

Like the editors of *Zvezda*, the editors of the magazine *Leningrad* have permitted grave errors in having published a number of works penetrated with a spirit of obsequiousness to everything foreign . . .

How could it happen that *Zvezda* and *Leningrad* published in the hero city known for its advanced revolutionary traditions, a city which was always a nursery of advanced ideas and advanced culture, permitted apolitical works without idea content, and alien to Soviet literature, to creep into its magazines? What is the significance of the errors made by the editors of *Zvezda* and *Leningrad*?

The leading employees of the magazines, in the first place their editors, Comrades Sayanov and Likharev, forgot the thesis of Leninism that our magazines, be they scientific or artistic, cannot be apolitical. They forgot that our magazines are a powerful means whereby the Soviet State educates the Soviet people and, in particular, the youth, and for this reason must be guided by the phenomenon which comprises the vital foundation of the Soviet structure—its politics. The Soviet system cannot suffer its youth to be educated in a spirit of apathy towards Soviet politics, in a spirit of disrespect and lack of ideas.

The strength of Soviet literature, the most advanced literature in the world, is that it is a literature in which there are not and cannot be any interests other than those of the people and the State . . .

For this reason any preaching of lack of ideas, indifference to politics, "art for art's sake", is alien to Soviet literature, harmful to the interests of the Soviet people and State and can have no place in our magazines . . .

The Central Committee of the C.P.S.U.(b) decrees:

The editors of *Zvezda*, the board of directors of the Union of Soviet Writers, and the propaganda administration of the Central Committee of the C.P.S.U.(b) are to take steps for the unconditional elimination of the errors and weaknesses of the magazine indicated in our decree, are to correct the line of the magazine and guarantee a high level of ideas and in art while forbidding access to the magazine for the works of Zoshchenko, Akhmatova and others like them . . .

The Zhdanov Report

At about the same time Zhdanov made a lengthy report to the Leningrad Party *Aktiv*⁽¹⁾ and to a meeting of Leningrad writers on the shortcomings of these two Leningrad magazines. He cruelly dissected and ridiculed the humorous stories of Zoshchenko and the highly individual lyrics of Akhmatova, quoted Lenin's strictures against literary works which did not serve the Party and hence the people, declared that the best traditions of Soviet literature were a continuation of the best traditions of Russian 9th century literature created by "our great revolutionary democrats — Belinsky, Dobrolyubov, Chernishevsky, Saltykov-Shchedrin, continued by Plekhanov, and scientifically worked out and put on a sound basis by Lenin and Stalin" and defined the wishes of the Central Committee as follows:

Comrades, what does the Central Committee demand and desire? The Central Committee of the Party desires that the Leningrad *Aktiv* and Leningrad writers should well understand that the time has come when it is necessary to raise our ideational work to a high level. It behooves the young Soviet generation to increase the strength and power of socialist Soviet development, using to the full the moving forces of Soviet society for a new unparalleled flourishing of our well-being and culture. For these great tasks the young generation must be educated to be steadfast, courageous, unafraid of obstacles, ready to meet them and able to overcome them. Our people must be an educated people, with high ideals and with high cultural and moral requirements and tastes. For this purpose it is necessary that our literature and our journals should not stand aside from the tasks of the day but should help the Party and the people to educate youth in a spirit of supreme devotion to Soviet development, in a spirit of supreme service to the interests of the people.

(1) Active members