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**A. V. Lunacharskii and the Role of Art and  
Literature in the Soviet Union (1917-1934)**

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## CHAPTER 1

### ART FOR ART'S SAKE OR ART WITH TENDENCIES IN THE SOVIET UNION

With the drastic changes in Russia after the Bolshevik Revolution in October 1917, art and culture, which are often characterized as a reflection of society, were destined to change as well. With the Bolshevik party and the new government working to build socialism, society itself underwent dramatic changes. This foreshadowed ominous effects on the arts—literature in particular—in Russia. Trying to hold on to the richness of Russian art while at the same time nurturing the future of the arts and culture in Russia, Anatolii Vasil'evich Lunacharskii,<sup>1</sup> as the new Commissar of Enlightenment,<sup>2</sup> played a key role in attempting to create an environment that favored and promoted a diversity in the arts. He supported art for art's sake, and at the same time protected the party from direct slander in artistic expression. In contrast to the Bolshevik view of one class—the working class—dominating all aspects of life in the new Socialist Russia, Lunacharskii in particular, and other leading figures of the time, enabled various competing artistic groups to flourish between 1917 and 1929—when Lunacharskii was removed from his post. The next few years saw the suicide of one of the most noted poets, the end of the diversity of artistic groups, and the death of Lunacharskii. The fate of Soviet culture would be clearly defined by 1934, when Zhdanov would put forth the order that all art must adhere to the principles of Socialist Realism.

While “culture” is a very broad term, when one thinks of cultural development in a country, “the arts” often come to the forefront. The arts, in the Russian sense, include paintings,

sculptures, poetry, and perhaps most importantly, literature. Similarly, the term “artist” applies to anyone who creates artistically.

The artists in Russia often formed groups, organized productions, and attempted to define their different artistic purposes. The differences in their approach to art, or the purpose they assign to art, and likewise, the differences in cultural development, may appear subtle on the surface, but they are, in reality, paramount. It is easy, and perhaps quite common, to split the views of art into antithetic camps: art for art’s sake and art with an obligation or service. This is not the case, however, as several groups or movements claimed to adhere to one or the other of these “two camps,” yet also claimed to be unique among those in the same camp.

With such diversity among artistic movements and the variety in the different fields of art, the most concrete form of art in terms of the expression of ideas is the written word—poetry, prose, literature, short stories, and the like. The writers in Russia, and what later became known as the Soviet Union, provided a rich source of intellectual nourishment to people in their country and throughout the world. Under the care of A. V. Lunacharskii, artists and writers were generally free to create what they considered to be art.

While Lunacharskii served as the Commissar of Enlightenment, this artistic course would be allowed to meander and branch. When Lunacharskii resigned from his government post in 1929, however, the party had already begun to dredge a single channel to direct the flow of artistic currents toward party service. Lunacharskii continued to write in support of artistic competition and diversity until his death in 1933, but by that time the future of the arts in the Soviet Union was clear. The only acceptable art in the Soviet Union would be Socialist Realism. By 1934, through Andrei Zhdanov, Stalin had gained control of the artistic talents in the Soviet

Union and had launched a new era in literature. Unfortunately, this also tarnished the remnants of the “Silver Age” and marked the death of the artistic riches that Lunacharskii had worked so hard to collect.

## CHAPTER 2

### ART AND CULTURE IN RUSSIA BEFORE 1917

What is art? What is culture? These are age-old questions that have plagued Russia and most other countries for centuries, during which, writers, painters, musicians, philosophers, and political and religious leaders have been trying to define art and culture: Should art have a preconceived tendency, does art have an innate tendency, should it depict the truth, should it preach, or should it be an expression just for the sake of expression? Even before the Revolution of 1917, Russia was not immune to the debates and disagreements on what art is or should be, or what role it should play in society.

The controversy, though, was centered on the issues of just what is the essence of art, and what is the purpose of art. “Beauty is life.”<sup>3</sup> “Beauty is the unity of the idea and the image.”<sup>4</sup> The essence of art—the reproduction of life—is to explain life, and often has the *purpose* of “pronouncing judgment on the phenomena of life.”<sup>5</sup> These are some of the ideas promoted in the nineteenth century by Nikolai Gavrilovich Chernyshevskii (1828-1889) in his essay “Aesthetic Relationship of Art to Reality” (1855) that would surface continually in debates on the essence of art. Chernyshevskii centered his arguments around Hegel’s (1770-1831) philosophy, in particular, around his dialectic method of argument. Hegel’s dialectic method would become important in Marxist cultural discussions, and it would also support Lunacharskii’s efforts to maintain competition among the artistic groups in hopes of developing world-class art in the Soviet Union.

There were already several established artistic movements by the end of the nineteenth century—some with strikingly different approaches and philosophies and others with very similar ideologies. Each group attempted to define art, or even the role of art, in its own unique terms. This diversity in ideologies led to an evolution of new movements, providing the richness in Russian culture that became known as the “Silver Age.”

Among the most prolific movements during this period were the Symbolists, including perhaps the most well-known Russian Symbolist writer, Aleksandr Blok (1880-1921). Though the Symbolist movement originated in France in the early 1890s, it was flourishing in Russia between 1900 and 1910. Before the movement faded out of the limelight in 1917, there had been two “generations” of Russian Symbolists. The “first generation” included poets Fyodor Sologub (1863-1927), Valery Bryusov (1873-1924), Konstantin Balmont (1867-1942), and Zinaida Hippus (1869-1945). The “second generation” included Aleksandr Blok, Andrei Belii (Boris Nikolaevich Bugaev, 1880-1934), and Vyacheslav Ivanov (1866-1949). “All were poets, but nearly every one also made significant contributions to the development of other genres.”<sup>6</sup> The Russian Symbolist writers were associated with *The World of Art* (Мир Искусства) group of graphic artists, led by Sergei Diaghilev (1872-1929)<sup>7</sup> and appeared as a “resurgence of idealism and aestheticism as a neo-romantic reaction to realism and positivism” of the previous century.<sup>8</sup> They had attempted to create a form of poetry that would carry with its message a purpose of moving the reader’s emotions.

“Symbolism began to be welcomed by some of the intelligentsia as a resurrection of spiritual goals in cultural life.”<sup>9</sup> The Symbolist movement, however, did encounter differences in doctrinal discussions. There was a marked split between beauty and truth, or aestheticism and

mysticism, among others. There were rivalries among those who supported religious or cultural goals. The Symbolists disagreed among themselves on what art is—art for art’s sake or art with a purpose (not a new issue at all when speaking of the arts).<sup>10</sup> Despite the disagreements in theory among the members of the movement, the Symbolists were among the leading writers and poets in Russia until 1917, when they were displaced by Acmeist and Futurist writers.<sup>11</sup>

Acmeism, though difficult to date precisely, was formally established as a movement with a name, membership, and manifestos in 1913 in the March issue of “Appolon.”<sup>12</sup> The three most prominent writers in this group were Gumilev (1886-1921), Anna Akhmatova (1889-1966),<sup>13</sup> and Osip Mandelstam (1891-1938). They disagreed heartily with Symbolist writing, and, rather than try to create mythical impressions with symbols, the Acmeists considered the meaning of the language, or the “word as such,” to be the focus of their writing.<sup>14</sup>

Futurism began its literary trek in Russia by 1910, but, unlike the Acmeists, it was not so much a unified movement as it was a category of writers. Perhaps the only common theme among the various Futurist groups was that “poetry is an autonomous and experimental art of the ‘word.’”<sup>15</sup> The subdivisions of the Futurist movement included Cubo-Futurists, who charged other writers with using a “poetic language of the past,”<sup>16</sup> Ego-Futurists, who set out to create an irrational poetry and experiment with new rhymes and words,<sup>17</sup> and Centrifuge, who rejected any type of guidelines.<sup>18</sup> In contrast to the suggestive or mythical ideas of the Symbolists, the “Futurists saw the poetic word as an end in itself.”<sup>19</sup> This was, in a sense, a declaration of “art for art’s sake,” where the futuristic form was the subject.

No longer content to write about life as they knew it, or about ancient times, these writers used futuristic settings—perhaps influenced by the Industrial Revolution—as a setting for

their works. The Futurists were redefining literature as an expression of something other than reality. In reality, however, Futurist writing was more than just art in form, or “art for art’s sake.” The themes of Futurist writers Mayakovskii and Zamyatin after the Revolution would prove to be contemporary concerns shrouded in futuristic settings.

Leading up to the Revolution in October 1917, however, the arts and sciences in Russia flourished, and became known as the “Silver Age” or the “Russian Renaissance.” This period included great strides in the areas of politics, philosophy, science, and “every branch of the arts.”<sup>20</sup>

As Suzanne Massey explains:

Between 1910 and 1913 there was an explosion of new ideas on art. . . . In addition there were countless debates, exhibits and theatrical spectacles. Every artist proclaimed his independence. Ideas and theories proliferated with such dizzying speed that it was often difficult to classify artists into precise schools.<sup>21</sup>

All of these writers felt a strong purpose, though the different approaches, styles, and purposes of their artistic craft were often at odds with each other. Their purposes would, in many cases, butt heads with the Bolshevik party. After the abdication of Nicholas II in February 1917 and then the Revolution in October, the Bolshevik party had seized power in Russia.<sup>22</sup> This set the stage not only for a civil war, but also for a struggle among the literary movements hoping to gain favor with the new reigning party.

From the Symbolists to the Futurists, from the “Silver Age” to the Revolution, a multitude of new artistic movements had appeared. As the Bolshevik party began to change cultural life in Russia, so, too, would it change the arts. The government figure who would play a significant role in determining the course of the arts and culture in the Soviet Union after the Revolution is A. V. Lunacharskii.

## CHAPTER 3

### THE ROOTS OF LUNACHARSKII'S MARXIST IDEOLOGY

In the several years prior to the October Revolution, Lunacharskii's experiences would shape his political views, and those political views would later earn him a place in Russia's post-revolution government. Anatolii Vasil'evich Lunacharskii was born in November 1875 in Poltava and attended the First Kiev Gymnasium in the 1880s and early 1890s. He had been involved in the study of Marxism and the Revolution since childhood (5<sup>th</sup> Class at the Gymnasium), and he considers the time he was in the 7<sup>th</sup> Class (1892-93) to be when he joined the Bolshevik party.<sup>23</sup> Because of his marks in personal conduct at the Gymnasium, however, he wasn't allowed to attend the Russian universities. Deciding to study in Switzerland as a result, he promised his mother that he would return during holidays, thus obtaining official permission to travel abroad.<sup>24</sup>

While in Switzerland, he was deeply influenced by the works of Karl Marx (1818-1883),<sup>25</sup> but it was Georgii Valentinovich Plekhanov (1856-1911)<sup>26</sup> who convinced him to personally approach Marx just as he had done himself.<sup>27</sup> While he was studying in Geneva, Lunacharskii began to ponder the question of art in connection with the history of culture. Upon traveling to Paris, though, his attention became consumed by art and religion, not from the perspective of an esthete, but from that of a Marxist.<sup>28</sup> His interest was in how the arts and culture related to Marxism. It was during this period in his life that Lunacharskii began to focus on the "purpose" of art, or its "role" in revolution and socialism.

He returned to Russia in 1896, traveled from Kiev to Moscow and Petersburg, and again briefly visited Paris. Upon returning to Moscow again in 1897, his political activities with the Social Democrats put him under the scrutiny of the militia. Though he wasn't arrested or charged, he was told to leave Moscow, and he left for Kiev to live with his mother. As the investigation of Lunacharskii's activities continued, he was sent back to Moscow and eventually sentenced to eight months in the Taganskaya jail (1897-1898). There he "spent all of the money [his] mother sent writing poetry, short stories, and treatises."<sup>29</sup> It was in the Taganskaya jail that Lunacharskii experienced, firsthand, the suppression of his ideas, as well as the importance of being able to express his ideas in literature.

After being released from Tagankaya jail, Lunacharskii spent a year in Kaluga and became close friends with Aleksandr Aleksandrovich Bogdanov<sup>30</sup> (Malinovskii, 1873-1928), who significantly influenced his personal\* and political life as a Social Democrat.<sup>31</sup> There he met several Marxists with whom he enjoyed numerous discussions on a wide range of social topics. "We were all deeply interested in the philosophical side of Marxism, and along with that, we craved to strengthen the epistemological, ethical, and aesthetic sides of it. . . ."<sup>32</sup>

Not surprisingly, Lunacharskii was well educated and well read in many different fields, including philosophy, history, sociology.<sup>33</sup> The Marxist views he developed in Switzerland and Kaluga on the role of the arts and literature in society, however, would later move him to shield several artist groups and artists from the whims and wishes of the ruling Bolshevik party, and even from themselves.

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\* Lunacharskii married Bogdanov's sister, Anna A. Malinovskaya in March 1903.

## CHAPTER 4

### LITERARY GROUPS IN THE NEW SOVIET UNION: 1917-1924

As the Revolution signaled a new political era, many of the established groups began to struggle to make sense of the society that was forming around the proletariat, as well as to find their place in the new society. New movements and journals appeared, and new party policies changed cultural and economic life in the Soviet Union. The old intelligentsia would soon face the new proletariat, and the party would begin to exercise more control and influence over the content, form and political direction of art.

Concerned about the party influence on the arts and the role of the old bourgeois intelligentsia, Blok, in what seems to be an explanation of his poem "The Twelve," writes in his essay "The Intelligentsia and the Revolution" of the storm of the Revolution and its ensuing chaotic effect on what the intelligentsia had in the past taken for granted. In addition to his criticism of the intelligentsia for "hacking away at the very branch [they] were sitting on,"<sup>34</sup> Blok lobs a stone at those who sit idly by and merely observe the events as they unfold, rather than fulfill the writer's duties. "It is not the artist's job to watch how intents are fulfilled, to worry whether they are fulfilled or not. In his art the prosaic, the workday, the transient will find expression later, when it will have burned out in life." He continues that "the artist's job, the artist's *obligation*, is to see *what* is intended, to listen to the music thundering in the 'wind-torn

air.”<sup>35</sup> While concerned about the new and unknown future of the intelligentsia, Blok reminds us that the purpose of art is to represent life.

This new and unknown future was not limited to art, but it was often reflected in the arts. The New Economic Plan, or NEP, opened the door for competition in the marketplace, and its effects can be seen in the growth of competition among literary groups. “NEP created a new intellectual climate,”<sup>36</sup> in which party leaders tolerated the existing artistic and literary groups in order to promote, albeit passively, the new economic and social structure. These groups included Proletkul’t, October, Smily, Futurists, and Fellow Travelers, to name but a few.

As the Bolsheviks gained better control of the country, and as the people accepted the value of the proletariat, the country saw a growing concern for keeping all things “proletarian” and destroying all things “bourgeois,” including art and culture. One of the first “proletarian” writers’ groups, Proletkul’t (Пролеткульт) led by Aleksandr Aleksandrovich Bogdanov, had been established in the Spring of 1917—before the October Revolution—as a separate and independent group of artists. This group intended to be the sole source of Russia’s new proletarian cultural and artistic development. Its mission was to present art as “an expression of the proletarian world view.”<sup>37</sup> To reach this goal, during the first All-Russian Conference, the Proletkul’t established that all members should receive an education in ancient and modern literature, both Russian and foreign, as well as in history from the working-class perspective. It also stated that both working-class writers and readers should learn the techniques, practical skills, and habits of writing, as well as the theory of metrics, rhythm, artistic prose, and criticism.<sup>38</sup> Bogdanov intended to create, from the ground up, a new and independent working-class culture.

Other groups with similar views that grew out of the Proletkul't included the Smithy (Кузница), VAPP (the All-Russian Association of Proletarian Writers, ВАПП), and October. The Smithy seceded from the Proletkul't and Cosmos groups in 1920 and strove to produce "Monumental Art," and VAPP was created soon afterwards by members of the Smithy. October (1922-1932) was an independent radical group of Proletkul't activists, as were the Smithy (1920-1932), and eventually resurfaced as RAPP (Russian Association of Proletarian Writers, РАПП, 1928-1932).<sup>39</sup> The artistic belief of the October group was that literature would "reflect the viewpoint and interests of a class-conscious proletariat."<sup>40</sup> These groups all hoped to define the future of Soviet literature, but they had some stiff competition to this end—the Futurists.

One of the most famous Futurists (Будетляне, Футуристы) was Vladimir Mayakovsky (1893-1930). The editor of *Lef* (Левф), the journal of the Leftist Avant-garde that was first published in March 1923,<sup>41</sup> Mayakovskii was a prolific poet and also enthusiastically participated in work for the party. He was also active in attempting to resolve differences between the various writers groups. In 1923, representing *LEF*, Mayakovskii and the Moscow Association of Proletarian Writers agreed, among other things, to cease the polemics aimed at each other while continuing objective criticism.<sup>42</sup> Though Mayakovskii is considered by many to be the most noted poet of this period, he was not alone.

Another Soviet Futurist writer was Evgenii Ivanovich Zamyatin (1884-1937). His science fiction novel *We* (Мы) preceded Aldus Huxley's *A Brave New World* by more than a decade, and inspired George Orwell's *1984*. Written in 1920 and 1921, *We* described life in a utopian and ostensibly communist society, in which freedom and happiness are incompatible. Zamyatin's hero, D-503, struggles with the irrational aspects of a perfect society (the touted

mathematical perfection of Marxism) represented in the story as the square root of -1.<sup>43</sup> This book, banned in the Soviet Union, was first printed abroad in 1924 in English translation and falls in the category of Soviet literature known as “Tamizdat” (meaning published over there, or abroad, Тамиздат). This work by Zamyatin was most certainly charged with a purpose. It intended to warn of possible shortcomings in the future of the new Soviet Union. The ban on its publication in the Soviet Union only served to emphasize the party’s determination to further socialist construction.

Though he was not an active supporter of the party, he was, for the most part, tolerated. Zamyatin was considered to be the leading figure of the Serapian Brotherhood, a very loosely-knit group of writers who claimed no link with proletarian writers and no unifying theme or ideology. A result of the tolerance provided by NEP, the members of the Serapian Brotherhood were among those dubbed Fellow Travelers (Попутчики) by Trotsky. These writers, though not a part of the development of proletarian culture in the Soviet Union, were allowed to publish as long as their works weren’t damaging to the goals of the party.<sup>44</sup> Diversity in the arts continued to flourish, as long as it wasn’t too extreme.

Though Brown terms this period of literary diversity following the Revolution a “persistence of the past, independent of government control,”<sup>45</sup> this is not entirely accurate. One could argue that the trend in establishing new, innovative literary and artistic movements has continued; therefore, proving “persistence of the past” true. Government control over writers, however, was beginning to take root even in the first years following the 1917 Revolution. Yes, several established writers and groups continued to create after the Revolution, but new groups were springing up. Even more innovative ideas were ripening, hanging on Marxist “literary”

theory. This was not, however, the 1890s, the 1900s, or even the 1910s. A new society was being built by the reigning party, and art was sure to reflect this new society. The Government was now setting the stage for its own productions. “Anti-party” works had been banned. The Central Committee resolution of December 1, 1920, declared the party’s intention to control and direct the creative currents in the country to further socialist construction.<sup>46</sup> And the literary and artistic groups were arguing among themselves as to which had the blessing of the party and the government.

## CHAPTER 5

### GOVERNMENT AND PARTY INFLUENCE ON LITERATURE: 1917-1924

While the different groups of writers were attempting to establish themselves as either the one truly proletarian group or a group independent of all influences, some of the major figures in the Soviet Union were also discussing the problems noted in the development of art and culture following the Revolution. As the writers attempted to define the essence and purpose of their art, so, too, did the leaders of the party.

As talks of the proletarian revolution became more frequent and political action began to stir the feelings of the population, there was concern about just what proletarian art—or for that matter, art in general—should be. Should artistic works be by the proletariat, or should they be about the proletariat? Would it play an active part and pay service to the party, or be passive and truth-seeking (art for art’s sake)? The idea of “party-oriented art” dominated among the proletarian writers.<sup>47</sup> After the Revolution, the Proletkul’t, though claiming to be the representative for the development of proletarian culture along the lines of the party’s social objective, maintained their independence from government and party control.

The party initially played only a minor role in the cultural development in the country and the Proletkul’t was allowed to develop relatively unchecked. This role, however, became increasingly dominant following the Civil War. Though the group professed its independence, it was formally subordinated to the People’s Commissar of Enlightenment on December 1, 1920<sup>48</sup>

with a resolution of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party.<sup>49</sup> In a subtle apology for not intervening in matters of culture and literature until that time, the party stated that it was unable to “devote the necessary attention” to these matters because of the military activities at the fronts. The Central Committee also bluntly affirmed its intention to “devote much more attention to the questions of public education in general and to the Proletkul’tists in particular.”<sup>50</sup>

From another perspective, there was the question of what role the intellectuals, or the intelligentsia, would play in influencing government policies. Perhaps the most important “intellectual” to have influenced government policies, and thereby to have influenced art and culture in post-revolutionary Russia, is A. V. Lunacharskii. He took part in seizing control of the Office of Public Education during the Revolution<sup>51</sup> and, because of his intellectual background, he was later formally appointed to the new government position of the People’s Commissar of Enlightenment by Lenin. Lunacharskii wrote ceaselessly, “about fifteen hundred articles on various questions of classical and contemporary literature, painting, music and sculpture.”<sup>52</sup> Others, such as V. I. Lenin (of course), Maxim Gorky, and Leon Trotsky, also played significant roles in defining Soviet art and culture from 1917 until 1929, but it was Lunacharskii who was at the center of the debates and who persisted in advocating the dialectic process in the development of Soviet culture.

Lunacharskii—an “intelligent” and a Bolshevik—was assigned to the government post of People’s Commissar of Enlightenment by Lenin in November 1917.<sup>53</sup> This government post, though not formally within the Party hierarchy, was strongly influenced by the ruling Bolshevik party. Lunacharskii’s mission would be to encourage the development of culture in the new country in support of socialist construction.

Though, for the most part Lenin allowed Lunacharskii to establish policy for his Commissariat, he did at times attempt to directly affect the party's course toward a new proletarian culture. In 1918, for example, Lenin contacted Lunacharskii and announced that they needed to drive art forward with propaganda. This task had two parts: 1) they needed to paint buildings, fences, and other such places with slogans where posters were usually found, and 2) they needed to place extremely large numbers of monuments to the great revolutionaries. These monuments were to be temporary—made of plaster of Paris—and placed throughout the cities of Petrograd and Moscow. Lenin called this “Monumental Propaganda” (монументальная пропаганда).<sup>54</sup>

Lenin also personally valued art of the past, especially Russian Realism. He strongly disliked Futurism, however, and as a result, the “Central Committee treatment on questions of art were rather severely directed against Futurism.”<sup>55</sup> Despite Lenin's feelings toward Futurism, though, Lunacharskii repeatedly defended the efforts of the Futurist writers, and Mayakovskii in particular, to create and publish. Lunacharskii, however, was also quite critical of the style Mayakovsky adopted (perhaps this was on behalf of Lenin). Even as early as 1920, Lunacharskii remarked that “for Mayakovsky, Futurism will be a childhood illness.”<sup>56</sup> He suggests that his talent as a writer would allow him to become more progressive if he were to abandon such a focus (Futurism).<sup>57</sup>

Other than his dislike of Futurism, Lenin claimed to know little about art, but wished that he had more time to enjoy it.<sup>58</sup> Despite his professed ignorance of artistic talent, however, he nevertheless hoped to personally guide or influence yet another area of the newly developing culture. On January 18, 1920, Lenin sent the following note to Lunacharskii:

Isn't it time to create a dictionary of the current Russian language, let's say, a dictionary of words used *now* as classics, from Pushkin to Gorky. What if we were to put this task to the current 30 scientists, having given them the Red Army ration? What would you think about this idea? A dictionary of the Classical Russian language? Not making any noise about it, speak with those who are knowledgeable, if it wouldn't be too much trouble, and let me know your opinion.<sup>59</sup>

Lenin was quite serious about creating a new dictionary of the Russian language.

Having heard nothing from Lunacharskii on this issue for more than a year, he posed the same suggestion to E. A. Litkens (1888-1922), the Deputy People's Commissar of Enlightenment.<sup>60</sup> In addition to his attempt to create a "Soviet" dictionary, Lenin expressed to Lunacharskii his concerns about the arts, including music, painting and sculpture.

Likewise, Lunacharskii took steps to preserve paintings and sculptures. Having met D. D. Goncharov, a Social democrat, before the Revolution, Lunacharskii took measures to preserve his house—a veritable museum with works from the time of Peter the Great through the current period, including modernism. Though Lunacharskii claims that his actions were taken not out of favoritism, but to protect the cultural significance of the works maintained at the Goncharovs', he did admit that he and others of his group refrained from conducting propaganda at Goncharov's factory.<sup>61</sup> Regardless of his personal feelings, Lunacharskii, by virtue of his position, was able to exercise a great deal of authority in protecting a variety of styles and types of art.

Lunacharskii and Lenin, however, were not the only people active in the preservation or development of art and culture in the new Soviet Union. Even before October 1917, writers of the time were concerned about cultural development after a revolution. In April of that year, about two months after Nicholas abdicated, Maksim Gorky, concerned about the educational

preparedness of the proletariat, stated that “a new order of political life requires of us a new mentality.”<sup>62</sup> Noting the ensuing chaos, he reminds his readers that even while attempting to rid the country of its bourgeois past, “the gifts of art and science must have value for the proletariat.”<sup>63</sup> In a statement that attempts to validate the idea of revolution with respect to the development of culture, Gorky states: “If revolution is not capable of promptly developing an intensive cultural structure within the country, then, in my view, the revolution is fruitless, is senseless, and we, as a people, are incapable of life.”<sup>64</sup> We can see that, in Gorky’s view, culture plays a leading role in life, and also that he advocates the prompt development of culture in post-revolutionary Russia. Sharply critical of actual events following the October Revolution, however, Gorky states:

‘The proletariat is the creator of new culture’—the wonderful dream of the creation of justice, intellect, beauty, the dream of human victory over beast and cattle is fixed in these words; in the struggle for the fulfillment of this dream thousands of people from all classes died.<sup>65</sup>

His complaint is not about which group is developing the new culture or even the pace of development; rather, it is the “contemporary reality”<sup>66</sup> created by the new government that is reflected, or will be reflected, in art. According to Gorky, this new reality will no doubt serve as a model for and be reflected in culture and art in post-revolutionary Russia. Citing examples of brutality that haven’t been seen since the middle ages, Gorky, in an attempt to emphasize the value of human life, complains that the people who are now demanding the drowning or execution of common thieves are young children—“the future builders of life.”<sup>67</sup> Gorky goes on to bemoan that the looting of the estates for the purpose of destroying the bourgeois culture of the past is accompanied by the destruction of libraries and paintings. “Works of science, art, instruments of

culture have no value in the eyes of the countryside—it could be doubted whether they have value in the eyes of the city masses.” “The book,” Gorky continues, “is the most important guide of culture. . . .”<sup>68</sup> In destroying the libraries, the people are destroying their teachers, their Radishchevs, their Chernyshevskiiis, their Marxes. They are destroying the ideological means “that would help in the development and fulfillment of their ideals.”<sup>69</sup> Books and literature, it is clear, play an important part in the development of culture, as does reality. Education and culture are key to the success of the Soviet Russia in Gorky’s eyes. Despite the intended purpose of the original authors, the artistic and literary works of the past have a value—a purpose—in the development of proletarian life and culture.

Another leading figure in the development of Russia’s new proletarian culture was Leon Trotsky. Though assigned to the government post of People’s Commissar of War (1918-1925)<sup>70</sup>, Trotsky was still very outspoken on party matters, including matters on the development of proletarian culture and art. His view was that “culture was a broader sphere of human activity than politics, and could not flourish with government interference.”<sup>71</sup> This did not mean, however, that art did not have a purpose. An interesting position, Trotsky explained in *Literature and the Revolution* in 1922 and 1923 that art need not be obligated to serve society; rather, art will inevitably become a useful servant of society. Even without government interference, “art is always a social servant and historically utilitarian.”<sup>72</sup> He adds that this is regardless of whether it is “pure” or “frankly tendentious” art.<sup>73</sup> He also emphasizes the use of Hegel’s dialectic process in creating literature and its resulting changes of literary forms—changes that, in true Marxist fashion, occur along with changes in the economic substructure.<sup>74</sup> He summarizes here the roles of the artists and the party:

Our Marxist conception of the objective social dependence and social utility of art, when translated into the language of politics, does not at all mean a desire to dominate art by means of decrees and orders. It is not true that we regard only that art as new and revolutionary which speaks of the worker, and it is nonsense to say that we demand that the poets should describe inevitably a factory chimney, or the uprising against capital! Of course the new art cannot but place the struggle of the proletariat in the center of its attention. But the plow of the new art is not limited to numbered strips. On the contrary, it must plow the entire field in all directions.<sup>75</sup>

His remarks reflect apparent concerns on the part of writers that they will be “forced” to adopt a “party policy” aimed at promoting a narrow range of social aspects of the revolution. He continues to soothe the writers’ worries by making promises that they are free to create but encouraged to participate in socialist construction (these promises will eventually be broken by others during the next decade):

No one is going to prescribe themes to a poet or intends to prescribe them. Please write about anything you can think of! But allow the new class which considers itself, and with reason, called upon to build a new world, to say to you in any given case: It does not make new poets of you to translate the philosophy of life of the seventeenth century into the language of the Acmeists. The form of art is, to a certain and very large degree, independent, but the artist who creates this form, and the spectator who is enjoying it, are not empty machines, one for creating form and the other for appreciating it. They are living people, with a crystallized psychology representing a certain unity, even if not entirely harmonious. This psychology is the result of social conditions. The creation and perception of art forms is one of the functions of this psychology.<sup>76</sup>

The tendencies in art, the essence of art, and the use of art were important topics following the Revolution. Lenin’s death on January 21, 1924,<sup>77</sup> marked the coming of a new era for the Soviet Union, as well as the coming of a new era in art and culture. As power struggles within the party ensued, more importance was placed on literary criticism.

## CHAPTER 6

### LITERATURE AND LITERARY CRITICISM: 1925-1929

In about the middle of the 1920s, the emphasis in literature appears to have moved away from literary creation and more toward literary criticism. Following the Central Committee decree on July 1, 1925, stating that the party would now play an even more active role in literary matters, there appeared to be a greater concern with matching the ideology of the literary group with that of the Communist Party. The existing literary groups split into factions, joined ranks with others, and attempted to set forth the one true and accepted theory of literature in the Soviet Union. By the end of Lunacharskii's service as Commissar of Enlightenment, the rich diversity that had once filled the literary journals was shriveling away and would be consumed by Stalin's cultural directives as his first Five Year Plan was set into motion.

The journal *LEF*, edited by Mayakovskii, ceased publication in 1925, but in January 1927, the *New LEF* was published with Mayakovskii as the editor.<sup>78</sup> His editorship of *New LEF*, however, would last for only seven issues. The eighth issue, published in July 1928, was edited by Sergei Tretyakov.<sup>79</sup> In his autobiography, Mayakovskii, who had tired of the party slogans and criticism, wrote “. . . I deliberately switched over to journalism. . . .” Despite the proliferation of his slogans and previous works, and repeated letters to the publishers from Lunacharskii, his works were still not getting published.

But persistence prevailed, and Mayakovskii's play, *The Bedbug* (Клоп), written in 1928 found its way to the stage. In this piece, Mayakovskii portrayed the weaknesses he saw in Soviet socialism as a bizarre, futuristic world where a reanimated and repulsive “worker” from the past was kept alive only to feed the all-important zoo beast—the bedbug. The bug, though serving only to entertain the intelligent population as a zoo exhibit, needed the ignorant worker to survive. This play was in itself a literary criticism of the ever-present philistine aspects of contemporary society.<sup>80</sup>

The contemporary literary group Pereval (Перевал) began in the Winter of 1923-24 and was associated with the journal *Red Virgin Soil* (Красная Новь). Aleksandr Voronskii (1844-1943) is attributed with formulating the group's “guiding principles.” “As professed Marxists, the theorists of Pereval assumed that ‘consciously or unconsciously a scholar or artist fills orders which he has been given by his social class’ (Voronsky), but they also. . .[believe] in the cognitive powers of an artist's intuition.”<sup>81</sup> Voronskii and Pereval maintain that there is a purpose, or tendency, in art, whether intended or accidental, that is related to society. They also claim that the artist is capable of knowing that purpose. To Voronski and Pereval, there is no “art for art's sake” and they held fast to the Plekhanovian position “that a genuine artist's intuition could be trusted to mirror reality correctly and that an honest representation of reality was in the best interest of the people, the victorious proletariat, and the party.”<sup>82</sup>

Contrary to the Pereval theory of art, Formalists Victor Borisovich Shklovskii (1893-1984) and Boris Viktorovich Tomashevskii (1890-1957) considered the writer as “a skilled craftsman who needed no inspiration, epiphany, or inner vision to produce his works” and emphasized the form, themes, styles and literary devices, paying little attention to literature's role

in society and politics.<sup>83</sup> Though much of their literary analysis determined how works differed in their structure, it disregarded *why* the pieces may have been written in the first place. Shklovskii, in his piece titled “Art as Device” from his *Theory of Prose* (О Теории Прозы, 1925), only briefly touches on the purpose of art when he explains that “Art is thinking in images” and that “there is no art without images.”<sup>84</sup> In one part of his argument—refuting the ability of an image serving to predicate a succession of changeable subjects—he explains that there are two types of imagery: as a means of uniting objects in groups or as a way of intensifying existing impressions. In purely formalistic terms, Shklovsky explains that works of art (including literature and music), as images, have tendencies, regardless of whether they are intentional or unintentional.

The Formalists, the Futurists, and Pereval would all feel the winds of change. The proletarian writers’ group VAPP became RAPP in 1928 and also claimed to be the only true proletarian writers’ group. Literary criticism was alive, and change was in the air. During this time the party was also, to an ever-increasing extent, influencing the lively debates on just what should be or even could be written in the Soviet Union.

## CHAPTER 7

### GOVERNMENT AND PARTY INFLUENCE ON LITERATURE: 1925-1929

In January 1925, Lunacharskii gave a speech to the All-Russian Conference of Proletarian Writers entitled “The Paths of Contemporary Literature” that appears to be designed to redefine and emphasize the role of the artist, as well as the role of art, in the Soviet Union. His speech covered several topics that concerned the proletarian writers and is a good example of the political savvy that Lunacharskii possessed. In one breath he condemned the proletarian writers, in another he applauded them, and, before he finished, he explained how their literary rivals could only help to improve proletarian efforts.

In his speech he stated that they have before them one very important objective, that “the country must become aware of itself” (страна должна осознать себя),<sup>85</sup> and he posed the question “what role could we and should we assign to art in our days?”<sup>86</sup> Having remarked that the country was already “standing on two feet” in the realm of politics, he points to a shortcoming in the field of literature. It is either nonexistent, or “just being born.”<sup>87</sup> Highlighting the importance of literature in politics, Lunacharskii states that “Not even the driest politician can deny that literary tasks are currently the most involved political tasks,” and literary works that do not present an accurate depiction of life result in harm<sup>88</sup>

Lunacharskii also pointed out that, at times, writers of fiction develop characters and depict real life, even though the author claims there is no connection between the fiction and

reality. He warns that such an approach to literature brings nothing but harm. “The artist must be colossally truthful in his examples from authentic life” or risk being a liar or traitor with respect to the party.<sup>89</sup> Lunacharskii explains that the writer is a teacher with an innate calling. “We must endeavor to reach the point where the communist heart beats in a purely artistic manner. Only that genuine proletarian writer who can, without violating the facts and himself, feel to such a degree the powerful tide of communist emotion, communist idea. . . .”<sup>90</sup> He continues that “artistic literature is the most powerful and far-reaching weapon that affects the masses more forcefully than anything else.”<sup>91</sup> This, Lunacharskii warns, is where the danger in jumbling facts is so precarious.

Then, response to the Proletkul’t claims that the proletarian writer is the one true source of literary satisfaction, Lunacharskii points out its fallacies. To the claim that, solely as a result of being a proletarian writer, such a writer is talented, Lunacharskii responds that this is simply not so. To the claim that the proletarian writer will speak only that truth, which the party expects of the writer, regardless of what life dictates, Lunacharskii reminds the Proletkul’t of its obligation to be “colossally truthful.” He sums up the treatment the proletarian writers should expect from him, from the party, and from other writers: they should be pounded with criticism when they err, and they will be praised when they display sparks of truly communist talent.<sup>92</sup>

In an effort to quell the extensive criticism launched at other groups by the proletarian writers and to remind them that they are living in a period of continual change, Lunacharskii states:

In the last few years among the proletarian family has arisen internal differences that still haven’t expired. These differences, naturally, because we live in a period of transition and are situated under the influence of two forces, one which draws us back into the bourgeois

swamp, and the other forward toward the uplifting proletariat sun. The sooner we understand that, being dissatisfied with each other, launching polemics at each other, we nevertheless are brothers-builders of proletarian culture, the better. Proletarian literature is a shop where we must forge our hearts and our minds.<sup>93</sup>

One of the groups that the proletarian writers were dissatisfied with was the group called Fellow Travelers. Lunacharskii explains that they cannot do away with them, because even reactionary writers can at times create marvelous artistic literature. What, then, to do? Get rid of them? Nothing of the sort. “We must print these pieces, but at the same time paralyze their harmful tendencies by means of criticism, by means of consistent Marxist criticism.”<sup>94</sup> These discussions highlight the attention given to criticism of competing groups. These discussions also demonstrate the impact that literature can have on political objectives and the need for writers to conform to the lines of those political objectives.

Later that year the Central Committee spelled out its political objectives in its decision “On the Policy of the Party in the Field of Artistic Literature.”<sup>95</sup> Following the publication of the Central Committee of Russian Communist Party decree “On the Policy in the Field of Artistic Literature” (June 18, 1925), Lunacharskii, on July 11, 1925, published an article which described the resolution’s significance and impact in literature. The resolution was founded on the principle that “the proletariat must be the class hegemony in all respects, but that its hegemony must be conducted in the current period of revolution not through struggle with other classes, but by means of harmonization and agreement of the tendencies of the classes.”<sup>96</sup> He stresses again that writers of literature must be attentive and truthful in order to flower as writers of proletarian literature.

In another article, “Perspectives of Soviet Art” (1927), Lunacharskii discusses some key issues still confronting the development of art in the Soviet Union. Among the issues is that of censorship of literature. He states that “some can claim that the existence of censorship, Glavlit [Главлит]\*\*, the existence of a rather aggravated class criticism sometimes serves as an obstacle to an artist being able to complete his social task with complete objectivity and honesty.

Sometimes, when he finds himself to be completely objective, artistically objective, he encounters an accusation that he, on the contrary, somehow jumbled reality.”<sup>97</sup> In response to this complaint, Lunacharskii states that it is impossible to completely avoid such a situation because of the hostile surroundings of the hard social struggle. Censorship, while at times detrimental or stifling, is needed to further the construction of the socialist system. Still, Lunacharskii supports the writer who tries, despite any shortcomings, as long as the intent is “objective and honest.”<sup>98</sup>

He also states that “art is an educational means of colossal force.”<sup>99</sup> This statement attributes a “controllable” quality to the tendencies in art that have already been accepted or acknowledged in various forms. Given that art will have such tendencies, either intrinsic or intended, those tendencies could, or even should, be put to use for the purpose of education or of enhancing the construction of the socialist system. In addition to these tendencies, he states that “politicians . . . understood that art is an infection of a specific cycle of feelings of those who are the consumers of that art. In this sense, the artist is a figure of power.” And, he continues, “. . .

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\*\* Terras *Handbook* 74-75. Though literature in Russia had been *relatively* free and uncensored since 1727, that freedom was formally revoked by the Soviet Government in 1928. Glavlit, formerly Gosizdat—the Government Publishers—controlled the newspapers since 1918, and eventually controlled the allocation of scarce paper.

for us the artist . . . himself turns out to be a function of that society in which he lives.”<sup>100</sup> This is an acknowledgment that the purpose of art, or its underlying tendency, is connected to politics.

Turning from the topic of tendencies in the arts, Lunacharskii then comments on the paradox that developed because of the introduction of the new social system. “Socialism broke through where the country was weak—with the proletariat” and states that a significant portion of the intelligentsia promptly left the country.<sup>101</sup> He implies here that what was left in the country was an “uneducated” proletariat was easier to motivate with slogans and promises. This, he argues, has not helped in terms of socialist construction.<sup>102</sup> Lunacharskii still maintains that the richness of cultural, and even intellectual, diversity, including that of the past, is necessary to build the country’s culture of tomorrow.

Still frustrated with the proletarian writers in 1928, Lunacharskii published an article entitled “On the Association of Proletarian Writers.” Stating that the All-Russian Association of Proletarian Writers (VAPP) plays an “extraordinary role” in Soviet cultural life and is spread throughout the entire country, its movement is not confined to the framework of Russian literature. There is, he notes, a common and mistaken perception of the writer as some kind of “preaching individualist.” Lunacharskii adds that there are plenty of cases where, as a discouraged writer, “any evil-doer can declare himself a crude narrator” (объявляет себя всякий наказавший шероховатую повествушку). He responds by stating “it cannot be said that creatively speaking the writers and critics of VAPP, already having made a name for themselves, lag behind anyone else.”<sup>103</sup> To other complaints that the writers’ efforts have been hindered, he argues that, based on the resolutions of the conferences that preceded the May congress, VAPP has complete faith in its leaders, while at the same time it heaps blame on its leaders and stirs up

numerous opponents. He attributes this to the majority of VAPP leaders being young, hot-headed, involuntarily drawn toward outward appearances of the polemic, and carrying on mercilessly. Lunacharskii remarks that at times the crudeness of the tone, jokes in poor taste, sharpness of judgment that one finds in *October* or *On Literary Guard* is shocking.<sup>104</sup> Sharply critical of the actions of VAPP leaders, Lunacharskii at the same time notes their enormous achievements. First, they try with all their might to find and follow a distinct proletarian line in literature, and second, in so doing, they appear in reality to be “the organization of the party, ready not only to heed the directives of the party, but also to subordinate themselves to, and carry out the directives with all their heart.”<sup>105</sup> This is clearly a frustrated Commissar of Enlightenment speaking here. Not only is he trying to protect competing literary groups from more frequent attempts to control the content of literature, but he is struggling with one group of writers that is attempting to annihilate all other literary “classes.”

Lunacharskii’s article “Class Struggle in Art” (February 17, 1929) discusses the “theoretical question of the relationship of the class structure of society and its culture in general” as well as the need for class struggle in art. He states bluntly that, from a Marxist point of view, “art is classed,”<sup>106</sup> but that it is more difficult to talk about the “class content of art in which the thought is not expressed in words.”<sup>107</sup> Without actually saying it, Lunacharskii tried to defend the artists who claim their work “art for art’s sake.” Formalists, for example, use collections of sounds and emphasize structure or rhythm. Such works are not connected to thought, and as such, cannot have tendencies.<sup>108</sup> This is also a defense for sculpture, painting and music, but the debates on the purpose of art in the Soviet Union were far from over.

Brown, in his introduction, alludes to the struggle between artists and officials in defining the role of art. He argues that “the State, looking upon writers with justified apprehension, sought to direct [the artists’] work into useful and ‘good’ channels.”<sup>109</sup> This summarizes both the censorship aspect of the government as well as the party’s realization that there is indeed a purpose in art. It also highlights the party’s belief that it could direct and guide this tendency in the arts. After years of “Great Literary Debates” on the theory of literature, the party was more and more determining the outcome. Along with the consolidation of forces that accompanied the first Five Year Plan in 1929, literary forces were also being consolidated.<sup>110</sup> While we often read that the Soviet Union silenced writers and limited the publication of anti-soviet works, the efforts here, though outwardly directed at the writer or artist, were aimed at controlling the purpose or tendency of art.

## CHAPTER 8

### BIRTH OF SOCIALIST REALISM: 1929-1934

The first Five Year Plan is marked with significant events in the development of Socialist Realism, and likewise, with the demise of all that Lunacharskii sought to retain in Soviet culture. Lunacharskii was pressured to resign his post. Mayakovskii—perhaps the most well-known and controversial Soviet poet and playwright—committed suicide. All literary groups were dissolved by decree and one, party-sanctioned organization was established. Lunacharskii died, and Zhdanov, the party advocate of Socialist Realism, set the new group of writers on the course of socialist construction. Lunacharskii had become an anachronism and was written off as history.

As Stalin's first Five Year Plan was set into motion, the distinction between literature and party policy was starting to blur. Lunacharskii, along with others in his commissariat who were labeled "liberals," resigned from his post in the Spring of 1929 following political disagreements with Stalin. Not only did Lunacharskii disagree with Stalin on the cultural revolution, the purge of the intelligentsia and discrimination of students based on their social (intelligentsia) origins, but he also sided with Bukharin on matters of maintaining moderate growth in industry and continuing NEP.<sup>111</sup>

The next year, Mayakovskii succumbed to pressures and joined RAPP. Two months later, on April 14, 1930, he committed suicide. Mayakovskii's suicide note, dated April 12, 1930,

included a postscript to RAPP: “Comrade RAPPists, do not charge me with lack of character. Seriously, there is nothing to be done.”<sup>112</sup>

There was certainly not much that could be done. In 1931, in an article entitled “Writer and Politician,” Lunacharskii (no longer the People’s Commissar of Enlightenment), as he had done several times in the past, stated that “any writer is a politician” and that “art has always been a significant political weapon.”<sup>113</sup> But in praising Maksim Gorkii for being a superb example of a writer-politician, he quotes Gorkii as saying “if the enemy doesn’t surrender, then he will be destroyed.”<sup>114</sup> This was perhaps a foreshadow of what Lunacharskii knew was imminent. Writers who refused to submit to the party policies and guidelines would not be allowed to write. Creative talent would be silenced.

The destruction of the literary diversity was formalized in 1932 with the liquidation of all literary groups and the establishment of the Union of Soviet Writers. The Central Committee decree on April 23, 1932, established that: 1) all associations of proletarian writers be dissolved, 2) all writers supporting the Soviet authorities and desiring to participate in socialist construction be united in the Union of Soviet Writers, 3) all other forms of art establish similar organizations, and 4) empower the government with the practical authority needed to carry out the measures of this decision.<sup>115</sup> From the perspective of the fellow travelers, this would put an end to the arrogance of RAPP.<sup>116</sup> From the perspective of the proletarian writers, this was their victory. From the perspective of the party, this was the only way to maintain control over the tendencies in literature.

Lunacharskii, despite having relinquished his government post, continued to publish articles advocating diversity and responsibility in literature. Since the Revolution in 1917, he had

been, perhaps, the most significant force guiding the multifaceted field of Soviet literature into the future while at the same time towing along proponents of “radical” literary theory and ideology. The protector of the Futurists and the educator of the proletarian writers, Lunacharskii died in 1933. The Soviet Union now needed a new figurehead to guide its literature and art.

That person would be Andrei Zhdanov (1896-1948). At the First Congress of Soviet Writers in August 1934, Zhdanov, the secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, stated that “the key to success of Soviet Literature is to be sought for in success of socialist construction. Its growth is an expression of successes and achievements of our socialist system.”<sup>117</sup> Claiming that the bourgeois intelligentsia has been displaced, Zhdanov identified the unifying purpose of literature and art as “socialist construction.” To this end, he provided the writers, the “engineers of human souls,” a formal definition of the creative style sanctioned by the party—Socialist Realism: socialist in content, realist in form. No longer did there need to be debates on tendencies in content or the appropriateness of form. He gave the writers a mission—he implored them to actively reshape their minds to conform to the spirit of socialism:

Organize the work of your congress and that of the Union of Soviet Writers in the future in such a way that the creative work of our writers may conform to the victories that socialism has won.<sup>118</sup>

This was the moment when the Union of Soviet Writers was made official, the moment that the unified organization began to implement its single literary style, and the moment the literary period became officially known as “Socialist Realism.” This was the beginning of a new era in Soviet literature.

This was also the end of the tarnished remnants of the “Silver Age.” It was the end of the freedom enjoyed by writers and artists to create what they thought was art. It was the end of the Hegelian dialectic method in literature, as well as the end of experimentation. Art had been defined. Its tendencies had been identified. But more importantly, its purpose was directed toward socialist construction. This was also the end of the richness in artistic diversity that Lunacharskii had tried to preserve—this was the end of Lunacharskii’s era in Soviet literature. This was now the era of Socialist Realism.

## NOTES

1. Transliteration conventions vary depending on the years, publishers and countries, and result in slight variations in how Russian names and words are rendered using Latin characters. Where possible, I will adhere to one transliteration standard with two exceptions: the names Trotsky and Gorky appear regularly as such in English. Quotations and titles of books, however, appear as printed in the sources cited.

2. Lunacharskii's title, Народный Коммиссар Просвещения, can be translated either as People's Commissar of Enlightenment or People's Commissar of Education. In all cases, except for direct quotes, I will use People's Commissar of *Enlightenment*, since Lunacharskii's duties included education—dispensing knowledge—in the broadest sense, and are more accurately expressed as “enlightenment” of the people.

3. N. G. Chernyshevskii, *Estetika* (Moskva 1958) 55.

4. Chernyshevskii 53.

5. Chernyshevskii 177.

6. Victor Terras, *Handbook of Russian Literature* (London 1985) 460.

7. Suzanne Massey, *Land of the Firebird: the Beauty of Old Russia* (New York 1980) 420, 423, 424-426, 433. Sergei Diaghilev was the leader of the group known as *The World of Art*—a combination of all the arts, stressing individuality, and touting the slogan “art, pure and unfettered.” The group “pioneered the art journal of quality in Russian”—*The World of Art*—that touched all spheres of art in Russia. In 1909, Diaghilev introduced the Russian ballet to Paris.

8. Terras *Handbook* 460.

9. Terras *Handbook* 461.

10. Terras *Handbook* 463

11. Terras *Handbook* 463.

12. Terras *Handbook* 3.

13. Anna Akhmatova was married to Gumilev from 1910 until 1918.

14. Terras *Handbook* 3.

15. Terras *Handbook* 161.

16. Terras *Handbook* 161.

17. Terras *Handbook* 161.
18. Terras *Handbook* 162.
19. Terras *Handbook* 161-162.
20. Massey 427.
21. Massey 452-453.
22. David MacKenzie and Michael W. Curran, *A History of Russia, the Soviet Union, and Beyond*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Belmont, California 1993) 530.
23. A. V. Lunacharskii *Vospominaniya i Vpechatleniya* (Moskva 1968) 18.
24. Lunacharskii *Vospominaniya* 19.
25. “. . . сам Маркс озарился для меня новым светом.”
26. Pavel Akselrod, *Perezhitoe i Peredumannoe* (Berlin 1923) 156-157. While Plekhanov is often referred to as the Father of Russian Marxism, he himself had a mentor during his youth. According to Akselrod, in 1875 a young Plekhanov expressed a desire to get a degree in chemistry. Akselrod explained to him that in order to become a revolutionary, he must become fully involved in revolutionary activities. In an explanation as to why Akselrod himself was not as involved in politics as he would have liked, he wrote that he had to work long hours on his dairy farm in order to finance his own political activities.
27. Lunacharskii *Vospominaniya* 22.
28. Lunacharskii *Vospominaniya* 23.
29. Lunacharskii *Vospominaniya* 24-25.
30. Bogdanov was Malinovskii's pseudonym.
31. Lunacharskii *Vospominaniya* 25, Timothy Edward O'Connor, *The Politics of Soviet Culture: Anatolii Lunacharskii* (Michigan 1980) 4.
32. Lunacharskii *Vospominaniya* 26.
33. Lunacharskii *Vospominaniya* 19.
34. Marc Raeff, *Russian Intellectual History: an Anthology* (New Jersey 1988) 371.
35. Original italics, Raeff 366.

36. Terras *Handbook* 505.
37. Edward J. Brown, *Russian Literature Since the Revolution*, revised ed. (Massachusetts 1982) 106.
38. Brown 107.
39. Victor Terras, *A History of Russian Literature* (London 1991) 513.
40. Terras *History* 514.
41. Vladimir Mayakovsky, *The Life of Mayakovsky*, ed. Wiktor Woroszylski (New York 1970) 315.
42. Mayakovsky 324-325.
43. Evgenii Zamyatin, *My* (New York 1952) 36.
44. Brown 70-71, Leon Trtsky, *On Literature and Art* (New York 1970) 55-56, 237-238.
45. Brown 7.
46. KPSS v *Rezolyutsiyakh i Resheniyakh S'ezdov, Konferentsii i Plenumov TsK*, vol. 2 (Moskva 1970) 197-199.
47. O'Connor 72.
48. KPSS vol 2, 197-200.
49. KPSS vol. 2, 27. The Bolshevik party formally changed its name to the Russian Communist Party of Bolsheviks, or РКП(б), during the Seventh Special Congress, March 6-8, 1918.
50. KPSS vol. 2, 197-199.
51. Lunacharskii *Vospominaniya* 180-182.
52. A. V. Lunacharsky, *On Literature and Art* (Moscow 1973) 6.
53. O'Connor 14, 114, Lunacharskii *Vospominaniya* 195-196.
54. Lunacharskii *Vospominaniya* 198-199.
55. Lunacharskii *Vospominaniya* 195.
56. A. V. Lunacharskii, *Stat'i o Sovetskoi Literature* (Moskva 1971) 419.

57. Lunacharskii *O Sovetskoj Literature* 419.
58. Lunacharskii *Vospominaniya* 191.
59. V. I. Lenin, *O Kul'turnoi Revolyutsii* (Moskva 1967) 177.
60. Lenin 177-178.
61. Lunacharskii *Vospominaniya* 27-28.
62. Maksim Gorky, *Nesvoevremennye Mysli* (Paris 1971) 21.
63. Gorky 22.
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