

A few days later the *Aktiv* of the Leningrad Party Organization assembled to discuss Zhdanov's report and passed a long and humble resolution in accordance with it and the writers of Leningrad were summoned to a special meeting to endorse the decree. If any voices were raised in defence of so popular a humorist as Zoshchenko and so gifted a poetess as Akhmatova, they went unrecorded.

Decree Applied to Music

On February 10, 1948, the Central Committee of the C.P.S.U.(b) issued a decree, from which the following extract is taken, in which the principles enunciated in the decree on the magazines *Zvezda* and *Leningrad* were applied in the field of music:

As far back as 1936, the anti-popular formalistic distortions in the work of D. Shostakovich were subjected to sharp criticism in the organ of the Central Committee of the C.P.S.U.(b), *Pravda*, in connection with the appearance of the composer's opera, *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*, and the harm and danger of this trend in its effects upon the development of Soviet music were exposed . . .

Despite these warnings and in the face of the instructions issued by the Central Committee of the C.P.S.U.(b) in its decisions on the journals *Zvezda* and *Leningrad*, on the film *Bolshaya Zhizn*, on the repertoire of theatres and measures for their improvement, no reorganization has been carried out in Soviet music . . . The situation is particularly bad in the sphere of symphonic and operatic work. It is a case of composers adhering to a formalistic and anti-popular trend. This trend has found its fullest expression in the works of composers such as D. Shostakovich, S. Prokofiev, A. Khachaturyan, V. Shebalin, G. Popov, N. Myaskovski and others, in whose work formalistic distortions and anti-democratic tendencies in music, alien to the Soviet people and to its artistic tastes, are particularly clearly represented. Characteristic features of this music are the denial of the basic principles of classical music, the propounding of atonality, dissonance and disharmony, which are alleged to be the expression of 'progress' and 'innovation' in the development of musical form, the rejection of the most important bases of musical composition such as melody, predilection for confusing and neuropathical combinations, which make of music, cacophony and a chaotic accumulation of sounds. This music is strongly redolent of the contemporary modernistic, bourgeois music of Europe and America, which reflects the miasma of bourgeois culture, the complete denial of musical art, the impasse which it has reached . . .

The Central Committee of the C.P.S.U.(b) considers that this unhappy situation on the front of Soviet music has come about as the result of the incorrect line pursued in the sphere of Soviet music by the Committee on Art, attached to the Council of Ministers of the U.S.S.R., and by the Organizing Committee of the Union of Soviet Composers . . .

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

1. To condemn the formalistic trend in Soviet music as anti-popular and in fact leading to the liquidation of music.
2. To instruct the propaganda and agitation department of the Central Committee and the Committee on Art to secure a rectification of the position in Soviet music, the elimination of the shortcomings outlined in the present decree of the Central Committee, and to secure the development of Soviet music in a realistic direction.

Criticism Continued

Criticism of creative work in all the arts on the basis of the above decrees has continued by means of authoritative articles in *Pravda* and other influential periodicals. Of this type of criticism the following excerpts from an article entitled "Concerning an Anti-Patriotic Group of Theatre Critics", printed in *Pravda* of January 28, 1949, will serve as an example: