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‘Cultural Bosses’ as Patrons and Clients: the Functioning of the Soviet Creative Unions in the Postwar Period

VERA TOLZ

At the Nineteenth Conference of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) in June 1988, the writer, Yuri Bondarev, spoke passionately in favour of the preservation of the traditional Soviet system of government, alleging that democracy ‘posed a mortal danger to the most gifted, creative people ever since the judges in democratic Athens sentenced Socrates to die.’¹ Bondarev spoke in the name of a group of cultural figures who in 1987 emerged as a focus of staunch opposition to Mikhail Gorbachev’s reforms. In justifying their position these people argued that the reformed Soviet Union and Western democracies could never provide the same support for the development of culture as the Soviet government had done.

These outspoken opponents of Gorbachev’s reforms occupied top administrative posts in the four ‘creative Unions’ – the Unions of Soviet Writers and Russian Writers, Soviet Artists and Soviet Composers. The USSR Unions were set up in 1932–34 to manage cultural activities and were joined by the RSFSR Writers’ Union in 1958². The leaders of the Unions consistently praised the role of these organisations in the development of Soviet and Russian culture. Significantly, not only Gorbachev’s critics but even the most outspoken reformers among cultural figures were in favour of the preservation of the creative Unions at the time when the USSR was disintegrating. Few members of the Unions agreed with the two readers of the main Soviet newspaper for cultural affairs, *Sovetskaia kul’tura*, whose letter of 7 June 1988 called for the disbanding of the USSR Writers’ Union as it reflected ‘the spirit and the word of Stalinist authoritarianism’.

The highly critical attitude of many leaders of the creative Unions towards

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¹ *Literaturnaia Rossiia*, 27 (1988), 5–6.

² The Russian Republican branch of the Soviet Writers’ Union was created in 1958 as a conservative balance to the Moscow branch. The latter had been established in 1955 and was joined by many liberal writers.

Gorbachev's liberalising reforms and the defence of the Unions as institutions by the majority of their rank-and-file members, including liberal reformers, indicate that the simple dichotomy – passive intelligentsia versus the repressive regime – is not a satisfactory tool for the analysis of the relationship between the Soviet party-state and cultural figures.³ Some scholars have already been arguing for a long time that, in fact, prominent cultural figures exercised significant influence on the course of Soviet cultural life. Moreover, speaking about the 1930s, Sheila Fitzpatrick argued that top Party and state officials often acted as patrons of individual cultural figures and that the cultural intelligentsia as a group was allotted a privileged position in society. The Unions provided the framework for the distribution of these privileges.⁴

This article seeks to clarify the reasons for the fierce opposition to Gorbachev's reforms on the part of the leaders of the creative Unions and, especially, for their open defence of the Stalinist system at a time when it was publicly attacked in the most influential mass media and by the Party General Secretary himself. In particular, conservative cultural figures recalled with nostalgia the postwar years. In the period of glasnost, the liberal media portrayed those years as the time of devastating ideological campaigns in the cultural sphere – *zhdanovshchina* and the onslaught on 'rootless cosmopolitans'. Yet the Unions' leaders had good reasons to see that particular period as their golden age. It was in the late 1940s and the early 1950s that they finalised the attainment of their broadest powers, including tight control over the production and distribution of – as well as the reward for – literary and artistic work. Their strengthening of control over the professions went hand in hand with better securing their status as one of the most privileged groups of Soviet society in material terms. In this period 'cultural bosses' acquired unprecedented financial and professional power vis-à-vis rank-and-file members of their professions. Such inequality in the distribution of power and wealth among members of the creative professions, rather than the ideological and political repression of the regime, became the main source of grievance on the part of rank-and-file writers, artists and musicians.

This article starts by analysing the activities of the Unions' leaders during *perestroika*. It goes on to show when and how the leaders' powers – which became threatened by Gorbachev's liberalising reforms – had been acquired. It then discusses

³ This is not to deny that repressions and party-directed ideological campaigns played a crucial role in shaping Soviet cultural life. For new material on this subject see A. V. Blum, *Za kulisami 'Ministerstva Pravdy.'* *Tainaia istoriia sovetskoi tsenzury, 1917–1929* (St. Petersburg: Blitz, 1994); D. L. Babichenko, *Pisateli i tsenzura. Sovetskaia literatura 1940kh godov pod politicheskim kontrolem TsK* (Moscow: Terra, 1994); *idem*, *Istoriia sovetskoi politicheskoi tsenzury. Dokumenty i kommentarii* (Moscow: Terra, 1997).

⁴ Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism. Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 89–114; *eadem*, 'Intelligentsia and Power. Client–Patron Relations in Stalin's Russia', in M. Hildermeier and E. Muller-Luckner, eds., *Stalinismus vor dem Zweiten Weltkrieg. Neue Wege der Forschung* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1998), 35–53; *eadem*, *The Cultural Front. Power and Culture in Revolutionary Russia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), 216–37. See also Serhy Yekelchuk, 'Diktat and Dialogue in Stalinist Culture: Staging Patriotic Historical Opera in Soviet Ukraine, 1936–1954', *Slavic Review*, 59, 3 (Fall 2000), 597–624; John and Carol Garrard, *Inside the Soviet Writers' Union* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1990), xii.

the impact of the postwar changes in the functioning of the creative Unions on the attitude towards the Soviet regime on the part of the Soviet cultural intelligentsia at large. In conclusion, the article analyses the rationale behind the policies of the political leadership towards the intelligentsia in the postwar period.

Leaders of the creative Unions in opposition to *perestroika*

As early as March 1987 a meeting of the secretariat of the board of the RSFSR Writers' Union turned into the first prominent public manifestation of opposition to *perestroika*.⁵ The organisers of the meeting, the chairman of the RSFSR Union, Sergei Mikhalkov, and his deputy Bondarev were also members of the secretariat of the USSR Writers' Union – the main government body of the Union since 1946.⁶ (In 1990, Mikhalkov was elected chairman of the USSR Writers' Union, whereas Bondarev took over the chairmanship of the RSFSR branch.)

After that this group of writers, as well as a number of leading members of the Unions of Soviet Artists and Composers; including sculptor Viacheslav Klykov, singer Liudmila Zykina and composer Tikhon Khrennikov, made public speeches and published letters in the press sharply condemning *perestroika*. In 1990, when the main organ of the USSR Writers' Union *Literaturnaia gazeta* cut its ties with the Union, the Union's secretariat ruled that another newspaper be set up, which could better reflect the views of the Union's leadership than had *Literaturnaia gazeta* in the previous few years. That was the newspaper *Den'*, whose editors defined it as an organ of 'spiritual opposition' to the Gorbachev–Yeltsin regime.⁷ The leaders of the creative Unions published numerous appeals to the army, the KGB, 'true Communists' and other 'patriots' to 'save' the USSR from the 'occupational forces' of Gorbachev's and Yeltsin's governments. Among these appeals the pride of place belongs to the so-called *A Word to the People* (*Slovo k narodu*), published in *Sovetskaia Rossiia* on 23 July 1991. *A Word* warned that enemies of Russia, who were kowtowing before the West, had taken power in Moscow and it called on all patriotic forces to defend the motherland. The authors of *A Word* were later accused by the main architect of glasnost policy, Politburo member Aleksandr Yakovlev, of laying 'the ideological foundation for the putsch' (in August 1991).⁸ This accusation was due to the participation of two of the signatories of *A Word* in the Emergency Committee which put Gorbachev under house arrest, and to the fact that the

⁵ Julia Wishnevsky, 'Nash sovremennik Provides Focus for "Opposition Party"', *RFE/RL Research Report* (20 Jan. 1989). See also Catherine Theimer Nepomnyashchy, 'Perestroika and the Soviet Creative Unions,' in John O. Norman, ed., *New Perspectives on Russian and Soviet Culture* (London: Macmillan, 1994).

⁶ According to the Unions' statutes, between congresses relatively large executive boards of up to a hundred members were supposed to supervise the day-to-day activities of the Unions. In reality, in the 1930s and during the war, the much smaller presidiums, consisting of a third of the boards' members, were the real loci of decision-making and executive authority. The increase in the powers of the secretariats in the postwar period meant further centralisation of decision-making in the unions.

⁷ Julia Wishnevsky, 'Cultural Politics in 1991', *RFE/RL Research Report* (20 Dec. 1991), 7–11.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 9.

Emergency Committee's own programme document *An Appeal to the Soviet People* was almost identical in its message to A Word. Moreover, on 20 August the secretariat of the USSR Writers' Union, under the leadership of Mikhalkov, gave support, albeit an oral one, to the Emergency Committee at the time when its fortunes seemed to be on the wane.⁹ On 23 August 1991 Mikhalkov, Aleksandr Prokhanov, Yurii Verchenko, Nikolai Gorbachev and other veteran leaders who had controlled the Union for decades were expelled from the secretariat for siding with the 'putschists'.¹⁰

Although some members of the 'spiritual opposition' probably genuinely objected for ideological reasons to Gorbachev's attempts to introduce some elements of democracy and pluralism into the USSR's political system, a threat to the corporate interests of the group in question seemed to provide a stronger motivation. When during the first public manifestation of the writers' opposition in March 1987 Bondarev called on the secretariat of the board of the RSFSR Writers' Union to launch 'a new battle of Stalingrad' against Gorbachev's reforms, his main enemies to be annihilated were editors of literary journals recently appointed by Aleksandr Yakovlev, who, rather than continuing to publish Bondarev, Mikhalkov and others, gave the pages of the journals under their auspices to previously banned authors.

Another threat posed by *perestroika* was that of multi-candidate elections. From 1934 onwards, members of boards of the creative Unions had been elected en bloc by acclamation without any discussion. Then the board members selected the members of presidiums and secretariats. Such a system made members of the governing bodies of the Unions feel secure in their posts. Genuine elections could destroy this security. Indeed, in May 1986 the Union of Soviet Cinematographers held multi-candidate elections to the position of the Union's chairman; as a result the semi-dissident film director Elem Klimov was elected instead of Sergei Bondarchuk, who had hitherto been the Party favourite. (In fact, the Union of Cinematographers was somewhat different from the Unions of Writers, Artists and Composers. The first was set up in the wake of Nikita Khrushchev's liberalisation in 1965 and did not have any Stalinist nucleus in its leadership as did the other unions, whose origins went back to the 1930s.) In contrast to what happened in the Union of Cinematographers, the leaderships of the three oldest Unions managed to withstand a threat of free elections up until the end of the Soviet period. As mentioned earlier, Mikhalkov lost his post as chairman of the USSR Writers' Union only in September 1991, and Khrennikov, chairman of the Union of Composers since 1948,¹¹ was reelected at the age of 78 as the Union's co-chairman in March 1991. Falsification of results in favour of Khrennikov by the Union's secretariat was reported in the media.¹² However, the threat of losing posts through

⁹ *Literaturnaia gazeta*, 34 (1991), 9.

¹⁰ *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 7 Sept. 1991.

¹¹ Khrennikov's candidacy for the chairmanship of the Union was apparently selected by Stalin personally (see Tikhon Khrennikov, 'Sud'ba chelovecheskaia', in T. Tolchanova and M. Lozhnikov, eds., *I primknushii k nim Shepilov* (Moscow: Zvonitsa-MG, 1998), 146.

¹² *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, 9 April 1991.

free elections was there, and it was precisely in reaction to it that Bondarev made his statement about democracy being an enemy of true talent which is quoted at the beginning of this article.

The 1990 USSR press law was another blow to the power of the leadership of the writers' Unions. This law required every periodical and newspaper to re-register with the local authorities and to identify its 'founder' (*uchreditel*). Collectives of employees of periodicals were allowed to register as 'founders'. The question of the founder was important, as, according to the law, it was the founders' right to appoint and dismiss chief editors, determine editorial policy and control revenues. Upon the adoption of the law by the Soviet parliament, the majority of literary journals and newspapers, including *Literaturnaia gazeta*, freed themselves from the auspices of the Writers' Union and proclaimed themselves to be independent, with collectives of employees registered as founders. Such a move affected not only the Writers' Union but also some other organisations which had hitherto controlled periodicals as well. Yet only the Writers' Union initiated legal procedures against the periodicals in question and pursued their cases with great vigour. (The Writers' Union eventually lost those cases.) In explaining their position, the leaders of the Union admitted that they were worried about the loss of the revenues which these periodicals used to raise for the Union, as well as about the loss of their hitherto unlimited access to the pages of those periodicals.¹³

Although at times admitting that material interests to some extent shaped their attitude to Gorbachev's reforms, the Unions' leaders far more often cited ideological reasons for their opposition. In opposing *perestroika*, these cultural figures articulated their own ideology. The latter was hardly innovative. Despite a highly negative image of Stalin in the official Soviet discourse of the late 1980s and early 1990s, these people did not hide their commitment to Stalinism. In describing the ideological position of the newspaper *Den*, Prokhanov said in August 1991 that it united, among others, those who were committed to Stalinism.¹⁴ Particularly striking was the similarity of the rhetoric of the critics of *perestroika* to that of the ideological campaigns of the postwar period. Indeed, as in the late Stalin period, Gorbachev's critics began to accuse their opponents of 'rootless cosmopolitanism', combining those accusations with antisemitism, anti-Western hysteria and rabid Russian nationalism, which included the proclamation of the superiority of everything Russian over everything foreign. As was the case in the late 1940s to early 1950s, the word 'patriot' began to be used regularly to signify 'a true Russian'. The latter was to be contrasted with 'anti-patriot' – a person with a pro-Western orientation, suspected of not being a Russian.¹⁵

The similarity of statements by the Unions' leaders to those of Stalin's

¹³ Julia Wishnevsky, 'Press Law Makes Trouble for Writers' Union', *RFE/RL Research Report*, 2 (Nov. 1990), 19–22.

¹⁴ *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 15 Aug. 1991.

¹⁵ For a detailed description of the anti-cosmopolitan campaign and an analysis of its rhetoric, see K. Azadovskii and B. Egorov, 'Kosmopolity', *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie*, 36, 2 (1999), 83–135.

anti-cosmopolitan campaign of the late 1940s and early 1950s has already been noted.¹⁶ What has not been noted is that those in charge of the creative professions had good reasons to remember the postwar period in a particularly positive light. It was in that period that the powers of the leaders of the creative Unions were fully defined. It was those powers that were under threat, and it was only natural that in defending those powers the Unions' leaders began to look back to the period of their 'origin'.

The postwar period and the functioning of creative professions

Scholars tend to emphasise the importance of the 1930s as the time when the cultural intelligentsia secured its highly privileged position. In April 1932 the Party Central Committee issued a resolution 'On the Restructuring of Literary and Artistic Organisations', which resulted in the establishment of the three creative Unions – of Soviet Writers, Artists¹⁷ and Composers – which merged a variety of hitherto existing literary and artistic groups. Henceforth Party control of culture was conducted largely through the Unions. Although the resolution reminded cultural figures of their obligation to serve the regime, it also indicated the Party leadership's deference to high culture. Following the creation of the Unions, members of the cultural intelligentsia started to receive better material rewards for their professional activities than the rest of society. Fitzpatrick hypothesised that in the mid-1930s the right to a prosperous life (*zazhitochania zhizn'*) was officially recognised and, simultaneously, the concept of *kul'turnost'* (being cultured) was put forward, which argued that a higher level of education entitled people to a more prosperous way of life, hitherto condemned as 'bourgeois'.¹⁸ Such ideological changes had a direct impact on the lives of Soviet cultural figures. Indeed, contemporaries noted a drastic change in their way of life in the second half of the 1930s. Those members of the Russian intelligentsia who traditionally held materialistic interests in contempt left us with bitter satirical depictions of the new 'Soviet intelligentsia' and its attitude towards material values. Nadezhda Mandel'shtam recalled in her memoirs that when

¹⁶ See, for instance, Walter Laqueur, *Black Hundred. The Rise of the Extreme Right in Russia* (New York: HarperCollins, 1993), and Vera Tolz, 'The Radical Right in Post-Communist Russian Politics', in Peter H. Merkl and Leonard Weinberg, eds., *The Revival of Right-Wing Extremism in the Nineties* (London: Frank Cass, 1997), 179–85. Some scholars, however, seem to miss the strong connection between the arguments of Russian nationalists in Gorbachev's period and the propaganda of the anti-cosmopolitan campaign; they trace extreme Russian nationalist ideas of the *glasnost'* period only back to the period of the mid-1960s–early 1970s, when, following Khrushchev's death, such literary journals as *Nash sovremennik* and *Molodaia gvardiia* started to preach rabid Russian nationalism (see, for instance, Yitzhak M. Brudny, *Reinventing Russia. Russian Nationalism and the Soviet State 1953–1991* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998)).

¹⁷ The decision to set up the USSR Union of Artists was taken in 1932; however, that Union was fully established only in 1957 when its first congress was held. Until 1957, only the Organisational Committee of the Union had existed as well as the Moscow Union of Soviet Artists.

¹⁸ Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism*, 90–3. See also Catriona Kelly and Vadim Volkov, 'Directed Desires: *Kul'turnost'* and Consumption', in Catriona Kelly and David Shepherd, eds., *Constructing Russian Culture in the Age of Revolution: 1881–1940* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 295.

she and her husband, the poet Osip Mandel'shtam, 'left Moscow for exile [1934], the writers had not yet become a privileged caste, but now [in 1937] they were putting down roots and figuring out ways of keeping their privileges'. Seeing apartments in the newly built complex for writers in Lavrushinskii pereulok in the centre of Moscow, she observed that the writers 'had gone wild at having so much money for the first time in their lives'.¹⁹ Further insights left by a contemporary can be found in Mikhail Bulgakov's novels *The Master and Margarita* and *The Theatrical Novel*.

Mentioning that, due to shortages, an entitlement to privileges through being a member of the Soviet intelligentsia did not automatically result in obtaining required goods and services, Fitzpatrick argued that, by the late 1930s, within the cultural elite itself a certain hierarchy of privileged access had been created. However, she did not detail the mechanics of the creation and functioning of such a hierarchy. Other scholars clarified the issue by mentioning that in each 'creative' profession there tended to be people who sat on the governing bodies of the Unions – executive boards, presidiums and secretariats. These were the main beneficiaries of the new system of reward.²⁰

The above-mentioned accounts leave an impression that the Soviet cultural elite turned into a highly privileged caste in the late 1930s and that the leaderships of the Unions also turned into a separate subgroup during that time. As will be shown below, such accounts are not entirely accurate. The postwar years were more significant than the 1930s as a time when top administrators of the creative unions and a few other famous cultural figures joined the highest ranks of the state elite. The postwar years were also a crucial period in shaping the relationship between the Party-state leadership and the leadership of the creative Unions, on the one hand, and between the latter and the rank-and-file members of the Unions, on the other.

Documents from the fund of the USSR Council of People's Commissars/Council of Ministers in the State Archive of the Russian Federation clarify the dynamics of the relationship between state/Party officials and cultural figures in the period from the late 1930s to 1953. First, these documents indicate that there was a significant difference in the type of contacts which cultural figures enjoyed with top state/Party officials in the postwar period as compared with the 1930s. Second, they indicate that the system of the distribution of power and privileges among members of the Unions, which was to survive virtually intact until the late 1980s, took final shape only in the late 1940s.

The majority of the 1930s documents concerning 'material support' for the cultural intelligentsia detail the establishment of facilities for professional and leisure use, such as clubs, retreats, restaurants and medical centres, for a wide circle of members of the newly established creative Unions.²¹ In the 1930s, even well-

¹⁹ Nadezhda Mandelstam, *Hope against Hope. A Memoir* (London: Collins and Harvill Press, 1971), 278.

²⁰ Garrard, *Inside the Soviet Writers' Union*.

²¹ See for instance, Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Rossiiskii Federatsii (State Archive of the Russian Federation, henceforth GARF), fund 5446, op. 22, delo 1445 'On the Material Support of Composers for the period from 12 April to 20 September 1938'.

established cultural personalities in Moscow tended to address their requests for material benefits to top executives in their Unions rather than directly to Party/state officials. Thus, when the construction of dachas for writers in the settlement of Peredelkino near Moscow began in 1935 and it turned out that certain writers such as Marietta Shaginian and Vladimir Zazubrin had built considerably bigger houses than the government had originally paid for, they lobbied the leadership of the Writers' Union for more money. Their expectation was that the leadership of the Union would attempt to extract from the Council of People's Commissars additional funds to finish the construction. The Union's leadership, however, turned down the request from the writers, arguing that all the extra spending should come out of their own pockets.²² Only in isolated instances would individual artists and writers send requests of a purely materialistic nature directly to Party/state officials, bypassing the Unions. Requests to top political leaders of the country, particularly to Viacheslav Molotov in his capacity as chairman of Sovnarkom, were normally sent by people in charge of cultural institutions, who, to use Fitzpatrick's expression, acted as 'brokers' on behalf of their subordinates.²³ All in all, the 1930s was the period when the most significant change from the past was a considerable expansion of services and facilities, which, at least in theory, all members of the newly created Unions were entitled to use. Within the 'creative' professions separate hierarchies of privileged access were only beginning to emerge.

In the late 1930s the USSR Commissariat of Finances attempted to impose rigid limits on the creative unions' spending. The Commissariat virtually never met in full any requests from the Unions for funding; in 1938 it attempted, albeit unsuccessfully, to transfer the responsibility of financing local writers' organisations from republican and regional governments to the Literary Fund of the USSR Writers' Union; the same year, the Commissariat refused to provide funds for the Writers' Union unless the Council of People's Commissars reconfirmed its decision of September 1934 to finance the organisation from the state budget.²⁴ As could be expected, during the war requests from the creative unions were rare and modest, usually asking for the means required to restore destroyed theatres, museums and libraries.²⁵

²² GARF, fund 5446, op. 22, delo 1780, ll. 5 and 9.

²³ See, for instance, letters sent in 1938 by the Writers' Union Secretary V. Stavsky to Sovnarkom, asking for additional funds to finance medical treatment and other provisions for the Union's members (GARF, fund 5446, op. 22, delo 1787, ll. 1–5). See also a letter, written in Dec. 1937 to Molotov by the director of the Hermitage museum in Leningrad, I. Orbeli, who argued that salaries of the museum's employees should be raised to make them similar to those of employees in other great (*velikie*) cultural institutions of the country such as the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow (GARF, fund 5446, op. 22, delo 1419). See also a letter of 27 Dec. 1937 from the director of the Bolshoi Theatre to Sovnarkom asking to allocate flats to leading ballet dancers (GARF, fund 5446, op. 22, 1415, ll. 2–13).

²⁴ GARF, fund 5446, op. 22, delo 1776, l. 3, on the Commissariat of Finances refusing to meet the Writers' Union's requests for funding in full; op. 22, delo 1779, ll. 2–9 on the Commissariat's suggestion that Litfond should finance republican and regional writers' organisations; op. 22, delo 1776, l. 4–5 on the Commissariat asking for another confirmation by Sovnarkom that the Writers' Union should be financed by the state.

²⁵ See for instance, 'Perepiska po delam Souizov Pisatelei, Khudozhnikov i Kompozitorov' in 1944, GARF, fund 5446, op. 46, delo 2432; op. 46, delo 2427, l. 1 with a letter of 16 Dec. 1943 by the

The period from 1946 to Stalin's death in 1953 is described in scholarly literature as the time that 'witnessed the loss of the modest room to manoeuvre that writers had gained during the war years',²⁶ as 'the darkest period of state interference in artistic and scientific realms'.²⁷ But documents on cultural matters from the fund of the USSR Council of People's Commissars/Council of Ministers in the State Archive of the Russian Federation indicate that campaigns aimed at tightening ideological control over the intelligentsia were not the only trend in the relationship between the Party/state and members of the creative professions in that period. The period also witnessed the considerable increase, as compared with the 1930s and the war years, in demand on the Party/state by cultural figures to provide them with various benefits and privileges. More importantly, top administrators of the Unions managed to broaden their power over the functioning of the creative professions and, paradoxically, to increase their autonomy from the Party/state.

In the postwar period, requests to top state/Party officials by leaders of cultural institutions on behalf of their subordinates began to represent only a small number of the documents concerning 'material support' for the cultural intelligentsia. Instead, we find a stream of personal requests – large as well as pathetically small – addressed directly to Stalin as chairman of Sovnarkom or his deputies by individual cultural figures of different ranks. The following selection of examples can give us an idea of the situation.

There are many requests from individual cultural figures to the leadership of Sovnarkom/Council of Ministers to provide them with cars, either on the grounds that public transport did not work well in the immediate postwar period, or because cars obtained in the 1930s were donated for the war effort in 1941. Thus, in a letter dated 21 June 1945 to deputy head of Sovnarkom Molotov, Academician Konstantin Skrobanskii complained: 'Using public transport is tiresome for me. In addition, having a car will let me regularly use my dacha in the countryside. Please help.' The same file contains a similar request from the Leningrad actor Iurii Iur'ev.²⁸ In November 1945 the famous writer Kornei Chukovskii sent a letter to the Sovnarkom also asking to be provided with a car. To strengthen his case, Chukovskii wrote: 'All my immediate neighbours in Peredelkino (Konstantin Simonov, N. Pogodin, P. Pavlenko, Valentin Kataev and others) have got cars at their dachas.' In February 1949, the Kievan artist Kh. Pumipenko asked Molotov to help him buy an engine and other spare parts for his boat.²⁹

Another type of request concerned help for the restoration of property devastated during the war. On 21 May 1945 Sergei Mikhalkov wrote to Molotov asking for

director of the Kirov Theatre of Opera and Ballet in Leningrad to the Sovnarkom asking for money to buy shoes for the theatre's employees.

²⁶ Garrard, *Inside the Soviet Writers' Union*, 63.

²⁷ Loren R. Graham, *Science and Philosophy in the Soviet Union* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972), 18. See also Elena Zubkova, *Poslevoennoe obshchestvo: politika i povsednevnost', 1945–1953* (Moscow: Rosspen, 2000), 181–7.

²⁸ GARF, fund 5446, op. 47, delo 2735, ll. 1–2.

²⁹ GRARF, fund 5446, op. 51, delo 2982, l. 98.

help in reconstructing his dacha on the grounds that only by appealing directly to a top government official did he have a chance of getting the necessary materials.³⁰ Such a famous actor as Vasilii Kachalov and singer Valeriia Barsova even attached a list of materials they required to restore their dachas, which included nails and light bulbs.³¹ In turn, in late 1945, another group of actors asked deputy chairman of Sovnarkom Aleksei Kosygin to make sure that they were supplied with enamelled baths and lavatory pans for their apartments.³² And a group of leading ballet dancers, including Galina Ulanova and Maia Plisetskaia, asked Stalin personally to arrange government support for building their apartment block in the centre of Moscow.³³

Thus, in the postwar period, the number of requests for material benefits sent directly to Party/state officials by individual artists and writers was on a different scale compared with the 1930s. These requests were clearly stimulated by the deprivation of the postwar period. But they also revealed the cultural elite's feeling of being entitled to a certain standard of living which had been shattered by the war and which they wanted to restore as quickly as possible. As a rule, the authors of the requests stated their titles, awards and other achievements in an effort to strengthen their case.

The attitude of Party/state officials to these requests naturally varied. Even in the 1930s there were not enough goods to satisfy all those who, by virtue of belonging to the Soviet intelligentsia, were entitled to them. In the postwar years, shortages became even more acute, whereas the demands of cultural figures increased. Thus, the competition for privileged access intensified. Two main criteria clearly determined whether the requests meet with success or failure – fame and residence in the centre (Moscow and Leningrad). In most cases, the two were combined. The speed with which the requests from famous persons were treated can provoke nothing but astonishment. For instance, on 5 May 1952 the writer Fedor Gladkov wrote to the Council of Ministers requesting a two-room apartment in Moscow for his son. The Council's favourable resolution was issued on 9 May and the Moscow city soviet allocated a particular apartment on 28 June.³⁴ However, not everyone was so fortunate. Whereas luminaries from Moscow and Leningrad all received the requested cars, light bulbs and baths, the above-mentioned Ukrainian actor was refused spare parts for his boat.

Indeed, in the postwar period cultural figures from the provinces complained to the Party/state leadership to the effect that, as the main bulk of resources was concentrated in Moscow and Leningrad, they were left in an inferior position.³⁵

³⁰ GARF, fund 5446, op. 47, delo 2168, ll. 55–7.

³¹ GARF, fund 5446, op. 47, delo 2166, l. 29.

³² *Ibid.*, l. 32.

³³ GARF, fund 5446, op. 86, delo 2440, l. 32.

³⁴ GARF, fund 5446, op. 86, delo 2439, l. 95–99. In contrast, in the 1930s requests from cultural institutions were processed much more slowly. For instance, a request from the Bolshoi Theatre for flats for its leading ballet dancers in Dec. 1937 was first dealt with in April 1938 (GARF, fund 5446, op. 22, delo 1415, ll. 3–12).

³⁵ Archival documents reveal that whereas in the 1930s the cultural intelligentsia in Moscow and Leningrad became a highly privileged group, the situation of their colleagues in the provinces often

Thus, in 1951 the artistic director of the Drogobuzhskii regional philharmonic orchestra in Ukraine wrote directly to Stalin: 'One needs to admit openly that the All-Union Committee for Artistic Matters is largely concerned with managing artistic affairs in Moscow and Leningrad and knows nothing about what is happening in Simferopol' and Astrakhan'. The author of the letter was also of the opinion that the Committee was solely concerned with financial and material matters and was not interested in the ideological side of work. He noted that especially 'in western Ukraine and Belarus there are serious ideological problems on the cultural front', but the Committee completely neglected the area.³⁶

In addition to the fact that during the postwar period individual cultural figures were busy lobbying political leaders for help to restore and further improve their way of life which had been shattered by the war, another development which took place in that period proved to be extremely significant for the relationship between the Party and the cultural intelligentsia and within the ranks of the cultural intelligentsia itself. This was the finalisation of control by the Unions' leaders over the functioning of the creative professions and their ability to secure a highly privileged material position for themselves, the maintenance of which no longer required regular appeals to top Party/state officials.

From the late 1940s onwards, members of the secretariats of the creative Unions began to lobby the government in order to secure their higher material rewards in the form of very high salaries. The new benefits were to be connected to a particular position, whose occupant would change with time, rather than to be justified by the personal achievement of an individual cultural figure and/or determined by the strength of his personal connection with a certain Party/state official. Another request was for the introduction of a sharp differentiation in fees paid for different types of cultural product. At the same time, members of the secretariats and boards tried to ensure that they would have a virtual monopoly in the generation of products falling into the most highly rewarded category.

Thus in 1948 leading administrators in the Unions of Soviet Writers and Composers lobbied the government for the approval of specially determined salaries for themselves. These salaries were much higher than had so far been paid. In April 1948 the Council of Ministers approved fifteen such salaries (*personal'nye oklady*) for 'leading workers of the Union of Soviet Composers' and in November the number of people entitled to such salaries increased to twenty-five.³⁷ In May 1948 a number of people in top administrative positions in the Soviet Writers' Union were allotted the same privilege. These requests were processed smoothly.

Another request proved to be more controversial. In 1947 the leadership of the Union of Composers appealed to the Council of Ministers complaining that the

remained abysmally bad. See for instance, documents for 1938 on the living conditions of actors in Karaganda (GARF, fund 5446, op. 22, 1413, ll. 1–3) and in Izhevsk (GARF, fund 5446, op. 22, 1407, ll. 41–3). In both instances, Sovnarkom responded to complaints with a vague promise to consider the situation in the next fiscal year.

³⁶ GARF, fund 5446, op. 81, delo 2634, ll. 186–96.

³⁷ GARF fund 5446, op. 50, delo 4266, ll. 73–80, 116, 121.

system established in 1934, under which the Committee for Artistic Matters at the Council of People's Commissars/Council of Ministers set identical rewards, 'without taking into account the ideological and artistic value of the works', was wrong and had to be changed. A new system was in order, which would stimulate the creation of large-scale operas, ballets and dramatic works. In the view of the authors of the appeal, these genres were automatically of the highest ideological and artistic value. Works in other genres could also be assessed ideologically and artistically and be classified as belonging to one of the three categories – outstanding (*vydaiushchiesia*), good and satisfactory. Depending on the category, an author would receive a relevant reward. The power to classify the work would belong to the leadership of the Union.³⁸ The documents show that initially the USSR Ministry of Finances spoke against such pay differentiations and in particular opposed a sharp increase in rewards for large-scale musical work. It referred to a 16 September 1946 resolution of the Council of Ministers banning any direct or indirect increases in salaries and wages. However, the leadership of the Union eventually won the backing of the Council of Ministers, which in May 1950 signed a resolution introducing the differentiation in pay.

In 1949 a similar request was put forward by the leadership of the organisational committee (*orgkomitet*) of the Union of Soviet Artists. It suggested that 'outstanding works of art', especially portraits and statues of Party leaders, should be 'rewarded at a higher level'. Again, after some hesitation and debate over whether a more unified system of reward as had existed from 1934 onwards was more justified, on 22 April 1949 the Council of Ministers signed a resolution favouring the request and dividing works of art into the three categories described.³⁹ The introduction of a differentiated pay scale for literary works was discussed at a meeting between Stalin, Molotov and Andrei Zhdanov and a group of leaders of the Writers Union in May 1947. Significantly, at the meeting, Stalin supported the idea of introducing a new system of reward in the face of the opposition of the Finance Ministry.⁴⁰

The execution of portraits and statues of Party leaders normally took place in response to orders (*zakazy*) from the government. Members of the Artists' Union's *orgkomitet* decided to ensure the maxim material reward for their work by monopolising control over government orders. In November 1950, two leading sculptors, Evgenii Vychetich and S. S. Valerius, submitted for consideration by the Council of Ministers a draft resolution on 'the establishment of a state creative sculpture studio under the auspices of the Committee for Artistic Matters' to carry out the most important government orders for the execution of statues of Party leaders. Needless to say the two sculptors saw themselves as being in charge of the studio. The Council of Ministers found the idea of a studio worthy of consideration but argued that, if a positive response was given, there should be several such studios

³⁸ GARF fund 5446, op. 81, delo 2639, l. 145–6 and op. 50, delo 4266, ll. 31–54.

³⁹ GARF fund 5446, op. 80, delo 2621, ll. 27–32, 62.

⁴⁰ K. Simonov, *Glazami cheloveka moego pokoleniia. Razmyshleniia o I.V. Staline* (Moscow: Kniga, 1990), 108.

rather than one. According to the Council, the original proposal indicated that 'Vychetich is for monopoly without competition'.⁴¹ Indeed he was. However, the creation of several studios did not introduce much competition. They were all controlled by members of the Union's *orgkomitet* and, according to rank-and-file artists, gave the Union's leaders greater power to exploit them.⁴² Similarly, in the sphere of literature it was in the late 1940s that members of the secretariat of the Soviet Writers' Union established full control over editorial boards of periodicals and editorial councils of literary publishing houses.⁴³

In sum, for the cultural figures who became top administrators in the Unions the period between 1946 and the early 1950s was not 'the darkest period of state interference' in their activities. Instead, it was the period when they themselves acquired very broad powers to control cultural production as well as the distribution of benefits and privileges among members of their professions. These cultural figures consolidated their positions as members of the highest state elite. No wonder that for some less fortunate members of the creative professions, as the above-mentioned artistic director of the Drogobuzhskii regional philharmonic orchestra, it seemed that for the Party/state leadership the satisfaction of the demands of top cultural figures for privilege and power took precedence over ideological matters.

The reaction of the rank and file

By the late 1940s the organisation of cultural activities took shape, in which professional success and failure, as well as the material wellbeing of the majority of the rank and file in the creative professions were determined not so much by the dictatorship of the Party, but by the dictatorship of the Unions' secretariats. In order to advance their careers and at times simply to maintain a very basic existence, ordinary members had to seek patronage from top leaders of the Unions. Such a situation was strongly resented by many ordinary members of the Unions and they sought Party/state intervention (usually unsuccessfully) to reduce the powers of the Unions' leaders.

The criticism of the powers of the Unions' leaders first surfaced in 1938. In that year the Politburo issued an unpublished resolution on the abuse of privileges which indicated that the Party was concerned that the Soviet intelligentsia was becoming corrupted.⁴⁴ Throughout Soviet history, ordinary citizens regularly used official campaigns to undermine the positions of those whom they resented or with whom they competed, alerting the political leadership to the fact that their adversaries were allegedly guilty of what the Party was campaigning against. Cultural figures were no exception. Thus, in 1938, the Soviet press reflected objections voiced by a number of writers over the fact that individual members of the presidium of the Writers' Union had concentrated too much power in their hands and were trying to use this

⁴¹ GARF fund 5446, op. 81, delo 2634, ll. 71–81.

⁴² GARF fund 5446, op. 87, delo 1548, 27.

⁴³ GARF, fund 5456, op. 87, delo 1306, l. 83.

⁴⁴ Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism*, 106.

power to increase their privileges.⁴⁵ However, those early complaints were made against individual cultural figures rather than against the whole system of the functioning of the Unions. Similarly, the anti-cosmopolitan campaign of the postwar period was used by some rank-and-file members of the creative Unions to attack the Unions' leaders, accusing them of being of Jewish origin and of wanting to undermine Soviet cultural life by the unjust distribution of money and other material rewards.⁴⁶

Even greater discontent over the position of the Union leaders was articulated after the Nineteenth Party Congress in October 1952 and the subsequent death of Stalin. At the Congress, the Central Committee secretary and Politburo member Georgii Malenkov, appointed by Stalin to deliver the main report, argued, in relation to economy, that the practice of concealing shortcomings should be stopped and that criticism and self-criticism should be encouraged to combat mismanagement.⁴⁷ Malenkov's speech marked the beginning of a new campaign against mismanagement in various institutions, including those in the cultural world. Plenums held by the secretariats/*orgkomitet* of the creative Unions in the aftermath of the Party Congress heard leading members of the Unions criticised for the abuse of power. In the first months of 1953, the press mounted a campaign against 'bureaucrats' in the creative Unions who were accused of using their positions to protect their own interests and establish control over the distribution of and reward for cultural production.⁴⁸ The press reports give an impression of a campaign orchestrated and controlled from above, simply aimed at further increasing Party control over the functioning of the Unions. However, archival material presents a somewhat different picture. It seems that the press reports in fact adequately reflected the frustrations of rank and file members of the creative Unions, who effectively used the opportunities opened up by Malenkov's speech to ensure the discussion of issues which they, for some time, had been finding extremely disturbing. In fact, as will be shown later, the Party and government leadership failed to take any significant measures in response to the criticism 'from below' unleashed by the official campaign against mismanagement.

Although they used political accusations fashionable at the time, rank-and-file complainants of that period offered a more sophisticated analysis of the super-privileged position of the Unions' leaders than merely accusing various individuals of being political saboteurs of Soviet cultural life as had been the case in the past. They managed to offer a critical appraisal of the system of the distribution of power

⁴⁵ Jack F. Matlock Jr., 'The "Governing Organs" of the Union of Soviet Writers', *American Slavonic and East European Review*, 15 (Oct. 1956), 393.

⁴⁶ See Kiril Tomoff's article in this issue.

⁴⁷ Scholars have argued that the Nineteenth Party Congress indicated a pressure for reform in the highest echelons of the party. Thus, in fact, de-Stalinisation had begun before Stalin's death. See Yoram Gorlizki, 'Party Revivalism and the Death of Stalin', *Slavic Review*, 54, 1 (Spring 1995), 1–22.

⁴⁸ For a detailed discussion of the press campaign against the leaders of the Orgkomitet of the Union of Soviet Artists, see Susan Emily Reid, 'Destalinisation and the Remodernisation of Soviet Art: The Search for a Contemporary Realism,' Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1996, 114–22.

and privileges itself within the creative professions. Thus in June 1953, a Moscow painter, Vladimir Gaposhkin, wrote a letter to the Party leaders Malenkov and Klement Voroshilov and to the Minister of Culture P. K. Ponomarenko with complaints about the extent of the powers of Vychetich, Dmitrii Nalbandian, Aleksandr Gerasimov, M. G. Manizer, Nikolai Tomskii, Georgii Motovilov and several other artists. Gaposhkin emphasised that all of them were members of the *orgkomitet* of the Union of Soviet Artists. They were the main beneficiaries of the introduction of a highly differentiated reward system for artistic work, as it was they who were most active in creating statues and painting portraits of Party leaders. They were also the main beneficiaries of the creation of the studios of the Committee for Artistic Matters, discussed above. Gaposhkin complained that these artists 'intercepted all main state government orders', exploited young artists, forced female artists into unwanted sexual relationships and, in effect, 'turned their studios into large private business enterprises'. They created 'large personal apparatuses, including managers (*upravliaiushchie*), solicitors (*iuristy*), many artists, sculptors, architects, technical support staff, etc.'. Some Union leaders completely ceased to do any work themselves, but instead put their names on the product executed by hired personnel, whose pay they themselves determined, keeping it to an absolute minimum.⁴⁹ Gaposhkin maintained that the whole atmosphere in the Union was more appropriate to a capitalist rather than socialist society, as leaders of the Union were often called 'bosses,' whereas artists whom they hired were referred to as 'negroes'. In order to survive under such conditions, many artists, particularly those who were young, 'had to develop not their artistic talents' but talents for securing influential patrons, commercialism and dodginess (*lovkachestvo*).⁵⁰

At approximately the same time a similar letter was sent by the poet Il'ia Sel'vinskii to Malenkov, complaining about the situation in the USSR Writers' Union. In the 1930s Sel'vinskii, a very well known, prolific poet, became a member of the emerging privileged cultural elite and together with a selected group of literary figures received a luxury apartment in Lavrushinskii pereulok. But with the increasing differentiation in the distribution of privileges and power in the 1940s, Sel'vinskii, who did not belong to the secretariat or any other ruling body of the Writers' Union, began to lose out and he deeply resented the situation. Describing the functioning of the Writers' Union, Sel'vinskii observed: 'Its atmosphere is far from the refreshing atmosphere of a creative contest (*tvorcheskoe sorevnovanie*) of masters of socialist culture; in fact this is the atmosphere of open bourgeois competition [*burzhuaznaia konkurentsia*]'.

He further complained that members of the Union secretariat, whom he called 'literary bosses', 'control and manage everything [*zapravliaiut*]' in the Writers' Union. They sat on the editorial boards of the journals and publishing houses and on the committees for the Stalin prize. 'With a few exceptions, the core of the secretariat of the Soviet Writers' Union acts as a literary concern which wants to strangle its non-organised competitors'. It became

⁴⁹ GARF, fund 5446, op. 87, delo 1306, l. 21.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

impossible to publish critical reviews of these people's work. Instead their product, and that alone, was constantly advertised in the Soviet media. According to Sel'vinskii, because poets writing on peasant themes were strongly represented in the secretariat, only those rank and file poets who explored the same theme could flourish. 'All other trends in poetry are strangled.' The Soviet Writers' Union, in its existing form, turned into an obstacle in the way of the development of Soviet literature, Sel'vinskii concluded. He was not afraid to name the culprit of this situation – the CPSU Central Committee Department for Agitation and Propaganda, which from the 1940s onwards began 'to single out a dozen of writers with connections [*so sviaziami*] and turned them into literary bosses, putting them in charge of all spheres of literary work'.⁵¹ Using the fashionable political jargon of the time, Sel'vinskii urged the Party/state leadership to launch a struggle against 'personality cults' which leaders of the Union managed to create around themselves.

Despite the fact that the complaints were part of the campaign orchestrated by the Party leadership, little was done to curb the powers of 'cultural bosses'. Investigations were usually launched and pages of reports were produced analysing the situation in the Unions. Reports acknowledged the validity of some accusations and indicated particular concern on the part of the Party over the ability of some cultural figures to establish powerful groups, factions and networks which, in fact, tightly controlled creative professions, without necessarily relying on the guidance of the Party.⁵² Yet, little, if anything, was ever done to change the situation. Apart from arrests or dismissals of individual members, procedures which the political leadership in most cases did not want to practise against well-established cultural figures, no mechanism existed for addressing problems in the Unions identified by complainants from below. Even if the validity of the complaints was acknowledged, a request to investigate the situation and take the necessary measures (*priniat' mery*) was normally addressed to leaders of the Unions themselves, that is, to the very objects of criticism. Thus a report prepared by the RSFSR Ministry of the State Control for the USSR Council of Ministers concerning Gaposhkin's complaint reiterated the complainant's wording and accused the 'bosses' of the artistic world of 'using hired labour.' It also stated that 'from their top positions of authority in the creative unions, they ['cultural bosses'] subverted socialist principles in organising the work of the majority of artists and sculptors in order to remove obstacles in the way of their excessive personal enrichment.'⁵³ After the Council had acknowledged that Gaposhkin's complaint raised serious issues, the Ministry of State Control sent a letter demanding an investigation to none other but the chairman of the board of the Soviet Union of Artists.⁵⁴ He was hardly an impartial person fit to conduct such an investigation.

The powers and privileges of the members of the governing organs of the Unions, as described by Gaposhkin and Sel'visnkii, continued to provoke criticism

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, ll. 53–4.

⁵² GARF, fund 5446, op. 87, delo 1306, ll. 20–6.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, l. 21.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, ll. 24–6.

from rank and file artists,⁵⁵ becoming one of the most important themes of debate among cultural figures in the *perestroika* period. In 1986, the newspaper of the Moscow branch of the USSR Writers' Union, *Moskovskii literator*, published an article under the title 'Are the Writers Happy?' (*Dovol'ny li pisateli?*).⁵⁶ Although acknowledging that most members of the Union enjoyed privileges unavailable to ordinary Soviet people, the article maintained that the majority of writers were in fact very unhappy. This stemmed primarily from the fact that some writers, namely those in the leading administrative posts, enjoyed incomparably more benefits and power than rank and file members of the Unions and in effect exercised monopolistic control over literary publishing in the USSR. What annoyed most writers was not so much that on behalf of the Party the Unions' leaders prevented the publication of works by dissident writers, but that their own works dominated the Soviet publishing industry and literary periodicals regardless of their artistic merit, and that they controlled the distribution of financial rewards and other material benefits to members of the intelligentsia. Rather than wanting to abolish the generously funded Unions, their liberal members who supported Gorbachev's reforms often simply wanted to take the administration of those Unions into their own hands and make the governing organs of the Unions more accountable to rank-and-file members. That this was the case can be seen from the activities of the 'Writers for *Perestroika*' Committee (popularly known as the April Committee). It was set up in 1989 by a small group of writers from Moscow. Its immense popularity among rank and file writers (within the first four days of its existence, it acquired 322 members) stemmed from the fact that the committee's chairman, the writer Anatolii Pristavkin, well known for his anti-Stalinist novel *A Small Golden Cloud Spent the Night*, announced that he had no intention of disbanding the Writers' Union. On the contrary, the main aim of his organisation was to deprive 'cultural bosses' of their monopoly of power and make the Writers' Union more responsive to the needs of its rank and file members.⁵⁷

Conclusions

Why did the Soviet political leadership allot to a small group of cultural figures such broad powers and privileges? As Sel'vinskii's letter indicates, some rank and file members of creative professions believed that it reflected a conscious move on the part of the Party leadership. Sel'vinskii might have been right. Stalin told the President of the Academy of Sciences, V. Komarov, during their meeting at the end of the war that 'the Soviet intelligentsia, through its creative work, made a valuable contribution to the defeat of [our] enemy'.⁵⁸ Therefore, a reward for the contribution, acknowledged by the leader, was to be expected. Indeed, there is evidence that

⁵⁵ For the attack on the privileges from the tribune of the Second Congress of Soviet Writers, see Matlock, "'Governing Organs'", 394.

⁵⁶ *Moskovskii literator*, 28 Nov. 1986.

⁵⁷ Garrard, *Inside the Soviet Writers' Union*, 230–2.

⁵⁸ Quoted in Nikolai Kremontsov, *Stalinist Science* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 99.

in 1947 Stalin firmly sided with members of the cultural elite, when they requested new powers and privileges, against the Ministry of Finance, which opposed the innovations.⁵⁹ Selected representatives of all groups of the Soviet intelligentsia seemed to have benefited. Thus, the postwar period witnessed a significant increase in the powers and privileges of members of the presidium of the USSR Academy of Sciences and of directors of academic institutes. The new powers and privileges were very similar to those acquired by the leaders of the creative Unions.⁶⁰ According to Nikolai Kremontsov, by 1948 the powers of the academic institutes' directors were such that they were often able to use ideologically motivated meetings organised throughout the Academy following the August 1948 session of VASKHNIL to reaffirm their own control over academia and to achieve 'institutional and disciplinary expansion'.⁶¹ It is therefore not surprising that in the period of *perestroika*, many members of the presidium of the Academy of Sciences behaved in a way similar to members of the secretariats of the creative Unions. In August 1991, 'The Academy's leaders were . . . along with the conservative heads of the Writers' Union, among the very few intellectuals in the dying Soviet Union who sided with the old order'.⁶²

It seems that what happened with top representatives of the cultural and scientific intelligentsia in the postwar period was part of what Vera Dunham called the 'Big Deal' between the Party/state leadership and some segments of Soviet society.⁶³ She observed that, in the postwar period, harsh ideological and political crackdown was not the only policy pursued by the state. Repression was accompanied by attempts to court those groups in society whom the regime saw as important partners in the rebuilding of the country. Dunham identified one particular group, which she described as 'middle-class' professionals, particularly engineers, doctors and middle-level administrators. She described these people as being 'below the top officials and the cultural elite, yet above the world of plain clerks and factory workers, of farm labourers and salesgirls'.⁶⁴ However, it seems that, in fact, members of the cultural elite who occupied top administrative posts in relevant organisations also participated in the deal. This deal proved to be a great success – the administrative apex of the creative professions turned out to be among the strongest supporters of the regime and of Stalin's policies, even at the time when these policies began to be attacked by the new leadership of the Communist Party. Indeed, for members of the ruling bodies of the Unions, the postwar years were remembered not for the harsh ideological crackdown but as the golden age when they finalised their immense

⁵⁹ See Simonov, *Glazami cheloveka moego pokoleniia*, 108–9.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 99–100.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 225–6, 280–5.

⁶² Loren R. Graham, 'How Willing Are Scientists to Reform Their Own Institutions?' in Michael David-Fox and Gyorgy Peteri, eds., *Academia in Upheaval. Origins, Transfers, and Transformations of the Communist Academic Regime in Russia and East Central Europe* (Westport: Bergin and Garvey, 2001), 255–274, 267.

⁶³ Vera S. Dunham, *In Stalin's Time. Middle-class Values in Soviet Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 3–23.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 5.

powers and privileges and, in effect, obtained considerable autonomy from the Party. But, from the point of view of the regime's stability, there was a serious downside to the policy of allowing selected members of the cultural intelligentsia to join the highest ranks of the state elite. The powers and privileges of 'cultural bosses' antagonised ordinary members of the intelligentsia and stimulated, among other things, their opposition towards the Soviet system.