

“Resolution on the Journals *Zvezda* and *Leningrad*”
Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union
August 14, 1946

The Central Committee notes that the literary-artistic journals *Zvezda* and *Leningrad*, published in the city of Leningrad, are being run entirely unsatisfactorily.

In the journal *Zvezda* recently, along with significant and successful works by Soviet writers, appeared many works lacking in ideas, which are ideologically harmful. *Zvezda*'s blatant error lies in providing a literary tribune to the writer Zoshchenko, whose works are foreign to Soviet literature. The editors of *Zvezda* know that Zoshchenko has long specialized in writing empty, contentless and crass things, advocating a rotten lack of ideas, crassness and apoliticism, calculated to disorient our youth and poison their consciousness. Zoshchenko's most recently published story, “The Adventures of a Monkey,” (*Zvezda*, no.5-6, 1946) presents a crass lampoon of Soviet daily life and Soviet people. Zoshchenko depicts Soviet manners and Soviet people in distorted, caricatured form, slanderously presenting Soviet people as primitive, uncultured, stupid, with narrow-minded tastes and morals. Zoshchenko's vilely hooliganish portrayal of our reality is accompanied by anti-Soviet attacks.

Presenting the pages of *Zvezda* to such vulgarians and scum of literature as Zoshchenko is even more impermissible as the editors of *Zvezda* are well aware of Zoshchenko's constitution and his unworthy behavior at the time of the war, when Zoshchenko, who did nothing to help the Soviet people in its fight against the German aggressors, wrote such a loathsome thing as “Before Sunrise,” the evaluation of which, like the evaluation of all the literary “creativity” of Zoshchenko, was given in the pages of the journal *Bolshevik*.

The journal *Zvezda* also popularizes in every way the works of the author Akhmatova, whose literary and social-political constitution has long been known to Soviet society. Akhmatova is a typical representative of empty, idealess poetry, foreign to our people. Her poems—steeped in the spirit of pessimism and decadence, expressing the tastes of the old [pre-revolutionary] salon poetry, which stagnated in the strongholds of bourgeois-aristocratic aestheticism and decadence, “art for the sake of art,” not wishing to keep pace with their people—bring harm to the education of our youth and cannot be tolerated in Soviet literature.

Giving Zoshchenko and Akhmatova an active role in the journal has doubtless introduced elements of ideological disorder and disorientation into the milieu of Leningrad writers. Works appeared in the journal that cultivated a spirit foreign to the Soviet people of servility before the contemporary bourgeois culture of the West. Works were published that were imbued with melancholy, pessimism and disappointment in life (poems of Sadof'ev and Komissarova in no. 1 of 1946, etc.). In accommodating these works, the editors deepened their mistakes and lowered still more the ideological level of the journal.

Having allowed the penetration into the journal of ideologically foreign works, the editors also lowered their demands for artistic quality in the literary material they published. The journal became filled with plays and stories of little artistic value (“The Path of Time” by Iagdfel'dt, “Swan Lake” by Stein, etc.) Such indiscriminateness in the choice of materials for publication led to the lowering of the artistic level of the journal.

The Central Committee notes that the journal *Leningrad* has been run especially badly, continually lending its pages to crass and philistine performances by Zoshchenko, to empty and apolitical poetry by Akhmatova. Like the editors of *Zvezda*, the editors of the journal *Leningrad*

allowed major mistakes, having published a series of works infused with the spirit of servility to all that is foreign. The journal printed a series of mistaken works (“The Incident over Berlin” by Varshavskii and Rest, “At the Barricade” by Slonimskii). In Khazin’s poem “Onegin’s Return,” aspersions were cast on contemporary Leningrad in the guise of a literary parody. The journal *Leningrad* presents primarily contentless, inferior literary material.

How could it happen that the journals *Zvezda* and *Leningrad*, published in Leningrad, the hero city famous for its advanced revolutionary traditions, a city that has always been a hotbed of advanced ideas and advanced culture—that these journals allowed such a lack of principle and apoliticism, alien to Soviet literature, get dragged into their pages?

What is the meaning of the mistakes of the editors of *Zvezda* and *Leningrad*?

The leading workers of the journals, and most of all their editors, comrades Saianov and Likharev, forgot the thesis of Leninism, that our journals, whether scientific or artistic, cannot be apolitical. They forgot that our journals are a mighty means for the Soviet government to educate Soviet people, especially the youth, and therefore must be guided by what comprises the vital basis of Soviet order: policy. Soviet order cannot tolerate education of the youth in a spirit indifferent to Soviet policy, in a devil-may-care, unprincipled spirit.

The strength of Soviet literature, the most advanced literature in the world, consists in the fact that Soviet literature does not and cannot have other interests than the interests of the people, the interests of the state. The mission of Soviet literature is to help the state correctly educate the youth, to answer their demands, to educate a new generation this is bold, believes in its work, is not afraid of obstacles, and is ready to overcome all obstacles.

Therefore any advocacy of lack of principle, of apoliticism, “art for the sake of art,” is alien to Soviet literature, harmful to the interests of the Soviet people and state, and cannot have a place in our journals.

The lack of ideological principles among the supervising workers of *Zvezda* and *Leningrad* also led these workers to base their relationship with authors not on the interests of the correct education of Soviet people and the political guidance of the authors’ work, but on personal interests and the interests of friendship. From a desire not to ruin friendly relationships, they blunted their criticism. From a fear of offending their friends, they allowed into print clearly useless works. This sort of liberalism, in which the interests of the people and state, the interests of the correct education of our youth, are sacrificed to friendly relationships and under which criticism is stifled, also results in writers ceasing to improve themselves and losing consciousness of their responsibility to the people, to the state, and to the Party, and ceasing to move forward.

All of the above is evidence that the editors of the journals *Zvezda* and *Leningrad* have not coped adequately with the task entrusted to them and have made serious political mistakes in the supervision of the journals.

The Central Committee establishes that the governing board of the Union of Soviet Writers and, in part, its president, Comrade Tikhonov, took no measures to improve the journals *Zvezda* and *Leningrad*, and not only did not lead the fight for Soviet literature against the harmful influences of Zoshchenko, Akhmatova, and un-Soviet writers of their ilk, but even facilitated the penetration into the journals of tendencies and morals alien to Soviet literature.

The Leningrad City Committee overlooked major mistakes by the journals, absented itself from supervision of the journals and made it possible for people alien to Soviet literature, like Zoshchenko and Akhmatova, to occupy leading positions in their pages. Moreover, while aware the Party’s position relative to Zoshchenko and his “art,” the Leningrad Party City

Committee (Comrades Kapustin and Shirokov), without having the right to do so, by a decision of the City Committee on January 28 of this year, approved a new editorial board for the journal *Zvezda* that included Zoshchenko. In this way, the Leningrad City Committee made a crude political mistake. *Leningrad Pravda* [the leading local newspaper] also erred in giving space to a suspiciously laudatory review of Zoshchenko's oeuvre by Iurii German in its June 6 issue.

The Central Committee's Propaganda Administration did not ensure the necessary control over the work of the Leningrad journals.

The Central Committee therefore resolves:

1. To require the editors of the journal *Zvezda*, the governing board of the Union of Soviet Writers, and the Propaganda Administration to take measures to correct unconditionally the mistakes and insufficiencies of the journal listed in this resolution and to correct the journal and ensure its high ideological and artistic level, putting an end to the practice of permitting the works of Zoshchenko, Akhmatova, and those like them to be published in the journal.

2. In view of the fact that the necessary means for publishing two literary-artistic journals in Leningrad are lacking at this time, to cease publication of the journal *Leningrad* and concentrate the literary forces of the city of Leningrad around the journal *Zvezda*.

3. With the goal of establishing the above order in the work of editing the journal *Zvezda* and seriously improving its content, to appoint to the journal a head editor and, under him, an editorial board. To establish that the head editor of the journal will take full responsibility for the ideological and political direction of the journal and the quality of the works published in it.

4. To confirm as head editor of the journal *Zvezda* Comrade Egolin, while also giving him the post of deputy head of the Propaganda Administration.

5. To require the Central Committee's Secretariat to review and confirm the list of editors of the journal's sections and its editorial board.

6. To change the resolution of the Leningrad City Committee of June 26 on the editorial board of the journal *Zvezda*, as politically mistaken. To call in for reprimand the Second Secretary of the City Committee Comrade Kapustin, for having made this decision.

7. To terminate from his position the Secretary for Propaganda and the head of the Division of Propaganda and Agitation of the Leningrad City Committee Comrade Shirokov, recalling him by a directive of the Central Committee.

8. To appoint a Party Bureau for the journal *Zvezda* within the Leningrad administration. To require the Leningrad administration and the First Secretary of the Leningrad administration and City Committee Comrade Popkov, personally, to take all necessary measures to improve the journal and strengthen its ideological and political work among the writers of Leningrad.

9. For poor leadership of the journal *Leningrad*, to call in for reprimand Comrade Likharev.

10. Noting that the journal *Zvezda* is has been published with significant delays and is formatted extremely untidily (the cover has an unattractive appearance and does not state the date of the issue), to require the editors of *Zvezda* to ensure timely publication of the journal and improve its external appearance.

11. To entrust to the Propaganda Administration (Comrade Aleksandrov) control over fulfillment of this resolution.

12. To schedule a hearing at the Central Committee in three months for a report from the head editor of *Zvezda* on its fulfillment of the Central Committee's resolution.

13. To send Comrade Zhdanov to Leningrad to explain the current resolution of the Central Committee.

N.B. to HIST 316 students (Spring 2017):

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