Held Oct. 31, 1958,” *Literaturnaya gazeta*, 1 November 1958, 3. Translated in: “Pasternak Expelled from Union of Soviet Writers,” *The Current Digest of the Soviet Press* 10, no. 43 (1958), 4.

community: his letter to the joint meeting of the Writers' Unions contested, point by point, the charges laid against him without actually cowing to pressure:

- I continue to believe that it was possible to write *Doctor Zhivago* without ceasing to be a Soviet writer—particularly as it was completed at a time of the publication of V. Dudintsev's novel *Not by Bread Alone*—which created the impression of a thaw, of a new situation...
- I gave the manuscript of *Doctor Zhivago* to an Italian Communist publisher, and expected that the translation would be censored. I was willing to cut out [unacceptable] passages...
- I do not regard myself as a parasite...
- I do not have an exaggerated opinion of myself. I asked Stalin to let me write as best I can...
- I thought *Doctor Zhivago* would be the object of friendly criticism...
- Sending my telegram of thanks to the Nobel committee, I did not think that the prize was awarded to me for this novel, but for the totality of my work, as was formulated in the proclamation of the award. This conclusion seemed logical to me, since my candidacy was put forward at a time when the novel did not exist and no one knew about it...
- Nothing will induce me to give up the honor of being a Nobel Prize winner, or force me to refuse the honor shown to me as a contemporary writer living in Russia and, hence, a Soviet citizen. But I am ready to transfer the Nobel Prize money to the Committee for the Defense of Peace...
- I know that the question of my exclusion from the Writers Union will be taken up because of social pressure. I do not expect justice from you. You may have me shot, or expelled from the country, or do anything you like. I forgive you beforehand. All I ask of you is: do not be in too much of a hurry over it. It will bring you no increase either of happiness or of glory.¹²⁵

Such an approach underestimated the gravity of the situation in the Party's eyes, however. Even if only forty-two members (roughly one-third) of the Writers' Union were present for this reading; even if a mere twenty-nine of those forty-two members publicly condemned Pasternak (almost exclusively rehearsing the official line); and even if five members¹²⁶ stormed out of the meeting, the decision to vote Pasternak out of the Writers' Union was agreed upon 'unanimously.'

¹²⁵ Ivinskaya, *A Captive of Time*, 227-228.

¹²⁶ These were Yevgeny Yevtushenko, Ilya Ehrenburg, Margarita Aliger, Aleksei Arbuzov, and Aleksandr Tvardovsky.

Evidently, the symbolic nature of Pasternak's ejection from the Writers' Union belonged to a discourse both obvious and accessible to participants in Soviet culture. With such liberals as Vera Panova and close friend Aleksandr Chukovsky signing on to Pasternak's "political and moral downfall, his betrayal of the Soviet Union, of socialism, peace and progress," the question in the literary establishment centred less on the specifics of *Doctor Zhivago's* supposedly anti-Revolutionary themes than a broader sense of betrayal against Soviet literature and its sense of community.¹²⁷ Pasternak's attempt to justify himself had little effect; this expulsion signalled a shift towards complete comradely conformity against him. On 28 October, the author contemplated suicide—an impulse to give up that quickly softened into an impulse to give in as he, instead, cabled the Swedish Academy to refuse his Prize. Later that day, Ivinskaya met with Polikarpov to ask, "in concrete terms," what should now be done.¹²⁸

Whether by way of Pasternak's symbolic disassociation from the Party by way of his expulsion from the Writers' Union, by way of his refusal of the Nobel Prize, or by way of both, Polikarpov intimated that the official line was now shifting: he recommended that Pasternak not pay "too much attention to all the shouting" but "must now say something."¹²⁹ The meaning of this ambiguous phrase was soon clarified. On 30 October, a young admirer of Pasternak employed at the Authors' Rights Department counseled Ivinskaya to have Pasternak write a personal plea to Khrushchev, just a few days before TASS, the official news agency of the Soviet Union, announced that Khrushchev had declared himself amenable to the possibility of Pasternak's emigration. Similarly, on 31 October Polikarpov 'requested' that Pasternak prepare a public statement

¹²⁷ Barnes, *Boris Pasternak, A Literary Biography*, 345.

¹²⁸ Ivinskaya, *A Captive of Time*, 236.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 236.

on 31 October and “find a way of making his peace with the Russian people” the day before *Literaturnaya gazeta* published an entire series of citizens’ letters on “Rage and Indignation: Soviet People Condemn B. Pasternak’s Behavior.”¹³⁰

Historiography has, at this juncture, typically privileged the details of Pasternak’s interaction with Khrushchev as the most telling symbol of condemnation. On 2 November 1958, Pasternak published in *Pravda* his letter to the First Secretary in which the author, “tied to Russia by birth, by life and work,” stressed that leaving the motherland would “equal death” for him.¹³¹ But the blow delivered by the Soviet reading public would have, arguably, been much greater. As Denis Kozlov has rightly argued, the assumption that the Soviet regime duped and manipulated a passive and unthinking audience into chastising Pasternak is quite mistaken: “The readers watched the press, but its language did not necessarily dictate the language of readers’ responses. The relationship between the two was also based on experience and memory.” Like newspaper reporters, most readers “declared basic acceptance of the existing order, seeking to present social problems as technical rather than systemic, and personifying responsibility for tensions and economic failures,”¹³² by building their own life experiences into the Pasternak debate and “expanding it into a polemic about the historic meaning of the revolution, the Civil War, the intelligentsia, and the fate of the existing social order.”¹³³ This added an important dimension to criticism of Pasternak’s work for, where condemnation had up to this point focused on literary mistakes by way of political

¹³⁰ Barnes, *Boris Pasternak, A Literary Biography*, 349.

¹³¹ Boris Pasternak, “Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union: To Nikita Sergeevich Khrushchev,” *Pravda*, 2 November 1958, 2. Translated in: “Letter to Khrushchev,” *The Current Digest of the Soviet Press* 10, no. 39 (1958), 5.

¹³² Kozlov, *Naming the Social Evil*, 6.

¹³³ Denis Kozlov, “‘I Have Not Read, but I Will Say’: Soviet Literary Audiences and Changing Ideas of Social Membership, 1958–66,” *Kritika* 7, no. 3 (2006), 562.

missteps, the negative reactions conjured by way of readers' interpretations lent a new legitimacy to the idea that Pasternak's works, whatever their intentions might have been, indeed constituted a betrayal of the Soviet collective.¹³⁴

Some letters dismissed Pasternak out of hand: Z. Arakelyan, Department manager in the Kirov Factory, had written in to *Literaturnaya gazeta* with the plain assertion that Pasternak "doesn't only hate the Soviet order and the Soviet people, but hates humanity in general, especially the working people." However others, like People's Artist of the U.S.S.R. Eugen Kapp in Tallin, drew clear connections between *Doctor Zhivago's* foreign publication and its effect on the U.S.S.R.'s public image:

I was outraged and angered to find out about the traitorous deed of B. Pasternak, who sold his dirty slander abroad, where it was made into another anti-Soviet sensation. Only a person far removed from the people, blinded with hate, can smear the achievements of the Great October Revolution, and close his eyes to the great changes that happened in the years of Soviet power in the material and spiritual life of the people.

Most striking of all were the letters like that of senior excavator Phillip Vasiltsov, which interpreted Pasternak's work as a personal assault on memories and values developed in childhood:

My father, a famous cattleman on the collective farm #18 in Rostov region, did not get drafted during the Great Patriotic War, he was exempt. But when the Germans pushed on, he volunteered. He even said to us kids: I have to defend the October achievements, we are nobody without them.

I was still a boy but understood it well. Father returned from the war heavily wounded. But he didn't spill blood in vain; it was for the right cause. We, three brothers, worked on the collective farm. Then I went on to build the Stalingrad hydroelectric power plant. For the past 6 years I work as a senior operator of the crane-excavator #681. We are finishing the great project on Volga.

¹³⁴ Here it is important to note that Kozlov's close analysis of the means by which the editors of *Literaturnaia gazeta* collected, sorted through, and ultimately published these letters demonstrates great attention to accurately and proportionately representing the views that were sent in. However, Kozlov argues that, since most of these letters were not found among the newspaper's archival holdings, they must have been forwarded on to the Central Committee.

I work on building a dam. It stormed overnight; there is a lot of damage. It was a difficult night, but today everything is repaired.

But what kind of storm is in the Pasternak's puddle? Like a frog in a swamp. Sometimes my excavator just picks up a small swamp together with a frog and throws it away. A frog may be upset and croak. But as a builder I don't have time to listen to this. We are busy.

No, I didn't read Pasternak. But I know our literature is better off without frogs.¹³⁵

Soviet citizens did not view the Civil War as “a paragraph in a newspaper or a textbook”—or, indeed, as the casual backdrop for a novel of love and war.¹³⁶ Thus, despite the problematic nature of their exposition to the Pasternak affair—chiefly, over-exposure to a storm of condemnation sanctioned by the state, and highlighted with only the most antagonistic passages of *Doctor Zhivago*—the Soviet reading public still found reason to condemn Pasternak three times over: firstly as a possible ‘White Guard’ who denied the Revolution (a contravention of *ideinnost'*); secondly, as a traitor to the Soviet system in the face of international scrutiny (a contravention of *partiinnost'*); and thirdly, as a writer incapable of appealing to, and representing, the realities of Soviet society (a contravention of *narodnost'*).

It follows that, on 5 November, having worked closely with Ivinskaya and Polikarpov, Pasternak sent the Central Committee a letter of public apology to be printed in *Pravda* the very next day. Noting that his “respect for the truth” compelled him to break his silence, Pasternak rather dejectedly admitted to all manner of confusion and error on his part, then stressed once again the fact that he had not been persecuted but that all his actions had been “entirely voluntary.”¹³⁷ The worst came to an end, leaving

¹³⁵ “Rage and Indignation: Soviet People Condemn B. Pasternak’s Behavior,” *Literaturnaya gazeta*, 1 November 1958.

¹³⁶ Kozlov, “I Have Not Read, but I Will Say,” 566.

¹³⁷ Boris Pasternak, “To the Editors of Pravda,” *Pravda*, 6 November 1958, 4. Translated in: “The Public Apology,” *The Current Digest of the Soviet Press* 10, no. 39 (1958), 5.

Pasternak an essential ‘non-person’ in the U.S.S.R.; his name disappeared from the press, the Central Committee removed blocks on his mail, offers for translation work reappeared, and members of the Western press were allowed to travel to Peredelkino uninhibited.

Ivinskaya called it “victory through renunciation”—a conclusion whose terms of appeasement still exceeded her conservative, Stalinist expectations.¹³⁸ Despite enduring blows to his pride, to his finances, and to his literary standing; suffering the almost complete desertion of friends and colleagues; and bearing criticism for his capitulation in the foreign news service that had whipped up the Affair in the first place, Pasternak had returned by and large unscathed to a stable state of affairs. Beyond this tale of bullying and betrayal lay a practical lesson in the functional realities of Khrushchev’s ‘middle road’ policy and the consolidation of the Soviet collectivity. Between 1956 and 1958, the Soviet party-state apparatus’s approach to literary production had been rather haphazard; an increasingly broad condemnation of past precepts had only ever translated into the piece-meal definition of new directives. In its rather drawn-out unfolding, to say nothing of its extremist edges, the Pasternak affair brought to bear three years’ worth of pronouncements on the relationship between the entitlements of Soviet authors and the privileges of the state on a newly re-affirmed basis of comradely consolidation.

Some six months after the affair’s conclusion, the Third Congress of Soviet Writers made explicit that which had been fought out between Pasternak and the Central Committee. Encouraged by what Harold Swayze deemed “an atmosphere of calm” among typically opinionated writers, Khrushchev acknowledged the “rather sharp character” of recent ideological struggles and sought to lay out a cohesive guide to

¹³⁸ Ivinskaya, *A Captive of Time*, 251.

literary production.¹³⁹ If his speech sustained orthodoxy by reinstating Leninist ideological-political imperatives, it embraced ‘dissent’ by way of literary experimentation and devised provisions for the re-integration of those who deviated too far in their pursuit of the spirit, rather than the letter, of Soviet law.¹⁴⁰ On the one hand, writers were enjoined to take greater responsibility in distributing amongst themselves the “sweet candies” of approval and the “bitter pill” of criticism, thereby allowing the Party to maintain a friendly and tolerant attitude. On the other hand, tolerance for ‘errant writers’ would be reserved for those who willingly surrendered to prevailing forces—recantation, as a highly symbolic bending of will to the demands of the majority, remained the condition for any remission of sins.¹⁴¹

The cultural-ideological developments of the 1950s had ushered in a new age of maturity for Soviet literature. Concurrently awaked to their place in the teleological development of communism and to the potentialities of the socialist realist form, the writers of the Khrushchev era pursued their own creative ‘coming of age’ and navigated its attendant growing pains with admirable determination. The conversive environment of 1953 carried forward, allowing arguments to blend with experience in the creation of a fully-fledged literary practice. Khrushchev’s ‘middle road’ hemmed in official literary discourse, but strengthened the literary establishment’s ability to expand the limits of orthodoxy by means of literary work. Thus, the writer was freed from exclusive reliance on the dictates of party bureaucrats, and assumed responsibility to let his conscience as a

¹³⁹ Swayze, *Political Control of Literature in the U.S.S.R., 1946-1959*, 203.

¹⁴⁰ Most notably the newly-elected Board of the Writers’ Union, which was imbued with a significant liberal bias.

¹⁴¹ Nikita Khrushchev, “On the Soviet Writers’ Lofty Mission, to Serve the People,” *Soviet Highlights* 1, no. 1 (1959), 1-14.

loyal Communist guide him. This was freedom of the press, Soviet-style: autonomy within the bounds of political loyalty and comradely behaviour.

Conclusion

If historical accounts of the Khrushchev era come to us as most chronicles do—through the cumulative efforts of established academics and armchair commentators, foreign correspondents and chance observers—narratives of the Thaw have always attracted a unique element. Balancing polemical misinformation against fascination for Eastern Europe’s ‘great experiment,’ Soviet historians have demonstrated a particularly sincere desire to understand socialism in its cultural, political, and ideological development in order to unpack the dynamics of the Soviet ‘everyday.’

This vested interest in typifying an experiential ‘reality’ has, however, done more to impose an external logic of Truth on the historical record than represent the ‘small-t’ truths of history through the internally-consistent logic of Soviet ideology. Motivated by an ironically Socialist Realist conflation of authority and authenticity, studies of the “Khrushchev Thaw” have done much to paint over the very ‘Sovietness’ of the past with the morality of a different age, culture, and ideology. As American literary critic Lionel Trilling explained,

At the behest of the criterion of authenticity, much that was once thought to make up the very fabric of culture has come to seem of little account, mere fantasy, or ritual, or downright falsification. Conversely, much that culture traditionally condemned and sought to exclude is accorded a considerable moral authority by reason of the authenticity claimed for it, for example, disorder, violence, unreason.¹⁴²

The realm of Soviet culture encompassed more than subservience to a dominant discourse, as dictated by the Party-state apparatus. Soviet readers and writers internalized the precepts of socialist ideology and maintained a sense of agency in which concern for political and ideological correctness manifested as argument, opposition, and even

¹⁴² Lionel Trilling, *Sincerity and Authenticity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1972), ii.

apparent dissent. If, during the twenty-odd years of Stalin's reign, society had struggled to stake a claim in the official discourse of the Soviet Union, the period between 1953 and 1958 was one in which Soviet citizens consciously rededicated themselves to collective leadership—which is to say, to a comradely model of discussion, argument, and ultimate agreement—as a foundational ideal of Soviet socialism. At a popular level, this emerged as a vocalized hope for new government policies and the return to a more open societal atmosphere.¹⁴³ At a cultural-ideological level, Soviet authors made “acutely aware” of their audience and its demand for “guidance in the conduct of the new life it was trying to fashion” pursued a restoration of authority and possibility in the production of Soviet culture.¹⁴⁴ And, at a political level, the party-state apparatus encouraged—both officially and unofficially—a diffusion of its power that allowed it to adopt a directive rather than despotic role in matters of cultural ideology.

The general tenor of the Thaw was no accident; rather the ‘thaws’ and ‘freezes’ ubiquitous to historical representations of the era constituted what Emily Lygo aptly defined as a “precarious constellation of power and influence” determined to balance social demands for change with Party demands for regeneration.¹⁴⁵ While writers, editors, and critics regained their authority as producers of Soviet culture (re-establishing, as Evgeny Dobrenko argued, “the real aesthetic nucleus, the main aesthetic event of

¹⁴³ As Oleg Kharkhodin recognized, a significant influx in even the most benign of street-side conversations took place: “With the fear of denunciation to the secret police substantially reduced, people gathered just ‘to chew the fat’ (*trepatsia*): parties of thirty to forty people would get together for no other reason than the pleasure of unrestrained communication. Their communication often took the form of a loyal critique of the regime’s dysfunctions. And from these gatherings, in full accord with Habermas’s schema, a public sphere of *belles lettres* emerged from interfamily communication and in its turn later became politicized.” *The Collective and the Individual in Russia: A Study of Practices* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 313.

¹⁴⁴ B. Malnick, “Current Problems of Soviet Literature,” *Soviet Studies* 7, no. 1 (1955), 10.

¹⁴⁵ Emily Lygo, “The Need for New Voices: Writers’ Union Policy Towards Young Writers, 1953-1964,” in *The Dilemmas of De-Stalinization: Negotiating Cultural and Social Change in the Khrushchev Era*, ed. Polly Jones (London: Routledge, 2006), 206.

Socialist Realism”: a meeting of popular spirit with Party-mindedness), Khrushchev’s regime established itself as a guiding force whose variously ‘liberal’ or ‘orthodox’ course corrections maintained a sense of discursive balance.¹⁴⁶

Considering the important sense of agency both claimed and expressed by Soviet citizens, historiography’s tendency to privilege a narrative of dissidence is understandable. But the everyday hero of the 1950s belonged to Soviet culture, and emphasized a continuation rather than disruption of Soviet thought. Indeed, the official writer of the U.S.S.R. worked alongside the Soviet Union’s literary establishment to maintain a sense of dedication to, and discussion with, the party-State apparatus.

This was the literary legacy of early Khrushchevism. Between 1953 and 1956, the Writers’ Union experienced a historically unprecedented influx of authors aged 30 and under. Partially, this was the natural attraction of “youthful exuberance, irreverence, idealism and individuality” to the Union’s very public crisis of confidence, and the opportunities inherent to its regeneration of artistic forms and functions.¹⁴⁷ More significantly, however, this demographic shift was a conscious effort by the literary establishment to “grow younger with the aid of talented young people,” connect with the realities of a post-Stalinist Soviet culture, and cultivate young talent’s inherent promise of innovation.¹⁴⁸ As the first generation of ‘true-born’ Soviet citizens instructed in the precepts of the Communist Party since birth, writers who came of age during the 1950s seemed particularly poised to sustain the tenor of this decade of possibility.

¹⁴⁶ Evgeny Dobrenko, *The Making of the State Reader: Social and Aesthetic Contexts of the Reception of Soviet Literature* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 138.

¹⁴⁷ Deming Brown, *Soviet Russian Literature since Stalin* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 141.

¹⁴⁸ Lygo, *The Need for New Voices: Writers' Union Policy Towards Young Writers, 1953-1964*, 201.

This “third generation” internalized the hard-won rights of their more established peers: a shift in the main thrust of socialist literary authorship from an objective writer asking “Who is he?” to a subjective writer-as-fighter wondering “Who am I?” Where the 1920s produced literature notable for its revolutionary *sturm und drang*, the 1930s yielded the first production novels, and the 1940s paraded Soviet glory by way of war-time themes, the historical context of the 1950s engendered a generation of authors seized by self-reflection and skepticism. The demystification of Stalin’s cult of personality had hardly inspired confidence in charismatic heroes or in the immutability of Party ideology; coupled with an artistic re-emphasis on the expansive “burning problems of humanity,” the current context of Soviet culture led young talent to exhibit an inclination for “individualistic sentiments” that, as Boris Solovyev argued, risked the writer’s “active, militant, creative position” as a “builder of life.”¹⁴⁹ In point of fact, however, those young writers who rose to prominence (and, by extension, reached an audience) did so on the pre-condition of avoiding a complete existential and moral crisis of belief, chiefly by way of divorcing the idea of communism from Stalinism and the humanist ideals of collectivism from the practices of the state.¹⁵⁰ Their “contemporary style” adopted a rather balanced sense of proportions: in form, a preference for short stories and essays recounted in a modern jargon; in content, an autobiographical style delivered as a stream

¹⁴⁹ Boris Solovyev, “Is This the Way to Educate Young People?,” *Literaturnaya gazeta* (23 July 1957), 1-3. Translated, condensed text in: “Youth Magazine Assailed for its Literary Criticism,” *The Current Digest of the Soviet Press* 9, no. 31 (1957), 12.

¹⁵⁰ V. M. Zubok, *Zhivago's Children: The Last Russian Intelligentsia* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2009), 171.

of ‘sincere consciousness,’ with courage and optimism for the future counterbalanced by subtle irony and stern judgment for the past.¹⁵¹

As evidenced in a 1963 questionnaire circulated by *Voprosy literatury*, young writers spent much of the 1950s absorbing liberalist arguments for sincerity, realism, and a complex rendering of both positive and negative phenomena. Their own works therefore re-evaluated the Socialist Realist connection between the study and the portrayal of life. Most rejected the traditionalist belief that Soviet society could only be experienced through “a spell of work” (Vasily Aksyonov) or devoting oneself to “any special problem” (Yury Kazakov) by arguing that the study and experience of life was an “unconscious process” (Aksyonov), the result of having “simply lived” (Yevtushenko), for “to study life means to live” (Justinas Marcinkevicius). New emphasis was placed on accessing the dynamics of Soviet reality through a sense of inner biography: “What does it mean to ‘study life’? Does it mean learning or thinking about it? Every person does that” (Anatoli Kuznetsov),¹⁵² “We are first and foremost the representatives of our own generation, our task is to see the main thing and to write about it” (Anatoli Pristavkin).¹⁵³ The “main thing” for the writer of the 1960s became a new heroism of the everyday that challenged the “positive hero” as a mainstay of Soviet literature.

Since its inception, Soviet art had consciously set itself against the heroes of 19th-century bourgeois literature and their “overwhelming predilection for defeat.”¹⁵⁴ The Soviet hero, developed in the hands of such writers as Vissarion Belinsky, Nikolay

¹⁵¹ Evgeny Dobrenko and Ilya Kalinin, "Literary Criticism during the Thaw," in *A History of Russian Literary Theory and Criticism*, eds. Evgeny Dobrenko and Galin Tihanov (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2011), 186.

¹⁵² Gaisaryan, “Creative Writing, Life, Experiments,” 127.

¹⁵³ “Young Soviet Writers about Themselves (Responses to the Voprosy Literatury Questionnaire, 1962).” SovLit. Accessed 10 March, 2013. <http://www.sovlit.net/youngwriters/>.

¹⁵⁴ Rufus W. Mathewson, *The Positive Hero in Russian Literature* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1975).

Dobrolyubov, and Nikolay Chernyshevsky, was a force of positivism: “the leading champion of his epoch, the inspired fighter for the victory of the people’s cause,” a figure who straddled the line between literary imagination and ideological criticism.¹⁵⁵ His life phases “symbolically recapitulate[d] the stages of historical progress as described in Marxist-Leninist theory,” and his story functioned as a repository for official myths.¹⁵⁶ By diffusing the positive hero’s expansive virtues and projecting his experiences onto a broad social plane, the young writer humanized heroism—effectively, challenged socialist realism’s method of inspiring the Soviet reader to active self-improvement.¹⁵⁷

But if raising questions of artistic purpose and official myth left young writers as easy targets for the criticism of established (and, most particularly, orthodox) writers,¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁵ Evgeny Dobrenko, "Literary Criticism and the Institution of Literature in the Era of War and Late Stalinism, 1941-1953," in *A History of Russian Literary Theory and Criticism*, eds. Evgeny Dobrenko and Galin Tihanov (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2011), 180.

¹⁵⁶ Katerina Clark, *The Soviet Novel: History as Ritual* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 10.

¹⁵⁷ If the positive hero was as reliably positive as he was correct, fear of his pre-determined trajectory had already raised, in the 1920s and '30s, concern for his ability to represent the truth of Soviet life in its revolutionary development—the central tenet of the socialist realism under development at the time. At the time, a solution was found in the artificially-created strawman of the ‘ideal hero’ as an antipode to those authors who warned against the “varnishing” of reality. The ideal hero became “taboo in Soviet criticism, which had stated that the romantic had become the everyday, that is, the ideal had become real” and effectively quelled concerns that the positive hero encouraged fantasy rather than realism. Intriguingly, on 13 July, *Komsomolskaya pravda*’s published A. Protopopova’s letter, “The Strength of the Positive Example,” which asserted that “the creation of the image of the hero” was “a fundamental issue of contemporary Soviet literature” and inspired party-loyal critics to lobby for the deliberate re-establishment of the ideal hero under a different label: “the image of our contemporary,” “the simple great man,” and even “the hero of our days.” The Romantic ideal hero of the Stalin era threatened to gain that which the positive hero lost, finding some measure of support in the young writers’ predilection for the ‘heroism of the everyday’ and its profound distaste for the uninspired dogma of objective realism. Ultimately, however, very little came of this—particularly since the ideal hero still fell short of the lyrical desires of this new generation (Dobrenko and Kalinin, *Literary Criticism during the Thaw*, 188).

¹⁵⁸ To give a brief chronology: At the Young Writers’ Conference of 1956, Vasiliy Azhaev, that reliable voice of orthodoxy, castigated young talent for failing to bring “the breath of events to literature, the vital breath of our life” to post-Stalinist literary forms. Similarly, P. Voronin railed against the “conceit and arrogance” of those who did not give enough serious thought to their “ideological and literary ‘luggage’” and were not properly grounded in their “mission in life.” (“Young Writers’ Conference in Moscow.” *Soviet Literature*, no. 5 (1959), 187-188). In the summer months of 1957, a variety of articles and editorials internalized the lessons of Polish and Hungarian literature to identify a dangerous “lack of purpose” in recent young prose. In *Komsomolskaya pravda*, A. Ionov warned that, while “every work is written in the name of some idea,” this “idea” remained unclear among young writers. (A. Ionov, “Talent Wasted on Trifles,” *Komsomolskaya pravda* (21 June 1957), 4. Translated, condensed text in: “Letter to

the culture of the 1950s echoed Suren Gaysarian's assertion that artistic experiments and innovations were "explained by the demand of life and the tremendous beneficial changes taking place in our time."¹⁵⁹ The party-state apparatus consciously dedicated itself to supporting young writers in their artistic development. In 1953, the literary establishment carefully revived a system of mentorship by which young writers would be encouraged in their modernization of the socialist realist form. The works of new authors were pushed through to publication in established literary newspapers. Several new youth journals were established. The Young Writers' Conference was reconfigured as an extension of the more notable Plenary Meeting of the Writers' Union. And, on occasion, even the First Secretary took up the cause by approving the publication of controversial works or appointing "symbols of the spirit of youthful liberalization" to positions of power.¹⁶⁰

In the dialogic openness re-established over the course of the 1950s, both hopes and fears of cultural re-evaluation were carefully managed. It is, then, imperative to recognize that repression of perceived 'dissidence' in the cultural realm existed alongside consistent 'affirmative action' that granted Soviet writers to find both the means and the space in which to voice their opinions. As M. Kuznetsov declared at a 1964 symposium on the "salient characteristics" of recent literary output, the writer of the 1950s took the initiative in active struggle "for the triumph of new attitudes; his is the position of a

the Editor," *The Current Digest of the Soviet Press* 9, no. 26 (1957), 31.) Some weeks later, Boris Solovyev further criticized the editors and columnists of *Molodaya gvardiia* for their consistent portrayal of a humanist 'anti-hero': "an inveterate individualist who is interested only in himself" and could only be found "saying a great deal about the needs of the individual and his 'normal desires' and saying too little about his duties and his responsibility to the people, to society and to the country." (Solovyev, "Is This the Way to Educate Young People?," 24.)

¹⁵⁹ Gaisaryan, "Creative Writing, Life, Experiments," 127.

¹⁶⁰ Most notably, Khrushchev personally approved the publication of Yevgeny Yevtushenko's "Heirs of Stalin" and Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovitch* (in the case of the latter, rejecting suggestions for narrative cuts on the grounds that no one had the right to alter the author's vision) and oversaw Yevtushenko and Aksyonov's appointment to the editorial board of *Yunost*.

fighter.”¹⁶¹ Moreover, the great educative power of Thaw-era literature now consisted in the fact that “the reader not merely wants to emulate the hero, to be ‘like the hero,’ but actually becomes him.”¹⁶² Thus, if the early 1960s introduced a new chapter in the realm of Soviet culture, with young writers embodying the characteristics of the Soviet hero to set themselves in stark opposition to the state, it is important to remember that the root of their determination lay in community rather than dissent.

In the annals of Soviet history, the “Khrushchev Thaw” has routinely functioned as narrative shorthand for post-Stalinist dissonance between ‘official’ orthodoxy and ‘unofficial’ liberalism. But if a clash between cultural forces undeniably shifted the dominant discourse between 1953 and 1958, the practice of political-ideological expression was less one of resistance than of cooperation. By recalling historical attention to the Soviet Union’s foundational principle of collective leadership, and allowing this cultural-political-ideological axis to bring new subtleties to established wisdom, this thesis has not made—or, indeed, claimed—any ‘new’ understanding of Soviet society. Its purpose is much simpler: to reintroduce Soviet ideology to the shifting contexts of Soviet history and imbue Soviet history with the ideological continuities of Soviet ideology—to follow the endless cycle of interaction between literature and life.

¹⁶¹ Kuznetsov, “When Did the New Period Begin?,” 59.

¹⁶² Olga Berggolts in Vera Alexandrova, “Post-Stalin Ferment in Soviet Writing,” *The Saturday Review* (30 Jan, 1954), 9.

Bibliography

Primary Documents

- “A Letter to the Editor: Hushing Up Acute Problems.” *Komsomolskaya pravda* (17 March 1954). Translated text in: J. M., "The 'Official' Intervention in the Literary Battle." *Soviet Studies* 6, no. 2 (1954): 179-186.
- “Concerning Certain Questions of the Development of Soviet Literature since the 20th Party Congress.” *Literaturnaya gazeta* (16 May 1957): 1-2. Translated, condensed text in: “Report to Writers’ Session Defends Socialist Realism.” *The Current Digest of the Soviet Press* 9, no. 21 (1957): 13-15.
- “For Leninist Adherence to Principle in Questions of Literature and the Arts.” *Kommunist* no. 10 (July 1957): 13-22. Translated, condensed text in: “Shepilov is Blamed for ‘Liberalism’ in the Arts.” *The Current Digest of the Soviet Press* 9, no. 33 (1957): 3-6.
- “For Party Principle, For Unity of Forces in Soviet Literature!” *Literaturnaya gazeta* (21 May 1957): 1-3. Translated, condensed text in: “Moscow Writers Attacked at Nationwide Session.” *The Current Digest of the Soviet Press* 6, no. 22 (1957): 3-10.
- “On I. Ehrenburg’s Novelette ‘The Thaw.’” *Literaturnaya Gazeta* (5 October 1954). Translated, condensed text in: “Readers Join in Controversy Over ‘The Thaw.’” *The Current Digest of the Soviet Press* 6, no. 49 (1954): 13-14.
- “Pasternak's Exploitation Criticized by Newsman.” *The Times Herald* (17 Apr 1959).
- “Rage and Indignation: Soviet People Condemn B. Pasternak’s Behavior.” *Literaturnaya gazeta* (1 November 1958).
- “Report on the Meeting of Moscow Writers.” *Literaturnaya gazeta* (15 June 1954). Translated, condensed text in: M., J. "The 'Official' Intervention in the Literary Battle." *Soviet Studies* 6, no. 2 (1954): 179-186.
- “State and Tasks of Soviet Literature, Report by Comrade A. A. Surkov,” *Literaturnaya gazeta* (16 December 1954): 3-5. Translated in “Surkov’s Keynote Speech at the Writers’ Congress-1.” *The Current Digest of the Soviet Press* 6, no. 50 (1954): 9-11.
- “The Nobel Prize in Literature 1958: Boris Pasternak.” Official Web Site of the Nobel Prize. Accessed Mar 26, 2013.
http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/literature/laureates/1958/press.html.

- “Voice of Moscow Writers – Resolution of General Meeting of Moscow Writers Held Oct. 31, 1958.” *Literaturnaya gazeta* (1 November 1958): 3. Translated in: “Pasternak Expelled from Union of Soviet Writers.” *The Current Digest of the Soviet Press* 10, no. 43 (1958): 3-4.
- “Writers Discuss Current Literary Problems: Third Plenary Session of the Board of the Writers’ Union.” *Soviet Literature* no. 2 (1962): 126-143.
- “Young Soviet Writers about Themselves (Responses to the Voprosy Literary Questionnaire, 1962).” SovLit. Accessed 10 March, 2013. <http://www.sovlit.net/youngwriters/>.
- “Young Writers' Conference in Moscow.” *Soviet Literature* no. 5 (1959): 186-189.
- Agapov, B., B. Lavrenev, K. Fedin, K. Simonov, and A. Krivitsky. “Letter from the Members of the Editorial Board of Novy Mir to B. Pasternak.” *Literaturnaya gazeta* (25 October 1958): 3-5. Translated in: “Novy Mir Editors’ Letter Rejecting ‘Doctor Zhivago.’” *The Current Digest of the Soviet Press* 10, no. 43 (1958): 6-11, 32.
- Azhaev, Vasily. “Answer to the Reply.” *Literaturnaya gazeta* (4 December 1953): 3. Condensed, translated text in: “Appeal to Reorganize Writers’ Union Stirs Controversy: Azhaev’s Rebuttal.” *The Current Digest of the Soviet Press* 6, no.50 (1953): 8.
- . “Respect your ‘Literary Workshop.’” *Literaturnaya gazeta* (11 November 1953): 2-3. Condensed, translated text in: “Appeal to Reorganize Writers’ Union Stirs Controversy: Azhaev’s Reply.” *The Current Digest of the Soviet Press* 6, no.50 (1953): 3.
- Bezymensky, Aleksandr and Yuri Korolkov. “For Real Democracy in the Writers’ Union.” *Literaturnaya Gazeta* (13 November 1953): 3. Condensed, translated text in “Appeal to Reorganize Writers’ Union Stirs Controversy: In Support of Azhaev.” *The Current Digest of the Soviet Press* 6, no.50 (1953): 5.
- Central Committee of the VKP. “On Restructuring Literary-Artistic Organizations.” Accessed December 13, 2010. <http://www.sovlit.com/decree1932/>.
- Chamberlin, William Henry. “Lesson of Zhivago.” *The Wall Street Journal* (1958, 4 Nov).
- Chukovsky, Kornei. *Diary, 1901-1969*. Translated by Heim, Michael. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005.
- d'Angelo, Sergio. *The Pasternak Affair*, 2007.

- Drummond, Roscoe. "Pasternak's Book... Why Soviet Heads View it with Fear and Trembling." *The Washington Post* (1958, Nov 5).
- Ehrenburg, Ilya. "The Writer's Work." *Novyi mir* (October 1953). Condensed, translated text in R. S. "From Soviet Publications: Three Soviet Artists on the Present Needs of Soviet Art." *Soviet Studies* 6, no.4 (April 1954): 412-445.
- Fadeyev, Aleksandr. "The Work of the Union of Soviet Writers: Speech Given at the Fourteenth Plenum of the Board of the Writers' Union, 29 October 1953." Translated text in: *Soviet Literature* no.2 (1953): 114-123.
- Frankel, Max. "Soviet's Writers Assail Pasternak: Colleagues Heap Scorn Upon Nobel Prize Novelist as He 'Joyfully' Accepts Honor." *The New York Times* (1958, 26 Oct).
- Gaisaryan, Suren. "Creative Writing, Life, Experiments." *Soviet Literature* no. 3 (1963): 130-134.
- Ionov, A. "Talent Wasted on Trifles." *Komsomolskaya Pravda* (21 June 1957): 4. Translated, condensed text in: "Letter to the Editor," *The Current Digest of the Soviet Press* 9, no. 26 (1957): 30-31.
- Ivinskaya, Olga. *A Captive of Time*. Translated by Hayward, Max. Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, 1978.
- Kaverin, Veniamin, Emmanuil Kazakevich, Mikhail Lukonin, Samuil Marshak, Konstantin Paustovsky, Nikolai Pogodin, and Stepan Shchipachev. "To Fellow Workers." *Literaturnaya gazeta* (26 October 1953): 2. Translated text in: *The Current Digest of the Soviet Press* 6, no.44 (1953): 13.
- Kazakevich, Emmanuil, Nikolai Pogodin, Stepan Shchipachev, Samuil Marshak, Veniamin Kaverin, Konstantin Paustovsky, and Mikhail Lukonin. "Reply to Comrade Azhaev." *Literaturnaya gazeta* (23 November 1953): 2. Condensed, translated text in: "Appeal to Reorganize Writers' Union Stirs Controversy: Rebuttal to Azhaev." *The Current Digest of the Soviet Press* 6, no.50 (1953): 6.
- Khrushchev, Nikita. "De-Stalinization: Speech by N. S. Khrushchev on the Stalin Cult Delivered Feb. 25, 1956, at a Closed Session of the 20th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party." In *Khrushchev Speaks*, edited by Whitney, Thomas, 204-265. Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 1963.
- . "For Close Ties between Literature and Art and the Life of the People." *Kommunist* no. 12 (August, 11-29): 11-29. Translated in: "Khrushchev on Stalinism, Literature and the Arts." *The Current Digest of the Soviet Press* 9, no. 35 (1957): 3-10.

- . “On the Soviet Writers’ Lofty Mission, to Serve the People.” *Soviet Highlights* 1, no. 1 (1959): 1-14.
- Kuznetsov, M. “When Did the New Period Begin?” *Voprosy Literaturny* no. 7 (1964). Translated text in: “The Salient Characteristics of our Recent Literary Output.” *Soviet Studies in Literature* 1, no. 2 (1965): 56-64.
- Lenin, Vladimir Ilyich. *The Lenin Anthology*, edited by Tucker, Robert C. New York, NY: Norton, 1975.
- Office of Current Intelligence. *Soviet Staff Study: The Soviet Writer and Soviet Cultural Policy*: Centre for the Study of Intelligence, CIA, 15 September 1959.
- Pasternak, Boris. “Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union: To Nikita Sergeevich Khrushchev.” *Pravda*, 2 November 1958, 2. Translated in: “Letter to Khrushchev.” *The Current Digest of the Soviet Press* 10, no. 39 (1958): 5.
- . “To the Editors of Pravda.” *Pravda* (6 November 1958): 4. Translated in: “The Public Apology.” *The Current Digest of the Soviet Press* 10, no. 39 (1958): 5.
- Pomerantsev, Vladimir. “Sincerity in Literature.” *Novyi mir* no.12 (1953). Condensed, translated text in R. S. “From Soviet Publications: Three Soviet Artists on the Present Needs of Soviet Art.” *Soviet Studies* 6, no.4 (April 1954): 412-445.
- S., R. “A Note on the Congresses of Artists.” *Soviet Studies* 9, no. 1 (1957): 108-111.
- Salisbury, Harrison. “Pasternak's Firmness.” *New York Times*, 1958, Nov 9.
- Sarnov, B. “This Would Have Been Impossible Ten Years Ago.” *Voprosy Literaturny* no. 7 (1964). Translated text in: “The Salient Characteristics of our Recent Literary Output.” *Soviet Studies in Literature* 1, no. 2 (1965): 92-98.
- Sholokhov, Mikhail. “Speech of M.A. Sholokhov to 2nd Congress of Soviet Writers, December 1954.” Accessed Feb 27, 2011.
<http://www.sovlit.com/2ndcongress/sholokhov.html>.
- Slonim, Marc. “But Man's Free Spirit Still Abides.” *New York Times* (1957, Sep 7).
- Sobolev, Leonid. “Facing Great Tasks.” *Pravda* (26 September 1957): 2-3. Translated, condensed text in: “Facing Great Tasts,” *The Current Digest of the Soviet Press* 9, no. 39 (1957): 31-33.
- Solovyev, Boris. “Position vs. Pose.” *Pravda* (24 June 1957): 2. Translated, condensed text in: “On Literary Themes,” *The Current Digest of the Soviet Press* 9, no. 25 (1957): 25.

———. "Is This the Way to Educate Young People?" *Literaturnaya Gazeta* (23 July 1957): 1-3. Translated, condensed text in: "Youth Magazine Assailed for its Literary Criticism." *The Current Digest of the Soviet Press* 9, no. 31 (1957): 12-13.

Zakrutin, Vitaly, Anatoly Kalinin, and Mikhail Sokolov. "Letter to the Editor." *Literaturnaya gazeta* (18 November 1953): 5. Condensed, translated text in: "Appeal to Reorganize Writers' Union Stirs Controversy: Sholokhov Defended." *The Current Digest of the Soviet Press* 6, no.50 (1953): 6.

Zaslavsky, D. "Reactionary Propaganda's Clamor Over a Literary Weed." *Pravda* (26 October 1958): 6-7. Translated in: "Pravda Denounces Pasternak and the Nobel Award." *The Current Digest of the Soviet Press* 10, no. 39 (1958): 6-7.

Secondary Sources

Alexandrova, Vera. "Post-Stalin Ferment in Soviet Writing." *The Saturday Review* (1964, 30 Jan).

Bakhtin, Mikhail. *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984.

Barnes, Christopher. *Boris Pasternak, A Literary Biography*. Vol. 2. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

Boobbyer, Philip. *Conscience, Dissent and Reform in Soviet Russia*. London: Routledge, 2005.

Brown, Deming. *Soviet Russian Literature since Stalin*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978.

Brudny, Yitzhak M. *Reinventing Russia : Russian nationalism and the Soviet state, 1953-1991*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2000.

Clark, Katerina. *The Soviet Novel: History as Ritual*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1981.

Dobrenko, Evgeny. *The Making of the State Reader: Social and Aesthetic Contexts of the Reception of Soviet Literature*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997.

———. "Literary Criticism and the Institution of Literature in the Era of War and Late Stalinism, 1941-1953." In *A History of Russian Literary Theory and Criticism*, edited by Evgeny Dobrenko and Galin Tihanov, 163-183. Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2011.

- Dobrenko, Evgeny and Ilya Kalinin. "Literary Criticism during the Thaw." In *A History of Russian Literary Theory and Criticism*, edited by Evgeny Dobrenko and Galin Tihanov, 184-229. Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2011.
- Dunham, Vera. "Insights from Soviet Literature." *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 8, no. 4 (1964): 386-410.
- Ermolaev, Herman. *Censorship in Soviet Literature, 1917-1991*. Landham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1996.
- Fleishman, Lazar. *Boris Pasternak: The Poet and His Politics*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990.
- Frankel, Edith Rogovin. "Literature and Politics Under Khrushchev: The Return of Tvardovskii to *Novyi Mir*, July 1958." *Russian Review* 35, no. 2 (1976): 155-172.
- Garrard, John and Carol Garrard. *Inside the Soviet Writers' Union*. New York, NY: Tauris, 1990.
- Getty, J. Arch. "Samokritika Rituals in the Stalinist Central Committee, 1933-38." *The Russian Review* 58, no. 1 (1999): 49-70.
- Gibian, George. *Interval of Freedom: Soviet Literature during the Thaw, 1954-1957*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1960.
- Gill, Graeme. *Symbols and Legitimacy in Soviet Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011.
- Hayward, Max and Edward Crownley. *Soviet Literature in the Sixties*. New York, NY: Praeger Publishers, 1964.
- Hellbeck, Jochen. "Speaking Out: Languages of Affirmation and Dissent in Stalinist Russia." *Kritika* 1, no. 1 (2000): 71-96.
- Johnson, Emily. "Nikita Khrushchev, Andrei Voznesensky, and the Cold Spring of 1963: Documenting the End of the Post-Stalin Thaw." *World Literature Today* 75, no. 1 (2001): 30-39.
- Kharkhodin, Oleg. *The Collective and the Individual in Russia: A Study of Practices*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999.
- Kojevnikov, Alexei. "Rituals of Stalinist Culture at Work: Science and the Games of Intraparty Democracy Circa 1948." *Russian Review* 57, no. 1 (1998): 25-52.
- Komaromi, Ann. "The Unofficial Field of Late Soviet Culture." *Slavic Review* 66, no. 4 (2007): 605-629.

- Kozlov, Denis. "I Have Not Read, but I Will Say': Soviet Literary Audiences and Changing Ideas of Social Membership, 1958–66." *Kritika* 7, no. 3 (2006): 557-597.
- . "Naming the Social Evil: The Readers of Novyi Mir and Vladimir Dudintsev's Not by Bread Alone, 1956-59 and Beyond." In *The Dilemmas of De-Stalinization: Negotiating Cultural and Social Change in the Khrushchev Era*, edited by Polly Jones, 80-100. London: Routledge, 2006.
- Lygo, Emily. "The Need for New Voices: Writers' Union Policy Towards Young Writers, 1953-1964." In *The Dilemmas of De-Stalinization: Negotiating Cultural and Social Change in the Khrushchev Era*, edited by Polly Jones, 193-208. London: Routledge, 2006.
- Maguire, Robert. "The Pasternak Affair (Book Review)." *Russian Review* 21, no. 3 (1962): 292.
- de Mallac, Guy. *Boris Pasternak, his life and art*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1981.
- Malnick, B. "Current Problems of Soviet Literature." *Soviet Studies* 7, no. 1 (1955): 1-13.
- Mathewson, Rufus W. *The Positive Hero in Russian Literature*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1975.
- Matlock, Jack F. "The 'Governing Organs' of the Union of Soviet Writers." *American Slavic and East European Review* 15, no. 3 (1956): 382-399.
- der Melkonian-Minassian, Chaké. *Politiques Littéraires En U.R.S.S.* Montréal, QC: Les Presses de l'Université du Québec, 1978.
- Mitrokhin, Nikolai. "The Rise of Political Clans in the Era of Nikita Khrushchev." In *Khrushchev in the Kremlin: Policy and Government in the Soviet Union, 1953–64*, edited by Jeremy Smith and Melanie Ilic, 26-40. New York, NY: Routledge, 2011.
- Parthé, Kathleen. *Russia's Dangerous Texts: Politics between the Lines*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004.
- Pasternak, Evgeny. *Boris Pasternak: The Tragic Years, 1930-1960*. Translated by Michael Duncan. London: Collins Harvill, 1990.
- de Proyart, Jacqueline. *Le dossier de l'affaire Pasternak: Archives du comité central et du Politburo*. Paris: Gallimard, 1995.
- Rothberg, Abraham. *Heirs of Stalin: Dissidence and the Soviet Regime, 1953-70*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1972.

Spechler, Diana. *Permitted Dissent in the USSR : Novy mir and the Soviet Regime*. New York, N.Y: Praeger, 1982.

Swayze, Harold. *Political Control of Literature in the U.S.S.R., 1946-1959*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962.

Trilling, Lionel. *Sincerity and Authenticity*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1972.

Turkevich, Ludmilla. "The Second Congress of Soviet Writers." *Books Abroad* 30, no. 1 (1956): 31-34.

Zezina, Maria. "Crisis in the Union of Soviet Writers in the Early 1950s." *Europe-Asia Studies* 46, no. 4 (1994): 649-661.

Zubok, V. M. *Zhivago's Children: The Last Russian Intelligentsia*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2009.