THE EFFECTS OF THE REVOLUTION
AS SHOWN IN
SOME OF THE WORKS OF NATURALISTS OF THE NEP PERIOD

by

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to examine the results of the revolution and its effects on the Russian people. Since the government of the NEP period allowed relative freedom to writers, attention is focused on this time. The writers Kozakov, Malashkin, Grabar', and Nikiforov were chosen because their naturalistic writings would give the most accurate picture of the time. While all four authors deal with the ills of the system, their different methods of investigation give a greater scope to a critical analysis.

Each chapter of the paper presents the background of the author, some stylistic elements, deficiencies in the Soviet system and psychological effects on the characters. The writers are dealt with in the following order:

CHAPTER I-Mikhail E. Kozakov
"Meshchanin Adameyko"

CHAPTER II-Sergey I. Malashkin
"Luna s pravoy storony"

CHAPTER III-Leonid Y. Grabar'
"Lakhudrin pereulok" and
"Na kirpichakh"

CHAPTER IV-Georgiy K. Nikiforov
U fonarya and
Zhenshchina

The conclusion points out that the results of the revolution were far from what was expected at its inception.
Much of the Communist ideology worked against the psychological make-up of the people causing endless frustrations. The failure of the Party to consider human character brought out undesirable factions and destroyed some of the most worthy elements in the society; thus, retarding the progress towards its own goal.
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INTRODUCTION

The establishment of the New Economic Policy by the U.S.S.R. in February, 1921, brought about a significant change in the attitude of the Communist Party towards free thought and enterprise in business and the arts. The relaxation of rules is evident in a proclamation with regard to writers that was issued during the Party Congress of 1925:

... Communist criticism should dispense with its tone of literary command ... While directing literature as a whole, the Party can give little support to any one faction of literature ... The Party should express its support of free competition of various classifications and trends within a given sphere ...

Although it was still asserting Party control, the relative freedom provided by this proclamation enabled writers to express some of their views on the revolution and the life it had created in Russia.

During the nineteenth century, one of the earliest proponents of a humanistic approach to life was the intelligentsia. Evidence of this appears in the works of many of the writers of the period including such major authors as Lev Tolstoy, Turgenev and Dostoyevski. It was the intelligentsia who planted, among the peasants and labourers, the idea of some

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form of human rights. The lower classes, having known nothing but their daily toil, had little time to contemplate such notions of freedom. From 1860, the time when the intelligentsia achieved class status, it had been alienated because of the gap which existed between the ideal and the real. The intelligentsia wanted "to make the 'cursed Russian reality' conform to the universal Ideas of Man and Reason." This zeal and passion for a just society led to a tendency towards doctrinairism and extremism but to little conception as to how their ideals would function in actual practice. To the intelligentsia,

... education meant the development of talent, of ambition, of pride and imagination—in a word, 'individuality.'

They had to free themselves and the whole populace of a State that "could accommodate only technical competence and not 'individuality'." Thus, the intelligentsia supported the revolutionary movement from its inception; in fact, it was the "zemstvo," a group of the intelligentsia with political experience who "set the ball rolling."}


\[4\] Malia, loc. cit.

\[5\] Elkin, loc. cit.
Unfortunately, the revolution did not resolve the conflict in the relationship between the individual and society; and so the intelligentsia found themselves totally alienated when the nineteenth century culture collapsed and the Bolsheviks took control. The liberalism and humanitarianism which they loved did not materialize. Instead, after the revolution and during the Bolsheviks' struggle to dominate the government, the intelligentsia again found a state that was unwilling to accommodate 'individuality'. Accordingly, a muted hostility developed between the regime and the intelligentsia. The Party thought of the intelligentsia as the bourgeois class and their every movement was suspect. The government resented their not being integrated into the system and having to pay them high salaries for their services. But as Lenin pointed out, in order to organize the State, they needed people with state and business experience that could only be found in the old class. It was for this reason that he said:

We have to administer with the help of the people belonging to the class we have overthrown. 6

The resentment of the Party was reciprocated by the intelligentsia who hated them for not carrying out pre-revolutionary ideals. They also objected to the curbing of free expression and being forced to conform to the Party line or be persecuted.

What was happening bore no resemblance whatever to the magnificent prophecies of the symbolist seers or the mystical-minded radicals, it simply meant epidemics, starvation, prison, exile—physical and spiritual annihilation.

Indeed, many of the intelligentsia, including a number of writers, became political exiles when the Bolsheviks came to power. Once initiated, the hard Party line gained such momentum that even those in charge had little control over its direction despite their evident dissatisfaction with the turn of events. Nadzhda Mandelstam, in speaking of Bukharin, when he was at his peak of power in the mid-twenties, said that he clearly saw that the new world he was so actively helping to build was horrifyingly unlike the original concept. Life was deviating from the blueprints, but the blueprints had been declared sacrosanct and it was forbidden to compare them with what was actually coming into being. Determinist theory had naturally given birth to unheard of practitioners who boldly outlawed any study of real life: Why undermine the system and sow unnecessary doubt if history was in any case speeding us to the appointed destination.

The Civil War that followed the revolution (1918-1922) and the First World War caused such devastation that writing seemed superfluous. During this period which is often referred to as War Communism, the writers, as did the rest of the country, concentrated on survival. Due to nationalization

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and centralization of both land and industries, production had fallen off to a mere fraction of its pre-revolutionary level with the major portion of it going to support the Red army. The rest was meted out to the general population with factory workers receiving more than civil servants; and they, in turn, were being given more than the former privileged class. In truth, there was very little to be had by any of the populace. "The horrors of everyday life reached their apogee in the winters of 1919-20 and 1920-21." Everything that could be pried loose, including books, was burned to survive the bitter winter.

Despite the dire living conditions, a gradual renewal of literary activity based on the pre-revolutionary trends of Symbolism, Imaginism and Psychological Realism began. Communist leaders from the old intelligentsia tried to promote literature that expressed the ideology of the revolution; members of pre-revolutionary groups tried to reform them; young people with no literary experience felt compelled to write about their lives in those turbulent times; the symbolists proclaimed a messianistic role for Russia, declaring that the whole world would follow Moscow's lead in building

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10 Ibid., p. 77.

a new society.\textsuperscript{12}

Due to the lack of publishers, paper and other materials, poetry was the first literary genre to develop since it was more readily transported by word-of-mouth than prose. This resulted in the cafe period of Soviet literature, characterized by the utopian outlook of young writers and filled to overflowing with hopes for a dazzling future. By late 1920, a number of literary groups had been organized. One of the groups that functioned at this time was the Futurists whose beginnings Struve traces back to as early as 1910. It was essentially a revolutionary group which stressed innovations whatever the cost, rejecting all great masters of the past and the two other trends in Soviet literature, Realism and Symbolism, as well. They also tried to free writing from its dependence on the meaning of words.\textsuperscript{13} Because their approach was new, they considered themselves spokesmen for the new social order that was developing in Russia and so demanded an exclusive position in arts and letters as interpreters of revolutionary spirit in return for service to the Communist regime. They called upon all writers to reject the past and create new art forms. Since every culture is an expression of a given socio-economic order,\textsuperscript{14} there was no room for literary ties with the past in this new Soviet system.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{12}M. Slonim, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 5.
\item \textsuperscript{13}G. Struve, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 14-5.
\item \textsuperscript{14}M. Slonim, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 32-3.
\end{itemize}
Another important group which had had its beginnings prior to the revolution and then flourished afterwards was the Proletcult. The brainchild of A. Bogdanov (pseudonym for A. A. Malinovsky), it was based on the assumption that the working classes would advance towards Socialism along three parallel roads: political, economic and cultural. The cultural aspect would be exempt from any political control. Although not quite as radical as the Futurists, the Proletcult also rejected the literature of the past, claiming that whatever could be drawn from it should only be used as a tool to forge the true literature of the collective conscience. A break with the past had to occur because everything of an individual character was condemned. All truth lay in collectivization. What the Proletcult believe was later to be laid down as point 4 in the aforementioned resolution issued by the Central Committee of the Communist Party in 1925:

In a class society, there is not, nor can there be, neutral art although the class nature of art generally and literature particularly is expressed in forms infinitely more varied than, for example, in politics.

In an attempt to realize their dream of a collective proletarian and peasant literature, the Proletcult, between 1917 and 1920, established schools and studios. In these schools,

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15 G. Struve, op. cit., pp. 27-8. (For resolutions passed by the Proletcult and essays on same, see Literaturnye manifesty, pp. 130-46.)

16 N. L. Brodskiy, op. cit., pp. 130-1.

17 Ibid., p. 293.
"bourgeois specialists" were to teach the workers to write poetry and prose.¹⁸

In 1920, a portion of the Proletcult broke away to form an independent organization called Kuznitsa or the Smithy. Although this group is often considered totally proletarian, not all the members were of true proletarian origin. The common bond among them was their "acceptance of Communist ideology that qualified one as a proletarian writer."¹⁹ In spite of their conformity to Party ideals, Kuznitsa followed the lead of Proletcult in insisting on keeping their writing free from government interference. However, because of the themes used by members of Kuznitsa, there was no conflict with the Party. The glorification of collectivism and factory labour satisfied Party demands, but the forms used to present them were romantic and the imagery, grandiloquent. For this reason, they were criticized by the younger proletarians for being

... romantic and abstract, withdrawn from the world of living human beings and quite unconscious in their poetry of the real physiognomy of actual proletarians.²⁰

It was mainly this group of younger writers who, at a later date, tried to maintain objectivity by placing themselves deliberately in opposition to the "political poster" in literature. For roughly a decade after this, the Smithy

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¹⁹ Ibid.

maintained that literature must not be made a propaganda weapon for Party policy. 21

With the establishment in 1921 of the New Economic Policy founded by Lenin to offset the catastrophic decline in industry and agriculture and the resulting famine, epidemics and malnutrition, prosperity increased. Small businesses sprang up, production multiplied and much to the dismay of the proletariat, the "meshchanin" or "Philistine" became a prominent force in society. Publishing houses, including a number of privately owned ones, were established and prose became the leading literary form. Along with a relaxation of economic restrictions, censorship was also less stringent. In 1922, a literary group called the Serapion Brothers boldly issued a manifesto demanding that "a work of art be original and real and live its own particular life independent of its source of material." 22 The most outspoken of any of the groups at this time, the Serapion Brothers proclaimed freedom from regimentation for all writing. They asserted that the political affiliations of the author were of no consequence when the merit of a piece of literature was being considered.


Naturally, such defiance did not go unchallenged by Marxist critics and it gave rise to some stormy controversy. The Party itself, however, had not yet taken an official stand against the Serapions. Its tolerance towards all non-conformists is evident throughout the NEP period. A proclamation was issued advising how to deal with them.

Regarding the attitude towards "fellow-travellers," it is necessary to keep this in mind: 1) their differentiation; 2) the significance of many of them as qualified specialists of literary techniques; 3) the presence of a vacillating attitude in this stratum of writers.23

This liberal attitude with regard to writers remained apparent into the first years of the Five Year Plan.

It was the relaxed literary climate discussed above that enabled writers to express their thoughts more freely than at any other time since the revolution. This produced some exciting trends in Soviet literature. A form of writing which is often called naturalistic became popular. Some of the authors whose works showed this naturalistic tendency were Mikhail Kozakov, Sergey Malashkin, Leonid Grabar' and Georgiy Nikiforov. Although all these authors were in some way active in Communist organizations, their writings were not overshadowed by this. The relative freedom allowed them by the government at this time permitted them to show the realities of the period of reconstruction. This naturalistic bent made

their writings far removed from the "political poster" literature and showed distinct beginnings of the true psychological novel.

Their writings demonstrated that the new order after the revolution was not the panacea the country had expected. The Soviet system was found to have as many failings as the Tsarist regime. The common man fared no better than previously, for the ills of each system, though different, were strangely similar. Man's nature had not changed and he worked primarily for his own personal advancement and material gains with no regard for the needs of the country as a whole. Many opportunistic elements from the lower classes rose to governing levels and fleeced the common working man. Aristocracy had been replaced by bureaucracy but the results were still the same. Although much effort was made to improve the living conditions of the ignorant and downtrodden, the task proved a difficult one. They themselves, in fact, perpetuated their former kind of life through ingrained attitudes and bigotry. However little use the proletariat had for the intelligentsia, they were forced into giving them responsible positions in the Party, for nowhere in the working class were their skills available. Thus, the 'has beens' were allowed to collaborate with the new regime.

On the whole, the results of the revolution were disheartening. It had negated the previous system and morality but failed to provide anything in its stead. This created a
a great deal of turmoil and chaos especially among young people. The following thesis will examine a sampling of works written between 1925 and 1930 by some of the "fellow-travellers":

"Meshchanin Adameyko" - Mikhail Kozakov
"Luna s pravoy storony" - Sergey Malashkin
"Lakhudrin pereulok" and
"Na kirpichakh" - Leonid Grabar'

"U fonarya and
Zhenshcina" - Georgiy Nikiforov

in order to point out what these writers considered the shortcomings of the system during the reconstruction period. A short literary analysis of each author's works and an attempt to evaluate the psychological effects on the populace, as represented by the characters in their stories, will also be made.
CHAPTER I

Kozakov was an active member of revolutionary groups from the beginning of the revolution and, as mentioned in the introduction, a prominent member of Communist committees until his death. However, he did not write in the "political poster" style—the style previously recommended for dedicated Soviet writers and then enforced after the NEP period. In the tale "Meshchanin Adameyko," not only does Kozakov not portray the greatness of the working class or the peasant, but representatives of either of these classes do not even enter into the story. His realistic writing leads the compilers of Russkiye sovetskiye pisateli prozaiki to say:

... in 1927—the tale Meshchanin Adameyko was published reflecting the deformed happenings of the NEP period.  

It seems that, according to Soviet interpretation, the unsavoury happenings were due to the leniency of the NEP period and not at all a result of the revolutionary process.

As pointed out by V. Zavalishin in Early Soviet Writers, Kozakov "applied Dostoyevski's methods." Zavalishin likens

25 Ibid.
26 Zavalishin, op. cit.
Kozakov's tale "Meshchanin Adameyko" to Dostoyevski's Crime and Punishment, but it seems to be patterned on a combination of both Crime and Punishment and The Brothers Karamazov in its psychological themes. As in Crime and Punishment, in which Raskolnikov kills the old money-lending harridan to rid the world of an undesirable element, so Adameyko believes that Varvara Semienovna is what he calls "wild flesh" and her hastened death would help eradicate a blight from this earth.

In commenting on the story, Zavalishin says:

Adameyko plans to kill a rich woman in order to help a poor family, but induces another man to commit the actual murder.

This is not so. Adameyko neither actually plans to kill her nor arranges for someone else to do the killing. They want only to rob her.

Don't forget ... Hit me first,—I will fall in a faint, then you can turn to her, understand? ... So that she wouldn't be suspicious in case of something ... if someone interferes ...

"Meshchanin Adameyko" resembles Dostoyevski's The Brothers Karamazov in that Adameyko, as Ivan does regarding his father, ...
voices the opinion that Varvara should be killed. The matter is then taken out of his hands by fate. Adameyko and his accomplice, Sukhov, rob the old woman, but neither of them kills her. She dies of a heart attack during the confrontation with Sukhov.

The log didn't have time to smash the petrified face covered with fine perspiration: Varvara Semienovna swayed gently and fell heavily backwards. On that very day, after an invitation from the investigating body of the inquest, the doctor admitted secretly that the widow Postrunkova died of a heart attack.31

Adameyko's inability to let his part in the crime remain hidden again makes him similar to Raskolnikov in *Crime and Punishment*. Because of his obsession for ridding the world of parasites, he cannot refrain from subconsciously exposing his complicity. He wants to conceal the crime but inadvertently implicates himself by giving one of Varvara's fresh tarts to a child in the yard, then grabbing it away half eaten. A strange force seems to be driving him because he also takes a number of these tarts to Sukhov's children. The argument which ensues between Sukhov and Adameyko is later related to the investigator by Sukhov's young daughter, Galochka, and results in Adameyko's arrest.

The point of view in the tale is that of the omniscient author in the person of the narrator who makes the story more

31 Ibid., p. 145.
plausible by keeping the reader constantly aware of his presence. He maintains suspense by using a reverse method. He first reveals that Adameyko has been sentenced for a crime he didn't commit; then, through a series of flashbacks, he slowly unfolds the actual sequence of events. The suspense is heightened because the author does not present the flashbacks in chronological order, but in a manner of an amateur raconteur who relates the incidents as he remembers them, leaving the details to be explained at a future time. He also includes details calculated to mislead. When Adameyko picks up Olga's handkerchief at Varvara's while the police are investigating the crime, the reader is left wondering what role she played in it.

A skilful use of foreshadowing further enriches the story. The reader is already aware of the outcome, but Adameyko is not when he says:

"I said this to you, 'They will slay people and this is a necessity.' That is so. You have taken these words to be a malicious joke. Perhaps it is a joke and a fantasy now, both for you and for me. Because they have not yet slain either me or you."

"Save me, Lord, Ardal'on Porfirievich! ... To whom are we with you necessary? ..." shuddered the neighbour.

"That's just it, that we are totally unnecessary ... -- " Adameyko repeated after her.32

Adameyko does not qualify his "they". As it turns out, "they",

32 Ibid., p. 28.
Adameyko and Sukhov, were responsible for precipitating Varvara's heart attack and her death while "they," the courts, brought about Adameyko's supposed untimely demise. The elimination of both these people gave credance to Adameyko's peculiar theory of justice, that all unproductive elements of society should be destroyed by whatever means possible.

Kozakov makes use of another literary device by artfully including ironic elements in his tale. The reader can see the irony when Varvara makes reference to her dog.

A dog also understands its own business; in its own way, it acts with justice;

and Adameyko replies:

Here it is, a dog's justice: feed it—bribe it!—it will sell its friendship with its master. There, where there is treacle cake in the hands—there justice doesn't wear a peaked cap.\(^{33}\)

This passage is ironic because both Varvara and Adameyko were erroneous in their interpretations and consequently perished. Both dogs were exact reflections of their masters. Varvara was a trusting soul and she expected her dog to protect her. However, her dog was trusting too, and so Adameyko was able to trick it into not creating a disturbance when Sukhov entered the apartment. Had Adameyko been more intuitive about the direct trait relationship between dog and master, he wouldn't have failed to miss the significance of Sukhov's dog biting him immediately after he had fed it. It was an obvious

\(^{33}\text{Ibid., pp. 24-5.}\)
forewarning of the treatment he would later receive from Sukhov.

The author's use of the language further adds credibility to the narrative. The speech of the narrator is straightforward, almost journalistic in style. However, colloquialisms such as "les rubit' - pod nogi ne smotret'" and adding "-s" to various words such as "dozvol' te-s," "vami-s," and "nikak-s" are included in the dialogue to give the characters class colour. Kozakov occasionally indulges in a play on words, such as the bandying about of the word "nuzhno" in the example cited in #19 above. The first time, it takes on the meaning of "Why would anyone want to do that to us?"; the second time, it has its actual meaning of "necessary."

In his use of patois, an obvious departure from the classical traditions of pre-revolutionary literature, Kozakov was following the general example set by post-revolutionary writers. Many of them were still idealistic enough to think that the country was being turned over to the masses; therefore, their literature had to be in the idiom of the street.

Throughout the story, Kozakov brings out shortcomings of the new Soviet system. He first directs criticism at the legal processes by pointing out that Adameyko was convicted for a crime he didn't commit;

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34 Ibid., p. 137.
and the court, convinced of his responsibility and maturity, brought in its verdict completely in accordance with the circumstances of the affair.

But here one must point out that Ardal'on Adameyko did not kill, although the court did not admit the error, counting him a murderer.  

Rather than concentrating on the evidence that applied to the case, the prosecutor questioned Adameyko so closely about his relationship with both people and animals that one of the observers said that he was about to call the white pommeranian to the witness stand. As further evidence of questionable courtroom procedure, Kozakov reveals that, while the doctor's secret report that Varvara died of a heart attack was admissible in Sukhov's defence, Adameyko was still convicted of her murder.

Kozakov's censure of the courts is not a novelty per se, for he patterns Adameyko's trial after that of Ivan in Dostoyevski's The Brothers Karamazov. Kozakov also reaches back into an earlier period of social unrest, that of nineteenth century England. The humorous twists in his outline of courtroom procedures can be found in the social satires of Charles Dickens.

The methods of investigation used by Dimitriy Kirillovich Zhigadlo are far from satisfactory. He based the arrest of Adameyko and Sukhov on the confused stories he extracted from Galochka when she and her brother had been brought to Zhigadlo's

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36 Ibid., p. 7.
home to play with his children.

The reader has also, in all probability noticed a gross error in Galochka's story. Adameyko's conversation with both the Sukhovs that frightened her, which occurred during the first days of their acquaintance, she attributed to a later time; yes, besides that, she interpreted, in her own way, this conversation which her childish imagination promoted more than a little and blended it immediately with her memories.

Dimitriy Kirillovich, of course, could not have known about this mistake, but it served as the best proof of his guesses in regard to the true culprit in the crime. 37

Kozakov does not fail to point out that a secret police was already in operation at this time and had Adameyko under surveillance, not because he had committed a crime, but because of his radical opinions:

Zhigadlo ... showed some haste in his effort to reveal the crime: the data of routine secret service investigation, imparted to him somewhat later, would have served as the best proof for Dmitriy Kirillovich's guess—and the guilty one in the murder, would still not have avoided his fate. 38

The investigation which evidently had begun for no apparent reason with Adameyko's first visit to Sukhov had uncovered a number of unfavourable points about him. This evidently was not an unusual procedure. Nadezhda Mandelstam quotes a saying of the exterminating profession, "Give us a man and we'll make a case." 39

37 Ibid., p. 134.
38 Ibid., pp. 122-3.
With regard to Adameyko, the secret police found that his constant preoccupation with eliminating unproductive elements in Soviet society was dangerous to those in power. Since V.I.P.'s like Dimitriy Kirillovich were not contributing to the growth of a peoples' nation but were using their positions to aggrandize themselves, they, according to Adameyko's plan, were in line for liquidation. Therefore, although Adameyko was not guilty, his involvement in Varvara's death provided them with a convenient justification for disposing of him. A rapid solution of the case would also demonstrate Zhigadlo's efficiency. The irony behind Adameyko's conviction lay in the fact that the positions of those in power were no more secure because of it. They, in turn, could be tried and convicted on similar pretexts.

Kozakov also criticizes the newspaper for its biased style of reporting:

... we have significantly outlined the situations which must be explained and perhaps, in doing so, we have already evinced in the reader an ill-disposed and hostile attitude towards Ardal' on Porfirievich whom we do not pity but whom we cannot picture as coldly and as one-sidedly as was done in the newspaper account of this matter.40

The newspaper, in an effort to discredit Adameyko and find favour with those in power, purposely selected unfavourable facets of his character and magnified them, completely

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40 Ibid., pp. 7-8.
omitting any facts pertinent to the case. By using this method of reporting that could be referred to as "poverkhnostn" or "superficial", it was able to convict Adameyko even before the case could be heard.

The Communist revolution was known as the great leveller. It was supposed to have equalized living standards and to have removed great disparities which had existed between the life styles of the aristocrats and the working class. Unfortunately, this did not materialize effectively. Kozakov effectively contrasts the living conditions of the Sukhov family and the Zhigadlos and to a lesser extent those of Varvara Semienovna to reveal the disparity which actually existed. The Sukhovs lived in cramped, sparsely furnished quarters: they had two small, dark rooms for four people and only two chairs so that when Adameyko visited, Sukhov sat on a piece of log, Galochka on a trunk. The Zhigadlo family, on the other hand, had a spacious, lavishly furnished apartment with a special room for the children and a study for Zhigadlo. Varvara too had more space for herself than the Shukhovs had for the whole family. Sukhov was not employed, nor was his wife. In fact, money was so scarce in the Sukhov household that, in spite of the seriousness of the young son's illness, they could not have called the doctor had Adameyko not volunteered to pay. Kozakov does not make any direct statements about Zhigadlo's financial status, but he makes it evident that they never lacked resources. Varvara had far more money
than she could use and so was lending it out to Adameyko's wife on a short term basis. The Sukhovs obtained money for basic necessities from the fruits of their children's begging in front of the bakery. When Adameyko brought them pastries, they would voraciously devour them. These fruit tarts were similar to the ones Varvara fed unstintingly, not only to her dog, but also to the mice which inhabited her quarters.\textsuperscript{41} The Zhigadlos, too, besides having plenty to eat, could always afford to keep a large jar of sweets on hand.

After the Communist government took control of all industry, many private enterprises were forced to close. This is why both Sukhov and Adameyko were unemployed. As Adameyko phrases it, he "did not find himself in the Soviet service."\textsuperscript{42} Kozakov indicates that the system was somewhat at fault in this instance; and it was because of this lack of constructive employment that Ardal'on Adameyko met his downfall.

In "Meshchanin Adameyko," all the characters presented by Kozakov were extremely negative and not at all likeable. All but Adameyko seemed to live by the "every man for himself" philosophy, each greedily grasping for everything he could get. This psychotic materialism in the Russian people had already

\textsuperscript{41}When Varvara's husband was on his deathbed, he jokingly said that he was not leaving her but would come back after the funeral as a mouse. Since she had no way of telling which mouse was her husband, when more than one appeared, she fed them all and gave them the run of the house.

\textsuperscript{42}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 21.
been pointed out by Zoshchenko in his works and is further examined by Kozakov. Varvara Simienovna was obsessed with money and food. She exhibited her greed by her decision to rent one of her rooms despite the great sums of money she was hoarding. Zhigadlo had acquired a preponderance of household possessions as if the weight of such goods would make his position more secure and harder to overturn.

With the Sukhovs, it was a more desperate kind of avarice which arose partly from their struggle for survival and partly from innate characteristics. Their basic needs drove Feodor Sukhov to attack a corn merchant in a dark lane; and the Sukhovs' pettiness of character perpetuated the hypocritical friendship with Adameyko. They found it expedient to be friends as long as Adameyko was bringing them gifts and helping them financially. When it became evident that Adameyko would be of no further use to them, they both turned on him. Sukhov laid all the blame on Adameyko for leading him astray, notwithstanding the fact that he had already been immersed in a life of crime prior to this; i.e., forcing his children to beg, attacking the deaf-mute merchant in the lane, etc.

This is what it is,—you swine ... It comes out like this, that you have driven me crazy ... You have dragged another man after you.43

Olga Samsonovna, Sukhov's wife, displayed a definite lack of

43 Ibid., p. 168.
morals too in encouraging Ardal'on to make advances without having any intention of returning his affection. It is ironic that Adameyko should have chosen such spineless undesirable types to try to help lift them from their abject poverty. It seems evident that the people that Adameyko chose as the epitome of the glorious working class would have been even greater vultures than Varvara or Dimitriy Kirillovich given the opportunity.

In Ardal'on Porfirievich Adameyko, Kozakov portrays vividly a schizophrenic personality. Our anti-hero was as negative and unpleasant as the rest of the characters, save for one aspect: his devout belief that the world should be freed from all parasites, allowing each man to get his just desserts. Slaughtering all these leeches, according to Adameyko, would be the only way to assure a successful outcome to the revolution. The irony of this belief comes from the fact that Adameyko knew that he, himself, was one of these parasites. This ambivalence was itself indicative of schizophrenia.

On the one hand, Adameyko considered himself a man of knowledge who could speak authoritatively and who had a mission in life—to convince people that all the human chaff be disposed of. On the other, he knew that he was parasitic and subconsciously tried to destroy himself. His reasoning was confused and like a broken kaleidescope, it constantly shifted,
pausing in bizarre tangles rather than in a pattern.

Because the revolution and events that followed eliminated his job, Adameyko had to justify his existence in some way. As a result, he spent all his time trying to project an aura of superior intelligence.

Another man would derive pleasure by spending money on murder or a prostitute, but you—you spend money to show off your strangeness and intellect.44

Thus, Adameyko's friendship with Feodor Sukhov and his generosity towards him resulted, not from altruistic motives, but from egotistical desire to propound his revolutionary theories to a captive audience. He resembles Kavalerov, in Alesha's Envy, who exhibited a similar trait. Kavalerov spent a great deal of time and energy trying to prove to the disinterested audience how clever he was.

The Sukhovs were not the only people constantly subjected to Adameyko's oratory, for

... often in the evenings he would go into the house manager's room and recount at length, to those present, the diverse news items. They were particularly and unusually interesting in Ardal'on Porfirievich's retelling.45

He considered himself extremely knowledgeable and took pride in deluding his listeners.

... from an observer's viewpoint, that Ardal'on Porfirievich has a close

44Ibid., p. 17.
In his maniacal idealism, Adameyko prescribed such radical measures that his listeners considered him anarchistic. He thought that the government in power was not doing enough for the people, but that eventually they would get around to doing more. Although he was unaware of it, his advocacy of a purge of all parasitic and undesirable characters from the society amounted to an outright declaration for the overthrow of the government. The greed, corruption, bribery, nepotism, and superfluity among the government officials equaled, if not surpassed, that of the general public. Adameyko wanted to leave only good people to develop the new land; but there could be no really "good" people, for all those who reached positions of responsibility were eventually corrupted by their power. Therefore, he was in reality prescribing anarchy.

When Kozakov opens his narrative and introduces his readers to Adameyko, he states:

"The thing which most of all forced one to feel some singularity in this man was his age.

And, indeed, Ardal'on Porfirievich's years least of all could serve as an explanation of his emotional state and his convictions: at that time, when the name of Ardal'on Porfirievich appeared in the newspaper for the second and last time, he was only twenty-nine years old."
that the reader gets a totally different impression from reading the story. If the author had not clarified it at the beginning, one would assume that Adameyko was at least forty-five years old. He, like other characters, lacked vitality and spirit. All the people, except those engaged in some form of profiteering, were prematurely aged and led a meaningless, undirected existence. The author subtly implies that they were different prior to the revolution. The revolutionary movement, like a vampire, craved fresh blood and made victims of the Russian people, drawing their life blood and leaving only hollow, human shells. The stark reality of life in the Soviet Union was impossible to tolerate so the people had to create a fantasy in order to survive emotionally and mentally. They lived not for the present, but always anticipated a brighter and more promising future. The saying "zit' bez fantaziy--sovetskaya skazka" could be applied to the whole period of the construction of Communism.

A plodding unresponsiveness governed Adameyko a major part of the time. His force of character appeared only during his manic periods when he was unable to control his actions. These spells of forced hyper-activity usually came after lengthy periods of fantasizing. As Adameyko says about fantasies:

... "Are they frightening because they smack of reality?! ... Fantasy--a frightening matter." Ardal'on Porfirievich continued his thought. "And notice in
what aspect it is frightening. In that, everything you imagine in your fantasies—will, without fail, occur in life! ...
/You can think any fantasy/. Only notice this, that it will, without fail, be possible and you will, also without fail, want to touch it like an object ... I am speaking about that kind of fantasy which can invisibly be found in line with life, that's what ... Its character, so to speak, and the character of life and related!"48

Olga Samsonovna became one of Ardal'on's prime fantasies. As is typical of a schizophrenic, he was both strongly attracted to and repelled by her. This obsession, which was somehow linked with and symbolic of his revolutionary ideals, had him so mesmerized that he was powerless against it. Like a runaway horse, it needed an external force to bring it to a halt. Adameyko was left at peace only after Olga's near fatal accident with the streetcar. This accident freed him of his unnatural fascination for her and, through symbolic transference, of his burning desire to fulfill the purpose of the revolution.

Kozakov gives no evidence that Adameyko's mental imbalance was caused solely by the revolution and the subsequent regime; but they thwarted his zealous desire to help create a utopia, and consequently brought his latent schizophrenia to the surface. The social injustices gave him an object for his activities and the bureaucratic processes made whatever he did totally ineffectual.

48 Ibid., pp. 27-8.
Adameyko's powers of observation were, nevertheless, acute; and in his rantings, he uttered a number of undeniable truths. He saw the nation as a flock of vultures preying on each other. He predicted that those in power would carry out mass slaughter in the name of the common good. He noticed, too, that the suicide rate had increased significantly among the young people of certain classes.

These allegations could hardly have been in harmony with the image that those with political power wanted to project. Since Adameyko was aware that those who did not deserve their influential positions would take revenge on him, his involuntary drive to actualize the revolutionary ideal was tantamount to suicide. In this respect, he resembled many young people throughout the country. They were, as in Socrates' analogy to himself, like the gadfly; and the State was like the horse. Powerless to affect the changes that the system so drastically needed and that they so ardently desired to bring about, the young people were constantly frustrated and eventually destroyed by that which they desired to change. Although Kozakov only hints at these frustrations, the next author to be discussed, Sergey Malashkin, treats them in greater depth in his story "Luna s pravoy storony."
CHAPTER II

Sergey Malashkin's written works should have been an excellent advertisement for the Russian revolution. The son of a poor peasant, he started working at the age of twelve. He joined the revolutionary group in 1906 and continued working with the governing group after the revolution. Surprisingly, Malashkin's political career and writing style bore no relation to each other.

The literary activity of Malashkin is a demonstrative example of a glaring rift between the maintenance of the creativity of the artist and his general political position. The object of Malashkin's creativity was the representation of a revolutionary epoch; but this representation was given from a position of heightened and over-sensitive interest in the dark aspects and perversions of domestic conditions. In this sense, his tale "The Moon from the Right-hand Side" is extraordinarily demonstrative.49

The story, which elicited this sharp criticism, "Luna s pravoy storony" - "The Moon from the Right-hand Side" was written in a style which bears little similarity to "political poster" literature. Because of his deviation from the preferred mode of expression, the author begins with an apology to some of his readers and a plea to them to examine the last chapter for the true ending of the story. Both the introduction and the final chapter are sufficiently divorced from the

49 Literaturnaya entsiklopedia (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo kommunistichestskoy akademii, 1929-39), Tom VI, p. 735.
rest of the tale that they appear to have been added in order to make the story more palatable to the government and thus, publishable.

Malashkin was a typical example of a writer who wrote only from memory about what he had observed. Although he lacked great imagination, his perception was keen as was his insight into the emotional machinations of the people about whom he wrote. In the introduction, Malashkin states that an author "should write only about what he sees with his own eyes and feels with his own heart." The result of this credo is a candid tale which reveals much of the sordid life after the revolution, and the mental anguish this way of living caused the young people. Because he wrote accurately about their problems, Malashkin was extremely popular with the Soviet youth. In 1927 writes Struve, "Luna s pravoy storony" was one of the "sensational successes of the year and went through several impressions." The very traits which enhanced his popularity with the youth brought him vitriolic criticism from the government.

... When he writes about the sexual disso-
luteness of the heroine of the tale, the Komsomol member, Tanya, the author refers to her as "the wife of twenty-two husbands." Malashkin did not succeed in presenting the question of the social reasons for this

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promiscuity. As a result, he made a groundless, unfounded accusation of lack of discipline against the Communist youth. The story was sharply censured by Communist critics.51

Malashkin's realistic description of the lives of youth was not an accusation, nor was it groundless and unfounded. During the twenties, a group of Komsomols in Sochi was shot for debauchery.52 Malashkin was truthfully reporting a situation which the government hoped to keep hidden until it could be stamped out. It was for this reason that Malashkin's works and, indeed, Malashkin himself disappeared from the Russian literary scene.

Of the tales he left behind, the most vivid is "Luna s pravoy storony." Malashkin uses several methods in his presentation of the tale: The heroine's brother, Kolya, acts as narrator to give a historical background of his sister Tanya, and a reason for telling the story. Malashkin then becomes the narrator who, using Tanya's letters to her brother, outlines the events which occurred in her young life. By quoting from her diaries, he admits the reader to Tanya's stream of consciousness and exposes him to the turmoil in her soul. Thus, Malashkin shows himself to be keenly attuned to the climate of the times, particularly in his observations of psychological patterns.

51 Literaturnaya entsiklopedia, op. cit.
52 Mandelstam, op. cit., p. 114.
Malashkin uses detailed description to depict vividly both character and setting. Psychological traits are also revealed through his almost caricature-like portrayal of the various personalities. Evidence of this is found in his description of Isayka Chuzhachek, a young Komsomol member.

Isayka Chuzhachek was of short stature; his face and body were puny; on his thin face, which resembled a shuttle, he had only three distinguishing features: a large red nose, wide yellow protruding teeth, and two beady eyes the colour of coffee grounds which, notwithstanding the unusual movement of Isayka Chuzhachek's whole body, were unmoving and seemed dead. Isayka Chuzhachek was dressed, not only well, but in a refined manner: He had on a grey checked suit, a white shirt with blue stripes, the end of which was tucked into his trousers and tied around with a wide yellow leather belt. Beneath his sharp hooked chin was an extremely large bright blue necktie with a jutting knot and ends extending almost to Isayka Chuzhachek's feeble shoulders. His forelock was not bad either—it was combed to the right in such a strange way that one began to fear for Isayka Chuzhachek's head; any minute the forelock, by its own weight, would pull his head over and break the long thin straw-like neck. His footwear was uncommon—sharp-toed suede shoes and large checked grey socks. Looking at and studying Isayka Chuzhachek, it was difficult to comprehend all the colours of his extraordinary figure, and so it was also impossible to understand the logic of his thought ...

In this outstanding example of satire on the Komsomol, Malashkin laughs sadly at misguided youth, inflated with self-importance but directionless and caught in a gyre. From the

53 S. Malashkin, "Luna s pravoy storony" (Moscow: Moldaya Gvardiya, 1926), pp. 34-5.
preceding picture, the viewer perceives a very confused and confusing young man. Outwardly, Isayka is self-assured, conceited, and somewhat foppish; inwardly, his thoughts are in imbroglio while his soul, which is mirrored in his eyes, is dead.

The introduction of Peter, Tanya's old friend from the village, makes the lives of Isayka and his cohorts appear even more futile and licentious. Peter is portrayed as a rather self-confident but compassionate young man: the antithesis of Tanya and her Moscovite friends. Tanya became acutely aware of the difference between them when she compared an innocent night spent in a haystack with Peter and her promiscuous life among the Komsomol delinquents.

In his description of Peter and Peter's ability to retain his integrity, Malashkin is careful to point out that Peter did not have the same obstacles to overcome as did the others. Since he was of true peasant stock, life under the new regime was considerably easier. He was not burdened with the stigma of a "meshchanin" background. Unlike the city Komsomol, he had not been uprooted from familiar surroundings, but was working on the land with the people he already knew. His foundations had not been destroyed so he still had a base from which to build.

Malashkin's descriptions of setting are as carefully constructed and graphic as his descriptions of character. In
them, he introduces olfactory as well as visual stimuli. Tanya, when she left the village, was in tune with nature; and the smell of spring in the air signified hope and promise to her.

... Four years ago, like today, there was a large moon in the sky and the saccharine smell of night. Yes, that's true; there was, at that time, the sharp smell of late flowers. Even in Moscow when, early in the morning, I got off the train and went out of the Kurski station into the square, there was this smell and I remember it as if it were now; its current inundated me in spite of a dead, boney nag sprawled in the square not far from the station. I passed by the horse calmly and in passing, glanced into its dark grey, paralysed eyes which were rolled out of orbit; and in them, as in a mirror, saw myself and smiled to myself. Moscow, at that time, despite its being late summer with carrion lying everywhere, to me seemed to smell of spring and snowdrops.

Since Tanya was filled with beautiful dreams for the future, she smelled only the spring and not the rotting flesh which was symbolic of much of the life in Moscow at that time. Pitting the wholesome pastoral life against the decadence of the city is not an original device. The "return to nature" theme was predominant throughout the whole Romantic period starting with Rousseau through Stendahl, Flaubert, Wordsworth, Whitman, Tolstoy, etc. A whole series of Gogol's stories show the adverse effect of the city upon him.

Under the Soviet system, "youth spoiled by the city" was
more than just a literary theme, for it had become a grim ac-
tuality. It was more pronounced than at any previous time
because the government took promising young people from their
homes in the country and resettled them in the city to work
and to go to school in the Rabochiy fakul'tet or Rabfak. In
the city especially, the speed with which the changes took
place during the post-revolutionary period forced a rapid in-
tellectual growth upon them, leaving their social development
lagging sadly. Through propaganda, the State attempted to
coerce the youth into abandoning the morals of their fore-
fathers. According to Communist doctrine, familial values
were untenable because they were based on a false premise and
so had to be replaced by collective morals. While "collective
consciousness", in which they were well indoctrinated, proved
effective in work situations, it was not viable in the organ-
ization of private lives. In an attempt to speed up their
retarded social development and fill the vacuum between it and
their sophisticated, intellectual achievement, the youth ex-
perimented with sex, drugs, and other types of debauchery hop-
ing to find emotional fulfillment. Their ignominy brought the
wrath of the Party down upon them, although the State was
largely responsible for their having succumbed to all the ne-
farious influences of the city. Although the Komsomol was the
official organization of Communist youth, an antagonism arose
between it and the Party. It is this rift that is courageously
exposed by Malashkin.
From a literary standpoint, "Luna s pravoy storony" is further enriched by Malashkin's use of figurative language and symbols, an example of which has been cited above (#54). The moon or "luna" is the main symbol in the story. When a full moon was shining from the right-hand side, it was thought to be an indication of good luck, and Tanya referred to it frequently. Shortly after the Bolshevik takeover of her village, Tanya went out into the garden, saw the moon from the right-hand side and compared it to an apple from the orchard which was then heavily laden with fruit.

... the days are golden; there are many, many apples in the orchard, so many, in fact, that it's beyond one's imagination. What delicious Antonovka apples: crisp, juicy, and yellow! At night, there is always a moon and always, just as you step outside, on the right. It is large and yellow, and mainly it resembles a ripe, juicy Antonovka, so that I feel like greedily swallowing it—gulp, and it's all gone.55

The simile which Malashkin presents above is a multiple image: the moon and apple, the moon and life, and the apple and life. The Antonovka, the best apple produced in the Soviet Union, is beautiful in colour, smell, and quality. It is symbolic of fifteen year old Tanya's life in the village where she was working with the peasants and tasting the first fruits of success. She was eager and hungry for what life had to offer. Just as she would have liked to swallow up the apple-like moon

55Ibid., p. 18.
in one gulp, so she wanted to encompass life totally in one bite, not just to savour it slowly.

To give a more substantial portrayal of his characters, Malashkin includes some of the superstitions held by the villagers. One of those, as previously mentioned, was seeing the moon from the right-hand side. Another was that of viewing terrible dreams as omens of a disaster. Tanya's father, who is never referred to by anything other than this appellation, slept unusually late one morning and could not eat his breakfast because he had had a frightening dream. Instead of opening his shop as he had always done, he prayed for a long time before going to the store. The prayers apparently were not answered, for the proclamation about the confiscation of property had been posted on his shop before his late arrival. The shock was so great that he had a stroke and fell to the ground. All his land holdings except for that property around his house were taken from him shortly thereafter; and he was also assessed for a large amount of money.

Beliefs in omens such as the ones above show that, although the structure of government and of the country had changed drastically, rural life was still bound by old tradition. The Domostroy custom was still in effect and households were patriarchal despite the equality that had been achieved by women. The male heads of household ruled with an iron hand as Tanya rudely discovered. She was disowned by her previously
ddoting father and ordered from the house when he discovered that she, a merchant's daughter, was working in league with the peasants.

Like Kozakov, Malashkin also criticizes the injustices and the false assumptions prevalent during the reconstruction period. When the peasants first started taking over the villages, they had no mercy for the merchants who had been fleecing them over the years. When Tanya's father refused to pay his contribution to the Party, he was detained in a dark room for four days and fed salt herring. He was released only when he convinced his captors that his son Kolya was at the front fighting the war. When there was a "kulak" uprising in one of the villages, they shot several Communists and nine Komsomol members. In reprisal, eighty "kulaks," ten priests, and one landowner were executed by the Communists.

That opportunistic elements were already starting to appear is evident from the humourous anecdote related by Tanya's godfather. After regaining his confiscated goods from an unscrupulous official, Stepan retained them through bribery. In the spring, when the official had derived sufficient personal benefit from Stepan's "gifts," he took possession of what was left of these goods for the whole community. Another indication that Communist officials were taking advantage of their positions appears in a scene that Tanya witnessed from her window in Moscow. At the time when fabric and clothing
were scarce, the wife of a Communist in the building across the square spent about two hours trying on eleven different dresses.

The use of anecdotes such as the one related by Stepan was fashionable in literature at that time, particularly among writers of Malashkin's coterie. The employment of this device was part of an attempt to bring literature closer to the working people by using their idiom. Mayakovskiy made similar use of the plebian joke incorporating it in his poetry and trying to make its use acceptable in literature.

One of the worst injustices perpetuated by the Soviet regime was that of attaching a stigma to cultural background. In pre-Soviet times, prejudice due to occupation was widespread. Tanya's father was, himself, the victim of this practice. As a young man, he was intelligent and handsome. However, because he came from a poor family and was a herdsman, the lowliest position in the village, he was the butt of many cruel jokes. After the revolution, propaganda inverted the social pyramid. If a person's parentage was that of a poor peasant or a factory worker, he was considered an exemplary person, no matter how undesirable he himself might be. If he came from a family of what was previously considered higher social standing or wealth, everything he did was questioned. To aggravate the situation, those who were of "meshchanin" origin were not encouraged to integrate with the workers, but were isolated in groups and often ostracized.
Another error in judgment made by the Communist leaders was that of considering Komsomol members as adults. Although they were highly organized into an effective work force, they were actually children. The responsibility placed upon the shoulders of these young people aged them more rapidly — Tanya looked eighteen when she was fifteen. Their minds were not yet mature and they sometimes behaved like children as evidenced in the following incident:

You well know that they can't provide cotton for the village, and the men of our village decided to organize their own textile factory, and did. They passed a resolution which gave each woman and girl a specific allotment of flax that had been taken from the landowners, Chiraev and Pisarev. The women spun this flax all winter and finished only at the time of the great fast; they washed it and hung the skeins in the frost. During the night, the young people took these skeins and entangled the whole village to such an extent that it was impossible to pass through it without becoming snarled in thread.

The Party again failed to take into account the immaturity of the young people when it sent them to school in the city. Hundreds of youngsters were plucked from their rural environment and left alone in a strange city. They had had no experience in coping with an urban way of life and many of them, through lack of knowledge and guidance, soon fell prey

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56 The premature aging of the post-revolutionary youth is also stressed by Kozakov in "Meshchanin Adameyko" as discussed in the previous chapter.

57 S. Malashkin, op. cit.
to evil influences. This is exactly what happened to Tanya.

Tanya, although she was only fifteen when she left the village, fared quite well in the city until the Raykom transferred her to a new position. A high-ranking official had decided to separate the children of the petty bourgeois from their parents. Since Tanya came from a merchant family, she, too, was included in the organizational cell allotted to these youngsters. Tanya, along with many others, suffered considerable hardship because of the prejudices held against that particular segment of the population. The conversation between the author and Tanya's brother shows how widespread and unjust this prejudice was. When Kolya made disparaging remarks

58 The segregation of the "meshchanin" youth eliminated any possibility of their ever becoming good Communist workers and made them the scapegoat of the rest of the populace. The psychological repercussions of such a division has been frequently shown in experiments. One such experiment was performed with a primary school class in California. The children were divided into groups according to eye colour. One day, the brown-eyed children were told they were inferior, the next day, the blue-eyed children were told they belonged to the inferior category. On the day they believed themselves to be inferior, the performance of the children in academic matters dropped sharply, while that of the superior group rose.

During playtime, those who were purportedly inferior stood on the sidelines making little or no attempt to join in the games. When a few did try to participate, they were harshly rejected and sometimes physically abused. In general, their social maturity was substantially reduced and they became either withdrawn or belligerent. When, on the following day, the alternate group was informed that it was inferior, there was a complete reversal in positions.

This experiment, though conducted long after the NEP period, shows that the Party, by its own actions, had created a problem that would grow in magnitude until it prompted such drastic actions as the shooting already cited.
about the "meshchanin" class blaming them for his sister's downfall, the author interjected sharply:

But your sister is not from a working family ... that didn't interfere, as you say, with her steadfastness.59

Not a new phenomenon, making a scapegoat of a particular occupation or class had been prevalent long before the revolution. There had merely been an inversion of the social order. Just as Tanya's father had been ostracized by the other villagers for being a herdsman, therefore of the lowest stratum, Tanya was discriminated against by the peasant class for having come from a merchant family. While Tanya's father reacted to this persecution by becoming cruel and retaliative, seeking only to increase his own wealth and status, Tanya succumbed to outside pressures and fell into moral dissipation, losing her revolutionary zeal and all faith in herself.

After the revolution, many of those who had been unearthed from the bottom of the social heap compensated for their previous suffering through ruthless exploitation of others. Involvement with one of these people was Tanya's first step towards her degeneration.

... At this time, many young men were courting and when I didn't reciprocate their attention, they started calling me a petty bourgeois publicly. Later, one very prominent worker of the Komsomol attached himself to me—you mustn't think I loved him—and I got together with him ... Later, he dropped me and I peacefully left him.60

59 Malashkin, op. cit., p. 21.
60 Ibid., p. 49.
This was the first of a series of sexual liaisons between Tanya and various Komsomol members. As Tanya lay on her bed and watched a voyeuristic pair across the square making love in front of a mirror—a scene which she called a "pastoral of the socialistic era"—she thought of her own sex life: the twenty-two men to whom she had been mistress and the six men with whom she had had sexual intercourse in one night. She felt that "life had roared past her and disappeared." She had reached a manic-depressive syndrome of psychological imbalance. During a withdrawal period such as the one mentioned above, she did not have the strength to do anything but "wallow in the filthy mud." In an instant, because she saw the moon from the right-hand side, she flew into wild elation and danced around her room, screaming and laughing, begging her friends to hurry and bring the "hashish," then falling asleep on her hands and knees in the middle of the room. The contrast between the spoiled Tanya and the exuberant girl who was shouting with joy at the thought of going to Moscow is so acute that both images are infinitely magnified.

Tanya's marriage to Peter stabilized her outward life but sent her into a deep depression. Although Peter was not repulsed by her previous activities, which she had related in

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61 Ibid., p. 23.
62 Ibid., pp. 22-3.
63 Ibid., p. 23.
details, Tanya felt she was cheating him and their marriage by being unable to respond to him sexually.

... I suffered because I loved him to distraction, because he also loved me deeply, and because, in spite of our reciprocal love, I didn't feel his caresses, his ardent inspiring touch from which the body opens and fills with life, millions of lives ... 64

The vacuum that existed in Tanya's life made her feel that she had burnt herself out. This feeling coupled with her love and high regard for Peter made her feel unworthy and led to her ultimate suicide. 65 She gave Peter all she had to give—her life—so that he could be free to live fully with a more deserving person.

The same frustrations that afflicted Tanya also beset the other members of her group. As has since been shown in psychological experiments (see footnote #58) when particular groups of people are the butt of discrimination and justifiably or unjustifiably made to feel inferior, the rate of achievement drops and they live up to the expectations others have of them. Thus, these youngsters were unable to attain personal satisfaction from their activities and were constantly looking for new "kicks" mainly as a means of escape, but also with

64 Ibid., p. 50.

65 Although Malashkin says, in the last chapter, that Tanya did not commit suicide but went into the north to work, this conclusion is not convincing. It appears that Malashkin actually intended the story to end with Tanya's death, but due to external pressures appended an additional weak conclusion in order to appease the censors.
a faint hope that this one was perhaps the right path to the restoration of self-esteem. Because the revolution had negated the moral values of the old system without providing anything new in its stead, they experimented with alcohol, drugs, sex, or whatever perversion or debauchery that presented itself. They could not morally condone their own activities but used their intellect to rationalize their actions. This is evident in Isayka's speech justifying free love and criticizing the conventional maxim of "love until death." In Tanya's case, Peter's love was sufficient to draw her away from rationalizations and look at herself clearly. Once she had seen herself realistically, she knew she could not live with what she had become. This makes her suicide inevitable and further shows the implausibility of the ending.

It is evident that the excessive drinking, sex orgies and experimenting with hashish did not provide the youth with the fulfillment they were seeking. Their mode of life only served to intensify their feelings of guilt, uselessness, and despair and often led them to suicide. These frustrations were not limited to just one segment of the society. As previously discussed, Kozakov points out their presence in people who were non-members of the Communist Party; Malashkin deals with them in regard to the young Komsomol group; and Grabar', the next author to be discussed, shows that they also affected well-established members of the Communist Party.
CHAPTER III

Grabar' is the one author of the four being considered on whom there is no biographical material in either the Literaturnaya entsiklopedia or in Russkiye sovetskiye pisateli prozaiki. However, it is known that he was a member of the Communist Party. His concern with the direction the reconstruction was taking is evident in an "author's digression" from the novel Sel'vinity by Grabar'.

The public has viewed my work as deliberate slander rather than an attempt at cleaning up; literary critics have accused me of depicting our society as a collection of left-overs and misfits. I protested angrily, astonished at people's lack of perspicacity and insisted on my right to sweep the dirt out of the house.

There was a time when people vacillated, took to drinking, erred, went astray, degenerated. I have known that time.66

As an artist, Grabar' failed to achieve any great heights of literary style. He was, nevertheless, a keen observer of the life of his period and reported what he saw with precision and accuracy. He understood people and the reasons for their behaviour. Also, he was aware of the compromises they had to make in order to survive against the external pressures of the Soviet system.

In his description of people, Grabar' presents "types" rather than realistic personages. An excellent example of

this is Egorushka in the tale "Na kirpichakh" who is the epitome of the "young idealist." All the people in "Na kirpichakh" are, in fact, "type" characters--"officials," "fence-sitters," and "workers." Through this literary device, Grabar' effectively shows that his main theme, the conflict between officials and workers, was not confined to one plant but was prevalent wherever industrial enterprises existed in the Soviet Union. This kind of exposé roused the ire of those in government and resulted in Grabar's ultimate disappearance from the literary scene.

The language in Grabar's stories is for the most part colloquial. Even in his descriptive passages, the narrator uses such expressions as "svoy chelovek" and "samim-to" in referring to Arshok Semenov in "Na kirpichakh" and countless diminutives such as "chastenko" and "shchuplenkiy" throughout the story. Kozakov and Malashkin both use the vernacular for the direct speech of the characters, but Grabar' includes it in the narrative as well. As previously stated, this use of colloquial language in literature was in keeping with the style of the times. It was an attempt to close the gap between literary language and common idiom, and thus bring literature closer to the people.

Like Kozakov, Grabar' brings out the disparity in living conditions between officials and workers. In "Na kirpichakh,"

the workers at the brickyard lived either in barracks with insufficient lighting or in stucco huts, most of which had no electricity at all. The director, on the other hand, was extremely well situated, especially since his marriage.

It was possible to talk with "himself" before. He even visited the barracks often...

Now, it isn't so. Now Valentina Semenovna fouls things up: there are rugs; she brought a piano in; the furniture is as it should be; the bedroom is of redwood. 68

In "Lakhudrin pereulok," Fedotov, a self-styled entrepreneur being status-conscious, bought a grand piano although he could not play. On the other hand, Ivanov, an office worker who knew how to play the piano, could not afford to buy Fedotov's old dilapidated one because it would have required a full three months' salary. Again, as in Kozakov's "Meshchanin Adameyko," the people seemed to be using material possessions to consolidate their positions and build a barricade against a possible loss of status.

Grabar' also criticizes the "red tape" involved in getting anything done. When Egorushka wanted to have safety measures instituted in the brickyard and a supply of rubber boots ordered for the workers, he had to submit a petition to the secretary who in turn passed it to the accountant before the director would consider looking at it. Volosov made an apt comment on it in "Lakhudrin pereulok."

68 Ibid.
... What a foul time this is—they are all wrapped in papers and walk on the estimate as on the floor. 69

The government's stress on a good production record for factories created a lot of hardship for the workers. At the brick works, men were standing knee-deep in water without rubber boots. Because of the wet working conditions in part of the factory and the excessive dust in other parts, many of the men had infected lungs. When Egorushka gave them permits to stay at home, he learned that Semenov had given the following instructions. Regardless of the state of health of the worker, he was ordered not to

\[
\text{give a worker more than forty-eight hours off work, nor free more than fifteen workers in one day.} \quad 70
\]

Anything beyond this would look bad on the production record.

Another practice of the Communist Party was that of putting men in high government positions because they were good tradesmen or had served well during the war. A desperate need for leaders, as Volosov said in "Lakhudrin pereulok," prompted this measure.

"The whole of the proletariat was in the army," he said, "in the front positions. Some were killed; some became commissars. Where would you get qualifications at this time? ..."

70 Ibid., p. 148.
71 Ibid., p. 171.
Most of these men were not suited for these responsibilities. When Ilyushin was unexpectedly made commissar of the people's education, he felt like a "perch in a frying pan." Dr. L. Peter in *The Peter Principle*, a contemporary study dealing with the psychology of promotions, puts forward the theory that a man advances until he reaches his level of incompetence. The situation in post-revolutionary Russia seems to exemplify this hypothesis. Many of the officials in the Soviet system found themselves in this position and thus, further complicated an already unwieldy bureaucracy.

Grabar' points out that another principle propounded by the government, the glorification of the proletariat, was erroneous. The government was hypocritical in its proclamations that all was being given to the proletariat, for in them lay the truth of the nation. Conditions at the brick works showed exactly how much was being done for the workers and peasants and how much was being used to line the officials' nests. Neither were the proletariat untarnished pillars of purity that had sprung from the goodness of nature.

Although there were many peasants of high character, Grabar' presents two prime examples of the lowest form of peasant in "Lakhudrin pereulok." These two men, drunk on homemade liquor, broke into the shed where school was taught.

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and sexually assaulted the young teacher Marya because she associated with the Komsomol members who were trying to stop their liquor operations.

In his denouncement of the premature aging precipitated by the Soviet system, Grabar' echoes Kozakov and Malashkin. To illustrate this, he presents a scene of gypsy children entertaining in the square for pennies. Among the casual spectators was a young "pioneer" about ten years old. He asked no one in particular, "And why shouldn't they be enlisted in the pioneer movement?", shook his head "with the seriousness of an adult," and left with the walk of a hurried, occupied man.74

Because the Soviet system invested too much power in individuals, this allowed a great deal of scope for corrupt practices. Bribery governed the actions of many officials. A conversation between two doctors in "Na kirpichakh" brings out this evil.

"... I pushed the envelope towards him, all the while thinking, 'Can it really be that we are all such idiots? Will someone not be found who will make a report to the proper place?'"

"Well, what happened? Did he take it?"

"He certainly did. 'Good,' he said. 'It is possible that we will direct you to the central hospital as an intern.'"

"When was that?"

"When? A month ago; about two days before he was arrested."

"Well now that bazaar is over. It seems to be sitting securely."75

Although the doctor did not approve of bribery, he did not have the strength and courage to report the official to the proper authorities, thereby submitting to the practice. That the culprit was arrested shortly afterwards was a credit to those workers who were truly trying to create a better life for the whole country. The second doctor's remark about the whole business seeming to be on a firm foundation was merely wishful thinking.

Grabar' gives many examples of officials taking advantage of their positions to amass small fortunes for themselves. Semenov in "Na kirpichakh" expended a great deal of energy and a large proportion of the community's allotment to have electricity installed. Ironically, the community except for a few upper echelon employees and Semenov himself could not afford to pay for the hydro rates imposed by Semenov, and thereby derived no benefit from the installation. In "Lakhudrin pereulok," men like Fedotov, Sanich, and Ambestor lived in luxury because they stole material from the government and sold it privately. In addition, they were indiscriminate in their choice of buyers. By selling the lead bullets which they had purportedly bought for scrap to the counter-

revolutionaries, they were indirectly committing treason against the government. Matveyev was profiting because his factory workers were exempt from the draft; they were involved in the defence effort—making gas-masks and gramophones.

Grabar' shows that there was something basically wrong with the system because it defeated honest people while it allowed the unscrupulous ones to flourish. Men like Egorushka were thwarted in their every move while others like Egorushka's classmate Bakhrushin, who set up a clinic exclusively for the treatment of VD and for abortions, prospered. Volosov went to jail while Fedotov, Sanich, and Ambestor continued profiteering.

Grabar' does not delve deeply into the psychological effects of circumstances on the characters. Instead, he outlines their actions, leaving the reader to infer their psychological state. In the two stories "Na kirpichakh" and "Lakhudrin pereulok," Grabar' seems to have a more positive outlook than either Kozakov or Malashkin. In Kozakov, the only character with any moral fibre, Adameyko, precipitated his own destruction; in Malashkin, Tanya's soul was destroyed so she took her own life. In Grabar', although the negative characters were revealed, the adversities which beset them resulted in moral growth for two of the characters, Anya and Volosov. The young doctor Egorushka was not defeated by the bureaucracy either. Despite having suffered severe setbacks,
he would continue trying to realize his ideals.

The street, Lakhudrin pereulok, was repository for a number of the negative elements existing in Soviet society. The name of the street itself indicates this, for "lakhudra" is a colloquialism designating an unkempt or dilapidated person. Lakhudrin pereulok was rather run-down and narrow, terminating in a cul-de-sac; and its residents, too, were shabby in both person and spirit: people whose lives could be considered virtually a dead end. All the residents on Lakhudrin pereulok were still living under the illusion of a past status and all its glories. They were quite misinformed and bigoted. An example of their way of thinking is shown in Madame Narkisova's speech to Shura, who was playing a fox-trot on the piano.

Ach, Shurochka, be more careful with fox-trots. They are banned. You know one of my friends is still sitting in jail for a fox-trot in Butyrki. They had gathered at some kind of meeting and had danced the fox-trot and sung "God Save the King." The windows, as in your house, were open.76

In presenting the above incident, Grabar' reveals the timely quality of his observations. The young people in the Soviet Union were fascinated with the fox-trot and other western phenomena and wanted to incorporate them into their mode of life. This "tyaga," the great wish of Russian youth to

76 Grabar', "Lakhudrin pereulok," p. 129.
adopt a western style of living, is still a problem in the Soviet Union today.

The Khvostov family, which was typical of the people dwelling on this 'winding' lane, were still strongly steeped in their old traditions. Most of their actions were governed by money. Their daughter Anya was living common law with a member of the Communist Party, a Christian Jew, whom the Khvostovs detested because of his Jewish origin. When Ivanov won a lot of money through gambling, they quickly changed their attitude towards him and offered him their so-called "respect and friendship." When he lost the money and ran away, they robbed their penniless young daughter of her best furniture on the pretext that the government would take it away to help repay Ivanov's debt. They also regarded the laundress Annusha as inferior because of her lowly occupation. Annusha, however, was the only person who showed true moral fibre by coming to Anya's assistance when help was needed. As well as befriending Anya and her child and aiding her financially, she even shared her laundry customers with her. Anya's family was disgusted with Anya for taking on such work because they felt it was degrading. To them, applying for state welfare would have been preferable.

Ivanov's father, an opera singer of Jewish origin, had nominally embraced Christianity in order to sing in the Imperial Theatre where this was a criterion.
Anya was one of the characters who experienced moral regeneration through a kind of trial by fire. At the beginning of the story, she was shown as an educated, well-mannered girl, but somewhat useless. Even though she had no outside employment, she was a failure as a housekeeper and a mother. Her only redeeming factor was that she loved Ivanov. By the end of the story, because of the hardships that were thrust upon her and because of Annusha's help, she had become quite competent and self-sufficient. The reader is left with the feeling that, unlike the rest of her family which was governed by false priorities, she would grow to be a credit to the society.

Volosov was another symbol of the attainment of moral growth through overcoming trials and misfortunes. An extremely qualified machinist and tinsmith, Volosov joined the Matveyev factory to avoid being drafted. He appeared rather spineless, for when the chicanery at the factory was discovered and he was conscripted into the army, he swallowed poison and had to be sent back to recuperate. In Volosov, Grabar' depicts the skilled tradesman who was snatched from his element and placed in the unhappy position of authority beyond his capability. He did his best, but his one transgression—selling off some lead bullets to pay for the restoration of a building to house a club for the villagers—was a step into quagmire. He could not stop himself from falling into deeper degradation. Just
before his impending arrest, he gave himself up and spent a year in jail.\textsuperscript{78} The man who emerged from prison and went back to a tradesman's job in a factory, had inner security. That he had found his position in life was evident in his conversation with San Sanich.

"You, Sergey Avdiech, must certainly try to become a "zavkom" (Factory director)," Volosov grinned.

"Somehow, it doesn't appeal to me, San Sanich. It's better for me this way ..."\textsuperscript{79}

While Volosov had learned to avoid those pitfalls which had led him to his downfall, Ivanov had not. Ivanov prostituted himself when he accepted the piano from Fedotov. The resulting loss of his own self-respect led him to try foolish ways of regaining it. He began gambling and his phenomenal streak of luck tossed him into the lap of luxury. Unfortunately, his luck was short-lived. While trying to extricate

\textsuperscript{78}It is interesting to note that while in prison, Volosov kept singing an old Russian song but with altered lyrics. Volosov's version of the song is

\begin{tabular}{ll}
Zhyla byla Racceya & Once upon a time \\
Velikaya gerzhava & This great power, Russia \\
Vragi ee terzyali & Was preyed upon by her foes \\
Naleve i napryave... & From the left and the right...
\end{tabular}

The better known version of this song as related by a former citizen of the Soviet Union is

\begin{tabular}{ll}
Zhyla byla Rocciiya & Once upon a time \\
Moguchaya derzhava & This mighty power, Russia \\
Vragi ee boyalis & Was feared by her foes \\
Byla i chest' i slava.. & And enjoyed honour and glory..
\end{tabular}

\textsuperscript{79}Grabar', "Lakhudrin pereulok," p. 266.
himself from a state of serious debt, he gambled away a large sum of money belonging to the chemical trust. The gambling disease had such a firm grip on him that before he was caught and imprisoned, he had squandered the money borrowed on his mother's typewriter, her only source of income. Prison failed to reform him, for after his release, he was again forced into the same conditions which had originally led to his downfall. The despicable theft which he committed aroused such a feeling of self-contempt within him that he took his own life.

Egorushka in "Na kirpichakh" was an idealist. He was so totally dedicated to the medical profession that he was oblivious to all personal discomforts. Egorushka was a Communist in the true sense of the word while the capitalistically-oriented administrators were only masquerading. He refused to give up his struggle to improve conditions for the workers, saying:

... we live, tovarishch Sinitsyn, in a Soviet land. It wouldn't hurt to think about the health of the worker.80

This attitude of Egor's caused a considerable amount of consternation among the administrators. Despite their persistence, their efforts to hasten Egorushka's voluntary resignation were not successful. The director, determined to remove the thorn in his side, issued a memorandum after all other ploys had failed.

Because of the curtailing of production in the brick factory, the position of junior doctor at "Kamenka" is being abolished.81

Egor, having at least implemented the changes he was seeking, left the factory resigned, but not disillusioned. There was some hope suggested in the closing of the story—Egor's mother would not get her felt boots that year. Although Egorushka's spirit had not yet been crushed, it appears that it would be only a matter of time before he became as passive as the old doctor.

Kozakov, Malashkin and Grabar' all focus the reader's attention on similar deficiencies in the system during the NEP period. In addition to touching on some of these shortcomings, Nikiforov, a contemporary of the aforementioned authors, investigates the effects of these inadequacies on the relationships between people.

81Ibid., p. 166. It should be pointed out here that Zavalishin has erred in content. "Finally, Yegor has to leave the factory at his own wish, and with the Administration's consent." (op. cit., Zavalishin, p. 323.) He interprets Egor's conditions as being "disillusioned, penniless, and hopeless." Although penniless, Egor does not appear particularly disillusioned and certainly far from hopeless.
CHAPTER IV

Nikiforov was also involved in the Communist Party from an early age and actively participated in its growth. He was one of the founding members of the literary group of proletarian writers called "Kuznitsa," previously discussed in the introduction. At the time of their publication, Nikiforov's works were praised for their supposed portrayal of the conflict of the people with the undesirable elements of the Communist system such as bureaucracy and career-ism.82 This interpretation saved Nikiforov's writings from the censorship to which he would ordinarily have been subjected.

In the "vstuplenic" or the prologue of his novel U fonarya, Nikiforov symbolically presents the whole theme of the novel.

Our lantern is the only one on the whole street. The street is winding and long; sometimes it seems endless ...

It is still autumn; the clouds become heavy and settle themselves on the ground. The lantern is going blind; there is no road nor strip of light to it; and then you guess that on the street, someone has lowered lustreless eyes. On the sides are unexpected hurdles, hostile jagged walls. Somewhere in the borderless steppe, a whistle has become lost. There is such a thick void all around and suddenly the cry of the midnight cock. You rejoice when you hear it,--and you hear yourself, then your own breathing, your own trembling and longing, and your own strength ... It is very cold on the road, cold and dank; the dampness gnaws your joints. You want to enter the warmth. Anyone wants

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82 Literaturnaya entsiklopedia, Tom VIII, op. cit., pp. 77-8.
this when there is a small thought that
one need only turn into the first gate;—
behind the gate, there is immediately a
holiday of repose, a grand holiday of
repose ...

Beyond the gate, just after you step
over the door-sill, the ground is strewn
with sand, "glad golden," as if gold-browned
by fire. In the sand is the peaceful sun;
the peaceful sun is in the sand ...
No, it is still autumn; on the sides
are the unexpected hurdles, the jagged
hostile walls ...
No! ... 83

It is obvious that a poetic image such as the one above
can be interpreted in a number of different ways. Of course,
the explanation of the Communist Party was geared to enhance
its own position. A book reviewer in Rabochaya Gazeta (The
Workers' Newspaper) presents a standard Soviet view of the
novel.

... In the novel U fonarya, a whole gallery
of types of our epoch are gathered together
against the background of construction and
the works of a large plant with four thou-
sand workers.

The central theme of the novel—the
lantern—is the Party. The Party illum-
inates and directs our whole life in all its
manifestations.

Individual characters, Party members
or non-Party members, onto whom the Party
directs its lantern, immediately receive a
distinct class physiognomy; everything that
is vague becomes clarified.

Throughout the whole novel, a strong
faith in the Party stands out—in it /the
Party/ is laid an iron-clad truth which
will help it to fulfill its historically
assigned purpose ... 84

83 Georgiy Nikiforov, U fonarya (Moscow: Zemlya i fabrika,

84 Ibid., p. 299.
Nikiforov's introduction can also be considered an analogy to life in the U.S.S.R. during the late twenties. It presents a picture quite different from the one normally postulated by the Soviets. The lantern can still, as above, be interpreted as the Party or even more broadly, as socialism. Although it is the sole hope of light on the twisting, almost endless road that lies ahead for the people, it does not cast any beams of light; and man might well turn his disillusioned eyes away from it. Nothing but obstacles and emptiness are all around. The disembodied cry in the night represents man's pleas for help. The cry of the midnight cock signifies something recognizable, something familiar from the past through which the wanderer can again find himself as a person—a person with flesh and blood, with hopes and dreams, a person with a soul.

The autumn which symbolizes the failure of life to be reborn after the revolution, still prevails. The spiritual dankness permeates man to his very marrow; he seizes on the hope that the first escape will lead to a glorious new life—a life which will not be a constant struggle, but will be warm and peaceful. Man, however, must be realistic and admit that his escape is but a dream; and for some time to come, he must continue to face what is around him—the "autumn," the "unexpected hurdles," and the "hostile jagged walls." By using this interpretation, Nikiforov's prologue becomes an apt
summary of the conditions in Soviet Russia as described by the other authors dealt with in this thesis.

Nikiforov employs a number of literary devices in the presentation of his novels U fonarya and Zhenshchina. He observes the action through the eyes of several characters, uses flashbacks, letters, and diaries—sometimes portraying only external actions; at other times, revealing emotions and thought processes. In many instances, Nikiforov sets up a quasi-scientific analysis of class physiognomy, then adds the human characteristics to make a fully-rounded personage. He vivifies these portraits by juxtaposing opposites: Ramzaev/Chuvyakin; Fayka/Sonchik.

Stylistically, Nikiforov's language is lucid, colourful, and almost lyrical. The poetic quality of his writing is apparent in the prologue to U fonarya as well as throughout both the works. This characteristic of his prose is shown in Sonchik's unusual suicide note, in which death is regarded as a fusion of man with nature.

Perhaps, I will lie as a gigantic grey rock on the shore of the sea, open to the waves and the sun. Centuries will pass: thousands, millions of centuries! How many people will I see and hear—with what love, what longing, what suffering?

As previously stated, while eliminating many undesirable elements in Russian society, the Revolution of 1917 and the

85 Georgiy Nikiforov, Zhenshchina (Moscow: Moskovskoe tovarishchestvo pisatel'ey, 1929), p. 246.
years that immediately followed also destroyed all the foundations from which the society derived its structure. After having wiped the slate clean, it failed to provide a satisfactory substitute from which man could start reconstructing a new life. This left the Russian people "borderless," or, so to speak, "freefloating"—with no morals to cling to, no peaceful havens of escape, and solely responsible for their own destiny with no one to blame for errors or omissions. They were not strong enough to carry this load. What Nikiforov says in *Zhenshchina* about women could well be applied to the country as a whole.

Our women are like young grass. It has just come out of the ground into the sunshine and still doesn't know whether it will be compassionate towards it or whether it will burn it to the roots. It doesn't know what kind of winds will tear it from the ground, what kind of tempests will wash it, or what kind of dews will drench it. Woman makes thousands of mistakes because, as yet, there has been no school for her, one that would have evaluated woman as a person; and she has not actually cried out about herself.\(^{86}\)

The newly liberated Russian would make many mistakes before he found a path for himself.

Physically, very little had changed for the common people after the revolution. In *Zhenshchina*, Praskovya Ulyanova was still working as a domestic and still sighing over God's denying her a husband although this was her dearest wish. Communism

had not even entered her sphere of thinking. Nor had Matronya Semenovna's lot improved. She had had great hopes for personal freedom after the revolution; but she was still cooking, cleaning, looking after young children, and battling with a drunken husband. In U fonary, Babka Stepaneda, too, was living the same kind of life she had always lived. Although Golandin talked about Communism freeing women from the kitchen, that is exactly where his sister Katerina was.

The ordinary workers had ceased to expect improvement.

... they had become accustomed to seeing everything in its old place. And when we talked about building stone houses and convenient quarters and so forth, they smiled good-naturedly and winked cunningly at each other, shaking their heads.

They lived in hovels which, according to Bryakin, should have been doused with kerosene and burned. Squalor still existed. The men still beat the women. Instead of bringing equality to the women, the revolution had just brought them additional work. Besides doing the housework and caring for the children, they were now working in factories also. All that the women longed for was rest, decent clothing, sufficient sustenance.

... There is no horror about past events and no pleasure from the present state. There is a wish to live comfortably, dress well, and have a good sleep at the proper time.
The description of Pokrovskiy's residence, in complete contrast to the workers' rabbit warrens, emphasizes the disparity in living conditions. Pokrovskiy also had a chauffeured limousine at his disposal as did Ramzaev while the workers did not receive even the bare necessities.

Nikiforov reiterates the belief that too much stress was placed on the glorification of the proletariat. The labelling of people as intelligentsia, proletariat, Party member or non-member rather than judging each on his merit, produced a situation through which the country lost the services of many extremely capable people. Payka, because she was from an intelligentsia background, almost dropped from exhaustion due to excessive hard work in order to surpass the other workers and prove herself worthy. This exhaustion coupled with disillusion with her idols resulted in such a state of mental turmoil that she made an abortive attempt on her own life.

In Ufonarya, Ramzaev, who was doing satisfactory work for the Party, developed severe guilt feelings about his past due to the prevalent attitude towards the intelligentsia. Of intelligentsia origin, he felt personally responsible for the sins committed by anyone formerly of this class. He also felt inadequate for not being able to prevent the unsavoury developments among the governing proletariat. Chuvyakin, on the other hand, merely rested on his laurels and held an important position due to Party membership rather than ability. He was
extremely smug and self-satisfied.

"I know what I know," his eyes seemed to say. "and the rest of you can go to hell." 89

Nikiforov uses an analogy to draw attention to Chuvyakin's greed. In speaking of his eyes, Nikiforov says they were

the eyes of a man who, having just consumed the first tasty dish, bangs his fist impatiently on the table waiting for the next. 90

Bryakin (Zhenshchina) was a true proletarian and had been working for reconstruction since the beginning of the revolution. Although he was a member of a professional union, he was asked to leave a meeting because he did not hold a "Party ticket." This was due to animosity between professional unions and the Party. Prior to the revolution, union membership had been the ultimate in achievement, for the unions were the most powerful force in industry; but after the revolution, the Party dominated. The unions, made up of skilled labourers who considered their trade an art, were interested in the welfare of the individual. Conversely, the Party disregarded the individual and placed all emphasis on what was good for the State.

According to Nikiforov, one of the most glaring errors made by the Party was to demand that total effort be directed towards the reconstruction of a strong Communist State. As

89 Nikiforov, U fonarya, p. 48.
90 Ibid.
Fayka said in Zhenshchina when trying to interpret the works of Karl Marx,

That means that in order to have industry flourish in our republic, it is necessary to smother the spirit of the masses and turn men into appendages of machines.\footnote{Nikiforov, Zhenshchina, p. 9.}

Fayka's father rejected this explanation but it seemed to be the attitude held by the State. In their eagerness to build a progressive economy, the Party leaders failed to take human needs into account. Few people were able to derive complete satisfaction from their work without devoting some attention to their personal lives. Because human emotions and the satisfying of the need for love and affection were contrary to, or at least not included in, Party aims, those who were truly working for the reconstruction of the nation were burdened with guilt feelings. They could not repress their needs and, by giving in to them, felt disloyal to the Party. It is characteristic of Nikiforov that he does not condemn Party aims but merely points out the flaws in their interpretation and implementation. His main concern was for man's individuality which was being inundated by machines and the masses. His characters who achieve some measure of success do so because of their humanistic qualities rather than their dedication to Party line.

Character analysis in Nikiforov's writings hinges on the
premise that every man has a basic need for close human contact. Sima's mother (Zhenshchina), Matronya Semenovna, a very simple woman, recognized this and despite Sima's urging, refused to leave her besotted husband. Although her relationship with her husband consisted of constant bickering, she had become accustomed to it; and she felt it was better than no involvement at all. For the Communist Party, the establishment of industry was of prime importance; and concern for individuals was secondary. This credo destroyed the natural relationship between man and woman.

For most of the characters, Nikiforov develops a class psychology, yet still maintains individuality. A representative of the intelligentsia, the group which was required to provide technical advice for the rebuilding of the nation, is Andrey Pokrovskiy, a qualified engineer. He was working for the Party but purely for personal gain.

It seems that he considered himself the only person on earth and thought solely about what he could get out of life.92

A man with a similar attitude towards his work was Inyakin (Zhenshchina). Not only was he apolitical, he was also somewhat amoral.

92Ibid., p. 16.
He thought only of one thing: how he, Nikolai Inyakin, without risk and as cunningly as possible could establish himself in life ... Inyakin wanted to be promoted, to get ahead; and it was immaterial whom he served.93

In his private life, Pokrovskiy is the one exception in both the stories who operates contrary to Nikiforov's premise. An emotional attachment was not necessary for him because he fed on self-love. His position as project engineer gave him ample opportunity to wield his authority over female technicians to satisfy all his sexual and ego-inflating needs.

Sonchik was also a member of the former "upper class." She and Elena, her counterpart in U fonary played games with men for whatever material benefits they could reap.

Obviously, life for her is like a buffet: she picks out what she likes.94

Nikiforov does not condemn Sonchik, for she was true to her character and fulfilled her role in society: She was decorative and made people happy. Under Communism, such a role was no longer adequate. The feeling of uselessness made her reach out for true love; but because she had merely used men rather than loved them, love was not to be found. Sensing total rejection, she fell into a decline which eventually resulted in her suicide.

Elena, on the other hand, was the cause of Chuvyakin's

93Nikiforov, U fonary, p. 234.
94Nikiforov, Zhenshchina, p. 46.
downfall. Chuvyakin is the symbol of bureaucracy and the epitome of poshlost'. As in the Garden of Eden, Elena led him to taste the forbidden fruit, a lavish way of life which, in turn, led to his destruction. In a sense, Elena served a useful purpose, for she was instrumental in bringing about the downfall of those unfit to govern.

The skilled craftsman in Zhenshchina is represented by Bryakin, while the woman in a similar role is Solomina. Although Bryakin did not hold a "Party ticket," both were good Communists and took pride in doing their work well. Outwardly, neither of them showed any emotion. Admitting such a flaw would have been contradictory to the image established for Communists. However, they too had a yearning for affection, fell in love with each other, and secretly set up their family life. Serdobova, a Communist official also felt that she could not let personal feelings interfere with her work for the Party. Her need for a mutually-fond relationship was satisfied through a part-time marriage: She and her husband lived separately but met by prior arrangement once or twice a week. In U fonarya, Kotel'nikov is the devoted craftsman who drove the workers but also worked along with them. Like the characters in Zhenshchina, he found that dedication to reconstruction and a satisfactory personal life were not compatible. The woman he loved left him because of his constant preoccupation with work.
Sima, a representative of the new breed of Communist youth, felt that she had found the correct path in life and rejected love completely. It was not until she developed a strong attachment for Pokrovskiy, who was merely using her, that she became aware of her urgent need for tenderness. This realization disrupted her life completely and left her directionless. The man-woman relationships which developed between the protagonists in U fonarya and Zhenshchina, Ramzaev and Anna and Payka and Shavronov respectively, were similar to the awkward association between Tsepilov and his wife in U fonarya.

Ramzaev, a former member of the gentry who was living under a disguise, had been working well for the Party for quite some time, not because he was dedicated to Party doctrine, but because he was a humanist. It was not until he met Anna, the daughter of an ardent Communist, and herself a member of the Party, that he began to have guilt feelings about his past. Party membership and Communist ideals acquired a new importance for him as a result of Anna's high regard for them. He felt that if he were discovered, he would loose her admiration. Anna, herself, had accepted these tenets without critically questioning them. Only when she was asked to testify against Ramzaev in court did she realize the rigidity of the doctrine; and she refused to incriminate him. Luckily, the judge, a woman, also believed in a humanistic interpretation of Party rules. Thus, thanks to the court case,
the relationship between Anna and Ramzaev, which up to this time had consisted of lame conversations about Marxist ideals, reached a happy resolution.

Payka and Shavronov found themselves in a similar predicament. Shavronov, one of the most prominent people in the work group, had devoted his whole life to building socialism. However, his new-found love for Payka threatened his once-unshakable belief that all his energies should be directed towards reconstruction. As Bryakin phrased it:

Here lives a man who can actually vault over mountains. He has jumped over both large and small ones without catching his feet. Suddenly, in one moment, seemingly both bad and good, he trips over a rut and stops.95

When Payka started to work for the Party, she too rejected love; therefore, she experienced great mental anguish because of her attraction to Shavronov. Indeed, they were both afraid of their passion.

"Are you afraid, Nikita, of my joy?"

"Yes, I am. There is a great truth here. If your joy captures me, it will be necessary for us to stop in a cove and build our own life. Don't you think so, Pausta? The rest of the world would continue to flow by, and we would sit in the cove ... ."96

As a result, they behaved irrationally: Payka found pretexts

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95 Ibid., p. 153.
96 Ibid., p. 211.
to see Shavronov; he begged her to stay away from him, then went to her home and pleaded to be allowed in. It was Sonchik's suicide letter that finally convinced Fayka that the only thing that made life worth living was a meaningful love between man and woman. With this realization, Fayka turned down the alternative of the morphine for the reunion with Shavronov through which they would both be fulfilled.
CONCLUSION

Communist doctrine and the emotional needs of the human psyche constantly vied against each other and tore apart those who wanted to rebuild. Larisa Reisner aptly describes the destructive process.

The revolution squanders its professional workers wantonly. It is an inexorable master with whom there is no use discussing a six-hour day, maternity benefits or higher pay. It appropriates everything--men's brains, wills, nerves, and lives--and, having sucked them dry, maimed and exhausted them, discards them on the nearest scrap heap and recruits glorious new soldiers from the vast reserves of the masses.97

It is precisely such a realistic portrayal that was depicted by the authors previously discussed: Kozakov, Malashkin, Grabar', and Nikiforov. That these authors presented an accurate description is apparent from the similarity of their critiques of the social order. Their main attitudes did not differ greatly; they merely varied in their degree of pessimism. In Kozakov's "Meshchanin Adameyko," the situation was completely gloomy and there were no redeeming features. Malashkin's scene was only a shade brighter. He presented Peter as an exemplary character and also intimated there were a few good peasants. Grabar' was somewhat more optimistic than the other two. Although a number of his characters

97Larisa Reisner, Front (Moscow: Krasnaya nov', 1924), p. 5.
were destroyed, one survived and two actually experienced a moral regeneration. Nikiforov had the most positive outlook of the group, for in his novels, only the weakest characters perished. The stronger ones, both proletariat and bourgeois, learned to adapt themselves to the system and become productive members of society.

The authors discussed were particularly concerned with the tremendous psychological stress placed on the individual. A sudden conversion to a totally new philosophy of life was impossible. The utopian state as outlined in Marxism was unattainable. Many from the former upper classes were also burdened by the additional pressure of class guilt. Although some resolved this dilemma, those who could not became mentally imbalanced.

The revolution could be equated to electric shock treatments. Through its traumatic destruction of normal life processes, many latent qualities, which otherwise would probably have lain dormant forever, were brought to the surface. In some, this resulted in a vigorous drive to reconstruct the State; in others, it brought out more undesirable traits such as opportunism and avarice. Tragically, the very people who wanted to actualize the revolutionary ideal were the ones annihilated. Thus, instead of a new social order, the revolution had created a chaotic state which would undergo many changes before it acquired a degree of acceptibility.
Kozakov, Malashkin, Grabar', and Nikiforov were graphic in their description of this turmoil. Because they were courageous enough to reveal the deficiencies, all four writers were extremely popular with the public especially among the youth during the NEP period and shortly thereafter. Works by Grabar' and Malashkin were even recommended by the Professional Union. However, their realistic portrayal of the social climate aroused unfavourable reaction among Communist critics and put the authors' careers and lives in jeopardy. Their works were labelled Trotskyist; therefore, they had to be kept from the people. The basic humanistic approach they employed upheld the psychology of the individual. This came into conflict with the psychology of the masses as propagated by the Party. Consequently, all these authors were banned and absolutely forgotten until quite recently when small parts of their works started to reappear.
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