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Who's Afraid of Franz Kafka?: Kafka Criticism in the Soviet Union

In January 1964, Western observers of the Soviet scene were startled by the publication of the major short works of Franz Kafka in *Inostrannaia literatura*, a leading Soviet literary journal.[1] This event was all the more surprising because it came only a few months after a wide-ranging party campaign against "modernism" in the arts,[2] with Kafka among those singled out for special condemnation.[3] Publication was viewed as evidence of a possible new thaw, and received considerable attention in the Western press.[4] Over ten years have now passed, and, in these days of the expulsion and incarceration of protesters and the suppression of dissent, it is timely once again to examine the fate of Franz Kafka in the land which for decades pretended that he did not

1. *Inostrannaia literatura*, 1964, no. 1, pp. 134–81. The following works were published: "In the Penal Colony," "The Metamorphosis," "Before the Law" (from *The Trial*), "The Passengers," "The Truth about Sancho Panza," "Home-Coming," and "At Night." Prior to publication in Russian, some Kafka stories were published in book form in Tallinn in 1962 in Estonian and then in Ukrainian in the journal *Vsevit*, 6, no. 12 (1963): 69–87.

2. As the Soviets use the term, "modernism" refers to a movement in literature and the arts which began at the end of the nineteenth century and made a decisive break with the realistic tradition. Many Western critics use the term in the same way, although without the pejorative connotation. The Soviets regard Proust, Kafka, and Joyce as the fathers of the modernist novel. Many of the arguments used by the Soviets against modernism in general and Kafka in particular can be found in the volume published in 1958 by the noted Marxist critic György Lukács, *Über den missverstandenen Realismus* (available in English as *Realism in Our Time* [New York: Harper & Row, 1964]).

3. The best account of this campaign is in Priscilla Johnson, *Khrushchev and the Arts: The Politics of Soviet Culture 1962–64* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1965).

4. See Guy de Mallac, "Kafka publié en U.R.S.S.," *Le Monde*, March 28, 1964; Hans Mayer and François Bondy, "The Struggle for Kafka and Joyce," *Encounter*, 22, no. 5 (1964): 83–89; Goronwy Rees, "A Visa for Kafka," *Encounter*, 23, no. 3 (1964): 27–34; Roman S. Struc, "Franz Kafka in the Soviet Union: A Report," *Monatshefte*, 57, no. 4 (April–May 1965): 193–97; and Gustav Herling-Grudziński, "Kafka w Rosji," *Kultura* (Paris), December 1965, pp. 8–13. For an account of some later developments, see Roman S. Struc, "Critical Reception of Franz Kafka in the Soviet Union," *The Annals of the Ukrainian Academy of Arts and Sciences in the U.S.*, 11, nos. 1–2 (nos. 31–32) (1964–68): 129–42. The situation in Eastern Europe is discussed in Heinz Politzer, *Franz Kafka: Parable and Paradox*, 2nd ed. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press,

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exist.[5] As the following pages will show, the debate over Kafka was much broader than his works themselves: it raised questions which were disturbing Soviet society and reflected, in microcosm, forces struggling to determine the very direction of Soviet life.

The Soviet decision to lift Kafka from obscurity was long in the making. The death of Stalin in 1953, the subsequent thaw of 1954, and the explosive Twentieth Party Congress in 1956 did nothing to break the official silence. The satellite countries, though, were going their own way. In Poland, "quite a lot of Kafka was printed after 1956 and very favorably received,"[6] and he was also widely read by intellectuals in Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia.[7] At the same time, several leading East European critics, as well as the well-known Austrian Marxist, Ernst Fischer, began to call for a reexamination of Kafka, proposing that he was not a decadent spokesman for imperialism, as the party maintained, but was, rather, a critic and victim of imperialism.[8]

The initial Soviet response to the growing furor over Kafka was an attempt to exorcise him with words. At a conference on realism held in Moscow in 1957, Ivan Anisimov, then director of the Gorky Institute of World Literature and a consistent supporter of orthodoxy, proclaimed, in answer to criticism from the East German critic Hans Mayer (who subsequently defected to the West), that it was indeed possible to write as if Kafka had never existed,[9] and Iakov El'sberg, another well-known hard liner, called Kafka "a bourgeois fashion which will pass."[10] Other speakers declared that regardless of changes in attitude toward some previously proscribed writers, Kafka continued to remain beyond the pale. During the next several years, Kafka was

1966), E. Bahr, "Kafka and the Prague Spring," *Mosaic*, 3, no. 4 (Summer 1970): 15–29, and A. J. Liehm, "Franz Kafka in Eastern Europe," *Telos*, no. 3 (Spring 1975): 53–83.

5. The pre-Stalinist *Literaturnaia entsiklopediia* contained a Kafka entry (1931), but there was no entry under his name in either the first edition of the *Bol'shaia sovetskaia entsiklopediia* (1936) or the second (1953). In regard to knowledge of Kafka in the Soviet Union during the 1920s and 1930s, Guy de Mallac writes that "copies of some of Kafka's texts in the original (notably 'In the Penal Colony,' *The Trial*, and *The Castle*) circulated in the early 1930s among certain Leningrad intellectuals (the Oberiu group, the practitioners of *zaum* A. V. Tufanov, Evgeny Schwartz)" (Letter to the Editor: "Postscript to 'Kafka in Russia,'" *Russian Review*, 31, no. 2 [April 1972]: 212–13). According to an acquaintance of Oberiu member Daniil Kharms, quoted by de Mallac, Kafka influenced Kharms, but this is disputed by Robin Milner-Gulland in his Letter to the Editor, *Russian Review*, 32, no. 1 (January 1973): 114.

6. Mayer and Bondy, "The Struggle for Kafka and Joyce," p. 84.

7. Johnson, *Khrushchev and the Arts*, p. 83.

8. Bahr, "Kafka and the Prague Spring," pp. 20–21; and Politzer, *Franz Kafka*, pp. 363–64. Fischer's essay on Kafka is available in English in Ernst Fischer, *Art Against Ideology* (New York: George Braziller, 1969).

9. Ivan I. Anisimov and Iakov E. El'sberg, eds., *Problemy realizma* (Moscow, 1959), p. 18.

10. Ibid., p. 586.

vigorously criticized along with Proust, Joyce, Camus, and other modernists as part of a campaign against ideological deviations launched by the Soviets in the wake of the Polish and Hungarian uprisings.[11]

At the same time, however, it became clear that mere vituperation and declarations were not enough, and that more effective means of dealing with Kafka would have to be found. The first evidence of change came in 1959, when the February issue of *Inostrannaia literatura* carried a lengthy article on Kafka by Dmitrii Zatonskii.[12] The following November, Ilya Ehrenburg defended Kafka in *Literaturnaia gazeta* with the statement that his pessimism was "a premonition of fascism," and not, as the conservatives[13] would have it, "an attempt to save capitalism."[14] The Kafka question had finally been brought out into the open.

In the context of the times, Zatonskii's article seemed to be a step toward greater acceptance of Kafka. Instead of being wholly negative, it contained much factual information given in a calm, neutral tone. It even praised Kafka for the first time in the Soviet press, and hinted that he had some originality as a writer. The greatest merit of Kafka's work, according to Zatonskii, is that it expresses "some part of the truth about the anti-human nature of capitalist relationships." "The Bucket-Rider" tells of "the destructive power of money," and "In the Penal Colony" describes "the Austrian governmental military machine." In *The Trial*, the court represents "the bureaucratic institutions of bourgeois government," and in *The Castle*, the forces that crush the hero stand for "a completely real . . . power, . . . which is hostile to man and crushes and enslaves him."

In what was to become a standard part of the new line, Zatonskii also granted that Kafka's sympathies were in the right place—with workers and progressive Czech writers—and that, although he created a pessimistic theory, "it did not gladden or satisfy him." Zatonskii recognized Kafka's sympathy for the downtrodden in *Amerika*, saw "much tragic dignity" in Joseph K.'s resistance in *The Trial*, and even found optimism in "In the Penal Colony": "the end of the novella is painted in bright and optimistic tones . . .: the ma-

11. See, for example, Vladimir R. Shcherbina, *Voprosy razvitiia sotsialisticheskogo realizma v sovetskoi literature* (Moscow, 1958); and I. Tsarelli, ed., *Protiv revizionizma v estetike* (Moscow, 1960).

12. Dmitrii V. Zatonskii, "Smert' i rozhdenie Frantsa Kafki," *Inostrannaia literatura*, 1959, no. 2, pp. 202–12. Zatonskii has also written on Kafka in Ukrainian. See, for example, D. Zatonskii and Z. Libman, *Otruiena zbroia: Reaktsiini literatura ta mystetsvo u boroť bi proty rozumu, ludianosti, progresu* (*The Poisoned Weapons: Reactionary literature and arts in their struggle against reason, humanity, and progress*) (Kiev, 1959).

13. "Conservatives," as I use the term, refers to critics who opposed Kafka. I am not concerned here with their positions on other issues.

14. Il'ia G. Erenburg, "V predvidenii vesny," *Literaturnaia gazeta*, November 5, 1959, p. 3.

chine is broken, and democratic changes are awaited. . . ." Thus Zatonskii sketched out the limits of Kafka's new acceptability: (1) criticism of bourgeois society and, in particular, of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy; (2) protest against social evils; and (3) sympathy for the oppressed. These were important concessions, for, in Soviet ideology, criticism of bourgeois society is equivalent to telling at least part of the truth, truth is a central criterion of realism in art, and only realistic art is acceptable.

Zatonskii's concessions, however, were more than outweighed by his negative conclusions. He attacked Kafka's works for both their form and their content, with Kafka's pessimistic views on man and history his main target. According to Soviet doctrine, man should be portrayed as strong and heroic. He controls the forces of history and is able to eliminate evil by changing society. Kafka, on the other hand, according to Zatonskii, tries to show that man is "weak and impotent" and that the "terrible" world that surrounds him is "unchangeable." Kafka's goal was "the degradation of man, the negation of his reason, and the denial of social progress," and he believed that "the enslavement of man" was not "a result of unjust social relationships," as Soviet doctrine would have it, "but the result of the individual's innate inability to be free." Because of this view of reality, which "frees" man from the obligation to strive for a better future, Kafka is "objectively . . . in the camp of the most double-dyed reaction." He is one of the pillars of "contemporary aggressive bourgeois aesthetics, . . . which tries to defile the whole world . . . so that . . . the filth and vileness of bourgeois relationships does not stand out so clearly against that gloomy background." Zatonskii's closing remarks were directed to admirers of Kafka in the socialist world. Kafka's works, he said, are "a dead end," and "to submit to Kafka's influence is to break all ties with life. . . . Those who are trying to entice the contemporary reader into the suffocating tunnels . . . of Kafka's thought are not simply blind, they want him to go astray and not find the road to the light and the truth."

The factual information Zatonskii provided in his article and his admission that Kafka was not totally decadent were no doubt designed to satisfy Soviet curiosity about Kafka and to provide some explanation for his popularity in Eastern Europe. The main thrust of the article, though, was unmistakably aimed at putting a damper on any enthusiasm Soviet intellectuals might have for Kafka and at preventing the spread of his popularity. It should be recalled that 1959 was the height of the Soviet campaign against revisionism, and Zatonskii's article must be viewed in that context. The regime was prepared to make slight concessions in its interpretation of Kafka, but publication of his works, much less his total acceptance, was still out of the question. By 1961 the atmosphere had changed enough that Aleksandr Tvardovskii, liberal

editor of *Novyi mir*, attempted unsuccessfully to publish *The Trial*.[15] The time was not yet ripe.

During 1961–63, Zatonskii spoke out three more times in a continuing effort to rebut pro-Kafka views circulating among Soviet intellectuals. His book, *Vek dvadtsatyi: Zametki o literaturnoi forme na Zapade* (Kiev, 1961), was aimed at countering arguments that socialist realism should make use of the artistic innovations of Kafka and other modernists. Zatonskii was especially critical of what he called Kafka's "mythmaking"—his use of abstract, generalized characters and settings to portray universal aspects of human experience. In an argument widely used later by other conservative critics, Zatonskii charged that mythmaking amounts to a justification of capitalism because it propounds the idea that evil is an inseparable part of human existence and that there is therefore no sense in struggling to overcome it. In the Soviet view, all evil is caused by capitalism or its vestiges; therefore, the mythic view of reality amounts to support for the oppressive status quo, and thus, for capitalism.

Zatonskii spoke out against Kafka once more at a conference on humanism and contemporary literature held in Moscow in 1962.[16] The conference, part of a government effort to rebut accusations that communism tramples on the individual, was aimed at demonstrating that the "realistic" writers, of which the party approved, and not Kafka and the modernists, are the true humanists.

It fell to Zatonskii, as usual, to deal with the argument that Kafka is a humanist. In Zatonskii's words, that argument goes as follows: "Doesn't Franz Kafka pity man, and doesn't he lament his impotence, his fear, and his loneliness? And [isn't this] in the name of . . . the individual?" Zatonskii agreed that this was true, but then insisted that "not all goodness, not all love of man . . . is humanistic." True humanism, he declared, requires not only "an unshakable faith in man" but also "the deep conviction that existence is not hostile to him and that life is basically harmonious"—a conviction which Kafka obviously lacked. Given these premises, of course, Zatonskii's conclusion that Kafka was not a humanist came as no surprise. It probably convinced only those who were already on his side, however, for it was precisely the definition of humanism that was at issue. For those who were trying to make the Soviet system more responsive to the needs of the individual, Kafka's anguish at human suffering was enough to make him a humanist, while for the conservatives, the good of society remained the ultimate value. But these

15. Personal conversation in the Soviet Union.

16. Dmitrii V. Zatonskii, "Chelovek i mir v literature sovremennogo zapada," in Ivan I. Anisimov et al., eds., *Gumanizm i sovremennaia literatura* (Moscow, 1963), pp. 307–18.

arguments about the definition of humanism were but shadows of the real issue: the fate of the individual under the Soviet system. Would he continue to be sacrificed in the name of society, or could communism ensure, as Marx had originally envisaged, a true flowering of human potential?[17] The debate on Kafka and humanism was only one skirmish in this larger struggle.

Zatonskii spoke on Kafka once more in a lecture delivered at Moscow University in 1963.[18] Although his conciliatory tone indicated that the conservatives felt the need to make their critique more convincing, his basic position remained the same: Kafka is not a realist, and his works, which imply that all of reality is absurd, represent "capitulation" to capitalism.

Thus, until 1963, the Soviet government made a determined effort to rebut all arguments in Kafka's defense and continued to ban his works, insisting that he was neither a realist nor a humanist, that he had made no contribution to literature, and that he had nothing to say to the socialist world. But the Kafka question could not be resolved by books and speeches. Increased contact between Soviet and Western intellectuals,[19] pressure from Eastern and Western European Communists and sympathizers, as well as the need to enlist liberal support for the break with China—all eventually led to the decision to publish at least some of Kafka's works.[20]

One of the most important figures pressuring the Soviets to liberalize their stand on Kafka was Jean-Paul Sartre. In a speech at the Moscow Peace Conference in July 1962,[21] and then in an article in *Inostrannaia literatura*

17. For a Western critique of the Soviet concept of man, see Richard T. De George, "The Soviet Concept of Man," *Studies in Soviet Thought*, 4, no. 4 (December 1964): 261–76. On Marxism and humanism, see Edmund Demaitre, "In Search of Humanism," *Problems of Communism*, 14, no. 5 (1965): 18–30, and Sidney Hook, "Marx's Second Coming," *Problems of Communism*, 15, no. 4 (1966): 26–29. For a defense of the Soviet position, see V. Griniuk, "Otpoved' kritikam sotsialisticheskogo gumanizma," *Kommunist*, 41, no. 1 (January 1964): 124–25.

18. Dmitrii V. Zatonskii, "K probleme modernizma," in Leonid G. Andreev and A. G. Sokolov, eds., *O literaturno-khudozhestvennykh techeniiakh XX veka* (Moscow, 1966), pp. 156–76.

19. An example of the embarrassment felt by Soviet intellectuals as a result of the ban on Kafka was provided by the writer Viktor Nekrasov. Nekrasov related that, in 1957 when Alberto Moravia asked him and some other Soviet writers about Kafka, "we silently looked at each other and could not answer; at that time we had never even heard of him" (Viktor Nekrasov, "Po obe storony okeana," *Novyi mir*, 1962, no. 11, p. 131).

20. I have interpreted any liberalization in Soviet policy toward Kafka as a result of pressures brought to bear upon conservative forces. It was suggested to me in the Soviet Union, however, that this is not entirely correct, and that after 1956 *all* segments of the Soviet intelligentsia had come to believe that Stalinist cultural policies—such as the ban on Kafka—"were standing in the way of progress" and that Soviet "cultural horizons" had to be "broadened."

21. Mayer and Bondy, "The Struggle for Kafka and Joyce," p. 83. The speech was summarized in "Pisateli mira za kruglym stolom," *Pravda*, July 14, 1962, p. 1, and ex-

in January 1963,[22] Sartre argued that Marxists should not reject all of Western culture as completely spoiled. Kafka, in particular, he said, should not be regarded as a dangerous ideological weapon of the bourgeoisie. On the contrary, Kafka's works are relevant to the problems of the younger generation in socialist countries and deserve thorough study by Marxist critics. Although the editors of *Inostrannaia literatura* printed Sartre's article, they could not let his criticism of the party line go unanswered. While they admitted that it would be a "dogmatic oversimplification" to reject everything not based on Soviet ideology, they declared that they felt in no way obliged to "import indiscriminately" all the "so-called values" of the Western world.[23] Sartre was again criticized in the April 1963 issue of *Inostrannaia literatura*, this time by Anisimov. Anisimov agreed that the Soviets should provide a "true interpretation" of Kafka but then went on to insist that such an interpretation would "inevitably lead to our refusing such ideological nourishment."[24]

Sartre's speech and his article were only the first examples of foreign influences on Soviet cultural politics. In May 1963, a conference was held in Liblice, Czechoslovakia, to commemorate the eightieth anniversary of Kafka's birth.[25] Here, Kafka was praised as a great realist and a poet of alienation.[26] He was called "a victim of the cult of personality" and his rehabilitation in Czechoslovakia was hailed as "the banner of spring."[27] A conference of the left-wing European Association of Writers, held in Leningrad in August of the same year, was also the scene of passionate discussion about Kafka. Writers from both Eastern and Western Europe praised him again and again and criticized the Soviet position on him. Sartre caustically remarked that those who call him a decadent more often than not have not read his works,[28] and Ehrenburg also defended him and ridiculed his attackers.[29] In November the pressure to publish Kafka grew as *Inostrannaia literatura* printed quotes from many speakers at the conference defending Proust, Joyce, and Kafka, calling

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cerpts were published in *Literaturnaia gazeta*, July 14, 1962. Neither version contained Sartre's remarks on Kafka, however.

22. Jean-Paul Sartre, "Kholodnaia voina i edinstvo kul'tury," *Inostrannaia literatura*, 1963, no. 1, pp. 222–29.

23. Ibid., p. 223.

24. Ivan I. Anisimov, "Aktual'nost' gumanizma," *Inostrannaia literatura*, 1963, no. 4, pp. 192–99.

25. The proceedings of the conference are contained in Edward Goldstücker, František Kautman, and Paul Reimann, eds., *Franz Kafka aus Prager Sicht* (Prague, 1965).

26. Dmitrii V. Zatonskii, "Kafka bez retushi," *Voprosy literatury*, 1964, no. 5, p. 70.

27. Evgeniia F. Knipovich, "Frants Kafka," *Inostrannaia literatura*, 1964, no. 1, p. 195.

28. "Roman, chelovek, obshchestvo," *Inostrannaia literatura*, 1963, no. 11, p. 244.

29. Il'ia G. Erenburg, "Otstaivat' chelovecheskie tsennosti," *Literaturnaia gazeta*, August 13, 1963, p. 2.

them the fathers of the modern novel.[30] The Soviet public was finally able to read firsthand the heresies that realism and decadence are not irreconcilably opposed and that the modernists were great realists who created works of universal and lasting value.

A final major factor in the debate was the theories of Roger Garaudy, then a member of the politburo of the French Communist Party. In a speech at the Liblice conference[31] and then in a book published soon afterward,[32] Garaudy eloquently challenged the fundamental premises of the Soviet case against Kafka. Basic to the Soviet case were the following tenets: The history of modern Western art (including literature) consists of a struggle between realism, which is progressive, and decadence, which is reactionary. Realistic art reflects the totality of objective (that is, sociohistorical) reality, and that totality must include the development of society toward communism. Because of Kafka's pessimistic view of the world and his failure to show at least the possibility of overcoming alienation, he cannot be considered a realist. He is thus not progressive or humanistic, and he has nothing to say to mankind.

Garaudy maintained, on the contrary, that all great art is realistic, since all art refers to "a reality external to and independent of itself." As for the demand for totality, Garaudy replied that the responsibility for portraying the whole of reality rests with philosophers or historians, and not with artists. "A work of art," he declared, "can be a very partial . . . testimony to the relationship between man and the world . . . and that testimony can be authentic and great." Garaudy also broadened his definition of reality to include not only the external world, but also man's "dreams and aspirations": "for the real, when it includes man, is no longer only what he is but also what he lacks, everything which he has yet to become, and which is activated by the dreams of men and the myths of nations."

In reply to the objection that Kafka, even though he shows the evils of capitalism, "remains a prisoner of it" instead of showing how it can be overcome, Garaudy argued that a writer's failure to provide solutions does not make him less great. In any case, he pointed out, a correct historical perspective does not necessarily make a work of art an effective agent for change. The relationship between art and action lies "not in commanding but in awakening" and a work of art is valuable not because it presents the whole truth or incites people to revolution but because it "helps us perceive new dimensions of reality." It may be true, Garaudy agreed, that Kafka's view of reality is

30. "Roman, chelovek, obshchestvo," *Inostrannaia literatura*, 1963, no. 11, pp. 204–45.

31. Roger Garaudy, "Kafka, die moderne Kunst und wir," in Goldstücker et al., pp. 199–207.

32. Roger Garaudy, *D'un réalisme sans rivages* (Paris, 1963). All Garaudy quotes are from this volume. The translations are mine.

limited and contradictory and that he portrays a dehumanized world, but all this is more than offset by "the consciousness his works provide of this dehumanization": "By the power with which he evokes the nightmare of this world of alienation, by the lucidity with which he moves aside its suffocating walls, he makes us see . . . the possibility of a different world and inspires us with an irresistible need for it." Thus the significance of his work goes beyond him and his class and lies in its revelation of "a profound law of our time."

Finally, Garaudy took issue with the Soviet claim that Kafka's works are unrelievedly pessimistic. Far from being a "black" writer, he said, Kafka "aspires with all his might toward what is normal." His works constitute an "endless struggle against alienation" and an "attempt to rediscover . . . the forgotten and lost meaning of life."

It should be noted that although Garaudy's views were a threat to the conservative stand on Kafka, they were at the same time quite compatible with the official Soviet aesthetic, which is elastic enough to accommodate a wide range of interpretations of any particular work. Expressed within a framework of values long espoused by Russian and Soviet critics—a realistic, life-affirming art—Garaudy's views were especially attractive to intellectuals seeking a less dogmatic application of old formulas. Garaudy's book, and especially his concepts of a "realism without limits" and of Kafka's "struggle against alienation," was the subject of much debate in the Soviet Union throughout the 1960s. Although no one was permitted to defend him in the press, an article by Garaudy, based on his book, was published in *Inostrannaia literatura* in 1965[33]—but not without the opposition of "some dogmatists," as the editor remarked.[34] Even more remarkable was the publication, in 1966, of the book itself.[35] This unexpected event can perhaps be explained by the Soviet desire for cooperation with other Communist parties, Garaudy's authority within the French Communist Party, and his usefulness to the Communist movement. He had written many books defending communism and Marxism, and the Soviets undoubtedly did not want to lose such an eminent and respected spokesman. Garaudy soon lost his respectability, though: he was expelled from the French Communist Party in 1970 for support of the Czech reform movement[36] and has been attacked by the Soviets as a revisionist ever since.[37]

33. Rozhe Garodi, "O realizme i ego beregakh," *Inostrannaia literatura*, 1965, no. 4, pp. 202–8.

34. N. Naumov, "Rozhe Garodi v 'Inostrannoi literature,'" *Inostrannaia literatura*, 1965, no. 1, p. 252.

35. Rozhe Garodi, *Realizm bez beregov* (Moscow, 1966).

36. See Maurice Cranston, "The Thought of Roger Garaudy," *Problems of Communism*, 29, no. 5 (1970): 11.

37. See, for example, "Protiv antikommunizma v literaturovedenii i estetike," *Voprosy literatury*, 1970, no. 5, p. 5, and Kh. N. Momdzhian, *Marksizm i renegät Garodi* (Moscow, 1973).

Much of what was written on Kafka after 1963, and especially during 1964–65, was aimed at countering the defense of Kafka made by Garaudy and the participants of the Liblice and Leningrad conferences. For the most part, critics merely repeated and developed the old argument that Kafka's pessimism had nothing to offer to people building a better world. While they could not disagree openly with the party's position, they did, nevertheless, have some leeway in the tone and emphasis of their remarks. In the wake of the de-Stalinizing Twenty-second Party Congress and the split with China, "overcoming the errors of the cult of personality" and "struggling with dogmatism" were the order of the day. Thus, under the guise of presenting a "complete" picture of Kafka's work, including "all of its complexity and contradictions," some more moderate critics were able to present views favorable to Kafka while at the same time joining in the general chorus of fidelity to the party line.

The most highly skilled practitioner of this approach was Tamara Motyleva, an established critic and scholar, who since 1956 has been arguing with conservatives in an effort to gain greater acceptance for nonrevolutionary Western writers.[38] In an article on the Leningrad conference published in *Novyi mir* in November 1963, Motyleva supported the official position that Kafka believed in "the inscrutability of the world, the omnipotence of evil, and man's insuperable loneliness."[39] At the same time, however, she managed to defend Kafka by emphasizing the dramatic power of his work and by asserting—in opposition to Zatonskii—that the short story, "The Metamorphosis," was realistic. "It reflects," she asserted, "the tragedy of the ordinary poor citizen, oppressed by need and dependence on his job, who is accustomed to bow down before his superiors and secure a 'decent' existence for his family by the sweat of his brow." She also noted the admiration for Kafka of such "progressively inclined" Western intellectuals as Heinrich Böll, and she even included in her article a translation of "Before the Law," the first time Kafka had appeared in Russian. It should be emphasized again that none of Motyleva's remarks contradicted the party line. Conservatives, too, acknowledged Kafka's talent as an artist as well as the social criticism contained in his work. In the controlled circumstances of Soviet criticism, however, nuances take on added significance. At a time when the party line demanded the rejection of Kafka, Motyleva's attention to the more acceptable aspects of his work at least kept the debate alive.

With publication of "The Metamorphosis," "In the Penal Colony," and other short works in January 1964, the Kafka debate entered a new stage.

38. See, for example, Tamara L. Motyleva, "Tak li nado izuchat' zarubezhnuiu literaturu?" *Inostrannaia literatura*, 1956, no. 9, pp. 209–18.

39. Tamara L. Motyleva, "V sporakh o romane," *Novyi mir*, 1963, no. 11, p. 207.

Whether publication was a victory for pro-Kafka forces, whether even those who opposed him had now come to agree that he must nevertheless be read, or whether they had simply decided that the ban on his works was counter-productive, Soviet readers were finally given the opportunity to judge him for themselves. The year 1964 also saw publication of three lengthy and informative articles on Kafka, the first since 1959. These three articles were similar in many respects. Each provided much biographical information about Kafka as well as extensive quotes and summaries of his works. Each discussed the alienation portrayed in his works and declared that it refers specifically and exclusively to capitalist society and not, as "certain" critics had proposed, to socialist society as well. Finally, each maintained that, although Kafka was a significant writer, his vision was too subjective to provide the whole truth. In spite of these similarities, however, the three articles differ in tone and emphasis and represent three distinct approaches to "the Kafka problem."

The first article, by Evgeniia Knipovich, was written with much sympathy for Kafka.[40] Although Knipovich followed the official story in denying that he was a realist or had any significant influence on Western literature, she nevertheless emphasized positive aspects of his works more than any other critic had previously done. She stressed the truth and humanism of his works (his honesty and anguished search for the truth), maintained that his work is a document of his time and even has some relevance to life under socialism, and declared that the Soviets should not reject him completely or waste time "speculating on his weaknesses." While Knipovich defended Kafka in many ways, she was also careful to qualify her defense with the requisite criticism. Thus she insisted that he was basically a pessimist and a decadent, that the alienation of his heroes had nothing to do with life under socialism, and that his work was in no way prophetic or of major significance. She even concluded that his works were actually harmful, since "his vision" militates against the attainment of "that 'reality' for which he vaguely longed." It should be noted, however, that while Knipovich's objections to Kafka were merely repetitions of old clichés, her defense of his work was original and expressed with conviction. This would seem to indicate that her praise was sincere and that she had to include the objections to conform to the party line.

The next article on Kafka, by Zatonskii, was no doubt a disappointment to those who thought that a more sympathetic attitude toward Kafka would now be permitted.[41] To be sure, it replaced invective with rational argument; it conceded that Kafka "hated the soulless, dehumanized world in which he lived" and that his "anguish" and "feeling of responsibility" for man "cannot

40. Evgeniia F. Knipovich, "Frants Kafka," *Inostrannaia literatura*, 1964, no. 1, pp. 195–204.

41. Dmitrii V. Zatonskii, "Kafka bez retushi," pp. 65–109.

fail to evoke sympathy"; and it contained an extremely valuable and objective survey of foreign interpretations of his work, including the defense of Kafka made at the Liblice conference. However, it was totally directed at countering that defense—at convincing the Soviet reader that Kafka was not a realist, that he was not progressive, and that his view of man as a weak and ignoble accomplice in his own destruction shows Kafka to be a symptom of disintegration and a victim of alienation with nothing to say to the socialist world.

The third and final Kafka article of that year was a singularly uninspired piece of writing by the conservative critic, Boris Suchkov.[42] In thirty pages, Suchkov found hardly anything worthwhile to say about Kafka, and any slight merit he did find was outweighed for him by Kafka's "defects"—his pessimism, his failure to portray reality, and the schematic and abstract quality of his characters.

It was clear from the articles by Knipovich, Zatonskii, and Suchkov that the Soviet government was not going to permit the kind of public discussion of Kafka that had occurred in Eastern Europe. It would make concessions—publication of some of his works and the admission that he was talented, sincere, complex, and worthy of study—but it would not admit that he was a fighter for a better world or that his picture of reality was truthful enough to make him a really great writer. Furthermore, the three articles indicated that future critical interpretations of his work would have to emphasize his pessimism and the fundamental "error" he made in believing that his own limited perception of the world represented the whole of reality.

Public discussion of Kafka reached a peak at a conference on modernism held in Moscow in December 1964.[43] With few exceptions, none of the speakers added anything new to the debate. They directed their remarks mainly against the Liblice conference's declaration of Kafka's contemporary relevance and, for the most part, merely repeated the arguments set forth in the three articles discussed above. The critic B. Bialik expressed some dissatisfaction with Suchkov's failure to explain why Western intellectuals were so attracted to

42. Boris L. Suchkov, "Kafka, ego sud'ba i ego tvorchestvo," *Znamia*, 1964, no. 10, pp. 212–18, and 1964, no. 11, pp. 229–46. My characterization of Suchkov derives from his critical writings, in which he condemns any work of literature which does not conform to his narrow definition of realism. From the point of view of those closer to the scene, however, he looked somewhat different. One Soviet critic pointed out to me that it was Suchkov who edited the Soviet edition of Kafka which came out in 1965, and that negative criticism of an author is, after all, a means of popularizing him. Yuri Glazov, a Soviet scholar now residing in Canada, has remarked that Suchkov, who succeeded Anisimov as head of the Gorky Institute of World Literature "invited [to the Institute] those who are . . . very unorthodox" (private correspondence). (Suchkov died in 1974.) The real configuration of forces in Soviet criticism is, to say the least, much more complicated than it appears on the pages of literary journals.

43. Ivan I. Anisimov et al., eds., *Sovremennye problemy realizma i modernizm* (Moscow, 1965).

Kafka and with the fact that Suchkov spoke exclusively about Kafka's "decadent" side, but this was an isolated exception.

The party's position was laid out in great detail by the chairman of the conference, Ivan Anisimov. Anisimov criticized those participants of the Liblice conference who tried to "link his [Kafka's] work with the interests and aspirations of socialist literature" instead of concentrating on a "historical evaluation" of it, who interpreted alienation "as some kind of eternal law operating outside of time and space," and who saw in Kafka's works "a prophetic premonition of the brutalities of fascism." According to Anisimov, the main defect of Kafka's work is that it reveals "man's inability to take any kind of action" and contains "a rejection of protest and indignation and a sermon of submission." Thus Kafka's view of man is "humiliating and distorted" and is "unacceptable" to the socialist world. Soviet scholars may study Kafka in order to show how capitalism produced such "spiritual monstrosities," but "linking Kafka's works with the future or seeing in him the possibility of enriching socialist literature" is "completely unacceptable." Anisimov rejected out of hand the idea, propounded most vigorously by Garaudy, that Kafka waged a "struggle" against alienation, and he also criticized unnamed Marxist scholars for overemphasizing Kafka's humanism.[44]

In what was perhaps his most interesting statement, Anisimov revealed the real issue at stake: the fear of the orthodox that a Kafkaesque vision would drive out socialist realism and cause Soviet writers to begin to write about alienation in the Soviet Union:

> The important thing here, of course, is not that Kafka was for one reason or another forgotten and insufficiently studied by literary scholars of the socialist world. Our opponents are determined to turn Kafka—with his tormented consciousness of man's impotence in the face of reality, his inner defeat, and his submissive acceptance of the monstrosity of capitalism—into the spiritual heritage of socialist society. They intend in such a way to turn the new literatures in the direction of . . . 'alienation,' which, as they try to convince us, retains its significance . . . under a socialist system.[45]

One of the "comrades" who believed that the concept of alienation was, in fact, relevant to life in the Soviet Union was the critic Samarii Velikovskii. In a surprise speech unanticipated by the planners of the conference, Velikovskii opposed the official line, asserted that the problem of how to interpret Kafka had not yet been solved, and showed that, for all the official disclaimers, Kafka did indeed have something to say to the Soviet reader.[46]

44. Ibid., p. 17.

45. Ibid., pp. 605–6.

46. Samarii I. Velikovskii, "Otchuzhdenie i literatura Zapada," in Anisimov et al., *Sovremennye problemy*, pp. 522–35.

Referring to the "silence of many years" which had enshrouded Kafka, Velikovskii offered a sarcastic characterization of the prevailing line: "One after another works are appearing by authors, who, as a rule, while acknowledging the writer's [Kafka's] exceptional talent, relegate him to a place in the museum of European decadence of the first quarter of the century, alien to us from beginning to end and deserving only criticism, although at the same time having the right to figure in histories of literature."[47]

An integral part of this approach, Velikovskii continued, was the assertion that Kafka was not a "fighter against alienation" but rather its "prisoner." That argument, he said, goes as follows: "It was beyond his [Kafka's] strength to understand 'alienation' as a concrete historical process within the capitalist system and to realize that a revolution which would completely destroy the social order connected with the institution of private property could bring liberation." Velikovskii did not quarrel with this, but said it meant only that Kafka did not know anything about Marxism. What was really important, he insisted, was to "clarify whether Kafka's work expressed *spontaneously* that tragedy of the alienated individual which Marxism *analyzes historically*."

The most explosive part of Velikovskii's speech concerned the question of alienation under socialism. Velikovskii agreed with the official position that "socialism as a *system* does not provide the conditions for it [alienation] to arise." He pointed out, however, that this does not mean that the system always works perfectly. Velikovskii then used the impeccable authority of Communist Party Congresses to link Kafka to de-Stalinization and to affirm what others had categorically denied—that alienation does exist in the Soviet Union. The Twentieth and Twenty-second Congresses, he said, were concerned that "the distortion of the principles of socialist democracy which took place in the past should never be repeated . . . . Such elements [that is, of alienation] are alien to us and hinder us, and our continued progress demands that they be overcome." Kafka's works are "an instrument, if not for the elimination, then undoubtedly for the detection and disclosure of the cancers of alienation."

The rest of Velikovskii's speech merits reprinting in full. It reveals that, in spite of all the efforts of the critics to turn Kafka into a museum piece and his works into the fantastic and distorted products of a sick mind, today's Soviet reader finds them all too relevant and all too realistic.[48]

47. Ibid., p. 531.

48. According to Yuri Glazov: "In the fifties Kafka was considered by many of my friends to be one of the most fascinating authors banned in Russia. We tried to read him in German and English, even in Polish and Czech, and our impression of him was nothing short of fantastic. He saw the world that we could not depict truly and in detail. Various stories and his two novels and parables struck at the system . . . more strongly than G. Orwell or A. Huxley. The appearance of his stories in Russia . . .

> What happened with Kafka outlined . . . with particular clarity those needs that sometimes arise when works of foreign masters of the word, brush, chisel, or movie camera appear in our midst. A book, painting, or film begins to live as an independent spiritual microcosm; the umbilical cord which tied it to its creator breaks, but in return, stronger ties arise between it and the consciousness of the person into whose hands it has fallen. And here it is not enough for a critic to be a mere provider of information, who explains the genesis of the book and provides facts about the historical circumstances in which it was written and the biography of its author. Sometimes what is more important is an open, direct look at what is happening to the work *now*. A sober and intensive analysis should be made not only of a given work, but also of the soil on which it falls and puts out new roots, as well as of that state of mind which is the basis for the highly complex attraction and repulsion that goes on between the work and the society which comes to know it . . . . The true civic maturity of a critic consists in . . . the exact calculation of the orbit along which a foreign body in our atmosphere moves, in . . . 'appropriating' the energy of its flight, . . . and in making fruitful the work which it does spontaneously and blindly. This is the real, and not rhetorical, battle for people's minds and souls on our sector of the ideological front. This is the truly critical assimilation (and not archival cataloging) of the works of great foreign masters, including Kafka, from the position of those who know from experience how the microbes of 'alienation' are rendered harmless and its outbreaks extinguished, of those who have not only noted on the map of the century, but are in practice carving out—in spite of all the somber guards at the gate—the road to the Law.[49]

Velikovskii's call to critics to show how Kafka was relevant to Soviet society was not taken up. Anisimov criticized him briefly at the conference for exaggerating Kafka's social and artistic significance, and his speech was not even mentioned in the account of the conference published in *Literaturnaia gazeta*.[50] The Kafka debate, of which Velikovskii's speech was the most open expression, was stopped as soon as it was allowed to surface. Although a short book on Kafka appeared in 1965[51] (the year the Soviets published the

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was . . . a sensation. The books could not be bought anywhere . . . and the price on the black market was exceedingly high. Soviet reality was such that what Kafka showed was only everyday Russian reality" (private correspondence).

49. Velikovskii, "Otchuzhdenie i literatura Zapada," pp. 534–35.

50. "Veter veka—v parusa realizma," *Literaturnaia gazeta*, February 2, 1965, p. 4. Velikovskii's speech was summarized for the scholarly public in A. L. Grishunin, "Nauchnaia konferentsiia 'sovremennye problemy realizma i modernizm,'" *Izvestiia Akademii nauk SSSR: Seriia literatury i iazyka*, vol. 3 (1965), pp. 270–76, and a similar version of it was published as "Priglashenie porazymslit' (k probleme 'otchuzhdeniia')," *Voprosy literatury*, 1965, no. 9, pp. 166–89.

51. Dmitrii Zatonskii, *Frants Kafka i problemy modernizma* (Moscow, 1965).

first Russian translation of *The Trial*[52]), it was written by the indefatigable Zatonskii and was merely an expanded version of his earlier statements. Since then, with the exception of a second edition of Zatonskii's book published in 1972, there have been only three major Soviet publications dealing with Kafka: his "Letter to my Father," published in *Zvezda* in 1968,[53] excerpts from his diaries in *Voprosy literatury*, also in 1968 (again with an introduction by Zatonskii),[54] and an article by a sociologist, A. Gulyga, published that same year in *Voprosy estetiki*, a collection of scholarly essays not likely to reach the general reading public.[55]

Kafka continues to be mentioned, however. Outright attacks are generally avoided, but his significance is minimized and his work tends to be portrayed as the morbid product of a sick imagination. Controversial questions such as his positive influence on twentieth-century literature are ignored and, needless to say, no one proposes that he is a realist or has anything to say to socialist man.[56] Since 1968, when the Soviets put an end to the Czech effort to endow socialism with "a human face," the situation has taken a turn for the worse. Kafka is mentioned less and less, and attempts at even-handedness are not even made.[57] Symptomatic in this respect is the volume of Moscow University's *Istoriia zarubezhnoi literatury* devoted to the period 1917–45, published in 1969. Edited by Leonid Andreev and Roman Samarin, both long-time hard-liners, this book of several hundred pages devotes less than a page to Kafka (compared with whole chapters on Thomas Mann and Johannes Becher) and views him almost exclusively as a "symbol of the incurably critical condition" of bourgeois society.[58]

There have been, however, a few exceptions to the prevailing anti-Kafka line. The Kafka entry in the 1966 volume of the *Kratkaia literaturnaia entsiklopediia*, written by Lev Kopelev, subtly emphasizes Kafka's good points

52. F. Kafka, *Roman* [*Protsess*]. *Novelly. Pritchi* (Moscow, 1965). An Estonian edition of Kafka's work was published in Tallinn in 1966.

53. F. Kafka, "Pis'mo k ottsu," *Zvezda*, 1968, no. 8, pp. 175–95, with commentary by A. Dymshits, "Kak 'ukorachivaiut' cheloveka," pp. 196–97.

54. "Iz dnevnikov Frantsa Kafki," *Voprosy literatury*, 1968, no. 2, pp. 136–68.

55. A. Gulyga, "Filosofskaia proza Frantsa Kafki," *Voprosy estetiki*, no. 8 (1968), pp. 293–323.

56. See, for example, Nikolai K. Gei and Vladimir M. Piskunov, *Mir, chelovek, iskusstvo* (Moscow, 1965); Mikhail S. Gus, *Modernizm bez maski* (Moscow, 1966); and Boris L. Suchkov, *Istoricheskie sud'by realizma* (Moscow, 1967).

57. See, for example, Vladimir R. Shcherbina, *Puti iskusstva* (Moscow, 1970). Commenting on the current situation, Professor Hans Mayer stated in August 1974 that he was certain that "in connection with the campaign against Soviet writers and scholars from Solzhenitsyn to Sakharov, no new and unorthodox interpretations of Kafka can appear" (private correspondence).

58. Leonid G. Andreev and Roman M. Samarin, eds., *Istoriia zarubezhnoi literatury posle oktiabr'skoi revoliutsii. Chast' 1: 1917–45* (Moscow, 1969), pp. 5–6, 8, 14.

and plays down his "defects." While conservatives would grudgingly admit, for example, that Kafka "revealed certain aspects of bourgeois society," Kopelev boldly states that he "penetrates deeply" into its "hidden regions." Kopelev also implies in Kafka's defense that his works contain protest and that he had a positive influence on such contemporary "realistic" writers as Thomas Mann and Friedrich Dürenmatt.[59] Tamara Motyleva's 1971 *entsiklopediia* article on realism also tipped the scales in favor of Kafka: "Among the writers of the twentieth century who are stamped with the mark of modernism, there are superior talents who try to convey the tension and anxiety of contemporary man and to express the tragedy of human isolation (F. Kafka, . . .)."[60] Needless to say, these subtleties were not lost on Soviet ideological watchdogs, and the *entsiklopediia* was severely criticized for lack of militancy and excessive tolerance of modernism.[61]

Since Velikovskii's speech in 1964, the most significant challenge to the party line on Kafka has come not from a literary critic but from a sociologist, A. Gulyga. In an article which appeared in *Voprosy estetiki* in 1968, Gulyga interprets Kafka as a social critic whose works provide a truthful picture of human relationships and consciousness in an alienated society.[62] He is especially interested in Kafka's insights into the nature and harmful effects of bureaucracy and totalitarianism. *The Castle*, for example, reflects "the increasing bureaucratization of the imperialist state" and shows that "in the world of alienation, under arbitrary totalitarian rule, the ordinary man is filled with fear for his fate and is terrorized by the pervasive atmosphere of repression." "The Metamorphosis," too, is concerned with totalitarianism: it shows that "the most destructive thing of which such a system of repression is capable is the corruption of consciousness, the destruction of the human 'I', the transformation of an individual into a depersonalized insect."

In another article, noteworthy, among other things, for its condescending attitude toward Zatonskii, Gulyga continued his defense of Kafka, suggesting that "The Great Wall of China" offers an artistic depiction of the "herd" mentality of modern man and that "The City Coat of Arms" shows that "Kafka understood that a world aimed at stupefying the masses must inevi-

59. Lev Z. Kopelev, "Kafka," *Kratkaia literaturnaia entsiklopediia*, vol. 3 (1966), pp. 454–56.

60. Tamara L. Motyleva, "Realizm," *Kratkaia literaturnaia entsiklopediia*, vol. 6 (1971), p. 221.

61. See, for example, Roman M. Samarin, "Bez chetkikh orientirov: zametki o kratkoi literaturnoi entsiklopedii," *Pravda*, June 30, 1969, p. 3; P. S. Vykhodtsev, "Kritika i nauka o literature," *Russkaia literatura*, 1972, no. 3, p. 20; and V. M. Ozerov, "Literaturno-khudozhestvennaia kritika i sovremennost'," *Literaturnaia gazeta*, February 2, 1972, p. 3.

62. See footnote 55.

tably collapse."[63] Alone among Soviet critics, Gulyga also defended Kafka as an artistic innovator whose use of stylized, abstract imagery leads to a "profound cognition of life." This type of writing, he implied, is needed now to examine "urgent contemporary problems," "to understand reality critically," and to "uncrown contemporary myths [that is, illusions]."

While these observations would excite no controversy outside of the Soviet Union, it must be recalled that Soviet critics had devoted much time and energy to opposing just what Gulyga affirmed—that Kafka was an artistic innovator whose works contain profound insights into modern society. But this is not the only heresy in Gulyga's writings. Not only does he find that Kafka's use of the technique of "alienation" is similar to Brecht's, and that Kafka's spare style, with its lack of concrete detail, is a "sign of the times,"[64] but he also calls Kafka a "satirist," a "humanist," and a "weapon of those who are struggling for human rights."[65] These are the very points which were made in Kafka's defense in the early sixties and which the conservatives had opposed with such vehemence and, evidently, so little success. Finally, given orthodox Soviet critics' insistence that Kafka's works shed light only on the capitalist world, it is very curious that Gulyga uses the words "capitalism" and "bourgeois society" only a few times, speaking instead of "bureaucracy," "totalitarianism," "alienation," "perverted social relationships," "the law of supply and demand," and "the division of labor."[66] Although he does not go so far as to state openly that Kafka's works are relevant to Soviet society, surely it is not far-fetched to suggest that this is implied.

Looking back on the past decade, it would seem that Zatonskii's 1965 book was not the beginning of Soviet Kafka scholarship, as it was interpreted at the time, but rather the party's attempt to solve once and for all the vexatious Kafka problem. Since then the official position has remained basically unchanged. "Yes, of course," it runs, "Kafka existed and it would be foolish to pretend he did not. There is no reason not to publish some of his works—in small editions, of course—or even to study him in school. He was a sincere and compassionate man and a significant and talented writer, and he undoubtedly has a place in the history of twentieth-century literature. However, let us not exaggerate. He was not a genius, and he did not have a decisive effect on the realistic mainstream of twentieth-century literature. Far from providing an objective picture of reality, his works are the morbid product of a

63. A. Gulyga, "Puti mifotvorchestva i puti iskusstva," *Novyi mir*, 1969, no. 5, pp. 217–32.

64. Gulyga, "Filosofskaia proza," p. 298.

65. Ibid., p. 307.

66. Ibid., pp. 299 and 303, passim.

sick mind. While they do capture some aspects of alienation under capitalism, they fail to reveal the whole truth or to show the real direction of history. Kafka is a victim, not a prophet, and his works have nothing to say to people who are determined to change the world." Thus is Kafka consigned to the ash-heap of history, one more well-meaning but impotent victim in its ever-forward flow.

The question remains: why was this great struggle against Kafka necessary, when other Marxists have shown that his works are compatible with the demands of Soviet aesthetics?[67] Why did the Soviets have to deny that his works are humanistic, or that they contain a struggle for a better world? After all, if Dostoevsky, Mauriac, Faulkner, and now even Proust have been integrated into the canon,[68] why not Kafka? Perhaps as an ally he is too dangerous: perhaps the authorities do not want readers to identify with Kafka's heroes—little, impotent people—and perhaps they really feel that his works would open a Pandora's box of dangerous questions. As Anisimov said, Kafka is a threat to socialist realism, for the wholehearted acceptance of his work would lead to the penetration of "Kafkaism"—despair, alienation, and subjectivism—into Soviet literature. But the problem is broader than that. As Edmund Demaitre said in *Problems of Communism*, an important aspect of the Liblice discussions was "whether a reinterpretation of the concept of alienation would result in an eventual infiltration of idealistic elements, such as existentialism and phenomenology, into the hitherto uncontaminated corpus of Marxism-Leninism."[69] The question of Kafka is thus inextricably linked to basic philosophical problems which the Soviet Communist Party is unwilling to have raised.

Although Soviet books and periodicals give the impression that the struggle for Kafka is over, unofficial sources indicate that it is still going on. A new book on Kafka, by Gulyga, and a translation of *The Castle*, by the noted Soviet translator, Larisa Rait-Kovaleva, have both been completed, although Gulyga's efforts to have them published have so far been unsuccessful. As for the Soviet reader, Kafka's works still evoke a passionate response ten years after the first —and only—publication of them in the Soviet Union. "Everyone is either for or against him," one Soviet writer stated recently, "no one is indifferent."[70]

67. See, for example, Fischer, *Art Against Ideology*, and Adolfo Sánchez Vásquez, *Art and Society: Essays in Marxist Aesthetics* (New York and London: Monthly Review Press, 1973), pp. 136–54.

68. On Proust, see Vladimir Dneprov, "Iskusstvo Marselia Prusta," *Inostrannaia literatura*, 1973, no. 4, pp. 194–203.

69. Edmund Demaitre, "The New Treason of the Clerks," *Problems of Communism*, 13, no. 5 (1964): 27.

70. Private conversations in the USSR. Printed sources also occasionally reveal that Soviet intellectuals continue to be interested in Kafka. Thus Viktor Shklovsky dis-

Thus in spite of official efforts to turn Kafka into a historical curiosity, as Velikovskii put it, his works and the issues they raise remain very much alive. One can only hope that some day they will be allowed to surface again.

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cusses him briefly in his recent book, *Tetiva: O neskhodstve neskhodnogo* (Moscow, 1970, pp. 74 and 366), and, in a Kafkaesque mini-story entitled "Understanding" (*Looming*, May 1974 [Tallinn]), the Estonian writer Toomas Liiv brings in a mouse whose name is Franz Kafka and who is "pronounced guilty of not understanding his guilt." Also, in an article in *Literaturnaia gazeta* (February 26, 1975, p. 4), the critic Iurii Andreev refers enigmatically to "enormous efforts" still being made "before our very eyes" by "certain circles" to "galvanize and exaggerate the significance of this sorrowful writer."