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The Search for

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Self-Definition in

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saying, we are not to blame; on the contrary, it is you urban Jewish and other non-Russian Bolsheviks who have destroyed our land and our nation. The third, alas, least often heard, although spoken by the noblest advocate, says: To be Russian has always meant to be decent, tolerant, unracist, unxenophobic, universal; and let us adopt that ideal for ourselves now.

In the welter of various angles, different visions, around Russian national self-images of the past and present, it is easy for a westerner to dismiss the whole show as chaos, to become disgusted with some of the self-pity and turn away, to call the awakening and recovery of sight (*prozrenie*) not a regaining of sight but a distorted, self-serving, dangerous misperception and anti-Semitism. It is certainly not a neat, crisp spectacle. But we may be selling Russians short. Let us not underestimate their resilience, their ability to change, their creativity. After more than half a century of terror and repression, why should they not need a few years of free-for-all trial and error—perhaps to come up with fine works of literature again, and a settled, useful, positive view of their own national identity.

HERMAN ERMOLAEV

## 2 Portrayal of Nationalities in Soviet Russian Literature

The portrayal of Russians and other nationalities in Soviet Russian literature has been to a large extent determined by the views and policies of the ruling communist party. In connection with shifts in party policy, one can distinguish roughly the following periods in the treatment of nationalities in Soviet literature: 1. 1917–34; 2. 1934–41; 3. 1941–45; 4. 1946–53; 5. 1953–64; 6. 1965–85; and 7. 1985 to the present.

In the first period, tsarist Russia was regarded as a backward, chauvinistic, and expansionist autocracy that subjugated and oppressed national minorities. Works dealing with the struggle of these peoples for liberation from the tsarist reign were welcomed. This was the case with Stepan Zlobin's *Salavat Iulaev* (1929), a novel concerned with the participation of the Bashkirs in the Pugachev rebellion. The official emphasis on equality of all nationalities allowed literature to depict realistically the role played by minorities in the Communist Party and the October Revolution. Thus, a character in Iurii Libedinskii's *A Week* (*Nedelia*, 1922) could say that half of the members of the Bol-

shevik party were non-Russians. In Aleksandr Fadeev's *The Rout* (*Razgrom*, 1927), the leading communist character is a Jew who has a real-life prototype.

Now and then we encounter censorial revisions purported to remove or replace words deemed offensive to national minorities. Already in 1924 the censors expunged from Artem Veselyi's story "Fiery Rivers" ("Reki ognennye," 1923) the appellation "Yiddish archbishop" (*arkhierei zhidovskii*) used by a character. Five years later, in Veselyi's uncompleted novel *Russia Washed in Blood* (*Rossiia, krov'iu umytaia*, 1927-), an unscrupulous Jewish quartermaster, Isaika Zuderman, was transformed into a Russian, Zudov, without a first name. But since 1932 he has been known under a neutral surname, Zudilovich. The word *khokhol*, which can be either a neutral or a derogatory name for a Ukrainian, was purged from the 1929 collection of Veselyi's works entitled *The Carousing Spring* (*Piruiushchaia vesna*) both in the authorial narrative and in the characters' speech. To my knowledge, this is the earliest elimination of *khokhol*, probably because the collection in question appeared in Khar'kov, then the capital of the Soviet Ukraine. In 1933 the authorial narrative of the first two volumes of Mikhail Sholokhov's *The Quiet Don* (*Tikhii Don*, 1928-40) lost all its *khokhols*. The 1932 censors of Veselyi's novel *My Native Land* (*Strana rodnaia*, 1925) eliminated a phrase about the Tatars' looting a town captured by anti-Bolshevik insurgents. On the other hand, descriptions of the ugly aspects of Russian life and behavior were virtually unchallenged by censorship. A notable exception was a rebuke given to Demian Bednyi by the supreme censor, Joseph Stalin, for publishing in 1930 a few poems portraying Russia as slavish, lazy, and savage. But the source of Stalin's ire was political rather than nationalistic. In his view, Bednyi slandered a people justly proud of its revolutionary heritage.<sup>1</sup>

The following period, from 1934 to 1941, was marked by the official revision of Russian history and the encouragement of Russian patriotism. The chief cause for this change was Hitler's rise to power and the associated threat of war. Stalin realized that his best and, perhaps, only chance to win this war lay in the appeal to traditional Russian patriotism. The focus of historical fiction moved from social re-

volutions to heroic battles of the Russians against foreign invaders. Sergei Borodin's *Dmitrii Donskoi* (1941) was devoted to the Grand Prince of Moscow who had crushed the Tatars in 1380. Konstantin Simonov's poem "The Ice Battle" ("Ledovoe poboishche," 1937) glorified the 1242 triumph of Aleksandr Nevskii over the Teutonic Knights and served as a warning to the Nazis not to attack the Soviet Union. Probably the most significant patriotic work of the period was a huge epic about the Crimean War, *The Ordeal of Sevastopol* (*Sevastopol'skaia strada*, 1937-39) by Sergei Sergeev-Tsenski. The novel was characteristic of the late 1930s in the sense that its fervent patriotism was not coupled with antagonism toward other nations. Furthermore, it was quite outspoken about the general superiority of the West over backward Russia.

The accent on patriotism did not mean that the Marxist concept of class struggle was thrown out. A case in point was the revising done by Nikolai Ostrovskii in his *How the Steel Was Tempered* (*Kak zakkalialas' stal'*, 1932-34). Concerned about having presented most of the Poles as enemies of the Bolsheviks, he added in 1935 Polish characters who side with their Ukrainian and Russian class brothers in the fight against the Polish aristocracy. In the same year, the censors played down Ukrainian nationalism by omitting from Ostrovskii's novel both the term "Ukrainian People's Republic" (which was hostile to the Soviets) and an appeal by Simon Petliura to fight the Bolsheviks who had destroyed a free Ukraine.

In the period from 1934 to 1941 the censors continued their sporadic liquidation of disparaging names for national minorities. Thus, in the 1935 edition of *Russia Washed in Blood* the word "Asiatic" was replaced by "horseman" or "mountaineer" in reference to members of the minorities in the Caucasus.

It was only natural that during the war the propaganda of Russian patriotism was greatly intensified. It is sufficient to mention Konstantin Simonov's play *The Russians* (*Russkie liudi*, 1942), Mikhail Sholokhov's unfinished novel *They Fought for Their Country* (*Oni srazhalis' za rodinu*, 1943-), and Sergei Sergeev-Tsenski's three novels about World War I written between 1943 and 1945 and included in his novelistic cycle entitled *Transfiguration* (*Preobrazheniie*). The class

approach to war gave way to the propagation of the struggle against the Germans as such. Simonov's poem "Kill Him" ("Ubei ego," 1942) called outright for the killing of a German. From the 1945 edition of *The Quiet Don* the censors banned the scene of fraternization between a Russian and a German soldier in World War I as well as an antipatriotic tirade of a Bolshevik that included the statements, "Workers have no fatherland. These words of Marx express the most profound of truths."<sup>2</sup> In the same novel, the nationality of the Bolshevik Shtokman was changed from German to Latvian, and some contemptuous remarks about Russia and the Russian people were excised. The Poles also benefited from the censors' actions. A character's comparison of the proud Poles with a well-fed pig, which appeared in 1940 in the last volume of *The Quiet Don*, vanished in 1945 because of the common war against Nazi Germany and the formation of the Polish communist government.

In the years between 1946 and 1953 patriotism degenerated into chauvinism. I see the chief reason for this development in the government's intention to neutralize the favorable impression made on millions of Soviet troops during their service abroad. The anti-western campaign was officially launched with the party resolution of August 14, 1946. It assailed a number of works for allegedly cultivating the spirit of servility to western culture. Elaborating on the resolution, Andrei Zhdanov asserted the absolute superiority of the Soviet way of life over that of the West. On May 13, 1947, Stalin, in a meeting with Simonov, Fadeev, and Boris Gorbатов, stressed the necessity to combat self-disparagement, suggesting that a novel be written on the subject.<sup>3</sup>

There is no point in dwelling on the numerous potboilers, particularly plays, that glorified the Russian past and the Soviet present and attacked practically everything in the West, except the people who sympathized with the Soviet Union. Even respectable writers, willingly or otherwise, joined the chorus of rabid nationalism and xenophobia. In Iurii Trifonov's *Students* (*Studenty*, 1950), American soldiers beat a black driver while their officers calmly look on. In addition, President Harry Truman and presidential candidate John Dewey are called scoundrels. Maksim Gor'kii is then said to represent

the highest achievement of Russian realism, a writer without equal in any country. Americans and Britons in Emmanuil Kazakevich's novel *Spring on the Oder* (*Vesna na Odere*, 1949) are coarse, egotistic, and supportive of German capitalists. In 1952 Vsevolod Ivanov added to his play *Armored Train No. 14-69* (*Bronepoezd No. 14-69*, 1927) phrases alleging that Americans had established a concentration camp in Vladivostok where they killed, hanged, or starved to death their prisoners. While the British and Americans were maligned as the principal enemies of the Soviet Union, former wartime adversaries began to enjoy a much more lenient treatment, for the majority of them, including the East Germans, had by that time come under Soviet control. Already in 1949 in the first book-form edition of Valentin Kataev's novel *For the Power of the Soviets* (*Za vlast' Sovetov*, 1949) many designations of enemy soldiers as "Germans" or "Romanians" were either censored or replaced by "fascists," "SS men," or simply "enemies." Several passages about German atrocities in Odessa were also dropped.

A good insight into the impact of chauvinism on literature is provided by the nature of censorial intervention in the historical novels *Stepan Razin* (*Razin Stepan*, 1927) by Aleksei Chapygin and *The Ordeal of Sevastopol* (*Sevastopol'skaia strada*, 1937-39) by Sergei Sergeevich-Tsenskkii. Both books underwent extensive revisions in 1948 and 1950. Of some two hundred deletions in *Stepan Razin*, most are connected with nationalism. Censors also removed numerous descriptions of the cruelty, ignorance, lewdness, and filthy living conditions of seventeenth-century Russia. To affirm the authority of Moscow, censors eliminated antagonistic statements made about it by the Don Cossacks. Moreover, the role of foreigners in the strengthening of the Russian state was virtually reduced to zero by suppressing information that they had formed the mainstay of the tsarist regime, serving it as military officers and master craftsmen and displaying more loyalty to the throne than the nobility did.

More than three hundred excisions in *The Ordeal of Sevastopol* were made for the sake of patriotic education. Gone were unfavorable comparisons between Russia and the West in terms of individual rights, freedom of the press, political tolerance, economic achieve-

ments, standards of living, and military might. There was no longer a place for chivalrous treatment of Russian prisoners by the French. The censors even deemed unprintable the fact that James Watt had invented the steam engine, or that English horses were as big as elephants. The same was done with passages about the obsolescence of the Russian navy, the panic experienced by Russian troops, and the aggressive policy of Nicholas I that led to the outbreak of the Crimean War.

The intent to Russify the Crimea was reflected in the removal of the adjectives "Tatar" and "Greek," formerly used to describe settlements on the peninsula founded by these minorities. Furthermore, the censors struck out phrases about the Tatars' hatred of Russians and their readiness to rebel. Likewise, the censors cut references to the desertion of the Poles to the Allied troops.

The tendency to downplay the mistreatment of minorities caused the elimination in 1948 of two and a half pages from *Stepan Razin*. The core of the deletion was a story about the rape, murder, and abuse of the Jews by the Razin and Ukrainian Cossacks. In the 1953 edition of *The Quiet Don*, more than half of the occurrences of the pejorative name "Yid" were either edited out or replaced. Made at the height of official anti-Semitism, these corrections might have been intended to camouflage the real attitude toward the Jews. The censors of the 1953 edition of *The Quiet Don* were apparently worried that the strong presence of foreigners in the Red Army might be indicative of a lack of pro-Bolshevik enthusiasm among Russians. Therefore, they saw it fit to erase the passages testifying to a large number of Latvians, Chinese, and other non-Russians in Red units.

During the first two years of Khrushchev's rule (1953–64), the ideological content of literature still had much in common with that of the preceding period. The year 1955 saw the appearance of new versions of Iurii Libedinskii's *A Week* and *The Commissars* (*Komissary*, 1926) and of Ivanov's novel *Armored Train No. 14–69* (1922), all of which were heavily revised in accordance with Stalinist canons. *A Week* was reprinted without a remark about the great number of non-Russians in the Communist Party; from *The Commissars* was struck a character's statement about the oppression of the Crimean Tatars by the Soviets in 1921. *Armored Train No. 14–69* featured numerous

insertions concerning not only the intervention in the Far East of the British, Americans, and Japanese, but also the atrocities they allegedly committed there.

Under Khrushchev, the censors continued expunging words regarded as offensive to national feelings. The practice was vividly manifested in works that had not been reprinted for a long time. In the 1956 edition of Sholokhov's *The Don Stories* (*Donskie rasskazy*, 1926), the word *khokhol* was crossed out in the authorial narrative. Disrespectful designations of the Chinese vanished in 1958 from *Russia Washed in Blood*, along with a hostile characterization of the Czechs as vermin to be exterminated. In 1957 censors removed from Babel's story "Berestechko" (1924) the author's observation that the Russians, living side by side with active and businesslike Jews, Ukrainians, and Poles, have developed the dogged love for work that the Russian is capable of before succumbing to lice, drink, and despair.

Two important phenomena emerged under Khrushchev. One was the theme of Russian and Soviet anti-Semitism inaugurated by Evgenii Evtushenko's "Babii Iar" (1961); the other, represented by Solzhenitsyn's "Matrena's Household" ("Matrenin dvor," 1963), was inspired by the belief that traditional moral virtues are still retained in Russian villages, although their possessors are clearly in the minority.

Progressive re-Stalinization distinguished the period from 1965 to 1985. Publishing works about Soviet repression of Russians and other nationalities became impossible. Further erosion of the faith in Marxism-Leninism intensified a search for moral and esthetic values in the prerevolutionary life of one's nation. This could be seen in the works of minority writers like Chingiz Aitmatov and in those of "village writers," particularly Valentin Rasputin. Another kind of nationalism, exemplified by authors like Valentin Pikul' and Ivan Shevtsov, smacked of jingoism.

The party policy toward nationalism varied during this period. It was tolerated by Mikhail Suslov in the second half of the 1970s, probably because of its appeal to a sizable segment of the population. Iurii Andropov, on the other hand, considered nationalism to be a threat to Marxist ideology.

Characteristic of the 1965–85 period is the sharply different treat-

ment of the Jewish question in literary works. One group of writers, following in Evtushenko's footsteps, portrayed the Jews in a favorable light. In this group belongs Andrei Voznesenskii, with "The Call of the Lake" ("Zov ozera," 1965), which evokes the Nazi executions of Jews. Anatolii Kuznetsov's novel *Babii Iar* (1966) relates not only the massacre of Jews in Kiev but also the attitudes of the local population, which ranged from indignation to approval and collaboration. Censors, however, excluded many remarks about Jews, both compassionate and hostile, from the Soviet publication of the novel; some scenes of German brutality also fell victim to the censors' heavy hand. Anatolii Rybakov's novel *Heavy Sand* (*Tiazhelyi pesok*, 1978) combines the theme of Jewish suffering under Nazi occupation with an active resistance offered by the Jews and Belorussians. The novel appeared in *Oktiabr'* after having been rejected by several publishers.<sup>4</sup>

On the opposite end of the spectrum, Pikul's novel *At the Last Frontier* (*U poslednei cherty*, 1979), set in the final years of the Romanov dynasty, presents the Zionists' attempts to attain political power by manipulating high-ranking officials and, especially, Grigorii Rasputin and the tsarina. To ward off charges of anti-Semitism, Pikul writes that the Zionists do not represent the aspirations of hard-working and oppressed Jewish people. In Shevtsov's novel *In the Name of the Father and the Son* (*Vo imia ottsa i syna*, 1970), Zionism is equated with fascism, and Trotskyism is labeled as a brand of Zionism. Enemies of communism, all three strive for world domination. Stalin is credited with having correctly guessed Trotsky's true intentions, thus saving the country from a nightmare worse than Hitlerism. To lend credence to all this nonsense, Shevtsov puts it into the mouth of an old, loyal communist, a Jew.

Shevtsov's other novel, *Love and Hatred* (*Liubov' i nenavist'*, 1970), is aimed not at Zionism in general but rather at a particular character supposedly representative of a typical Jew. Naum Gol'tser, a spoiled brat and pseudointellectual, would commit any crime for the sake of money. To avoid sharing his father's inheritance with his mother, he stabs her to death with an awl; then he opens up her stomach, removes the entrails, and winds them around her neck. Fearing being reported to the police for a number of illegal activities, he mur-

ders a girl, dismembers her body, and scatters its pieces throughout the city. Needless to say, this piling up of horrors would provoke in any sensible reader a reaction quite different from that intended by the author.

Among the first works of the *perestroika* period are Rasputin's long story "The Fire" ("Pozhar," *Nash sovremennik*, No. 7, 1985) and Viktor Astaf'ev's novel *A Sad Detective*, (*Pechal'nyi detektiv, Oktiabr'*, No. 1, 1986). Both authors offer a depressing picture of the life of the Russian people. In "The Fire" the behavior of migrant workers illustrates the depth of their moral degradation. These uprooted people defile cemeteries, drink, fight, kill one another, and terrorize the population of a Siberian settlement. In *A Sad Detective* crime and savagery are presented through the experiences of a provincial militiaman, Soshnin. A gang rapes an elderly woman, drunkards attempt to murder Soshnin himself, an intoxicated driver kills several people with his truck, and a young man keeps beating a pregnant woman with a rock until she dies. The head of Glavlit passed the novel on the condition that the chief editor of *Oktiabr'*, Anatolii Anan'ev, take full responsibility for its publication.<sup>5</sup>

*Glasnost'* lifted the taboo from works dealing with the deportation of national minorities accused of cooperating with the Nazis during World War II. In February 1987, *Oktiabr'* printed Iosif Gerasimov's story "A Knock at the Door" ("Stuk v dver'"), written twenty-seven years earlier. Its subject is a partial expulsion from Moldavia of the Moldavians in 1949. Anatolii Pristavkin's novel *The Golden Cloud Slept There* (*Nochevala tuchka zolotaia*), written in 1981 and published in 1988 (*Znamia*, Nos. 3-4), provides some details of the total deportation of the Chechens in 1944. Both authors sympathize with the victims.

On the other hand, Astaf'ev's attitude toward contemporary Georgians in his story "Catching Gudgeon in Georgia" ("Lovlia peskarei v Gruzii," *Nash sovremennik*, No. 5, 1986) generated considerable controversy. Some Georgian writers and intellectuals complained about Astaf'ev's description of the black market activities of their compatriots and about his comparison of a stream of cars driven by young, affluent Georgians with a "monkey parade."<sup>6</sup> Most likely As-

taf'ev had no intention of insulting the Georgians as a nationality. On the whole he shows them as decent, generous people with impressive cultural traditions. It was his admiration of an old Georgian temple that prompted him to create an abhorrent image of its Mongolian desecrators. They built campfires directly in the temple, skinned their horses, gorged themselves on bloody, undercooked horsemeat, and finally fell down themselves, "burying their slant-eyed snouts into stinking horse dung."<sup>7</sup> In his August 24, 1986, letter to Astaf'ev, the historian Natan Eidel'man called the portrayal of the Mongols racist and immoral.<sup>8</sup>

In 1988 the editors of *Oktiabr'* censored in Vasilii Grossman's *Life and Fate* (*Zhizn' i sud'ba*, 1960) a paragraph about deported national minorities and Jews. Grossman wrote that the battle of Stalingrad decided the fate of the Kalmyks, Crimean Tatars, Balkars, and Chechens as well as Jewish actors and writers, whose execution in 1952 was to precede a trial of Jewish doctors (which, fortunately, did not occur because of Stalin's death). The main reason for the deletion must have been the reference to the persecution of Jews in the Soviet Union. This explains the disappearance from *Oktiabr'* of Chapter 32, which analyzes anti-Semitism and its causes. The journal, however, printed the chapter several months later.

Anti-Semitism has become one of the most sensitive issues in the Soviet Union today. *Glasnost'* has made it possible to express both pro- and anti-Jewish sentiments with increasing frankness. Among writers sympathetic to Jews is Voznesenskii, whose poem "The Ditch" ("Rov," *Iunosť*, No. 7, 1986) condemns the looting of a mass grave containing the remains of Jews murdered by the Nazis in 1941. Sergei Kaledin's story, "A Construction Battalion" ("Stroibat," *Novyi mir*, No. 4, 1989) has an attractive Jewish soldier named Fishel' Itskovich. A carpenter by profession, he comes from the Carpathians, where many Jews lived in villages. To save the life of his fellow soldier, he kills a brutal military guard. In the end, it is a Russian soldier who betrays Fishel' to their commander. Wicked activity of an anti-Semitic writer is represented in Iurii Nagibin's story "The Internationalist" ("Internatsionalist," *Knizhnoe obozrenie*, September 1, 1989). At the end of the story, Nagibin speaks of today's growth of chauvinism and intimates the possibility of pogroms in the future.

Literary works promoting anti-Jewish feelings include Vasilii Belov's recent novels *Everything Is Still Ahead* (*Vse vperedī, Nash sovremennik*, Nos. 7–8, 1986) and *The Year of the Great Change* (*God velikogo pereloma, Novyi mir*, no. 3, 1989). *Everything Is Still Ahead* features an unpleasant Jewish character, a cynic and slanderer, devoid of patriotism. The second novel communicates a fairly common notion that it was the Jews who brought the worst calamities upon the Russian people. High-ranking Jews are shown to be the architects of the homicidal policy of collectivization. The destruction of the Russian peasantry, Belov suggests, was inspired not by class struggle, but by national or, possibly, religious considerations. This suggestion is preposterous: collectivization was carried out for political and economic reasons by a party whose leadership consisted of members of different nationalities.

Another negative view of Jews is displayed in the novel *Special Regime* (*Osobyi režim*), produced by an obscure writer, Boris Sotnikov. Quotations from this novel printed in a reader's letter to the editor of *Ogonyok* indicate that one of Sotnikov's aims is to demonstrate a variety of ways used by the Jews to gain control over the Soviet state.<sup>9</sup> Sotnikov harps on the fact that Stalin's children Iakov and Svetlana married Jews and presented their father with half-Jewish grandchildren. Wives of Bukharin and Molotov were Jewish, and Stalin himself cohabitated with Roza Kaganovich. Then Sotnikov makes Stalin share with Beria his ideas about Jewish ascendancy. Jews, the dictator says, have obtained important positions in the press, radio, and publishing houses, as well as in well-paying professions; to speed up their advancement, they resort to bribes and patronage. Trotsky, Zinov'ev, and Kamenev had a great number of Jews in their entourages. It is worth noting that Sotnikov's novel was serialized in *Dnepropetrovskaia pravda*, the organ of the party committee of the Dnepropetrovsk province. This bespeaks the presence of anti-Semitism in the upper strata of the party. The same applies to the military, whose publishing house, Voenizdat, reprinted in 1988 Shevtsov's *Love and Hatred* and *In the Name of the Father and the Son*. And in 1989 Pikul's *At the Last Frontier* was serialized in the Voronezh magazine *Pod'em* under the original and more expressive title of *The Evil Spirit* (*Nechistaia sila*).

No doubt Belov, Sotnikov, Shevtsov, and Pikul' can only exacerbate anti-Jewish feelings in a certain part of the Soviet population. The same type of reaction has been prompted by a completely different work, Grossman's tale *Forever Flowing* (*Vse techet*, 1963), published in the sixth issue of *Oktiabr'* for 1989. Grossman has no personal animosity toward the Russian people, but his concept of their history and character is likely to be perceived as unjust and offensive by a considerable number of Russians. According to Grossman, the Russian soul was formed during a thousand-year-long period of slavery. Moreover, he feels that Russians lack a sense of dignity. Lenin's intolerance, cruelty, fanaticism, and contempt for liberty, Grossman asserts, were rooted in the Russian history of *nesvoboda* (unfreedom).

In response to the publication of *Forever Flowing*, Igor' Shafarevich and two other individuals sent a complaint to the secretariat of the board of the Writers' Union of the Russian Republic about what they called "a consistently anti-Russian policy" of the journal *Oktiabr'*.<sup>10</sup> In addition to *Forever Flowing*, the letter mentions Andrei Siniavskii's book *Strolls with Pushkin* (*Progulki s Pushkinym*, 1975), a fragment of which was published in the fourth issue of *Oktiabr'* for 1989, and the announced publication of Aleksandr Ianov's writing. Anan'ev defended the publication of *Forever Flowing* in two recent interviews.<sup>11</sup> While he does not agree with all of Grossman's points, Anan'ev finds his ideas interesting, surprising, and stimulating.

For the sake of their survival and retention of power, Soviet leaders created an artificial symbiosis of two mutually exclusive elements—the internationalist Marxist ideology and popular Russian patriotism. The ultimate goal was the linguistic Russification of all other nationalities with the purpose of producing a new Soviet person, without national distinctions. The failure of this ill-conceived design is amply demonstrated by today's national tensions and bloodshed. I hope that this national tragedy will eventually receive a profound and impartial treatment in imaginative literature.