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AN ANALYSIS OF INTERPRETATIONS OF F.M. DOSTOEVSKY'S THE DEVILS BY SOVIET LITERARY CRITICISM DURING GLASNOST (1985-1991)

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A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Arts, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, in fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Russian Studies.

Johannesburg, 1995

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis is entirely my own work and has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other university.

Date: 27/01/95

ABSTRACT

This thesis undertakes to examine the interdependence of ideology and literary scholarship, in particular regarding the legacy of F.M. Dostoevsky, in the Soviet Union; and to investigate the reflection of political and ideological agenda in Soviet literary criticism's interpretations of Dostoevsky's novel, The Devils during the era of glasnost, 1985-1991. I shall isolate, identify and describe the principal ideological trends reflected in literary critiques and analyses of this novel, published in the Soviet Union during this specific period of time.

My thesis will build on and develop previous research conducted around the analysis of ideological trends in the Soviet Union, through a study of literature and official literary criticism. Western commentators, such as E.J. Simmons, V. Seduro, and H. Mondry have demonstrated the correlation between general shifts in Party domestic and international policy and the ideological viewpoints expressed in literature and literary criticism. They have found it to be a valid practice to analyse certain political, social and ideological factors in the Soviet Union through a close study of literature and literary criticism. In continuing this research, I shall demonstrate that Soviet literary criticism during glasnost could still be regarded as a mirror of political and ideological changes in society, and that Soviet criticism's interpretations of Dostoevsky's The Devils could once again be used to help distinguish, delineate and clarify the ideological trends that existed in Soviet society during this era.

I shall begin my analysis with a consideration of the effects of Gorbachev's glasnost reforms on Soviet culture in general, and on literary critical practice in particular; and of the role that literary criticism played in Soviet society during this era. I shall then proceed to a brief historical overview of interpretations of The Devils by Russian and Soviet literary critics, from its publication until the eve of the glasnost reforms. This will demonstrate both the manner in which literary criticism has mirrored ideological trends in the USSR, and the validity of centring my research on this novel. From there, I shall turn to an examination of how interpretations offered by Soviet literary critics of The Devils, as well as attitudes

expressed by them regarding the writer's world outlook, reflected the ideological trends that existed in Soviet society during glasnost. The interpretations to be analysed will be taken from a broad range of Soviet literary periodicals, monographs, and discussions published in the Soviet Union between 1985 and 1992.

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1. INTRODUCTION

This thesis undertakes to examine the interdependence of ideology and literary scholarship, in particular regarding the legacy of F.M. Dostoevsky, in the Soviet Union; and to investigate the reflection of political and ideological agenda in Soviet literary criticism's interpretations of Dostoevsky's novel, The Devils during the era of glasnost, 1985-1991.

Past research has shown that ideological trends within Russia and the Soviet Union are reflected in literary criticism, and so can be isolated and examined through an analysis of critics' interpretations of works of literature. As T. Bennett points out in Formalism and Marxism, the way in which a literary text has been appropriated is determined "not only by the operations of criticism upon it but also, and more radically, by the whole material, institutional, political, and ideological context"[1] within which these operations are carried out. The unique role that literary criticism has played in Russia and the Soviet Union has meant that it has acted as a mirror of contemporary conditions, and that the periodisation of Soviet social, political, and economic development has been clearly reflected in literary criticism. This phenomenon has been of great interest to Western sovietologists. E.J. Simmons declares that the special nature of Soviet literature with its "social commanding"[2] suggests its usefulness for the study of social patterns and ideological trends; while at the recent Conference on Literature and Perestroika held in Louisiana, Denmark, in March 1988, it was pointed out by M. Magnusson that the important role that all forms of literature played in Soviet society as a platform for attitudes and viewpoints, meant that "in the West, social scientists have drawn increasingly upon these "soft data" sources in their analyses of Soviet society"[3].

In this thesis, we understand by "ideology" the definition given by A. Zinoviev in

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[1] Cf. Selden, R., 1984, p. 83.

[2] Simmons, E.J., 1953, p. 25.

[3] Magnusson, M., "Foreword", in M. Magnusson (ed.), 1989, p. 1.

The Reality of Communism it is "'a definite teaching about the world, human society, mankind, and about vitally important features in people's lives'"[4]. He says that the task of ideology is to organize and standardize people's consciousness and to control them by forming a definite type of consciousness useful to the ruler: people are programmed to think and act in a particular way. The ideological apparatus of the state has the function of adapting individuals to the norms and goals of society by constructing universal values, which will create solidarity, order, and stability through a consensus of motivation of actors in the system. Ideology, which often invokes symbolic myths of race, class, and nation, makes obedience to existing political institutions appear to be a rational choice.[5]

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[4]Brom, L., "Aleksandr Zinov'ev's Vision of Soviet Ideology", in E. Thompson (ed.), 1991, p. 108.

[5] Marxist-Leninists consider the question of ideology and emphasise it in a different manner and with a different attitude, in three instances. Firstly, following Marx's own writings, Marxists, and the subsequent Marxist-Leninists, attacked the use of ideology by capitalist governments. Marxism asserts that a class society is held together not only by force, but also, and more importantly, by ideology. "Ideology is defined by Marx and Engels as reflecting social, political, and economic life in such a way that distortion, illusions, and a 'false consciousness' of the social world are produced" (Swingewood, A., 1979, p.60) so that it functions as an important element in achieving social cohesion and political legitimacy. An intellectual stratum appears in the ruling class whose social function is to produce ideas which underpin social order and consensus, and combat social theories that challenge its authority. Secondly, in their struggle against the capitalist state, Marxist-Leninists developed their own ideology, which exercised an important motivational factor in social change, by shaping man's consciousness and helping to direct his will and praxis towards correct action. Thirdly, upon the establishment of the first Marxist-Leninist regime, ideology was immediately recognised as an indispensable factor in its continuation and success. Marx believed that ideology counteracts man's anti-social instincts, and provides direction and purpose to his daily activities. Marxists rationalize their tight control over all aspects of culture by claiming that in an socialist state, the ideological superstructure must necessarily reflect the socialist economic base. "The Great Soviet Encyclopedia (3rd edition) defines socialist ideology as the theoretically elaborated consciousness of a class which opposes the reactionary ideology of the bourgeoisie....Spreading through society and adapting itself to the level of mass consciousness, ideology acts on that consciousness and influences social psychology. Under socialism, the Marxist-Leninist scientific philosophy fulfils a "dominant role" and rallies the entire society around the working class and its party to consolidate and further develop socialism"(Brom, L. "Aleksandr Zinoviev's vision of Soviet ideology", in E. Thompson (ed), 1991, p. 107). The dominant ideological apparatus has thus continuously expressed the idea and values of the ruling class, controlling and regulating the behaviour of system units for the general needs of the system, correcting disruptive tendencies, and deviant behaviour, and promoting harmonious co-operation. Ideology in the Soviet Union has been such that any change of the system must be harmonized with the ideology, or the appearance of the ideology must be altered in such a way as to justify the change of system. 'Hence, "the relationship between ideology and reality cannot be categorized in terms of truth or falsehood, but in terms of the extent to which a given ideology serves the purpose of conditioning people's consciousness"'.

1.1. LITERARY CRITICISM AND IDEOLOGY IN RUSSIA AND THE SOVIET UNION

Many Western scholars have pointed to the unique role of litterateurs and the distinct function of literary scholarship in Russia and the Soviet Union. V. Erlich asserts that twentieth-century Russian criticism has stood apart from the international process owing both to national traditions and distinctive culturally determined habits of mind, and to political pressures and stringencies, "the intellectual quarantine"[6]. T. Proctor speaks of the tradition that arose in the nineteenth century and which gave Russian literature its distinct colouration and significant place in Russian culture, thus differentiating Russian literary criticism from that of the West: "The Russian attitude toward and expectations of literature came to be rather different from those of Western Europe, and peculiar demands were laid upon literature, upon the writer, and upon the critic"[7]. This tradition was initiated by Vissarion Belinsky. His theories were further developed by such critics as Chernyshevsky, Dobrolyubov, Pisarev, and Mikhailovsky, who have been called "civic", "utilitarian", "sociological", or "radical" critics; and then adapted by Soviet critics for their own particular needs. Indeed, Soviet literary criticism has proudly claimed descent from these so-called Revolutionary Democrats, and Belinsky's name has continued to be cited as an authority in literary matters.

The school of literary criticism initiated by Belinsky in the 1840s, was based on a close link between literature and society. It invested literary criticism with a sense of social responsibility, political commitment, and moral vision. Like the rest of the intelligentsia, which emerged in the 19th century, literary critics were caught by a desire to save the Russian people from suffering, injustice and slavery, to create a better society. Berdyaev asserts that the phenomenon of the intelligentsia is badly understood in the West, where they are lumped together with what are there called "intellectuals". He sees them as completely exceptional, a spiritual-social

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[6]Erlich, V., 1975, p. 3.

[7]Proctor, T., 1969, p. 17.

formation existing only in Russia. "It is not a social class, but an idealistic class, a class of people, living not in the present, but in the future, and sometimes the past, and showing an extraordinary capacity for ideological enthusiasm."[8] The intelligentsia's desire to expose the social problems of Russia, coupled with the existence of a press censorship that sought to limit the dissemination of political, philosophical and social ideas, obliging them to disguise their views, meant that publicist literary criticism acquired enormous significance in Russia during the second half of the 19th century. The roles of social and literary critic were combined. Belinsky and his successors worked on the basis of the conviction that the existent society was not satisfactorily organised, and so should be altered using all available means, including literature. Literature, they believed, can act as a means of enlightenment as it has a direct effect upon the ideas and morals of society- it '"is the vital spring from which all human sentiments and conceptions percolate into society"'[9]; and should be used to the service of the common good of the nation, by expressing, explaining, and judging reality, thus arousing dissatisfaction with the current social order. A work of art had to justify its existence, by asking questions and attempting to answer them, "by meeting a recognizable social need, by offering a timely and progressive message"[10]. Literary criticism became an instrument of social analysis, of the search for answers to current social problems, and of propaganda for socio-political solutions. The literary criticism practised by the Revolutionary Democrats, came to be referred to as "publicist criticism", or "tendentious criticism", where tendentiousness ("tendentsioznost") is the clearly expressed ideational orientation of a work of art, the obvious reflection in it of the ideological position of the artist.

This ideological literary criticism presents certain clearly distinguishable characteristics, attitudes and methodologies. It is based on the assumption that

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[8] Berdyaev, N., "Russkaya Idea", in Voprosy Literatury, no. 1, 1990, p. 90.

[9] Belinsky, V., "Thoughts and Notes on Russian Culture", in R.E. Matlaw (ed.), 1962, p. 9.

[10] Erlich, V., 1975, p. 5.

literature is about life, that valuable literary texts "tell truths- about the period which produced them, about the world in general or about human nature- and that in doing so they express the particular perceptions, the individual insights of their authors"[11]. The text is seen as a way of arriving at something anterior to it: the convictions of the author, or his experience as part of that society at that particular time. It is further believed that literature can influence life, not just in its cultural aspect, but in its political and social aspects too. The artist is given the role of a prophet, a seer, and even a leader of social movements, who should attempt to lead the reader through his creation towards a specific idea and conclusion. Every work of art has a bias, a tendentsiya, and the writer is morally obliged to ensure that his tendentsiya is directed towards the common good. The critic therefore examines not just literature, but life and men as well, and he draws conclusions not just about the work of art, but also about society. His criticism is directed more towards what the work stands for, the attitude to life that it expresses, than towards the work itself. Art purely for its own sake is seen as sterile and useless, equated with inertia, and even identified with a reactionary ideological position. The critic, who sees himself as a pedagogue, interprets a literary work for the public with the aim of strengthening, neutralizing, or weakening its effect on the reader, depending on the ideology it expresses. He is an intermediary between the artist and society. The critic looks to the artist for illumination when the views expressed are in accordance with his own, but if they are not, he denies the authority of the artist, or interposes himself between the artist and the public so as to impose upon the public not the artist's work, but his own vision of it. Of paramount importance is that the public be lead in the right direction. Thus, art is put to the service of the critic's ideology.

The Marxists found much in the basic tenets of the Revolutionary Democrats which they could develop further. They adopted their view of literature as an instrument, a means for effecting the necessary changes to society. Because a work of art is comprehensible to the masses, it was considered to have the potential to be a

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[11]Belsey, C., 1980, p. 2.

powerful weapon for the organisation of society. Its task must be to give an example of a true citizen, to inspire the people to join the struggle, to help build a Communist society. When a writer did not adequately carry out his role as leader, it was up to the critic to supplant him in it. Literature was seen as being only as good as its ability to influence the people in the necessary spirit, and its artistic relevance continued to be secondary to the ideological impact it exerted on man, that is, to its effectiveness in advancing the concerns of the Party. Literary criticism, according to the Marxists, must be guided by principles which ensure a correct attitude to literature amongst the readers, and which contribute to both promoting progressive views and criticizing reactionary ideas. Literary criticism must be partisan, as it has a vital role to play in ideological struggle. Lenin introduced the concept of partiinost, or party-mindedness, party spirit, to literature- "the idea that the Party may use literature for whatever purpose it may think fit at a given moment, and that it is the duty of any true Soviet writer to accept Party guidance without question"[12]. According to E.J. Simmons, it was this Leninist notion of partiinost that inevitably disassociated the Soviet intellectual from his non-Marxist western or pre-revolutionary Russian counterpart[13].

The ideologically tendentious nature of literary criticism continued to be a characteristic feature of Soviet literary criticism. During the first decade after the revolution, culture remained outside the tight control of the Party, but the intelligentsia continued to see its role as that of guiding the people towards social harmony. "The freest minds were fettered by the self-consciousness of an age which took itself with wonderful seriousness, believing that the destiny of mankind lay in its hands and that upon the articulate members of the population devolved the duty of formulating and directing the ideals of all men"[14]. The growth of totalitarianism and increasing domination of Party ideology meant that literary criticism steadily became an integral part of the Soviet media and increasingly

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[12]Hayward, M., 1963, p. 15.

[13]Simmons, E.J., 1953, p. 25.

[14]Muchnic, H., "Literature in the NEP Period", in M. Hayward & L. Labedz (eds.), 1963, p. 42.

involved in the process of ideological struggle. G. A. Hosking refers to the Bolsheviks as masters of mass propaganda, who accorded priority to communication with the public and used every means available to project specific information, a certain outlook, and a distinct ideology. This included literature and literary criticism. As the critic M. Serebrianski stated in 1938: '"Artistic truth is the ability to tell everything necessary, but to tell it correctly, that is, from a definite, Bolshevik point of view." (Literaturnye Ocherki, p. 231)'[15]. Soviet critics elaborated on the Marxist theory of literature, with Lenin and later Stalin as the "authorities", in order to justify in terms of historical materialism the absolute Party control of literature and its use as an instrument to support their policies. Under Stalin's rule, literature and literary criticism, like every other aspect of cultural life in the Soviet Union, became a component part of a great, unified Communist mechanism. "All forms of art must in every way help raise the mass consciousness and organize the mass will, mind, and enthusiasm for socialist construction and the great social reforms being carried out..."[16]. It must strive to organize not only the opinions of people, but also their knowledge, thoughts, feelings and dispositions. Critics praised or attacked writers as supporters or opponents of a 'correct' ideology, that is, of Party doctrine. Far more was expected of critics than to merely refrain from openly criticizing the Soviet regime- they were expected to strike a positive note under threat of being branded a class enemy.

In the 1930s, the methodological pluralism that had permitted apolitical and aesthetic tendencies, was forcibly eliminated, and the accredited version of Marxist criticism became the sole acceptable methodology. Approaches such as that of the Formalist school were viewed as highly undesirable because of their view of literature as a distinct and independent field of human activity, rather than a reflection of society and ideology. Subsequently "formalism" became a multi-purpose term of abuse, being loosely applied to works to express disapproval and to stigmatize anything that deviated from the Party norm, with the implication of

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[15]Quoted by Simmons, E.J., 1953, p. 13.

[16]Borland, H., 1950, p. 23.

cultural sabotage, counter-revolution, evidence of an unhealthy western influence. Apolitical art was useless and therefore undesirable: '"The Soviet system ca..t tolerate the education of youth in a spirit of indifference to Soviet politics, to ideology, with a couldn't-care-less attitude"' (quote from the decree passed by the Central Committee on 14 August 1946, which for years laid down the direction that literature was to take. This was the start of Zhdanov's campaign, the most repressive era as regards Soviet culture)[17]. O. Poptsov at the 1988 Louisiana Conference spoke of how public organisations in the Soviet Union were transformed into the conductors of the bureaucratic apparat's ideas. Instead of confronting the views of a given social group with the views of the governing structures, the leaders of the public structures simply passed on the ideas of the bureaucracy to the masses. "A theory was developed and put into practice: you exist in the world not in order to provide ideas, but in order to realize the ideas given to you by the State, by which was meant the ideas of the apparat"[18].

Even during the years of relative relaxation in Party control, such as the late 1950s, decrees of the Central Committee demanded ideological militancy, and insisted on the primacy of the idea of partiinost. In the Marxist tradition interpretation is "always necessarily engaged in ideological struggle"[19], which leads to "the appropriation and subjugation of the text to a particular interest or value system"[19], so, although criticism could express views that departed from the narrow ideology propagated by the party, it did not lose its ideological basis- it merely expressed an ideology that in some way (limited by the Party controls) opposed that of the state. Changes in the social order in the Soviet Union have been shown to have led to the reinterpretation of works of literature, and to the redefining of the ideological positioning of particular works, but the basic canons and traditions of literary criticism were never successfully challenged and a division

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[17] Quote from the decree passed by the Central Committee on 14 August 1946, which for years laid down the direction that literature was to take. This was the start of the Zhdanov campaign, the most repressive era as regards Soviet culture. (Vickery, W., "Zhdanovism (1946-53)", in M. Hayward & L. Labedz (eds.), 1963, p. 101.)

[18] Poptsov, O., in M. Magnusson (ed.), 1989, p. 87.

[19] Selden, R., 1984, p. 114.

between the 'literary' and the 'extra-literary' was never established. Literary criticism as a science was not permitted to develop in the Soviet regime.[20]

It was expected that the introduction of a policy of "glasnost", which is variously translated as "openness", "publicity", "voicing opinions"[21], would bring about fundamental change in Soviet culture, by removing the enforced adherence of all intellectual activity to the pattern of ideas, beliefs and loyalties prescribed by the Party. However, although there is a generally accepted view that Gorbachev's glasnost "de-ideologized" Soviet culture, there is clear evidence that this was not the case. There was a certain movement towards the breaking of the link between literary criticism and ideology, but this did not gain much momentum or popularity. Russian literary critics appeared to be slow to exercise the new freedom accorded them to choose their own approach, style and mode of expression; and to be unaffected by recent Western literary critical movements. As before, they were inclined to respond directly to the text without any real theory or systematic approach procedure. Shneidman claims that Soviet intellectuals still showed evidence of conditioning through education and upbringing in the shadows of

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[20] Various techniques of this "ideological" criticism have been identified by Western literary theorists. The critic both guides the reader to those aspects most worthy of consideration through the use of selective emphasis, and 'supplements' the text by filling in its gaps at his discretion. Characters are studied as the bearers of ideas, either supporting or opposing the author's political, moral, social, metaphysical views. The critic searches for statements, messages, transmitted through the voices of characters, privileging certain voices above others. Judgments of what and who is good or evil in a work are expressed by the critic in conformity with his own value system and the "message" he wishes to convey through the text. The critic assumes that a text has only one "true" meaning, imposed on it either consciously or unconsciously by the author and sees his task as being to reveal it to the public. All contradictions, ambiguities, and inconsistencies are suppressed in the interest of formulating the writer's ideology. Aesthetics too become a function of ideology, the ordering and collation of elements being regarded by the critic as a function of the 'organising intelligence' behind the work- the author who is an intentional subject and who wishes to convey a message. C. Belsey discusses ideological criticism in general and asserts: "..the quest is for the unity of the work, its coherence, a way of repairing any deficiencies in consistency by reference to the author's philosophy or the contemporary world picture. In this smoothing out of contradictions, closing the text, criticism becomes the accomplice of ideology. Having created a canon of acceptable texts, criticism then provides them with acceptable interpretations, thus effectively censoring any elements in them which come into collision with the dominant ideology" (1980, p. 109). And "If ideology is a set of omissions, gaps, and partial truths, then ideological criticism may be understood as a source of partial analysis of literary texts, concealing and obscuring more than it reveals" (1980, p. 128).

[21] Dejevsky, M., "Glasnost and the Soviet Press" in J. Gaffy & G.A. Hosking (eds.), 1989, p. 27.

Stalinism, but, as has become evident, the roots of this tendency go much deeper. The intelligentsia, despite their newfound freedom, still felt a deep sense of obligation towards the people, whose needs and dissatisfactions must be expressed, and who must be shown the path towards a better society. The accepted role of the Russian intellectual as one of the central figures in the political life of the land did not change under glasnost. At the Louisiana conference in March 1988, K. Bjornager pointed out , that despite the great changes taking place in the cultural and intellectual life of the Soviet Union, as yet a genuine cultural debate had not begun- "a discussion of what culture is for and how it should function in a society.."[22]; O. Poptsov stated that despite the independence of culture from the bureaucratic apparat, "...Our culture is accustomed to being obedient. And now that the circumstances have changed, this habit hinders progress."[23]; and A. Jorgensen remarked that he had been struck by the role assumed by the creative intelligentsia in the new era: "Taking their point of departure in Russian and Soviet tradition many of its representatives have now taken up all the social and human problems, openly, polemically and with deep commitment..the creative intelligentsia seems now to have placed itself in the vanguard of the movement for change and renewal, while at the same time acting as the conscience of society as well as its inspiration."[24]

Thus the criteria for analysing and judging literature remained unchanged- critical opinions continued in most cases, to be determined not by the artistic merit of a work, but by the ideological position of the author. And as before, critics' studies published in the contemporary Soviet press tended to lead to questions of the current moral state of society. Although the ideology expressed in literary critical articles was no longer dictated "from above", they nevertheless continued to express ideology, the critic projecting into a text the metaphysical, political, and socio-moral speculations of a current trend of thought. Despite the glasnost

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[22]Magnusson, M. (ed.), 1989, p. 38.

[23] "The Independence of the Culture must be Defended", in Ibid., p. 85.

[24]Ibid., p. 12.

reforms, literature and literary criticism continued to be used as a medium for exerting ideological influence and the same interpretative assumptions and conventions persisted. Literary criticism, addressing the "news of the day", still conveyed "messages" about how to live, how society ought to to be organised. Literary criticism no longer used Stalin's dogma as a criterion for the analysis of literary works, and the views expressed through criticism were now varied, but critics continued to try to produce work that was actual; to explain works in relation not to theory, but rather to the contemporary political, social and economic situation. As before, the distinction between literary criticism and journalism, or publitsistika was blurred, as it was polemical, argumentative, and didactic. One set of terminologies was replaced by another, but the final purpose remained unchanged.

Soviet culture, by all appearances, did not undergo a process of de-ideologisation during glasnost. The certain relaxation of Party control in Soviet life, did not in fact halt recurring demands for the strengthening of ideological works among critics. Official literary criticism openly admitted that at the time of slow economic changes, which put perestroika under threat, literary criticism became loaded with responsibilities before the changing society. L. Lavinsky in an article published in Literaturnoye Obozreniye in June 1986 stated that "if literary criticism wishes to serve the people, it cannot but be publicistic and move away from consideration of artistic merit to aim at revealing hidden ulcers of society to the people"[25].

1.2. THE ROLE OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY RUSSIAN CLASSICS

The Russian nineteenth-century classics have weathered the vicissitudes of Soviet literary criticism. They have consistently been at the centre of Soviet literary critical attention and debates. Despite the fact that the ideas expressed by these classics often seem to be incompatible with the Soviet world outlook, their significance in Russian culture has meant that they cannot be rejected outright or completely

[25]Cf. Mondry, H., 1990, p.115.

ignored by literary criticism. Thus, not able to dismiss them completely, literary critics have reacted by refuting their significance, or adapting them in order to further the ends of Party doctrine. Western and Soviet scholars have noted the special unshakeable regard that the Russian people have for the classics, the tendency amongst Russians to look for answers in them.

Commentators such as G. Gibian[26] have asserted that Russians are marked by their unusually high degree of dependence on their literature for patterns, models, and prescriptions for their conduct; and have accorded the writer a "unique and near divine function"[27]. In striving to make sense of their experience amid the uncertainties of their everyday life, they look to the great common resources of human experience for guidance. The classics are believed to have the capacity to enhance the reader's perception and understanding of his experience, to transmit a sense of values. The people see this literature as reflecting the reality of experience as it is perceived by an especially gifted individual, possessing exceptional, even visionary, sensibilities, who expresses it in a discourse that enables other people to share his knowledge. Russians often seem to confuse written life with real life. The poet Constantin Sluchevsky expressed this strong influence of classical literature over the thoughts and deeds of its readers: '"Yes, it is difficult for the majority of people to avoid the influence of ideas projected by creative works, the influence of Rudins, Raskolnikovs, Chatskys, Oblomovs,....It is not the same weight as that of chains, being purely mental, not in the least distressing, fraternal....the poet cuts a silhouette out of life...But a weak man, without long reflection, takes on the readymade results of others' views ,and there is no room for his own views to sprout- as in a web, the paths are all interwoven of simple, unbroken, healthy conclusions"[28]. Ivanov claims that this "almost bewitching influence of literature" is due to the circumstances of Russian reality.

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[26]Thompson, E. (ed.),1991.

[27]Freeborn, R., "Introduction", in R. Freeborn & J. Grayson (eds.), p. 3.

[28]Cf. Ivanov, V.V., "Literature's Guilt and Guilt before Literature", in Literaturnaya Gazeta, 25/09/91, p. 11.

Each person belonging to the Russian culture is submerged from childhood in a world of lines and verses learnt by heart, which continue to live and mature with him. This dependence on the insights of the classics has been shown to intensify in times when old certainties are under challenge and crumbling. Soviet critics, in order to ensure that classical literature fulfil its educative purpose in Soviet society by supporting the policies of the Party, have critically re-evaluated the legacy of the nineteenth century, emphasising its progressive elements. The classics have been shown by critics to be "relevant" to the problems and experiences of the present, and discussions and debates have arisen over the significance of the classics for the present times, and about the contemporary 'reading' of their works. And in the era of glasnost critics once again looked to the classics to aid them in their task of guiding the people. Classical literature was still believed to contain the profound truths that "mass" literature does not. It is still in its capacity to project a universal system of values, and to supply answers to the sacred questions, a model and guide for individual and social life, that the classics are looked to. A. Vasilevsky asserts that this attitude to literature is an inherent part of Russian native life, which it is senseless to dispute. The tendentiousness of the classics is part of their richness, and is necessary- "without 'teachers', all will crumble"[29]. It is not the role accorded to writers that is a myth, as some critics would claim, but the notion that literature in Russia can exist by itself- set apart from religion, politics, morality, philosophy. This, to him, is the real illusion.

1.3. DOSTOEVSKY IN LITERARY CRITICISM

The ongoing significance accorded to F.M. Dostoevsky's work since his first novel, Poor Folk, cannot be denied. N. Berdyaev asserts that Dostoevsky more than any other writer, expressed all the contradictions of the Russian nature, and the passionate intensity of the Russian problematics. His works have been regarded by the people and many critics, not only as revealing that which is hidden from others, but also as prophetic. Throughout his works Dostoevsky discusses the most

[29] Literaturnaya Gazeta, May 1991, p. 11.

controversial and essential topics of man's destiny: good and evil, God and Christ, socialism and revolution, the Golden Age, the freedom of man. This has allowed philosophers of differing beliefs to highlight in his works the heros best suited to their own system. "Dostoevsky's work glows with ideas, as some people glow with health. It arouses more passion and intolerance inside and outside Russia, than the work of any other writer, furnishing ideologists of all sorts- Christians and atheists, friends and enemies of socialism...with endless ammunition for their battles"[30]. J.F. Matlock asserts that Dostoevsky has served as an excuse for the expression of the most disparate ideas, and opinions on Dostoevsky often tell us more about he who expressed them than about Dostoevsky himself[31]. Soviet critics have not been able to ignore such a powerful, influential, popular, and politically orientated writer, and, believing that a danger existed of upsetting the mental balance of the Russian masses if Dostoevsky's work could be read and judged by every citizen, demanded that an elite of leading Soviet intellectuals study his work thoroughly and interpret it for others, in order that the undesirable aspects, which might infect the people, be overcome. Throughout Russian history, Dostoevsky has been alternately pronounced an enemy, a fellow-traveller, or an ally; he and his characters judged, condemned, praised, or forgiven, according to the latest ideological stance. During the glasnost era, Dostoevsky was once again seen to be a writer of great significance for the destiny of Russia, and actual to the contemporary situation. Igor Vinogradov states in his discussion of Yu. Karyiakin's book, Dostoevsky and the Eve of the XXIst Century, "Before us is the experience of comprehending Dostoevsky through our life, and the experience of comprehending our life through Dostoevsky"[32]. Such has been the importance of Dostoevsky.

The Devils, more than any other of Dostoevsky's works, has continually found itself at the centre of polemical discussion and debate. Since its publication in

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[30]Catteau, J., 1989, p. 285.

[31]"Literature and Politics" Fyodor Dostoevsky', in Voprosy Literatury, 1989, p. 141.

[32]Cf. Znamya, no. 7, 1990. p. 206.

1872, the critical reception of this novel has clearly revealed how different, and often contradictory, readings have been given of the Russian classics by critics. At the heart of The Devils lies the theme of revolution and terrorism, a theme that preoccupied the author throughout his life, and which has captured the attention of both radicals and right-wing critics because of its evident relevance to Russian history. Sharp differences of opinion have emerged in interpretations of the novel concerning Dostoevsky's attitude towards this theme, and debates have arisen around the significance of the novel. Throughout its history, the novel has been adapted to various kinds of goals. It has been seen as a grim but masterful picture, in the realist tradition, of contemporary reality; as a confession and atonement of Dostoevsky himself; and, most commonly, as a prophecy of future catastrophe for Russia, and even the world. Dmitry Urnov claims that the changeability of contemporary interpretations of Dostoevsky is perhaps nowhere as evident as in The Devils, the most topical of his novels[33]. L. Saraskina believes The Devils to be "the principal novel not only of Dostoevsky, but also of Russian literature in general"[34], and states that this novel has suffered more in the hands of critics than all other works of Dostoevsky put together[35].

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[33] Discussion on Dostoevsky and the Eve of the XXIst Century, in Znamya, no. 7, 1990

[34] Ibid., p. 207.

[35] "In the Context of Precise Time", in Voprosy Literatury, no. 9, 1986.

2. THE ROLE OF LITERARY CRITICISM DURING GLASNOST

On the 11 March 1985, at an unscheduled Plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the deceased General Secretary, K.U. Chernenko, was honoured and Mikhail Sergeevich Gorbachev was unanimously elected to this position. Although in his address, Gorbachev gave an assurance that he would devote all his strength towards faithfully serving the Communist Party, the Soviet people, and the great Leninist task, he also stated that new directions must be undertaken, and the XXVII Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union proved to be the bordermark of a fundamentally new stage of social progress. The new Programme of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), based on the resolve to undertake new directions in the economic and social development of the USSR, and to introduce, according to the editors of Voprosy Literatury[1], an innovatory frame of mind to the depository of Marxism-Leninism, constituted a complex of practical actions of a truly revolutionary character and scale. A reversal of the general trend of Soviet government- the progressive reduction of information, under a control that was increasingly centralised and monopolistic- was begun.

The Gorbachev era began with a sense of innovation and of a change. In the Political address of the Central Committee of the CPSU to the XXVII congress, Gorbachev spoke of the necessity of each man to feel the challenge which the age was casting, of '"the attainment of an understanding by each man of the acuteness of the moment being lived through, its revolutionary character..."'[2]. To

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[1] "XXVII syezd CPSS i vpprosy literatury: kursom iskoreniya", April 1986.

[2] cf Zalygin, S. "Vremya bolshikh zabot", Voprosy Literatury, May 1985. Of course the reasons for this radical shift in policy, instigated by the Party leadership itself, has raised much questioning and debate. Many commentators saw behind the new direction, the party's will to self-preservation. N.N. Shneidman attributed it to the party's awareness of the country's economic problems and fear of the complete moral disintegration of Soviet society: glasnost was a means to fight corruption, moral decay and the decline of the work ethic (1989, p. 8). T. Remington asserts that glasnost was intended to reverse the "drift of the Soviet system towards crisis or even breakdown with painful, frequently radical self-examination intended to build popular pressure for deep reform- to enable a new liveliness and credibility of 'words' to serve the goal of reform in the area of 'deeds' by activating personal initiative and material self-interest in the state and public spheres.". In his view, the linking of glasnost and

its supporters, glasnost represented a shift towards openness and sincerity in public life and the first step towards a genuinely participatory society and true democracy. For the first time since the revolution, there was an attempt to truly activate the masses. Gorbachev appealed, as in a speech in April 1988, to the Soviet people to learn public openness, so as a new political climate of democratic norms, procedures, and values could be created. Glasnost called for open speaking about the complications and difficulties of the contemporary situation, for an analysis of its causes, for self-criticism. Gorbachev himself set the example at the XXVII Congress of the CPSU, where, according to commentators, such as V. Ozerov and Yu. A. Lukin, the shortcomings, difficulties and omissions of the party were boldly laid bare[3]. Glasnost dismantled former taboos, introduced freedom of expression, and opened up new areas of Soviet life for critical enquiry. The party itself declared that Soviet society must be recomprehended, credulity and acceptance without questioning must end, and that which was concealed must be uncovered without being corrected, for only then could the problems be resolved. Yu. Davidov, in support of this policy speaks of how in the past "we consciously educated the country's population in the spirit of social short-sightedness.."[4], so that Russians have been under the impression "that our towns are completely healthy, our landscapes whole and safe, our economy absolutely rational, and our system of education could not wish for anything better..."[5]. It was this blindness that the new policies were to end, by placing all areas of Soviet life under critical

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perestroika with socialism was intended to save both society and the official ideology- Gorbachev wished to modernise and liberate Russia in defence of an existing political structure. Doubt has thus arisen as to whether the prime purpose of glasnost was to give the Soviet people access to more information, because the leadership recognised it to be good and necessary, or to consolidate Gorbachev's authority and save socialism. There is indeed reason to believe the latter if one considers Gorbachev's words in his speech to the Plenum on 11 March 1985: "It is furthermore our duty to broaden 'glasnost' in the work of the party, soviet, state and social institutions. V.I. Lenin says that the state is strong by the consciousness of the masses. Our practice must wholly support this conclusion. The better informed are the people, the more consciously they act, the more actively they support the party, its plans and programmed goals." (cf Voprosy Literatury, April 1985, p. 12)

[3] "Demokratizatsiya kultury (XXVII syezd CPSS o kulturnoj politike partii)", Voprosy Literatury, February 1988, p. 3.

[4] "Literatura i demokratiya", Voprosy Literatury, February 1988, p. 116.

[5] Ibid. p. 129.

scrutiny, and thus bringing to light the necessity for deep qualitative changes. Thus, one of the first concrete manifestations of glasnost was the reevaluation of Russian and Soviet history according to "alternative thinking". A discussion of Soviet history was conducted in the press, especially concerning the role of Stalin and Stalinism. During the second half of 1987 and through 1988, facts and figures concerning past atrocities that had never been publicly acknowledged in the Soviet Union, were published.[6]

Alongside openness, Gorbachev stressed the need for a pluralism of opinions, interests and ideas; for discussion and debate from various points of view. The party urged tolerance and affirmed that conflict was a normal part of the reconciling of the opposing interests of distinctive groups in society. This was substantiated with the claim that Leninist socialism made room for a pluralism of opinions, interests and needs, for it believed that people's natural predisposition towards socialism would be all the stronger for being uncoerced. Diversity would provide the conditions for the much needed development of peoples' creative activity and initiative, without which there could be no movement forward, and the new leadership believed that in a society of divergent interests and ideas, the task of the state was not to create an uncritical unity by repression, but rather to manage diversity, to use it positively by institutionalising it. Administrative interference in scholarship and culture was reduced during 1987, 1988 and 1989, so that non-members of the Party, and even non-Marxists and religious believers were able to take part in political life. 'Dogmatism' and 'authoritarian thinking' were denounced and, in general, the mechanisms of ideological control over society were drastically reduced, such as the bills passed officially endorsing the guarantee of freedoms of the press and speech, freedom of information and public openness (glasnost) in 1989. New terms advocated by the party since 1987 were

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[6]It must be emphasised that although glasnost appears as a challenge to socialist ideology in form and content, it aimed only at a within-system change and the many horrors and disastrous consequences in the past were shown to be the result of socialism being put into practice by the wrong hands. The Gorbachev regime insisted that the Leninist theory of socialism was still justified, although it realised that deep reforms were necessary. The reforms it proposed to undertake were in many ways presented as a return to the path of 'true socialism', from which Russia had strayed.

"socialist pluralism of opinions" and "participatory civic culture"- these were based on citizens not only being permitted, but also socialized to criticize official policies, to assert their rights and interests, and to engage in vigorous public debate of social problems and their possible solution.

Glasnost was introduced as an auxiliary to perestroika. The success of perestroika required the opening up for discussion of a number of issues that had previously been taboo. The disastrous results of previous policies- corruption, nepotism, black-marketeering, alcoholism, declining growth rates- were shown to be indicative of a failure of the Soviet system as Stalin and his heirs had shaped it and of a need for drastic change. Gorbachev, in his first address to the Plenum in March 1985 committed himself to the task of accelerating the socio-economic development of the Soviet Union and raising the well-being of its people, and at the XXVII Congress the party's plans for the years 1986-1990 and up to the year 2000 were laid out. At its origin, perestroika implied the reconstruction of the economy through scientific and technological progress, the increased productiveness of labour, the improvement of the quality of production, the upliftment of the material and spiritual conditions of peoples' lives, the raising of the independence of enterprises, the creation of the principle of responsibility, the rebuilding of the workers' psychology in all spheres, and the upliftment of social consciousness. In brief, within a short space of time would be accomplished, "a radical transformation of the whole structure of the socialist economy."[7]. But it was to go even further: in the summer of 1986, Gorbachev launched the notion of perestroika as a revolution that would embrace not only economic life, but '"social relationships, the political system, the spiritual-ideological sphere, the style and methods of work by the party and all our cadres."'[8]. Henceforth, it was to entail also democratisation, the rebuilding of government, and a reorientation in the thinking of Soviet people. As V. Ozerov asserts, for such deep reforms to succeed,

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[7] "XXVII syezd CPSS i voprosy literatury: kursom uskoreniya", Voprosy Literatury, April 1986, p. 4.

[8] cf Gooding, J.: "Perestroika as Revolution from Within: an Interpretation", The Russian Review, January 1992, p. 48.

they must begin with the perestroika of the people's thinking, or in Lukin's words, a decisive reorientation of the whole social consciousness towards the quick assimilation of the new ideas put forward by the party, deliverance from antiquated, backward views. At the October plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, it was noted that for the acceleration of the economic and social development of the country, "it is necessary to activate the human factor."[9]. J.C. Moses asserts that Gorbachev firmly believed that all economic and political reforms would be doomed to failure, unless they were underwritten by equivalent changes in motivations, dominant values, norms, and attitudes and that he equated the 'human factor', "with the degree of personal commitment, enthusiasm, initiative, trust, and personal responsibility within a society."[10].

The glasnost and perestroika reforms were to embrace Soviet foreign policy too. Along with the need to rebuild the Soviet economy and society, came the necessity to establish good international relations, for it was evident that the Soviet Union was in need of Western assistance in the form of their technical and scientific expertise and financial aid. Gorbachev emphasised that relations with capitalist countries would firmly follow the Leninist course of peaceful coexistence, and that in order to bring a halt to the arms rac the Soviet Union must begin to collaborate with the NATO countries. He seemed to indicate that the reestablishment of normal relations between the Soviet Union and the West was possible and necessary. Ozerov refers to the Congress's decisive expression of the spirit of peace-loving, constructive Soviet external politics, A. Mulyarchik quotes from Gorbachev's address to the British parliament: '"..according to our deep conviction, in today's conditions, by all countries and peoples, as never before, is necessary a constructive dialogue, a quest for the resolution of the main international problems, the finding of domains of agreement, which can lead to the

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[9] cf Lukin, Yu.: "Politicheskiye oriyentiry tvorchestva", Voprosy Literatury, November 1985, p. 30.

[10] "Democratic Reform in the Gorbachev Era: Dimensions of Reform in the Soviet Union 1986-1989", The Russian Review, July 1989, p. 240.

improvement of trust between countries, to the creation of an atmosphere in international relations, which would be free of the nuclear menace, hostility and suspicion, fear and enmity."'[11]. Reformists urged that, as Lenin had taught, national pride yield to an acceptance of the democratic culture of the whole world.

2.1. GLASNOST AND LITERARY SCHOLARSHIP

Glasnost meant that what had been believed to be impossible in literary scholarship a decade before became possible. A first important manifestation of glasnost in the field of literature was the publication and rehabilitation of previously repudiated writers. These included authors of different ideas and eras, exiles, emigres, and so-called "internal emigres"- those who were hostile towards the regime, but in a prudent or silent manner. All these names, who shared the common feature of having been declared 'anti-soviet', 'counter-revolutionary' because their work did not fall under the definition of party-mindedness, were resurrected under the new policies and their significance was reestablished. A concentrated effort was made to fill in the "blank spots" of Soviet literary history. E. Etkind describes how "During the last five or six years, a crowd of strangers have intruded into Russian literature- among them are brilliant writers, contemporaries of our fathers and grandfathers. Of some of them, many of us have not even heard, of others, we have heard with half an ear, but have not read any works, and of a third lot, whom we thought we knew well, we knew in a one-sided, flat, trivial manner.."[12]. The time has come, he states, to resurrect the writers' images without either idealising or debasing them, to rid literature of the Stalinist-Zhdanovist distortions and falsities- the tendency to [illegible]s a black and white schematisation must come to an end.

Glasnost meant freedom of expression to all those involved in literature. A. Ninov

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[11] "Posle 'novogo konservatizma'", Voprosy Literatury, April 1985, p. 101.

[12] "O rytsaryakh so strakhom i upreknom", Literaturnaya Gazeta, 13 May 1992, p. 6.

in his article, "Tri usloviya kritiki", published in Voprosy Literatury in July 1987, commends the particular openness of the speakers at the VIII All-Union Congress of Soviet Writers. He says that openness is at least a start to the truth of the word. Moreover, "after the April Plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (1985) and the XXVII Congress of the Party, a wider scope was created for the extension of glasnost, for the fuller existence of freedom of opinion and freedom of the press, foreseen by Soviet law and order. And together with these general positive processes of the democratisation of social life, literary criticism too was correspondingly revitalized.."[13]. He speaks of the decision made at the congress to change the organisation of literary critical matters, from the training of young critics to the ordering in publications of sharp, bold, or openly polemical critical articles. Glasnost encouraged the opening up of discussions, and even controversies around certain literary works, both verbal and in print.

The new internationalist attitudes permitted the bringing together of both Soviet and Western and Soviet and emigré writers and scholars, such as at the Louisiana Conference on Literature and Perestroika, which was held in March 1988, and the literary evening at the USA Embassy in Russia which took place at the initiative of the American Ambassador, J.T. Matlock, to discuss a book by Yu. Karyakin. The editors of Znamya, which published the addresses, emphasised the significance of the American Ambassador initiating a meeting that they consider to be of national necessity, saying that it recalled the best traditions in relations between American and Russian people and culture[14]. Interest was also accorded to works and articles of Western writers and literary critics. These were fairly widely published in the literary press, translated into Russian, and noticeably without the hitherto compulsory editorial disclaimer, even when it concerned articles criticising Marxism-Leninism. Soviet critics began to regard western sources as worthy of study, acknowledging that they had been divorced from a rich and invaluable

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[13] p. 43.

[14] "Dostoevsky i kanun XXI veka", July 1990.

source of information by their absolute break in intercourse with the West. Western literary scholars, such as R. Laut in the Institute of Philosophy in March 1989, gave lectures in the USSR, which sparked off animated discussion amongst Soviet litterateurs. For the first time, Western scholars were seen as colleagues instead of rivals. Glasnost opened the way for cultural interaction with the West, and literature became a way of strengthening mutual trust and understanding between countries and peoples.

The end of authoritarianism, and the tolerance to all opinions, implied in glasnost, meant that writers and critics were no longer required to obediently safeguard the single social opinion permitted. Yu. Davidov speaks of the difficulty experienced by litterateurs in the past in expressing not the "whole truth" or even "half" of it, but just a "tiny piece of it" - it had necessitated the "working out of a pigeon tongue which would allow them to squeal about that which they were ordered not to talk"[15]. By contrast, Glasnost encouraged, especially since early 1987, the publishing of articles bearing a polemical, discussional character, and expressing frank opinions about many important problems. A. Ninov, a strong supporter of glasnost in literary criticism, states that the human factor must not be excluded from the field of literary criticism, but used to the full extent to uplift respect for honest literary opinion, however controversial it may seem. Critics, he says, must not be afraid to express a fair judgement, and must not attempt to smooth over it, just because it might be unacceptable to someone[16]. The broader the spectrum of critical opinions relating to a concrete work of literature, the more easily the one-sidedness of individual judgements will be overcome in the course of discussion. Open criticism was expressed of former literary practices and literary critical traditions, of past critics and their relationship with ideology; and discussions have opened up around the role of the contemporary critic, which led to suggestions that there is a need for a new methodology and theoretical base, that would permit the interpretation of texts in more than 'one correct way', and for multi-focused

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[15] "Literatura i demokratiya", Voprosy Literatury, February 1988, p. 119.

[16] "Tri usloviya kritiki", Voprosy Literatury, July 1987, p. 74.

approaches. Critics, such as Vyacheslav Ivanov, expressed the need for a new, ideology-free approach to literary criticism, for "disarmament"[17]. As is well-known, he says, Russian literature has for a long time fulfilled the responsibilities of philosophy and legal establishments, which did not exist in Russia, and of presenting the history of the latest era, but now it is time to give literature the possibility of being literature. In his article, "Literature's guilt and guilt before literature"[18], Ivanov speaks out against the use of authentic literature for cheap propaganda. Russian criticism, he says, has always had the tendency to give an extra-literary reading of the classics, extracting certain truths, often false or not corresponding with the writer's intentions so that it has been an ideological criticism that refutes the aesthetic side of literature. All critics have been united on one point: none of them wished to acknowledge literature's separate individual right. This is the guilt of society before these writers. During glasnost, there some new studies conducted in orientations long neglected: biographies, st of style, more "objective" studies of writers' lives and creation. Literary periodicals began to publish views of different critics expressing divergent opinions about a single work of art; and controversial works of great social and artistic significance were debated at 'round table discussions' involving well-known writers, critics and political figures.

2.1.1. The Continued Link between Ideology and Literature

Despite indications that glasnost would bring about significant changes in the cultural and spiritual life of society, by divorcing it for the first time from the question of ideology, the attitude towards literature and literary criticism does not in fact seem to have undergone any deep or significant change. H. Mondry reveals how leading scholars in Russia reaffirmed the important role of literature and literary criticism in Soviet society. "In the interview given in the Literaturnaya Gazeta of 4 July 1990 with the characteristic title "The literary process today and

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[17] cf "Dostoevsky i kanun XXI veka", Znamya, July 1990.

[18] Literaturnaya Gazeta, 25 September 1991, p. 11.

tomorrow", both academics (Anatoly Bocharov & Lidiya Ginzburg) stressed the fact that there never existed and never will exist a "literature without ideas" in Russian society. Mondry asserts that critics continued to search for relevance, and literary criticism became once again part of the public exchange of opinions, a medium through which demands, support and opposition towards the state could be articulated. Once again literary critics over-emphasised the content and meaning of a work, singling out specific themes from the entirety of the work which in their view were relevant to contemporary issues, and striving towards a final conclusion. In essence, during glasnost, critics applied the same methodologies[19] as before in the interpretation of literary texts[20]. V. Bryukhovetskij claims that critics often resorted to far from scientific means to achieve their intention which remained: "..to influence the reader's consciousness, to prove the truth of one's ideas.."[21]. According to him, an analysis of the well-known critics allows one to come to the conclusion that the most important feature of their activity was to actualise for their time the socio-aesthetic problems contained in a work of literature, to regulate its sympathies and antipathies, always keeping its topical social potential at the forefront of their mind[22]. He emphasises that this methodology, in which the elements of communicative pragmatic thinking suppress the theoretical scientific elements, was by no means obsolete during the glasnost era, but concerned several active "perestroikists". A. Ninov evokes the three conditions of literary criticism and declares that in Russia its condition as a phenomenon of journalistics continues to predominate[23].

No rigorous theory of literary criticism or programmes of methodological purity developed and literary criticism still acted as a medium for political and social

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[19] Lenin's methodology as applied to Tolstoy's work, the Plekhanov methodology of "otsiuda i dosiuda, and the holistic approach.

[20] Mondry, H., 1990, p. 89.

[21] "Ispytaniye glasnost' ili 'davajte govorit'..", Voprosy Literatury, March 1987, p. 103.

[22] Ibid., p. 105.

[23] "Tri usloviya kritiki", Voprosy Literatury, July 1987, p. 41.

discussion in a public sphere, concerning itself with the problematics of social life; addressing the essential questions of Soviet history, the contemporary situation, the future of the country; and attempting to diagnose certain phenomena. S. Chuprinin asserts that the interest in criticism in the contemporary time had increased: "The conception of criticism, as of literature, as an important, socially significant kind of creative activity has long since taken root here, but I think that the question of the responsibility of the literary critical word- a word not only about books, but also about the times, incarnated in books- stands out with particular sharpness and actualness today, when the processes of development have been sharply accelerated, the activisation of creative beginnings in all spheres of life has begun."[24]. Every important pronouncement by a critic was understood as a pronouncement about contemporary life- "it is not without reason, speaking about the multi-facetted nature of the work of our profession, about the at times striking differences of views and evaluations, that we invariably pick out as a common feature and sign of criticism, its powerful publicist, socio- civic-mindedness, didactic charge and pathos."[25]. In his opinion, despite the outward appearance in contemporary criticism of individual methods, and original thinking, it was based on a fundamentally unified methodological platform and a general tendency to swoop down on the key questions at the forefront of the social agenda: "What is to be done? What is happening to us? Who is guilty? Where did it start?...Contemporary criticism...hopes through the magnifying glass of literature to closely observe reality, to conduct its 'judgement' of it, to aid the formation of social opinion and social ideals"[26]. Chuprinin again expresses this view in his article in Znamya, in January 1990: "And if one takes literary criticism- one has the impression that it has not only departed into publicism, become the weapon of ideological agitation and contra-agitation, but has even lost any interest in texts..."[27]. He sees this as a result of the lack of opportunity for discussion of

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[24] "Kritika- eto kritiki!", Voprosy Literatury, December 1985, p. 79.

[25] Ibid. p. 81.

[26] Ibid, p. 82.

[27] "Situatsiya", p. 201.

discussion in a public sphere, concerning itself with the problematics of social life; addressing the essential questions of Soviet history, the contemporary situation, the future of the country; and attempting to diagnose certain phenomena. S. Chuprinin asserts that the interest in criticism in the contemporary time had increased: "The conception of criticism, as of literature, as an important, socially significant kind of creative activity has long since taken root here, but I think that the question of the responsibility of the literary critical word- a word not only about books, but also about the times, incarnated in books- stands out with particular sharpness and actualness today, when the processes of development have been sharply accelerated, the activisation of creative beginnings in all spheres of life has begun."[24]. Every important pronouncement by a critic was understood as a pronouncement about contemporary life- "it is not without reason, speaking about the multi-facetted nature of the work of our profession, about the at times striking differences of views and evaluations, that we invariably pick out as a common feature and sign of criticism, its powerful publicist, socio- civic-mindedness, didactic charge and pathos."[25]. In his opinion, despite the outward appearance in contemporary criticism of individual methods, and original thinking, it was based on a fundamentally unified methodological platform and a general tendency to swoop down on the key questions at the forefront of the social agenda: "What is to be done? What is happening to us? Who is guilty? Where did it start?...Contemporary criticism...hopes through the magnifying glass of literature to closely observe reality, to conduct its 'judgement' of it, to aid the formation of social opinion and social ideals"[26]. Chuprinin again expresses this view in his article in Znamya, in January 1990: "And if one takes literary criticism- one has the impression that it has not only departed into publicism, become the weapon of ideological agitation and contra-agitation, but has even lost any interest in texts..."[27]. He sees this as a result of the lack of opportunity for discussion of

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[27] "Situatsiya", p. 201.

socio-political matters, pointing to the Silver Age of 1905-1918 as the only period in Russian history when there was true freedom of conscience and speech. This lead to the literary life of the country becoming sharply depoliticised, losing its ideological, propagandist sense. For that historically brief moment, writers were writers and literary critics exactly that, not leaders of the nation, political thinkers, or ideologists. Chuprinin states that he is recalling this period because in the quest for analogies to the present-day era of perestroika, one's thoughts turn most often to this period. However, "If in answer to the reform of 80 years ago- a significant proportion of literature strenuously depoliticised itself, turned to 'artistry', then now, in answer to the April (1986) impulse, it has just as strenuously politicised itself, turned pre-eminently into publicism, into direct speech, addressed to the people and to the powers.."[28]. Literature has taken up the discussion of burning issues, of the formulation of ideological programmes from or against the "official" point of view, of propaganda and contra-propaganda, of political agitation.

In January 1989, Voprosy Literatury published several critics and literary scholars' answers to questions that it had posed, concerning the present day relationship between criticism and publicism, and about the extent to which glasnost has taken root in literary criticism[29]. E. Dobrenko answered that, criticism in today's Russia is increasingly becoming publicism, and as in publicism, what is of primary importance is the standpoint that the critic takes in general socio-ideological problems. A. Egiazaryan believes that criticism's popularity and importance in the contemporary situation lies in its civic-mindedness. It is a related sphere of spiritual activity to publicism, but treats living material through the framework of literature. He declares that in general, Russian criticism and literary scholarship has lost the taste for theoretical research, and that the theoretical works of such scholars as M. Bakhtin, D. Likhachev, S. Averintsev, have not in essence influenced Soviet criticism. They have inherited from the 30s, theories, categories, and canons, which have restrained with a mortal grip, the development of theoretical thinking

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[28] Ibid, p. 205.

[29] "Nasha anketa: o chyom molchim? i pochemu?"

in literary scholarship. K. Sultanov believes that while publicism has seized the leading position in forming public opinion, literary criticism is not far behind. The two are united in their aim to destroy the old myths and illusions. They bombard the public with ideas in order to expel all former lies. Both are contributing towards the national enlightenment. These opinions have been expressed in various other articles too.

There appear to be two principal reasons for the persistence of an ideologically prescriptive attitude in literary scholarship, and the intertwining of criticism and publicism in the Soviet Union during the "liberated" years of glasnost. One reason is the one and a half century old tradition of Russian literary critical thought, Soviet education, and mental conditioning. While it was clearly difficult for literary critics educated in the Soviet school, accustomed to demands, requirements, and prohibitions, to adapt to the new policies of glasnost, which freed them from repressive commands, more important still was their sense of personal responsibility before the Soviet people. Critics continued to regard themselves as fulfilling the role of political and social commentators, and indeed were expected to do so by the people, accustomed to finding ideological guidance in their literary critiques. In general, the Russian intelligentsia continued, as it had done with greater or lesser freedom since the 19th century, to define itself as embodying the national mind and conscience, as '"a critical self-aware unincorporated group, inclined towards dissent and assuming moral and intellectual responsibility for the fate of the country"' (L. Smolyakov in Kommunist, no 16, 1988)[30]. Critics continued to see their role as that of steering the people's consciousness in the right direction according to their belief of what this might be.

This attitude was further stimulated by the new socio-economic situation created by the policies of the Gorbachev government. There was evidence of a new consumer attitude amongst critics. The introduction of free market policies into the Soviet press and consequent need for literary periodicals to extend their readership

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[30] cf Remington, T. in The Russian Review, July 1989, p. 292.

meant that critics could not be indifferent to the expectations of the general public, but had to strive to capture the contemporary reader's attention. They had to tackle topical issues and questions likely to be of interest to the majority of people. Public opinion became the ultimate judge and the critic could only break through to a large audience by becoming part of the necessary literature on the news of the day. There were thus financial motivations as well as the desire to become part of an elite of "major critics" whose commentaries controlled public opinion.

The second reason for the ongoing tendentiousness of literary criticism is to be found in official policy, which continued to encourage the mixing of ideological commentary and literary criticism, and to discourage purely aesthetic criticism, through the pronouncements of both its political and literary representatives. Indeed, in the address of the Central Committee of the CPSU, of the Praesidium of the Higher Soviet of the USSR, of the Soviet of Ministers of the USSR, to the Communist Party, to the Soviet people, published in Voprosy Literatury, in April 1985, it was declared that the party would work towards the improvement of ideological work and the upliftment of the social role of literature. And at the XXVII congress it was declared that the party approaches the evaluation of a writer's work with the criteria of its role in the common public cause, and affirms that literary scholarship, like other social sciences, will actively be used for the bold, innovative posing of new problems, and for their creative elaboration. Articles relating to views expressed by Gorbachev in various addresses and during discussions, clearly indicate that the Communist party continued to regard literature as an important instrument of ideology, a means of instruction and conveyer of ideas to the people. S. Zalygin in his article published in Voprosy Literatury in May 1986, "A time of great concerns", quotes Gorbachev's Political address to the XXVII congress in which he declared that literature "..must do all that society does. But by its own means. It does not have any kind of isolated tasks."[31]. And V. Ozerov in his article published in Voprosy Literatury in September 1986, reports that Russia's writers at their forum unanimously

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[31] p. 10.

expressed their approval of the historical resolutions of the XXVII Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, and their firm readiness to carry out the lines envisaged by the Party for the development of the social and spiritual life, and the culture of Soviet society. The Political address of the Central Committee to the congress raised the question of literary criticism and emphasised that it is a social matter- it must answer the calls of life, attempting to understand the nature of contemporary conflicts, and working towards their resolution. This seems to substantiate H. Mondry's opinion that the innovative qualities of Gorbachev's treatment of literature and art are limited to polemics against his political predecessors. He does not offer a model that differs in either form or content from models offered by his predecessors[32].

Literary bureaucrats and official literary critics clearly expressed their support for the party literary policy. Lenin's authority in literary matters as well as the theories of Belinsky and the Revolutionary Democrat critics, were once again frequently evoked to support the continuation of the ideological approach to literature and literary criticism. Yu. Lukin, commenting on the materials of the XXVII congress, declares that the whole of artistic creation, its ideological direction and aesthetic level, are being examined, so as to ensure the upliftment of the role of literature and literary criticism in the spiritual life of society, which means that the responsibility of writers, artists, literary critics, etc. for the ideological direction of creation is being strengthened[33]. He asserts that there is a direct link between the ideas Lenin expressed in the article "Party Organisation and Party Literature" and the cultural politics of the CPSU of the contemporary era, for the same belief in the strong link between literature and the concrete tasks facing soc[illegible]rsists[34]. In his article published in November 1985, "The Political orientation of creation", which once again recalls Lenin's same article published 80 years previously, Yu. Lukin attacks all those hostile towards Lenin's theoretical position and teachings

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[32] The Evaluation of Ideological Trends in Recent Soviet Literary Scholarship, 1990.

[33] Ibid. p. 5-6

[34] Ibid. p. 7.

concerning the partinost of literature[35]. He regards the tendency to view literature through the prism of its political orientations as a genuine worldwide historical contribution by Lenin to literary scholarship and states: "..up until our time, in all the documents of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Lenin's ideas about the political orientations of artistic creation were and remain fundamental, they serve as a reliable compass in the solving of any questions of literature and art.."[36]. He points out that this year is the 60th anniversary of the resolution that developed the ideas laid down by Lenin and declares that this link between art and social problematics remains in this day the subject of the party's constant concern[37]. Lukin also points out that the importance of literary criticism has not been ignored by the new leadership, who are fully aware, that it "...has become a kind of avant-garde of intellectual life, in the well-known sense of a generator of many sentiments, and a barometer of public opinion"[38], and that Marxist-Leninist criticism is called, in its function of evaluating the past and directing the contemporary, to react actively, clearly, attentively and implacably towards art that is ideologically alien or professionally weak[39]. A. Ninov resurrects the desire expressed by Lenin in a letter to Gorky to '"link literary criticism more closely with party work"'[40], in order to support his own views. In his opinion, literary criticism had to work even more energetically in the present situation, for it is "an important instrument of social opinion"[41]. He praises the "scientific" methodology of Marxist-Leninist criticism, insisting on its heritage from the ideas of Belinsky, whom he quotes extensively, and development by such revolutionary democrats as Dobrolyubov, Herzen and Chernyshevsky. Their worthy tradition, he asserts, must be continued. Criticism is a consciousness of reality and as Belinsk

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[35] Voprosy Literatury, November 1985, p. 5.

[36] Ibid. p. 7.

[37] Ibid. p. 20

[38] "Demokratizatsiya kultury", Voprosy Literatury, February 1988, p.30.

[39] Ibid, p. 31.

[40] cf "Tri usloviya kritiki", Voprosy Literatury, July 1987, p. 45.

[41] Ibid, p. 48.

stated, '"Criticism in its judgements makes equal use of art and of life as material,..it is just this analytical capacity that allows it to understand most universally the characteristics and image of its times.."'[42] He laments the tendency he perceives in literary criticism of becoming more hermetised, retreating into academic literary scholarship and theoretical abstraction and thus losing its link with practical life, the readers' interest, and its influence on their minds.[43]. A. Aleksin, in his article relating to the XXVII Congress of the CPSU and problems of literature[44], firmly declares that literature does not exist for itself, but for its readers. He says that the journal has received thousands of letters, from which it is evident that the people believe that literature is obliged to establish responsibility, to instruct, to support and confirm virtue. He believes that once again it is literature's duty to cultivate the youth in the right socialist spirit. V. Ozerov asserts that the contemporary literary critic must deeply analyse the problems posed by a writer, as was so brilliantly done by Belinsky, Chernyshevsky, Dobrolyubov. He says that in the discussions about criticism that occurred while the congress was being prepared, several considerations were written down, one of which was that critical articles about books must be "articles about life"[45], critics must know "how to correlate literature and reality"[46], and criticism, comprehending reality, must be able "to at times go further than the writer"[46]. V. Chalmayev asserts that the only thing that will not be understood by anyone at the present moment is indifference, keeping aloof, refutation of the necessity of deep constructive changes, disregard for the conflicts of the past, and silence[47]. Inconclusiveness is unacceptable.

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[42] Ibid. p. 73.

[43] Ibid. p. 74.

[44] "Formiruya cheloveka...", Voprosy Literatury, October 1990.

[45] "Literaturnaya kritika: chetkost' kriteriyev, vysota trebovatelnosti", Voprosy Literatury, July 1987, p. 9.

[46] Ibid. p. 10.

[47] "Ispitaniye nadezhd....", Moskva, April 1988, p. 196.

It is therefore clear that glasnost did not spell either the end of literary critics' tendency to view criticism as a means to propagate ideology, or the party's concern for ideology[48].

2.1.2. The Continued Link between Party Ideology and Literary Criticism

Furthermore, despite suggestions that glasnost would end the party's ideological control over Soviet culture, it not only encouraged the continuation of ideologically orientated literature and Marxist-Leninist methods of literary criticism, but also specifically urged the propagation of its own ideology. The party, if it did not wish to surrender its power, had to continue to justify its rule, and to educate the rising generation in the right spirit. It became evident that although the reforms instituted during the glasnost years were revolutionary, they were nevertheless still dictated "from above", and the creative intelligentsia were expected to participate in the task of preparing the peoples' consciousness for the new course to be undertaken. Gorbachev wished to steadily transform the existent system through his reforms and so needed a counter-ideology, the so-called "new thinking". The party foresaw that this transformation in the basic values and attitudes of Soviet society, the resocialisation of the Soviet public according to the new democratic policies, would be difficult, as many deep-rooted myths and stereotypes remained, and writers and critics were once again regarded as being able to play an important role in bringing about psychological, ethical changes. Gorbachev relied on the liberal intelligentsia to supply the intellectual content supporting his policies, and to popularize and

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[48]Many commentators in fact see the aim of glasnost as being merely to reprogramme the ideological controls over public life, improving the steering capacity of the centre, and mobilising support for the reform programme. According to T. Remington, "Glasnost entails both a loosening and a reprogramming of the ideological content of public expression"(A Socialist Pluralism of Opinions: Glasnost and Policy-making under Gorbachev", The Russian Review, July 1989, p. 274). He states that it would be incorrect to think that the attack on the orthodoxies of the past that have taken place under glasnost, represent an attempt to weaken the party's authority over the ideological sphere. "Indeed, probably no Soviet leader since Lenin has devoted as much personal attention to ideology and mass media as Gorbachev."(Ibid, p. 288). Despite the many new notes that sounded in Gorbachev's initial speech, he also firmly declared that the Party's organising and directing role must be strengthened, for only the party is able to mobilise the energy of the people towards the common task of communist creation.

publicize the general contents of the reform programme, through such means as literary criticism, widely circulated through the central media, and widely read by the Russian public. People would no longer be coerced to act, but they must still be induced to act. In several addresses, such as the one made to representatives of the media in February 1987, Gorbachev made clear the importance that he ascribed to literature and literary criticism in his ideological perestroika campaign [49], emphasising that writers and critics too must contribute towards the overcoming of the negative strata. M. Magnusson in her introduction to the publication of the Louisiana Conference on Literature and Perestroika, affirms that the leadership during the glasnost era emphasised the role played by writers and literary critics in directing attention to the necessity of reform[50]. The Gorbachev leadership, she says, appealed to them to assist in the Party's programme for the political and cultural enlightenment of the people, and to provide the intellectual and moral leadership necessary to save the country from economic and moral disaster, to elaborate a vision of a humane and democratic socialism. N.N. Shneidman points out that the bureaucracy constantly reminded the Soviet people that the call for criticism is not unrestricted permission to attack the system and that regarding the limits of glasnost, 'Gorbachev has the following to say: "We solve this problem within the framework of socialist pluralism of opinions, we are for the wide development of criticism and glasnost, but only if it is in the interests of society, socialism, and the people"'[51], and 'there must be "freedom of expression of opinions and choice" but all within the socialist order"[52]. Indeed, "pluralism" was only to lose the qualifier "socialist" in 1990. Glasnost, like previous policy shifts, was instigated and controlled by the new bureaucracy itself, who like those before it, found it necessary to justify the new policy to the people and attempt to earn their support of it.

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[49] cf Mondry, H., 1990, p.367.

[50] 1989, p. 7.

[51] 1989, p. 8.

[52] cf Remington, T. in The Russian Review, July 1989, p.279.

Writers and literary critics were thus summoned, like workers in all domains, to devote their energies, towards the economic, political and social transformation of the Soviet Union according to the new policies of the Gorbachev regime. In "The XXVII congress and questions of literature", it was declared that literature must support an uncompromising attitude towards that which hinders social progress, it must join the active struggle for tomorrow, for such are the unchanging principles of partiinost and narodnost. In the Party Congress's resolution it was stated that "...The most important and responsible role that the party strictly poses before criticism now is the mobilisation of its creative forces for the energetic support of the profound and thorough perestroika being conducted by the party in all spheres of life, in the psychology of man."[53]. Criticism was called upon to work towards the accomplishment of perestroika.

Indications were given to the writers and critics as to how they could help the party in the advancement of Soviet society. According to the glasnost supporters, it was necessary to expose the evils of the past in order to clear the way for new and positive achievements, but without rejecting socialism[54]. While glasnost supporters did not reject socialism in theory, they advocated a change in the way it had been put into practice in the past. They advanced the idea of a new socialism with new attitudes, values and policies. This desire for reform increasingly gained momentum. One of the most significant manifestations of the spirit engendered by glasnost was the encouragement of tolerance for the West, the call for a halt to the uncompromising criticism of everything associated with Western society, and even for a willingness to recognise and to learn from the

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[53] Ozerov, V. in Voprosy Literatury, September 1986, p. 4.

[54] Lukin quotes M.S. Gorbachev's words, stating that they apply to the full extent to the sphere of literature: '"The offensive nature of our ideology- this is not only the dethronement of bourgeois ideological myths and stereotypes, this is, above all, the confirmation of our ideals, of the socialist norms of social life, of genuine freedom and democracy, of the propaganda of our historical path." (Voprosy Literatury, February 1988, p. 34.). He adds that now more than ever, literary creation must strongly affirm the Soviet way of life. V. Ozerov too claims that there is still a need to struggle for the socialist ideal against its ideological enemies. There must be a perestroika of literary ideological work- it must work concertedly towards a socialist transformation of society. The attractiveness of socialism must be convincingly shown, so as to ward off the effects of the cultivation by capitalist countries of a spirit of anti-communism.

West's successes, while avoiding their failures. The acknowledgement of universal, world-wide, pan-human problems came to replace the continuous highlighting of problems experienced by Western countries. H. Mondry in her study on the ideological trends in the Soviet Union during the early glasnost years[55], revealed in Russian literary criticism, discusses how the general emphasis on pro-Russian and anti-Western sentiments continued into the beginning of the glasnost era, but in 1987 a sharp change could be perceived towards "pan-human" values, and attempts to reduce the significance of geographical, national and cultural borders. This was in keeping with the introduction of a kind of 'Russian capitalism' and the encouragement to learn from the west in many of its economic practices that have proved to be productive and viable.

Litterateurs were to help instil this new universalist spirit in the Soviet people. Yu. Lukin, in his article "The democratisation of culture", notes that at the XXVII Congress on the cultural politics of the party, the multinational nature of Soviet art was emphasised, and its active role in the forming of the man of this world- a patriot and a genuine internationalist[56]. He goes on to state that works of literature that deal with the global problems of humanity, play an important role in confirming the party's policy of peace and wide co-operation. Throughout the progressive world there is great scope for literature to work towards the uniting of all people of good will in the name of common interests. He declares that contact between representatives of culture in the present circumstances frequently proves to be one of the most important channels for the establishment of mutual trust of peoples, which is necessary in bringing about the uniting of men's efforts to overcome global problems and scientific technical co-operation for the sake of peaceful goals[57]. And later he declares that in a discussion with a group of representatives of world culture, M.S. Gorbachev noted that "the spiritual energy of the representatives of science and culture can further the elaboration of the new

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[55] The Evaluation of Ideological Trends in Recent Soviet Literary Scholarship, 1990.

[56] Voprosy Literatury, February 1988, p. 6.

[57] Ibid. p. 13.

political thinking of the whole of human society in the affirmation of the priority of pan-human values over all others."[58].

The success of the reforms lay in the motivation of people towards the economic and technological development of the country. In his article published in February 1988 in Voprosy Literatury, Yu. Lukin reiterates the Leninist belief that literature must help fulfil the tasks standing before Soviet society: "e intensification of the economy, the acceleration of scientific technological progress, the perestroika of government planning, organisation and discipline. This transformation of society would necessitate a change in the style of functioning, and thus "the decisive reorientation of the whole social consciousness towards the quick assimilation of new ideas, to the deliverance from antiquated, backward views and concepts,.."[59]. He asserts that "During the past year a series of resolutions have been made by the Central Committee and the Soviet of Ministers, directed towards the upliftment of the role of Soviet culture, literature and art in the acceleration of the socio- economic development of the country." [60]. And Ozerov affirms that it is necessary to clearly steer the course towards socio-economic acceleration, towards the intensification of the human factor. The moment demands decisive polemics with negativism, pettiness and spinelessness, and it is literature and literary criticism's duty to take up the struggle for social renewal, refuting all that is hostile to Soviet society. The destiny of the party's plans lies in their hands. Litterateurs were called to help rectify the loss of community spirit that had occurred under Brezhnev, by encouraging social cohesion, to work towards the development of an ethically, morally stable, and selfless citizen, a good family person and a productive worker.

Literature and literary criticism have thus been expected to march hand in hand with the new ideology advanced by Gorbachev and his supporters- "In these days

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[58] Ibid. p. 12.

[59] "Demokratizatsiya kultury", p. 7.

[60] Ibid. p. 3.

of the new editorial office's multi-national discussion of the Programmes of the CPSU's projects, of the changes in the CPSU's Statutes, of the basic directions of the USSR's economic and social development from 1986-1990 and in the period until the year 2000, the representatives of Soviet literature and art are advancing in a single system with all the soviet people, rallied around the Communist party, its Leninist Central Committee."[61]. The state and party continued to rely on the propagation of its ideology by the creative intelligentsia. H. Mondry states that "although Gorbachev made a point of separating himself from the policy of giving ideological directions, as practised by his predecessors, messages "from above" continue to be received and advocated by official literary criticism."[62]- in glasnost times literary criticism continued to be used to promote the new policies. It appears that "de-ideologisation" was in fact merely "re-ideologisation", that what Gorbachev and the supporters of glasnost attempted to create is what K. Bjornager, in his address at the Louisiana conference on literature and perestroika, refers to as the "democratisation of culture" rather than a "cultural democracy"[63]. Bjornager asserts "In a cultural-political context we have here two different sets of implications: democratisation of culture is a controlling of people's taste by means of the support of the State given to culture, but in a cultural democracy the State must support a framework and forms of organisation that can give a broad and rather undefined cultural life the right conditions for growth."[63] Democratisation of culture implies a decision from above concerning what is good and right-ie. democracy- which is then communicated downwards. In a cultural democracy the very form contains the possibility for the culture to be a feedback from the people as to what is happening within and to them, as to what their concerns and interests are.

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[61] Lukin, Yu. in Voprosy Literatury, November 1985, p. 38.

[62] 1990, p. 113.

[63] "Reflections on Culture and Cultural Policy", in Magnusson, M. (ed), 1989, p. 36.

2.2. THE ROLE OF LITERARY PERIODICALS DURING GLASNOST

An understanding of the role played by literary criticism during glasnost must further take into account the role of the literary press during these years. In Russia, perhaps more than anywhere else in the world, the press, as part of the apparatus developed to disseminate culture, has served as the basis for the production and distribution of literary criticism, and during glasnost, journal and newspaper articles remained the basic form of criticism's existence. The new leadership believed that freedom of information and the press was paramount to foster democratic values and attitudes, and at the cutting edge of the glasnost campaign was the revitalisation of the Soviet media, which through its distortions and omissions had become incapable of articulating or mediating social impulses, and completely unrepresentative of the people's needs and interests. It would be instrumental in bringing about the '"revolution in people's consciousness"' and would perform the task of '"galvanising the intellectual and spiritual potential of society"'[64]. Despite much concern at the beginning of the reform process as to how far the new policies of freedom of expression would go, by the third year even the most sceptical analysts had begun to concede that the policy of glasnost had wrought profound changes in the character of the Soviet media. The media, regarded by the party as an instrument to mobilise public opinion, was encouraged to generate public debate over problems and policy options from opposing viewpoints. In an address to media executives in mid-1987, Gorbachev urged that editors not allow newspapers, magazines and periodicals to be creatures of narrow group interests, and demanded that the media present the voices of the whole of society, assuming that the inner, unifying truth would transcend the limited and partial visions of the many[65]. In addresses to the media such as the ones made in January and September 1988, Gorbachev affirmed his position: '"Publish everything. There should be a pluralism of opinions. But with such directedness that the line of

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[64] Hosking, G.A. in Graffy, J. and Hosking, G. (eds), 1989, p. 3.

[65] Ibid. p. 278.

perestroika, the cause of socialism, are defended and strengthened."'[66]. Yu. Lukin reports that at the XXVII congress, the party called for the strengthening of the personal responsibility of the directors of the press organs for not only the artistic level, but also the ideological content of publications[67], and indeed, as J. Zasurskij noted at the Louisiana Conference, after the Central Committee's Plenary session in April 1985, the mass media which includes the literary periodicals, began implementing the policy of glasnost, and in fact became one of the major instruments of the perestroika taking place in Russia[68].

There is no doubt that, for whatever reason, the desired revitalisation of the press, including the literary press, did occur during glasnost. Many journals, such as Novij Mir and Znamya, were completely rejuvenated by their editors and the overall circulation of literary journals grew fantastically. According to J. Graffy[69], subscription to the Soviet press rose by over 18 000 000 in 1988. He attributes this to the fact that the media began to concentrate on what the public wanted, and attempted to publish more lively and penetrating reporting, whose relationship with the official ideology was much less clear than it used to be, and sometimes blatantly opposed to it. This flourishing of the press contributed to the reanimation of literary criticism during glasnost as not only were critics eager to express views that were previously unacceptable, but were also faced with the necessity of competing for attention, publication space, and readership with both fellow critics, and historians, economists, and sociologists.

Given this renewed vigour of the press, the abandonment of formal restrictions, and the persistence of the ideo-educational function of literature and literary criticism in the Soviet Union under glasnost, the literary journals and newspapers were inevitably drawn into the socio-political polemics and debates of these years.

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[66] Ibid p. 279.

[67] "Demokratizatsiya kultury", Voprosy Literatury, February 1988, p. 21.

[68] "Perestroika and Journalism", in Magnusson, M. (ed), 1989, p. 47.

[69] "The literary press" in Graffy, J. and Hosking, G.(eds), 1989, p. 135.

Whatever Gorbachev's intentions behind his new media policies, it appeared that the freedoms accorded the press assumed a momentum of their own, and several literary journals, instead of being reconstructed in the spirit of glasnost, ranged themselves against the new policies. The party's tight control on the literary press was replaced by editorial censorship which manifested itself in the choice of texts and articles to be published in periodicals. This meant that editors played a large role in determining the political leaning of a periodical and the content of the literary critical articles published therein. All journals began to present their version of the contemporary situation, and their opinion on the tasks, directions, approaches, tempo and means for the perestroika of the social structure[70]. Different periodicals and newspapers clearly reflected different viewpoints, according to the ideological standpoint of their editorial staff, and engaged in sporadic debates with those representing an opposing line, or a different "faction", on a particular issue. Each periodical came to be regarded as a mirror of a leading literary idea and of a specific social position. Some journals, such as Novij Mir, Literaturnaya Gazeta, Neva, Znamya, and Oktyabr' came to be seen as mouthpieces and champions of perestroika; while the so-called "Triple Alliance"- Nash Sovremennik, Molodaya Gvardiya, Moskva represented conservative, ultra-nationalist ideals, and some, such as Voprosy Literatury took a middle-of-the-road position. Hostilities were openly declared: E. Dobrenko, entering the battle, claims that 'novomirski' criticism sprang up from the soil of healthy social freedom, the struggle of ideas, whereas 'molodogvardeyski' criticism is based on a readjustment of the critical apparatus to the system through an organised lie[71]. The situation during the glasnost era was evidently one of group passions, a continuation of the old attitude of a polar split between "ours" ("nashi") and "not ours" ("ne nashi").

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[70] Chuprinin, S. in Znamya, January 1990, p. 206.

[71] of "O chyom molchim? I pochemu?", Voprosy Literatury, January 1989.

2.3. THE RE-EVALUATION OF THE RUSSIAN CLASSICS

One more aspect of Soviet literary criticism during the era of glasnost that must be pointed out, is the reaffirmation of the tendency to re-evaluate the literary heritage of the past. This has always constituted an important part of the ideological life of official literary criticism in the Soviet Union. Works of the great Russian writers of the past reappeared in new editions and were discussed in numerous critical works. Valentin Rasputin insisted in an interview that it is a civic necessity for Russians to read the literature of their past such as Tolstoy and Dostoevsky[72], and in general, the ideal of nineteenth-century classical literature was renewed. The discussion on "The classics and us" that took place in 1977 was published in Moskva in the first few issues of 1990, was clearly in defence of the classics. The editorial foreword emphasizes the topicality of the discussion for the present day, with its ideological and aesthetic antagonisms, and the search for openness and truth. In his address, S. Mashinsky declared that the classics possess the astonishing capacity to discuss with its readers that which concerns them most at a particular time[73]. He stated that the classics live on and enrich their readers, that they should indeed be reinterpreted in the present. He points to the fact that whereas exposures and corrections pass on, the nineteenth-century classic continues to live, and its significance is becoming deeper. Classical Russian literature is not closed to the present problems, for it has an intransient quality. M. Lobanov declares that the Russian literature of the 19th century is a living phenomenon, an inalienable part of the people's national and moral strength[74]. The classics must be loved and defended, they must be protected as the forests and rivers are protected. Yu. Seleznev believes that an important historical phenomenon is occurring- the return of the classics in the form of contemporary consciousness. He declares that it is without doubt necessary to re-interpret the classics in the present time, in order to forget about the times of the pogrom

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[72] cf Walsh, H., "The village writers and the single[stream theory of Russian history" in Thompson, E. (ed), 1991, p. 46.

[73] Moskva, February 1990, p. 176.

[74] Ibid. p. 178.

against them. One must fight a war to the death against past unjust interpretations by means of new interpretations[75]. It is evident that in the glasnost era the Russian classics were once again accorded a unique status. They were actualised, made contemporary. The Soviet man, refusing to live as he did before, but not knowing how to live otherwise, again sought guidance and instruction in the classics, in the ideological values expressed in them. They were once again regarded by many as embodying something higher than man, as possessing the "istina", the truth, the world formula, that could lead man to his salvation.

In the post-glasnost era, the classics have in fact become the centre of polemics that began during glasnost concerning their significance in the contemporary situation, and their relation to the new popular literature. Some critics have encouraged an attitude of respect for the classics, seeing them as "real", "great" or "high" literature as opposed to the contemporary "trade" literature , "in bad taste", "mass", "anti-literature"[76]. However, others, such as S. Shvedov criticize professional critics' neglect of the large layer of belle-lettres that enjoys the support of a broad strata of readers. In his view there is a necessity to study not only masterpieces, but also that which appeals to the taste of the mass reader, asserting that a work gains significance through its influence and success amongst the public[77]. V. Ozerov criticizes such attempts to place contemporary literature on the same footing as the classics. He praises critics such as A. Turkov, N Ivanova, N. Khudaiberganov, and I. Zolotussky who are not guilty of the sin of endlessly praising modern works. He advocates the saving of monuments of national culture such as the classics; a love for Russian literature, which has a vital link with the kernel of the people's morality; and aggressive resistance towards modernism, bourgeois "mass culture", vandalist by its very nature. This, to him, represents the intrusion of an alien ideology, the impoverishment of culture. A. Vasilevsky, in his article, "But we live in Russia", polemicises with A. Ageev who

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[75] Ibid. p. 191.

[76] Shevedov, S. in Voprosy Literatury, May 1988, p. 3.

[77] Ibid. p. 7.

attempts to discredit the nineteenth century classics, defining their moral rigourism as examples of totalitarian thinking and a precursor of the cruel anti-human norms established by the communist government. Ageev sees the writer's prophetic mission as a fiction and praises "new" literature for the fact that unlike "great" literature (Vasilevsky points out that the inverted commas used by Ageev are ironic), it "refuses to claim moral leadership, to a monumental ideological pathos.."[78]. It poses questions but relies on other fields of scholarship to provide the answers. Vasilevsky asserts that in fact "new" literature does aspire to precisely this position and attempts to give answers to the eternal questions of "Why?" and "What is to be done?". He then goes on to say that although the peoples' fear, like an allergic reaction, to "ideology" is understandable, being associated in their mind with totalitarianism, there should not be an automatically negative reaction to the word. Although people believe they are entering a phase of post-ideological consciousness, this should not mean an automatic rejection of any idea with a capital letter as a new non-freedom, which in fact often only leads to the next ideological trap. He questions A. Ageev's interpretation of a "free culture" - free from what? - from official commands, from bureaucratic censorship, or from the power of great ideas? I. Rodyanskaya, responding to the same article by Ageev, in her article, "Will we live without the great?", refutes his claim that '"..mass culture is the natural opponent of formal, imperial, "great" literature..", calling it instead an "..excellent tool of 'imperial' cultural politics.."[79]. Unlike new literature, the former "great" literature, displayed a faith in man and the world. She sees his article as an "ideological injection", smelling of totalitarianism, where facts are carefully arranged to impart a message, and against which it is useless to polemicise. Ageev's accusation of the 19th century great literature as being hostile to "freedom and democracy" is, in her view, no more than lying banality. This literature was not created by private professional artists, such as have long-since been established in the "civilized" world, but by "teachers of life". Ageev claimed that the place of "great" literature is in an historical museum, for it wholly belongs

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[78] "No my zhivyom v Rossii", Literaturnaya Gazeta, 29 May 1991, p. 11.

[79] Literaturnaya Gazeta, 29 May 1991, p. 11.

to the past, being linked to an historical social base. To Rodyanskaya, this is simply an example of "vulgar sociology", corresponding with the Marxist ideology. She regards Ageev's ideology as being against holy things and transcendence, opposing the desire of any man to be "above" and "over". In her opinion, the contemporary attempts to put classical literature under suspicion reflect the desire to rehabilitate the greatest totalitarian ideology ever, by showing that it in itself is not evil, but only the soil in which it took root. This literature - "in a certain sense, the heart of the country, the soul of its culture and history.."[101] was thus accused of radiating a totalitarian threat. She ends by declaring "great" literature to be still very much alive. The classics were thus once again looked to for messages of truth, hope and salvation, as constants in a changing society.

The classics were certainly very much alive during the glasnost era, not only being widely read and discussed, but being cited and quoted in the most diverse situations to substantiate a writer, journalist, or publicist's view on a certain issue. Indeed well-known quotes from the classics have often been pulled totally out of context, to put the weight of their superior insight behind a view expressed. L. Rosenbloom, using the example of Dostoevsky's well-known line " beauty will save the world, comments on how this, being a quotation from a classic appears with new meanings in all kinds of situations, ranging from art exhibitions to young fashion show to emphasize the significance of the occasion[80]. Such quotes became popularised and vulgarized. The classics were still very much embedded in the daily lives as well as thoughts of the Soviet people.

Thus, as in past eras of Soviet history, literary critics reinterpreted and actualised the nineteenth century classics, accommodating the meanings and values expressed in them to the contemporary situation. They both examined the contemporary situation in the light of "messages" contained in the classics, and evaluated the works as a path to a new knowledge of reality. S. Semenova asserts that now that for the first time the possibility of uniting in the ideals of democracy

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[80] "'Krasota spaset mir', o 'simvole very' F.M. Dostoevskogo", Voprosy Literatury, December 1991.

and respect for the right of the personality has appeared, humanity is more than ever in need of the higher goals expressed in the nineteenth century Russian classics[81]. G. Shchennikov praises N. Kushina for his book Man in Dostoevsky's creation for not leaving the classic in its epoch, but taking into account the new resonances in his creation, and undertaking a contemporary approach in his treatment of the important problems[82]. Not only were there frequent debates around the place of the classics in Russian and Soviet literature and cultural history; but social, political, and economic polemics were waged around re-interpretations and re-evaluations of this literature of the past. H. Mondry demonstrates how nineteenth-century Russian literature was incorporated into the glasnost ideological debates; how the interpretation of literary works played a role in polemics; how the tendency to treat literary texts as a source of political and socio-economic knowledge remained intact; and how the Shalomov view on Russian literature as instrumental in the coinage of ideological beliefs and moral clichés in twentieth century Russian society continued to be applicable to the glasnost times. She asserts "Russian literature once more is being cast into ideological networks, and the heroes and heroines produced by it are being made into a pattern for imitation, a model for perfection..."[83]. According to H. Mondry, the process of the re-evaluation and rehabilitation of the cultural heritage of the past constituted an essential part of the glasnost campaign. Indeed, I. Rodionov declares: "..in the present days of discord, of babel, the prophetic word of the Russian classic is becoming not only astonishingly actual, but also a sermon, illuminating with its light."[84]. New readings of texts were given based on a thematic adjustment to the problematics of contemporary issues.

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[81] "Nuzhny li nam absolyuty?", Literaturnaya Gazeta 25 December 1991, p. 11.

[82] "Chelovekovedeniye Dostoevskogo", Voprosy Literatury, August 1987.

[83] "The 'literariness' of current ideological debates around Russian national character" in Mondry, H & Kasack, W. (eds), 1990, p. 15.

[84] "O narode i svobode", Moskva, September 1990, p. 190.

3. HISTORY OF INTERPRETATIONS OF "THE DEVILS"

An examination of the history of the question of the interpretation of Dostoevsky's The Devils by Soviet literary criticism shows how prevailing ideological trends within successive periods of Soviet history have been reflected in critics' interpretations of The Devils. This is due to the fact that throughout Russian and Soviet history it has been impossible to isolate literary criticism from a specific historical context that can be defined in political, cultural and social terms. And because critics' discussions of The Devils have always been associated with their repudiation or endorsement of specific aspects of Dostoevsky's ideology, shifts, reversals, developments and conflicts of ideology come to light in the various interpretations offered of The Devils throughout Russian and Soviet history.

Each change in the internal and external situation prompted changes in ideology, and a corresponding critical "re-understanding" of The Devils. New political, social, economic policies, as well as changing attitudes towards the West, have always been defined and justified by a continuously adjusted official ideology, and each adjustment in ideology necessitated a new Soviet attitude towards Dostoevsky, a change in the direction of the critics' tendentiousness.[1] The Devils was reinterpreted and reappraised over and over again in accordance with new Soviet realities, critics' views fluctuating between the extremes of complete rejection to full rehabilitation. The author's world-view, as it is expressed in The Devils was thus either repudiated as being in no way relevant to reality, or adapted according to the contemporary Soviet social and political needs, so as his ideals were identified with the party's goals. In each case, the critic's interpretation of the novel aimed to steer citizens' consciousness in the right direction.

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[1]For most of the century, the tight control of the Communist Party on all aspects of culture, meant that Soviet literary criticism's treatment of Dostoevsky of necessity followed a single ideological line. New directives "from above", were disseminated through newspapers and journals. Nevertheless, in pre-Soviet Russia and during brief periods of ideological relaxation in the Soviet Union, there was some possibility of expression of opposition to party policies and attitudes, and varying, and even conflicting, ideological trends, emerged. These, in general, constituted no more than what can be termed "officially sanctioned opposition"- small and limited doses of freedom of expression granted to the intelligentsia, that led to limited discord and polemics, expressed through the medium of literary scholarship.

In order to fully comprehend the question of the history of interpretations of The Devils, several constant features, which are discernible in literary criticism throughout the various stages of Russian and Soviet history, should be pointed out. Firstly, each stage was accompanied by the rise and fall of influential critics, who were either seen as the champions of a new ideology, or discredited as exponents of a false and obsolete ideology. Some critics, such as V. Ermilov and D. Zaslavsky, were able to maintain their position as the standard bearers of Soviet Party literary policy and truth, by their constant readiness to respond to each zigzag in party policy. Secondly, in periods of strict Communist control, opposing ideological trends that could not be tolerated, were ruthlessly stamped out by the discrediting, silencing and even physical removal of offending critics. Thirdly, throughout the Soviet era, the Marxist-Leninist approach was considered to be the only desirable, or even permissable, approach to literature. This meant that other approaches were actively discouraged, or even prohibited. Particularly undesirable were formalism, which was considered to be '"sterile"'[2], as it elevates form and style to a role of paramount importance over content; comparativism, which allegedly displayed a servile, deferential attitude towards the West, by portraying Russian literature as borrowed and imitative; and all metaphysical, idealistic interpretations, which ignored the socio-economic base of all phenomena. Fourthly, according to the Communists' utilitarian approach, by which the only permissible road for literature is that of direct service to the party, works labelled as "reactionary" were either passed over in silence, adapted in accordance with party requirements, or "unmasked" and harshly criticized so as to eradicate their harmful influence. Fifthly, literary critics showed an ongoing tendency to select from the work being analysed, certain themes and aspects that they considered worthy of discussion, and to reject the rest. This was in accordance with the encouraged methodology regarding the analysis of classical texts, adopted from Lenin's teaching that the progressive aspects of a particular author's writings should be highlighted, and from Plekhanov's methodology of "otsiuda i dosiuda", or "from here up to here", which is based on a partial acceptance of the writer's work. All

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[2] cf. Seduro, V, 1957, p. 312.

that did not support the critic's ideological viewpoint was ignored, minimized, or distorted. Finally, new official attitudes and tendencies were justified with reference to the views of a widely-esteemed, ideologically-canonised figure, presented as an incontestable authority on the question of literature, usually Belinsky, Lenin, or Gorky. Thus, their writings, which expressed an ambivalent attitude towards Dostoevsky, were used both to substantiate the harsh condemnation of Dostoevsky's reactionary views, and the justification or rehabilitation of the author.

3.1. PRE-REVOLUTIONARY INTERPRETATIONS OF "THE DEVILS"

The Devils was published in 1872. The beginning of the 1870s marked the apogée of the "narodnik", or populist, movement, which had gained momentum during the 1860s. This movement stood for social and political change, for the end of autocratic rule in Russia, and freedom for the people. Its supporters ranged from more moderate liberals advocating slow evolutionary change, beginning with the education and improved living conditions of the peasants, to radical revolutionaries who believed that change would only be achieved through the violent overthrow of the tsarist government. The movement was characterised by a faith in the peculiar virtues and destiny of the Russian people, and the belief that the individual would find fulfilment in dedicated service, in one form or another, to the "narod", the people. Opposing these currents were the conservatives, who wished to maintain the autocratic monarchy and hierarchical social structure.

The novel was greeted with some positive criticism on the part of conservatives who praised it as a bold revelation of the horrifying truth about the contemporary degenerates and radicals[3], but principally it sparked off a lot of violent criticism among radicals, insulted by what they considered to be its anti-revolutionary connotations. They attacked it as a treacherous slander, fabricated by a vindictive reactionary. V. Burenin referred to the heroes of the novel as a gang of idiots,

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[3] cf. Hare, R., 1959, p. 130.

while P.N. Tkachov said that Dostoevsky had limited himself to an analysis of psychiatric anomalies in man, and depicted the inner world of mental patients.

The narodniki, enraged by the image presented of the generation of revolutionaries, labelled it as reactionary as soon as the first chapters appeared. Nikolai Konstantinovich Mikhailovsky, a supporter of the movement and one of the first and most influential critics of The Devils, wrote to agree with this judgment in an article which appeared in Notes of the Fatherland in February 1873, "From literary and magazine notes for 1873", and in essays written seven years later, the most important of which were "Commentaries on The Devils" and "A Cruel Talent", published in 1882. Mikhailovsky attacked Dostoevsky as both an artist and an ideologue. He firmly rejected the Nechaev case, a monstrous affair, as suitable material for a novel of any significance. He criticises Dostoevsky's clumsy depiction of characters reflecting contemporary youth and especially the group of revolutionaries, declaring both they and their ideas to be in no way typical. The Nechaev affair, according to him, was an exceptional occurrence, a grievous and criminal mistake, that Dostoevsky seized upon as a pretext to represent radicals and revolutionaries as pathological cases, while ignoring the true progressive youth of the time, who represented the Russia of the future. He claims that all the principal characters in The Devils are driven by eccentric ideas imposed on them by the author. According to Mikhailovsky, Dostoevsky clearly intended the novel as a sort of allegory- Russia being possessed by devils who have lost their sense of national identity and indulge in negation and destruction- but disregarded the real devils of the time: those of encroaching capitalism. The critic's further articles underlined his continued ideological opposition to the author's socio-political ideas. In "A Cruel Talent", he discusses what he perceives to be an increasingly dominant element in Dostoevsky's work- a cruel, almost rejoicing exultation in man's suffering, caused by the conflict between his sympathy for the oppressed and his rejection of social change. He says that Dostoevsky displaced the hatred one would expect to be directed at the oppressive social order, to those guilty of revolt against social order. Mikhailovsky objects to the gratuitous nature of Dostoevsky's interest in suffering and torment, which should be directed towards arousing

discontent and motivation for action. In his opinion, Dostoevsky's work is not utilitarian, but shows sadism, reverence for the established order, and a desire to preach. To Mikhailovsky, The Devils represented an attempt to discredit narodnik ideology and repudiate all revolutionary aims, and so he rejected the entire cast of characters and denied the novel's validity.

The failure of the populists' attempt to "go to the people", led to a disillusionment with the peasantry and the role it could play in bringing about social change. The decadent movement, which arose in the 1890s and reached its peak after the failure of the 1905 revolution, expressed a disenchantment with politics in general, turning to the metaphysical and a search for a true ideal outside of daily reality. Its representatives criticized the social demands being made on literature. To them, Dostoevsky represented a remedy of religious mysticism in contrast to the futility of efforts at social reform. During the last decade of the nineteenth century, there was also a swift rise of the Marxist movement as a political force among the intelligentsia and working class. This movement soon took over leadership of the radical wing of Russian political opinion and its influence in the literary field began to spread.

Dmitry Sergeyevich Merezhkovsky, the leader of the decadent movement during the 1890s, wrote extensively on Dostoevsky. He criticized the realist critics for their inability to comprehend the writer and labelled him a "Prophet of the Russian revolution", and "revolution pretending to be reaction". The symbolist, Yul' Aikhenval'd, declaring social and political questions to be irrelevant to the core of Dostoevsky's art, claimed that the author fully expressed the spirit of the age: unceasing anxiety, confusion, spiritual chaos. He too believed that Dostoevsky had pronounced ill-boding prophecies.

Another more militant group of the intelligentsia, repudiating their former allegiance to revolutionary programs after the failed 1905 revolution, published a book in 1909, Vekhi, which served as their manifesto. They referred to Marxism as irreligious, unphilosophical, and working against the interests of the nation, and

alluded to Dostoevsky's treatment of the revolutionaries in The Devils, saying that '"the legion of devils has entered into the gigantic body of Russia and shakes it convulsively, tortures and cripples it."'[4]

The Marxist, Yevgeni Andreyevich Solovyov in his book published in 1891, F.M. Dostoevsky: His Life and Literary Activity, attempted to explain the characteristics of Dostoevsky's art by his social position as a literary proletariat. He finds at the heart of all Dostoevsky's work, a plea for the rights of the oppressed, who rise up in anger and despair to take vengeance. Georgi Valentinovich Plekhanov, the father of Russian Marxism and greatest theorist of its application to art, studied literature as a reflection of the life of society, and particularly of economic facts". His evaluation of Russian authors rested on their attitude toward the development of capitalism and the class struggle in Russia. In "The Russian Worker in the Revolutionary Movement", Plekhanov referred to The Devils in order to point out the problems of morality in the crucial years of transition, inferring that Dostoevsky saw revolutionary activity as an excuse for immoral behaviour, and attempted to discredit the revolutionaries in his work.

Maxim Gorky, firmly devoted to Marxist ideology, retained an antipathy towards Dostoevsky almost throughout his life and refused to accept him as a social pedagogue, although he recognised his artistic talent. In 1913, a dramatisation of The Devils was produced by the Moscow Art Theatre, and Gorky wrote two articles, "On Karamazovism" and "More on Karamazovism", in protest against the production. He denounced the popularisation of Dostoevsky, and particularly of The Devils, believing it to be harmful to the public's interests to devote attention to certain warped and morbid traits of the national psyche. Influenced by Mikhailovsky, he criticized Dostoevsky's implication that the sadistic cruelty of the disillusioned nihilist was in any way a typical phenomenon. He felt that these traits should be combatted by the creation of a healthy social environment and that instead of Stavrogins, the Russians should be shown examples of courage, spiritual

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[4] cf. Seduro, V., 1957, p. 73

health, and action.

3.2. POST-REVOLUTIONARY INTERPRETATIONS OF "THE DEVILS"

Post-revolutionary literary scholarship in many respects continued that of the previous century. From the very beginning, the Communist Party intended to subordinate literature and literary criticism to political designs, and to the aim of creating a proletarian state. The building of a new social system, with new norms and ethico-aesthetic categories, and the cultivation of new men, necessitated centralized planning and control. These were steadily extended over all cultural activities.

For a while after the Revolution, and during the NEP period, there was some collaboration with the bourgeoisie, and relative freedom and diversity of thought in Russia. The so-called "bourgeois press" continued to exist, often carrying articles of a blatantly anti-Bolshevik inclination, and many short-lived periodicals sprang up that ventured to express independent and unorthodox opinions. H. Muchnic sees the pre-Stalinist age as a period of heightened emotionalism, in which the atmosphere of partisanship, of narrow passionate commitments, made independence difficult[5]. Literary critics hastened to express through their work, their attitude to the new socio-political situation, and a conflict in attitudes towards the revolution became apparent.

Valerian Fyodorovich Pereverzev, who exerted the strongest influence in views and methodology in Soviet Marxist literary scholarship during the 1920s, expressed his opinion, in an essay published in 1921, "Dostoevsky and Revolution", that in The Devils, Dostoevsky had given a faithful rendering of the essence of the revolutionary upheaval- an elemental revolt of the petty bourgeoisie. He declared that Dostoevsky's importance could not be ignored in the post-1917 period, as the problems he raised had not yet been solved. They constituted the burning questions of the time, as Russia was still caught in the whirlwind of revolution, and

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[5] Muchnic, H.: "Literature in the NEP Period", in Hayward, M. & Labedz, L. (eds.), 1963, p. 42.

was painfully aware of the vicissitudes of the revolutionary tragedy. Pereverzev often draws explicit analogies between events in The Devils and Bolshevik practice. He asserts that, to Dostoevsky, revolution is cruel, immoral, and brings terror and despotism, for the once-oppressed wish to become despots themselves. Dostoevsky showed that a real revolutionary is not a noble, compassionate defender of the weak, but a man driven by self-will to seek power, such as Peter Verkhovensky and Stavrogin in his revolutionary phase. Pereverzev argues that whilst revolution can bring humanizing freedom to the downtrodden, it can also lead the freed slave, intoxicated with his new-found freedom, to act without legal, moral or ethical concerns, and to crush not just his recent enemies, but all dissidents as well, and so everything returns to its starting point, with the roles of slaves and masters filled by new people. The new order may even be worse than the old. Pereverzev's analysis of Dostoevsky's position revealed his own disillusionment with the revolution he had seen. He claims that revolution is a seducer that offers diabolical treasures. In The Devils, Dostoevsky revealed aspects of revolution of which not even revolutionaries are aware, and evidently understood the nature of revolution better than many contemporary revolutionary ideologists. Pereverzev declares that all happened as Dostoevsky predicted, even the disillusionment of the revolutionaries, for the proletarian revolution of 1917 too, had suffered from the influence of the rebellious petty bourgeoisie. Pereverzev sees The Devils as a wise, prophetic and instructive book, warning against the degeneration of revolution.

Georgi Yefimovich Gorbachev, who was regarded as one of the most orthodox Marxist critics of the 1920s, published several articles on Dostoevsky, such as "The R olution and Dostoevsky" in 1922, and "The Social Roots of Dostoevsky's Teaching" in 1924, in which he used Dostoevsky's social roots to explain the philosophical content of the writer's work. He did not see Dostoevsky as harmful and thought that the myth of his powerful criticism of socialism should be destroyed. Gorbachev claims that in The Devils, Dostoevsky created a ruthlessly realistic image of the tragedy of social individualism, criticized utopian socialism, and pointed to the ineffectuality of small groups of conspirators, dislocated from

the masses and the genuinely democratic revolutionary movement. Gorbachev claims that despite his disillusionment with the revolutionaries' coercive methods, socialism never lost its appeal for Dostoevsky. In The Devils, Shigalovism is only a caricature of utopian socialism and did not touch on scientific socialism which Dostoevsky did not know. Verkhovensky is a result of the aristocratic liberalism of the 1840s, and Stavrogin of the degeneration and disillusionment of the nobility, who takes up revolution as a new attempt to escape from boredom, having already tried debauchery, mysticism, and nihilism.

In the 1920s, V. Lvov-Rogachevsky and L.N. Voitolovsky produced surveys of Russian literature, containing chapters on Dostoevsky. Lvov-Rogachevsky saw Dostoevsky's literature as that of the city intelligentsia living in uneasy poverty. His characters such as Stavrogin and Peter Verkhovensky arise from the depths of social conflict, and his prophetically significant novels, such as The Devils, show how crime stems from the tragedy of contemporary life. He claims that Dostoevsky was a champion and precursor of the Russian revolution, for, despite his attacks on socialism, he gives expression to the new hopes of radical social reform in Russia. In the final analysis, his intense images of human suffering hold sway over his hostility towards nihilists and socialists. Lvov-Rogachevsky condemns Dostoevsky's religious reactionary ideology in the latter part of his life, but finds extenuating circumstances for it in his limited and unpleasant experiences of socialism- the course of revolution in the West, the Nechaev affair, and atheistic socialism in Russia, which advocates that all is permitted. Peter Verkhovensky and Stavrogin represent Dostoevsky's conception of this atheistic socialism. Dostoevsky failed to see that the true idealists and public workers did not follow the slogan of "all is permitted", and that Nechaev was not a revolutionary of pure strain.

L.N. Voitolovsky's chapter on Dostoevsky in History of Russian Literature in the Nineteenth Century, published in 1926, represented the first attempt to apply methods of Freudian analysis to Dostoevsky's work, but almost no Soviet scholars followed in his footsteps. He too sees Dostoevsky as a writer of a new social

milieu, the raznochintsy, intellectuals divorced from the masses, and his writing as a response to the new spirit of capitalism. Money is shown to be a poison that infects his heroes with a capitalist psychology and turns them into men such as Stavrogin. In Freudian manner, Dostoevsky's characters all conceal secret desires and passions beneath the mask of everyday life; and in all characters, even the strongest such as Stavrogin, he sees a rotten, despicable, mean aspect that he calls "Lyamshinism", after the character of that name in The Devils. His characters are the product of capitalist life, and throw light onto the depths to which the soul sinks in the capitalist phase.

At the end of the 1920s, Gorky was received in government circles as an arbiter of Soviet literature and his views on Dostoevsky established the criteria for criticism of his works. He persisted in his denunciation of Dostoevsky's ideology, despite his admiration for him as an artist. He returned to The Devils, calling it '"the most talented and most evil of all the countless attempts to defame the revolutionary movement of the 1870s"'[6]. In his address to the First All-Union Congress of Soviet Writers in August 1934, he referred to Dostoevsky as the offspring of an inhuman capitalist system, who took revenge for the misfortunes of his revolutionary youth through the sufferings of his heroes and reactionary tendencies.

1928-1929 marked the end of NEP, the beginning of Stalin's absolute control over the Party, and the inauguration of the First Five Year Plan. This launched a concerted effort to convert the USSR from a weak, dependent, agrarian country into a powerful, industrial nation, independent of world capitalism. At the beginning of the 1930s, there was a shift in literary policy too, which aimed at stamping out all vestiges of bourgeois culture. The "dialectical-materialist" method was imposed as the sole method for Soviet study of literature, and it was declared that literature and literary criticism had no right to be neutral, but must actively serve the ruling class. "Hence, just as the peasants were to be collectivized, so the writers and

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[6] cf. Seduro, V., 1957, p. 89.

intellectuals in general were to be "bolshevized" according to the slogan of the day"[7]. During the First Five-Year Plan, the most widespread and intensive effort of all times was made to mobilize literature for use as propaganda and, as in other fields, there was an utter intolerance of opponents, doubters and sceptics; and a ruthless disregard for individuals or groups who blocked the march to socialism. Throughout the Stalinist regime, intellectuals were terrorized into abject conformity and submission to the Party's political and social ideology. During 1929 and the early 1930s, campaigns were launched to discredit as "mensheviks", such critics as Gorbachev, Lvov-Rogachevsky, and Pereverzev, who was accused of dismissing the educational role of literature, disregarding the importance of the political and philosophical convictions of a writer, and isolating art from politics. As E.J. Simmons asserts, "In some ten years after Lenin's death, the totalitarianism of Stalin had wholly enveloped literature as it had everything else in the Soviet Union"[8].

In February 1931, the year of the fiftieth anniversary of Dostoevsky's death, an article by A.G. Tseitlin appeared in a special anniversary number of Literaturnaya Gazeta, "For a Class Reevaluation of Dostoevsky's Writing", in which he declared the author of The Devils to be a political renegade. He used a 'sociological' method to explain Dostoevsky's conversion from a participant in the Petrashevsky circle to a virulent counter-revolutionary, and stated that Dostoevsky, unlike the nineteenth century radical socialists such as Belinsky, Dobrolyubov, and Chernyshevsky, belonged to a group of down-trodden city-dwellers who could not bring themselves to join the political struggle. After his exile, Tseitlin explains, Dostoevsky took up a firm stance against nihilism, the revolutionary intelligentsia, liberalism amongst the aristocracy, and all forms of utopian socialism. His hatred culminated in The Devils, which Tseitlin considered to be one of the most reactionary novels of the time. In this novel, he claims, Dostoevsky ridicules almost

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[7] Hayward, M.: "Introduction", in Hayward, M. & Labedz, L. (eds.), 1963, p. 9.

[8] Simmons, E.J.: "The Organisation Writer (1934-46)", in Hayward, M. & Labedz, L. (eds.), 1963, p. 77.

every important segment of Russian society- the liberal nobles of the 1840s in Stepan Verkhovensky, political sycophants to the revolutionaries in Karmazinov, the anarchists in Stavrogin, and the young Russian revolutionaries in Peter Verkhovensky. He saw the designation of Dostoevsky as a 'prophet' of the revolution as false and politically harmful, for Dostoevsky was profoundly hostile to those who stood for the establishment of a socialist society. Tseitlin called on all critics of Dostoevsky to use the Marxist-Leninist method to fight against reaction and put an end to his acclaim.

The shift in emphasis and tone of Leonid Grossman's criticism stands as an example of how literary scholars were forced to adapt to the Soviet ideological requirements of the 1930s. His work on Dostoevsky published from 1934 onwards is clearly differentiated from his earlier work of the 1920s, by both his approach and the views expressed. It now appeared as a sharp attack on the writer's ideology. In "Dostoevsky and Government Circles in the 1870s", he dismissed as totally false his former belief that Dostoevsky's philosophical evolution showed a return to socialism towards the end of his life, and asserted that from the 1870s until his death, Dostoevsky was a strident anti-revolutionary. In his writings, Grossman claims, Dostoevsky struck out at the devils of the revolution, revealing a clear hatred of atheists and the revolutionary raznochintsy, and support for the Russian autocracy.

In an additional Preface to one of A.J. Dolinin's works on Dostoevsky, "From the Publishers", Kamanev expressed in succinct form the communist attitude to Dostoevsky during the 1930s. On one hand, he was recognized as a great literary figure of the nineteenth century, who was always convinced that socialism and revolution were at the centre of the problem of human history. While, on the other hand, during the second half of his life, he had become an opponent of socialism and revolution, and his writings, such as The Devils, formed a powerful block of reactionary ideology. According to Kamenev, Dostoevsky could not be easily dismissed as his work still held interest as the most profound ideological argument against socialism in the second half of the nineteenth century, and he had

succeeded in depicting the dying world of feudal and bourgeois culture in the face of socialism, but Dostoevsky scholars should use their work to expose and combat the illusoriness of his ideological system, so as others would not be infected with it.

Anatoly Vasilyevich Lunacharsky's articles, written for the fiftieth anniversary of Dostoevsky's death in 1931: "Dostoevsky as Thinker and Artist", "On Dostoevsky", and "Dostoevsky and Writers", present his belief that in the writer's works could be heard the voice of the struggling city meshchanstvo. According to him, Dostoevsky's experiences had led him to reject materialistic socialism and to remain a supporter of the Tsarist regime, but in his visions of future bliss could be discerned the essence of socialism, and in his works, he allowed his characters to call for rebellion. This was evidence that, despite his great efforts to besmirch, discredit and degrade materialist socialism, he could not completely quell his attraction for socialism. The Devils is an indication of the great lengths to which he went in order to show the revolutionaries to be ludicrous and insignificant. Lunacharsky compares The Devils to a court trial contrived by the author himself, where the most damaging conditions are created for his opponents. However, at the trial, the characters are able to escape the author's control and to freely and independently present their own case. Lunacharsky proclaims Dostoevsky to be a truly great artist, whose work held significance for both the post-World War I West, and Soviet society, where Dostoevskianism continued to exist. The Communist proletariat was still haunted without, by vestiges of the petit bourgeois environment, which manifested itself in wrecking and sabotage, and within, by doubts, hesitations, resentments, and other old bourgeois prejudices. It was therefore necessary to study Dostoevsky to become acquainted with these negative forces, so as they might be overcome.

V.V. Yermilov belonged firmly to the group of critics who took up Gorky's denunciation of Dostoevsky's ideology in order to condemn him as an artist. In his article published towards the end of the 1930s, "Gorky and Dostoevsky", he contrasts the two men, showing how, unlike Gorky, Dostoevsky manipulates

reality to impress on it his own subjective view, and transfers his characters from ordinary existence into the realm of tense ideological struggle. He defined Dostoevsky as an extreme reactionary who wished to stop the course of history. He sees in the characters of The Devils, the predecessors of the Soviet bourgeois spies and counter-revolutionary conspirators, '"fascist, Trotskyist-Bukharinist provocateurs and murderers"'[9].

The new international situation on the eve of the Second World War heralded an adaptation of Soviet ideology, and therefore of literary policy. The imminent war prompted the party to embark on a policy of stimulating unity and patriotism amongst all Soviet citizens by encouraging them to take pride in Russia's past glories, including the great Russian writers. Once the Nazis invaded Russia in 1941, the wave of nationalism that swept the land submerged all other ideological and literary concerns. The Bolsheviks began to represent themselves as protectors of the national interests of the people, territories, culture, literature, and even religion of the Soviet Union. They reinstilled the idea of Slavic community and belief in the messianic role of the Russian people, destined to free mankind from the evils of fascism. The war meant a need for new ideological tactics to arouse hatred of the enemy, and so much of what was formerly condemned as reactionary was reappraised. Many of the great names of Russian culture were used towards these ends, appearing in the new light of anti-German propaganda. Amongst them was Dostoevsky, now deemed to be one of the great patriotic writers of Russia, and who had indeed made many unflattering references to Germans in his writings. In August 1942 in Bolshevik, Y.M. Yaroslavsky, a member of the Central Committee of the Party, officially pardoned Dostoevsky and enlisted him in the struggle against the Germans. He claimed that until the end of his life, Dostoevsky retained an inner sympathy for revolutionaries, and although his reactionary ideologies evoked the criticism of progressive Russians, his artistic gift was never denied. Furthermore, despite his faults, Dostoevsky remained a profoundly Russian writer with a deep love for the Russian people. He was, unlike the followers of

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[9] cf. Seduro, V., 1957, p. 238.

Hitler, a man of love and compassion for the people.

Once this signal had been given, V.V. Yermilov, who retained his rank as a leading Party critic through successive shifts of Party literary policy, reversed the views he had formerly expressed on Dostoevsky. In 1942 an article by him, "The Great Russian Writer F. M. Dostoevsky", was published in Literatura i Iskusstvo, in which he presented the author as a great writer and Russian patriot. He argued that Dostoevsky's prophetic characterisation of Stavrogin in The Devils helped to reveal the threat of the loss of human values, although Dostoevsky did not know that this threat would be posed by fascism. Furthermore, Dostoevsky was opposed to the division of mankind into all-powerful masters and submissive slaves, as is set out in the novel in Shigalev's plan for a new society. Dostoevsky had foreseen the superman philosophy of Nietzsche, and was violently opposed to its implementation. Yermilov abandoned the traditional implacable hostility of Soviet criticism towards The Devils, saying that Peter Verkhovensky was merely Dostoevsky's portrayal of the political charlatan and adventurist, Nechaev. Yermilov even turned on the conspirators, calling them "renegades", "political gangsters", "adventurers", "murderers", and "blackmailers"[10], and highlights the anti-socialist statements of the characters. In this manner, he suggests that there is in fact no attempt in The Devils to attack the socialists, as the protagonists are in no way similar to the genuine socialist revolutionaries of the time. In his opinion, the novel is another exposition of Dostoevsky's warning that a small fraction of humanity should not attempt to rule over the others. Yermilov highlights Dostoevsky's references to German arrogance, swaggering, and banality and so enlisted even The Devils in the Soviet war effort. He concludes that Dostoevsky was only opposed to vulgar socialism with its master-and-slave theories, and that the most important theme in Dostoevsky is his violent protest against insult and injury to man by those who dream of becoming the masters of all mankind. Dostoevsky was therefore on the side of the Soviets in the battle against fascism.

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[10] cf Ibid., p. 250.

From the end of World War II until late 1947, Soviet critics continued the wartime rehabilitation of Dostoevsky. In November 1946 celebrations were held to commemorate the 125th anniversary of the author's birth. D.I. Zaslavski, as a mouthpiece of Soviet literary policy, wrote in an article in Literaturnaya Gazeta that the wartime amnesty for Dostoevsky had been extended, affirming that, despite the changes in his ideology during imprisonment, Dostoevsky's works still aroused rebellion against social injustice among the Russian youth.

In his books, The Young Dostoevsky and F.M. Dostoevsky, published in 1947, V.Y. Kirpotin acknowledges the legacy that contemporary Soviet culture had received from Dostoevsky. He insists that social protest in Dostoevsky was always stronger than his reactionary views, and that the writer's ideal of the brotherhood of man was never shaken, he merely rejected the use of force for its establishment. He sees Dostoevsky's frontal attack on the revolutionary underground in The Devils as a reaction to radical critics' interpretation of Crime and Punishment and The Idiot as arguments in favour of revolution. He does not deny that the novel represented a furious attempt to discredit revolution and the revolutionaries, accusing Dostoevsky of waiving his psychological objectivism in this novel, of tailoring life to fit his reactionary political motives, and of turning into '"a pamphleteer...in defiance of the truth"'[11], but also asserts that, despite this onslaught, the inner discord in Dostoevsky was not pacified.

The short interlude which continued after the war, was brutally ended by an abrupt shift in the ideological line, reflecting the post-war international and national policy of the Party. The new campaign, known as Zhdanovism after its chief instigator, A.A. Zhdanov, the "Lord High Executioner of cultural freedom"[12], was initiated in August 1946 by speeches made by Zhdanov, and a series of decrees, which affected every sphere of intellectual activity. The aim was to restore the situation as it existed on the eve of the war, by reinstating ideological orthodoxy and the

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[11] cf. Ibid. p. 269.

[12] Simmons, E.J.: "The Organisation Writer (1934-46), in Hayward, M. & Labedz, L. (eds.), 1963, p. 74.

Party's absolute control in all the arts. All literature and literary criticism that was not only "ideologically harmful"[12], but even merely "lacking in ideas"[13], would no longer be tolerated. The Central Committee made it clear that there was to be no return to the laxity and ideological "confusion" of the 1920s and that wartime relaxations were very definitely at an end. Zhdanov expressed these new requirements in 1947: "He qualified 'annihilating criticism' as obligatory to the Party's polemical arsenal. To treat opposing views with a light hand would lead to professional '"quasi-objectivism"' and would rob Marxism of the aggressive spirit demanded by partiinost. Intellectuals were exhorted to regard themselves as fighting publicists and waverers were warned that anyone preferring to bypass the challenge would be branded a '"deserter"'[14]. The war's end had brought to a close the necessary, but temporary wartime alliance with the capitalist West, and led to a reassertion of mutual suspicion and a resumption of "the struggle between two systems"[15]. An anti-Western campaign was therefore launched, designed to curb the Western bourgeois influence that had spread during the Second World War. It assailed all those who allegedly cultivated a spirit of servility to western culture, and all writing that manifested '"deference to the contemporary foreign culture of the West", and was permeated with a "spirit of kowtowing to everything foreign"'[15]. Furthermore, a vast reconstruction effort would be required to set the Soviet economy back on its feet, which meant that fresh efforts and sacrifices must be demanded of the people. In order to remobilize the Soviet nation, it was to be persistently reminded that it was the most original and advanced culture in the world, and the new teacher of mankind.

In December 1947, the wave of ideological purges reached Dostoevsky scholarship. The only patriots now acceptable were those who had consistently subscribed to the ideology of revolutionary liberation, and so full value could only

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[13] Vickery, W.N.: "Zhdanovism (1946-53)", in Hayward, M. & Labedz, L. (eds.), 1963, p. 100.

[14] Hankin, R.M.: "Post-war Soviet Ideology and Literary Scholarship", in Simmons, E.J. (ed.), 1953, p. 255.

[15] Ibid. p. 252.

be awarded to cultural phenomena of the past which were associated with the radical tradition. This meant repudiating Dostoevsky.

D.I. Zaslavsky, who the previous year had applauded Dostoevsky, now, in an article entitled "Against Idealisation of the Reactionary views of Dostoevsky", radically reappraised his views. He pronounced The Devils to be evidence of Dostoevsky's incompatibility with the world-view of progressive literature, and believed its distinctive feature to be the vulgarity and baseness of its slander of the revolutionaries. In his view, the polyphonic novel was Dostoevsky's technique for confounding the progressives- he allows revolutionary ideology to enter into clashes and disputes in the novel, and then attempts to discredit it as morally base and totally worthless. The author's aim was to demolish socialism completely, considering it to represent a universal catastrophe and the ruin of civilization. Zaslavsky classified Dostoevsky as an enemy of the Soviet people and spiritual father of traitors and double-dealers. He conceded that Dostoevsky was a great writer, but maintained that as there was no doubt that he was a virulent opponent of socialism, revolution and democracy, any scholarly works that denounced him, would be welcomed.

V.V. Yermilov, too, reinterpreted Dostoevsky in view of the new Party campaign in an article entitled "Against the Reactionary Ideas in Dostoevsky's writing". He places Dostoevsky on the side of American imperialist reactionary forces, whose views on the inherent sinfulness of man poison the people with moral and political defeatism and justify the use of force against them, as opposed to the progressive Soviet-led forces who have unshaken faith in man. Dostoevsky, he asserts, tried to prove that freedom lets loose in man tendencies towards evil that lead him to insult and torture his fellow-man, and so must be restrained, both religiously and politically. No sooner does a motif of rebellion and revolution ring out in Dostoevsky's work than he stifles it by proving its injustice and harmfulness. Yermilov states that new Party requirements could not tolerate Dostoevsky's entanglement of truth and lies in his work- he portrayed the revolutionary camp, but then slanderously filled it with all kinds of "devils".

The Zhdanov reaction dealt a decisive blow to all attempts to vindicate Dostoevsky and established the definition of his ideology as thoroughly reactionary. A taboo was placed on Dostoevsky scholarship, and it almost ceased completely, right up until 1955.

The year of preparations preceding the 75th anniversary of Dostoevsky's death in February 1956, coincided with the stepped-up campaign for peaceful coexistence and the relaxation of international tensions. At the beginning of 1955, the Soviet government instructed all propaganda organs to portray the Soviet Union as a peace-loving nation struggling to achieve harmony throughout the world. From 1956, the impression was given of the arrival of a moment of general forgiveness, and a desire on the part of the Communist Party to expand "co-existence" and cultural exchange. These ideological changes were a result of the changing relationship between the USSR and the West, effected by an easing of the Iron Curtain, Khrushchev's visit to the West, and the anti-Stalin campaign, in which the abuses and illegalities of Stalin's dictatorial rule were uncovered and criticized. As the word implies, the "thaw" led to a general melting, a softening of rigidities. Once again, corresponding changes occurred in literature and literary criticism, where there was a move towards some approximation of a pluralistic ideology.

Due to the world-wide recognition surrounding Dostoevsky's art, it became desirable to lift the ban on at least a limited quantity of his works, and a campaign for the rehabilitation of Dostoevsky's work was launched. Supplementary sources were unearthed to justify this decision. In April 1955, an excerpt from V. Bonch-Beuyevich's memoirs were published, in which he points out that despite Lenin's solidarity with Gorky's censure of Dostoevsky, and condemnation of the writer as reactionary, he had esteemed him greatly as a realist writer and still found several redeeming aspects to his work, even The Devils, which should be highlighted. For example, when reading this novel, one must remember that it treated events connected not only with the activities of S. Nechaev, but also with those of M. Bakunin, with whom Marx and Engels were arguing at the time of the writing of the novel. In analysing this novel, it is the critic's task to distinguish between the

elements that apply to Nechaev and those that refer to Bakunin.

The commemorative ceremonies in February 1956 followed this new trend of reopening the study of Dostoevsky. In accordance with the policy of cultural exchange, Dostoevsky's impact in the West was now highlighted, and Western critiques of his work discussed, although almost always with the aim of discrediting the interpretations offered by Western "bourgeois" scholars of his work. Increased international interaction also meant an increased need to combat the possibility of "corrupting" Western influences. In his introductory address, A. Surkov stressed the fact that Dostoevsky's works had become part of the treasure-house of world culture, and V. Yermilov, in his report, termed Dostoevsky one of the greatest writers of world literature. He defined the goal of the celebrations as part of a struggle for that which was truly important and imperishable in Dostoevsky's works as opposed to all that was false, pernicious and hostile to human happiness. He asserted that reaction could not claim Dostoevsky as an ally, as he was time and again compelled by his conscience to expose the injustices of a monstrous social system, and to sternly judge the bourgeois world. In general, Soviet scholars now interpreted Dostoevsky's work as being divided into its acceptable and its reactionary aspects, which must be "unmasked". There was also much criticism of foreign studies of Dostoevsky which allegedly contained anti-revolutionary and anti-Russian views.

An unsigned article in Pravda, published in February 1956, divides Dostoevsky into his great images of protest against social injustice, and his supposedly almost worthless work, such as The Devils. In the critic's view, such works were evidence of how '"...in a number of instances, Dostoevsky's reactionary views had a baneful effect on his writing..."'[16]. The author of the article states that The Devils, contains '"a malicious distortion of the truth of life"'[16], and that Dostoevsky presents '"the anarchistic and the merely mutinous" as something authentically revolutionary, and that is why he "did not acknowledge the presence in this novel

[16] cf. Sedurö, V., 1975, p. 33.

of those high artistic qualities which are found so abundantly in his other works"[17]. He then goes on to attack the '"obscurantists and stiflers of progress"'[18], who pick out the reactionary aspects of Dostoevsky's work and distort his creative persona in order to justify their counter-revolutionary objectives. He emphasises the need to sort out what is true in Dostoevsky from his "Dostoevskyism".

V. Yermilov's book, published in 1956, F.M. Dostoevsky, laid down the basic guidelines for the renewed Soviet literary scholarship of Dostoevsky, in accordance with contemporary ideological demands- the struggle against capitalism and the glorifying of socialism. He rejects Dostoevsky's fundamental world-outlook, and stridently criticizes all "bourgeois" and "idealistic" scholars, and "religio-philosophical"[17] interpretations of his writings. He supplies a commentary on each of Dostoevsky's major works, defusing his philosophy by supplying the reader with his own interpretations of them. Yermilov accuses Dostoevsky of "mixing up his social addresses"[18], by portraying people of the decaying bourgeois world, social outcasts, in the guise of raznochintsy and revolutionaries. According to him, cynics and amoralists, the products of social disintegration, such as Stavrogin in The Devils, are portrayed in such a manner as to remind the reader remotely of atheists and revolutionaries, but are soon revealed in their own true social nature. He tackles The Devils, which he considers to be the most tendentious work, with the aim of straightening out "mixed-up social addresses", hunting down and denouncing "dostoevskiisms", and "cutting out all his reactionary ideas"[19]. Yermilov discerns a lowering of Dostoevsky's artistic level in The Devils, seeing it as the novel in which he was least free as an artist, being bound by reactionary tendencies. He even states that Dostoevsky frankly declared when he started working on the novel that its artistic quality was the least of his concerns. He asserts that Dostoevsky often "turns his work into a megaphone for chauvinistic

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[17] cf. Ibid., p. 36.

[18] Ibid., p. 220.

[19] Ibid., p. 222.

ideas" or "clerical propaganda"[20]. In his concluding chapter, Yermilov appeals to the reader not to reconcile himself to "dostoevskiisms" and not to forgive Dostoevsky his reactionary tendencies, as his denial that a struggle against injustice was necessary was deeply hostile to an authentic humanism. He firmly declares '"We Soviet people... cannot, however highly we may value his artistic talent, 'forget' or 'forgive Dostoyevski for the glowering spite which was expressed in his most tendentiously reactionary works, and which blinded him against the best democratic forces of his age. Nor can we forget that even in our own times the forces of reaction- churchmen and other obscurantists- try to exploit his works to promote their own nefarious goals."'[21]

Although orthodox Communists were not reconciled to Dostoevsky's ideological legacy, there was evidence in 1956 of some ideological concessions. Various critiques appeared that testify to a genuine respect for Dostoevsky, and a desire to secure his acceptance by Soviet readers. L. Grossman and A. Dolinin both insisted on Dostoevsky's greatness as a writer, and suggested that his ideals were always close to socialism. V. Kirpotin dutifully condemned Dostoevsky's hostility to the Revolution; pointed out the distorted perspective in which the writer depicted the adherents of the democratic camp in works such as The Devils; and spoke out angrily against the propaganda based on Dostoevsky, in favour of mysticism and political reaction, but also showed a tendency to justify Dostoevsky. He affirms that Dostoevsky's profound humanity made him appreciated by readers all over the world, and claims that because he consistently exposed the ills and failings of the Russia of his time, his political and social position sense remained a reformist one. He maintains that the contradictory conclusions presented in his later works, such as The Devils, are striking illustrations of the necessity of new departures demanded by life.

A further indication of a loosening of the ideological stranglehold, were the few

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[20] Ibid., p. 229.

[21] cf. Ibid., p. 230.

studies produced relating to Dostoevsky's artistic mastery, although these too were not entirely free of sociological formulae. A collection of monographs was published in 1959, entitled The Creativity of Dostoevsky, that included an article by L. Grossman, "Dostoevsky the Artist". He claims that the notebooks of The Devils give evidence of the close attention that the writer paid to problems of composition. In Grossman's opinion, The Devils is a superior work of fiction to Dostoevsky's earlier novels because of the rapid flow of its narration, its poignant tension-filled incidents, the dynamism of its plot, and the humour of its characterisations. He shows how Dostoevsky based his work on authentic facts taken from specific contemporary events, emphasising the importance of his acute prognoses of social ideas and relationships still in the process of formation. Grossman presents a few restrained criticisms of Dostoevsky. He points to Dostoevsky's method of escaping into a world of foreboding and conjectures, which is evidence of a departure from the realistic mode of apprehending reality, inherited from Belinsky, and to Dostoevsky's hostility to revolutionary ideas, which accounts for the anti-social tendencies in The Devils. He also speaks of the characters which populate The Devils as suffering from diseased over-excitability. He regards them as prone to hallucinations and idées fixes, or to sexual and other crimes, and describes how they finally lose all sense of logic. Finally, he points out the mistakes in Dostoevsky's prophecies, and his failure to recognise behind the decomposition of culture in Russia and its alleged demonic "possession", the rallying of new youthful forces and the accumulation of creative energy, which was preparing the people for the performance of great deeds. However, Grossman, contrary to the traditional approach, does not attach any great importance to Dostoevsky's ideological errors, saying that they were overshadowed by his artistic achievements. He even concluded his monograph with a quote from the magazine, Russian Wealth, for 1881, the year Dostoevsky had died: '"Despite all the efforts he made to become a champion of darkness, he remains a luminary"'[22]. This, combined with Grossman's comparative-historical method of analysis of Dostoevsky's poetics, resounded like an opposition towards the official line in

[22] cf. Ibid., p. 135.

Soviet literary scholarship.

A new 10 volume edition of Dostoevsky's Collected Works was published between 1956 and 1958. Not only was The Devils included in this new edition, but it was even characterised in a relatively mild and tolerant manner. In his consideration of The Devils, '"Dostoevsky's most tendentiously reactionary work"', 'Ermilov himself expressed the opinion that although Stavrogin's image bore the stamp of the writer's objective aim and reactionary and false tendencies, nevertheless, Dostoevsky here had "undoubtedly reflected, albeit in a distorted manner, existing social realities. Stavrogin is a product of the decay and disintegration of the gentry in an age of crisis"'[23]. And F.I. Evnin, who compiled the "notes" for The Devils, voiced his complete agreement with Yermilov's assertion that all Dostoevsky's mystifications in fact only conceal the same objective social reality- his horror in the face of capitalism and its consequences; and that while Dostoevsky intended to strike out at political "nihilists", he actually castigates the bourgeois moral nihilists and social renegades, who are the real enemies of mankind.

As these conciliatory interpretations of Dostoevsky's novel reveal, there was a brief period of relaxed ideological rigour during the mid-1950s. However, already in May 1957, there was an indication that this period of literary indulgence was coming to an end, when Nikita Khrushchev made his first speech on the topic "For a Close Link between Literature and Art and the Life of the People". Then, by his speech at the Party Caucus in July, the relative freedom accorded to literature in the post-Stalin years was ended. Khrushchev appealed for a struggle against ideological errors and unhealthy tendencies, calling a halt to the criticism of "varnishers" in Soviet literature. This new ideological campaign for the purity of Marxist-Leninist doctrine was launched as a consequence of Hungary, Poland and Yugoslavia's various bids to independence during 1956, and the general awakening everywhere of aspirations for new freedom, including stirrings among the Soviet intelligentsia. During 1957, the Party press attempted to subdue this gathering

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[23] cf. Ibid., p. 145.

demand by attacking revisionism and revisionists, and free discussion of Dostoevsky was actively discouraged.

V. Yermilov was again quick to respond to the new trend. In June 1957, he published an article in Pravda, "Against Falsehoods about Dostoevsky", in which he states that attempts to idealize Dostoevsky's social and political views, and to gloss over his reactionary position, were exceedingly harmful, as they extolled his repudiation of the revolution and democratic ideas. In another article published in Kommunist, "Against a False Interpretation of Dostoevsky", he asserts that Dostoevsky's prison experience had caused him to lose faith in the possibility of altering reality through struggle and man's free will. He thus began to criticize capitalism from the vantage point of a reactionary Utopia, in which the union of the Tsar and church with the people would bring an end to bourgeois rapacity, revolutionary upheavals and atheistic socialism. Mentally, Dostoevsky fused the bourgeoisie and the revolutionaries, and so attempted to attribute bourgeois amorality to the camp of revolutionary democracy and socialism.

However, not only was the scholarly interest in Dostoevsky's heritage that had awakened among the Soviet intelligentsia not completely stamped out, but an interest in his writings had arisen in broad segments of the reading public. The restoration of relative peace at the beginning of the 1960s brought a new easing up in the ideological war being waged in literary criticism. This even led to an open repudiation by some critics of the intolerant attitude towards Dostoevsky that had prevailed. The new atmosphere of tolerance made possible the publication over the next decade of much that was new in Dostoevsky studies, including a series of studies of his poetics, and stylistic analyses of his novels, even The Devils; new editions of his work; another collection of his correspondence, and a bibliography of works by and on him. In general, a more objective view of Dostoevsky's legacy was discernible. The revelation in 1962 that a proposal had been advanced for the publication of a new edition of M. Bakhtin's book, Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics, sparked off a lengthy debate concerning Bakhtin's methodology of literary analysis, of which staunch defenders of Soviet ideology disapproved as being alien

to the Marxist methodology. The very existence of a literary debate in which different views were expressed, was indication of a loosening of Party domination over literary criticism.

Nevertheless, the ideological assaults on Dostoevsky's creation by loyal Party critics did not cease. Ya. Zundelovich devotes a chapter in his work, The Novels of Dostoevsky, to an investigation into the pamphlet structure of The Devils, in which the contradictory nature of Dostoevsky's world-view is seen as the determining factor behind his stylistic peculiarities. He discerns in The Devils, certain artistic "miscalculations" and "failures". "In this novel," he writes,"Dostoevsky gives battle to the devils in a setting that is not appropriate to his design; and thereby violates the basic principle of realistic art- that of the portrayal of typical characters in typical circumstances. Hence the inevitable artistic failure, the artistic frustration, which characterize this work"[24]. And in the chapter on Dostoevsky in A.A. Galaktionov and P.F. Nikandrov's Russian Philosophy from the 11th through the 19th Centuries, the authors express their agreement with the traditional Soviet view of The Devils as a "libel and lampoon"[24] against the democratic and populist movement, and declare that in this novel, the author abandoned the theme of the insulted and injured folk and began to resort to subjectivism and arbitrariness in his descriptions of reality, reaching, as a result, some extremely reactionary conclusions. Postulating a mutual hostility between the nihilists and society, Dostoevsky defamed the entire Russian liberal and democratic movement, while praising the existing order of things, and trying to account for all social vices in terms of a loss of faith in God. Furthermore, his undeniable mastery in psychological analysis manifested itself in the form of a craving for the perverted aspects of the human soul. Therefore, Maxim Gorky was not being unreasonable when he called The Devils '"a sadistic and morbid work"'[25]. In his work, Ideas and Images of F.M. Dostoevsky, M. Gus compares Dostoevsky's writings with the

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[24] cf. Ibid., p. 341.

[25] Ibid., p. 304.

author's era, and points to many "inaccuracies" and "distortions"[26] in the mirror held up by Dostoevsky. He discusses his special "fatalistic" brand of realism which led him to "prophesy", to anticipate future realities, as in The Devils. He sees in the Dostoevsky of this epoch only the supporter of the reactionary Pobedonotsov and the "fiery paladin"[26] of the Tsar.

In his article published in 1963, "Anti-communism, Dostoevsky, and 'dostoevskiism'", which reflected the latest Party attitudes to Dostoevsky, Yuri Karyakin, agreeing with Lenin, declares that The Devils is a picture of Nechaevism. But he also draws an analogy between Nechaevism and the cult of the personality and cruel regime of Stalin. He is in favour of using the achievements of Soviet Dostoevsky scholarship in the world-wide ideological struggle on the side of "progressive" ideas. Scholars must fight on behalf of Dostoevsky's humanism and against "dostoevskiism".

An article by Ya. Elsberg published in 1972, "Contemporary Bourgeois Conceptions of Dostoevsky's Writings", was designed to refute all the West European and American research scholars, who in his eyes were nothing but bourgeois servants carrying out the orders of their bosses. The attempt made by V. Seduro to reveal the metaphysical meaning of Dostoevsky's novels, especially The Devils, as mirrors of the Russian revolution, provoked him to virulently attack what he claims to be attempts to present the writer as an ideologist for counter-revolution. He does concede that Dostoevsky put forward a series of accusations against socialism and various phenomena connected with the preparation of the Russian revolution, which distorted the whole revolutionary phenomenon.

The second half of Brezhnev's rule is identified with the collapse of detente in international relations, economic stagnation, corruption and moral decay in Soviet internal life. This led to a change in emphasis of ideology. The State's insistence on urbanisation and industrialisation led, during these years, to a feeling that

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[26] Ibid., p. 358.

authentic Russian national values were being abandoned, which in turn encouraged the rise of Slavophilism and "pochvennichestvo"; an idealisation of the native Russian values, found only among the Russian peasants, not among the westernised, corrupt city population; and even the assertion of a certain Russian messianism. Concerns turned from social and economic organisational problems to moral, ethical, psychological, and even philosophical questions. Nationalism, anti-semitism, religion, and revolution were themes that had formerly been considered to be "contradictory", but in the literary criticism of the late 1970s to early 1980s, interest in them was revived, and they were reinterpreted in such a manner as to be adapted to the needs of the contemporary society.

This process of reinterpretation took place around the heritage of Dostoevsky. The existence of a significant and long-established western tradition of Dostoevsky scholarship necessitated the creation of a Soviet tradition, able to neutralise and oppose the ideological currents of Western literary research. Not only were previously avoided themes now broached by critics, but a politically and ideologically neutralised image of the writer was created, so as he could be used to serve the main political and ideological trends of the 1970s, and early 1980s. As H. Mondry asserts, Dostoevsky had become necessary, because he "with his chauvinist feelings, his theory of the soil ("pochvennichestvo"), his preference for "the voice of the heart" to scepticism, his anti-intellectualism, his rejection of Western social ideals (which he called "Genevian ideals"), all appealed to the general ideological climate of the Brezhnev era"[27]. The aspects of Dostoevsky's legacy most frequently chosen for neutralisation and actualisation were: his hatred of the West, his messianism, his pan-slavism, his populism, his faith in man, his humanism, and his concept of utopia. Furthermore, these years being the peak of the Third Wave of Jewish emigration from the USSR, Dostoevsky's anti-semitism was brought to light in an anti-Zionist attack.

An important feature of this process was the weakening of Dostoevsky's religious

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[27] Mondry, H., 1990, p. 31.

thematics. K. Kedrov sees in The Devils evidence of an heretical religion in Dostoevsky's presentation of the theme of "God-man, man-god". The figure of Kirillov, who expounds his theory of the man-god, is interpreted by him as a positive ideal of Dostoevsky, the spokesman of the writer's views. His evangelism is atheistic as it lies not in the God-man, but in the man-god.

Yu. Kudriatsev in his book, Tri Kruga Dostoevskogo, published in 1979, also analyses the theories of Kirillov, identifying his position with that of Dostoevsky. Kirillov becomes the propagandist of the author's ideal, his '"hymn to man"'[28]. Kudriatsev deprives both Dostoevsky's religion and his image of Christ of their mystical aspect. He sees Shatov in The Devils as expressing the essence of the writer's orthodoxy: God is a love of our fellow-man, and religion grows out of morality. He attempts to proclaim Dostoevsky to be sympathetic to the ideals of socialism, his arguments being based on the assumption that Dostoevsky was not acquainted with Marx's theory of scientific socialism, and so the author took for true socialism, perverted, unscientific forms and manifestations of this. Anarchism, or "nechaevism", which Dostoevsky strongly opposed in The Devils, was a form of elemental socialism, which Marx, Engels and Lenin also opposed. Kudriatsev states: '"Dostoevsky's negative evaluation of that phenomenon which he named 'socialism' had real foundations. By this term, Dostoevsky meant 'Nechaevism', which the founders of scientific communism had unmasked in their time. 'Nechaevism never had anything in common with scientific, Marxist socialism, expressing as it does, not the interests of the proletariat, but the interests of the petty bourgeoisie, which are alien to the proletariat."'[29]. The Devils is thus interpreted as a pamphlet against "the perversion of socialism"[28]. The critic also draws on The Devils for evidence of Dostoevsky's dislike of the West and Europeans. He puts forward a conception by which Dostoevsky's principal heroes are divided into opposing categories- the truly Russian and the 'Russian Europeans'. Under the former are implied the heroes with whom Dostoevsky

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[28] cf. Mondry, H., Thesis, [illegible]4, p. 30.

[29] cf. Ibid., p. 76.

sympathised, possessing such qualities as goodness, generosity, a feeling of brotherhood, a preference for spiritual over material interests, a 'broadness of nature', a capacity for the sacrifice of personal interests for the good of one's neighbour; while under the latter are implied the usually negative characters who live according to the laws of Western morality, or under the influence of the philosophical thinking of the West, and who are characterised by a lack of spirituality, a thirst for profit, and an interest in the material. Kudriatsev uses this opposition to compare the heroes of all Dostoevsky's major novels, including The Devils. His analysis even includes the feminine characters, Dasha and Marya Lebyadkin being categorised as Russian, and Marie as a 'Russian European', and thus as 'anti-feminine'.

Yu. Seleznev's interpretation of The Devils, in V mire Dostoevskogo, published in 1980, presents Dostoevsky as a prophet who was able to discern in his contemporary society the embryos of the future form of perverted socialist ideas. He asserts:'"The type of world organisation of the devils and the inquisitor, is prophetically divined by Dostoevsky, it reveals itself, it is thought, in various kinds of anti-human 'myths of the twentieth century', that have become reality: in the fascist national-socialism, ... in the 'barrack communism' of the maoist interpretation, in the theory and practice of Zionism"'[30]. He again broaches Dostoevsky's anti-semitism as it is revealed in The Devils, when he explains the type of consciousness depicted in Shigalev's theories, referred to as the "superman" consciousness, as the outcome of the ancient Jewish consciousness, with its idea of the 'chosen' race. Seleznev explains the nature of this consciousness by the philosophy of ego-centrism, which, according to him, leads to the division of mankind into two unequal categories. He finds the sources of this in the Bible: '"..according to the Old Testament, God concluded a contract with only one people, vowing to give them power over all others if they would strictly carry out all the laws given to them. By these laws was established 'the divine

[30] cf. Ibid., p. 78.

separation' of mankind into two unequal categories"'[31].

M. Gus, in Ideas and Images of F.M. Dostoevsky, published in 1971, also interprets the anti-socialist problematics of The Devils as a premonition of future distortions of scientific socialism. He expresses the view that Dostoevsky predicted fascism in Shigalev's theories: '"Shigalevism was historically fulfilled in fascism, in the extreme, naked form of the dictatorship of the petty bourgeoisie over the majority. Dostoevsky brilliantly foresaw this... But he, to please his own false schema, turned everything upside down, transferring Shigalev's fascist schema onto genuinely revolutionary socialism. Dostoevsky foresaw the future but misunderstood it"'[32].

B. Suchkov in his book, For the 150th Anniversary of the Birth of Dostoevsky, published in 1972, asserts that The Devils presents a criticism of ultra-left extremism in the character of Peter Verkhovensky: '"The peri-revolutionary devils, like Peter Verkhovensky, of which there are many at present in the West and the East, have made extreme leftist radicalism their sign. The novel The Devils reveals their anatomy and is a critique of ultra-leftist extremism"'[32]. He also goes on to say that Dostoevsky's ideas that every man has a need for spiritual freedom and that society should allow man to retain his individualism, constituted an integral part of Soviet beliefs.

Official policies, and thus the ideological environment, continued without significant change under Andropov and Chernenko's leadership in the early 1980s. Consequently attitudes and socio-political views expressed in literary criticism showed no real shift, and there was no need for a reinterpretation of influential texts such as The Devils. However, the death of Chernenko and rise to power of M. Gorbachev in 1985 heralded the dawning of a new era, based on dramatic changes in Party policy and ideology, that would inevitably reverberate through all

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[31] cf. Ibid., p. 127.

[32] cf. Ibid., p. 79.

spheres of public life, including literary criticism.

4. THE REINTERPRETATION OF "THE DEVILS" DURING GLASNOST

4.1. DOSTOEVSKY SCHOLARSHIP IN THE GLASNOST ERA

Glasnost was heralded as an era of new-found freedom and truth, and the expression of diverse interests, opinions, views was encouraged in all domains of life, including literary criticism. One could thus expect a new era in Dostoevsky scholarship too. Dostoevsky had already been rehabilitated during the 1960s and 1970s along with the shift in the prevailing ideology towards "peaceful coexistence". As H. Mondry asserts in her thesis[1], the 70s could be regarded as the period of the "struggle for Dostoevsky", as during this time scholars directed their efforts towards the full rehabilitation of the writer's legacy. The reason for his rehabilitation during the Brezhnev regime, while other controversial or "reactionary" nineteenth century writers remained outcasts of Soviet culture, was his importance as a writer and a thinker both in the USSR and internationally. His popularity in Russia provoked the necessity of the publication of his works and therefore, of commentaries so as he would be correctly understood, while the existence of a long-established tradition of Dostoevsky scholarship in the West necessitated the creation of the Soviet Union's own Dostoevsky scholarship, able to oppose and neutralise the ideological currents of Western literary scholarship. And, there is no doubt that interest in Dostoevsky was sustained throughout the glasnost era, and even intensified, despite the criticism and accusations levelled at the classics by some critics.

Several critics reproached the classical writers for their despotism[2], for taking on the personal right to show mankind how to live, for their "hypermoralising"[3]. They declared the classics to be superfluous, to no longer have a role to play in contemporary Russian society, and even to have been discredited by their

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[1] The Evaluation of Recent Trends in Soviet Dostoyevsky Scholarship (1970s-80s), 1984.

[2] Cf Dneprov, V.: "Ateizm Chekhova", Zvezda, August 1988.

[3] Cf. Condee, N & Padunov, V.: "Perestroika suicide: not by bread alone", New Left Review, June 1991.

totalitarian inclinations. They regarded the 19th century classics as being opposed to progressive people and ideas, and associated them with the will to power and authority. They pointed to the fact that despite the revelations, prophecies and lessons of the classics, they did not succeed in restraining anyone, or diverting disaster. Others accused the classics of instigating the revolution amongst the discontented strata of the population, and thus of having caused the bloodshed that occurred in the twentieth century. In their view the classics pose a danger to the stability of society. This disdain for the classics was strongly expressed by the Russian post-modernists who gained great influence in the post-perestroika period. The post-glasnost era saw the great rise of so-called "mass" culture and was characterised by debates around the question of "high" or "great", and "low" or "mass" literature.

Dostoevsky was saved from this process, not only due to his importance as a writer, but also because critics of all ideological points of view, found ammunition in his works that could be used in the literary debates that were a feature of this period. His writings were drawn into the polemics and used as an active instrument of both perestroika and the opposing ideologies.

The majority of critics during the glasnost time supported a continuation of the tendency towards the full, undistorted rehabilitation of Dostoevsky and all his creation, be it as a sign of the triumph of glasnost, the beneficial change in the ruling ideology, or of the preservation of an important part of the Russian cultural heritage of the past. The complete restoration of Dostoevsky to a place of esteem was manifested in several ways. His words on various people and events came to be regarded as being of interest and relevance. Quotations from his writings were widespread in diverse situations, at times completely inappropriate. N. Staroselskaya declares in her article that interest in Dostoevsky has greatly increased in recent times and his heritage has been pilfered for all kinds of quotations[4]. Today, she says, for example, it is difficult to imagine a newspaper

[4]Critique of V.A. Tvardovsky's work, Dostoevsky v obshchestvennoi zhizni Rossiyi (1861-1881), Literaturnoe Obozreniye 1991, p. 79.

in which at least one article is not called "beauty will save the world". Indeed, I. Volgin declaring great art to not have solved anything, to not have had the final word, states "beauty has not saved the world- its remedy is becoming ever more doubtful and indefinite"[5]. Dostoevsky was regarded as an authority on a number of issues, and views and opinions expressed by him were used to substantiate the commentator's arguments and convictions. His words lent credibility to views, significance to topics and issues, and importance to events and people. Furthermore, an interest was shown in the attitude of prominent members of society, past and present, towards him and his beliefs as a means to a deeper understanding of their own world outlook and personality. A tendency was also evident to make comparisons between him and contemporary writers, to point to evidence of the continuation of the Dostoevsky tradition in contemporary prose, a similarity to him being seen as a mark of approval, a sign of insight, depth and talent. Critics such as M. Kononov[6], Yu. Sokhryakov[7], L. Bartashevich[8], K. Myalo[9], Yu. Levin[10] use Dostoevsky as a point of comparison in their discussions of contemporary Russian writers, and emphasise his role as a source of inspiration and as an evident influence in their works.

A revised Dostoevsky scholarship was first announced, as in each new epoch and with each new policy shift, by a wave of articles criticising interpretations of Dostoevsky by Soviet literary critics of previous eras, and unmasking the unjust practices of literary criticism. This time however, the criticism embraced the whole of the Soviet past.

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[5]"Chto napishem na pamyatnikhe?", Literaturnaya Gazeta, 23 October 1991.

[6]"Ni za kakuyu chechevichnuyu pokhlebku", Zvezda, August 1989.

[7]Nash Sovremennik, December 1987.

[8]"Roman-disput", Neva, November 1986.

[9]"Dva rasskaza o sudbakh 'levogo' terrorizma", Voprosy Filisofii, July 1986.

[10]"Klassicheskiye traditsii v 'drugoi' literature- Vendikt Erofeev i Fyodor Dostoevsky", Literaturnoe Obozreniye, February 1992.

Ludmila Saraskina speaks of the destructive effect of past Soviet literary policies and deficiencies of literary criticism in previous eras. In the introduction to her book, "Besy" Roman-preduprezhdeniye, she affirms that as a student she never dreamt that the present freedom would ever exist in the Soviet Union, believing, that the system of "grandiose intellectual swindle" in which the country, people and culture lived, was forever, that the ideological monolith weighing down Russian life, vigilantly distrusting Dostoevsky, would never end. And in Chapter 3, she states that the protectionist Soviet literary criticism could not permit any analogy with The Devils concerning the revolutionary process and that its reaction to undesirable interpretations of the novel, with its punitive expeditions, remind one of the delirious fabulousness of the young Verkhovensky. She mentions some Soviet critics' statements that aimed at discrediting The Devils and says that it would be possible to draw up a long list of names and quotes that fulfilled the task of settling the score with this novel, showing it to be double-dyed reaction and false prophecy. These critics were of course considering their party duty and demonstrated their adherence to progress by defaming the novel. They aspired to separate The Devils and its historical lessons. Then in her article "Tolstoevsky against F. Dostoevsky"[11], which is defined by the editor in the Foreword a filling in a blank spot, she expresses even more fervent criticism of the past Soviet regime. She states that the history of the reception of Dostoevsky by official Soviet doctrine was one of permanent efforts to overcome the writer's artistic ideology. She says that the uncompromising social scientists of the 20s and 30s, fell on him with wrathful, inflamed accusations, but that even worse than this was the use of satire to attack him, with the same political and ideological motivation. She analyses the dialogue between Ilf and Petrov, showing how the satirical play on Dostoevskian themes struck at the highest point of the disgraced writer's creation, seeming to demonstrate the worthlessness and poverty of his artistic ideology. The book gives a mocking, sceptical view of the beliefs of the "ideological good-for-nothing" Dostoevsky. This was done in conformity with the programme of the Bolshevik party, in which everything was dedicated to the fight

[11] Znamya 1992.

for the new Soviet man, free of the loathsome survivals of capitalist society. They used comic defilement and desacralisation against the noble-bourgeois, pre-revolutionary culture, scorning spiritual problematics and religious faith and throwing off from the pedestal the already defeated but still attractive "beautiful and high". Naturally "the particularly hated by the powers novel The Devils" did not escape this experience of the Soviet order and its ideas, motifs and characters too were lowered, devaluated in a satirical transformation. She then defends this old world, which, having become the object of abuse and humiliation, a "shameful stain", all the same survived, perhaps thanks to its great values, before which even Soviet satire proved to be powerless. She concludes that going into battle with Dostoevsky, "Tolstoevsky" was doomed to defeat. Saraskina maintains that culture must be allowed to go by the free road, distancing itself from any power, party or system, not summoned or mobilised by anyone.

A.V. Mikhailov points to how in 1918 a culture had been introduced that called for the purging of classical texts, changes in orthography and punctuation, sham simplifications, which revealed an itch to semi-imperceptibly adapt the classic to the understanding of the new culture, to bridle authors more "correctly" to the new order[12]. The Devils was one book that was subjected to such evildoings, and he, as a philologue rejoices that the new publication of the novel prepared by V.I. Zakharov, has returned to the author's text, so that we may now truly read what the author wrote, and appreciate The Devils for its own sake, not for its ideological infallibility. A. Larionov speaks of Lenin's hatred for the author of The Devils, and of how the Bolshevik ideologues therefore fell on his creations with abuse[13]. B. Tarasov accuses progressive logic of having held Dostoevsky scholarship in captivity and thus having hindered an adequate analysis of The Devils[14]. This arbitrary and tendentious interpretation of Russian history follows a line, he says, from Radishchev to the Revolutionary Democrats, and the ideologies, world

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[12]"K novomu Dostoevskomu", Nash Sovremennik, March 1991.

[13]Introduction to article by Ilyin, V. in Slovo, December 1991.

[14]"Vechnoe predosterezhenive- "Besy" i sovremennost", Novyi Mir, August 1991.

outlooks and practices of its representatives were fundamentally different to those of Dostoevsky. He declares that these "venerable Soviet Dostoevsky scholars" committed many errors and reduced the great spirit of the work to superficial oppositions and struggles.

Even eminent critics of the most recent era of Soviet history, in which there was some evidence of a loosening of the stranglehold on culture, were criticised for their continued tendency to manipulate literature for ideological purposes. G.V. Krasnov and V. Viktorovich discuss Yu. Seleznev's book Dostoevsky[15]. They assert that although the critic's contribution to Dostoevsky scholarship is undeniable, there are many factual errors and the essence of the biographical conception must be questioned. Seleznev sacrifices the complexity of Dostoevsky's personality to the idea of the writer's astonishing unity and clarity of purpose. They claim that Seleznev borrows statements from the author and attributes to them his own doubtful reasoning. According to these critics, in Seleznev's examination of the theme of "Dostoevsky and revolution", Dostoevsky almost appears as a Marxist due to some of the reflections that he attributes to him, such as in the evaluation of Nechaevism and the revolution as "..not sedition, not repudiation, but renewal, rebirth...". Krasnov and Viktorovich thus clearly see in this work evidence of the writer's views being distorted according to the critic's ideology. They conclude, true to the spirit of glasnost, ...at the discussion that this work opens up must be continued, with the quest to reveal the whole truth and without further smoothing over of contradictions. I. Volgin presents a critique of the 30-volume Complete Collection of the Works of F.M.Dostoevsky[16], which was produced during the 1970s and early 1980s by the Institute of Russian Literature. Much in the collection, he asserts, is to be praised, many of the ritual incantations and customary accusatory intonations being absent, and in general the work is one of honest, conscientious, professionalism. He comments that the group preparing the publication resisted the tempting advice (issued from above)

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[15]"Russkiye klassiki v serii 'Zhizn zamechatelnykh lyudej'", Russkaya Literatura, No. 2, 1985.

[16]"Chto napishem na pamyatnike?", Literaturnaya Gazeta, 23 October 1991.

to resort to light ideological cosmetics, and that in bygone years, when a publication succeeded in duping the cold winds, no decent person would allow himself to remark on such a delicate matter (in order not to hasten his own undoing), but the complete collection is now open for scholarly and other reflection. However, he then makes several sharp criticisms of the publication under the guise of what a future litterateur's reaction to and dissatisfactions with the publication might be. These include changes to Dostoevsky's language, the confusing architectonics of the collection, commentaries being artificially removed from texts, and the vast quantity of copies of such an erudite book, not destined for universal pleasure, but for a relatively narrow scholarly goal, the large number of commentaries relating to a single fact, the relatively scanty references to contemporary foreign Dostoevskyists, revealing the age-old defect of Soviet literary scholarship, which is the result of soviet-centrism, and the exclusions. He goes on to directly criticise the unquenchable thirst in Soviet literary scholarship to "trample on all that is old, with hatred, with abuse, with disgrace", which is the sign of an infantile and ideologized culture, which doesn't trust its own aesthetic basis, and requires a supplementary sanction- political, religious, moral. He concludes that the work should not be seen as the last instance in a debate, but as having an open end. He believes that there is still evidence of ideological concerns in Soviet literary scholarship, and that The Collection shows signs of old tendencies, alive in the new age, despite its more objective stance.

4.1.1. "Non-ideological" Studies

A significant characteristic of literary criticism in the glasnost years was the renewed calls by some literary critics for "literariness" for its own sake, accompanied by the publication of some studies of Dostoevsky's artistic craft: the style, structure, aesthetics, poetics, symbolism of his works. These "non-ideological" analyses, which concentrate on manner rather than content, would previously have been regarded as undeserving of a critic's efforts, and even condemned under the lable of "formalism".

V. Ivanov praises Dostoevsky's artistry[17], and says that there is something in him that goes far beyond whether Marxism is good or bad. L. Saraskina's article, "V kontekste tochnogo vremeni" published in Voprosy Literatury in September 1986, reinstates Dostoevsky as a great artist and The Devils as a literary, artistic masterpiece. She states that a prejudiced opinion has been established that in Dostoevsky's works there is chaos, disharmony, lack of character and plot development, "mystics" and "black magic" instead of art, but a close analysis of the novel will destroy many stereotypes and refute old and new prejudices. She discusses time in the novel, showing how the novel is in fact the final act of a tragedy whose main action has already occurred. The chronicle is impregnated with the past which heralds the coming catastrophe, the last twist in the heroes' fate. She speaks of how the logical and causal-consequential correlation of temporal signs is thoroughly thought out, so that each event in The Devils has a unique and precise time and place. She compares narrative and real, historical time, noting the incredible precision of the novel's calendar. Despite the density of action and events, there are no discrepancies in time, and nothing is really accidental or unexpected. The characters live in precise time, and thus the combining of their chronologies gives significant effects, a hidden context revealed through the synchronic and symbolic fitting together of their destinies. She concludes that the artistic calendar of The Devils, its internal chronology with its scrupulous precision, by which thousands of separate threads are gathered together into the complete, active and living cloth of time, is one of the most incontestable indications of the enormous work of the artist. Indeed, she says, in his notebooks, Dostoevsky scrupulously worked out the whole plan of the plot, all the details of psychological development, all the nuances of human relations. The detailed chronological notes show how the precise calendar of The Devils was preceded by a vast preliminary work, and thus disprove the myths about Dostoevskian "black magic", and careless artistry. Her book The Devils: "Novel-Prophecy" also contains several chapters that avoid socio-political matters or discussions of the author's world outlook. In one chapter, she discusses the motif of literary creation in The Devils,

[17]Cf discussion of Yuri Karyakin's Dostoevsky v kanun XXI veka, Znamya, July 1990.

a passion that Dostoevsky's characters share with him. She shows how for Dostoevsky, the process of a character's literary creation is a key element in his biography. He reveals figures of story-tellers and the fruits of their labour, their motives for turning to literature and the types of literary undertakings, their relations with and attitudes towards their readers. She sees The Devils as the "most literary novel" as three decades of the development of Russian social thought and literary struggles enter the novel. In the fourth chapter, she studies the character of Maria Lebyadkina, the cripple, polemicising with traditional interpretations of her as the "soul of the world" and "eternal femininity". She compares her to the legendary figure of Solomnia, who gave herself to devils, emphasising the distortion of her appearance and unnaturalness of her behaviour. She was created with realism, not as an ideal. She has a sick inner soul, that has been poisoned by devils. Saraskina and other critics have explored new details and themes that would once have been discouraged or ignored as too petty and insignificant to warrant attention.

A fairly large number of histodco-biographical works have been published, relating to previously unexplored aspects of Dostoevsky's life. Such works which tend to aspire towards objectivity were also formerly discouraged. These are usually the result of intensive research into newly unearthed or reinvestigated materials. S. Belov's two books The Romance of Book Research and Wife of the Writer. The Last Love of F.M. Dostoevsky were published in 1986, and favourably reviewed by M. Mizya in 1987[18], for the author's high civic responsibility towards the Russian cultural heritage. The first book is dedicated to the history of the author's research into material about F.M. Dostoevsky, his painstaking search through letters, documents, memoirs. In the second book, the author acquaints the reader with an astonishing Russian woman, and presents a love without which the great novels of Dostoevsky could not have been created.

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[18] Neva, September 1987.

K.A. Barsht focuses on Dostoevsky's literary debut, and how much in Poor Folk reflects this[19]. He sees this work as Dostoevsky's way of tackling the problem experienced by every starting writer- the fear that his work will not be read. Devushkin becomes a prophecy of Dostoevsky's own destiny, by finding spiritual growth and self-realisation through the possibility of self-expression in the written word. The same scholar, K.A. Barsht, also presents a study of two drawings done by Dostoevsky of his brother, Mikhail Mikhailovich, in his "Rough Notebook" of Spring 1865[20], and discusses how these drawings testify to the moral ordeal that the writer experienced over the closing down of the journal Epoch after his brother's death.

N.K. Nekrasov's article "Nekrasov and Dostoevsky", published in Moskva in July 1986, speaks of the lifelong interrelationship between these two writers, and especially of how the role played by Nekrasov in his literary debut and rise to fame through Poor Folk was never forgotten by Dostoevsky.

V. Tunimanov states that books about Dostoevsky's life and creation have imperceptibly become a commonplace phenomenon, every year a few new monographs having appeared[21]. He cites two works about the Siberian period of the writer's life that he considers to be exceptional: M. Gromyko's Siberian Acquaintances and Friends of Dostoevsky and My Prison Notebook, edited by V. Vladimirtsev and T. Omotskaya. Siberia is revealed to be a period not only of suffering, but also of grandiose discoveries and insights that enriched Dostoevsky's creation. New facts allowed M. Gromyko to fill in many blank spots of these years. V. Tunimanov does however accuse Gromyko of allowing his ideological biases to lead to tendentious and unjust evaluations of events and people, such as in the pages dedicated to S.F. Durov, whom Gromyko insists was an important prototype for Stepan Verkhovensky in The Devils. Tunimanov declares that the portrait of

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[19]"Literaturnij debut Dostoevskogo", Neva, September 1986.

[20]"Dva risunka F.M. Dostoevskogo", Russkaya Literatura, no. 3, 1985.

[21]"Dostoevsky v Sibiri", Voprosy Literatury, January 1988.

Durov is given as though through the prejudiced eyes of Dostoevsky, but, most likely, the "aesthete" and "hanger on" annoyed Gromyko more than Dostoevsky, and he was in fact a talented nobleman. My Prison Notebook corrects many previous textological shortcomings and has extensive annotations. These siberian notebooks are shown to be a truly inexhaustible source to which Dostoevsky consistently turned whilst working on his later novels, including The Devils. Tunimanov concludes that this new edition, this "unique monument of Russian democratic culture", (Ligachev in the book's foreword), is a gratifying appearance. Tunimanov thus praises the filling in of the blank spots and colouring in of the grey spots in Dostoevsky's life.

S.V. Belov[22] speaks of the discrepancies in biographers' accounts of incidents in Dostoevsky's life and claims that no scholarly biography of the writer will exist until the whole circle of contemporary writers, known or met by him, is brought to light. He thus decided to compose a bibliographic dictionary, Dostoevsky and his Milieu, based on his correspondence and memoirs about him, to which end he is appealing to sponsors so as he can conduct archival research in Europe.

Another kind of study that reestablished itself during glasnost was comparative analyses, in which Dostoevsky's work in both ideas and style is compared to those of other important writers of different origins and epoques. It was formerly considered degrading to Russian literature to suggest that it had sources in, or was strongly influenced by European literature, and that Russian writers were imitators. L. Saraskina says that while preparing a commentary on The Devils for a foreign publication, she undertook a very thorough reading of the text, which revealed many new details to her[23]. She explains that the reasons for Stavrogin's voyage to Iceland, an enigmatic, isolated island, remained incomprehensible until the writer Yu. Davidson suggested that she turn to Jules Verne's novel Journey to the Centre of the Earth. Indeed she found much evidence linking the two journeys, and

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[22] "Okruzheniye Dostoevskogo", Literaturnaya Gazeta 23 December 1992.

[23] Chapter 2, "Mir Romana", "Besy" Roman-preduprezhdeniye, 1990.

through this association the true significance of this journey as an allegory of Stavrogin's spiritual quest, was revealed. I.V. Inov compares Dostoevsky's work to that of the Czech writer, V. Nezval, and finds many similarities in their ideas and artistic methods[24]. He mentions how Nezval referred to Dostoevsky's work as continuing the tradition of "allegorical wanderings", represented by such writers as Dante, Cervantes, Rablais, Voltaire, Goethe.

A fourth extremely important manifestation of glasnost in Dostoevsky scholarship was the enormous interest that developed in the spiritual and religious aspects of the man, the writer and his work.

Mystical, spiritual religious interpretations of his work by such rehabilitated "mystics" and "idealists" as V. Rozanov, N. Berdyaev, L. Shestov, were published. L. Mitrokhin points out that in the past predominated a scornful and slighting attitude towards the spiritual legacy of religious writers such as Dostoevsky, a significant role in this being played by the theory of "anti-religious education", which affirmed that religion "hinders" the development of socialism by propagating a "hostile" ideology[25]. According to the critic, the newly-forming religious world outlook embraces a broad spectrum of philosophical, artistic, ethical ideas that are filling up the void of spirituality. K. Myalo affirms that the growing interest in religion that can be perceived in the present times is the real upheaval of social opinion, and must be evaluated with regard to the decades of a policy of the isolation of socialist culture from philosophical religious thinking[26]. He welcomes this shift, seeinfg it as necessary for the rebirth of the entire native culture, which would remain crippled without the views on religion of writers such as Dostoevsky. The tens of millions of believers in the country, he asserts, have an inalienable right to freedom of conscience and the worthy expression of their own views. A. Chirkin

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[24]"F.M. Dostoevsky v zhizni i tvorchestve V Nezvala", Russkaya Literatura, no. 3 1985.

[25]"Filosofy i religii", Voprosy Filosofii, September 1989, p. 18.

[26]"Dva rasskaza o sudbakh 'levogo' terrorizma", Voprosy Filosofii, July 1986.

speaks of the resurrection of Russian monasteries and praises their activities[27]. He asserts that it is not surprising that many of the old Slavophiles such as K. Leontiev, Vl. Solovyev, Strakhov and Dostoevsky came to the Optina hermitage, which enjoyed the deep love of the intelligentsia[28]. Indeed, after the death of his young son, Alyosha, Dostoevsky could not write and thus on the advice of his wife, entreated Solovyev to accompany him in 1878 to the Optina hermitage, where he twice met in private with the elder Ambrose. The atmosphere returned him to life and helped him to comprehend some of the deepest processes occurring in man and society.[29]

4.1.2. Towards a New Understanding of Dostoevsky

It is clear that the greater freedom permitted to Dostoevsky scholarship led to attempts at new or rediscovered approaches to his work, to changes in publishing patterns, and to a new aspiration to truth, clarity and precision. This movement included not only the objective studies discussed above, but also studies concentrating on the content and meaning of his work. Discussions were opened up concerning the abuses of Soviet Dostoevsky scholarship and the development of a new attitude towards the interpretation of his word. The major literary journals became the medium for this discussion, publishing articles written by progressive Soviet scholars and foreign experts on Russian literature. These articles ranged

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[27]"Voskresheniye", Nash Sovremennik, April 1990.

[28]Ibid., p. 191.

[29]Of course, the reactions to this renewed infatuation with religion have not all been positive. A. Ageev states that he is troubled by the fact that there are many aspects to this "religious revival" that are political, social, economic and cultural. He acknowledges that the Russian people were deprived of this aspect in their culture, which is now being returned to them, but he wishes to question if it is really religion that is being revived? This, he says, could not have died, for it needs only God and man to exist - not the state, or its laws, or the synod, or temples. He continues that, despite this revival neither the people nor society are any happier or less criminal and, it seems to him that there is simply a strong desire amongst millions of people to believe in something, a powerful thirst for a miracle (229) to replace the ideological stronghold that has crumbled. One should not speak about "revival", but about the serious spiritual crisis of the whole society. In his opinion, that which is being revived is on one hand, an orthodox fashion, "orthodox kitsch", and on the other, the Russian Orthodox Church, not as the mystical "Divine body", but as a social institution with its own structure and functions. He describes certain manifestations of the excesses and vulgarity of the new religious trend. Ageev asserts that this stream has seized literature too, having already engendered a relatively large quantity of works on a religious theme. These writers are failing in their attempts to revive an old tradition of Russian writers whose creation was built on the foundations of a religious idea, gained through much personal suffering and who constantly strove to solve the tormenting questions about the existence of God, such as Dostoevsky.

from blatant accusations levied at past Soviet regimes for the misuse of Dostoevsky's works for their own goals to proposals for the beginning of a new understanding of the writer, freed of the crude ideological manipulations of the past, and attempting to gain a real understanding of his work, in all its broadness, and without the deliberate disregard of those facets considered for socio-political reasons to be unworthy of consideration. This movement, initiated to a large degree by the American literary critic and Ambassador to the USSR, J.F. Matlock, who consciously raised the question of the limitations of Dostoevsky scholarship and the need for a new understanding of the great writer; and the Soviet critic and philosopher, Yuri Karyakin, whose book Dostoevsky and the Eve of the XXIst Century, published in April 1989, became the first instance in a discussion on the present and future of Soviet criticism's interpretation of Dostoevsky.

J.F. Matlock's article, "Literature and Politics: Fyodor Dostoevsky" was translated into Russian and published in the journal, Voprosy Literatury in July 1989[30]. In this article, he asserts that because criticism of Dostoevsky's major novels has always embraced an array of disciplines, the real Dostoevsky has often come to be buried beneath the avalanche of commentators' personal views. He compares the interpretations given by V. Rozanov and E. Sandoz of Dostoevsky's work, showing how their own interests, views and opinions, direct, or at least colour, their interpretations. He considers three questions to be of significance: is it possible to give an objective definition of Dostoevsky's political philosophy? How did Dostoevsky apply his philosophy to the political debates of his time? And, do Dostoevsky's opinions enjoy any serious support in the present times? He discusses how Dostoevsky was persecuted by the Bolshevik leaders and critics because of the incompatibility of his world outlook with theirs: Dostoevsky was without doubt very hostile towards socialism, and saw religion as the only basis for man's freedom and morals. In Matlock's view, given the characteristics of Soviet literary criticism - the tendency to distort and adapt Dostoevsky to political needs, and the shifts in attitudes towards the writer in conformity with official

[30] pp. 39-60.

policy shifts - it certainly cannot be taken seriously as a theoretical interpretation, whatever practical uses it might have served. He highlights the way in which Dostoevsky's ideas have been used in the past to support Russian messianic nationalism, and then states that this is also occurring in the contemporary situation. According to him, Dostoevsky's philosophy of freedom is all too easily obscured by Russian chauvinism. Matlock affirms that whilst Dostoevsky illuminated many ills of his time, he never offered a practical remedy. The critic firmly believes that one cannot demand concrete prescriptions from an artist, even the greatest. Dostoevsky's creation is profound and actual because of his ability to penetrate to the innermost recesses of man's soul, but critics tackle Dostoevsky from their own point of view and, like bees, gather that pollen which is most suited to their honey, using his words as irrefutable proof of their own already established thesis.

Matlock proposes a new study of Dostoevsky to replace the one-sided, superficial interpretations that are intended to support a particular world outlook. Critics, he believes, must make a serious attempt to understand Dostoevsky's work in all its depth, not as a political guidebook, but as a prophetic vision, a spiritual quest and a journey into the soul of man. Dostoevsky ideas must no longer be regarded as ammunition in ideological disputes, but as a means to better understand the contemporary world and man.

An article by Ludmila Saraskina, who stood at the forefront of literary critical change and of Dostoevsky scholarship in the glasnost era, follows J.F. Matlock's article in this issue of Voprosy Literatury[31]. She comments on his article, criticising certain statements made by the American, and adds to the discussion of a new understanding of Dostoevsky. She expresses her agreement with Matlock's assertions that contradictions invariably come to light when one examines both Dostoevsky's creative work, particularly The Devils and The Brothers Karamazov, and his publicist writings; and that researchers read

[31]"Within the coordinates of understanding".

Dostoevsky with the aim of understanding the grievous state in which contemporary mankind appears to be. These two affirmations, she says, can be verified in all studies of Dostoevsky, adapted in each case to the critic's personal motives in explaining the writer's ideological paradoxes and spiritual teaching. Saraskina claims that the time of the persecution of Dostoevsky is over and all now seem to cite him to support their own, frequently political, ideas. She continues that when taken out of context and used speculatively, Dostoevsky's utterances lose any connection with their source, and such manipulations certainly don't lead any closer to an understanding of Dostoevsky. In her opinion, J. Matlock poses certain truly important questions concerning Dostoevsky's influence on political thought. The matter lies in the fundamental incompleteness, openness of Dostoevsky's world and the multiple significance of the personalities that inhabit it. She criticises the tendency that is revealed in Matlock's discussion of the works of Rozanov and Sandoz to see ideas in Dostoevsky's creation as extensions of the author himself instead of his characters. She declares that this blatant identification between the writer and his heroes is an old illness in Dostoevsky scholarship. Saraskina even denies the validity of bringing Dostoevsky to account for statements made in the first person in his writings. To her, one of the most important points upon which Matlock touches is the relationship between certain of Dostoevsky's judgements expressed in Diary of a Writer and the humanist and anti-totalitarian tendencies revealed in his works. There is nothing easier, she says, than to convict Dostoevsky by pointing to his contradictions, to expose his "fantastical thinking" and utopian ideas; or to use the old trick of dividing Dostoevsky into a brilliant artist and a weak, reactionary thinker. But such a division can only be in the perception of the critic, who uses this ploy in a vain attempt to get the better of Dostoevsky, and to blame him for the illnesses and contradictions of society. To her, Dostoevsky is one throughout his novels, his Diary of a Writer and his political articles, and that it is precisely the understanding of the wholeness of Dostoevsky as an artist-thinker that makes it possible to comprehend all that he wrote, not as a piling up of contradictions and mistakes,

but as a united ideo-artistic phenomenon[32]. She claims that whatever Dostoevsky wrote about as a publicist, he never had pretensions to the role of a political ideologue, and never tried in his articles to play up to anyone. His readers did not look in his publicism for rational political prescriptions, but were grateful to him for his sincere desire to comprehend the contemporary world. The news of the day, Saraskina continues, was examined in Dostoevsky's publicism from the point of view of a moral ideal, so that his prophecies existed in another system of co-ordinates, within which it is not always easy to orientate oneself. It is much easier to call Dostoevsky the foreshadower of fascism, a medieval inquisitor, a double-dyed reactionary, and an obscurantist, as Soviet criticism did in the 30-40s, or a xenophobe, a chauvinist, an anti-Semite as Sandoz does. In her opinion, "the whole Dostoevsky"[33] must be seen within the co-ordinates of understanding rather than within the co-ordinates of accusation.

Saraskina does not deny that Dostoevsky's work contains messages. She says that the future Russia was divined by him with terrifying foresight, for Russia became that same country for experiment about which Shigalev and Verkhovensky dreamed, and this "dream" was fulfilled by their successors on scales that in the 19th century were reached only in Dostoevsky's imagination- "100 million heads". Yet this political insight must be approached with the highest degree of responsibility, it is important to maintain one's distance, whether one is arguing with the author or claiming him as an ideological ally. In this way, perhaps his prescriptions will appear more realistic, and more appropriate to the curing of contemporary ills. She agrees wholeheartedly with Matlock's remark that '"to demand from an artist concrete prescriptions, means to demand too much of him, even if it is question of one of the greatest artists in mankind"[34]. She says that nowadays, when the goal has been attained of legalizing and legitimizing the whole of Dostoevsky, one cannot justify the ambiguous approach to Dostoevsky adopted

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[32] p. 63.

[33] p. 67.

[34] Ibid idem.

by Soviet criticism after the last policy shift by which critics felt it diplomatic to hold their tongues about certain aspects of his "weaknesses". Now, semi-glasnost must give way to a genuine freedom of the word in the comprehending of the writer, for only then will Dostoevsky's spiritual legacy, about which J. Matlock speaks so perspicaciously at the end of his article, be able to serve the humanity that needs him.

Saraskina thus cautions against the intentional use of Dostoevsky as an ideological weapon and the tendency to either see only one aspect of his work, or to divide his views into two contradictory parts. She does not refute the idea that his works contain messages, insight and guidance with regard to the paths to be taken or avoided by society, but asserts that the temptation to find definite messages or concrete solutions must be resisted. Dostoevsky must be understood as a whole.

At the initiative of J.F. Matlock, a literary evening was held at the US Embassy in the USSR to discuss Yuri Karyakin's latest book Dostoevsky and the Eve of the XXIst Century, published in April 1989[35]. The fact that such a discussion was held is indicative of the importance attached to the publication of this book by the representatives of both Soviet and American experts on Russian literature. Karyakin's work, which addresses the question of the misuse of Dostoevsky's writings and the need for a reinterpretation of his work, was heralded as a sign of the new era in Dostoevsky scholarship that was dawning thanks to the new freedom of glasnost. Indeed, there is no doubt that Karyakin was one of the pioneers of a new understanding of the great classical writer. According to the editors of Znamya, the book confirms that Russians are now able to recognise that much of what Dostoevsky foretold, did indeed come to pass in the twentieth century, and to extract vital lessons for the present from these prophecies. I. Vinogradov agrees that through Karyakin's book, Russians can now try to comprehend the fundamental spiritual problems that Dostoevsky posed in the nineteenth century in conformity with their contemporary life. Until the present, he

[35]The contributions towards this discussion were published in Znamya, July 1990.

says, the spiritual problems of society have been neglected, and yet these constitute the central problems of Soviet life. No-one, in his opinion, can avoid the "sacred" questions of human existence and these cannot be resolved without turning to Dostoevsky's experience. In his book, Karyakin enters into a vital spiritual dialogue with the writer, showing that he has assimilated the essence of Dostoevsky's Christianity. This dialogue is of great significance, for the problem of contemporary irreligious humanism is becoming ever more urgent. And in the perestroika situation, it is becoming increasingly clear that the social building that one is building or intends to build, must have a spiritual foundation.

L. Saraskina sees the publication of Karyakin's book as the culmination of his spiritual, political and human journey of knowledge and self-knowledge. He was purified by this journey, having been in his student days in the 40s a loyal subject of Stalin. She says that he, like the whole of his generation, was forced to change his ideological system, his political coordinates, several times in the course of his life, whereas she is of the following generation which has not been seduced by dogmatics and so-called ideals. She praises Karyakin for the fact that already in the 60s he did his best to rehabilitate The Devils and to legitimise the scholarly study of materials connected to this "libel of the revolution and revolutionaries". However, like critics of past epochs, he has given a very subjective and, in her opinion, incorrect view of where Dostoevsky's insights and blind spots lie, as he separates Neche-vism, which he links to the "devils", from the "real" revolutionaries. Despite this "principal hiatus", she praises the work for a specific remarkable quality: its inconclusiveness. Saraskina says that the finest virtue of the book lies in its openness, the lack of an overpowering final word, of a definite conclusion, allowing for an insertion in the discussion and a continuation of the theme. While there may be a dogmatic attitude in his book, the process itself of understanding the truth is free any kind of doctrinairinism. This is the most important result of his years of work and what permits one to affirm that Karyakin made his way to Dostoevsky.

I. Zolotussky also speaks about how Karyakin succeeded in liberating himself from

the self-deception and dogmatics of his age. Through his experience of Dostoevsky, and particularly The Devils, the most sensitive of his works to the present moment, Karyakin evolved from a Marxist to an idealist. He built a bridge for his generation to the past, cut off from them by the nihilism of the revolution.

I. Zolotussky sees Karyakin's book as a document about the evolution of a man who has drawn closer to Dostoevsky's text and lived through it. It is a book about both Dostoevsky and the author himself, about the drama of his journey, his development. He states that at the end of the book, in a completely political article, Karyakin unmasks his own anonymous antipode- dogmatics, and is ready to forgive the spite and abuse that Dostoevsky has suffered. The book moves towards an exposure of mankind's self-deception, encapsulated in the dominance of theory over life, in the absolutisation of and whole-hearted faith in theory as higher than man. Karyakin's drama lies in the overcoming of this faith, for he has succeeded in rising above himself, in recognising that which he previously refuted as truth. He has liberated himself, through Dostoevsky's works, from the pride of the idea, from the chir and self-deception that were sacred to his generation. Yuri Karyakin's book d.. .es the stamp of struggle, enlightenment and public liberation. It is a confession that turns into a sermon. On the positive side it is sincere and personal; it reveals the struggle of idealism against materialism, of feeling against logic (Marxism is logic), a departu e into the spiritual domain. However, on the negative side, it lacks philosophical depth, the sense of Dostoevsky in the context of the world and the Russian literary process, and contains a political tendency. There is a desire to smash literary, and other opponents, an attempt to unite Dostoevsky with all of "ours" - all those who are directly or indirectly the precursors of Karyakin himself. According to Zolotussky, there are glimpses in Karyakin's excellent book of the birthmark of former Marxist views, such as when he speak of the superiority of "ours" over "not ours", when he accuses Dostoevsky of errors, narrow-mindedness and morbidness, and when he separates Nechaevism and Verkhovenskyism from socialism. As a conclusion, Zolotussky says that the book reveals where the possibilities for self-liberation lie and he thus takes it as awaiting a continuation and a completion.

Yuri Karyakin himself added a commentary to the discussion published in Znamya. In this, he reaffirms that what is important in the present situation is not economics or politics, but the spiritual moral aspects of existence, for this is where the root of contemporary problems lie. He speaks of how Marxism-Leninism lowered the value of the personality, of man, as all was flung aside for the attainment of specific goals. It is time, he says, to settle accounts. Not one serious politician, in Karyakin's opinion, has the right to practise politics, if he has not allowed Dostoevsky's insights, such as that God is the source of all moral values, to pass through his soul. While the amount of scientific knowledge has doubled in the Soviet Union in recent years, this is certainly not true with regard to morality and the spirit, and this deficit must now be addressed.

Karyakin desires a full, open understanding of Dostoevsky's creation, free of the external motives of previous Soviet scholarship. It is time to stop the deliberate accommodation of Dostoevsky's works to a specific ideology and to open up the meaning of his work for the present times. Karyakin shows how Dostoevsky's prophecies came true in the beginning of the twentieth century and believes his message to be just as vital on the eve of the twenty-first century, when mankind is threatened with destruction. His book can be regarded as the first step towards a new Soviet approach to Dostoevsky and his word.

There were other critics who joined their voices to the call for a new understanding of the classic writer. Karen Stepanyan, for example, says in his article "Let's listen to Dostoevsky"[36] that it is not surprising that critics in the present era, with all its complications, are turning with their questions to Dostoevsky, but that it is evident, in most cases, that they have not yet learned to listen correctly to the answers. Critics still forcibly adjust these answers according to their specific subjective needs, or use the writer's authority to corroborate their viewpoint in polemics[37]. Stepanyan finds this very troubling because literary critical articles are

[36] Voprosy Literatury, May 1989.

[37] p. 216.

addressed to the broad reading mass which cannot always discern where certain truths, supposedly uttered by Dostoevsky have been substituted. He shows how I. Volgin in his book Dostoevsky's Last Year (1986), distorts the message in Dostoevsky's works in order to claim that he was a supporter of the movement "The People's Will". Karyakin concludes that while such critics no doubt love, know and revere Dostoevsky, one must be very careful how one approaches his work in the "dust of battle"[38]. And when citing Dostoevsky's authoritative name, critics must remember their responsibility before the hundreds of thousands of readers for whom they are fulfilling the lofty mission of an intermediary. Stepanyan too does not deny that it is the critic's role to reveal Dostoevsky's lessons to the people, but asserts that this must be done with responsibility, and without attempting to use him merely as substantiation for one's own ideological views.

Although the "new" Soviet Dostoevsky scholarship proposed a rejection of the blatant manipulation of literature for ideological purposes, as has occurred throughout Soviet history, it was more a reshaping of the old approach than a complete rupture with it. Proponents of change emphasised that there was a deeper spiritual aspect to Dostoevsky that had been disregarded in purely socio-political interpretations, that a distance must be maintained between critic and author, and that a critic must look for the real meaning in Dostoevsky's words instead of merely support for his own already formulated views or proof of Dostoevsky's acceptability. Yet the inherent view of Dostoevsky's work as containing messages for humanity and offering insights into past and present problems persisted. They called for an open-minded approach to the meaning contained in his work, but did not negate the existence of this meaning or its relevance to contemporary society. Dostoevsky scholarship was to be updated to reflect the concerns of the new era.

4.1.3. The Reinterpretation of The Devils

[38] p. 225.

Despite the changes that resulted from the freer policies of glasnost, attention during the six years in question for the most part continued to concentrate on Dostoevsky's work as an expression of a particular world outlook, and the ideas contained in his work provoked discussion on political, social, economic and other ideological issues. Intense debates once again arose over the "meaning", the "message" contained in Dostoevsky's work. Even in this era of the search for the truth N. Staroselskaya was able to state that at times the feeling is created that Russian interpreters only read Dostoevsky for the corroboration of our own ideas[39]. His characters are studied for the way they think about the world, the truths they disclose, the convictions they live by, and how this relates to contemporary reality.

Dostoevsky's works were shown to be not only about Russia at the end of the nineteenth century, but also about contemporary life, contemporary man. He and his writings were brought into the discussions of the problems of the time, the destiny of Russia and its culture. Themes that appeared profoundly actual in the glasnost era were highlighted. L. Eriov even claims that Dostoevsky already raised the question of the protection of nature in his concern for the Russian forest[40]. And K. Stepanyan, claiming that Dostoevsky's writings have the astonishing quality of being eternally topical, in both a philosophical aesthetic sense, and an everyday practical sense, says that he also wrote about glasnost, about those phenomena that appeared when it was first introduced into society, such as the emergence of poets and writers as a result of newfound openness and transparency[41]. Dostoevsky's lessons which had been forgotten or deliberately ignored were resurrected and recomprehended in the light of contemporary problems. N. Mekhed asserts that an ethical philosopher cannot afford not to turn to the impressive philosophical achievements of Dostoevsky's novels, which offer

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[39]Critique of V.A. Tvardovsky's Dostoevsky v obshchestvennoj zhizni Rossivi (1861-1881); Literaturnoe Obozrenive 1991.

[40]"Ogon' mertsayushchij v sosude", O sovremennoj sotsialno-filosofskoj proze', Zvezda, September 1988.

[41]"Davajte poslushaem Dostoevskogo"; Voprosy Literatury May 1989, p. 215.

their own deep penetration into man's moral existence[42]. His discoveries concerning moral-philosophical and moral-psychological problematics, obtained not through scientific research, but through his own living, moral experience, are exceptionally fruitful to this day. Critics sought to extract lessons from Dostoevsky's work for the present, to discuss the problems posed by Dostoevsky in the nineteenth century in conformity with their contemporary life, showing how Dostoevsky is until the present day, especially actual to Russians.

A. Kazintsev declares that it is time to answer the age-old question "Chto delat'?" [43] and many look to Dostoevsky for the answer, the questions and problems of today being weighed up by the experiences and lessons of the past. B. Tarasov[44] states that Dostoevsky's writings are gaining in significance and interest, that there is a new appreciation of his wisdom and penetration into the essence of problems. Dostoevsky's works and the thoughts embodied in his images were reanalysed during glasnost in order to acquire the knowledge able to assist in contemporary matters. The great changes instituted by glasnost provoked much questioning anew: how to live, how to conduct oneself in the extremely complex situations from which there seems to be no way out, what is happening to Russia? And critics looked to the words of Dostoevsky and other classical writers for answers. Faced with the questions engendered by perestroika, critics turned to Dostoevsky, representing the pinnacle of Russian thought, for guidance and instruction that could be passed on to the people. Through Dostoevsky's literary works critics sought to evaluate the contemporary state of the country and propose paths for its future.

The Devils once again became the focus of Soviet literary critics' attention, and interpretations of it reflected and concentrated the general tendencies in Dostoevsky scholarship in the Soviet Union during these years. A few critical

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[42]"Khudozhestvennij otkritiya kak objekt eticheskogo issledovaniya", Voprosy Filosofii, no. 6., 1986.

[43]"Vzyskatelnaya kritika i eyo p[illegible]ki", Nash Sovremennik, November 1986, p. 186.

[44]"Urok iz klassiki. Dostoevsky i sovremennost", Moskva, May 1989.

analyses of the novel that avoided socio-political themes and issues were published, but the majority focused on the meaning of the work and, as in past eras, provoked discussions and debates that revealed the critic's own ideological position and attitude to the realities of contemporary Soviet society and to the changes instituted by the new leadership.

Glasnost saw the complete rehabilitation of The Devils, a novel that undoubtedly suffered more than most under the weight of Soviet restrictions and censure. Indeed one can go so far as to say that the novel came into fashion, attracting the attention not only of major critics, but also of lesser ones and of commentators on other domains of study and aspects of life too.

L. Saraskina emphasises the troubled history of this novel[45]. She speaks of how when she first read the novel 20 years previously, it had just been republished after a decade of interdiction, but still bore the mark of "a double reaction" and "ideological sabotage". She did not dare to think that she would someday write a book about it. For her, The Devils became a personal experience, a revelation of truth that formed her consciousness, defined a vital choice. She felt the desire to understand this "the most controversial, the most long-suffering, and according to my deep conviction, the most important novel of Dostoevsky", to penetrate into the very depths of the text, to discover the central idea, contrived by the experience of real history. She asserts that the lessons of this great prophetic novel must be assimilated by each person, starting from zero and she hopes that she herself has had the chance to approach that which Dostoevsky expressed in The Devils.

Yuri Karyakin[46] asserts that Dostoevsky and The Devils overturned the fervent Marxists, Leninists, and even Stalinists. He admits that he, like Lenin, once stated in 1948, when he was 18, that he had not read Dostoevsky and did not intend to

[45]Introduction to "Besy" roman-preduprezhden'e, 1990.

[46]Cf discussion on Yu. Karyakin's Dostoevsky i kanun XXI veka, Znamya, July 1990.

do so. And then suddenly he flung himself into Dostoevsky, floundered, sank, but in the end swam out, saving himself.

B. Tarasov declares that now that The Devils has been rehabilitated, it is very important to avoid a passion for politicised analogies between the Nechaevists and contemporary extremists of either the radical left or right, and to try to see behind these analogies, so that a novel about Russia's past and present may become a work about its future[47].

In general, The Devils has not been separated from its socio-political revelations and messages. The call for openness and the truth invoked by glasnost meant that past injustices and inhumanities were uncovered and brought to public attention. This in turn led to the desire to analyse and comprehend the processes that led to such a monstrous revelry of cruelty in the country, a revelry such as had been described in the previous century by Dostoevsky in The Devils. As K. Stepanyan points out, people are haunted by the question of how did such a thing become possible, how did it happen that the bestial element took the upper hand in such a large number of people[48]? Scholars have once again turned to the truths and insights contained in The Devils, where such catastrophes were as though foreseen and foretold. The revolution was discussed with frankness and openness in all its horrific consequences, and Dostoevsky was again regarded by many people as a prophet who had accurately foreseen the impending disaster in all its suffering and cruelty and who had issued his warning to Russia in The Devils. L. Saraskina states that it is not by accident that The Devils came to be regarded as a "novel-warning" and a "novel-prophecy"[49]. P. Palamarchuk speaks of how Dostoevsky had in the past century predicted that the revolutionary experience would cost the country a hundred million souls, although the ordeals and losses surpassed all that even he

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[47]"Vechnoye predosterezheniye. Besy i sovremennost", Novij Mir, August 1991.

[48]"Tri shaga k istine", Neva, January 1989, p. 183.

[49]"Besy" roman-preduprezhdeniye, 1990.

could have foretold[50]. The Devils is about the bane of revolution, the absence of compromise which is like an illness that spreads through society and contaminates not only talented, gifted, outstanding people, but even mediocre, ordinary natures. A.V. Mikhailov[51] asserts that Dostoevsky could scarcely have been incorrect in his predictions of how history would turn to evil and people to self-will, but in The Devils, he presents this as an artistic analysis, seizing a phenomenon in its wholeness and internal logic. And L. Saraskina speaks of the year 1905, when the "bloody dawn of the new age" was dawning and the old world and everything that was great and sacred in it, was being judged by the reason of history and doomed to a fiery ordeal, when daring young Russians tossed in the quest for "justice" and the country paid a human tribute to the "dark demons of historical duty", confirmed Dostoevsky's prognosis in The Devils[52].

Answers were sought in the novel to the root of man's cruelty to man, the origin of revolution and tyranny and terror, and how mankind could be cured. Understanding the message of this novel appeared to be important to scholars in the search for solutions to the present, for a way to save the country. M. Volonshtein declares that each of Dostoevsky's words resounds more forcefully on the eve of the XXIst century than 100 years ago[53].

Further evidence of the impact and inerasable impression of Dostoevsky's novel on the contemporary consciousness is that "the devils" became a popular and almost universal term of abuse and of reciprocal accusations amongst representatives of diverse world outlooks. Critics and socio-political commentators used it as a means of referring to past and contemporary groups whose point of view or ideology was opposed to their own and who were regarded as being an evil of society. L.

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[50]"Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn: Putevoditel", Moskva, September 1989, p. 189.

[51]"K novomu Dostoevskomu", Nash Sovremennik, M... '91.

[52]"Besy" roman-preduprezhdenive, 1990, Chapter 3 of Section "Vechnoye i zlobodnevnoye".

[53]Cf his contribution to the discussion on Yuri Karyakin's Dostoevsky and the Eve of the XXIst Century, Znamya, July 1990.

Saraskina points to how in the past the overwhelming majority of interpretations by Soviet critics came down to a denial of any relation to the "devils" or any possibility of The Devils being about them[54]. During glasnost it seems that denial turned to accusation and critics eagerly participated in the hunt for the guilty party. Sokhryakov speaks of how Shmelov's hero polemicises with one of the ideologues of the contemporary "devils", reproaching him for the fact that they consider themselves to be part of an "elite" having the right to lead, although no-one authorised or asked them to play this role not only for themselves, but for others too[55]. These ideologues have pretensions to intellectual depth and originality, but display in the end a fanatic hatred for those who are "differently minded". The evil in their message is exposed, reveals its bestial mercilessness, passion for self-assertion at the expense of others. Karen Stepanyan calls for the unmasking of the myth about the Russian classic as the ideological inspirer and organiser of Russian revolutions- a myth created by the revolutionary "devils" themselves, who very much wished to compose for themselves a noble genealogy[56]. A.V. Mikhailov in his criticism of past Soviet editions of The Devils and the culture which blatantly altered Dostoevsky's text so as to distort its message, claims that "devilishness" has become cunning with the word and the letter, blinding and dulling them[57]. It creates words of censure, falsehood, a hatred for man, a bowing to idols. M. Volenshtein says that the "devils" are characterised by a black hatred for Dostoevsky because he understood them so well[58]. He points to the devils of our epoch, direct descendants of Peter Verkhovensky- Paul Pot and Zhdanov, who reigned very recently. I. Volgin resurrects a comment of a member of the liberal intelligentsia in which the "devils" are equated with the Bolsheviks who claim Dostoevsky as their precursor[59]. He sees this continued tendency to use

[54]Chapter 3, "Prorochestvo ot uzhasa", in "Besy" roman-preduprezhdenive, 1990.

[55]"Nenavidet zlo sejmie malo. O klassicheskoj traditsii v sovremennoj proze", Nash Sovremennik, December 1987, p. 171.

[56]"Nuzhna li nam literatura?", Znamya, December 1990, p. 224.

[57]"K novomu Dostoevskomu", Nash Sovremennik, March 1991.

[58]Contribution to the discussion on Yuri Karyakin's Dostoevsky and the Eve of the XXIst Century, Znamya, July 1990.

[59]"Chto napishem na pamyatnike", Literaturnaya Gazeta, 23 October 1991.

Dostoevsky to their own ends amongst Soviet critics right up until the present. I. Zolotussky refers to the liberal democrats who seized power after the August 1991 putsch as a new modification of "the devils", born out of the struggle with devilishness[60]. S. Zolotsev protests against the suggestion that the capital be moved from Moscow, preordained by the will of the heavens to be the heart of Great Russia, asserting that those who thirst to do so deserve the definition taken from Dostoevsky of "the devils" for this expresses their essence precisely[61]. He asks: "How much further does this devilishness, the spitting on and defamation of the Russian nationality and literature, go" and claims that it is prompted by such journals as Ogoniok and Nedelya. L. Saraskina mentions this tendency in her discussion with Yuri Karyakin in March 1992[62], stating that it is significant that the very concept of "the devils" has become the chosen term of abuse in general use, the universal means of political mud-slinging, so that all without distinction of values slander one another with this satanic brand-name. She herself declares that in the present day with its epidemic of exposures, all around are scum and riff-raff, as there have always been; there are no pure men and there can never be, all are "devils". Yu. Karyakin[63] agrees that at present all the "devils" consist of almost everyone exposing one another and almost no-one looking in the mirror, except to admire himself.

It is thus evident that an analysis of attitudes towards Dostoevsky and of the various interpretations of The Devils offered by Soviet literary criticism during the glasnost years gives one an insight into the ideological trends present in Soviet society during that time. A definite pattern of themes and problematics is discernible in these interpretations. Critics commented and expressed their views on the most important questions, concerns and debates of the day through the

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[60]"Nashi nigilisty", Literaturnaya Gazeta, 17 June 1992.

[61]"Dostojnstvo i dostoyaniye", Moskva, May 1990, p. 171.

[62]Cf Rishina, I.: Interview with Yu. Karyakin and L. Saraskina, "Zakruzhilis besy razny, budto listya v noyabre...", Literaturnaya Gazeta,
11 March 1992. p. 3.

[63]Ibid.

medium of interpretations of the novel and of direct references to Dostoevsky's views, especially those encapsulated in The Devils.

4.2. AN ANALYSIS OF SOVIET CRITICISM'S REINTERPRETATION OF "THE DEVILS" DURING GLASNOST

There are certain considerations that must be taken into account when analysing the interpretations of Dostoevsky's novel published by Soviet critics during the glasnost period. Various assumptions and a distinct methodology[64] underlie critical practice in the Soviet Union distinguishing it as a whole from literary criticism practised in the West. This means that while an analysis such as is being undertaken in this work may not be valid in the case of Western literary criticism, it is justified in the case of Soviet criticism.

Although Western scholars now tend to agree that there is no such thing as an ideal text or as objective criticism in any culture, the blatantly subjective, biased nature of the approach of Soviet critics, and their clear manipulation of a text, differentiate them from Western critics who, in general, strive towards objectivity and ideological neutrality.

The majority of Western theorists have come to agree that no text can have a completely objective value in the literary system [65] and the reception and interpretation of a text can never be totally free of ideology. An ideal text, which completely excludes extra-literary factors, and offers a perfect mirror of the world, free of ambiguity, is not possible. It cannot be totally free of historical, political, social and ideological concerns. Althusser states that ideology, often unconscious and not deliberately inserted into discourse, is the very condition of the experience

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[64] As discussed in my introduction, Soviet critics use such methods as the tendentious selection of facts from the author's biography; the blending of publicist statements and literary analysis, the identification of the author's position with that of the literary characters; and the adaptation of topical themes in his work to the contemporary situation, in order to propagate their ideological standpoint through literary criticism.

[65] For example, T. Bennett, cf. Selden, R., 1984, p, 83.

of the world[66].

Since the early 1970s, a trend has developed in Western Europe that examines criticism from a reader point of view. These approaches, which transfer the focus of criticism to the act of interpretation, have shown the impossibility of a "correct" reading. A text's reception depends on the reader's, be he a critic or otherwise, own biographical, socio-economic and ideological position. The possibility of the modern post-structuralists' notion of the self as "free" and "wiped clean of prejudice" was questioned by these critics, who turned the focus of interest to the concept of reader-response, which cannot be free of ideology[67]. All claims to knowledge and interpretive validity, they claimed, are simply variations of response. Every critic has an ideology, formed by all he has experienced and assimilated in life. As soon as he offers a "correct" reading of a text, some form of suppression takes place, a smoothing out of contradictions and a closing of the text that is ideological. As Saussure argues '"a literary work is not an object which stands by itself and offers the same face to each reader in each period. It is not a monument which reveals its timeless essence in a monologue."'[68] Each text contains "blanks" which allow freedom in the process of reading, and the connections made by the reader will depend on his state of consciousness. R. Selden speaks of how Iser, who places the reader at the centre of the process of the meaning's actualisation, asserts that the content of the mental images offered by the text are translated into the reader's consciousness and coloured by his existing stock of experience. '"The significance of the work then does not lie in the meaning sealed within the text, but in the fact that meaning brings out what had previously been sealed within us."'[69]. How a writer's word is received is to a large extent dependent on that which has taken shape in the perception of the reader, who, of necessity has acquired certain stereotypes of thinking and

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[66]Cf. Belsey, C., 1980.

[67]Selden, R., 1984, p. 9.

[68]Ibid, p. 114.

[69]Ibid., p. 117.

subjective preconceptions. Each reader is formed by the peculiarities of the spiritual culture in which he finds himself. Often despite himself, he is influenced by the spiritual demands of the society in which he lives, the socio-political, moral atmosphere of the time.

Electiveness, recomprehension and addition are always part of reception. As Roman Selden states, many Western critics have come to the conclusion that reading is always to a certain extent a rewriting. R. Williams and T. Bennett assert that '"all readings are misreadings in the sense that they must necessarily displace or supplement the text"'[70]. Meaning is never a fixed essence inherent in the text, but is always constructed by the reader. A critic inevitably introduces a meaning, and imparts his own ideas to the text, for he does not, as Nietzsche points out, merely perform a conceptual translation, but actively interprets the text. Selden asserts that according to many scholars, literary works are always "appropriated, reappropriated, dissolved and reconstructed, according to the cultural practices prevailing at the moment of reception"[71], and that the reception of a text is the determining instance in the chain of communication. A literary text, he says, is appropriated according to the whole material, institutional, political and ideological context in which the operation of criticism takes place[72].

Despite these assertions by Western critics, the significant non-objectivity of interpretation that can be observed amongst Soviet critics distinguishes it from Western criticism and has made it a viable means for the examination of ideological trends in the Soviet Union. While Western critics have tended to aspire towards ideological objectivity, Soviet critics have continued to approach literary texts in a blatantly subjective manner so as there is little doubt as to their world outlook. Soviet critics have always considered criticism to be a socially significant activity, and thus have tended to adapt texts to fit their own political agendas. The literary

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[70]Ibid., p. 121.

[71]Ibid., p. 62.

[72]Ibid., p. 83.

critical word is regarded as having a responsibility: it is not only about literature, but also about the times, and helps accentuate social attention on the essential problems of the contemporary situation. Soviet critics, although they have in general discredited Marxist and Socialist Realist criticism, have not developed other theories and approaches with which to guide and control literary criticism. There has not been, as has occurred in the West, a questioning of the basic methodology or institution of criticism, and they have not, except for a few individuals, attempted to develop a science of literary criticism, where scientific discourse can be defined as "fundamentally indifferent to the expectations of the general public", and "governed by rules of methodological purity and logical consistency"[73], but continue to blatantly respond to the literary word in a journalistic manner. Soviet critics cannot separate literature from reality, so that a text often becomes a reflection of their thoughts on the state of society and literary criticism becomes polemical.

Also to be taken into consideration is the question of historicism. An "historical approach" takes into account the thoughts and beliefs existing in a distinguishable historical period, and thus rules out certain possible meanings as historically inappropriate. As previously mentioned, one of the fundamental principles of contemporary Soviet Dostoevsky scholarship is the actualisation of various "relevant" aspects of his legacy. While Western research has shown that ahistorical studies are viable in certain situations, such as gender studies, many scholars believe that, in general, an ahistorical conception of the literary system is inadequate. A literary text, according to them, is embedded in an historical context that can be defined in cultural, political, social and ideological terms, and cannot be divorced from its contemporary social reality. It is produced "within and with reference to, a conjuncture of historical forces", and any "particular work is always addressed, first and foremost, to a particular audience at a particular time"[74].

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[73]Hohendahl, P., 1982, p. 18.

[74]Selden, R., 1984, p. 106.

The total disregard of a text's historical conjuncture can lead to a blatant misreading and manipulation of the text. Critics such as Jakobsen have shown that this can often means that certain elements are promoted to the foreground, while others, which may have previously had a dominant function, are relegated to the background[75]. R. Selden points to Foucault and Derrida's insistence on the historicity of discourse: all meanings, all texts are subject to an "historical process". Modern Western criticism insists on the plurality of the text, but also shows that taking the historical conjuncture of a text into account does not mean that it is univocal. It is important to "..distinguish between kinds of interpretation according to the degree to which they are derived from the elements of a conjuncture or forced upon the text by institutional, political or ideological determinants not belonging to the specific conjuncture in question"[76]. The historical conjuncture determines the limits of a text's possibilities, and some readings are clearly derived to a greater extent than others from the determinate set of conditions of the text's production. The critic should recognise the text's openness, but also take cognisance of the multiple determinants which operate on a text at the moment of composition. J. Catteau, one of the West's foremost contemporary Dostoevsky scholars emphasises, that although Dostoevsky's works have a perennial quality, a universality, they are still rooted in a definite time period and specific environment[77]. For example, The Devils was written under the immediate impact of the Nechaev affair, which deeply affected Dostoevsky.

Soviet criticism tends to read works of the past as though they were modern works. Evidence of the ahistorical nature of Soviet criticism is given by the characteristic by which what is one day considered to be the irrefutable truth, is the next day reanalysed, and a new irrefutable truth proclaimed, more appropriate to contemporary policies. They have lost a basic understanding of the historical context. They disregard the fact that the author was part of the controversies and

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[75]Cf. Ibid, p. 61.

[76]Ibid., p. 84.

[77] Dostoevsky and the Process of Literary Creation, 1989.

debates of his time, and that the critic exists in a different social and political climate. Although Marxist theory asserts that knowledge is inseparable from the political and ideological struggles which arise in specific historical situations, Soviet criticism came to insist on the overriding importance of topicality. Theory was sacrificed to relevance. Critics, even in the glasnost era, concerned themselves with those themes, problems and experiences that were reproducible in the contemporary situation. It is evident that some readings arise as a result of a total disregard for the text's historical conditions, and the new knowledge that was put forward by a writer has been blatantly divorced from the historical conjuncture in which it occurred. The work becomes integrated into another historical context, into a changed social structure, a new set of spiritual and practical values. Soviet readings tend to "'force the text against the grain of history", transgressing, distorting or displacing the limits of a text's historical conditions of production"[78]. They ignore the fact that the historical conditions of production of a text exclude some significances.

These important features of the Soviet approach to literary criticism, and to the examination of Dostoevsky's works must be noted in the examination of the ideological trends of the glasnost era reflected in literary critics' interpretation of The Devils. It is important to understand by what means and for what purposes Dostoevsky's text is interpreted in a specific manner.

4.2.1. Internationalism and Nationalism

The question of Russia's relationship with other countries, particularly western Europe and the U.S.A., its long-standing "enemies", and its role in the international arena, became exceedingly important issues during the glasnost era. Inherent in the glasnost policies were a new openness and transparency, not just within Soviet society, but also in the international sphere: the bringing to light of past and present wrongs, the free exchange of information, the tolerance and acceptance

[78]Selden, R, 1984, p. 114.

of views other than one's own. As previously mentioned, perestroika highlighted the necessity of good relations with other countries that could provide assistance from both a financial and an advisory point of view. As the new policies took root, calls from party supporters for reconciliation and tolerance developed steadily into encouragement to learn from and imitate the West.

From the very beginning of glasnost, there was a noticeable effort on the part of the Communist Party to put forward the ideal of universalism, pan-humanism. Gorbachev himself declared the "priority of pan-human values"[79]. A. Ninov in his commentary on the VIII All-Union Congress of Soviet Writers, says that universal values and morality must not be negated, as they arise from the best of the historical experience and culture of all peoples, and that not only do they not contradict the ideology of communism, but are the necessary premises and foundation for its development and upliftment[80]. He also claims that Marxism is opposed to the spirit of national narrow-mindedness. He points to Belinsky's criticism in the 40s of the attempt by Russian slavophilism to fence Russia off from the broad all-European process of political, economic and cultural transformation, and to an article written by Lenin in 1901 in which he referred to the slavophiles as reactionary, and their doctrine as archaic[81]. He declares that there is not the least grounds to celebrate the revival of slavophile ideas and that they can in no way be united with concepts of Soviet patriotism.

The incompatibility between Russian nationalism and the new spirit of internationalism thus became one of the fundamental and controversial topics of social and political thought during the glasnost years. Dostoevsky scholars too, directly or indirectly, expressed their views on this issue, and their works reflect the trends of thought and opinion that developed around this question. The Devils was brought into this debate, its messages being used to substantiate critics'

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[79]Kozhinov, V.: "My menyaemsya?", Nash Sovremennik, October 1987, p. 165.

[80]"Tri usloviya kritiki", Voprosy Literatury, July 1987, p. 49.

[81]Ibid., p. 51.

statements, or interpretations of an aspect of the novel revealing the critic's views on the question of Russia's role in the international sphere.

4.2.1.1. The Interaction of Cultures

The publishing patterns of certain leading literary journals during the period 1985-1991 reflected the glasnost policy of cultural interaction and internationalism. They began to regularly publish foreign critiques of Dostoevsky, and for the first time, the ideas and views of Western scholars were treated with respect. Indeed, the voice of a foreign scholar was often seen as lending credibility to an argument. G. Gibian states in his article "The quest for Russian national identity in Soviet culture today" [82] that there is at the present an incredible, unabashed eagerness to hear foreigners views and to solicit foreigners' opinions, to get them to write articles and give interviews, including criticism of the Soviet past and present, and that they are listened to as authorities. This trend is certainly discernible in Dostoevsky scholarship.

J.F. Matlock's article, "Literature and politics: Fyodor Dostoevsky", published in July 1989 in Voprosy Literatury, is blatantly critical of the Soviet regime. He asserts that the figure of Peter Verkhovensky in The Devils shows that Dostoevsky was able to look inside the soul of the socialists. The writer, he says, foresaw the consequences of the theories of his time, which like Shigalev's, began with unlimited freedom and ended with unlimited despotism. He declares that we must agree with the dangers that Dostoevsky foresaw in socialism, for this was a prophecy of what brought man to totalitarianism in the 20th century. What is noteworthy is that this article is neither preceded by a foreword nor followed another article exposing the error of the critic's views, and counteracting them with "correct" ones, as was customary in previous eras, when a contentious article made its way into the Soviet press.

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[82] Cf. Thompson, E. (ed.), 1991.

Articles on Dostoevsky by Robert Belnap and Robert Jackson were translated into Russian and published together in the Soviet press, followed by an article by S. Semenova[83]. All three deal with Dostoevsky's moral-philosophical reflections. Jackson compares the treatment of the theme of the ethics of vision in the works of Dostoevsky, [illegible]urgenev's "The execution of Tropman". Both examine the problem of the sight of violence, in particular of corporal punishment, and the role of the observer. Jackson asserts that while both writers are troubled by man's attraction to and fascination with violence and horror, their discussions on the subject are polemically interrelated: although Turgenev's spectator considers himself innocent as he did not strike the blow, Dostoevsky insists on the guilt of knowledge and vision. The critic emphasises Dostoevsky's ability to look within himself, in order to find the bestial impulses in man. He declares the cornerstone of his religious philosophical world outlook to be his insistence on the fact that human solidarity begins with solidarity in evil, and atonement must begin with the recognition of universal guilt. In his article, "Creation as transformation", R. Belnap discusses the writer's creative process. He asserts that in Dostoevsky's work, this involves both modification of real life and innovation, and that Dostoevsky can thus be regarded as a romantic realist, standing at the crossroads of loyalty to reality and originality. Dostoevsky was able to point to incidents from real life that confirmed that his heroes were to the highest degree real, and that such accusations as The Devils being an anti-realistic creation full of libel and slander were unfounded.

An article by A. Moravia, an Italian critic, was published for the first time in Russia in January 1990[84] although it was written in 1956. Moravia openly criticises the Soviet regime and especially Stalinism, under whose rule Dostoevsky was not republished. He says that one understands why Dostoevsky was seen by Stalinists to be their antagonist when one considers his novel, The Devils. He speaks of a dual between Marx and Dostoevsky, the third round of which will be won by the

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[83] Voprosy Literatury, November 1988.

[84] Voprosy Literatury

latter.

The close interrelationship between Russian and Western literature and social thought was emphasised through discussions of Dostoevsky's importance for and influence on Western academics. The universalists adopted a position of cultural comparativism, by which they showed the interdependence, closeness, and reciprocity of influences of Russian and foreign cultures.

The editors of Voprosy Literatury wrote an introduction to their section in the November issue of 1988, "The Russian Classic in the World: Dostoevsky", in which they emphasised the international importance of Russian classical literature, such as the works of Dostoevsky. They claim that people are drawn to such works as they contain the grave, but inspiring truth about the world, in all its contradictions and complexity. Foreign Russian studies, they continue, are a fast developing branch of literary science, and serve as a testimony to the universal authority of the Russian classics. They state that the high level that has been attained in Russian studies, can be judged by the multitude of congresses, conferences, symposiums, that have been organised by national and international slavists; and throughout the world, increasingly valuable monographs and scholarly publications are appearing. They welcome this fruitful and ever-developing interrelationship between Soviet and foreign literary scholars during the epoch of glasnost and perestroika as a step towards the liberation from stereotypes, hardened cliches, and prejudices, that have been accumulated over decades. They announce that the journal intends, through regular publications, to make its readers acquainted with the most significant findings of foreign Russian experts.

W. Kazak asserts in his article "Dostoevsky through the eyes of German writers"[86] that Dostoevsky holds a special place of honour in contemporary European culture. He discusses the influence of the Russian writer on and views expressed about him by several important German writers. Frank Thiess in the early 19th century declared that a knowledge of Dostoevsky is more important than of

[85] Voprosy Literatury, September-October 1991, pp. 126-140.

any other work, and that the reading of Dostoevsky is a way of understanding the distinctiveness of the Russian people within the polyphonic unity of all mankind. Herman Hesse (1877-1962) affirmed that the European youth considered Dostoevsky to be the greatest writer. Nossak (1901-77) believed that Dostoevsky was necessary in order to better understand the world in which we live. He studies The Devils through the prism of the contemporary world and considers it to be exceedingly actual. For example, one already encounters arson and political murder as a means of propaganda in the novel, and did they not in the times of Fascism endure these methods of exerting an influence on the masses? He generalises Dostoevsky's prophetic words, considering them to be "a warning about the disastrousness of any system that turns into an end in itself"[86]. Kazak also discusses the views expressed by two writers of German origin who had accomplished the ideal of immigrants: the complete uniting of two cultures. Fyodor Stepan (1884-1905) dedicates his article to "the prophetic analysis of the Bolshevik revolution"[87]. For him, the corresponding passages from The Devils undoubtedly appear as "the most profound interpretation of the tragic events of Eastern Europe"[88]. Kazak concludes that Dostoevsky is a source of strength in both the Russian and German culture and one of the most powerful roots of worldwide culture. Kazak emphasises the interaction and mixing of cultures, through proof of Dostoevsky's influence on German writers. He regards his works, and particularly The Devils, as important for an understanding of not just Russian, but worldwide society.

K.M. Azadovsky also emphasises the cultural links between Russia and the West in his article on Dostoevsky in the memoirs of F.F. Fidler, a German by origin, who spent his whole life making the German public acquainted with the great Russian classics[89]. One of his favourites, Azadovsky says, was Dostoevsky, whose name

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[86] p. 135.

[87] p. 138.

[88] p. 138.

[89] Novij Mir, August 1985.

was widely known in Germany since the 80s and who was recognised as one of the leading figures of the psychological novel and of realism.

The world-wide recognition of Dostoevsky's greatness and significance is emphasised by A. Gulyga in the introduction to R. Laut's article, published in the sixth issue of Literaturnaya Ucheba in 1989. She speaks of how Laut has made great steps in the popularisation of Russian national philosophy through his study of Dostoevsky, and of how he looks to Dostoevsky's insights for answers and declares: "I answer together with Dostoevsky : genuine Christianity and genuine pan-humanism", words which, in her opinion, reveal the whole of R. Laut- a good man, A European scholar, a friend of Russia[90]. R. Laut states that through Dostoevsky's insights, Russia brought something incomparable to anything else into the depository of mankind's spiritual ideas. A. Gulyga thus reveals her support for cultural interaction and internationalism according to the spirit of glasnost.

In her book "Besy" Roman-preduprezhdeniye, L. Saraskina examines in great depth Dostoevsky's influence on both Western and Eastern literature. She states that in the 100 years since his death, Dostoevsky's influence has continued to grow and broaden, beginning with his own country, and spreading to the countries of Europe, America and Asia[91]. A chapter is devoted to her discussion of George Orwell's great novel, 1984, as a realisation of the warnings contained in Dostoevsky's The Devils, where the totalitarian regime reaches its culmination in the total disappearance of people, and even the negation of their very existence. And in two further chapters, she analyses Dostoevsky's influence on Eastern literature, through a comparison between The Devils and works of the Japanese writer, Akutagava Ryunokse, and the Indian writer, R. Tagor. They, she says, show the same humanist approach as Dostoevsky and, like him, reveal their horror at the immorality of politicians and the tendency of totalitarianism to abolish the concepts of humaneness and justice. His influence, according to her, is not limited to

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[90] p. 162.

[91] 1990, p. 187.

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[90] p. 162.

[91] 1990, p. 187.

literature, but touches the very image of the life, thinking and emotions of people throughout the world.

K. Stepanyan highlights the question of foreign influence on Russian culture as an important aspect of the contemporary ideo-aesthetic debates. He criticises those who would deny the European influence in Dostoevsky's work. He uses as an example Yu. Bondarev's unwillingness to admit the influence of Hoffman on Russian classical literature, and argues that Dostoevsky had avidly read the whole of Hoffman in German and Russian and echoed him throughout his life[92].

However, while these critics eagerly welcomed the contributions of Western critics to Dostoevsky scholarship, ready to learn from their insights into his work, there were others who opposed this infiltration of Western culture and learning into Soviet scholarship, repudiated the idea of an harmonious interaction of cultures, and continued the old attitude of opposing Soviet and Western blocks of scholarship locked in conflict. Such critics believed that cultural groups cannot enrich one another and each should live within its own cultural heritage. They rejected the notion that the Russian author could be fully understood by non-Russians, and sprung to the defence of the Russian writer in the face of criticism levelled at him by Western readers and scholars. In his article published in Russkaya Literatura in 1985, A.N. Nikolyukin criticises Constance Garnett's English translation of Dostoevsky's work at the beginning of the twentieth century, which he says, is considered by Western critics to be the best translation of Dostoevsky, and which determined for the whole of the twentieth century the American experience of him. In his opinion, English and American readers became acquainted with a coarsened, stripped version of Dostoevsky, and not the Russian one. This fact, he asserts, cannot be discounted when we consider the readers' perception of the writer, which was often very critical of the style and content of his works. The translation lost the significance of many images, discarding many Russianisms and uniquely Russian details, smoothing away many shades of meaning, bringing

[92]"Davajte poslushayem Dostoevskogo...", Voprosy Literatury, May 1989, p. 224.

of the writer, which was often very critical of the style and content of his works. The translation lost the significance of many images, discarding many Russianisms and uniquely Russian details, smoothing away many shades of meaning, bringing historical reality down to the level of understanding of the Anglo-American reader, and sometimes twisting the ideological meaning of the text. The text is thus accommodated to the English reader's way of thinking. He further states that American writers, such as Hemingway, who claimed to have been influenced by Dostoevsky, did not by any means know the same writer as the Russian readers. Thus, in his opinion, the real Dostoevsky is known only to the Russians, being part of their culture, and can only be superficially understood by Westerners. Nikolyukin emphasises the separation and lack of true comprehension between the two cultures, and rejects Western scholarship and Western perceptions of this great national writer.

The new admiration for and attempts to imitate Western methods and models in all spheres of life, including literary scholarship, was very unfavourably received by certain commentators. Their defence against Western criticism of Russia and backlash criticism against the ever developing tendency to tolerate and even agree with it, was no doubt a reaction of injured pride. V. Makhlin devotes his article, "The problem of Dostoevsky's creation"[93] to a review of the biography of Dostoevsky by Prof. Joseph Frank, an American scholar, which is considered to be without precedent by Western Russian experts. He agrees that with regard to the material basis of the study, Frank is without equal abroad, but sees the American's aspiration to give a complete interpretation of almost all aspects of the writer's life and creation to be problematic. Frank, he says, attempts to draw together biographical and historical time in Dostoevsky's works, looking for the intermediary between his life and creation in the "socio-cultural milieu" of Russia in the 19th century, on the level of the "objective spirit of Dostoevsky's age". Frank expresses the desire to use the achievements of his Soviet precursors "for the good of free interpretation", which they did not enjoy. However, Makhlin asserts, a discrepancy

[93] Voprosy Literatury, December 1987, pp. 225-235.

comes to light between the conception of the work and its realisation- the genuine "free interpretation" expresses itself as a bad ideologisation and politicisation of Dostoevsky's world outlook and creation, exactly that for which Frank never tires of reproaching the Russian Revolutionary Democrat critics. What appears to be important are none other than Frank's own subjective biases, and the ideological motives in his work are evident. It is noteworthy, Makhlin continues, that the evaluation of Dostoevsky by his contemporaries, particularly Belinsky's school, appear tendentious and implausible to Frank, but he all the time operates with precisely these evaluations, and the thought process known as "vulgar sociologisation" clearly reveals itself in his work. Makhlin states that J. Frank looks into Dostoevsky's creation for simplified ideological solutions and authoritative words, which he advances as the genuine word of Dostoevsky himself. Makhlin defends L. Shestov's book against Frank's criticism, arguing that the genuine spiritual soil of Dostoevsky is alien to Frank. The American approaches his work with an arbitrary yardstick of antitheses, so that he even distorts the "socio-cultural milieu" and the "objective spirit of the age" that he studied so thoroughly. Makhlin concludes that the American biography of Dostoevsky is instructive, but by its methodology and the level of its spiritual ideological problematics, J. Frank's research belongs to yesterday's stage of Dostoevsky study.

4.2.1.2. Dostoevsky- Nationalist or Universalist?

The majority of Western critics have come to regard Dostoevsky as a nationalist and even a chauvinist, and indeed it is difficult to deny his nationalist inclinations, especially in his later life, when he became very militant. An examination of his publicist writings, such as those collected in The Diary of Writer reveal his strong inclination towards nationalism, where "nationalism" is "based on the ideas of national superiority and national exclusivity as well as the view that the nation constitutes the highest form of moral-religious and political community"[94]. The writer's blatantly nationalist views were by no means extraordinary in his time,

[94] Allain, L.: "Fyodor Dostoevsky as bearer of a nationalist outlook", in E.M. Thompson (ed), 1991,

when patriotism was in vogue, and even part of the official policy of the state. Many other respected thinkers supported Russian nationalism, and like Dostoevsky, expressed love and compassion for their brother Slavs in other countries who suffered persecution at the hands of foreigners, such as in the Turkish Empire.

Dostoevsky's nationalist tendencies brought him close to some of the views expressed by the Slavophiles, although he was not a Slavophile himself. Like them, he had a deep faith in the Russian people, and feared the influence of foreigners, which he believed had led to the emergence of the denationalized liberals who supported the revolution, such as Stepan Verkhovensky in The Devils. In many of his writings, he criticised the uprooted intelligentsia, whose atheism stemmed from their divorce from the people and the Russian soil. In The Devils, Shatov tells Stavrogin that he is godless because he is part of the idle rich who have lost contact with the people of his country and that he can only refind God through work in the soil.

Although on several occasions, such as at the Pushkin speech, Dostoevsky expressed the need for universality, it was in Russia that he saw the great harmony, the brotherhood of all people being achieved, and not in Europe. His positive statements about Europe were far outnumbered by negative criticism, by blatant accusations levelled at Europe, and by his distinctly chauvinistic remarks concerning foreigners. While he admitted that Europe had been great in the past, and had made significant material progress, he believed it to be on the point of crumbling, and to be morally decadent, spiritually ill, having lost the true faith retained by the Russian people. In his view, all the parliamentarism, theories, accumulated riches, banks, sciences were only the pillars of a crystal palace that was doomed to collapse. Russia, on the other hand, held the key to spiritual upliftment through the Christianity of its people, for whom he had great love and respect.

There was certainly an element of messianism in Dostoevsky's views. As A.

Walicki[95] points out, he believed that the conquest of Constantinople and the unification by Russia of all the Slavic peoples was necessary to begin a new epoch in world history- an epoch in which Orthodox Russia would spread the new word and bring about the rebirth and salvation of mankind. Messianism is expressed by Shatov in the Devils. He claims that the only god-bearing nation is the Russian nation.

An analysis of the treatment of this question in Dostoevsky's writings, reveals that Soviet critics still tended to adapt the writer's beliefs to their own, to use the discussion of his ideas to reveal their own, whether they supported the glasnost policy of greater internationalism or opposed it, advocating Russian nationalist ideals instead. Both ideological camps, or groupings, not only lacked objectivity, but were manipulative in their approach to Dostoevsky's work, clearly departing from a pre-determined aim, which was either to make Dostoevsky an ally for their standpoint, or, less frequently in this era, condemn him as their ideological opponent. There was evidence of a tendency to distort Dostoevsky's text so as it was made to suit the needs of the contemporary debates between opposing camps, and to become a weapon and a means for achieving an ideological aim.

4.2.1.3. Internationalism

Many leading literary critics and scholars revealed their support for the "new thinking" and spirit of pan-humanism of the glasnost era through their interpretation of Dostoevsky's world outlook, and ideas. His works are often shown by them to contain a message of pan-humanism and internationalism, and his nationalism and chauvinism are disregarded, softened or denied. His statements are explained in such a manner as to make them more "acceptable" from and universalist point of view. The messianic note in his teachings is shown to refer solely to the universally human mission of the Russian people.

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[95]Chapter on Dostoevsky in A History of Russian Thought from the Enlightenment to Marxism, 1988.

In the November 1988 issue of Voprosy Literatury, the editors asserted that the Russian classical writers such as Dostoevsky, whose works revolve around the Russian historical experience, and the hopes and dreams of the Russian people, have also proved to be brilliant spokesmen of pan-human spiritual-moral ideals. And the problems embodied by this literature are acquiring a universal actuality, for, in the face of the global danger of the destruction of all life, people are beginning to realize that the earth is our "common home"[96]. They look for and find answers to the most complex questions of existence in these works; they draw faith in them in the triumph of humanity, social justice, brotherhood. The words of Dostoevsky and other classical writers resound like a hymn to Man, the Creator, able to transform life according to the laws of beauty.

Critics supporting an internationalist attitude highlighted Dostoevsky's call for a universalist approach, for tolerance and understanding between cultures. They showed that far from supporting the ideology of the Slavophiles, Dostoevsky was very sympathetic towards the Westernisers of his times, and was a true pan-humanist. The conception of Dostoevsky as an ardent nationalist was repudiated by claiming that his ideas for Russia were of an universalist nature and aim. L. Rosenbloom speaks of the Pushkin speech where Dostoevsky confirmed his belief that the principal national idea is the aspiration towards universality, and the destination of the Russian man to be unquestionably all-European, universal[97]. He says that Dostoevsky dreamed of universal harmony and that those who would focus on his national antipathies, must bear in mind that Dostoevsky never carried them over into the sphere of his ideal. V. Viktorovich speaks about the incredible reception of Dostoevsky's speech at Pushkin's memorial in June 1884, the incredible unity of spirit among the crowd, which came from all walks of life and different nationalities[98]. It was a moment of true brotherhood. Emphasising the

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[96]"Russkaya klassika v mire: Dostoevsky", p. 133.

[97]"Krasota spaset mir", O "simvole very" F.M. Dostoevskogo', Voprosy Literatury, December 1991, pp. 142-180.

[98]"Broshennoye semya vozrastet", eshcho raz o "zaveshchanii" Dostoevskogo", Voprosy Literatury, March 1991, pp. 142-169.

pan-human aspect of the Russian writer, he asserts that Dostoevsky criticized the isolationism of the Slavophiles and recognised justice in some of the precepts of the Westernisers. Dostoevsky saw truth in both views and found a space for both tendencies within the bounds of "the Russian idea." Viktorovich sees The Devils, which began as a pamphlet "with a whip in hand" (Dostoevsky's own words) and finished as the greatest act of "the Russian tragedy", as containing a new experiment of the synthesis that Dostoevsky was seeking, and that was realised in the speech. To him, Viktorovich affirms, to be truly Russian means to be the brother of all people, universal. An authentic culture is open to others by its very nature, to dialogue and understanding. Dostoevsky's words are tinted by these critics to give them a pan-humanist colouring and remove the signs of a nationalist orientation.

The supporters of a closer interrelationship with the West, strongly criticised the strong nationalist pro-Russian stance of some groups and the commentators who voiced such views. L. Saraskina deflates their idealisation of the Russian man and their claims that he is morally and spiritual superior to other races, by recalling Dostoevsky's own criticisms of Russians. In Chapter 4 of her book on The Devils[99], she declares that such characters of Dostoevsky as the Cripple, Maria, "punished by God", are also the flesh of the society in which they live and reveal the truth pronounced by Dostoevsky about Russia, proving how soberly he evaluated the inner possibilities of both the individual and the nation, how far he was from an idealisation of these possibilities. She asserts that Dostoevsky was astonished at the haste at which the Russian man declares himself at any given moment on the side of good or the vile, at his lack of restraint, which allows him to renounce everything, his family, customs, God, to give himself up almost wholeheartedly to love, self-love, debauch, envy, etc. She says that his image is very far from that of the "reading-book" "the god-bearing people", and does not coincide with the popular schema, the soothing toast in honour "of the people and the soil". Her assertions are in contrast to the tendency to point to Dostoevsky's

[99]Section "Mir romana" in "Bosy" roman-preduprezhdeni' , 1990.

exceedingly negative portrayal of foreigners, side by side with his exceptionally positive portrayal of Russians, in whom many attest that he saw the only hope of salvation.

In other chapters of her book, Saraskina emphasises that the horrors and tragedy portrayed by Dostoevsky in The Devils are undoubtedly Russian, and not foreign. In her chapter, "Pravo na vlast", she asserts that the phenomenon of imposture which is at the base of the revolution, is particularly Russian illness, and in her chapter, "Vykhodya iz bezgranichnoj svobody..", she polemicises with those who have tried to claim that Dostoevsky's novel has proved to be a prophecy of catastrophes that occurred in other countries. She says that for a long time, Soviet historians and critics have only interpreted The Devils in connection with foreign devilishness and foreign extremists who have seized power for their own ambitious and criminal aims. Traces of the novel have been found in China, Chile, Latin America, Japan, India, etc, but in her opinion, while there is some justification in these analyses, it is nevertheless clear to everyone that The Devils refers most precisely, most prophetically, and most tragically, to the Russians. With whomever critics may wish to compare Peter Verkhovensky, one cannot escape the fact that already for a long time, the rest of the world and the Russian people themselves have compared the artistic world of The Devils with what happened in Russia[100].

In her article "Within the coordinates of understanding"[101], L. Saraskina again demonstrates her anti-nationalist, pro-universalist stance, by attempting to put forward mitigating explanations for Dostoevsky's nationalist statements. She admits that Dostoevsky's humanist belief which are evident in his artistic works, at times seems to be contradicted by pronouncements made in Diary of a Writer and his letters. Two mutually exclusive theses, she says, seem to be combined in Dostoevsky, who was, according to her, a convinced preacher of a higher morality and a great humanist, but who at times appeared as an apologist of violence, a

[100] 1990, p. 431.

[101] Voprosy Literatury, July 1989.

preacher of crusades, chauvinism and obscurantism. She goes on to explain this apparent paradox, clearly "softening" the nationalist aspect of his views. She claims that his political articles in the Diary of a Writer are linked to the global ethico-historical conception of his publicism, and that it was his profound dislike of the contemporary reality that made him at times believe that war is better than peace. She does not see his call to war as a nationalist desire to subdue a foreign enemy, but as the result of final extreme despair at the whole of mankind, and believes that he threw himself into the Russo-Turkish war not in the hope of a decisive Russian victory over another people, but because he saw it as a great, popular, liberating sacred battle for the sake of the noble goals of the liberation of the persecuted. He dreamed, she asserts, of the unity of the people and the monarch as a way out of internal discords and of any kind of Nechaevism, as portrayed in The Devils. She thus explains his call for war as his last desperate attempt to find a solution to the evil reigning in society such as is revealed in this novel, as a means of creating harmony and averting the threat of sedition. For '"such a war cleanses the contaminated air..." Such a war strengthens every sort with the consciousness of self-sacrifice, and the spirit of all nations with the consciousness of the mutual solidarity and unity of all its members..'[102]. Dostoevsky, she continues, passionately believed in the unselfish intentions of Russia, and that the war held the promise of unforeseen changes within Russia, of the unification of all strata of Russian people under the flag of a great idea. She denies all possibility of Dostoevsky harbouring extreme nationalistic, chauvinist views, saying that the writer did not know, and could not know the whole hidden aspect of the events in the Balkans. She admits that while there might be utopianism and naivety in his political hopes for the Russo-Turkish War, there certainly is no rampant amoral nationalism, hypocrisy and demagogy. She substantiates her claims by pointing to the fact that the conservative camp of that time (1876-7) never considered Dostoevsky's publicism as being on its side, but tried to ignore it, and that, as is revealed by epistolary archives, none of his readers thanked him for his support of the politics of the tsarist regime or for preaching

[102]Ibid., p. 65.

war; no-one wrote that he had become an adherent of autocracy or an apologist of the crusades under his influence[103]. She then goes on to defend Dostoevsky against other accusations of nationalism. She says that Dostoevsky was certainly not guilty of idealising the spiritual virtues of the Russian people. In his creative works, it is often not foreigners and strangers who are responsible for the Russian troubles in his works, but Russians, such as Stavrogin and Shigalev, Verkhovensky and Lebyadkin and Fedka in The Devils. While other critics emphasise the Western education of Stavrogin and Verkhovensky, their uprootedness, Saraskina sees them as purely Russian. It is principally Russians, she states, who create Russian life, who weave the Russian tragedy. It is they, Russians, who devise their own or take over others theories and decide how to use them to turn Russia upside down[104]. She sees the Russian manipulation of theories as being the cause of the catastrophe, not their Western origin, as other critics have asserted. Saraskina concludes that no seeming resemblance of Dostoevsky's prophecies to the many speculative neo-slavophile declarations can compromise the writer, who was an honourable man.

K. Stepanyan criticises the right-wing nationalist stance, calling for an end to Russian isolationism and elitism[105]. He criticises the traditional Russian belief, still rife during glasnost, that Russians are superior to other peoples in their moral qualities; and the age-old Russian tendency to divide people into "ours" and "theirs". He softens Dostoevsky's ardent nationalism by explaining its roots in Russian national history. He claims that the answer to the question that persistently resounds in Karyakin's book, Dostoevsky and the Eve of the XXIst Century, as to why Dostoevsky, who so brilliantly predicted everything that happened to Russia, could not stop anything, and why his contemporaries did not listen to him and went as far as the horrors of the civil war and cooperation with

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[103]Ibid., p. 66.

[104]Ibid., p. 67.

[105]Contribution to discussion on Yuri Karyakin's Dostoevsky and the Eve of the XXIst Century, Znamya, July 1990.

collectivisation, lies in the fact that he was himself showing evidence of the attitude typical of the Russian people, by which the treatment of those who are not kinsfolk lie outside the norms of morality. Even he could not oppose this conception, which began a long time before Stalin, and of which there is clear evidence in contemporary Soviet society: the assertion that all peoples are inferior to the Russian in their moral qualities, and that all supporters of radical social change are the force of foreign people. This is the reason why Dostoevsky's contemporaries didn't want to listen to him: the whole society was suffering from an ancient illness of the soul- the division into "ours" and "theirs"- an illness for which they must now without fail find a cure. It is clear that Stepanyan uses a technique employed by literary critics in previous eras, by which an author's undesirable aspects are "softened" or made more acceptable, by indicating the origins of or deeper underlying reasons for their belief.

In his article "Let's listen to Dostoevsky", published in Voprosy Literatury in May 1989, Stepanyan openly criticises those of a nationalist orientation who have used Dostoevsky's name in their polemics regarding the very sensitive problem of international relations. He asserts that such thinkers, in their fight for the purity of Russian culture and a rebirth of national patriotism, have emphasised the difference between nations and facilitated a mood of isolationism. He continues that in a whole range of publications Dostoevsky has been presented as practically the founding apologist of Slavophilism, and as supporting claims of the superiority of the Russian people. Stepanyan then refutes these views by showing that Dostoevsky was actually on the side of universalism, and was strongly opposed to those Slavophiles that '"dragged the idea onto the street"[106], having turned it into a means for chauvinistic self-glorification, fights with foreigners and other political theories, imagining themselves in this to be the "Saviours of Russia"'. Stepanyan emphasises that while there were many such people in the Slavophilic camp in Dostoevsky's time, there are even more amongst the representatives of the "neo-Slavophile" movement of the contemporary era. He quotes several

[106] p. 220.

statements made by Dostoevsky that he believes express th writer's point of view during the mature period of his creation. These are selectively quoted with the purpose of substantiating his claim that Dostoevsky was certainly more universalist- than nationalist orientated. He robs Dostoevsky's pronouncements of their messianic element by asserting that the new salutary Word that the writer claimed Russia would pronounce to Europe and the whole world, was merely the idea of "universal pan-human unification"[107], and that according to Dostoevsky the greatest task of the Russian people could undertake was service to the whole of mankind, and not just to Russia, or to the Slavs. Dostoevsky believed, he says, that universal reconciliation must be given priority over one's own personal interests, and that the slightest touch of national conceit destroys everything. Dostoevsky thus becomes the spokesperson for Stepanyan's universalism, appearing as a confirmed pan-humanist, opposing all manifestations of nationalism that threaten the brotherhood of nations. Stepanyan then turns to a chapter of Diary of a Writer in which he says Dostoevsky clarified his view on "the European question", by stating that he has never held any hatred for Europeans. Stepanyan accuses "those who, screening themselves with Dostoevsky's name, in every way possible aggravate the present-day national attitudes in this sphere"[108] of having forgotten this statement, although he himself disregards the many instances where Dostoevsky showed evident contempt for Europeans. He further states that in their tendency to see a "judo-masonic" threat in everything, such critics have discarded Dostoevsky's most fundamental beliefs and his call to come together in complete brotherhood. Stepanyan attempts to discount Dostoevsky's many harsh judgments about the representatives of other nations, by claiming that these were not provoked by instinctive national hatred, but by ideological differences with specific groups or movements. He also repudiates the notion of Dostoevsky's anti-semitism, saying that, with regard to the Jewish question, Dostoevsky separated his attitude towards the Jews from his attitude towards the idea of Judaism-bourgeois accumulativeness, and exploitation- and saw much in common between

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[107] p. 221.

[108] p. 221.

the poor Jew and the Russian peasant. The critic then refers to Dostoevsky's direct criticism of the vulgarisers of the national idea. He says that Dostoevsky criticised his contemporary Slavophiles, and that many of these accusations are actual at the present moment too. Through Dostoevsky's lips, he speaks of the hostility and fanaticism which drives these people. Stepanyan also polemicises with the present-day nationalists' disapproval of literature that points to the flaws and defects of the Russian people, and rejects their claim that Dostoevsky was opposed to such satirical accusatory literature. He says, that in distinction to such zealous "patriots", Dostoevsky welcomed the Russian capacity for self-criticism, and rejected any attempt at self-glorification. He again actualises Dostoevsky's statements, saying that they were made as if for the "present-day stiflers of glasnost"[109], who act under the pretence of respect for national self-consciousness. He further claims that such people who profess to be on the side of the people, to defend them from internal and international enemies, calling for ideological vigilance, and who at each step recall Dostoevsky's name and count him as their collaborator, in fact don't respect, but despise the people. He concludes by asking whether there is not a certain similarity between such people and the Grand Inquisitor?[110]. Stepanyan thus blatantly denies Dostoevsky's slavophilic inclinations, showing him instead to be an own antagonist of these ideological movements. He removes Dostoevsky from the patriot camp and enlists him in that of the internationalists.

While these and many other glasnost supporters claimed Dostoevsky as their ally, still others admitted that the writer was on the side of the Russophilic nationalists and thus hostile to their own "internationalist" views. The technique used by these critics to expound their own views was to accuse the writer of "wrong", "undesirable" views. M. Volenshtein, for example, criticises Dostoevsky's

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[109] p. 223.

[110] p. 225.

intolerant attitude towards foreigners[111]. He asserts that Dostoevsky held foreigners- Germans, French, Poles, Jews- in contempt and one meets hostility towards non-Russian people in all his great works, including The Devils. In his view, these foreigners are negatively portrayed precisely because they are not Russian. That is why, he declares, Dostoevsky, a mastermind of the most advanced portion of society, somehow appealed to Goebbels and Shafarevich.

D. Lekukh also regards Dostoevsky as being on the side of his ideological opponents, and uses criticism of him to express his anti-nationalist stance[112]. Reacting to the common tendency to accuse imported Western ideas of being responsible for Russia's catastrophes, he shifts the blame, saying that Russians distort Western ideas, by immediately experimenting with them on themselves. He remarks on how two or three European names and hypotheses, with no claim to universality, taken out of context, and woven into the Russian national heritage, astonishingly tend to lose their original content and find a specifically Russian content, thus changing into the most monstrous, to judge by practice, universal schemas, that have no relation to their Western analogues. He uses literature to substantiate his claim. Russian post-modernism, he asserts, is one such phenomenon: its heroes bear no relation to those of Western post-modernists, and their precursors are none other than such petty rebels, devoid of creative strength and organically incapable of either service to God or struggle against him, as Dostoevsky's heroes Raskolnikov and Stavrogin from The Devils. He reduces the significance of Dostoevsky's heroes, and thus of the great philosophical tradition in Russian literature, to that of a revolt of mediocrity, to pure human nature without metaphysical import; and the chief devil to a tiny devil, a demon of banality with a nightmarish, obscene physiognomy. He states that like their precursors, the crisis in weltanschauung of these heroes is no more than godlessness, a consciousness cultivated for a long time in Russia by the Bolsheviks, and now being modified by the "orthodox-populists". He thus

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[111]Contribution to discussion on Yuri Karyakin's Dostoevsky and the Eve of the XXist Century, Znamya, July 1990.

[112]Metamorfozy melkogo besa. O "novoj gumanitarnoj proze'", Literaturnaya Gazeta, 20 May 1991.

discrowns Dostoevsky's philosophical and spiritual importance, discredits contemporary Russian literature, defends Western ideas, and puts the contemporary conservative nationalists on the same level of consciousness as the Bolsheviks.

We therefore see how these critics brought Dostoevsky into the contemporary polemics around the question of nationalism and internationalism: either by taking him onto their side, softening or ignoring his nationalism and highlighting his internationalist statements, or by branding him as a foe and duly criticising him for his mistaken views.

4.2.1.4. Nationalism

Many Russians opposed this latest policy shift of the Communist Party which requires that they adopt a new attitude towards the West, readjust their perceptions of the Soviet Union's place in the international arena, openly acknowledge that many errors had been made in the past, and accept that the Soviet Union was in need of foreign assistance. The nationalist or "patriot" current had been gaining strength since Brezhnev's ascension to power, when it not only became openly supported by officialdom, but also spread among various groups of intellectuals. The universalist, pan-humanist policies of the glasnost leadership were in direct opposition to their standpoint, and taking advantage of the new freedom of expression, they did not hesitate to express their antagonism towards the shift in ideology. V. Pigalev rejects the contemporary calls for universalism through rapprochement with the West, and declares that Dostoevsky's references to it have been misinterpreted[113]. Supporting the Slavophile trend, Pigalev explains that although Dostoevsky, who was deeply interested in this question, often referred to them as "cosmopolitans", he did not mean it in the sense that the contemporary political dictionary defines this concept, and certainly not as

[113]"Chto oni ishchut v slavyanofilov?", Nash Sovremennik, October 1986.

contemporary bourgeois ideologues interpret it[114]. Instead, the great writer believed that Russian people, obsessed with the idea of saving mankind from the ills of the capitalist consumer morality, think in universal cosmic categories, and grieve for the whole of mankind. He thus emphasises the essentially Russo-centric nature of Dostoevsky's references to universalism, which other critics had begun to quote extensively in order to support an internationalist attitude.

To a large extent, this nationalist movement continued the attitude of the Brezhnev era, with its general emphasis on patriotic and pro-Russian chauvinism of an anti-Western orientation, but there were also new elements that arose as a result of the latest policy changes. Firstly glasnost opened up the horrors of Russia's past for international criticism and
some critics, finding this new passion for the exposure humiliating, responded by denying that these were uniquely Russian phenomena. Yu. Davidov, unwilling to regard the catastrophes that occurred as the result of a uniquely Russian evil, insists that the horrors described in The Devils are not Russian, but universal[115]. He states that in the 20th century, both the East and West have presented bloody facts.

I. Rodyanskaya denies the responsibility of the Russian people for the horrors that occurred[116]. He defends them through his defence of Dostoevsky and other nineteenth century writers who have been accused by such critics as Ageev of being totalitarian. He says that these are the kind of ideas that Dostoevsky termed "trichina-ideas", which have their own logic, and enter into their own conspiracy. It is one such conspiracy, he asserts, that can be discerned in the present times in the attempts being made to transfer the historical guilt for the evil that occurred during this century from a hopelessly ill head- the Communist Party- to one that is

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[114] p. 161.

[115] Contribution to discussion on Yuri Karyakin's Dostoevsky and the Eve of the XXIst Century, Znamya, July 1990.

[116] "Zazhivyom bez velikogo?", Literaturnaya Gazeta, 29 May 1991.

healthy, or at least capable of recovery- the Russian people. This movement, he says, is trying to rehabilitate the greatest totalitarian ideology ever by showing that it is not evil, but only the soil in which it took root. This is done by showing Russian history to be one of alternating vain attempts at freedom and the powerlessness of slavery, by warning against the genocidal dangers of Orthodoxy, and finally by trying to convince people that the Russian classic, which he considers to be the soul of the country's culture and history, radiates a totalitarian threat. The aim of this strategy is to avert people from the main source of this threat, which is political socialism. Rodyanskaya declares Ageev to be the "brave man" selected by the conspirators to perform this deed, whether he wished to do so or not, and substantiates his criticism with an analogy from The Devils, saying that Stepan Verkhovensky also didn't want what happened to his son. He thus speaks out against the Communists and denies the responsibility of the Russian people in the catastrophe that occurred in their country.

Glasnost also called for many changes to the very basis of Russian society, and particularly encouraged Russians to learn from Western examples. The "patriots" accused the new leadership of putting glasnost into effect through a disregard for the people's will and spirituality, and with a nihilistic attitude towards the cultural, ethnic and historical heritage of the Russians. Their pride injured by comparisons that revealed Russia's inferiority in a number of spheres, many Russians were unwilling to admit any kind of superiority on the side of the West, and were not prepared to change their attitude from hostility to amicability or even tolerance. They warned against disaster unless the present tendency to destroy the country's bonds with Russian tradition is reversed. They saw the collapse of society- alcoholism, violence, corruption and civic indifference as the inevitable consequence of the loss of ties with the age-old morality of Russian village life.

These critics, like those of a glasnost orientation show the same tendency as in previous eras to diminish the contradiction and ambiguity of Dostoevsky's work, so as the discourse may be organised according to their own point of view. While all criticism necessarily involves some selection of what is of significance, their

criterion for this is very clearly ideological. Both groups use the same methodology of simplifying the text, of disregarding that which refutes their view and emphasising that which supports it. These critics exaggerate Dostoevsky's nationalism, exploiting it in order to propagate their own ideological views.

Many saw in Dostoevsky the notions of conscience, soul, good, which they believe are no longer present in glasnost society, but which have helped Russians to endure all kinds of adversities. Dostoevsky, regarded as expressing the Russian soul of the people and as the upholder of the people's truth and traditions, was brought into the quest for the establishment of national self-consciousness, the struggle for its confirmation. He was declared to be the property of the national culture. A. Larionov in his introduction to a republished article by V. Ilyin[117], states that Dostoevsky is now rightly returning more and more firmly to Russia's group of national spiritual fathers, a right of which he was robbed for 70 years or so. He continues that Dostoevsky is above all a Russian genius- "his heroes are our blood, our earth, our people". The Russians, he says, were deprived of Dostoevsky for a long time by anti-nationalist ideologues, but the writer is an eternal companion to the Russian people, whom he loved and admired for their traditions and character, and from whom he wished to learn. He was a true Russian man, who loved God, his fatherland, family, and all should now take him as a teacher and learn to love Russia as Russians.

G. Shchennikov also emphasises Dostoevsky's love and admiration for the Russian people and their values and traditions. In his critique of N. Kushina's Man in Dostoevsky[118] he asserts that the author underrates Dostoevsky's populism, by claiming that he did not possess a profound knowledge of the popular milieu. The critic believes that Dostoevsky knew the people's character and had faith in their potential to create a true brotherhood. In each of Dostoevsky's novels, including The Devils are characters from the common people, which are exceedingly

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[117] Slovo, no. 12, 1991.

[118] "Chelovekovedeniye Dostoevskogo", Voprosy Literatury, October 1987.

important in the general conception of the work, and his thinking about the people is the central core of his ideology. He and other critics reaffirmed the basic moral goodness of the Russian people, thrown into doubt by the newly uncovered statistics of Russian society.

V.A. Mikhnyukevich concentrates on the Russian popular traditions present in The Devils, by discussing the polyfunctionality of folkloric material in the novel, which he regards as both a political pamphlet and a philosophical religious tragedy[119]. He sees its functions to be dual directed- the revelation of the author's ideal, the people's pochvennyj truth, and satirical exposure. For instance, in the image of Peter Verkhovensky it performs an unmasking role. Peter's complete ignorance of reality and of the Russian people is repeatedly emphasised in the novel's text, and even more often in the preparatory material. He intends to be a parasite on the socio-utopian legends of the people. Much in the novel, Mikhnyukevich states, including the central motif of devilishness, operates on widespread popular superstitions and legends. The folkloric elements are actively used in the novel in the function of evaluating a character, and reveal the author's voice. Mikhnyukevich shows how in Dostoevsky's work, a seemingly insignificant change by a character to a Russian proverb or saying says a lot: that before us is someone who lacks a deep understanding of Russian matters and whom the author regards ironically. The inclusion of foreign proverbs is not indifferent either, but reveals the author's point of view. The frequent foreign sayings on Stavrogin's lips can be seen as a sign of the tragic rupture between him and the native soil. The Western influences on him are thus presented as a source of his devilishness. It is because the revolutionaries have lost touch with the people, whose interests they should represent, that they have become possessed by devilishness, and from this stems the tragedy of the novel. The critic speaks of how Stepan Verkhovensky is in the habit of translating Russian proverbs into French, which reveals his double-nature: a patriot of Russia and an occidentophile. This signifies the simultaneously ironic and sympathetic attitude of the author towards his character. The lame woman,

[119]"Folklor v Besakh F.M. Dostoevskogo", Russkaya Literatura, no. 4, 1991.

through her connection to folkloric motifs, is presented as a positive character, close to the soil and the people's truth, a fool-in-Christ. Dostoevsky thus reveals, in Mikhnyukevich's, opinion, that his sympathies lie with the Russian people, and that Westernism lies at the root of the horrors of The Devils. Using a study of the folkloric elements in the novel, the critic incorporates into his article an exposure of the writer's dislike of the West and Europeans. As has been done previously, he divides the characters in The Devils into the "true Russians" and the "Russian Europeans", the former being positive characters with whom he sympathises, and the latter being negative characters, who live according to the laws of Western morality or under the influence of Western philosophical thinking, and who are responsible for Russia's ills.

Anti-westernism was a natural accompaniment to nationalism. It was often directed against Western ideas which were seen to have corrupted Russia. Commentators claimed that these distorted Russia's own ideas and introduced notions that were foreign to the national consciousness. In this way, Russia's past miseries, and in particular the horrors of the revolution, were blamed on the Western origin of the founding theories. The West's influence was rejected as a source of evil, not good. Many scholars of a nationalist orientation expressed the view that the theory of the revolutionary transformation of society was "borrowed", "adopted" from the West and planted in the Russian soil, although it contradicted the Russian soul. While glasnost supporters emphasised the superiority of the West, especially from an economic and technological point of view, the patriots drew their own comparisons between the West and Russia, in which the reverse relationship was revealed- Russia was shown to be clearly superior to the West. Russia's superiority was usually considered to be of a spiritual, moral order. While the greater wealth and technological advancement of the West could not be denied, this was declared to be not an advantage, but a strong disadvantage, being at the root of much of the evil that developed there. They believed that the reforms were bringing only an outward "decorative" change for the better, behind the facade of which Russian nationality was being

suppressed and freely spat on by the "superintendents of renovation"[120].

In his article on Dostoevsky published in Moskva in May 1989, "A lesson from the classics. Dostoevsky and the contemporary situation", B. Tarasov reacts to the glasnost tendency to point to the West's leadership in all spheres, and the desirability that Russia imitate Western patterns by turning to Dostoevsky's words. He declares that Dostoevsky reasoned that if Russia had literary works of such strength of thought, why could the Russians not have their own science, their own economic and social solutions. He could not understand why Europe refused them independence, and declared Russia's backwardness to be merely a question of history and circumstances. The critic denies the possibility of an inherent superiority of the West and even blames Europe's dominating tendencies for Russia's lack of development.

Then, in "Where do they look for devils?", published in Literaturnaya Gazeta in November 1991, B. Tarasov analyses The Devils, a novel that he believes Russians should learn from today, shows how anti-national westernising ideas were largely responsible for Russia's troubles. He speaks about the influence of Stepan Verkhovensky on his son Peter, how he passed on to him his convictions about the need to destroy the concept of nationality in the name of the brotherhood of all people, and about scorn for the fatherland as a hindrance to universal development. He says that Stepan embodies the collective traits of the Russian liberal westernisers- on the one side something lofty and noble, but on the other side, a certain vagueness, indecision, half-heartedness. He is helpless, like a child, inclined towards dandyism and posing, but also has pretensions to a certain civic role. This lifelong aimlessness and infirmity of his views corresponds to the vagueness and inconcreteness of the high-minded tasks that he preaches to the representatives of the young generation. In the novel, these ideological social views are combined with the ideas from Auri, and the positivism of the children is merged with Stepan's thoughts on the harm of religion, the uselessness of the word

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[120]Zolotsev, S.:"Dostoinstvo i dostoyaniye", Moskva, May 1990, p. 170.

"fatherland" and the fruitlessness of Russian culture, to produce the catastrophic results depicted by Dostoevsky.

The nationalists firmly believed that the Western path leads away from true values, natural human solidarity, the real goals of human community, and it is thus not for Russia. Faced with the humiliating truth revealed by glasnost of the low standard of living in Russia compared to the West, many critics emphasised the Russians' disdain for worldly goods. Russia's material poverty and spiritual wealth were shown to be preferable to the West's material wealth and spiritual poverty. N. Mekhed asserts that Dostoevsky examined the social relations that had developed in the West and the results of the development of a bourgeois civilisation[121]. He concluded that much had been achieved, that the combined wealth of society had grown beyond measure, and people's labour had become more productive, but also that the increasing enrichment of some involves the impoverishment and spiritual pauperism of many. Mekhed asserts that Dostoevsky believed that in the conditions of bourgeois society, the aspiration to attain the ideal of general prosperity and social harmony, in reality turns into the loss of spirituality through the distortion of the essential traits of the human personality.

I. Solonevich expresses the sentiment felt by many Russians that the importation of Western ideas should be rejected. He declares that Russian humanitarian science with the obstinacy of a maniac has tried to shove the country onto the European path, nourishing itself with European terms, many of which don't correspond to anything in the real world[122]. In fact, he states, they are worse than pure nonsense, they are illusory milestones that the "devils" of scholastics stuck in all Russia's paths. By these "imaginary miles", he says, came "The Devils" of Dostoevsky. And came the devils of Stalin. "Milestones are guiding stars and each such one- led us into a pit. In what a pit we are now sitting too. For this pit, we are obliged if not exclusively, then predominantly to the whole sum of our social

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[121]"Khudozhestvennye otkrytiya kak obyekt eticheskogo issledovaniya", Voprosy Filosofiyi, no. 6, 1986.

[122]"Dukh naroda", Nash Sovremennik, May 1990, p. 148.

sciences"[123]. Thus, Solonevich declares, for centuries, the Russian reading public has been trained to hate phenomena that did not exist here at all, and to fight for ideals with which they had nothing to do. A series of "guides" to an inexpressibly beautiful future was produced by these devils, in which each ideal that was proclaimed to be a guiding star, was in fact illusory.

The new transparency and search for the truth engendered by glasnost revealed the harsh realities of Russia's economic and technological backwardness, which even the most ardent nationalist could no longer deny. They thus emphasised, as many nineteenth century slavophiles and pochvenniks had done, the superior spirituality, morality, and sense of brotherhood of the Russian people. And like them, they rejected the suggestion of many members of the intelligentsia that Russia follow the path set by the West, pronouncing instead a special destiny for Russia, true to the traditions and values of its people.

4.2.1.5. Nationalist Extremism and Anti-semitism

An extreme nationalist movement had begun to reassert itself in the pre-glasnost era. Indeed, this movement had existed throughout the pre- and post-revolutionary times, but its manifestation was regulated by shifting official policies, which suppressed or unleashed it according to the current ideology. The freedom of glasnost allowed this new uprising of extremism to openly declare itself. However, whilst in previous eras, Russian nationalist extremists highlighted Dostoevsky's Russian messianism, adapted to contemporary reality and usually deprived of its religious basis, during glasnost there was very little focus on this aspect of his nationalism. Throughout the preceding decades, and particularly during the 1970s, Dostoevsky's concept of Russian messianism had been replaced by critics with the idea of the messianic role of the Russian state as a nation, whose function was to deliver humanity from the social injustice and materialism of the West. Hence, socialism and Russian messianism were seen as identical. The hesitancy observed

[123] p. 148.

during the glasnost years in expressing messianistic ambitions in literary criticism was a reflection of the changes instituted by the glasnost process. Not only had socialism to a large extent been discredited, especially in its Soviet form, but also the revelations of truth about the disastrous state of Soviet economy, society, morals, etc., clearly spelled out that the country could not aspire to leadership. Therefore, an attitude of isolationism, self-sufficiency and national exclusivity developed amongst ardent nationalists. Critics tended to alter their pronouncements of Dostoevsky's confirmed belief in the mission of the Russian people in the contemporary world to a statement of his conviction that the Russians are a Chosen People.

On the other hand, Dostoevsky's chauvinism, rehabilitated in the 1970s, has continued to be emphasised. Once again, his "Russian idea" was shown by ardent nationalists to be essentially chauvinistic, and they again used Dostoevsky's anti-bourgeoisism and anti-westernism to propagate extreme anti-western ideas. As before, they presented the West as the incarnation of all the troubles and misfortunes of mankind, preventing the Russian people from the attainment of their true goals, as the incarnation of the anti-Christ, personified by Dostoevsky in such heroes as Stavrogin in The Devils.

Extreme nationalist sentiments were accompanied by an open show of hostility towards certain minority groups. In particular, there was a continuation of the wave of anti-semitism that became a focal point of Soviet propaganda after the 1967 Six-day War and especially in the 1970s at the peak of Soviet Jewish emigration from the Soviet Union. At this time, the Black Hundreds political movement of pre-Revolutionary Russia (responsible for many Jewish pogroms) began to be viewed as quite harmless. H. Mondry in The Evaluation of Ideological Trends in Recent Soviet Literary Scholarship discusses how the evaluation of Dostoevsky's anti-semitism in the 1970s reflected the contemporary situation[124]. She says that his anti-semitism was brought to light and justified from economic,

[124] 1990, p. 256.

racial and political angles, so that the polemics on the pages of literary journals and monographs resembled anti-Zionist attacks. In her thesis, The Evaluation of Recent Trends in Soviet Dostoevsky Scholarship (1970s-80s)[125], she shows how despite the fact that Soviet criticism did not officially recognize Dostoevsky's anti-semitism, critics justified it through specific methodologies, and used his authority as a thinker to advance anti-semitic arguments.

Anti-semitic sentiments continued to be expressed during glasnost, the new freedoms meaning that they no longer needed to be veiled or justified and once again Dostoevsky criticism was used as a tribune for these sentiments. Dostoevsky's attitude towards Jews was shown by such critics to be one of profound disgust and dislike. I. Shafarevich emphasises Dostoevsky's attachment to Russia and the Russian people, and affirms the author's anti-semitism, while he calls Russians to defend their country against the threat that emigrants and Jews pose[126]. He begins his article by condemning Russian emigrants, whose status in Soviet society rose dramatically with the institution of glasnost policies, but whom he and others regard as having deserted the fatherland. His criticisms are centred around certain contemporary emigrant writers, who display a desire to instil in the public a view that presents the Russians as a nation of slaves, always having bowed before cruelty and grovelled before a strong power, and Russia as an eternal breeding ground of despotism and totalitarianism, dangerous to the rest of the world[127]. These writers propose adopting as a model the contemporary Western multi-party democracy, which appears attractive precisely because it is foreign, not springing organically out of Russian history. Shafarevich declares that in the Russia of the XIXth century, such traits were very clearly evident in the liberal and nihilist currents against whom Dostoevsky warned. Dostoevsky perceived the danger in them as they ignore historical traditions and the people's values, displaying a contemptuous attitude towards their own culture while bowing

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[125]University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 1984.

[126]"Russofobia", Nash Sovremennik, June 1989.

[127]p. 173.

before the Western culture. Thus, the writer believed, this path unavoidably provokes a chain of catastrophes. He says that Dostoevsky once recounted how an ardent Westerniser proclaimed that if the people will not allow the implementation of the new system, they must be destroyed. Shafarevich continues that Dostoevsky in The Diary of a Writer polemicised with just such literature as he is discussing, finding in it the same scorn for the Russian people and the principle that there cannot be any other than the European truth. He asserts that Dostoevsky also perceived that the reason for emigration is based on this ideology which regards all Russian systems as guilty. "How contemporary are Dostoevsky's thoughts!" Shafarevich exclaims[128]. These emigrant advocates of imitation of the West cannot accept the thought that Russia can seek her own path, and once again present-day troubles are explained by "survivals" from the "accursed past"[129]- this time not capitalism, but "Russian messianism", "Russian despotism", or "the devil of Russian tyranny". He states that maintaining the legend that they were "banished" or "exiled", they appear in a time of crisis in the role of ideological leaders, believing that they have gained this right through suffering. They remain a strata permeated by elitist, exclusivist attitudes, not aspiring to enter into contact with, and even alienating themselves from, the people, and the feelings of its representatives can only be described as Russophobia. Shafarevich then links these emigrant writers to one nation- the Jewish nation. He declares that it is their national emotions that dominate over international negotiations on disarmament, trade agreements, and science, whilst the "Russian question" is not acknowledged at all. Knowing the role that this group has played in history, one can imagine how fraught with danger is this new manifestation of its uprising[130]. Indeed, he believes that it will lead to the definitive destruction of the religious and national foundation of life and thus a new and final catastrophe after which probably nothing will remain from the Russian people. He summons all Russians to oppose this new group whose credo Dostoevsky guessed: "He who curses his past is one

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[128] p. 182.

[129] p. 183.

[130] p. 190.

of ours.."[131]. Such at present is the task of Russian thought- an armament of spiritual defence must be created against it as a matter of self-preservation.

Particularly rife amongst the extreme nationalist press was the tendency to republish articles of well-known right-wing critics and thinkers, whose views they evidently feel should once again be heard and reiterated in the contemporary situation.

An article by V.N. Ilyin, a scholar of renowned "Black Hundreds" sympathies who emigrated from the USSR in 1919 to Western Europe, where he continued to lecture and write on theology, philosophy and literature, was published in the extreme right-wing journal Slovo at the end of 1991[132]. In this article, he expresses very nationalist, anti-Western and anti-semitic views. At first he makes direct links between the events and characters of the novel and the Russian revolution which he rejects completely: he speaks of the bloody crimes of the revolutionaries, the "devils", who are untameable "beasts", under the leadership of the "horrifying monster" Peter Verkhovensky[133], an atheist and materialist, who is willing to sacrifice the whole of Russia to the revolution; criticises the liberal intelligentsia for their fawning to the revolutionaries, referring to the figure of "Karmazinov-Turgenev" who "somersaults before the red leftist youth"[134]; and refers to the conspiracy as a kind of socio-political ailment, the study of which has been prevented by an all-powerful veto. However, he then asserts that in its essence The Devils is not a Russian tragedy, for although it appears to portray Russian history, through the horrors of the Russian revolution, the events of the novel could have been in another country and among other people- such an occurrence is not in any way alien to the rest of the world. He gives examples of

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[131] p.192.

[132] "Vechnye sputniki". Fyodor Dostoevsky. Russkoye samopoznaniye".

[133] p. 4.

[134] p. 5.

revolutionary movements in France and of European revolutionary thinkers[135]. Therefore, he declares, these phenomena have nothing in common with the Slavic national spirit, but are in fact deeply alien to this spirit- in general, if it had not been for Russian occidentalism, this terrible anti-ecclesiastical dream thought up by beings with burning, delirious hysterical minds and icy hearts, would not have occurred. The phenomena depicted in The Devils are models carved out of the massive killings at the end of the 18th century and the murderers and incendiaries of the commune, who overran the whole world with the stench of their fires and the nauseating smell of innocently shed blood. And how characteristic it is, Ilyin remarks, that the principal actor of The Devils, Nikolai Vsevolodovich Stavrogin, a confirmed atheist, became a citizen of the canton of Auri, and that all the many plots of the tragedy were formed abroad. He continues to emphasise that Stavrogin is a "citizen of Auri"[136] and that the atmosphere from whence the contaminated Peter came and into which all the characters are plunged, had already been prepared in Geneva. Ilyin's article reveals his nationalist, anti-western inclinations to the point of blaming the West for Russia's catastrophes as presented in The Devils.

Ilyin's conservatism reveals a Tsarist tendency. He defends the authorities, presented in the novel in the figure of the ridiculous Governor Lembke, by claiming that he is completely atypical, that such a functionary as he never existed, or only very rarely in stages of extreme catastrophe, and that his behaviour is to be blamed on the fact that he is sick with some kind of paranoia[137].

He further declares that in The Devils, Dostoevsky succeeded in exposing the subsequent symbol of the bloody pentagon and the detestable hammer and sickle, the two symbols of eternal tedium and monstrosity[138]. He thereby links the

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[135] p. 5.

[136] p. 5.

[137] p. 4.

[138] p. 5.

revolutionary "devils" and their vile deeds, in which are "concentrated all the stench of hell and all the mediocrity of the creative impotence of the nether-world" not only to the Bolsheviks, but also to the Jews, who must also bear responsibility for the country's troubles.

An article by K. Leontiev, a contemporary of Dostoevsky, was published in Nash Sovremmennik in July 1990[139]. In this article, his Russian nationalist, anti-Western views were clearly expressed in his discussion of Dostoevsky. His words openly repudiate the notions of reconciliation with the West, which he believed to be consumed by arrogance. Leontiev begins by criticizing the proceedings at Pushkin's funeral, which were conducted in a European manner. He would have wished to see more national colouring, that would have helped justify the pride of slavism. Even Dostoevsky's speech, he says, did not contain anything new- many had already spoken about Russian "humility", endurance and love, but did make him think. He says that there is a lot that he finds irreconcilable in Dostoevsky's belief that cosmopolitan love is the destiny of the Russian people, and in his hopes for universal reconciliation. Given the two kinds of love that exist- mercy, or moral love, and admiration, or aesthetic love, he cannot understand for what one can love the contemporary European. They cannot be pitied as they are all so self-assured and arrogant; they have so much in the way of worldly and practical advantages above the Russians. And they certa... cannot be admired for they lack true values[140]. He replies to Dostoevsky's declaration that the people of Europe are dear to Russia, with his own declaration: "..we hate contemporary Europe for it has destroyed in itself all that is great and sacred and is now destroying all that is precious in Russia with its infectious breath".[141] Leontiev criticises Dostoevsky for rejoicing in the fact that the Russians would soon drown without a trace in the ocean of cosmopolitanism, for nothing of their own would be left amongst the blended people of the future. He further declares that neo-European and Christian

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[139]"O vsemirnoj lyubvi" rech F.M. Dostoevskogo na Pushkinskom prazdnike".

[140]p. 172.

[141]p. 183.

humaneness are antitheses, the former being an "automatic" step-by-step humaneness that can lead to dry self-assured utilitarianism, to the "epidemic of mental derangement of our time which can psychiatrically be called *mania democrata progressiva*"[142]. He concludes that this speech must be regarded as an error, a blunder, for in Dostoevsky's compositions, one can find many thoughts incompatible with this cult of the "universal man" and "Europe"[143]. He declares this article to be a blatant repudiation of the almost heretical ideas of universalism expressed by Dostoevsky, which much to his horror have still not to this day been discarded. In Leontiev's view, Dostoevsky final novels, including The Devils showed some promising progression in the writer's views, that were not present in the Pushkin speech.

The continuation of an element of extreme nationalism, tending towards chauvinism and anti-Semitism, during glasnost, cannot be doubted, and Dostoevsky's ideas were once again shown to support these views. However, it is noteworthy that the messianic element of his nationalism was almost completely disregarded in the new situation where Russia could no longer aspire to a guiding role in the international arena.

4.2.2. Revolution and Socialism

The aim of glasnost was to initiate a process that would lead to the creation of a new Soviet society. The Communist Party leadership during these years saw its goal as that of a peaceful revolution that would lead to a renovated form of socialism in the Soviet Union, cle[illegible] of the injustices of the past. The image of perestroika as a "bloodless" revo[illegible] was promoted in contrast to the cruelty and terror of the Revolution and military con[illegible]unism. The reformers proposed to change the face of Soviet society through gradual non-violent reforms. The initiators and supporters of glasnost believed in the possibility of a new socialism,

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[142] p. 180.

[143] p. 183.

free of the totalitarian, authoritarian spirit that had dominated it in the past, and which would return to the people the freedom and rights of which they had for so long been deprived.

The glasnost reforms began with a promise of transparency, of the opening up of the truth, the filling in of the blank spots of Soviet history, even if this meant the bringing to light of atrocities committed by past regimes. The Party hoped that the revelation of the truth would help them to regain the trust of the disillusioned Soviet citizens and stimulate the desire for change, for the creation of a new form of Soviet socialist society. Thus, one of the first manifestations of glasnost was the resurrection of entire periods of Soviet history for public scrutiny and comment, and the rewriting of formerly idealised events and biographies in accordance with the policy of transparency. However, once legitimised and unleashed, much criticism went beyond the level of condemning the errors of the past totalitarian regimes, down to the very roots of the socialist system, whose right to existence was questioned. An inquest was begun into the real source of the horrors that occurred, into the question of moral and political responsibility. The encouraged criticism of revolutionary violence and the excesses of Stalinism unavoidably spread to blatant criticism of the very founders of the regime, including the immortalized Lenin, who were now exposed as the enemies of the people, and to the questioning of the theory of Marxism-Leninism itself. N. Condee and V. Padunov point to this significant aspect of the glasnost years, stating that the period from 1985 to 1991 has been marked by the dismantling of a number of personality cults. Within the field of political culture as it had been constituted for six decades, two cult figures- Lenin and the reigning General Secretary- had been uniformly positive, but during Gorbachev's tenure as General Secretary and President of the Soviet Union, even these political cults underwent severe destabilisation[144].

The reformists' intentions were threatened not only by this increasingly liberal

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[144]"Perestroi'ka suicide: not by bread alone", New Left Review, June 1991, p. 70.

"democratic" movement which, having pushed their criticism past the acceptable limit, began to call for the end of the socialist system itself, but also by the "patriots". These Russians questioned many of the values that the perestroika reforms propagated, and showed great scepticism regarding the latest policies that would constitute this new brand of socialism.

The discussions and debates around the questions of new political, economic, social structures and laws, that took place in the burgeoning parliament and amongst politicians, were carried over into the press, including the literary press. Literary criticism and Dostoevsky scholarship too became permeated with discussions on the transformation of a socialist society. Critics expressed either support or opposition to the new attitudes and policies in their interpretations of Dostoevsky's attitude towards revolution and socialism as was revealed in his works, and in particular, in The Devils.

4.2.2.1. Dostoevsky's Attitude towards Revolution and Socialism

It is generally accepted by both Soviet and Western scholars that Dostoevsky's world outlook can be divided into two phases. In his youth, Dostoevsky was attracted by the humanitarian socialism advocated by Belinsky, which was based on the belief that evil comes from external- social and political- circumstances and that once these are destroyed, the Golden Age would be born. It was due to his involvement in the revolutionary movement of the Petrashevsky that Dostoevsky was arrested and sentenced to imprisonment and penal servitude. During this time, his views underwent a significant transformation. Both the publicist writings and creative works produced after his release contained blatant pronouncements against the violence and destruction that revolution engenders.

The Devils was no doubt Dostoevsky's most directly anti-revolutionary novel. A revolutionary group and certain horrifying events that occurred in Russia became the basis for the characters and plot of the novel. To Dostoevsky, the Nechaev affair constituted a diabolical undertaking of political and moral subversion, the

origin of which was to be found in the idealism of the 40s. He was horrified at the rise of revolution and saw it as a nihilist apocalypse. The leader of the revolutionary movement portrayed in The Devils, Peter Verkhovensky, is a fanatical socialist who does not flinch before the logic of the revolution with its inevitable bloodshed and turmoil. The novel was a warning and a prophecy. It revealed how revolution was seething beneath the surface of Russian society, how the youth were caught in the trap of their own rational theories, and how Russia was heading towards a catastrophe.

Dostoevsky became increasingly anti-socialist in his mature years. His references to social structures built according to a plan that divides humanity into two unequal groups, testify to his repudiation of rational theories and schemas for the creation of a perfect society. He did not believe, whatever the motives of these plans, that they could bring happiness and harmony to mankind, only the destruction of free will, the personality and faith in God. In his opinion, they were all built on atheistic rationalist theories that ignored the truth about man. Shigalev's theory in The Devils is one such schema, which becomes the ideal that Peter wishes to create through the violence of revolution. It is based on absolute obedience and the depersonalisation of man. Dostoevsky shows that these schemas always necessitate violence and destruction and are not the path towards freedom. Through Shatov, he expresses his disillusionment before the possibility of such rational plans creating a perfect society and his revulsion before the concept of revolution.

While there is no doubt that a development and shift in Dostoevsky's attitude towards the question of revolution and socialism occurred, the simplistic view of him that has always existed in Soviet criticism- that during his life he turned from a revolutionary to a reactionary- cannot be accepted, for there is evidence of his continued attraction towards socialism until the end of his life, although the nature of this changed. Despite his more conservative outlook, and the fact that in the 1870s, he became closely associated with right-wing circles, Dostoevsky advocated a "Russian socialism" based on the innate feeling of brotherhood, linked

to their orthodox religion, amongst the Russian people. Furthermore, Dostoevsky never professed a fixed, undoubted doctrine, but was always rethinking his beliefs. He criticised and refuted certain theories, but did not offer his own concrete solutions. It was this vagueness that made his writings so easy to exploit by literary critics, who manipulated them for their own ideological ends by robbing his views of their ambiguity and giving his statements the definitiveness that they never possessed.

4.2.2.2 Dostoevsky the Anti-Revolutionary

Up until the glasnost era, literary critics approached Dostoevsky's work with the aspiration to either discredit or deny the writer's anti-revolutionary views, by showing his ideas to be contrary to the interests of the people and of Russia, or by showing that Dostoevsky, despite some evidence in his writings to the contrary, had supported the ideals of the revolutionaries, and had heralded the revolution as a cure to the ills of Tsarist Russia. Such critics attempted to claim Dostoevsky as a predecessor of socialism, declaring that socialists around the world were his conscious or unconscious pupils. Various techniques were used by critics when confronted with the blatantly anti-revolutionary message of The Devils[145]. Some Soviet critics, eager to defend the official ideology, attacked The Devils as a dishonest exploitation of an isolated crime, which revealed Dostoevsky's reactionary tendencies. They denied that it in any way reflected the real Russian revolution, stating that the novel could be seen as an example of the manner in which Dostoevsky debased himself by coarse pamphleteering against the revolutionaries, and that it was no more than a wild vindictive caricature[146]. They presented Dostoevsky's novel as an absurd delirium, a nightmarish phantom, the fruit of a sick and angry imagination. A second group regarded the novel as a

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[145] Refer to Chapter 3, "History of Interpretations of The Devils" of the present thesis.

[146] Gorky at the end of the 1920s, called The Devils an evil attempt to defame the revolutionary movement; Tseitlin in 1931 declared Dostoevsky to be politically harmful and The Devils to represent the culmination of his hatred of the revolution; Lunacharsky asserted in 1931 that The Devils was an indication of the great lengths that Dostoevsky went to in order to discredit and degrade socialism; and D.I Zaslavsky in 1947 classified Dostoevsky an enemy of the Soviet people and a spiritual father of all traitors, who had attempted to completely demolish socialism.

pamphlet on the "perversion of socialism" but not true "scientific" socialism, which its author did not know[147]. Still others showed that the novel warned against other phenomena that occurred during the 20th century such as fascism, zionism, and maoism, and not against socialism[148].

Glasnost, which by its policies of transparency, the re-evaluation of Soviet history according to "alternative thinking", and freedom of speech, opened the door to the horrifying revelations and exposures that occurred after 1985, brought about a sharp change in commentators' attitudes towards the Revolution. While condemning the past Soviet tendency to falsify the past and present, to adjust the facts of yesterday according to the ideological conceptions of today, they turned to the events of the revolution with the intention of a full exposure. This new attitude was reflected in the change in literary critics' approach towards Dostoevsky's ideology and especially towards his views on revolution.

There was still some rare evidence during the glasnost era of pro-revolutionary, pro-Soviet sentiments on the part of certain critics in Dostoevsky scholarship. In his praise of Gorky's progressive works, Ovcharenko claims that they support the revolution as the realisation of historical predestination and progress, and depict the real fighters for the socialist ideal, who have nothing in common with those simplified, and thus also parodied images of "socialists" which are to be found on the pages of Dostoevsky's The Devils[149]. And A. Khvatov hails Dostoevsky and the classical writers as having possessed the gift "of foresight of unavoidable changes, the necessity and justification of future displacements and cataclysms, if you wish, their blessing, a passionate desire to hasten their arrival"[150].

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[147]Yu. Kudriatsev asserted in 1979 that Dostoevsky did indeed oppose Nechaevism, but this was only a form of elemental socialism that Marx, Engels and Lenin also opposed, and had nothing in common with scientific socialism.

[148]V.V Ermilov declared in 1942 that the characters of The Devils represented a prophetic vision of the threat posed by fascism and a warning against one group that dreams of becoming the masters of mankind; M. Gus in 1971 affirmed that Shigalevism was fulfilled in fascism; and Yu. Seleznev pronounced in 1980 that the world order divined in The Devils was realized by fascism, maoism and zionism.

[149]"Revolutsiya i literatura", Moskva, November 1987, p. 175.

[150]"V zabotakh o dne tekushchem", Zvezda, June 1988, p. 182.

However, once brought into the open and officially acknowledged, the events of the revolution were almost universally denounced as a catastrophe that must not be repeated. This attitude prevailed amongst literary critics too. The Devils again became a focus of attention because of its treatment of the theme of revolution, but now the interpretations that were given by critics, almost all revealed a disgust for the revolution. The novel was accepted by official Soviet criticism as a politically prophetic novel and widely recognised as accurately having predicted the Russian revolution in all its horror. Dostoevsky was no longer hailed by literary scholars as a herald of the revolution, but as having warned against it in no uncertain terms. There was almost universal consensus that Dostoevsky was opposed to revolution. The Devils became widely regarded as Dostoevsky's protest against the Bolshevik revolutionaries, as a novel that unmasked the terror of revolution, and even as a revelation of the fundamental inhumanity of the communist system.

This shift in attitude, however, did not provoke a shift in literary critical approach. In general, there was a continuation of the tendency to refute any possibility of an ambivalence on the part of the writer towards the question of revolution, and to accommodate the events, characters and message of the novel to the critic's world outlook.

L. Saraskina uses references to The Devils in order to blatantly criticise the Russian revolution. In her contribution to the discussion on Yuri Karyakin's book, Dostoevsky and the Eve of the XXIst Century[151], which was published in April 1989, she polemicises with Karyakin's assertion that Dostoevsky mistakenly confused the devilishness of Nechaevism with the revolution and put all the "real", "good" revolutionaries under the same banner as the Group of Five. Karyakin's book still contains evidence of the old doctrine of the 1970s in his attitude towards The Devils and the Revolution, by which a distinction is made between good and bad revolutionaries. To Saraskina, there is no such distinction. She believes that the true revolutionaries were in fact very close to Nechaevism in their methods and

[151] Znamya, July 1990.

goals, and that the great writer had a deep understanding of the blasphemy inherent in their principle of violence in the name of social justice. Dostoevsky, she says, saw the full extent of the dirt and nightmare of the revolution, and this is what gave him the impulse to write the novel chronicle The Devils. She believes that Dostoevsky was quite justified in including all revolutionaries, right down to Lenin, in his portrayal of "the devils". In her article on the theme of literary creation in The Devils[152], Saraskina shows how various literary manifestations reflect the approach of crime and catastrophe, how the tragedy is linked to literary occurrences and how the characters' destinies are reflected in their numerous pieces of creation. She states that the story of literary life in the novel is a long list of failed attempts and explains that devilishness, entering into all spheres of spiritual life, destroys the natural motives for creation, its meaning and goal. According to her, the multitude of story-tellers in The Devils, their interests, motives, and the results of their creation all carry the invisible stamp of disease, a social practice in which denunciation, slander and forgery have become the privileged form of the art of the word, allowing the perversion and distortion of the authors' ideas, and lies- the most serious symptoms of the illness of Russian society. Then, in her analysis of the character of Maria Lebyadkina in The Devils[153], Saraskina asserts that the novel reveals the fatal and terrible illness that has gripped not only one stratа of Russian society, but the whole society- no-one in this situation was guaranteed safety and health.

Throughout her book "Besy" Roman-preduprezhdeniye[154], Saraskina makes references to how prophetic Dostoevsky's novel proved to be in forewarning of the horrors of the revolution, about the steady progression towards a total disregard for human life, and the conviction that the end justifies the means. Her criticism of the revolution is exceedingly direct and strong. In her chapter on the theme of imposture in The Devils, she speaks of how the logic of sedition leads to the

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[152]Published in Voprosy Literatury, December 1989, and her book, "Besy", roman-predurezhdeniye, 1990.

[153]"Besy", roman preduprezhdeniye, 1990.

[154]Moscow, 1990.

dictatorship of a tyrant, to the power of ideological delirium, to the nightmare of habitual violence. She repeatedly reasserts that these visions reflect historical events that occurred in Russia which found itself torn apart by devils, its spiritual existence threatened, and its people, in a human herd, driven into an "earthly paradise" with "earthly gods". In The Devils, she says, Dostoevsky showed how even the purest hearts can be drawn into this monstrous evil-doing. He clearly predicted the "great terror", where violence and bloodshed were legitimized. By showing that everything occurred as according to Dostoevsky, Saraskina reveals her profound disgust for the events which took place before and after 1917.

Saraskina substantiates her claims that Dostoevsky's foresights of horror and violence were realised in the Russian revolution, by turning in several chapters of her book, to works of authors who actually experienced the revolution and post-revolutionary years, and whose descriptions of the Russia of their times corresponds to Dostoevsky's warnings. By showing how The Devils was mirrored in these works by those who had been exposed to the real experience of limitless despotism, her blatant revulsion for the horrors of Russia's past is further intensified. She refers to Gorky's publicist writings of 1917 and 1918, in which she says the horror and indignation of this former opponent of Dostoevsky before the outcome of the revolution are expressed. He saw how the revolution was not a source of happiness and enlightenment, but had fallen prey to extremist-fanatics, experimentalists; and that equality clearly meant equality in slavery; that the psychological mechanism of revolution comes down to the former oppressed and sufferers striving to become despots and torturers themselves. The ideas and images of The Devils, she says, blazed up before the writer's eyes, almost literally accomplished in the events that had taken place in Russian reality, and Gorky too became a chronicler of the chaos and inhumanity of revolution[155]. Korolenko's publicism of the 1920s, according to Saraskina, appears as a direct extension of Dostoevsky's novel-warning, The Devils. She says that Korolenko really only had to add details from the new reality to complete the facts of Dostoevsky's

[155] 1990, p. 362.

previsions made half a century before him. He shows how the first experiment of the introduction of socialism was done by means of the suppression of freedom, and gave results opposite to the ideas of social justice[156]. Bunin, whose work Okayanniye Dni was only published in 1989, offered still another chronicle of the tragedy that befell his country. She says that he, following the whole of Russian humanist thinking, wrote with great pain about the total dehumanisation of man. Saraskina also discusses Ye. Zamyatin's novel, We, as an echo of The Devils, in which the embryo of the future from Dostoevsky's chronicle has grown into a grandiose picture of the completed construction, in which the ambition of the totalitarian regime is revealed: to make man ideally average, deprived of any burden, like talent or conscience, honour or dignity, so as to become the strong material of the planned construction. And finally, she turns to B. Mozhayev's novel Muzhiki i Baby, in which she says the ideas and images of The Devils are openly pronounced. The heroes present a precise and correct diagnosis of the illness that struck Russian society at the time of the revolution: impatience, a devilish hatred towards the good origins of real life, the aspiration to create a social miracle at any price, bitterness, the obscuring of reason and conscience, a panicky fear of intellectual superiority, and limitless force, in all spheres of human existence. She concludes that the image of Russia being torn apart by devils was seen by all who did not wish to deceive themselves when the euphoria over the revolution was replaced by horror. Russia, she says, learned the lesson of The Devils under torture and the gallows, on plank-beds and in the writhings of famine, for the mad fantasy of Lyamshin of "100 million heads" clearly lost its metaphorical quality[157].

I. Zolotussky also counteracts Karyakin's assertions, which were clearly aimed at diverting the blow that Dostoevsky struck in The Devils away from Marxism-Leninism. Zolotussky believes that the novel directly reflects the Communist party's ideology and methodology. In his commentary on Karyakin's book[158], he

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[156] 1990, p. 393.

[157] 1990, p. 408.

[158] Znamya, July 1990.

opposes the author's claim that the satire in The Devils about the upper strata, the "one tenth" that dominates the nine tenths, is the same as the Marxist, or Revolutionary Democrat doctrine about the guilty rich. In his opinion, the Bolsheviks used this idea and the hatred felt by the nine tenths to replace everyone with one faceless, impersonal mass, and it is not in the least Dostoevsky's idea. He also states that although some members of the Russian intelligentsia supported this communist idea, it subsequently thrashed them in its meat-grinder. He, like L. Saraskina, questions Karyakin's separation of Nechaevism and Verkhovenskyism from socialism and the revolution, and his assertion that the "devils" in the novel are pseudo-revolutionaries, not real socialists.

M. Volenshtein too, links The Devils directly to the Russian revolution[159]. He says that the principle truth preached by Dostoevsky is that the end does not justify the means. In the novel-prophecy, The Devils, the writer shows how the end turns unavoidably into the means and vice versa. To Stalin, Volenshtein continues, the idea of socialism appeared as a means, the end was terror, genocide.

Yuri Karyakin himself made a contribution at the end of the published discussion, which was intended to add to the book and even "correct" it. Indeed, it appears as a kind of "update" in conformity with the contemporary situation on the views expressed in the book. In this contribution he expresses far more condemnatory and unequivocally critical views of the Soviet regime and communism than in his book. He states that he now wishes to rewrite his own book, or rather finish it with a chapter. He speaks about how in the past, all was cast aside for the attainment of certain goals, the results of which are now plain to see: R[illegible] at present has the lowest rate of productivity for its labour, and the highest [illegible] of infant mortality. The reason, according to him, is that for 70 years the Soviet regime placed itself first by lies, deception and self-deception. In his opinion, there has never been in the history of mankind a society with such a false self-consciousness. Karyakin recounts various atrocities of the communist regime, and

[159]Contribution to discussion on Y. Karyakin's Dostoevsky and the Eve of the XXIst Century, Znamya, July 1990.

how these were covered up with lies. He criticises the Politburo which was organised, like the rest of society, from above downwards, which concentrated truly unbounded power in its hands, and which failed to listen to the intelligentsia. He goes on to say that in Russia there is a long-standing notion that they have not yet got rid of: that Marxism-Leninism is the highest achievement of world culture. "It is time for us to settle the account- we promised so much and in reality fulfilled nothing"[160]. He declares that not one politician has the right to practise politics if he has not let The Devils and Gulag Archipelago pass through his being. In The Devils, Dostoevsky first announced that there would be colossal attempts at progress which would have to be paid for with the loss of feeling and honour, and with the loss of 100 million heads. And so the "socialist" camps paid for it. This novel was the first warning of the entry into Hell, while Gulag Archipelago describes the results with its monstrous list of that which was lost.

In his discussion with L. Saraskina, published in March 1992[161], Karyakin again criticises the old regime by referring to The Devils, and again "updates" his views. In accordance with the general tendency amongst the "progressive" members of society, he now extends the criticism in Dostoevsky's novel even further, to include Lenin as well. He recounts how for a long time he thought that Lenin and Nechaev, the prototype for Peter Verkhovensky, were incompatible, although, like everyone else, he had no trouble in seeing Stalin in Peter, and how gradually traits of Lenin then began to show through him as well. He made various discoveries about Lenin that finally convinced him that Lenin and Nechaev were combined.

It is thus evident that there was strong opposition to the revolution and the suffering it had caused. This revealed the necessity of change in Soviet society. However, the question of the ideals upon which a new society should be built, and how the transformation should be achieved, provoked much dissension and debate. Some critics supported the proposed policies of the leadership that came to power

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[160] Znamya, July 1990, p. 217.

[161] Literaturnaya Gazeta, p. 3.

in 1985, and the ideas of a new brand of socialism, while others opposed them with varying degrees of vehemence, forecasting Russia's doom.

4.2.2.3. "Glasnost Socialism"

Glasnost was intended to be the first step in a campaign for the rebuilding and reorganisation of society, and was based on various principles: openness, truth, transparency, a pluralism of opinions and views, and the possibility for all people to express their needs. Inherent in these changes was a transformation of the Soviet socialist ideology that governed party policy. Gorbachev, as General Secretary of the Communist party, presided over the discussion around the new ideology, over the question of the nature and future of the USSR, which now became paramount. He was faced with the people's disgust and exhaustion before a fallacious doctrine that had promised them, at the cost of endless sacrifice, a wonderful socialism, and which in fact, as was now admitted, had produced only social and economic disaster. His task was therefore to persuade the people that socialism could be a success when it doesn't fall into the wrong hands.

The official Gorbachev line had two principal aims: to expose the errors of the past in full acknowledgement of the Communist Party's mistakes, and to instil a faith in the Party's reformed brand of socialism, or the rehabilitation of socialism in theory, not in its unfortunate historical practice. Literary critics supporting this new line expressed the ideas of the socialist reformers through their interpretations of Dostoevsky's work.

In conformity with the glasnost leadership's emphasis on their opposition to revolutionary extremism, towards its undemocratic nature, its elitism, its terrorist methods, its disregard for the individual, its contemptuous attitude towards the masses, critics showed that The Devils is directed against revolutionary socialism. They revealed that Dostoevsky was horrified by the idea of the use of force to attain unity and showed the transformation of society as proposed by Shigalev and Peter Verkhovensky, to be no better than an anthill - the compulsory organisation

of human happiness, which deprives man of his freedom.

As the so-called "democrats" supported the idea of a new brand of socialism, cleansed of corruption, deceit and authoritarianism, so critics of this orientation reinterpreted Dostoevsky's works to show him to be sympathetic with the ideals of the new Soviet socialist society. There was, as in previous eras, an identification of Dostoevsky's social ideals with contemporary Soviet reality, but now the writer was shown to be the spiritual precursor, not of socialism in general, but of socialism in its contemporary form. Dostoevsky's ideals were shown to be the same as those propagated by the new Soviet leadership, his views to be those of contemporary socialist society, his ideology to correspond to that of the new regime.

Dostoevsky's artistic creation was thus reinterpreted in accordance with the new policies. For example, critics of "democrat" sympathies no longer highlighted and exaggerated Dostoevsky's virulent rejection of capitalism as had been a constant tendency Soviet criticism in the past, and they revealed how the writer supported change in society, but by peaceful methods, not revolution. Dostoevsky is shown to be a great humanist, whose rejection of the merciless violence and bloodshed of the revolution and ideas for the peaceful transformation of society according to new values coincide with the principles forming the corner-stone of the new humanism of the glasnost era.

Critics such as I.V. Inov expressed one of the principal concerns inherent in the new leadership's policies- the concern for the people's rights within the socialist system and the opposition to blind authoritarianism, which disregards the welfare of the masses[162]. He supports socialism in its ideal of justice and equality for all, and declares Dostoevsky to have held these same ideals. In his article on Dostoevsky's influence on the Czech writer, Nezval, he speaks of how, like Belinsky, Dostoevsky fought for socialism and against exclusively individualist ideas

[162]"F.M. Dostoevsky v zhizni i tvorchestve V. Nezvala", Russkaya Literatura, No. 3, 1985.

that propose that a strong personality has the right to be in command of the lives of the masses. He asserts that Nezval affirmed the ideal of the free, sublimated personality, in defence of which Dostoevsky also raised his voice with passion. Inov claims that Nezval, like Dostoevsky, saw socialism as freeing man from social chains, and refuted the widespread notion of the indifference of the socialist state towards the fate of the individual man. According to Inov, Nezval shared Dostoevsky's dislike of the strong personality that towers over the multitude of personalities, and both saw the complete bankruptcy of the individual rebellion founded on the prophetic idea that all is permitted to the "strong personality". Nezval saw in Dostoevsky a like-minded thinker and his spirit was greatly strengthened by his reading of The Devils.

In her book, "Besy" Roman-preduprezhdeniye (1990), L. Saraskina expresses, through her interpretation of Dostoevsky's novel, many of the glasnost leadership's criticisms of both the pre-revolutionary non-socialist and post-revolutionary socialist regimes, as well as many of their ideas for the creation of a just harmonious society on the basis of a new brand of socialism. She uses literary criticism to condemn those elements of the revolution and past Soviet regimes that the glasnost leadership had itself openly condemned and promised to change in the new era. In the section "Eternal and Topical" she demonstrates not only how Dostoevsky's prophecy in this novel came true in Russian history, but also how his warnings and lessons remain relevant until the present day. It is for this reason that she has chosen to look to Dostoevsky for answers to many contemporary questions, And through her analysis, she makes a stand for glasnost, transparency, freedom of expression, the right to independent thought, for a turnaround towards truth and freedom.

Saraskina's voice becomes one of a supporter of the reform process and the creation of a new socialism, by her selection of certain elements in the novel highlight which she highlights as counterpoints to the new policies. She emphasises the element of force and coercion- The Devils reveals the revolutionaries' desire to drive man with a stick into the crystal palace of universal

happiness. She strongly condemns this method of the revolutionary alteration of society, the creation of a new state through violent means. She asserts that sedition is adopted by the "ours" when they are overcome by impatience and a thirst for the rapid transformation of society, so that the elaboration of a world outlook gives way to pure politics. Revolution amounts, in her opinion, to the desire to push history along a bit, using any coercive means necessary. The reformists condemned the use of coercion and violence to attain political ends, promising to listen to the needs and desires of the people and to move towards democracy through gradual reform.

Saraskina also speaks of the role of the power-hungry individual, who appears at the head of the revolutionary group. In contrast to the new policy supporting a pluralism of opinions, Saraskina shows how the Dostoevskian rebel, the phenomenon of which can certainly be seen in an historical perspective, claims that precisely he, and not someone else is able to give to the world a new, correct law. She criticises the amorality of the revolutionaries who falsely confer on themselves the right to decide for others where their happiness lies. They affirm their right to a monopoly in the domain of the construction of the world- there can be no alternative to their doctrine. The denial of any choice becomes the central point of the ideological myth maintained by the impostors, and it becomes clear that the revolution is necessary for dictatorship and not vice versa. This, in her opinion, is an initial defect at the basis of their social planning.

Saraskina's interpretation of The Devils as a prophecy of Russia's future contains a criticism of authoritarianism. This reflects one of the primary concerns of the new leadership, who pronounced an end this feature of past Soviet regimes. Like the glasnost supporters, Saraskina sees both the Tsarist regime, and the Soviet regime since Stalin, as guilty of authoritarianism. Saraskina believes that Dostoevsky revealed the desire for power to be the real motive of the revolutionary leader. It is he who longs for power that enters the path of revolution. The reformists strongly condemned this aspect of pre-glasnost Soviet rule: the power-hungry dictator, whose motives are clearly the acquisition of complete control, not the

betterment of the people's life, and they opposed this with promises of democracy which brings legitimate power through the choice of the people. Saraskina devotes a chapter to the discussion of the phenomenon of what she regards as false power, stained with imposture and self-will. She opposes the Tsarist regime, embodied in Lembke, and the revolutionary regime, embodied in Peter Verkhovensky, as both allow for the rule by false power. She enumerates the characteristics of this false power. False power, she says, tries at any price to legitimise its status, to consolidate itself in its new quality. It becomes the only real value of the government, which in turn becomes manipulative and despotic. Power gained through undemocratic means is characterised by arbitrariness which is a self-defensive method of legitimizing itself and holding back distrust and doubt within permissible limits. Another feature of false power is complete inertia, lack of innovation. Because of its lack of democracy it lacks true goals, and any activity, social or political, is deprived of any meaning. All institutions of power acquire an openly window-dressing character, where each reform is fictitious, each law ambiguous, each right illusory[163]. Both "parties" in The Devils, in her view, are revealed to be political adventurists at their origin. These are precisely the features of previous regimes that the glasnost supporters had exposed, criticised, and were determined to change.

Saraskina's portrait of Petar as a politically ambitious man, possessed by the forces of evil and destruction, aspiring to superman status and self-divinisation, together with her assertions as to the prophetic nature of this portrait of a revolutionary leader, are another clear indication of her support for the re-evaluation of Soviet history according to alternative thinking, for here is the image of the Stalinist ruler. Peter appears, she says, as a symbol of the philosophy and strategy of power for its own sake, which Dostoevsky foresaw. Saraskina demonstrates the mechanism of the acceptance of a univocal decision under the leadership of a skilful director, embodied in Peter, whose platform achieves an absolute majority of votes, allowing him to take full control of the group despite his dubious reputation. She further

[163] 1990, p. 268.

speaks of how he uses every slightest error committed by one of the members to make the internal discipline more rigid, to tighten the screws, and to establish a new regime. Peter does not intend to share his power with anyone. The new structure he will create will be based on barrack socialism, authoritarian government, a totalitarian regime, supported by mythology and a "new law" or propaganda. Peter has doomed Russia to a dictatorial regime, where the people are united around a false ideology and the cult of the man-god, where the rulers manipulate the consciousness of millions, and where all submit to "one splendid despotic will"[164]. Saraskina sees The Devils as a refusal for all times of autocracy, a refusal that clearly reflects one of the central issues of the glasnost era. With glasnost would come the first true representation of the people.

Saraskina also criticises the structure of the revolutionary organisation which foreshadows the regime it intends to impose upon Russia. This question of structure was another issue towards which the leadership that came into power in 1985 turned its attention, proposing not only "de-authoritisation", but also "decentralisation", "de-bureaucratisation", a more widespread distribution of power in every sphere. Saraskina shows that Peter Verkhovensky's schema rests on hierarchical centralism and the dictatorship of the centre. The revolutionary society is contrived as a society of total intellectual obedience, consolidated by statutes and a programme. It is imperative that no alternative thinking, or even worse, opposition, arise within the organisation, and it is clear that these will likewise not be tolerated in the future. Peter sees bureaucratisation as a powerful lever of politics and hopes to instil the bureaucratic principle into the structure of the revolutionary group. The revolutionary group is based on strict centralisation at the head, the principle of the submission, the concentration of means and information at the very top of the organisation, the creation of close-knit commissions and sub-commissions and the conferring of the broadest powers to these narrow groups. According to Saraskina, it is this rigid structure that Dostoevsky prophesied in The Devils, and which she highlights as part of the evils that overcame Russia.

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[164] 1990, p. 308.

Furthermore, Saraskina expresses views that support the "de-ideologisation" of society, inherent in the glasnost reforms. Through her discussion of the warnings contained in The Devils, she criticises the tendency of the past to rely on ideology to screen the lack of real ideas. She asserts that the action of the revolutionaries in The Devils has a theoretical foundation and an ideology. Those, she says, who wish to take power by false means create an ideological myth in order to surround all their claims to power with the mist of incontestable lawfulness[165]. The dogmas and methods adopted by the revolutionaries are justified by the promise a utopian future. At the head of this utopia Peter plans to place a new idol who, through the creation of a legend, will be able to claim the place of an earthly god, a man-god, who will satisfy the religious sentiment of the people, and who will bring them a new truth. Peter believes that this utopia, accepted in faith, in the place of the old faith, will rebuild the consciousness of the people who will believe everything and follow him. The destruction of the old sacred things, now grown hateful, will sanctify the rightness of the new, of the revolutionaries' philosophical and political platform- their "catechism". It becomes clear that there aren't really true ideas behind Peter's platform, just an ideological myth, which rests on the blind alley of limitless arbitrary rule. This, the critic shows, is Dostoevsky's prediction- arbitrary rule justified through the cult of the individual and promises of a future paradise, and it is this that the new leadership hoped transparency would bring to an end.

The relationship between socialism in theory and socialism in practice, at the core of the glasnost discussions and debates is also raised by Saraskina in her analysis of The Devils. Emphasising that The Devils certainly proved to be a true prediction, she claims that to the revolutionaries, liberalism is not a goal but a temporary political means, and speaks of how practice distorts the theory. Peter Verkhovensky's group manipulates liberalism and socialist theory. She declares that when one looks past the pseudo-revolutionary phraseology, the only serious claim that remains is the fight for power, the desire to replace those in power with

[165] 1990, p. 276.

oneself[166]. She speaks of how the slogans on the leaflets distributed by the members of the "Five" reveal a resemblance between their ideas and those of utopian teachings, its socio-political programme, but how, when deprived of the veil of learned dialectics, they point quite shamelessly to the fundamental means for the realisation of this utopia- unrestrained violence. She further discusses how Shigalev's theories are manipulated by Peter Verkhovensky for his own political motives. She says that while Shigalev is the creator of the written doctrine, in the form of 10 chapters in an exercise book, at the meeting of "ours", he does not expound his own theory, doing only the introductory speech. Peter, having entered into the debate, takes the theoretical discussion onto a new level. Casting aside the question of means and goals, he poses the question of speed, concluding that a quick solution, whatever it consists of, is better than the slow journey contained in the compositions of social theoreticians. He wants action, not theories on paper. And this proposal of his wins over the "ours", who, although they have just repudiated Shigalev's system for its inhumanity, express their undoubting willingness to accept the "quick solution"[167]. Peter Verkhovensky, she says, assigns a secondary plac to the socialist ideal as an abstract idea- from the ideal must remain the verbal casing, the ideological entourage[168]. He sees the utilisation of the socialist idea and socialist phraseology as necessary given the "sentimentality" of many adherents towards it, but his real aim is to establish this idea as freedom from moral norms and obligations. His most actual political task is to teach the organisation to act by any means available, to refute moral images if they are not linked to the interests of the organisation, or, even more so, if they contradict them. This is the new revolutionary word, its strategy and tactics, the frightful materialised consequence of Shigalev's "Pure theory"[169]. Saraskina sees Shigalev's departure from the park prior to Shatov's murder as an indication of his inability to understand how closely linked his system for the construction of the

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[166]1990, p. 274.

[167]1990, p. 285.

[168]1990, p. 292.

[169]1990, p. 298.

world is with Peter's platform and practice. He considers it his duty to publicly dissociate himself from the rectilinear interpretation of his system, to draw a border between "flippant politicians" and "pure socialists", between the theoreticians and the practitioners. Peter, while scorning "shigalevism" for its aestheticism and red-tape methods, has completely evaluated the worth of this system and its colossal prospects and thus appropriates it, crafting it anew according to his own manner. In his version, certain points of the system acquire the character of political slogans and far-reaching conclusions not present in Shigalev's version. Peter amply decorates Shigalev's speculative and abstract schema with his own fantasies. Saraskina illustrates this by comparing quotations from Shigalev and Peter's commentary[170]. In fact, she points out, Peter acknowledges, without the shadow of self-criticism, that in the bloody nightmare he is creating, he is "a swindler and not a socialist"[171], and that it required certain efforts not inherent in, but alternative to socialism. He will do what socialism has failed to do- harness the new forces and put his plan into action. This impostor, director of sedition, maniac, manipulator, under the mask of a revolutionary, socialist and democrat, and screening himself with the phraseology of "bright red liberalism"[172], intends to construct "equality in an anthill" in the conditions of full submission to despotic dictatorship and idolocracy. She later refers to Gorky's realisation, which reflects Dostoevsky's warnings in The Devils, that those who accomplished the revolution did not participate in "the socialist psychology"[173]; and that the leaders were in practice fulfilling "the ideas of Prudhomme, not Marx, developing Pugachevism and not socialism"[174]. She says that Gorky, like Dostoevsky, examined the essence of the cruel experiment on the Russian people that the revolution proved to be, from the point of view of political adventurism, not the true putting into practice of socialist theories. She also quotes S.N. Bulgakov, who declared that

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[170] 1990, p. 301.

[171] 1990, p. 306.

[172] 1990, p. 308.

[173] 1990, p. 365.

[174] 1990, p. 368.

Nechaev was not a socialist, but a rebel, and that the ideal of his rebellion was destruction[175], and speaks of how Mozhaev's novel, which demonstrates an ideological solidarity with Dostoevsky's, shows that the theoretical foundation of the revolution proved to be an ideological masquerade, a decoration. Suppression and violence were not the means, the conditions of the experiment, but its goal. While on the surface it appeared to be a failed undertaking, an unsuccessful social utopia, which experimenters attempted to realize by foolish means, in actual fact the revolution, which was painstakingly camouflaged by socialist slogans, had as its aim the attainment of complete obedience, complete despotism[176]. Saraskina thus does not express outright criticism of socialist theory, but rather of the way it has been put into practice, manipulated for the sake of personal power. It is precisely in this light that the reformists wish to present the Soviet past, redeeming the theory of socialism by dissociating it from the horrors that had been brought to light.

In general, Saraskina's liberal, humanist sympathies, in the spirit of the glasnost supporters, are indicated by her evident agreement with the warnings and insights of Stepan Verkhovensky, the benevolent liberal theoretician. He represents, in Saraskina's view, the humanist democratic values that are refused in favour of totalitarianism and violence. She declares, for instance, that he warned about the danger of Peter Verkhovensky taking power over the "ours" because they would allow him to do so; of the fact that all would be accomplished with violence and slavery, about the impossibility of the rebirth, personal and social; of man being accomplished so quickly, and even of the possibility of the literal disappearance of men without a trace. To Stepan, she says, to demand one's rights, to protest, to experience the urge of disobedience, not to permit coercion and mockery, means to maintain one's self-respect and human dignity. She asserts that much of what he pronounced proved to be not madness, but clairvoyance, for his fear were more than justified by the outcome of the revolution and the Soviet regime that came

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[175] 1990, p. 383.

[176] 1990, p. 450.

into power.

Voprosy Literatury published the chapter, "Slovo zvuchashcheye, slovo voplosbchennoye" in their July 1989 issue. In this article, L. Saraskina voices her support for glasnost by placing Dostoevsky on the side of openness, truth, and the right of all to freely express their views, needs, desires. In her analysis of literary creation in The Devils, she says that Dostoevsky's heroes personify his dream for his country- they are citizens who think and discuss, read and observe, and most importantly, write. He reveals a Russia where each has been given the chance to give his hidden word, to express his soul openly and truthfully, a chance to voice himself. This gives rebirth to man. Indeed, she declares, until the end of his days, Dostoevsky entrusted his last hopes to an outburst of consciousness, of publicity. He believed that one must ask people about their needs and they will tell you the truth. He dreamed of a national referendum, of a combined search for the truth, irrevocably linked to the new word uttered by the people and transformed into the learned word by the intelligentsia. Dostoevsky is shown by Saraskina to share the same dreams for Russia as the initiators of glasnost: openness, transparency, publicity, the possibility for all people to express their needs, and the reestablishment of the intelligentsia's role as spokesmen of the people's interests. K.A Barsht also sees Dostoevsky as a spokesman for glasnost[177]. He asserts that to Dostoevsky, the possibility of expressing oneself, of acquiring a "voice" is the most absolute proof of one's existence, and that all should have the right to free self-expression. He thus too expresses one of the fundamental beliefs of the reformers of socialism: the people's right to free expression of their needs, desires, views.

In order to gain acceptance for the new policies, the hardened resistance of stereotypes had to be broken down. The creation of a new society would be based on economic reforms and on scientific and technological progress. For this to succeed, not only did the people's wariness of the new have to be overcome, but

[177]"Literaturnij debut Dostoevskogo", Neva, September 1986.

also their engrained distrust of science, which they associated with the evil of the purely rational and a lack of spirit. There can be little doubt that Dostoevsky had a profound mistrust of science and technology which he believed often brought more evil than good to society. He was against progress that occurred at the expense of the people's morality and values. However, in her chapter on Stavrogin's journey to Iceland in The Devils[178], L. Saraskina speaks of Dostoevsky's great respect for science. She asserts that in the polemics that broke out between literary magazines over the merits of Jules Verne's novel Journey to the Centre of the Earth, Dostoevsky was firmly on the side of Sovremennik, the journal favouring the novel, having himself written that there is no reason to fear science as it is a higher force, inherent and necessary to all. And she interprets Dostoevsky's decision to send Stavrogin in the footsteps of Verne's novel, as a means of giving him one more serious chance at salvation- to serve for a while in the name of knowledge and science, to be a worker in the universal workshop. It was a gift of fate for a devastated man who has lost faith, a true, worthy activity at last for this "great sinner".

Interpretations of Dostoevsky's novel during glasnost provide evidence of the continued use of the concept of "the devils" to criticise ideological opponents, and to place responsibility for the troubles in Soviet society on their shoulders. The "democrats", who supported the glasnost and perestroika reforms, the new age in Soviet policy, strongly criticized their "conservative" opponents, seeing them as the "devils" of contemporary society. V. Ivanov blames the ultra-nationalists the "cut-throats" from 'Pamyat' who are "breaking loose in the manner of their Nazi prototypes" for Russia's troubles[179]. He equates them and their crimes with those of the heroes of The Devils, referring to the blood that has flowed in Russia since the beginning of the century as a result of the pogroms, rebellions and revolution, and believes that their evil continues to manifest itself in contemporary society. He says that this novel and "The Legend of the Grand Inquisitor" read like

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[178]Chapter 2 of section "Mir romana" in "Besy" Roman-preduprezhdeniye, 1990.

[179]"Vina literatury i vina pered literaturoj", Literaturnaya Gazeta, 25 September 1991, p. 11.

a report in a present-day morning newspaper. Russians now live, according to him, in the world that Dostoevsky described in his heroes' delirious fantasies. He thus claims that Dostoevsky's prophecies not only came true in Russia's bloody past, but are being truly fulfilled in the present-day Russian society, where the "devils" of such groups as Pamyat have once again arisen. He sees these groups as a dangerous obstacle to the reforms.

Some critics such as A. Vasilevsky[180] did not attempt to include Dostoevsky amongst their allies, but regarded him as their ideological opponent, believing the classics such as Dostoevsky to be on the side of the anti-reformists, to be the enemies of the new era. Vasilevsky declares that the democrats feel menaced by two things: a coup and great literature, such as the works of Dostoevsky, which seem to them to be a sort of totalitarian nucleus around which all the archaic, barbarian, anti-cultural, nationalistic, "conservatives" group themselves.

It is clear that there was support amongst literary critics for the new order and its policy of a new brand of socialism , which was expressed in interpretations of Dostoevsky's work, and in particular, The Devils. However, what also became evident is that as the notions of glasnost and perestroika advanced, members of this group saw the need for even greater changes than those envisaged by the Gorbachev regime, and began to express opinions that questioned the validity of socialism itself.

4.2.2.4. The Role of the Individual

Another very important tendency must be mentioned with regard to the new socialism advocated by the Gorbachev leadership: the concern for the individual within society. This new focus of attention that was both encouraged by the reformers and arose naturally in the freer atmosphere of glasnost, was also expressed in literary criticism, and in interpretations of The Devils.

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[180]"No my zhivyom v Rossii", Literaturnaya Gazeta, 29 May 1991.

Both pre-Revolutionary Russian thinkers and Socialist theoreticians had tended to emphasise the worth of the collective over the individual. The former spoke of the Russian tradition of "sobornost", an age-old concept in Russian culture linked to Orthodox Christianity, which was based on the Russian preference of the collective over the individual[181]. The latter's ideology was based on the need to place the good of the collective over that of the individual, and called for the joining of all to work together for the good of the whole. However, the glasnost leadership recognised the failure of this approach in the economic sphere, and acknowledged that there was a need for a sense of individual responsibility.

The concern for the individual shown by the glasnost leadership had two fundamental reasons: economic and social. The leadership was faced with the task of fighting corruption, the decline of the work ethic and the moral decay in Soviet society. The success of the new economic policies depended on the motivation of the individual. The move towards the beginning of a free market system, or of rudimentary capitalism, necessitated the need for the individualist attitude of capitalism- personal responsibility. As Althusser has pointed out, capitalism needs subjects who work by themselves, who freely exchange their labour power for wages, so in the epoch of capitalism, ideology emphasises the value of individual freedom[182]. Moreover, the statistics that had been revealed as a result of glasnost, brought to light a society fraught with crime and evil, and had led many to fear the complete moral disintegration of Soviet society. Soviet citizens would have to acquire a sense of personal moral responsibility too. It was thus evident that for Soviet society to be resurrected through political, economic and social reform, there was a need for a new Soviet man, not the man of a purely collective consciousness of the old regime, but a man with a sense of self worth, with an awareness of his own personal responsibilities, an ethical, morally stable citizen

[181] "Sobornost" was an historical phenomenon dating back to ancient Russia, that came to mean to the "mystics" of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, such as N. Berdyaev, a spiritual harmony based on freedom and unity in love, a community based on loving fellowship and the truth of believers. As a religious concept, it implied spiritual unity and religious community based on free commitment to the traditions of the Orthodox Church.

[182] Cf Belsey, C., 1980.

who was a good and productive worker.

It was further recognised that a concern for the individual had become necessary to regain the support and trust of Soviet citizens, without which the reforms could not succeed. The Communist Party was confronted with a disillusioned people that had witnessed the terrible inhumanity that had resulted from the tendency to put the good of the masses over that of the individual, who had seen that the promise of future bliss for all at the expense of the present individuals had led to the unimaginable horrors of the past. It was necessary to show that under the new socialism a total disregard for the value, needs, rights of the individual would be considered unacceptable, and that henceforth the individual would not be regarded as a mere tool of society, as in previous eras, but as possessing his own rights as well as responsibilities.

Literary critics too showed the striving for perfection of the individual personality to be the essential basis for the success of the new society. They regarded the role of the individual to be of vital importance in the new era, and emphasised the need for personal improvement, self-perfection, the moral progress of the individual, as a means towards the creation of a better society. They affirmed that social reform must begin with a perestroika of the self, for a perfect society can never be created if its individual components do not strive for spiritual and moral self-perfection.

As towards most questions, Dostoevsky's attitude towards that of the relation between the collective and the individual was dual-facetted. Dostoevsky was certainly a proponent of the ancient idea of sobornost as a religious tradition amongst the Russian people. He believed that the Russian people had an innate sense of brotherhood and unity. However, he strongly opposed the socialist revolutionary tendency to totally disregard the individual in its struggle to transform society. He saw plans that sacrificed the individual for the good of the masses as leading inevitably to horror, bloodshed and the creation of an ant-heap where men were robbed of their free will and personality.

It was this latter aspect of his teaching that contemporary democrats emphasised. They also highlighted his interest in man as a free-thinking and acting individual, his belief in the responsibility of each man for his own moral self-betterment, and his conviction that a good society must be based on good individuals. I. Vinogradov, for example, states that in the perestroika situation, Russians are beginning to understand more clearly that they need to shape ourselves first and foremost so as to lay a spiritual foundation for the society they intend to build[183].

Yuri Karyakin turned his attention towards man and his spiritual-moral role in society[184]. This, according to him, is where the fundamental sources of Russia's troubles lie, not in economics and politics, and he blames the distortion of socialist theories for this. He says that an initial flaw in interpretations of the teachings on which the Soviet regime was based has led to the unbelievable lowering of man's personality. Referring to Dostoevsky's discovery, revealed in The Devils, that if man does not possess moral values, then all is permitted. Karyakin declares that although in science the amount of knowledge has doubled over the last five years, the same is by no means true of morality and the spirit. Attention to these is necessary to overcome contemporary problems. In his discussion with L. Saraskina on The Devils[185], he emphasises the personal responsibility of the individual, saying that each man must find the evil within himself when he questions the evil in society. He declares that he has now understood who the devils are and has recognised his own portrait too, for he has realised that his principal devil is within himself. And, he asserts, as Herzen said, one must not free others until one has freed oneself. In his opinion, there are very few free people at the moment in Russia, but all the same there are more than ever before and they will continue to come into being. He draws a lesson from The Devils which for him was in essence

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[183]Contribution to discussion on Yu. Karyakin's Dostoevsky and the Eve of the XXIst Century, Znamya, July 1990.

[184]Commentary at end of discussion on his book, Dostoevsky and the Eve of the XXIst Century, Znamya, July 1990.

[185]Rishina, I. (ed), Literaturnaya Gazeta, 11 March 1992, p. 3.

a confession-repentance-atonement on the part of Dostoevsky: people must be internally free before a free society can be created, and what is needed in Russia is the sincerity, honesty, self-discipline and selflessness of the individual.

V. Viktorovich claims that Dostoevsky expressed the belief that social perfection must be achieved through the improvement of the personal qualities of the people constituting society[186]. Dostoevsky did not believe, as many of his contemporaries did, that revolution cannot be repudiated even if it is bloody, as it is the only way to resolve human suffering, for he foresaw the hardships and suffering that the Russian people live in today. According to Viktorovich, all accusations of reaction levelled at the writer carry a political character, and miss the prophetic, suprapolitical and immeasurably more important meaning of his words. Dostoevsky believed the way to harmony to be through culture and not politics, for while politics asserts that one must start with the perfection of the social structure, and as a rule, exalts temporary, pragmatic, group interests, culture emphasises the personality. Only once the moral truths pronounced by Dostoevsky have been realised, must one proceed to social, civic, political ideas.

G. Shchennikov asserts in his critique of N. Kushina's Man in Dostoevsky[187], that serious readers nowadays are most interested by the writer's thoughts on the mysteries of human nature, his study of man and the personality. He criticises Kushina's tendency to view all Dostoevsky's heroes as merely representing social phenomena, to reduce the reason for the monstrous distortion of ideas in Dostoevsky's heroes to the state of disconnection of bourgeois society. Shchennikov believes this accentuation of only the objective laws to be insufficient. Dostoevsky, he claims, posed the question of the individual's moral responsibility. He delved into the very structure of man's consciousness, into the contradictions of the moral-ethical position of the personality, its capacity for service to society or social evil. Shchennikov then asserts that with each day we

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[186]"Brosher noye semya vozrastet", escho raz o "raveshchanii" Dostoevskovo', Voprosy Literatury, March 1991.

[187]"Chelovekovedeniya Dostoevskogo", Voprosy Literatury, October 1987.

become more convinced that much in life depends on an arrangement of moral forces, and the contemporary experience of political life testifies to how much in the world climate depends upon the simple, moral position of one leader. He thus emphasises that the individual is important in determining the condition of society rather than that society is important in determining the moral condition of the individual, which is the traditional Revolutionary Democrat and Marxist-Leninist approach.

K. Stepanyan turns his attention to the moral responsibility of the individual in the new society. He declares himself to be more concerned with the losses in the moral sphere, than the disastrous state of the economy, science and culture in the Soviet Union, for he believes this to be far more destructive to the people[188]. He says that the fact that many see force as a part of normal social existence, is much more horrifying than the bungled agriculture. There have been grave moral deformations. In another article, "Nuzhna li nam literatura?"[189], he claims that life from a daily existence point of view has become worse, but more worrying than the price increases and new deficits, is the uncontrolled evil, the negative energy that is increasingly accumulating in people nowadays. In his opinion, the most important result of the five years of glasnost has been the strengthening of the understanding that the source of all evil and trouble is to be found in the depths of the human soul, and not in socio-economic systems, that there is not one Stalin, or Hitler, or Lenin, or Marx who is guilty of all the troubles that have befallen Russia in the 20th century. He claims that Dostoevsky realised how deeply evil hides itself in man, and believes that literature calls man to rebuild himself. He mentions A. Adamovich's statement in the discussion about Yuri Karyakin's book Dostoevsky and the Eve of the XXIst Century that the Russian people by the depth of understanding of even the ordinary citizen are a people of "little Dostoevskys"[190]. Suffering has revealed to them the truth about human nature

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[188]"Tri shaga k istine", Neva, January 1989, p. 185.

[189]Znamya, December 1990.

[190]p. 225.

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[188]"Tri shaga k istine", Neva, January 1989, p. 185.

[189]Znamya, December 1990.

[190]p. 225.

that Dostoe[illegible] perceived: that it contains deep sources of both good and evil in it. To him too, Dostoevsky was a teacher who called man to moral resurrection before attempting to transform society.

4.2.2.5. The End of Socialism

As previously mentioned, an increasing hostility towards socialism as a political and social theory, was discernible amongst the "democrats", who initially supported the shift towards a new more liberal socialism proposed by the glasnost leadership. The lack of success of the reforms in curing Russia's problems led to a growing disillusionment with socialism, even in its new form. Having lost the enthusiasm, optimism and idealism of the initial stages of the reform process, they began to blame the very system itself for the continued economic and social problems. It appeared that the last attempt to save socialism as a system had failed and the only hope for the renewal of Russia was complete change, not merely another policy shift.

In the midst of the polemics being waged around the question of reform, the impetus for the creation of a new social and political structure gathered a momentum of its own, diverging from the path carefully plotted by its initiators. Its culmination was the coup of August 1991, which ended Soviet socialist society, and pronounced the establishment of a truly new society. It was the end of an Empire and the birth of what was claimed to be the first real democracy in Russia.

However, many commentators greeted this event with little enthusiasm or hope for the end to Russia's troubles, and literary critics, turning once more to Dostoevsky's lessons, expressed their anxiety.

While it is evident that critics such as Ludmila Saraskina and Yuri Karyakin supported the reforms introduced by glasnost, a discussion held between them and

published in March 1992[191], reveals their profound disillusionment with the course that these reforms took, and their trepidations concerning the latest change. They look back at the glasnost years through the looking glass of The Devils. L. Saraskina asks: "who are the devils in today's context? and asserts that qualitative changes have occurred in the personnel of perestroika. No doubt, she says, the Stepan Verkhovenskys started the movement, flippant, garrulous, vainglorious, and weak, not capable of doing anything concrete. Today, after the event, these idealists, puny intellectuals trapped in their inertia, appear as something beautiful and significant, which is perhaps why they so furiously criticise those who brought about the change- the cynics and pragmatists, people of business and deed, so unmistakeably recognisable as Peters. She says that Dostoevsky often affirmed that the best people come to the surface in times of danger, but questions whether these are really the best people? She continues that it is striking how the most conscientious, intelligent, cultured part of all the different social movements have somehow been washed away; and it is not the brave and free who succeed, but the insolent, those deprived of any sense of decency. All organs of the press seem to her to be involved in a campaign to finish off and bury the native intelligentsia, to shake off the old paths as quickly as possible in order to dash ahead without looking back. There is the same old devilish desire, to cut up the divine appearance of the great ideal "in the name of equality, hatred and digestion". And one cannot escape from the inevitable changing of the spineless liberal idealists into cynics with a backbone- the flesh of his flesh. Liberalism naturally changes into nihilism, for according to the satanic model, all well-meaning intentions and good concerns must be turned over onto their dark, shady side, every victory discredited and cheated. In her opinion, the cycle revealed in The Devils has been repeated once more in contemporary Russia.

Karyakin is of the same opinion, asserting that despite the initial signs of good brought by glasnost: democracy, the separation of the church from the state, the reinstatement of religion, evil was not far off, and the principle "all is permitted"

[191]Rishina, I. (ed.), '"Zakruzhilis besy razny, budto listya v noyabre.."', Literaturnaya Gazeta, p. 3.

is being held up ever more brazenly and joyfully. He says that those caught in blatantly criminal acts feel no remorse, but defend themselves with the concept of "pluralism".

In her next commentary, Saraskina declares that she no longer attends political meetings of any group as she sees dishonesty in all of them. According to her, the reborn communists have taken their red flags out of storage and attempt to gratify the people with new petty concerns. In all eras, she says, the "suffering of the simple people" has been shamefully used by political bandits, and now it is the last hope of the former red guard. The Democrats are no better, for they care more about being in the majority, than about the people's poverty. Indeed, for a long time they have not been with the people, although they have disguised themselves well. There is no dialogue with the people. To her this is a situation taken straight from The Devils. She places her last hope on the individual, saying that she herself would advise people to go home, clean and tidy up their "izbas" (small traditional dwellings) - personal concerns must now take precedence. This dwelling is each person's only property; they mustn't listen to the communists, but must put their houses in order- this is undoubtedly the first democratic task. She continues that the democrats have no right to use their catch-phrase on unity when they have just broken off completely from their own party. Yuri Karyakin agrees, saying that Tikhon has given way to Marat- the noble-hearted, passively idealist priest has become a cruel man of revolution.

L. Saraskina then expresses her belief that people don't wish to take on honest simple labour anymore, but would rather join the demonstrations; to scream and rage while doing nothing to impro) their own lives. People stand under their banners, waiting for charity. And, she says, those within the structures of power have only one concern- to rise up the hierarchy. There are always new claimants to the positions, new young forces with new slogans to stimulate the people to action. Indeed, she states, in contemporary Russia, the question "who are the devils?", as well as its reverse, "Who are not devils?" is becoming hopeless. She openly turns to The Devils for explanations of contemporary phenomena. In her

opinion, this novel is apt in the present situation for it applies to times when there is a disturbance, a jumble in society and in man, when in each person lies both his own truth and evil, and when each person tries to elevate both his truth and his lie to a canon, an absolute. She later speaks of Stavrogin's role as a "seducer " who committed many crimes against humanity, who spiritually seduced the "ours", by writing the statutes, leading the gang, and enticing with false ideas. She sees no difference between the long-departed seducers and the newly-formed ones, and claims that no-one seems to be in the least bit ashamed of their former role of ideological seducer. On the contrary, all stand with power, profit, and their career, and no-one makes a drama of the false road by which he has arrived at his position. Karyakin asserts that the falsity of all revolutions lies in the fact that they only destroy the contemporary bearers of evil, so that evil itself, greater than ever before, continues its legacy. He goes on to speak out against the new entourage of the president, who have replaced the former group in which he saw hope for a better society.

L. Saraskina asserts from hindsight that the same pattern as Dostoevsky revealed in The Devils occurred with glasnost- the idealist liberals, who possessed noble, beautiful ideas, but who were weak and ineffectual, were replaced by men of action, pragmatists with no morals. She was amongst the reformers, now swept aside by the new leadership- the Peters destroying all the old ideals. Karyakin too regards glasnost as another failed revolution in which evil gained the upper hand over ideals, and continues its legacy into the future. Russia, according to them, is once again in the grip of "devils".

4.2.2.6. Opposition to the "New" Socialism

Despite the support that the glasnost reforms enjoyed amongst certain representatives of the literary intelligentsia, a significant amount of opposition and even hostility towards the new policies also came to light in other literary critics' analyses of The Devils. For while the nationalists strongly endorsed the policy of greater openness, they also played a prominent role in opposing the orientation

undertaken by the glasnost party leadership.

While previously some nationalist critics had shown communist sympathies, or had at least sympathised with the village version of Leninism, there was now a complete rejection of socialism as incompatible with the people's interests and values. These critics had little faith in the latest ideological shift. They regarded the new policies and plans for a new brand of socialism as yet another attempt to forcefully organise Soviet society according to a rationally calculated schema, which, as before, was based on a disregard for the Russian people and scorn of spiritual matters, and so was doomed to catastrophe. Seeing little hope for real change in these political strategies, they expressed their belief that the very basis of Russian society needed to be altered according to Russian spiritual traditions and values.

S. Semenova polemicises with glasnost, perceiving it to be another ideological manoeuvre with the purpose of organising society according to the will of those in power[192]. She expresses her opposition to this latest attempt to mould man into a rationally perfected society through her interpretation of The Devils. She says that Dostoevsky shows how the depth of man's spiritual irrationality is such that he cannot be brought to a contented settlement in the "crystal palace". He foresaw this inclination to mould mankind into a harmonious form as ominous, for it meant reducing him to a more elementary mental and spiritual level, pruning him. According to her, this theory triumphs in The Devils with Shigalev's proposal to create out of 9/10ths of humanity a new breed of people, reduced to happy, peaceful, debilitated slaves who will act like a herd with perfect obedience, without consciousness of good and evil. This anthill appears as the most automatically functioning type of organisation of humanity. She claims that Dostoevsky makes a statement against systems of all sorts, and the temptation to live by formulae, and that perhaps no-one as concertedly as he warned against hopes of man's nature being inclined towards illumination and progress.

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[192] "Vysshaya ideya sushchestvovaniya" u Dostoevskogo', Voprosy Literatury, November 1988.

Semenova discredits the bright hopes of the democrat intelligentsia. She states that it is evident in the present century that there is a crisis in humanism, such as Dostoevsky predicted in theory. Historical experience has revealed the scope of the terrible illusion of the ideal that proclaims to act in the interests of society and mankind. She goes on to discuss the concept of nature in Dostoevsky's creation in its symbolic meaning, and in particular, the images of "the feast of life" and "the rejected man". She speaks of Stavrogin's vision recounted in his confession, of the harmony of man and the world. This at first appears to be that special kind of joyous, paradisiacal landscape that appears to Dostoevsky's heroes as the image of the possibility of a transformed world, when the character breaks free from studied concepts and automised behaviour, but Stavrogin's reawakening is accompanied by the vision of the red spider, a vision of evil and nature's signal that things will never be fulfilled in the world without a radical transformation of this same nature. Stavrogin, she asserts, has subconsciously become aware that this dream of the "Golden Age" rests on the rotten root of human nature, the law of selfishness and voluptuousness. In Stavrogin's vision, it is sunset and the people are alone, giving it a sort of endless sadness associated with the hopeless incompletion of life. Thus, Semenova concludes, the idealistic dream of the brotherly unity of all creatures is overshadowed by the aspect of man's rebellion against the natural order of existence. Semenova's analysis displays a shift from a social to a metaphysical explanation for the evil in man's society, for its imperfections, which cannot be cured by a rationally planned reorganisation of society. To her, changes must occur on a spiritual level, before there is hope of the utopia of peace and harmony. While man rebels against the order of things and nature, there can be no hope for the creation of a perfect society, and indeed, all attempts to externally and forcefully mould man into a new form of organisation, instead of being achieved for the good of man, can only be achieved at the expense of man.

In her article published in Literaturnaya Gazeta in December 1991[193], Semenova

[193]"Nuzhny li nam absolyuty?"

again speaks out against the present tendency to totally disregard spiritual aspects. She reduces literary discussion to the fight against the "new Russians" who show business-orientated values and interests. She declares that a solid middle-class rehabilitation is taking place that cherishes and fosters only earthly life, guarding it against idealists who threaten it with all kinds of absolutes, but that this moderate rehabilitation also leads to an absolute in its emphasis on "this and only this". Its representatives vigilantly hunt for those guilty, not only of communist ideas, but also of raising any higher ideas, or questions about a special meaning to life, temptations which often languish in philosophy and literature. And already, she declares, the great Russian classical tradition in its branch from Gogol to Dostoevsky, has been revealed by such people to be incompatible with "freedom and democracy", as the special "totalitarian nucleus" around which all that is harmfully, archaically conservative can gather, even in the present situation. They affirm that too much in this literature is tainted with metaphysics- God, grace, resurrection, which too easily change to Party and communism. She criticises this liberal insistence on the concrete, clearly practical, normal and human, by stating that in the same way the socialists of the past didn't go in for transcendental ontological problems, but stuck to the most concrete practical matters, such as making bread and providing electricity. She thus regards the present-day liberals' scorn of spiritual concerns in favour of purely concrete practical concerns as being its own kind of ruthless absolute, comparable to that of the past Soviet regimes. She believes that there should be less emphasis on socio-economic matters, and more on metaphysical matters, for that is where man's roots lie.

N. Starobelskaya expresses her objection to the new path embarked upon by the Soviet regime through her critique of V.A. Tvardovsky's book on Dostoevsky[194]. Although she begins by praising the author for not having written this book for the sake of the news of the day, and condemning the present day tendency by which Dostoevsky's philosophical heritage is persistently being reduced to his revolutionary prophecies, expressed in The Devils, she too draws analogies

[194] Literaturnoe Obozrenive, 1991, p. 79.

between this novel and the present, in which she sees much that is disconcerting. She asserts that the present is beginning to resemble ever more closely the events described in the novel, making one think of the "Group of Five" who spread sedition, having slandered, simplified, and trivialised the whole past. She contemporises the novel's message to criticise the present "devils" of glasnost. Today too, she claims, everything that was until recently accepted and extolled, either by faith or by habit, is being repudiated with much emotion, but without superfluous thought. She quotes Tvardovsky's words on the characteristics of their forefathers' era that gave birth to the revolt: '"the general underdevelopment of the socio-political life of the country, the intellectual forces by which an agreement of opinion had been taught for decades, the reaction of glasnost, engendered its own kind of intolerance and ideological divergencies"', and she exclaims: "How little has changed over a hundred years on so! for these words are as if about us, the contemporaries"[195]. She thus expresses her dissatisfaction with the present tendencies in society- they too have rejected their past and now show great intolerance. She sees a cycle being repeated, which can only end in disaster.

D. Urnov uses the "message" of The Devils to criticise the initiators of glasnost - the liberal intelligentsia who took up the cause of change, and who perceive their contemporary role to be progressive[196]. He declares that they argue as if Dostoevsky were on their side, but he was against them, for he was against progressive people. Indeed, Urnov asserts, progressive people and ideas were the basic object of the great writer's criticism in his works. Such thinkers regard The Devils as an accusation directed at the Revolutionary Democrats for the horrors of the revolution, but, he points out, before one gets as far as Nechaevism, the whole of society is subjected to a total, systematic criticism, starting from the top: the free-thinking well-intentioned protests among the authorities, the suffering prophet, the sacred intelligentsia, and the progressive writer-half-emigrant, who as a result of these harmful circumstances propagates Nechaevism. The Devils, he

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[195] p. 79.

[196] Contribution to discussion on Yu. Karyakin's Dostoevsky and the Eve of the XXIst Century, Znamya, July 1990.

declares, is not a criticism of revolution in general, but of revolution begun from above, and caught up from below- it is the chopping off of that bough on which the "fathers of society" sit, trying to pass simultaneously as the pillars of order and the champions of change for the better. He thus expresses his own dissatisfaction with those at the spearhead of glasnost, who have begun the movement for change, but whose sincerity he doubts.

I. Rodionov also questions whether glasnost is truly in favour of, and not at the expense of the people[197]. He uses Dostoevsky's lessons to give his own warnings and criticism of the glasnost reforms. He declares that he doubts whether those who have undertaken to alter the world have clearly revealed on their banners, from where they will draw their arms: the people. He says that Peter Verkhovensky in The Devils, who undertook the same feat, gave away his thinking in spurts: that the people are silently being destroyed. And, Rodionov continues, a devil though he might have been, Peter did not talk about "a hundred million economic units", but about the people in their humble nakedness. In this, he asserts, Verkhovensky can be distinguished from our blind critics, who when they say "let us save or destroy the people" most often mean precisely "a hundred million economic units"[198]. He is wary of the newly proclaimed freedom, for he believes that people have not learned how to use it. Dostoevsky, he affirms, wrote that there is no more tormenting anxiety to man than freedom, and the minute he acquires it, he strives to pass it on to someone else. In truth, Rodionov declares, only he is free in whom there is strong spiritual power and whose conscience is at peace. Freedom, if it simply arrives, leads the unprepared into the temptation of transmutation into a higher quality, but, as Dostoevsky said, man is not made at once, but must be made up to a man, which requires discipline upon yourself. This, says Rodionov, is repudiated by the contemporary thinkers. They call for the end of despotism and for freedom, but freedom only leads the huge majority to servility before a foreign thinking. According to him, present-day free-thinking, or rather,

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[197]"O narode i svobode", Moskva, September 1990.

[198]p. 190.

glasnost, is only the relatively free speaking of words and by no means the emergence of free thought. This epoch, he says, has been outlined beforehand, pre-planned, and consequently is limited by the petty experience of people. As Dostoevsky said, truly free ideas live unconsciously in popular life and are only strongly felt, but one day will be too powerful to contain, and then this higher thought and word will be expressed, even if it is by the poorest, most inconspicuous people, living in persecution and obscurity. This is a true pluralism of opinions[199]. He sees the new society as having been planned despite the people, not by or for them, and thus as superficial and doomed to failure. True harmony can only be attained through a sincere regard for the people.

Many Russians feared the much publicised plans for the reconstruction of society through a transformed socialism, based on freer economic policies and the acceleration of scientific-technological progress. There was a profound distrust of "science", and all that it brings to society, and of any schema for the creation of a new society that is based on reason alone. They believed that this latest rational construction would lead to the final destruction of the people's traditions and values, and moral disintegration.

Yu. Davidov refers to Dostoevsky's insights, as presented in The Devils, in his discussion of the problems of democracy experienced by the West and now menacing Russia[200]. Basing his discussion on many of the ideas of the American scholar R.P. Warren, from whom he believes the Russians could learn a lot, he states that in today's world where science, technology and "large-scale" organisation predominate, many difficulties lie in wait for democracy. These forces are promoting an image of life in the contemporary world that levels out differences, smooths away the individual features of people, and are turning society into a simple mechanism for the support of order and the gratification of

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[199] p. 191.

[200] "Literatura i demokratiya", Voprosy Literatury, December 1985.

peoples' physical requirements[201]. And, he asserts, where the real differences between individualities are lost, the real community of people also disappears. He believes that technology, together with natural science and capital lead to the withering of human life and interhuman relations. The business culture, according to him, is based on principles of rationalisation and calculation, and the belief that everything is for sale. Davidov acknowledges that man is obliged to technology for the comfort that he now enjoys, but asserts that he has had to pay for this gift with an estrangement from nature, and by the atrophy of his spontaneous side, his feelings. He continues that it is peculiar to democracy to glorify the "common", the "ordinary man", not in accordance with Christian principles, but as a pompous aspiration to raise this "ordinariness" to a norm and even an ideal. From Dostoevsky's time, he claims, this aspiration has received a name that Warren also knows: "Shigalevism", from the name of one of "the devils". He declares that Warren is justified in fearing the orientation he perceives towards a "mechanical levelling", especially as it corresponds to the standardizing-equalizing aspiration of "mass society", formed by a highly developed "industrial culture". Davidov claims that Warren's antagonism towards this shigaleveresque inclination- the inclination of the democratic soul towards the "Divine Minimum"- is evident. He is opposed to shigalevism, the "devils" of levelling and equalizing, as well as all forms of social setting apart and division, and the aspiration of any social group that considers itself to be an elite, such as the elites of the scientific, technical and political order. These undertake as their task to make mankind happy (and which elite does not justify the "particularity" of its existence with such goals?), and elaborate for themselves a certain special morality, which they then advance to the place of universal norms and values. He claims that organisation "from above" is always linked to the danger of authoritarianism and totalitarianism. Davidov asserts that despite everything, R.P. Warren is not pessimistic, but hopes that all is not lost, that the "authoritarian personality" does not yet prevail everywhere, and that the prospect remains of a democratic future in the development of contemporary society. Davidov clearly opposes the idealism and bright dreams of democracy

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[201] p. 124.

amongst the glasnost supporters with the image of Dostoevsky's "shigalevism".

In his contribution to the discussion on Yuri Karyakin's book, Dostoevsky and the Eve of the XXIst Century[202], Yu. V. Davidov again expresses his scepticism over the new order and the promises for reform which appear superficial. He says that despite evidence of Nechaevism having been exposed in both the revolution and subsequent Soviet regimes, not all of the Russian intelligentsia are willing to truly repent. Only very few do so with sincerity.

The new economic policies engendered by perestroika aroused antagonism amongst many Soviet citizens, who saw in the changes orientated towards a free market system and private enterprise, the infiltration of Western values and capitalism, the return, sanctioned by the Party leadership, of the "bourgeois evil". There were thus renewed attacks on materialist, individualist "bourgeois" society, which brings only social ills, not reforms, and which leads to the moral decay of the personality and of the whole society. While "democrats" tended to ignore Dostoevsky's anti-bourgeois statements, these were highlighted by those who feared that Russia was now embarking on the path of the capitalist West, which would lead to the destruction of the people's values, traditions, morality and spirituality.

N. Mekhed expresses strong anti-bourgeois views in his analysis of Dostoevsky's work[203]. His critique displays the typical methodology and approach of Marxist-Leninist criticism which sees socio-economic factors as determining all man's actions. He interprets those characters of Dostoevsky that display some kind of moral deviation as historically concrete moral-psychological phenomena. According to him, Dostoevsky examined this "sickliness" of the consciousness as a plague of society at a given stage of its historical development. It appears in the form of

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[202] Znamya, July 1990.

[203] "Khudozhestvenniye otkrytiya kak obyekt eticheskogo issledovaniya", Voprosy Filosofii, no. 6, 1986, pp. 75-84.

the extravagant "experimentisation" on morality, to which the personality is drawn in the conditions of contemporary civilisation. This "experimentisation" is caused by social factors, and its variations are classified by Dostoevsky in a typological system, into which the principle characters of The Devils can undoubtedly be fitted. The first group, consists of those experimental attempts to confirm the principle "all is permitted", when the personality, rebelling against the inhumanity of the conditions of life, in a rational, nihilistic manner, believes he has a "right" to take revenge on society, and resorts to the most extreme forms of struggle against social evil. This protest of the personality, he says, bears within itself the imprint of bourgeois individualism and egoism. To the second group belong the personality's attempts to attain, by sticking to a fully directed programme, a degree of power that would allow him absolute independence of the hated society. He counts on, systematically using this logic, overcoming the socio-historical laws pressing down on him. To a third group belongs the personality that flees from reality of social relations into a special world constructed by his consciousness-rebellion in the form of a passive departure. Mekhed states that Dostoevsky believed that man's sickly consciousness is marked by the hypertrophy of his rational side which leads to these experiments. Dostoevsky aspires, according to him, to protect human society against the nihilistic encroachment of theoretician-experimentalists, who in general refute any kind of moral law. Mekhed further affirms that in the writer's image of mankind's movement along the stages of historical development, we can pick out the adjoining and mutually exclusive stages of "patriarchality" and "civilisation". In the initial patriarchal state, the life of society is characterised by the collectiveness of the forms of organisation. Man in this period lives harmoniously, and the personality does not separate itself from the "communal", his psychology is one of "mass consciousness". Then came the progressive time, civilisation, and with it the development of personal consciousness and the repudiation of spontaneous laws. Man acquired a hostile, refuting attitude towards everything. The fanatical, grotesquely misshapen peculiarities of the personality's moral, psychological make-up, correspond to this stage of "civilisation," which Dostoevsky constantly links with the historical bourgeois type of social organisation. Mekhed claims that Dostoevsky saw man as

a creature in transition, and made a simple conclusion that there is no real essence to the renewal of society on new beginnings, to revolution, but only the victory of one powerful class of society over others, with the conquerors later turning out to be only worse than those whose place they occupied. In the bourgeois stage of social development, the distinguishing feature of the new "detached individual" is the reinforced sense of self-preservation- he demands his rights with sword in hand; and a strengthened consciousness of the "clever man". This personality, having separated itself from the masses, is a sickly, suffering being, morally and psychologically isolated, socially alienated. Mekhed states that contemporary ethical science owes much to classical literature for the elaboration of an empirical model of the phenomena of "deviant" behaviours. Dostoevsky's contributions lie in the consideration of moral consciousness in the conditions of bourgeois society. Mekhed thus regards "civilising" policies as destructive to the ideal, communal, traditional form of social organisation, and bourgeois society as engendering a sickly consciousness, caused by man's refutation of the reality that surrounds him. It brings not harmony, but alienation of the individual.

The anti-reformists, seeing little change from past socialist eras, questioned the reformers' motives. In general they believed that the reform process was being enacted for the sake of personal gain, without a real understanding of the people's needs, and thus could not bring the peace and prosperity that was promised. They saw themselves as the spokesmen of the people whose interests were once again being disregarded by the Soviet leadership. V. Mikhnyukevich claims that there is one series of thoughts in The Devils that is particularly pertinent in the present times: "Until the forces that lay claim to the leadership of society cease to regard the popular mass only as a means to the attainment of their goals, until they begin to see the present and future society through the prism of the people's ideas, and until they amalgamate with the people in a united moral sentiment, they will not be able to provide social stability, and to protect society and themselves from a terrible shock"[204]. He studies the presence of folkloric motifs in The Devils as a

[204]"Folklor v Besakh F.M. Dostoevskogo", Russkaya Literatura, no. 4, 1991, p. 18.

means to revealing the author's thinking. He asserts that the speech of the radicals and liberals, of all the "leftists" in the novel is often clearly folkloric, and that this saturation with folkloric speech exposes the illusoriness of an imaginary knowledge of the people by those who place themselves at the head of the movement in their interests, but who help political extremists to the throne of power.

B. Tarasov's article on The Devils, "Eternal warning, The Devils and contemporary times"[205], represents a thorough criticism of almost all aspects of the reform process, appearing as a succinct summary of the views of many of glasnost and perestroika's detractors. He sees the glasnost and perestroika reforms as a dangerous experiment that will surely follow the path revealed by Dostoevsky in this novel. He begins his article on The Devils with the assertion that it is too simplistic to blame the bloody realities of the past on the evil intentions of one man or group, for this leads away from the real roots of destructive phenomena. In general, he continues, attempts to explain the tragedy of Russian history fall on the bloodthirsty leader, Stalin, and an analysis of the principal laws of the crimes that occurred is neglected. Most important, Tarasov says, is to decipher the principles of the evolution of utopia to terror, the secret metamorphosis of humanist ideas, the degeneration of love for mankind into hatred towards it. Several spiritually talented Russian writers, Dostoevsky foremost amongst them, in the previous century perceived the general course and results of "schematic" experiments". Indeed, in Tarasov's opinion, this great writer's philosophical logic remains until the present an indispensable examination of all good ideas which through unexpected reorganisation, can lead to unforeseen evil. He refers to the present-day wave of alarmists announcing the onslaught of an ecological cataclysm and a nuclear apocalypse, calling for the end of the arms race and the suicidal polluting of the world, and says that Dostoevsky cautioned against unrealistic notions of changing the world. He foresaw in advance the course of various ideas and the danger of a monolithic control over social problems hastening the final fall into the chasm. Tarasov then evokes other aspects of the contemporary reform policies in which

[205] Novii Mir, August 1991.

he foresees danger, and about which, he says, we must consult Dostoevsky. The trade and financial sphere and the free market are now, the critic declares, regarded as a direct route to material prosperity. Dostoevsky, he asserts, believed that the supremacy of the financial-trade absolute leads to the emergence of cunning, sharp-minded people whose activities, together with material-technological progress, cause a radical confusion of the hierarchy of values. Dostoevsky realised that money takes away peoples' freedom and will, conscience and love, alienating them from one another, and that the quick, full satiating of one's desires, chains man to the narrow sphere of augmenting his material existence, cultivating various pleasurable sensations and senseless desires. People become incapable of self-sacrificing love, fall into isolation and become slaves to the gratification of their own countless desires, dimming the possibility of the achievement of the brotherhood of mankind in the world. A second aspect of the reform process, Tarasov says, is the steps being made towards overcoming judicial nihilism, guaranteeing the rights of man and building a just state. Here too, he finds Dostoevsky to be on his side against the reformers. The writer, he states, had sharp words about how true justice and conscience do not always coincide with the formal justice of the judicial system. Tarasov declares that it would be naive and incorrect to suggest that Dostoevsky was the opponent of a legal system, material prosperity, or the co-existence of people, and "occupied, in today's jargon, an anti-perestroika position"[205], but it is clear that the writer believed that these must not be seen as the panacea for all troubles and, especially, for an inadequate spiritual and moral soundness.

Tarasov asserts that according to Dostoevsky's logic, scientific, technical and legislative progress only provide an outward appearance of material well-being, not a transformation of the inner world, of the spiritual, psychological nucleus of man This is where ambition, vanity and envy are rooted, and it is therefore utopian to think that material progress will create a moral foundation for life. Tarasov equates

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[205] p. 236.

"bloody totalitarianism" and "consumer democratic despotism"[207]. He says that despite their apparent dissimilarities, the latter, as is made evident in the present day moral, psychological, cultural, ecological, demographic crises, is an identical dead-end variant of human development. And, he continues, when reflecting on such paradoxes as extreme democracy engendering extreme despotism, and scientific and technological progress being accompanied by spiritual, moral disintegration, it is imperative that one make use of the concrete lessons contained in the novel The Devils. In this novel, Dostoevsky shows us the submerged parts of the iceberg, so that the genealogy of the Nechaevists is revealed to be, not a tragic historical mistake, but in accordance with certain links and transitions that have not lost their actuality. He states: "It can be certified that our everyday life is literally overpopulated with the multi-faceted heroes of The Devils", although some of these, in the fervent search for the truth and the sincere desire for progressive change, are unaware that they are caught in the whirlpool of the "possessed". "A reading of the novel today gives one the impression that nothing has changed in essence, only the decorations and costumes have been updated."[208] Thus, he declares, Dostoevsky's thoughts in this novel can help guide one through the labyrinth of obscure ideas and doubtful values- they are a true examination of present-day goals and tasks. He emphasises that although the Nechaev affair, whose task was that of complete universal, ruthless destruction, using any means available, forms the factual basis of the novel, Dostoevsky admitted that he wished to pose the question of how, in a transitional society are possible, not simply a Nechaev, but Nechaevs, who are able to recruit followers.

Dostoevsky, according to Tarasov, reveals and warns against an inevitable process: the transformation of majestic "new ideas" into horror, chaos and destruction. The root of this lies in the tendency of the seekers of a just social structure to ignore the extra-rational peculiarities of mankind's existence, and in the conviction that since there is nothing sacred, everything goes. Thus, Tarasov says, according to

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[207] p. 237.

[208] p. 238.

Dostoevsky, the unavoidable deterioration of "magnanimous ideas"[209] can be explained by their moral poverty. It is because of this that they lead to terrible violence, spying and constant control by the most despotic powers. A rational socio-economic system, Tarasov claims, does not correspond to the living process of living life, and the only brotherhood that will be created will be one in which are visible the heights of egoism, inhumanity, economic confusion, and the suppression of human values. The leaders, portrayed in the figure of Peter Verkhovensky, make use of the weaknesses of human nature in order to attain, under the cloak of good intentions, their own ambitious goals. To them, the people are material to be moulded, as is revealed by the devilishness of Shigalev, who advocates methodical despotism, spiritual and physical suppression. Many other strata of society are drawn into the magnetic field of the "chief devils": the retrogrades of the liberalising governess Lembke, the westerniser writer, Karmazinov, the robber Fedka, the fool-playing Captain Lebyadkin, and the full-of-bright-hopes Virginsky[210]. These dissimilar characters, Tarasov states, are united by their spiritual fragility. The "father", Stepan Verkhovensky, looks on in confusion, unable to comprehend the laws by which the abstract, undefined, humanist ideas that he preached were altered and degraded. Tarasov reveals, as a lesson to contemporary Russia, the truth opened up with striking sensitivity by Dostoevsky in The Devils: how the "great idea" falls onto the street, into the hands of scoundrels, because of its ontological and moral emptiness, abstractness and contradiction to human nature and history.

Tarasov also criticises the contemporary enthusiasm for science, saying that almost all the nihilists in Dostoevsky's novel call for positive sciences in their work, finding in them support for all their actions, including the murder of Shatov. For Dostoevsky, he declares, there was no doubt that "utility", "science" and "progress" are fraught with "disintegration", "insanity" and "apocalypse", as is

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[209] p. 240.

[210] p. 242.

shown in The Devils[211]. He concludes with a discussion of the novel's epilogue, in which, he believes, is offered some guide to the future path to be taken. The image of the "open road" along which the old Verkhovensky sets out, abandoning a world which seems to have lost its senses and which is captivated by devils, seems to Tarasov to promise a recovery from the illness for future generations, if they turn away from their fathers' militant atheism, illusory utopias and enforced change, towards their grandfathers' road of the genuine unity of people. The critic thus clearly expresses opposition to the new reforms in all areas of society: free enterprise, the emphasis on scientific and technological progress, the obsession with material prosperity, the new judicial system, all of which he believes to have led men away from truly important concerns. In his opinion, Dostoevsky would have warned against these changes, for he warned in The Devils against all rational schemas for the transformation of society. He sees already in the new democracy the buds of extreme despotism and totalitarianism. The new solutions are no better than previous ones, but will lead to the same moral corruption. Once again the noble, ideals of the "fathers" will inevitably be transformed into cruelty and violence. He announces a prophecy of doom for the reforms of glasnost and perestroika.

In another article[212], B. Tarasov again expresses his anxiety over the course of the reforms, repeating many of the ideas discussed above. He once again actualises Dostoevsky's words and takes them as guidance in the glasnost era. He is worried by the growth of materialism, of a concern for economic prosperity, and by the loss of faith and tradition. Declaring Dostoevsky's writings to be an insufficiently assimilated lesson, he points out that the writer understood only too well the conditions whereby the development of the bourgeois individualist supplants the traditional spiritual moral values, permitting the growth of the selfish practicism of the business people. He states that Dostoevsky understood how an unstable transition period leads to the disintegration of the family, suicide and

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[211] p. 246.

[212] "Urok iz klassiki. Dostoevsky i sovremennost", Moskva, May 1989.

drunkenness. According to Tarasov, the writer was saddened by the intelligentsia's estrangement from the people, the ideological bankruptcy of "old beliefs" and the theoretical narrowness of the "new". Dostoevsky opposed rectilinear solutions of any kind- those of the "old" conservatives and of the "young" liberals. While theoreticians pushed physical well-being to the foreground, convinced that this would serve as a foundation for the upliftment and ennoblement of life, to Dostoevsky, this was one of the principal reasons for "confusion" in society. Tarasov draws parallels between Dostoevsky's insights into his contemporary reality and the present conditions of Soviet society, saying that these thoughts make one think about the concern with materialism in recent times, about the discussion about the genuine and the sham. In his opinion, the writer's reflections of a century ago outstrip those of recent authors, who often present solutions that come down to the accelerated satiation of the people's material demands, seen as a means towards the improvement of relations between people. However, in Dostoevsky's thinking, this does not liberate man's consciousness from worry, it does not make him righteous, but transforms him into a slave. He noticed, says Tarasov, how in Russia people ever increasingly bowed to money and how the desire for acquisition captured all spheres of life. The writer was worried by the fact that those considered to be the "better" people included not only the manufacturers and merchants, but also men of science and enlightenment, while he believed that "the educated man is not always an honest man", and "science does not guarantee valour in man". This, in Dostoevsky's opinion, leads to the appearance of highly educated and cunning monsters with a thirst for intrigue and power, often hidden beneath the most decent forms of egotistical hypocrisy, prestigious forms of activity and even people-loving ideas and sincere lies. He saw the sincere lie, which distorts the concepts of good and evil, in the unbridled hopes of the contemporary progressives who placed their hopes for a movement towards universal brotherhood on the progress of culture and civilisation. These ideas, Tarasov affirms, not having sufficient spiritual foundation, threaten to turn into barbarism.

Dostoevsky, he says, thus believed that one must evaluate beforehand the possible

future course of an affair, to establish whether it is really bringing the better and not the worse. The aspiration to achieve a universal harmony from without necessitates violence, espionage and ceaseless control by the most despotic power, its moral bankruptcy and root in egoism and inhumanity are inevitably revealed. The nobility of good intentions can be distorted, according to Dostoevsky, by hastiness in conclusions accompanied by the rejection of thousands of years of traditions, values and popular ideas. Ideas that are at their origin noble, often fall into the street, amongst "swindlers trading liberalism". Tarasov states that Dostoevsky's multi-faceted analysis shows that not utopian theories, not civilisation, not democracy, not the equal possibility for all to "eat, drink, and be merry", will move man to fraternal love; on the contrary, evil and egoism will adapt themselves to the new conditions, become more refined, and consequently more dangerous. This is the warning that he wishes the new leadership to heed.

Dostoevsky, Tarasov continues, saw the cause of the growing atmosphere of nihilism, materialism, and scepticism, the adoration of gratuitous gain in the loss of age-old ideals. He also saw the lack of a uniting higher idea as the cause for the dissension between fathers and sons. He thus proposed personal self-perfection as the beginning to everything, linking the genuine flourishing of society to the inner organisation of its citizens. If one scorns this first step, economic reform will be weakened, for it will only reproduce the existing in a slightly renovated reform. According to Tarasov, Dostoevsky believed that temporary consolations and economic prosperity do not lead to a truly civic moral order, but engender disorder and the decomposition of society. Several of man's principles need to be changed completely, for only if conditions are created for the preservation of popular ideals and traditions, will better people be formed and the discords between various strata of society be resolved, permitting the creation of a genuine democracy. Then the present reality with its pressing economic problems will also without fail be changed for the better, not cosmetically, but radically according to the new principle. Tarasov says that Dostoevsky emphasised that a fruitful result depends not on a correct financial calculation, or the activity of the mythical "new man",

but on the noble human material that is constantly growing from the ancient roots and unbroken spiritual traditions.

B. Tarasov, through his interpretation of Dostoevsky's lessons, speaks out against short-sighted superficial reforms, which will not bring happiness and harmony. He regards Dostoevsky's writings concerning his contemporary society as a pertinent lesson in the present situation in Russia, where changes to the old way of life are being carried out far too precipitously. He foresees nothing but Russia's ruin in the new policies of the reformists.

4.2.3 Religion

After the formation of the USSR in 1917, the question of religion became exceedingly problematic in Russia, as its teachings are essentially incompatible with Marxist-Leninist ideology which henceforth ruled all spheres of life. This ideology regards itself as providing people with the truth as opposed to the false consciousness engendered by religion. Religion was equated with sedition, a display of anti-communism, and was actively discouraged. The treatment of such questions in literature, became one of the most polemical aspects of literary scholarship, and inevitably also of Dostoevsky scholarship. Despite the brief vogue for metaphysical, religious-orientated interpretations of Dostoevsky's work by the "mystics" during the relatively free period of the 1920s, the policies of the Stalinist regime soon "cleansed" Soviet literary criticism of this "heretical" work, which was declared to be directly hostile to Marxist criticism and the theories of socialist realism. Because of its antithetical relationship to the ruling ideology, the question of religious faith acquired a political nuance under the Soviet regime, and indeed right up to and throughout the glasnost era it could not be completely separated from political issues.

Dostoevsky scholarship reflected the general trends in the official approach to religion in the Soviet Union. It was only in the late 1970s and early 1980s that there was evidence of a consideration of religious questions in Dostoevsky's work that was not completely negative and condemnatory, although it certainly could

not be construed as positive either. A new approach was adopted by which the religious nature of these questions was completely toned down. This change came as a reaction to the revival of religious sympathies amongst young Soviet citizens, which greatly alarmed the leadership. In response, literary critics undertook a re-evaluation of faith and religion in Dostoevsky's writings. H. Mondry speaks of how during these years Dostoevsky's religion was part of the unacceptable aspects of his worldview that were ideologically neutralised, in order to rehabilitate the author[213]. Instead of admitting that Dostoevsky was a religious thinker, literary criticism demonstrated that the religious ideals of peace, brotherhood, and equality were none other than the ideas of Utopian socialism. The degree of the authors' religiousness was reduced by proving the pragmatism of his faith, and religion's essential incompatibility to Marxist-Leninist doctrine was ignored.

Inherent in the glasnost policies of openness, a pluralism of opinions and tolerance towards all views, was a new attitude towards religion- its persecution by previous regimes was officially criticised and for the first time it became openly permitted and accepted. Religious feelings and viewpoints could be expressed in the public media without fear of reprisal. Soon the Orthodox Church was returned to respectability, and even to a place of honour. These reform policies of the glasnost era provoked, or unleashed, a "religious revival". A tribune for the expression of religious ideas and sentiments was now willingly granted in Russian organs of mass information. This resulted in a wave of articles relating to religious topics being published in all the major journals, and a consideration of religious aspects entering into discussions of all topics.

These changes were reflected in literary criticism, and a new methodology soon developed in the interpretation of Dostoevsky's religion. His faith was no longer shown to be an inessential part of his world outlook, but as a fundamental aspect, as the basis for many of his other ideas and as central to his ideology. Many critics now emphasised his profound Christianity, instead of neutralising it, and, most

[213]Thesis, University of the Wiwatersrand, 1984.

importantly, it was regarded as a positive aspect of his world outlook. Whilst the Western conception of Dostoevsky as a religious thinker and a mystic had formerly been stringently refuted, and branded as "bourgeois", this was now widely accepted amongst Soviet critics of differing world outlooks. Religious themes and "messages" became the focus of attention of many Dostoevsky scholars, and the works of the previously condemned "metaphysical" writers such as K. Leontiev and N. Berdyaev were rehabilitated and widely published.

A few commentators, such as V. Dneprov, continued the old Soviet strategy of denying the importance of the "spiritual" tradition in Russian philosophy and literature[214]. He asserts that there is nothing more false than the tendency to proclaim the religious morality of Dostoevsky and Tolstoy to be the principal philosophical tradition of Russian literature. He praises Chekhov and Pushkin, whom he opposes to these two writers, for the fact that in their creation beauty and harmony are united with a morality, originating not from God, but from man. He declares that the notion held by Dostoevsky that good needs God, is absurd[215]. Chekhov does without religious phantoms and idealistic chimeras, believing in man, and opposing Dostoevsky's "if there is no God, then all is permitted" with the belief that once there is no God, then morality, like everything else, can be achieved only from human life, reason, science[216]. The critic shudders at the way "certain of our philosophising litterateurs with full seriousness" translate Dostoevsky's and Tolstoy's points of view into contemporary language. To him, the truth of the real God must not be sought in Dostoevsky, whom many see as a prophet who would replace the social revolution with a religious one, but in science. The religious movement, according to him, is an outburst of prejudices, a vain attempt to revitalize, to rouse that which is dying in the new Russia. "It is highly regrettable that even in our days there are philosophising litterateurs, who find in Dostoevsky and Tolstoy the origin of

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[214]"Ateizm Chekhova", Zvezda, August 1988.

[215]p. 193.

[216]p. 194.

absolute morality"[217]. He claims that the quest for an absolute morality of timeless norms, necessarily becomes an irreconcilable contradiction to all that is known about nature, society, the human personality.

However, in general, commentators and litterateurs, eagerly took advantage of the new freedom in order to reinstate religion's place in Russia. A.V. Mikhailov[218] points to an interesting manifestation of this new religious fervour: it was formerly forbidden to print the word "god" and other religious terms in Dostoevsky's works with a capital letter, the word having acquired a political meaning; and now, with the new flourishing of religion, the opposite tendency can be seen: to always write "God" with a capital letter, even when the author did not do so.

Thus, during the glasnost era, a large number of religious interpretations of Dostoevsky's ideas and work were published in literary journals and newspapers. The religious views expressed by critics in these articles were often an integral part to their overall ideology, being linked to their ideas on economic, political and social matters.

4.2.3.1. Dostoevsky the Religious Thinker

Although Dostoevsky's attitude towards religion prior to his arrest is vague and inconsistent, there is no doubt that he emerged from his experience of penal servitude in Siberia as a religious thinker. The only book he was permitted to read during this time was the Bible and he often spoke of the strength and courage that he drew from it. His religious belief deepened during his mature years and he became increasingly convinced that Russian Orthodoxy was the only true religion, being the only religion that had preserved the ideals of Christ in all their purity. His writings contain criticism of both those of no faith and those of other faiths, even Catholicism. He considered this to have perverted the true way of Christ by linking

[217] p. 196.

[218] "K novomu Dostoevskomu", Nash Sovremennik, March 1991.

religion and politics. To the Roman Catholic ideal of the Church as state, he opposed the Orthodox ideal of the state as Church.

Dostoevsky feared atheism as the greatest evil threatening Russia and mankind. In his view, this disbelief was the result of man's pride in being rational, for he allows reason to dominate the spirit, which senses the existence of God and immortality. Reason imprisons man in a system of logic that leads to a rejection of that which constitutes the foundation of the metaphysical. It is this belief in the infallibility of logic that is at the root of Shigalev's theories, which the confirmed atheist Peter in turn uses as the foundation for his revolutionary plans. The Devils shows how the rejection of the way of Christ, the God-man, leads to the idealisation of man, the way of the man-god. In Dostoevsky's opinion, such theories degrade and objectivise man, robbing him of the dignity that he acquires as a spiritual being. Kirillov commits suicide as the only means to affirm his own freedom in a world devoid of God. He wishes to kill his fear of death and thus to free mankind from God, to show that man is himself a god, but all he achieves is his own annihilation. Dostoevsky showed in such books as The Devils and The Brother Karamazov that once God and immortality have been refuted, all is permitted, and mankind tends towards violence and destruction.

Dostoevsky's national messianism was inseparable from his religious beliefs. His Orthodox Utopia, or "religious socialism" rested on the idea of a return to the people, to the native soil. Dostoevsky saw no hope for peace and harmony outside of religion. According to him it was the image of Christ and the faith in Christianity as it had been preserved in the peasant milieu that were central to Russia and her future. These ideals are expressed by Shatov in The Devils.

4.2.3.2. Glasnost and Religion.

The Soviet leadership that came to power in 1985 had a new approach to religion: a place was to be found for it within the socialist ideology. There were several reasons for this shift in attitude from previous regimes. The disastrous moral state

of Soviet society had led to the fear that there was truly no longer any moral orientation in the Russian nation. The morality by which "whatever is useful for the revolution is moral", had been discredited and the people needed a new morality into which they could put their faith. Furthermore, the "de-authoritisation" process meant that morality was no longer to be dictated from above and a new source of moral guidance had to be found, by which the people could be taught what was good, bad, necessary and not permitted. The new leadership realised that religion offers the moral guidelines necessary for society to work. A religious revival had begun among certain groups during the previous decade which had resurrected the idea of morality in its Christian meaning, lost after the revolution, and the glasnost supporters found a way of incorporating this revival into socialism. They were aware of a yearning for some sense of spirituality amongst the exhausted, disillusioned Soviet citizens whose material life brought them little joy. They saw that it was necessary to move away from purely materialistic, socialist, rationalistic concepts which no longer enjoyed general support, and to acknowledge the metaphysical, spiritual side of mankind. This would give the people a new source of hope, inspiration and encouragement in their suffering. Religion would also lend support to the new approach of "begin with yourself" which was essential for the success of the reforms.

With the rehabilitation of religion, came the rehabilitation of religious analysis in literary scholarship. Critics of the new era acknowledged that which Western criticism had long since accepted as undeniable: that Dostoevsky's works could not be thoroughly and credibly interpreted without taking into account his religious beliefs, which are at the root of many of his themes.

L. Saraskina, affirms the significant role of religion in the meaning and message of Dostoevsky's work, although she does not interpret it from a metaphysical point of view. She emphasises that the religious aspect of his work cannot be disregarded. In the Introduction to her book on The Devils[218], she quotes some

[218] Moscow, 1990.

words from the dying Stepan Verkhovensky that testify to man's need for the "boundlessly great", and points to Shatov's cry "I will believe in God", saying that without this, there are no Dostoevskian heroes, even Stavrogin. The most eternal Dostoevskian question is whether you believe or don't believe. She says that this is what gives The Devils its truly Dostoevskian co-ordinates. It is a novel about tormenting quests for God, about experiences of faith and love, about the ordeals of a rebellious soul. She states that after a first reading of The Devils, within the coordinates of the actual and the topical, must follow an understanding of the novel within the coordinates of eternity, as Dostoevsky understood it - from the position of Christian law. She thus shows that a true reading of Dostoevsky cannot remain on a purely social, material level, as the writer perceived life and man's struggle on a higher plane too.

Some "democrat" critics continued the prevalent tendency of the previous era by which Dostoevsky's religion was to a certain extent deprived of its mystical content, by placing the emphasis of their discussion on its humanist aspects. Religion, such critics showed, calls man to live according to certain ideals which are revealed to be the same as those encapsulated in the reform policies. Religion was in many cases reduced to moral questions. These critics showed that Dostoevsky saw the basic value of Christianity in its moral categories, and that his Christ is a symbol of the higher moral, towards which man and society must strive. Dostoevsky's religious morals and values are revealed to be those of the new Soviet society. There was no longer a total neutralisation of the metaphysical aspect of Dostoevsky's creation. Instead, "democrat" critics emphasised those aspects of his religious thinking that could best serve the needs the leadership and the purpose of glasnost. Religion was harnessed to the new ideology- it would work hand in hand with the aims of the glasnost reforms to create a new peaceful society. Critics used Dostoevsky's religion to help create the socialist ideal of man in the new era, and regarded the writer as supporting the ideals and values of the new government.

I.V. Inov takes a humanist approach to religion, regarding Dostoevsky's conception

of Christ as representing a moral ideal. In his discussion of the influence of Dostoevsky on Nezval[220], he declares that Nezval saw the image of the Christ of the new age in Dostoevsky's characters- the embodiment of all-saving compassion and brotherly love, the absorbing of God in man. However this God is not a supernatural being; he is man- compassionate, loving, courageous. Nezval, Inov says, sees Dostoevsky's choice of Christ as the only alternative to Kirillov and suicide as a way out of man's chaos. He believes that the moral lessons of Dostoevsky's Christianity are necessary for the functioning of society, but attempts to rob it of its mystical aspect, although this was essential to Dostoevsky's religious beliefs.

V. Viktorovich regards Dostoevsky's religion as an integral part of the writer's moral-ethical beliefs, and as guiding man towards the attainment of a better society[221]. He emphasises Dostoevsky's insistence on certain moral qualities towards which man should aspire, claiming that Dostoevsky understood the bringing of harmony to the world as a universal task that cannot be reduced to a resistance to evil, and which must begin with the people through education. Dostoevsky, he affirms, should be appreciated not as a mouthpiece for the political interests of some social grouping, but as the expounder of the striving of the human soul towards harmony. He desired a new society erected on the foundation of the ideal of the people, compassion and universality, Christian ethics, repentance and self-instruction. He searched for those points in which men of all tendencies could all be united and work together for a new society.

Many critics began to see spirituality as a new source of hope for the recovery of society. They declared that a higher meaning and goal to life was necessary for true harmony to be achieved, and that whilst the aims of glasnost were noble, they could not be achieved without the moral basis provided by religion.

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[220]"F.M. Dostoevsky v zhizni i tvorchestve V. Nezvala", Russkaya Literatura, no. 3, 1985.

[221]"Broshennoye semya vozrastet", escho raz o "zaveshchanii" Dostoevskogo', Voprosy Literatury, March 1991.

In his contribution to the discussion on Yuri Karyakin's book Dostoevsky and the Eve of the XXIst Century[222], I. Vinogradov speaks of the religious nature of Dostoevsky's creation as part of man's striving towards self-perfection and aspiration to create a better society. Dostoevsky's heroes, he states, are concerned with looking anew for answers to the meaning of life, and embark on a spiritual journey of regeneration from former "irreligious" convictions. The critic recognises the need for faith among the Russian people who no longer have anything to believe in. Dostoevsky, he says, is very actual for our times, for the situation of broken consciousness that he confronted in the 19th century, born in the spiritual vacuum of non-religiousness, is no less characteristic of our age. One cannot, in his opinion, resolve the sacred problems of human existence without turning to Dostoevsky's spiritual experience. Vinogradov says that Karyakin's world outlook follows Dostoevsky's Christianity for he too believes that certain fundamental values exist to which man and society must aspire- goodness, conscience, honesty, love, charity, compassion, etc. Vinogradov unites Dostoevsky's religious values with the reform process. Today, he declares, the writer's reflections are beginning to acquire an ever more urgent character, not only as the personal goal of each of us, but also as a social task. He asserts that there must be a spiritual foundation for the social construction that we intend to build and a choice of two principle means exists for this foundation: a set of absolute, indisputable norms of morality and values, having a religious sanction; or a conventional morality, a value system operating on the principle of social consensus. He declares that it seems impossible, given that the society in which we live, is practically non-religious, to build a "church" morality, for one cannot lead the majority, who are unbelievers, into religion by force with the severity with which Russians in their recent past were driven into ideology. But, on the other hand, Dostoevsky exposed all the dangerous destructive tendencies of a moral consciousness outside of religion and predicted the catastrophic consequences of the consolidation of such a consciousness. And indeed, he says, as Solzhenitsyn shows, Dostoevsky proved to be very astute in his understanding of the almost fatal unavoidability of the

[222] Znamya, July 1990.

phenomenon of "devilishness" in the attempts to build a moral society without God. According to him, in the present situation, one cannot avoid these questions if one truly desires the spiritual recovery of our country. The way appears to be opening in the conditions of the contemporary democratic state for the free development and influence on society of those religious spiritual movements, which are the most reliable foundation for social morality. I. Vinogradov clearly believes that a new society must be based on religious foundations if it is to succeed, for as Dostoevsky showed in The Devils, morality by convention tends towards catastrophe. Dostoevsky, according to him, warned against trying to create a just society without religion. He does not pose a formal church religion as the solution, but merely a spiritual, religious attitude towards the tackling of self- and social improvement. He supports glasnost as sees it and religion to be interdependent.

Some critics supporting the glasnost reform process, held even more deeply religious views, which they linked to political progress. They insisted on Dostoevsky's belief that religion holds the only hope for both man and society's redemption, for if man does not strive towards the ideal of Christ, the moral basis necessary for the creation of a harmonious society will never be achieved. Economic, political, and social reforms do not alter the essence of man, for man needs an image to follow and believe in. Christianity, according to them, provides the real ideals towards which man must aspire, ideals which are very close to those propagated by the reformists.

L. Rosenbloom, whose ideas mirror many of those of the reformers, shows how Dostoevsky's religious ideals were essentially turned towards the creation of an harmonious society. In his article '"Beauty will save the world", about 'the symbol of faith" of F.M. Dostoevsky'[223], he discusses the ideal of beauty in Dostoevsky's creation. According to him, the writer believed that the only hope for the salvation lay in the constant striving of man towards beauty, which in his

[223] Voprosy Literatury, December 1991.

works is shown to be linked to such conceptions as humility, love, truth, suffering, joy, happiness. Rosenbloom declares that Dostoevsky was inspired by the belief that it [not the direction of man's interests and activities that must change, but the very character of human society. This, the writer demonstrated, must not be achieved through revolutions such as the previous ones- physical and bloody, but through moral revolutions, where courage and sacrifice are necessary.

In his investigation into the real meaning of Dostoevsky's phrase, much popularised in the contemporary Russia, "beauty will save the world", he explains that this was essentially a Christian idea. This, he says, is confirmed in the rough notebooks for The Devils, for during his work on The Devils, Dostoevsky ever more persistently contemplated the problem of beauty. Dostoevsky believed that Christ is the ideal of beauty to the whole of mankind. In The Devils, Rosenbloom continues, one finds Shatov's discourse on the great moving force of the historical process, which he chooses to call "the search for God", as well as the image of Christ as the man-God. Dostoevsky shows, he says, that material beauty is not enough as an ideal for man, and that beauty as an aesthetic category, such as is propagated by both the liberal idealist, Stepan Verkhovensky and by his revolutionary son, Peter, cannot lead man to salvation, for only the search for God can do so. The author unmasks the nihilist aesthetic- Shigalev's plan for a future society where "Shakespeare will be made of stones". For Dostoevsky, he says, this is the insidious half-beauty of the Anti-Christ.

Rosenbloom expresses the realisation reached by the reformers that man needs an ideal, that morality dictated from above is not sufficient. In Dostoevsky's opinion, morality cannot be based on social and ideological criteria, but must be of a higher order. To him, the ideal of unconditional morality and the beginning of every moral idea, was Christ. The critic speaks of how in the preparatory work for the novel, the character that became Stavrogin explains to Shatov his belief that morality left to its own devices can be thoroughly perverted, and claims that although these notes did not enter into the finished text of The Devils, the ideas did, for the ideal of beauty in man's earthly journey became the "supertask" in Dostoevsky's work.

The writer reveals moments of happy contact with beauty as pledges for the future. However, Rosenbloom continues, Dostoevsky also shows that this journey is as a rule tragic because of the catastrophic situation of the world and the unjust social order, because of centuries of national, religious and political clashes, ideological errors, of disastrous attempts to thrust upon people a reorganisation of society on the basis of science and reason.

Rosenbloom sees the complete denial of religion as being responsible for many social ills and the return to religion as the way to the personal salvation of the individual, essential to the betterment of society. Tragedy, he says, is inherent in contemporary man in his loss of faith. Dostoevsky believed that there must be a voluntary, not dictated, return to Christianity. The image of beauty in Dostoevsky symbolises the highest moral aspiration along the path indicated by Christ. He asserts that the "living image" of beauty often appears at the most unexpected moments in Dostoevsky's creation, and gives as an example, the [illegible] of Marie to Shatov in The Devils and the birth of the baby, at a time when Shatov finds himself on the brink of an abyss. A real miracle takes place within his soul, and those who come into touch with this change in Shatov's life are themselves as if illuminated by it: Marie, Kirillov, Mrs. Virginsky. This genuine happiness that Shatov experiences is only found in striving towards people and God. Shatov, Rosenbloom asserts, has found the God whom he has so long and agonizingly sought, and realises that those whom he has deserted are the enemies of living life and freedom. Even the murder of Shatov, he affirms, cannot revoke the image of beauty created by the author. It only reveals in what brutally cruel circumstances beauty is doomed to exist in the world. Dostoevsky, he claims was not absolutely convinced that beauty would save the world, but deeply believed that if anything would save the world, it would be beauty, and that in the world there is only one truly beautiful figure- Christ. The path of beauty on earth is difficult, but it is the only saviour. It is not, in his view, isolated from the social, economic and political problems, and even imparts to the humdrum of daily life, a higher meaning and goal.

Rosenbloom finds a place for Christianity in socialism and shows through his interpretation of The Devils that the two are by no means diametrically opposed. He asserts that despite his polemics with the revolutionaries and socialists, Dostoevsky remained a dreamer of "the Golden Age". He acknowledged both his rupture with the ideas of his youth and his spiritual kinship with them, declaring that he is a socialist, but since his experience on the scaffold had changed his ideal as he had realised that there is nothing higher than the great idea of Christ; and that he still believed, although not in the commune, but in the Divine kingdom. He believed that Russia would be saved, that the kingdom of Christ would come to pass. In Rosenbloom's opinion, if Dostoevsky were to look at contemporary Russian life, in which it seems as though these prognoses have not come true, he would still bear hope, for he knew that suffering and ordeal are able to not only cripple, but also uplift the soul. The critic sees the salvation of Russia in that which Dostoevsky called beauty- the living image of Christ. Only through striving towards this ideal can economic, social and political problems be overcome, and a just society be created, for science and reason cannot produce true morality. He believes that socialist society should incorporate religion and its ideals in order to create a new society, and that the only way to achieve the final goals expressed in the concept of glasnost is through Christianity.

4.2.3.3. Russian Orthodoxy

Another group of scholars regarded the ideas and values being propagated by the leadership and its supporters as running counter to the ideals of Christianity. Not only was Communist ideology, whose disregard for religious faith they blamed for Russia's troubles in both the past and the present, not rejected outright, but many of its "reformed" aspects appeared to them to oppose Christ's teachings, to scorn the higher meaning and goals of life inherent in Christianity. They declared that it is only by turning wholeheartedly towards His ideals that Russia could be saved.

According to this group, atheism was not only the primary cause of the revolution but also the cause of the persistence of evil in Soviet society. They asserted that

the only truth and hope of salvation lay in Orthodoxy, in a strict, formal Church Christianity, a rigid, ritual faith. Many "patriot" opponents of the reform process asserted that an undefined, or humanist faith was not sufficient - the Orthodox faith is unique to the Russian people, it is their most precious attribute and the promise of their salvation. They opposed westernisation, and the introduction of western values, on the basis that it would destroy this carefully preserved faith. The "patriots" believed that despite Russia's evident inferiority in certain spheres of existence, the Orthodox faith of the Russian people places them spiritually above other nations, and therefore Russia should follow its own path, according to the true teachings of the Church. The glasnost reforms were considered by them to pose a danger to Orthodoxy, which is the very fibre of the Russian people and society. While the reform supporters found a place for Christianity within socialism, these commentators saw the two as mutually exclusive.

Literary critics supporting this orientation also substantiated their opinions, by invoking Dostoevsky's insights, as revealed in The Devils. They placed a strong and positive emphasis on Dostoevsky's Orthodox faith. They showed that he too believed that religious faith, and in particular Russian Orthodoxy, is the key element in the rebuilding of society. He, they asserted, maintained that Orthodoxy is a central feature of Russian life and culture, and the basic source of morality among Russians.

D. Urnov separates Christianity from the humanism of the reformers' attitude. In his contribution to the discussion on Yu. Karyakin's book Dostoevsky and the Eve of the XX Century[224], he exposes several firmly established wrong notions about D evsky in the contemporary Russian society. He claims, for example, that while the writer is stubbornly called a humanist, the idea of "universal responsiveness" in Dostoevsky was Christian, not humanist. In his view, Christian love excludes humanism, the high value of the human personality. It is evident, he declares, that today, as before, almost every step of the way, that which we read

[224]Znamya, July 1990.

into Dostoevsky is not what he had in mind.

V. Mikhnyukevich reveals his Russian nationalist orientations by emphasising Dostoevsky's faith in the "pochvennij" truths of the people and linking these to religion. In his analysis of the folkloric elements in The Devils[225], he shows that Dostoevsky believed revolution and socialism to be the path of the Anti-Christ. He speaks of how these are used in the portrayal of Peter Verkhovensky, so that the image of the anti-Christ shines through all his social, worldly concreteness. The associations of his name with the "first nihilist" Peter I and the "false Peter", put the collective murder of Shatov on the level of the bloody rites of the initiation eucharist of the church of the Anti-Christ. Mikhnyukevich also speaks of how the "pochvennij" ideals of Dostoevsky are embodied in the lame woman, who would have been much revered by the popular religious ethical tradition as a fool-in-Christ. He later states that it is well-known that Dostoevsky intended to include in The Devils a character that would embody in his behaviour, preaching and salutary influence on people, religious, ethical, "pochvennij" truth. This intention was not fulfilled, but, according to him, the non-personified, preeminently popular point of view shows through in the folkloric associations. The critic expresses in his analysis of The Devils, the desire for a return to the popular traditional beliefs and faith as a means to Russia's salvation.

S. Semenova clearly polemicises, in her article "'The higher idea of existence" and Dostoevsky'[226], with the "unreligious" nature of the glasnost reforms. She insists on the significance for Dostoevsky of the ideal of Christ as the only way for man and society to be saved. She believes that this ideal is being deliberately destroyed by the new leadership and contemporary liberal reforms. She declares that to Dostoevsky, Christ is the truth- "istina", the highest good towards which man must constantly strive. She declares that one cannot create an absolute out of man in his present state, even with the best intentions, for as Dostoevsky so decisively

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[225]"Folklor v Besakh F.M. Dostoevskogo", Russkaya Literatura, no. 4, 1991.

[226]Voprosy Literatury, November 1988.

affirmed, one can only accept an ideal higher than man as an absolute, which for him was Christ. Semenova asserts that if one aspires to understand the source of evil in man's nature, one must turn one's attention to Dostoevsky, one of the greatest minds in the world, and that in the struggle against apocalyptic danger, we need to have before us the higher goals set out by him, goals which she sees as opposing the humanist aims and values of the reformists.

Semenova reveals a wariness in her attitude towards the new reforms which appear to her to neglect higher ideals and goals. In her analysis of the symbolic role of nature in Dostoevsky's work, she compares the descriptions of a paradisiacal landscape associated with Zossima and Makar, with Stavrogin's vision. In the former, she says, it is always dawn, a symbolic resurrection, whilst in the latter, it is sunset. This reflects Dostoevsky's belief that true harmony comes through following the ideal of Christ, and that those who cannot accept this feel alienated from nature and are doomed to self-destruction. She declares that Dostoevsky believed that neither man, nor society can exist without a higher idea and that there is only one higher idea in this world- that of the immortality of man's soul. Dostoevsky, she says, believed that the denial of the higher idea of man's existence and the subsequent loss of a higher meaning to life leads inevitably to self-destruction. It can even lead to global evil-doing, nihilistic attempts to destroy nature and oneself, as occurs in the case of "legical suicide", such as Kirillov's. To Semenova, true harmony can only come through a belief in Christ and the immortality of the soul and glasnost is a form of transformation of society that neglects these higher ideas.

In her article "Do we need absolutes?"[227], published in December 1991, Semenova again cautions against present day tendencies . She says that contemporary society is repeating the same mistakes as the Soviet society of the past, in which the eternal questions, transcendentalism, and mysticism were regarded as being on the side of the enemies, and thus as unacceptable topics of

[227] Voprosy Literatury, December 1991.

discussion. She claims that the contemporary Russian liberals, like the socialist realist ideologues, show a clear hostility towards higher hopes, and see man as being "from oneself, for oneself", without God. She asserts that in the Russian classical literature from Gogol to Dostoevsky, some very similar precursors and ideological kinsmen to such contemporary thinkers, stand out: a line of rebellious amoralists, god-fighters, demonic nihilists, appearing in completion in some heroes of The Devils. This novel, in her opinion, looks into the very heart of "for oneself, from oneself", and forewarns about the catastrophic effects of godless nihilism and human self-deification, which is spreading out to the masses. No-one, she says, as deeply and directly as Dostoevsky revealed how losing faith in the higher meaning of life, in salvation, in resurrection and immortality leads to such a dislocation in the psyche, such blatant nihilism, as would be capable of organising the apocalypse (or of voluntarily or involuntarily giving internal [illegible]). In her opinion, the world at present is not ready to receive Ch[illegible] to take Fyodorov's task, which proposed that humanity would realise itself as the collective instrument of God, through the turning of all powers towards construction and peace, and which so impressed Dostoevsky. To this mystic philosopher, the most important principle was active Christianity- converting evil to good. Until now, she says, it seemed that the Fydorovian project could only be achieved within a monolithic structure, but as it is the true expression of the highest freedom of man, the idea by itself must convince people within a free society. In her opinion, the liberals are not following the right path towards the construction of a new society, as they base their plans on purely practical, material concerns, and not on the ideals of active Christianity, which come from a belief in higher ideals and the image of Christ.

B. Tarasov polemicises with the orientations undertaken by the new leadership, which he sees as destructive to the moral fibre of society, by turning to Dostoevsky[228]. He clearly warns against many of the contemporary changes on the so-called path to reform, based on humanist ideals. Having stated that

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[228]"Vechnoye predosterezheniye. Besy i sovremennost", Novii Mir, August 1991, pp. 234-247.

Dostoevsky's insights are exceedingly actual in contemporary society, he analyses the religious connotations in The Devils, linking this to a criticism of present-day tendencies and beliefs. He asserts that for Dostoevsky, the figure of Christ was an absolute and beautiful ideal, an embodiment of the characteristics of the higher and full development of man. Real morality flows from the recognition of this higher beauty and the acceptance of it by all as an ideal. Without this, he says, man's existence proves to be meaningless and his links with the world fragile, so that life becomes full of distortions and catastrophes.

Tarasov, taking Dostoevsky's teaching as a valuable lesson in the present day, asserts that when age-old ideals are repudiated, society falls into the grip of materialism, scepticism and nihilism. He says that Dostoevsky saw how the youth yearned for positive ideals, something to believe in and strive towards, but how in the family, at school and from their ideological leaders, they learned a sceptical view of the higher goals of life, and to substitute them with more practical interests, with no real moral content. Real enlightenment, according to Dostoevsky, is based on the people's faith in the eternal light, and, Tarasov declares, he did not doubt that moral origins and not cunning politics were the foundation of the prosperity of the state. Faith in eternal, and not conditionally advantageous ideals gives politics a spiritual sense, supports moral health and great nations. To the writer, he says, the goals of peace and prosperity can only be achieved through the attainment of a new morality based on the ideal of Christ.

Tarasov substantiates his views through his interpretation of The Devils. He says that, in the epigraph of the novel, the devils that come out of the sick man and enter the swine are all the plagues, all the demons, that have accumulated in Russia over the centuries. He continues that nihilistic possession appeared as a tragedy to Dostoevsky, for the atheisation of the intelligentsia created conditions for the development of a limitless faith in the infallibility of "short-term" science[228]. To Dostoevsky, he claims, the despotic dogmatism of Peter

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[228] p. 241.

Verkhovensky, whose political ambition becomes entangled with criminal demonism, is the consequence of an arrogant personality, deprived in its upbringing and education of "the higher, the fundamental". An aggressive lack of faith and the repudiation of the family home and people's values are at the basis of Peter's psychological make-up and lead to his depravity. Tarasov links religion to the spiritual values, moral ideals and folk traditions that have been passed down in Russia from generation to generation, and helped maintain her essence. He places a lot of responsibility on the head of the "fathers", the "liberal" educators who, as is shown by Stepan Verkhovensky, are responsible for the development of their sons' outlook. He says that the fruitless mirage of splendid, indistinct "higher ideals" of the father Verkhovensky are no more than a sincere lie in the atmosphere of which all the pupils' destinies take shape. Tarasov claims that for Dostoevsky, the nihilism of the children is derived from a metaphysical condition of disbelief and lack of faith. However, he sees a Christian message of hope in him too. He asserts that in Stepan's departure at the end of the novel on a "last journey" and his attempt to penetrate the essence of the Evangelius, the writer saw the pledge of his hero's rebirth, and put on his lips the apostalithic message about the powerful strength of love, thus indicating a way out of the undefined magnanimity of idealistic westernism[230].

Tarasov, like Dostoevsky, sees that in his age, disbelief is increasingly possessing the hearts and minds of the people who rely on reason instead of faith. He asserts that the figure of Stavrogin seems to sum up the state of the contemporary world, in which "God is dead"[231]. Stavrogin, he says, understands that without a complete faith, human existence acquires a comic nuance and loses its authentic reason, but he makes the mistake of trying to obtain faith in spiritual tradition with his mind, by rational means, instead of through a living participation. And the "self-propelled knife of reason leads him further away from the desired goal, cleaves his

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[230] p. 243.

[231] p. 244. B. Tarasov acknowledges that this is F. Nietzsche's phrase.

soul, and destroys the very possibility of organic faith"[232]. Stavrogin's spiritual search is reduced to a series of misdeeds, of "attempts" and "frustrations". He cannot be convinced of the existence of God, and so his heart is not drawn into the organic domain of conscience, hope and love. Stavrogin goes through the same crucible of doubt and refutation as Dostoevsky himself, but in contrast to him, comes to an inescapable end in suicide. Dostoevsky came to the conclusion that without faith in the immortality of the human soul, the existence of both the personality and of the nation become unnatural, meaningless, unbearable.

Tarasov, evidently seeing many parallels to the present-day situation in Russia, claims that Dostoevsky showed in his work how during a vague time of transition and hesitation, when it is unknown where the country is heading and everything sacred is being criticised, the ranks of "ours" are prepared to be reinforced with even the most wretched scoundrels[233]. He revealed how during a time of shocks, changes, doubts, denials, scepticism and unsteadiness in the founding ideals, the simple pure hearts of the people are also drawn into the ideal of monstrous social crimes. He presents in The Devils many different types amongst the youth, but all are weighed down by insolent pride, and at the root of their behaviour is the absence of a real foundation or of higher directing ideals. Throughout the novel, Tarasov declares, is spread an atmosphere of the degrading of the spiritual and the exaltation of the material, of the substitution of faith in God with the "positive" laws of science. Many of the possessed, he says, are occupied with the ridiculing of the higher meaning. The "new ideas" which are called upon to replace the obsolete Christian spiritual values, rest upon principles of utility and the struggle for existence[234]. According to him, Dostoevsky believed that if people are deprived of the immeasurably great, they will die in despair, and never tired of repeating that only the most high can pull man out of his natural ego-centrism and make him capable of becoming the brother of another. Thus religion is the only

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[232] p. 244.

[233] p. 245.

[234] p. 246.

possible foundation of an harmonious society.

Dostoevsky, Tarasov continues, was greatly troubled by the preponderance of obscure ideas in Russian society and the scornful attitude of certain groups towards the concept of the higher meaning and eternal ideals. And, the critic claims, he believed that neither education, nor outer sophistication and a shiny gloss, nor even scientific technical achievement, could reconstruct man's deep layer of egotistical thinking[235]. Humanity must choose a path of spiritual order which will lead to an increase of love and light in the soul of the individual personality. Tarasov states that at the centre of The Devils is the search for the moral centre. Dostoevsky, he says, saw that the youth were ready to offer up everything for truth and prayed that God give them an understanding of the truth, for as the novel shows, the real question lies in what one takes for truth. To Tarasov, the lessons given by Dostoevsky in The Devils should be heeded in the present-day Russian society. He asserts that Dostoevsky showed in the novel that a just society will never be created without a belief in a higher meaning, that scientific technological advances and material prosperity do not bring harmony, and that rational theories blur the distinction between good and evil, leading to a rejection of religion and traditional values. In his opinion, the rejection of orthodoxy is at the root of Russia's troubles, for the rupture of the cultural strata from the "soil" means a refusal of orthodoxy, and thus of a genuine search for a world order based on eternal ideas. By turning away from God and spiritual values, man destroys all chance of a true brotherhood. The only way to cure this illness is to turn away from militant atheism and towards God and higher ideals.

A talk given in March 1989 by R. Laut, a professor from Munich, at the Institute of Philosophy in the USSR, entitled "What is Dostoevsky telling us today?" was published in the Soviet press[236] with a foreword by A. Gulyga, who praises the views he expresses. She declares Laut to be a true friend of Russia, thereby

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[235] p. 247.

[236] Literaturnaya Uchoba, no. 6, 1989.

bringing this article into the ideological debate as authoritative support for her own nationalist standpoint. Gulyga claims that Laut believes that the spiritual culture of Russia, the fullest embodiment of which he sees in Dostoevsky, holds the promise of the salvation of humanity. Indeed, in his talk on Dostoevsky, he expresses his opposition to western values as well as to the excessive faith in scientific progress as the way to a better society, instead of religious faith. His views thus reflect in many ways those of an anti-glasnost stance.

Laut's analysis of religion and atheism in The Devils contains evidence of a certain anti-Westernism, and particularly of an hostility towards America, such as was strongly felt by the Russian "patriots". He states that in the present day the vulgar idea of the neutrality and equal significance of all ideologies and religions orientated towards exclusivity, which is the equivalent of Stavrogin's position, is coming to Russia from the Anglo-Saxon world, already being widespread in America. He later draws a comparison between the Roman Church of the West, which has violated the truth of Christ's teachings, and the Orthodox Church who, despite its persecution, has preserved its inviolability and is flourishing with new strength. Following Dostoevsky, Laut affirms that the Church in the East did not yield to the temptation to turn itself into a dominating secular power as in the West, in the case of the Roman Catholic Church. He says that Dostoevsky foresaw all this, writing about how Russia has fallen ill with atheism, brought from the West, although the majority of Russian people live in accordance with the idea of Orthodoxy. Laut's belief that atheism and thus much evil comes from the West provides support for the Russian nationalist standpoint.

Laut, like those who opposed the glasnost reforms, expresses the conviction that humanist progress will not bring harmony, for only religion can do so. He claims that all of Dostoevsky's interpretations of social phenomena are linked to atheism's hostility towards Christianity in our time. The critic continues that, as Dostoevsky realised, the antagonism between Christianity and a faith in progress does not mean that Christianity refutes historical achievements. Dostoevsky persistently emphasised the need to resolve the problems of civilisation and clearly understood

the social problems, but, to him, what is truly important is the spirit with which one approaches these problems. In his opinion, it must be with a moral religious one.

Laut associates atheism with all aspects of modern society that he dislikes- science, the desire to construct a new order in society, the belief in reason. He states that although man has acquired enormous technical power and there have been great strides forward in the establishment of social justice during the century that has passed since Dostoeysky's death, , we are still faced with many unresolved problems. The cause of these, in his opinion, lies in a lack of faith, not in purely socio-political factors. One cannot attribute the horrors and mass exterminations that have occurred all over the world to either democracy or socialism, but must listen to the voice of Dostoevsky who believed that there is only one reason for all such excesses: atheism. Laut asserts that Dostoevsky clearly saw how atheism leads to the stifling of life, and a world where everything is determined and regulated by politics, and that it is this pseudo-reglementation that creates problems that humanity cannot solve.

Dostoevsky, he says, was aware of how atheism, appearing as a fanatic belie, rejects the profound meaning of Christ and tries to assert its own limitless domination. In the notes for The Devils, Dostoevsky wrote that in His time Christ's followers believed in the perfection of His image, but upon the victory of Christianity, an illusory notion was formed amongst His enemies that we are all saved, and a light-mindedness became apparent. "Gaia scientia" and naturalism, hated by the true reality of Christ, blossomed. Dostoevsky, Laut declares, personified this phenomenon in the image of the main hero of The Devils, Nikolai Stavrogin. He asserts that Dostoevsky demonstrates the unavoidable result of this deformed embodiment of evil- despite his boundless strength, the hero loses a sense of purpose in anything and the ability to accomplish anything, and he brings down with him all those whom his satanic existence engendered, such as Peter Verkhovensky. Laut claims that the atheism that has taken root today appears as the fruit of the development of science. Since the time of the encyclopaedists, who

were united in their dislike of Christianity, false interpretations of man as a creature governed by nature and endowed with reason have arisen. Dostoevsky objected that now and until the end of the age, science and reason can only fill a secondary, auxiliary position in people's lives, for a different inexplicable force dominates people- the spirit of life, "the search for God". This definitive goal, Dostoevsky believed, is Jesus Christ. Dostoevsky strongly opposed the rationalist perception that man created God and not God created man. Laut shows Dostoevsky to be distinctly anti-humanist.

R. Laut's disapproval of the attempt to solve problems through a new, practical, rational schema, is clearly revealed in this lecture on Dostoevsky. He declares that man is faced with the choice of combatting contemporary dangers such as the threat of atomic energy, with either practical, technolcgical ideas, or on moral grounds. Dostoevsky, in his opinion, would certainly have supported the latter choice. He declares that in the contemporary world the notion that catastrophes can be avoided with the help of clever, technological, practical inventions is becoming ever more readily accepted while Christian views are vanishing and the attitude towards evil is becoming all the more flippant. Dostoevsky was the first to see clearly the satanic, directly anti-moral goals of evil, and he firmly believed that no abolition of poverty, and no organised work, will save humanity. It was this that he revealed in vibrant poetic images.

Laut displays a distrust of progress and scientific technical advances, and of the Western influence on Russia, seeing the only hope for Russia's recovery in religion overcoming atheism, evidence of which is now [illegible] in the religious revival. According to him, the same is presently occurring. [illegible] evangelist Luke said in the passage used as the epigraph to The Devils: the devils came out of Russian man and entered into a herd of swine, that is, into the atheists, such as Nechaev and S. Solovyevich and others. These have drowned or are certainly drowning, and the healed man sits at the feet of Jesus.

4.2.3.4. The Republication of Religious Criticism

An interesting phenomenon of the glasnost debates was the widespread use of the republication of older Russian texts to substantiate a certain viewpoint. Views expressed by authors in previous eras became an integral part of the polemics during the glasnost era. These texts were often amongst those that had been banned under previous regimes because of the incompatibility of the views they contained, with Soviet ideology. This tendency was particularly marked in the right-wing press. The reason for this was perhaps not only that the editors of these ultra-nationalist journals felt that a particular thinker from a previous era expressed a view especially well, but also that they wished to conceal their own extremism behind the name of a critic of a previous era, and to avoid direct responsibility and possible censure for these views.

The thinkers most frequently chosen for republication were religious, mystical philosophers such as N. Berdyaev, V. Rozanov, L. Shestov, and K. Leontiev. Such authors, formerly considered unpublishable, were completely rehabilitated during glasnost as part of the process of the rehabilitation of religion. The views and thoughts of these religious, and often conservative thinkers were once again considered to be worthy of respect, and regarded by many as pertinent to the contemporary situation. Their voices were thus merged with those of contemporary religious commentators and literary critics participating in the glasnost discussions and debates.

The work of N. Berdyaev was one of the first to be republished and rehabilitated, his ideas being more moderate than many of the other "mystics". The republication of his writings was a significant manifestation of the renewed interest in religious themes, for he examines social issues from a metaphysical point of view. During the glasnost era, his opinions came to be regarded as of scholarly interest and of relevance to the contemporary situation in Russia. The appearance of his writings in certain journals indicated that many of his views were now being openly accepted and shared. Many of his views were in fact compatible with those of the

reformists. He expressed the necessity of religious faith for morality in mankind and for the creation of a better society, and warned against the assertion of the individual turning into self-deification. He saw a place for Christianity in the socialist ideal. In his article "The Russian Idea" published in Russkaya Filosofiya[237], Berdyaev asserts that although Dostoevsky understood the rebellion against God, he revealed how self-assertion, which he calls mangodhood, can cause man to fall out of the eternal world order. According to him, although Dostoevsky fervently defended man's freedom, he exposed the fatal results of godless, empty freedom. Dostoevsky posed the opposition between Godmanhood and mangodhood. He showed how when man arrives at mangodhood, or self-divinisation, compassion and humanism are turned into cruelty. Berdyaev says that Kirillov expresses the final result of the way of the deified self-assertive man when he speaks of how there will be a new man who will have conquered pain and fear and who will thus be himself God, bearing the name "mangod". The path of mangodhood, according to Dostoevsky, leads to Shigalev's system, to the denial of man and of freedom. Only the path of the God-man leads to the affirmation of the human personality and freedom. He believed, Berdyaev says, that humanity who is alienated from God is reborn into inhumanity. Dostoevsky saw this in the example of the atheist-revolutionary, Nechaev, who broke away completely from humanist morality and demanded cruelty.

Berdyaev claims that Dostoevsky advocated a socialism governed by Christian values. This was his own social utopia- a theocratic utopia in which the Church would absorb the state and accomplish a kingdom of freedom and love. He says that one could call the writer an orthodox socialist. Dostoevsky foresaw Russian communism and opposed it with a Christian solution. He did not accept that the problems of bread be resolved through a renunciation of the freedom of the spirit, which to him was the beginning of the Anti-Christ. Berdyaev believes that the question of the organisation of mankind according to a new state is a religious question, and Dostoevsky understood this very deeply. As is evident in The Devils,

[237] No. I, 1990.

he saw and understood a lot by looking into the spiritual undersoil of phenomena that on the surface appeared to be only social. He looks into the metaphysical depths of the Russian theme of social justice. Dostoevsky, says Berdyaev, was troubled by the question of the utopia of an earthly paradise, and arrived at the conclusion that the only solution to this lay in a harmony that man arrives at through freedom and suffering, a Divine kingdom. Berdyaev believes in a new form of socialism, in which religious values form the foundation of social ones, and social problems are tackled with religious solutions. His views correspond to many of those of the "democrats" of a religious orientation.

However, as mentioned above, the majority of republished religious works expressed extremely conservative, nationalist views, which opposed the ideals of the new leadership. These writings were now used to support the contemporary religious nationalist ideology. In the previous era of the late 1970s and early 1980s, Dostoevsky had been rehabilitated by means of critics showing his opposition to such interpreters of him as Leontiev, Shestov and Rozanov, who were declared to be the enemies of democracy. But these thinkers were now regarded by many "patriot" critics as respected interpreters of the writer's art and as his ideological allies.

L. Shestov, whose article 'On "the rebirth of convictions" and Dostoevsky' was published in Russkaya Literatura[238], expresses very conservative nationalist, anti-western religious views. He opposes Dostoevsky's religious values to those atheist, misguided values of the West that threaten to lead Russia astray. Shestov states that during the same years that Dostoevsky, in penal servitude, was rediscovering the Bible, the enlightened West was repudiating it in the most decisive way. And in his later years Dostoevsky entered ever more boldly into a desperate struggle against the alluring but all-destroying ideas of Western philosophy, attempting to oppose with the biblical teachings, the totality of knowledge brought by the new times into all domains of life. The Devils is part of this period.

[238]No. 3, 1991.

Shestov polemicises with those who considered Dostoevsky to be a dangerous reactionary, seeing him instead as being on the side of good, as a proponent of his own religious ideals. He does not see the transformation that occurred in Dostoevsky's beliefs during his imprisonment as an unfortunate shift towards ultra-conservatism, but as a finding of the true path of religion. Dostoevsky's nationalist, conservative and chauvinist tendencies are thus presented by him as highly moral, religious views. According to Shestov, the longer Dostoevsky lived, and the more he contemplated the great mysteries of life, the more passionately and wholeheartedly he gave himself to the downtrodden people, whom he regarded as his own brothers. In prison he drew strength and courage from the Bible, and it was this that caused him to break away from his earlier convictions and return to the truth of the living God. Shestov claims that through an examination The Devils one is able to explain the sense of the author's "rebirth of convictions" which was in essence a conversion, for all the principal characters of The Devils, tell us about how Dostoevsky was tormented by God his whole life, and how he came to find the true path. Like Shatov he found God through his profound belief in Russia and her Orthodoxy. Nationalism and religion are thus seen to be inextricably linked, the former being given a religious sanction and therefore a moral value.

Another aspect of Shestov's ideology that becomes apparent, and which lends support to the beliefs of the patriot camp, is his denial of the possibility of morality without God, and of the possibility of harmony created by man's reason. Like the nationalists, he did not believe that a good society could be created that is not based on religious values. The views he expresses are clearly opposed to the humanist tendencies of the glasnost supporters, for he has no faith in man and in reason. He emphasises that the change that occurred in Dostoevsky's views and beliefs after his time of penal servitude, led to his rejection of the notion of a revolutionary, rational transformation of society, which disregards the people's values and morals, and engenders false ethics and morality. Shestov claims that despite its complicated plot, The Devils is fundamentally a continuation of the desperate battle with the "brick wall" of rationality, the euclydian mind, with that loathsome monster, indifferent to everything, to which our reason gives over the

fate of people and the world. He says that Dostoevsky shows how love for mankind based on reason turns to hatred. Our certainty in the limitless power of this monster appeared to the writer as an "incomprehensible enchantment". He speaks of how Dostoevsky put his own struggle into the mouth of Stavrogin who declares that reason has never been able to define or separate good and evil. Reason is a heartless, indifferent force that has, through science, acquired power over the fates of the universe and man. This thought, he asserts, was unbearable to Dostoevsky, especially as he believed that the people who submitted to it completely, even joyfully, were often not the worst and weakest, but the best, strongest, richest in spirit. He shows through the characters of The Devils how it impregnated the whole of our culture- art, philosophy, ethics, even religion. To Shestov, reason and science bring suppression, not freedom.

Shestov's horror of revolution, and of socialist constructions based on a belief in man and society and not God, are fully revealed in his interpretation of The Devils. L. Shestov sees The Devils as Dostoevsky's portrayal of the earthly hell that is inevitable without God and the real love that comes only through religion. Shestov declares that already the title of The Devils shows one into what life changes when it is torn away by knowledge from its Creator. He has no faith in rational schemas for man's happiness, for true morality cannot be engendered by reason. Like all the characters of The Devils, the Russian people are being suffocated in the heavy stinking atmosphere of agitated senseless human passions, that occurs when the link with the living God has been lost. Dostoevsky came to believe, he says, that neither man nor nation can exist without a higher idea, and that the only higher idea on earth is that of the immortality of the human soul. The writer realized that morality alone does not protect man from senseless cruelty and arbitrariness; that love for one's neighbour, instead of for God, turns to hatred; that it is impossible to live on the earth without God; that lack of faith is the most terrible crime, for which man kills; and that all ideas without one higher idea- the idea of God and of the immortality of the soul- are illusory. This old truth, written in the book of books, shows us that if one's life is full, one does not strive for knowledge of life through science. He says that it became clear to Dostoevsky that the truths, that

seem to man most indisputable and beyond doubt, are falsehood, and that that which man considers to be good is not so. Mankind's morality evoked only despair in Dostoevsky. Many of Dostoevsky's most tormenting fears, according to the critic, are revealed in Stavrogin. The thought that on the throne of God mounts a monster, dressed in magnificent attire and swallowing all there is in the world, that will be for all like God, which is the basic thought of the Apocalypse, caused Dostoevsky to experience the fits of despair that were the condition of the birth of a great, final understanding that the only true path is that of Christ.

Shestov thus claims through his analysis of The Devils, that man without God is doomed to destruction. Science, in his opinion, is the force of the anti-Christ that mounts on God's throne and rules the world and people by its laws. Love derived from rational schemas and from man's ideas on morality inevitably changes to hatred. His ideas coincide with those of the conservative nationalists, who opposing the new leadership's faith in the possibility of the construction of a new socialism, placed Dostoevsky on their side against such hopes of man transforming the world through his own reason and sense of morality. They believed, like Shestov, that a social structure that disregards spirituality and religion, basing itself on man's reason and material, practical concerns alone, is doomed to failure.

Throughout the pre-glasnost Soviet regime, K. Leontiev was regarded as an reactionary writer, and his writings as ideologically unacceptable. When certain aspects of Dostoevsky's ideology were rehabilitated in the late 1970s, his name was mentioned in the comparison drawn between Dostoevsky's pragmatic faith and his own reactionary faith. However, his writings were republished during glasnost. They appeared principally in the right-wing press, which re-established his name as one of the great Russian thinkers. His strict Orthodox beliefs, merged with his strong nationalist, anti-humanist sentiments found much sympathy amongst nationalist supporters, as they seemed to support their own views. The ideals Leontiev expressed were clearly opposed to the "liberal" ideals embraced by the glasnost supporters.

In his discussion on Dostoevsky, Leontiev expresses very rigid Orthodox views[239]. While progressives of all eras have condemned Dostoevsky for his conservatism, Leontiev believed that Dostoevsky was not sufficiently Orthodox and nationalistic. He sees Orthodoxy as part of the great messianic mission of the Russian nation. He declares that although Dostoevsky's ideas on the historic vocation of this great people, the Russians, was based on religious faith, they unfortunately did not incorporate the true Orthodoxy. Leontiev asserts that a great secret was entrusted to the Russian nation- strict and steadfast Church orthodoxy, but that the best minds would rather humble themselves before anti-national demonism than before it.

His religious views are also united with his anti-Westernism. He contrasts the views on universal reconciliation expressed by Dostoevsky in his speech at Pushkin's funeral, with his own, which he claims to be those of true Orthodoxy. To him, Orthodoxy means division, not reconciliation. According to him, the prophecy of the universal reconcilliation of people is not an orthodox one, but a humanitarian one. The Russian liberals, he continues, are feeble, whilst God is strong, and one ought not to love and be reconciled with them now. One must hope for their moral recovery, even if this is achieved through physical punishment, which Dostoevsky actually declared to be good for the criminal's spiritual state. In Dostoevsky's works, says Leontiev, the evil-doers often experience the most burning religious sentiment- suffering, remorse, deprivation, personal injury and restraint open up new perspectives in their minds. Christ, he reaffirms, never promised the triumph of general brotherhood on the globe. For such brotherhood, concessions are first necessary on all sides, and there are some things that, according to him, one cannot concede. His teachings are clearly hostile to the universalist, pan-humanist orientation of the glasnost leadership.

He also speaks out against the possibility of mankind creating an harmonious society based on humanist ideals and love. In his opinion, this can only be done

[239]"O vsemirnoj lyubvi: rech F.M. Dostoevskogo na Pushkinskom prazdnike", Nash Sovremennik, July 1990.

through submission to the Church and Orthodoxy. He says that people place all their hopes on the alteration of society, the correction of the circumstances, believing that the pressures exerted by the law and by new economic conditions, will make it necessary for people to become better. According to him, Dostoevsky was opposed to the thinking of the ardent social-reformists, which suggests that for humanity to be corrected, and for earthly peace, justice and equality to be realised, it is necessary to change the conditions of life itself, so that the heart becomes accustomed to good, and is unable to do evil. Thinkers such as Dostoevsky had little faith in the reconstruction of society. Leontiev declares that the socio-political experiences of the near future will certainly be the first stumbling block for the human mind on the false path of the quest for general good and harmony. He states that socialism (that is, deep and forcible economic and everyday-life changes) causes not only the suffering of the defeated, but the conquerors themselves will very soon realise that they are a long way from peace and prosperity. That part of humanity that wishes to create the "bliss" of completely new social and economic conditions, will fall into legitimized anarchy, for social revolution will not wait for the personal moral education of the members of the future state, but will seize society in that form that we know it, and which is still far from love and truth. He says that Dostoevsky demonstrated in his novels that an ideal such as the "building of mankind's happiness" is unattainable. Progressive humanity, Leontiev affirms, is thus doomed to fall into the deepest disillusionment, and this is where its reconciliation with positive religion lies. The people, he says, no longer deceiving themselves with unfounded hopes, must turn to realism and repudiate, as positive religion does, the dreams of earthly prosperity and the quest for an ideal of moral truth in the bosom of mankind itself. This, he says was revealed by Dostoevsky in his later works, although he did not go far enough. Dostoevsky does not mention the most essential aspect- the Church. In Leontiev's view, undefined religion is not enough- one must love the Church, its teachings, its statutes, its rites, even its dogmas. Love for the Church, says Leontiev, is more tangible than love for all mankind, for it has its own rules and external forms which Russian society does not have, being full of opposing interests.

Leontiev then discusses the gradual orientation from humanist Christianity towards Orthodoxy that he perceives in Dostoevsky's religiousness through his three main novels. An analysis of religious themes in Crime and Punishment, in which there is not much evidence of Orthodoxy, shows that at this time Dostoevsky thought very little about real, or Church Christianity. In The Devils there is some progress. There is mention of an icon revered by the people and the author is indignant at the nihilists who have insulted this sacred thing. Out of the cultured circle of Russian characters, many talk eloquently and sincerely about Christ, but not in an Orthodox, holy-national manner, and these speeches are only useful to he who has forgotten completely about Christ and God. They are only the beginning of the road, for, according to Leontiev, man will only know the real orthodox Christianity when he reads the national religious works. It is true, he says that the epigraph to the tale is the evangelical tale about the healing of the possessed, representing Russia which is then healed of all its ailments- personal, moral and social- when it becomes more Christian in the spirit of its own nation. But here too Dostoevsky is imprecise about what kind of Christianity will save the future Russia- the undefined E angelical one, or one which has known, determined forms. In The Brothers Karamazov, Leontiev says, it is clear that the author approached ever more closely the Church. However, the mystical sense is still weakly portrayed and the feeling of humanitarian idealisation is ardently expressed in many places, even by monks. Nevertheless, he declares, it is impossible not to rejoice that such a talented Russian man ever increasingly attempted to follow the genuine Church path. Still a step or two further and he would have given Russia a creation that was truly great in its instructiveness. But unfortunately, according to Leontiev, he then took a huge step backwards with the Pushkin speech and his talk of universal reconciliation and love for Europe. Leontiev firmly condemns humanism, opposing it with the Russian Orthodoxy in which, he believes, lies mankind's only hope.

A commentary by Leontiev in 1885 is added to the published text in which he again denies that Dostoevsky's speech had a truly religious character, being, in his opinion, far too humanist. He says that he is ready to believe that if Dostoevsky had continued to live another few years, he would have approached much more

closely than in his final novels to the Church, and even to monasticism, which he loved and respected. He may have been an Orthodox man, but he still could not correctly write and preach the creeds of Orthodoxy. Dostoevsky needed to learn more, but he was in a hurry to teach. The critic still maintains that his speech was full of errors. To Leontiev, Dostoevsky is not sufficiently conservative, nationalist and Orthodox, although his final novels such as The Devils show that he was progressing in the right direction. Leontiev confirms the idea of Russia's exclusivity, basing this on her strict Orthodox faith.

5. CONCLUSION

An examination of the interpretations of The Devils by Soviet critics during glasnost clearly reveals that during these years literary criticism continued to serve as a medium for socio-political discussion and this novel as a focus for ideological debate.

It is evident that despite the encouragement to learn from the West in all spheres of activity, Soviet literary criticism, maintained its uniquely Russian characteristics. While Western criticism has passed through successive movements that have redefined the aims and approaches of literary scholarship[1], Soviet criticism remained essentially ideological throughout its history. And while in the West, literary criticism strove towards greater objectivity, towards an approach that did not examine literature from perspectives external to the text, Soviet criticism merely oscillated between stricter or looser control over the content of a criticism that persisted in its integration with socio-political commentary and tendentiousness. Russian Formalism having been eradicated in the 1920s, it remained protected by strict party measures from any movements that might introduce a theory that opposed that of Marxist-Leninist criticism[2], and even the

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[1] The "New criticism" of the 40s and 50s associated with American critics such as J. Ransom and C. Brooks, had as its premise that a work of literature should be studied as a separate and self-contained entity. And the late twentieth century witnessed a radical reappraisal of traditional modes of literary criticism. Building on the work of the Russian Formalists of the 1920s and the examinations of linguistic structure carried out by the Swiss philologist Ferdinand de Saussure, literary theorists began to call into question the overriding importance of the concept of "the author" as the source of the text's meaning. Structuralist and post-Structuralist critics, such as Roland Barthes, J. Lacan, L. Althusser and Jacques Derrida all, from various positions, questioned the humanist assumption that subjectivity is the source of meaning and action, and directed attention towards the way in which meaning is created by the determining structures of language and culture. In this context, the notion of a text which tells a truth as perceived by the author, the individual mind, whose insights are the source of the text's single and authoritative meaning, is untenable.

[2] The most important movement towards a new approach to literature in the Soviet Union was initiated by M.M. Bakhtin in the late 1920s. In his book Problems of Dostoevsky's Work, published in 1929, he arrived at the concept of the "polyphonic" novel- a novel of many voices, none of which can be equated with the author's own. Each persona, according to his approach, possesses a radical autonomy, and it is thus incorrect for a critic to single out one or several of Dostoevsky's characters as the mouthpiece of the author, deducing an unequivocal ideology from his work. The development of these theories was brought to a decisive end by the rigid policies of the 1930s under Stalin.

new freedoms of the glasnost era did not provoke widespread interest in new, more "scientific" literary critical approaches. While during this time critics offered different interpretations of texts, the interpretative operations were very similar to those of past eras, and as before lacked a specific methodology. As is shown by Soviet critics' interpretations of The Devils published during the period 1985-1991, the Russian classics were once again reinterpreted as texts that carry a "message" for contemporary society. Critics sought to find in the novel the author's guiding idea and support for their own ideological viewpoint, and literary criticism continued to be conducted according to external criteria. While there is little doubt that this novel did deal with present realities and does contain many insights into human society, fiction is nevertheless fiction, and as such contains an admixture of fantasy according to the author's views. Soviet critics continued during this era to blatantly merge disciplines blending literary scholarship with socio-political, religious-ethical and even economic commentary. While an inter-disciplinary approach may well be of value, the extent to which it is used by Soviet critics (which is not acknowledged) is unjustifiable and stems from the desire to propagate a specific ideology. The text is in many cases examined as a document which is used to substantiate their arguments concerning the present and future of the country. They thus use the interpretation of the text to manipulate public opinion, to mould the people's consciousness as they deem to be correct and healthy.

Given this ongoing tendency to regard literary texts as historical material on the life of society and as containing solutions to the political and socio-economic problems confronting contemporary Russian society, Soviet literary criticism once again came to mirror the ideological trends of the time. An analysis of the views and attitudes expressed by critics in their interpretations of Dostoevsky's world outlook, particularly as it is revealed in The Devils, permits one to isolate the principal issues and concerns of the glasnost era and to investigate how these interpretations reflect the shift in the ideological trends within the country that was provoked by the new official policies in the Soviet Union.

5.1. IDEOLOGICAL TRENDS IN THE SOVIET UNION DURING GLASNOST

By opening up the Soviet press to a variety of opinions long submerged in society, glasnost acted as a catalyst that stimulated and provoked the diverse ideological camps to articulate their positions. Socio-political debate was waged even more openly and heatedly than before, dissension no longer being curbed or regulated by official organs[3]. The ideas of glasnost became the focus of both open praise and open criticism, which were expressed through the medium of literary scholarship. As before, critics, upon entering the new phase in Soviet history, addressed the question of what was happening in the contemporary situation and what paths the country and its people should take in the future.

Focusing their attention on the questions of Russia's place in the international sphere, the development of a new socialism, and the place of religion and spiritual concerns in society, critics expressed their views on the changes occurring in the society around them through the interpretation of the nineteenth century Russian

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[3] The adherents of the different currents of thought expressed virulent criticism of one another, blatantly denouncing those of the opposing grouping. There were reciprocal accusations of one-sidedness, narrow-mindedness, of the putting of personal ambition before a true desire for the country's well-being, of the politicisation of all issues, of a superficial interpretation of events of the past and present. Each believed the other to be guilty of journalistic, publicistic propaganda, of attempting to instil in the reader preconceived thoughts and feelings, and of seeking popularity rather than to solve the essential problems. S. Chuprinin comments ("Situyatsiya" p. 201) on how glasnost unleashed an element of reciprocal exposures and defamations. He claims that left without authority, the Russian litterateurs were allowed to settle scores, fight for ideological leadership. That which had formerly been hidden, escaped into the press, multiplied in millions of copies, and, high above the many calls for "consolidation" (p. 202) and "cultural discussion", could not but take on the decades old civil war logic with its simple rule: "He who is not with us, is against us." Chuprinin seeks an explanation for this transformation from a healthy competitiveness into a conflict of positions, where various literary journals attempt to out-argue one another by mutual reviling, and claims the reason to be that the possibility to express oneself is only partial. Literature, according to him, would not need to "politicize" itself as much if the impulse generated in 1985 were firmer, and if the will to reform, to rebuild the whole life of the country and people were more consistent and steadfast. N. Staroselskaya attributes the bitter character of the polemics to the fact that a culture for debate had been made impossible by the enforced agreement of opinion, total rejection of glasnost, and intolerance towards ideological divergencies that had existed for decades. N. Astafyev in his contribution to the discussion "O chom molchim?" published in January 1989, says that although they have pleaded with one another to observe restraint, the debates are such that the public could well have the impression that literary critics are merely taking stock with personal offences, yet real problems do exist, as does a real opposition of positions.

classics. As S. Chuprinin states in "Situyatsiya"[4], both groupings were glad of perestroika, and both sides sought a better future through social, economic, political, and spiritual change, for Russia and the Soviet Union, but they had exceedingly diverse principles which they do not wish to forego, and conducted their struggle against different objects of hatred and fear[5]. Dostoevsky's The Devils once again became the focus of literary critical attention, and the diverse ideological standpoints of the two principal currents of thought that had formed the supporters of the glasnost reforms, or the "democrats", and its opponents, or the "patriots"[6]- came clearly to light through the interpretations of his text.

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[4]Znamya, January 1990, p. 206.

[5]These aggressive polemics provide evidence of a continuation of the mentality that divides society into "ours" and "theirs", of the desire to unite the "ours" around certain issues, and reject completely the validity of the "theirs". Karen Stepanyan points out in her contribution to the discussion on Yuri Karyakin's book, that this typically Russian division of society began a long time before communism, stemming from the pagan tendency to regard people as either our kinsfolk or others. He sees clear evidence of its continuation in the accusations being levelled at the left press, and the widespread notion that all supporters of radical social reform are the force of foreign people. He describes this attitude as a tragic illness of the soul for which a treatment must be found in the contemporary situation. In his article: "Tri shaga k istine", he again discusses the origins of this attitude in Russian thinking. He says that already in 1905, the inspired symbolist poet, Minsky, wrote, "who is not with us, is our enemy, must fall" (p. 185), and that this sinister division into "ours" and "theirs", sanctioned from above, manifests itself in the instantaneous exclusion of all those counted amongst the "others" from the very right to be called a man. S. Chuprinin also speaks of how the urge has continued amongst the intelligentsia to divide themselves according to who is with whom and who is against whom. He remarks ("situyatsiya" p. 209) that during the time of stagnation the choice of "ours" and "theirs" was simpler and more comfortable than at present. It was easy to distinguish those standing under the banner of semi-official organs and those who placed themselves in more or less declared opposition to them. According to him, in previous epochs there at least existed the illusion of oppositional unity of culture against the fight with unculturedness implanted from above, in the antagonism towards bureaucracy, formal ideology and formal pseudo-literature, but now this is impossible. The break-up of culture into two remains, but the demarcation line does not at all lie where it used to, clearly separating "apprentices" and "dissidents". L. Saraskina in her discussion with Yuri Karyakin affirms that during glasnost Russians were again living by the principle "ours"-"not ours", and the slogan "he who is not with us is against us", although the new humanised communists turned it around to "who is not against us is with us".

[6] H. Mondry identifies these two opposing currents in her article published in South African Essays on Literature, History and Ideology in Eastern Europe and USSR (1988-1990), and speaks of how both the adherents of "pan-humanism" or "proraby perestroiky" (superintendents of perestroika) and the "pochvenniki" (back to the soil movement) or "samobytniki" (originators), use literary allusions and quotations from 19th century texts as arguments and counter-arguments in ideological polemics. And in her publication The Evaluation of Ideological Trends in Recent Soviet Literary Scholarship, she discusses this antithetical pattern of thinking in Russia during glasnost remarking on how it showed the failure of the "proclaimed aim of glasnost" of pluralism (p. 50) in intellectual activity.

There were two particularly striking features of the glasnost debates. Firstly, while the reformers promised a move to greater democracy, they envisaged this to be within the structures of the socialist system. They encouraged the exposure and criticism of the horrors that had occurred in the past and admitted that socialism as it had been put into practice had caused much social and economic misery, but they did not question the validity of socialism in theory. However, in spite of their calls for freedom of expression within a socialist context, criticism began to extend past the initially acceptable limits, and there was increasing pressure for "real" change, for a change to the very foundation of soviet socialist society. Secondly, for the first time pro-westernism represented the officially inspired line, while nationalism became a strong force of opposition, so that while glasnost did not transform the basic dual model of Soviet society, but shifted the accent of approval, so that Westernism came to be officially regarded as a positive policy. The Russian nationalism that had arisen during the Brezhnev era, and gained official sanction, now not only increasingly became a force of strong opposition to the leadership, but also appeared to become increasingly conservative, revealing extreme elements, that displayed Russian chauvinist, xenophobic, and even anti-semitic tendencies[7]. This meant that despite the progressive policies of the

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[7]According to T. Remington, (p. 299) these ultra-nationalists saw themselves as engaged in an endless battle against conspiracies and enemies such as the anti-patriots, Zionists, cosmopolitans and emigrés. They were extremely orthodox and advocated strict observance of the Church's teachings, regulations, rites. In their view, economic and political progress should be subordinated to religious spirituality embedded in national tradition, and that if the moral and spiritual well-being of society is endangered, then both technological progress and political freedom should be cast aside (see comment of "Aleksandr", a member of Pamyiat in D. Shlapentokh's article in E.M. Thompson ed, p. 130). The extreme nationalists refuted any possibility of reconciliation with the West, for, to them, this would mean the drowning of Russian nationality in the ocean of cosmopolitanism. While there was little sense of Russian messianism, there was a strong desire amongst this camp to isolate Russia from the rest of the Soviet Union and the world, to be spiritually self-sufficient, to protect their country from the corrupting influence of international currents. Their main aim was to preserve Russia's originality, her "Russianess" and national self-consciousness. R. Danilevsky, for example, (Russkaya Literatura, no. : 1985, p. 162) speaks of how there have been attempts to deprive the Soviet people of a rich historical past, mangling the history of Russian social thinking, defiling the culture, defaming the names of genii of which not only Russia, but other nations too can be proud, introducing false orientations into literature, bibliographies, reference and text books, destroying the monuments of history, convincing Soviet citizens with various anecdotes and remarks that they are as though "genetically inferior" people not capable of ensuring progress in their country on their own. To them, solutions to present ills, must be found through links with the past, with tradition, to which the young generation and the enthusiasts of the new epoch were becoming dangerously indifferent. Many even desired a return to the autocratic past, believing that strong power is preferable to democracy.

Gorbachev leadership, amongst the Russian public, and a large section of the intelligentsia, there was a retreat into isolationism.

The opposition of the nationalist grouping to the reforms of the Gorbachev leadership, became increasingly virulent and aggressive as the new era of glasnost and perestroika became ever more firmly entrenched in both law and the social consciousness. And indeed, this block of right conservatives steadily gathered ground, so that in January 1990, S. Chuprinin was able to declare that it "presents a highly serious threat to perestroika"[8].

5.2. THE END OF GLASNOST

Although the Party was initially able to manipulate the new situation created by the glasnost reforms to its own advantage, it had nevertheless allowed literature and literary criticism to become a forum in which increasingly virulent views opposing its own were expressed and read by the public. The most serious threat to official ideology was shown to be not Stalinism, but Russian nationalism, the reawakening of Russian national consciousness. This mounting conservative force asserted itself through the medium of literary criticism as an opponent of any free market economic and democratic political reforms. Freedom of speech permitted open expression of even the most extreme Russian nationalism, which quickly became an important social phenomenon. T. Remington attributes this group's ability to exert a great influence over the new political movements to the absence in Soviet society of an ideologically based alliance between "power elites", or the state structures, and "prestige elites", such as the intelligentsia to whom significant influence over the reform programme had been given by the Gorbachev programme[9]. This "uneasy coexistence of the guided liberalisation of expression under glasnost" and the decompression of society, complicated the reform procedure and led to the Party's loss of control over its planned transformation of

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[8] Ibid., p. 219.

[9] "A socialist pluralism of opinions: glasnost and policy-making under Gorbachev", The Russian Review, July 1989, p. 292-293.

Soviet society[10].

The glasnost era came to an end with the events of August 1991, that toppled the Soviet leadership and lead to the disintegration of the USSR. This August 1991 revolution defeated not only the Communist Party, but Gorbachev's reform project as well. It was seen as a momentous gain for the bourgeois democratic values advocated by Yeltsin, and the total defeat of socialism, for although the communiqué issued by the "Emergency Committee" attempted to justify itself by invoking the "centuries old" tradition of the Russian nation and Empire, no reference to socialism was made. However, while the democrats triumphed in 1991, this did not mean the weakening of the nationalist movement. In fact, the strong influence and gathering popularity of this group became evident in the post-glasnost years, when in the wake of the failure of the Soviet reform process, the widespread disillusionment with the changes made, gave momentum to a group that promised Russia's economic, social, spiritual salvation, and affirmed the superiority of Russia over all other nations.

Commentators have sought to explain the collapse of Gorbachev's reformist regime, evidence of which was visible before the final events. N. Condee and V. Padunov explain the demise of perestroika by its internal contradiction: its standard bearers were totalitarian in their liberationist philosophy, and enraptured with their own Radiant Future- when they would finally emerge victorious after dismantling the discredited Radiant Future of their predecessors[11].

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[10]G.A. Hosking, foreseeing this outcome, described the sit(tion: "Because of the build-up of establishment non-conformity, however, when Gorbachev decreed glasnost' he was not so much impelling it as uncorking it- and once let out of the bottle, it will prove very difficult to stuff back in, unless the party is prepared to resort to terror of Stalinist dimensions, which seems unlikely. The utterance of long-suppressed complaints and grievances has increased not only the honesty of the media and creative unions, but also their cliquishness, the 'group passions and personal ambitions' of which Gorbachev himself complained at the Party conference." (Graffy, J. & Hosking. G. [eds.], 1989, p. 3).

[11]"Perestroika suicide: not by bread alone", New Left Review, June 1991, p. 85.

J. Gooding[12] asserts that the reform movement had been nourished by the assumption that removing the administrative-command system would leave in place a reinvigorated party, able to pursue socialism with the nation's support. However, by 1990, it was evident that the democratisation process either had to break the bounds of partial democracy or go into reverse. According to Gooding, the forces that had been unleashed since the beginning of glasnost engulfed the leadership and it proved incapable of maintaining its position of a vanguard party within a democratizing polity. He explains how the revolution of February-March 1990 threatened to dispossess the ruling class and drove the die-hards to begin a determined rearguard action against a leadership that they felt had betrayed them. At the same time, there was increasing self-assertion on the part of the radicals, so that by the end of 1990, it was clear that the politics of confrontation had displaced the politics of consensus. Gorbachev's strategy, says Gooding, had been to advance gradually towards a version of social democracy with the support of the broad mass of the population whose innate loyalty to socialism would enable him to disregard the "extremists" at either end of the spectrum, but by the end of 1990, this strategy lay in ruins. Far from dominating Soviet politics from an expanding centre, Gorbachev faced extremists to the Right and Left who were encroaching rapidly on the middle ground by offering clear-cut solutions to the ethnic and economic problems which had undermined any possibility of consensualism. He asserts that what occurred was a revolution against the effective party and the mental constructs that sustained it, carried through in the name of Leninist socialism, and its result was to erode whatever credibility the official ideology still possessed without generating any alternative ideology that could command general assent. The revolution left in its wake a wounded party, a more or less destroyed ideology, and a weakened president. The party had lost its right to rule.

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[12] "Perestroika as revolution from within: an interpretation", The Russian Review, January 1992.

5.3. SOVIET LITERARY CRITICISM DURING THE POST-GLASNOST PERIOD

The situation in literary criticism in the glasnost era clearly being marked by the continuation of the tendency to express one's ideological viewpoint through critiques of works of literature, and an analysis of literary criticism's interpretations of The Devils having revealed the existence of two opposing ideological camps, it is of interest to consider the role of literary criticism and Dostoevsky scholarship in the post-glasnost era.

The most distinctive feature of literary criticism during the post-glasnost years is the polemics that are being waged over the role of "great" literature, and in particular the 19th century classics, and around the question, "Do we have a literature today?"[13]. Evidence of this debate was already clearly visible in the glasnost years, and in the new Russia, it quickly gained momentum. While the classics, as well as books and articles about them, were widely published during the glasnost period, there was evidence of readers' interest turning increasingly to the detective novels, scandal "chronicles" and sexual publications, liberally being produced by co-operatives, and post-glasnost Russia saw a complete change in publishing patterns.

Already in September 1988, L. Eriov spoke of a "new wave" in Russian culture and how the concept of a best-seller, formerly alien to Russians, had taken root in the native soil[14]. A new mass culture developed, the products of which included erotic manuals, works on mysticism and the supernatural, psychoanalysis, love and sex, many of these subjects having formerly been forbidden or considered "taboo" by the Soviet leadership. M. Kononov in August 1989 remarked that 10th class pupils are finding it ever more difficult to love Dostoevsky and Tolstoy and that the contemporary reader is more tempted by the digestible pink-grey trash on the shelf than by the classical works next to them. According to him, there is no doubt that

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[13]Saraskina, L.: "Tolstoevsky protiv Dostoevsky", Znamya, 1992.

[14]"Pisatel, chitatel, izdatel na iskhode dvadtzatogo veka", Neva, September 1988, p. 176.

the artistic taste of the readers changed during the glasnost years as they began to turn to those works that elicit a quick response[15].

The changes instituted by perestroika initiated a transformation of Soviet and Russian culture. In their article on the effects of perestroika on culture, N. Condee and V. Padunov declare "Thus, it was not that perestroika came to be concerned with economics rather than culture, but rather that culture, passing through the historical period of perestroika, came at last, for better or worse, to be defined and restricted by economic realities"[16]. In their opinion, perestroika freed culture of its enslavement to and dependence on politics, which had been deemed necessary for the preservation of the totalitarian order. They see the inevitable result of this in the post-perestroika era through the end of the intelligentsia's privileged position of influence. To them, one of the most significant developments of the years 1985-91 was the consistent dismantling of "creator cults"[17], the roots of which can be traced back to the 19th century, and which under Soviet rule became the model for propagandizing and defending the accomplishments of the single reified Artist within cultural production. This phenomenon formed the basis of both official and oppositional cultures in the Soviet Union. The steady dismantling of these cults manifested itself in the growing irrelevance of previously revered authors. This meant that during glasnost, there was no longer much demand for the classics, and an ever growing demand instead for the "urban survival" manuals[18] that covered such topics as karate, sexual disfunction, business financing, herbal remedies, horoscopes, computer programming, carpentry, dream charts and American management, as well as for erotica, sold on the black market. They assert that the dismantling of creator cults appears to be only one aspect of a more significant social process- the devaluating and de-fetishising of cultural production and the de-elitising of cultural composition. It is incontestable, they continue, that the laws of

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[15]"Ni za kakuyu chechevizhnuyu pokhlebku", Znamya, August 1989, p. 205.

[16]"Perestroika suicide:not by bread alone", New Left Review, June 1991, p. 68.

[17]Ibid., p. 72.

[18]Ibid., p. 76.

the emerging marketplace are having a devastating effect on Soviet publishing, and the processes occurring are forcing a radical reorganisation of priorities within the culture industry. Whilst the Soviet populace might well still be the most literate in the world, they say, what it is reading has changed dramatically in the last few years. The various changes towards a free market system have given the cultural consumers unprecedented economic power, and the frantic pursuit for consumers has given rise to the various new literary modes that have flooded the market: "Publishing has clearly lost its former professional identity as the purveyor of Enlightenment, its new identity is defined as 'business' pure and simple"[19]. Capitalism has completely taken over the industry, and Russia is experiencing the end of culture as it has known it for three centuries.

Many commentators, like Padunov and Condee, see no reason to be alarmed at these developments. Indeed, the rise of mass culture is seen by some as not only an inevitable, but also a desirable development, as one of the great achievements of glasnost. Several critics who praised the advent of "new " literature as a mark of true emancipation, saw it as rightfully replacing the discredited classics. They assert that the written word should no longer seek to construct global plans for the people and should not attempt to save them.

S. Shvedov in his article, "Literaturnaya kritika i literatura chitatelej", published in Voprosy Literatura in May 1988, defends this mass literature, and criticises those who scorn it. He says that such works have been sorely neglected in criticism, and very little is known about that which has constituted the reading matter of a significant group of the population in recent times. He blames this on the narrow-mindedness of specialists. There is a definite tendency, he says, to divide literature into only two parts: "high" literature and "flops". The latter are ignored by researchers although they are read by the broadest layer of the Russian public. He continues that one should not too hastily accuse the readers of this literature of a "low level of culture" or a "lack of exactingness", and that the attitude that has

[19]Ibid, p. 80.

been confirmed today must be halted: that a reader is like a child who should not be given any independence, for adults know better than him what he needs. As a result, the most reading nation does not read what it chooses, but that which is published for it in the largest editions, which is on the shelves of any local library, and which is strongly propagated by the means of mass communication. In the division of literature by critics, is implied the rejecting evaluation of "not real" literature, which critics regard as hindering the normal development of literature and spoiling readers' taste. Shvedov asserts that the estimative formulae accorded to this literature such as "trade" or "lower" literature should be replaced by a more neutral concept such as "popular" literature, and its place in the literary process must be recognised. The tendency to speak only about its destructive influence on morality, must end, for research shows this to be far from the truth. Popular literature must be studied with the aim of understanding and explaining it.

L. Gudkov and B. Dubin discuss the phenomenon of mass culture in their article, "Uzhe ustali! Sotsiologicheskiye zametki o literature i obshchestve", published in Literaturnoye Obozreniye in 1991. Some, they explain the evident fall in interest in the printed word, the cutting back of subscriptions and the reduction of leading journals' authority, by the fact that people are tired out, disillusioned with any kind of leader. They acknowledge that there has indeed been an increased feeling of indifference, weariness, despair, confusion amongst people, which has dramatically reduced the popularity of the "thick" journals with ideological programmes, both conservative and democratic, but they cannot accept this explanation as exhaustive or sufficient, as there is much evidence of a growth in the book culture. Readers, they explain, are now able to obtain literature that is truly interesting to them- fantasies, detective novels, adventure, children's books. In their view, the serious changes that have occurred in the reading public. It is rather a case of the classical literature of the 19th and 20th centuries having been discredited through its association with Soviet power. They assert that the intelligentsia have used the classics to create a "legend of power"[20], a basis for

[20] p. 98.

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its own authority, and thus, according to them, an aversion to the classics can be equated with an aversion to totalitarian culture. They consider the emergence of mass culture to be a normal process in a time of transition and change and by no means as a catastrophe, as the fall of high culture indicates a step towards the democratisation of Russian culture. According to Gudkov and Dubin, the products of mass culture can have the positive effect of normalising society.

Many other critics have defended the value of the classics, believing that not only are they an essential part of the great national culture, but also that they still have a role to play in guiding the minds and sentiments of their readers, and in giving insights into problems experienced by society and by mankind. They believe that the classical authors are Russia's national spiritual fathers, and that the lessons offered by the great classical heritage should be assimilated in the context of contemporary Russia. To them, true literature is inherently philosophical, reflecting the surrounding world, and discussing issues such as life and death, good and evil, social and moral laws, the meaning of life, the limits of freedom, and the goals of history. L. Erifyov claims that history prepared a special place for the Russian philosophical novel, whose most important representative was Dostoevsky, and that his ideo-thematic tendencies are being continued in the only true literature that exists in contemporary society: the socio-philosophical novel. The classics are thus eternal.

It was principally the nationalist orientated critics who, claiming the classics to be an important heritage of the Russian national past, and to be linked to the concept of "narodnost", applauded the return of the classics to the broad reading public during the glasnost[21]. They equated this with the return to them of their national dignity. I. Rodyanskaya declares in her contribution to this discussion that the classics are becoming a form of narodnost, of pan-national consciousness. Although in previous eras a pogrom was conducted against the classics, during which Dostoevsky was prosecuted as a traitor, and despite the fact that there are

[21]Cf "Klaasiki i my", Moskva, March 1990.

still forms of a fight against the classics in the contemporary USSR, these works will not be forgotten. They are, she says, our contemporary consciousness, or, at least, its moral, spiritual basis, and thus the fight around them is really an echo of a much more significant fight that is being conducted worldwide today[22]. Yu. Davidov in his discussion of R.P. Warren's work, states that he, like Warren, firmly believes that only high literature can oppose false art, and the pseudo-art that is nowadays actively participating in the mass industrial production of pseudo-personalities, of people who are denying the highest in themselves through the use of disguises. He speaks of how only high literature can inspire moral activeness, "self-creation"[23] in man, helping him overcome passivity.

These defenders of the Russian classics deny the value of the products of mass culture, with its imported Western tastes, and condemn the present passion for "pulp" literature. They see these as worthless, morally unhealthy works that degrade human and national dignity, and as a sign of the spreading intellectual and cultural poverty of the new generation of readers. They fear the flooding of the book market with low standard commercial publications, as yet another harmful infiltration of capitalism.

A. Egiasaryan in his contribution to the discussion "O chom molchim? i pochemu?" published in Voprosy Literatury in January 1989, notes with alarm that the "chtiv" (pulp literature) is spreading among the reading public much quicker than serious, highly artistic books. And I. Rostovtseva criticises the huge wave of the so-called literature "of a middle level" which grows and broadens like a snowball, coming down on the readers' heads, corrupting their taste. She says that it is no secret that the fashionable, the acknowledged, the popular, at times far from authentic literature, dresses itself up in the guise of talent, and so people need to be helped to recognise this cheap, masked banality.

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[22] p. 191.

[23] "Literatura i demokratiya", Voprosy Literatury, February 1988. p. 148.

This debate, begun in the glasnost years, was amplified in the post-glasnost years, when critics ever more stridently expressed their views and ever more firmly took their stand. The process of the destruction of "high culture" and its replacement by mass popular culture could no longer be denied and was hastened by the transition to a full free market economy and private enterprise. This quickly lead to a sharp reduction in the publication of the texts that were most in demand under perestroika, and the reading of texts of high culture being replaced by the reading of the products of mass culture.

I. Zolotussky speaks with deep regret about this contemporary process[24]. Citing the words of Dostoevsky that state that in all periods of despair and national shame, nihilism comes to the surface and gains the upper hand, speaks of how headlines have recently appeared in newspapers pronouncing the end of the questionable lessons of the classics. He says that on the eve of the putsch, 10 August 1991, an article appeared in Independent Newspaper, entitled "The death of the gods" that heralded the death not of criminal generals and party officials, but of Russia's classic writers, who are regarded as being on an equal footing to Lenin by the force of the pressure that they exert on readers. He continues that while just yesterday, litterateurs prostrated themselves before such writers as Solzhenitsyn, they are now ready to throw him off his pedestal like some kind of Sverdlov or Dzerzhinsky. This article, he says, proclaimed that a writer should not construct global plans or attempt to s[illegible] the people, that the writer's sacred role has come to an end, for the aspiration to give guidance is absurd in the new historical situation. Zolotussky asserts that after the putsch, the campaign to shoot down the classics grew, became a trend, as nihilism changed from peaceful refutation to execution. He speaks of how after the young critic A. Ageev discredited the Russian classic by accusing it of instigating the red terror, and others, such as V. Erofeyev clamoured to read funeral speeches over its corpse. A. Genis, he says, declared that writers could no longer claim power over the people, that it was time to end the "tyranny of the classics" and "begin a new

[24] "Nashi nigilisti", Literaturnaya Gazeta, June 1992.

page". According to Zolotussky, the present era's illness has its roots in the Revolutionary Democrats and then the Leninists, but they accommodated the classics instead of annihilating them. The left radical ideologues, he asserts, dominated literary criticism and began what seemed to be the final and decisive annihilation of the classics. He repeats the western saying that he who fights with someone for a long time, begins to smell of his enemy, and states that this is what occurred with the extreme leftists: the nature and culture of communism and anti-communism proved to be one- revenge and the settling of scores. The breaking down of the walls of communism took place before the people's eyes, together with the praising of those who did it, but these triumphant new leaders then began to add to the destruction all that preceded communism as well. The Revolution, he continues, is only beginning now when new ideologues are beginning to smash the holy of holies- the Russian spiritual tradition. This nihilism is nourished by atheism and educationism, the overcoming of which will take some time, for it is necessary to reteach the whole people, to instil in several generations that Russian literature did not encourage violence and revolution, that it only warned of the disastrous consequences of this path. The nihilists proclaim that if Russia is to enter the civilized world, it must be like it, including in culture. There, in the West, culture is separated from life, the artist is solitary and egotistical, and he does not claim the role of teacher. Zolotussky laments that in the present situation, the deep Russian experience contained in the classics remains uncalled for and unnecessary, that Dostoevsky is dead.

H. Mondry discusses this debate in her article, "Is there a crisis in the Russian Cultural and Literary Press? Some Diverse Opinions"[25]. She asserts that while glasnost was characterised by debate within the confines of high culture, post-glasnost culture in Russia, is characterised by the post-modernist aversion to high culture. She says that following Shalamov's views expressed in the 1970s, the post-modernist writers of the 1980s displayed an open contempt for the 19th century classic. Alongside this trend, emerged mass culture and post-Soviet post-

[25] Slavic Almanach Vol II, 1993.

modernism. Like Shalomov the representatives of these currents accused the writers of the second half of the 19th Century of inspiring the fanatics of the revolution with their messianic political and social messages, and through the interpretation of Soviet scholars, of having contributed to the cause of totalitarian culture. She explains that the end of financial support of the publishing system in post-perestroika Russia, which meant that for the first time, literature was left to make it on its own, ended the institution of "high culture", and lead to the "crisis of Russian literature" of 1991 and 1992, which resulted in the near collapse of the state and Central Committee-run publishing system[26].

Mondry, after discussing the articles by Condee and Padunov, and by Gudkov and Dubin, which defend the existence of "makulakultura", turns to an article by Lev Annensky and M. Zolotonosov that was published in the same issue in January 1991 of Voprosy Literatury as the Russian translation of Condee and Padunov's article. She says that these Russian literary critics do not accept the phenomenon of mass culture in Russian society, seeing it as essentially a product of the Western world, where there is little interest in reading. Annensky warns against mixing Russian and Western models, as this has produced disastrous results in the past. There will be no place for the intelligentsia with it culture of high values in a society based on trade. Zolotonosov sees American and Russian mentality as fundamentally different. To the Russians, freedom and free culture do not relate to the concepts of material and financial wealth. Although these authors believe that high culture should de-ideologise itself, they also affirm that it must be protected from the laws of the free market which threaten its survival.

Mondry also highlights the opinions of such prominent emigré writers as V. Aksenov and Solzhenitsyn. Aksenov asserts that high cultura and literary periodicals will perish in competition with "chernukha" if they are not subsidised. He strongly criticises the flooding of the contemporary literary market with privately produced publications which he regards as amoral and devoid of aesthetic

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[26] p. 21.

power. Solzhenitsyn believes that it is this literature of the "pseudo avant-garde" that is destroying cultural traditions. He warns of a catastrophe if man is deprived of the spiritual values generated by literature and art. These writers both defend the eternal human values and the aesthetic and ethical ideals of high art.

5.3.1. Dostoevsky Scholarship in the Post-glasnost Period

Dostoevsky once again occupies a special position in the literary debates of the post-glasnost era. Despite the onslaught of mass culture and the growing opposition to the classical tradition, to many critics he continues to represent an exceptional civic leader, a teacher, prophet and a guide, and his works one of the most impressive achievements in the understanding of the world, man and society. Although many attempts have been made to cast his lessons aside, there is still ample evidence of an interest in his views and opinions, and his works continue to be analysed in the light of contemporary ideological issues, to be regarded as having a guiding influence on people. Dostoevsky's creation has once again been brought into the ideological debates dividing society, and critics' ideological biases in many instances continue to be revealed through their interpretation of his texts. As before, the artistic and ideological components of his work are not always separated and it is clear that tendentiousness in literary criticism has not been eradicated.

L. Saraskina and Yu. Karyakin in a discussion held in February 1992, interpret the new situation and express their dissatisfaction with current trends in society, with reference to The Devils[27]. I. Rishina, in an introduction to this discussion, declares that in these times in the seventh year of perestroika, when no-one is listening to the voice of the people anymore, and the loud appeals of the next ringleader, agitator are resounding in the square, it somehow springs to mind that Dostoevsky started The Devils in January-February, and it is not coincidental that in this turmoil of thoughts and feelings, there is a desire to reach out to Dostoevsky's visionary

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[27] "Zakruzhilis besy razny, budto listya v noyabre...", Literaturnaya Gazeta, 11 March 1992.

lines. Saraskina and Karyakin are disillusioned with the reform process, acknowledge the failure of glasnost, and are pessimistic about the road that contemporary society is taking. Around them they see the disintegration of morals, hypocrisy, confusion, ambition, and criminal behaviour which is accepted without question- the cycle foreseen by Dostoevsky is occurring once again. L. Saraskina declares that when looking around her she is tempted to fill in beneath each character of the novel The Devils the surname of a contemporary performer. In her view, all the characters are ideological-political symbols and both the liberal-idealists such as Stepan Verkhovensky and the political rogues such as Peter Stepanovich, are immortal. She sees many "devils" in the present day context, for there has been, in her opinion, qualitative changes in the personnel of "perestroika". The intelligentsia are now being disregarded in the headlong dash forwards. The great ideal is being ruthlessly destroyed, and it seems that there was not even time to bury and conceal those killed in the days of the August putsch. Both the ultra-right and the ultra-left are too concerned with their own positions. Yuri Karyakin affirms that the principle of "all is permitted" is being held up ever more brazenly and joyfully. Saraskina continues that people are only interested in their slogans and demonstrations, and all the new tribunes are filled with claimants to the posts and positions in the established hierarchy. They are not interested in discussions to solve problems, only in furthering their own aims of profit, power, and career. She is sceptical of the stream of self-expression and confession from both sides, seeing it as posing, coquetterie. It is not repentance, but showing off to the public. For the stream of exposures also continues. No-one is clean. Karyakin agrees that the contemporary devils consist of all those exposing one another from both sides. Evil continues in society, perhaps even greater than before. He disapproves of those who have replaced the original reformists around the president of Russia. To them, The Devils remains, in Saraskina's own words, a book to read about and try to understand life, even to influence it.

And I. Zolotussky, speaking in his article, "Nashi nigilisti" published in Literaturnaya Gazeta in June 1992, about the present tendency to pronounce the death of the classics, asserts that everything tends towards devilishness, towards Peter

Verkhovensky, Shigalev and the demon of denial, Stavrogin. To him, the extreme leftists are the new form of the "devils" that have been born from the struggle against the former devilishness. They are no better than the communists for whose downfall they take credit and are in fact even more destructive nihilists that their precursors, as is shown by their attitude towards the classics.

A. Turkov[28] criticises those of a nationalist orientation, saying that the rise of fascism and the awakening in people of the basest instincts is again becoming topical in the present day. He asserts that even Dostoevsky, who, in his opinion, at times suffices to an excess in his patriotism, is now falling under suspicion in the eyes of the upholders of national-cultural "purity" and self-sufficiency, because of some of his remarks, such as his references to Schiller's deep influence on Russian culture. Turkov calls for unity amongst all nations through the medium of culture, which he describes as a multiple conductor linking not only neighbouring peoples, but also those separated by great distances. It is culture and not politics that creates a true "friendship of the people", opening roads between peoples, through powerful currents of mutual interest and goodwill. He asserts that in his time, Dostoevsky grieved bitterly that all kinds of rhetoricians with their empty speeches, were compromising the expression "the beautiful and the most high", words which in his youth had been fresh and uttered without irony. Turkov declares that the same is now occurring with other words which are now devoid of their meaning, and laments the present trend to separate instead of unite nations.

B. Sporov in his article "K ponyatiyu krasoty"[29] returns once again to an analysis of Dostoevsky's phrase "beauty will save the world". His discussion of this phrase reveals his nationalist orthodox outlook, and he openly polemicises with the "democrats" whom he accuses of having misunderstood Dostoevsky's words. He speaks of how this message of salvation was misunderstood for a long time,

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[28]"Po zhivomu", Literaturnaya Gazeta, 20 May 1992.

[29]Literaturnaya Rossiya, 02 September 1994, p. 11.

having been seized as a short, convenient formula. People, seeing it as a purely aesthetic category, began to produce beauty wholesale and in retail. Sporov claims that it is because of Russians having been deprived of freedom of the word, of conscience and of choice for so long, and because even in the present times, the best, most honourable writers are unable to speak about many things, that something very important was lost in the meaning. According to him, Yu. Seleznev closely approached the solution of the mystery, but beauty is still seen as an aesthetic category. Such beauty perishes under the onslaught of devilish destruction, and will not save the world from perishing in sin. He turns to Dostoevsky's words about the "ideal of beauty", and the asserts that beauty is a journey or movement towards the ideal, and truth is a journey towards the Truth. He further examines Dostoevsky's notebooks, concluding that to Dostoevsky, beauty was of a divine, spiritual origin. He quotes a letter from the writer to V.A. Alekseev, in which he says the ideal of beauty is directly named: Christ. This is the Ideal, incarnated in the Image and the Word, which provides man with the eternal aspiration towards a goal, a movement towards the one Truth. It is only in such a revelation that the words "beauty will save the world" can be understood for beauty is Christ and Christ is the Saviour. With this definition, one can understand the phenomenon of Russian literature, for it moved the world towards the ideal of beauty, and the one Truth.

There has, no doubt, been some waning of interest in literary criticism in the changing political climate of the post-perestroika period, as well as indications of a decline in the importance of this literary genre. Many commentators ascribe this to the fact that in an open and democratic society, political and social questions are addressed by professionals in these domains, and so Russian literary criticism has lost its traditional role of providing a medium for the expression of sociological and political opinion[30]. However, there is also evidence to show that literary criticism has neither separated itself from political and social issues, nor lost its taste for polemics, but,

[30]Cf Mondry, H., 1993.

albeit to a lesser extent, continues to play an important role in providing a forum for ideological debate and discussion. It is also evident that classical literature has not been dealt a final blow by the latest policy shifts, but continues to be used by critics as a means of expressing their own ideological point of view. The post-perestroika times do not seem to have brought with them an end to the tendency to confuse ideology and literature, and to seek guidance and messages relevant to the contemporary situation from the classical writers. There seems good reason to believe that Russian literary criticism will retain its specific social character.

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