Two Views on Ukrainian Culture of the Late 1910s-Early 1920s in Two Open Letters from the Year 1960[1]

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1. If we try to find a common framework for the microhistorical method, given that it is practiced by humanities scholars from different countries and schools of thought, we might approach this task by combining three components: the meticulous work of the researcher at the level of individual cases and micro-social relations, their examination in as many contexts as possible and scrupulous attention to minute details, with the intention of deciphering them historically, that is, by considering what these details could mean and what role they could play in the context where they emerged[2]. In doing so, the question addressed by this study is not reduced to the usual series of case-study questions, but claims to generalize at a higher level than that of the individual cases chosen for analysis[3].

The protagonists of microhistorical research are often people whose behavior and life choices both follow established social norms and challenge them[4], and the tasks of such research explicitly involve seeking out and emphasizing the agency of historical subjects, their ability to produce and transform ideas, make important decisions, consciously build relationships with family members, neighbors, colleagues, partners and, of course, with readers, if these actors are creators of texts themselves[5].

If we consider the history of literature, especially Russian and Soviet literature of the last two hundred years or so, we will be surprised to find that this model quite accurately captures a range of contemporary approaches to the study of writers as historical actors. It does not require great intellectual courage to speak of a writer's agency: since the late 18th and early 19th centuries, writers have consistently claimed that their texts and public behavior (and sometimes even private behavior) are crucial to society, even if they deliberately avoid discussing public issues[6]. Literary history — if it is to consider not only artistic texts but also individual writers' biographies, the large and small communities they associated with, the public and state institutions whose principles of operation they had to recognize or ignore — is essentially a microhistorical discipline[7]. But even if this has not yet been generally

[1] I would like to thank Maxim Lukin and Mykhailo Nazarenko for their invaluable help with the archival and bibliographic research, and an anonymous peer reviewer of "eSamizdat" for significant contribution in the work on this article.

[2] C. Ginzburg — C. Poni, *The Name and the Game: Unequal Exchange and the Historiographic Marketplace*, in *Microhistory and the Lost Peoples of Europe*, ed. by E. Muir — G. Ruggiero, Baltimore 1991, pp. 2-10; G. Levi, *On Microhistory*, in *New Perspectives on Historical Writing*, ed. by P. Burke, Cambridge 1992, pp. 93-113.

[3] S. G. Magnusson — I. M. Szijártó, *What is Microhistory? Theory and Practice*, London - New York 2013.

[4] On the concept of 'normal exception' see: C. Ginzburg — C. Poni, *The Name*, op. cit.; C. Ginzburg, *Microhistory: Two or Three Things that I Know About it*, "Critical Inquiry", 1992 (XX), pp. 10-35; E. Grendi, *Repenser la micro-histoire?*, in *Jeux d'échelles. La micro-analyse a l'expérience*, ed. by J. Revel, Paris 1996, pp. 232-243. It is important for literary historians that the 'normal exception' can appear not only as a subject (a potential protagonist of the study), but also as a particular document or set of documents, which allow us to discover and describe a reality that had remained hidden.

[5] B. S. Gregory, *Is Small Beautiful? Microhistory and the History of Everyday Life*, "History and Theory", 1999 (XXXVIII), pp. 100-110.

[6] See, for example: Iu. Lotman, *Sotvorenie Karamzina*, Moskva 1987; Idem, *Aleksandr Sergeevich Pushkin: Biografiia pisatelia*, in *Pushkin: Biografiia pisatelia. Stat'i i zametki, 1960-1990*, Sankt-Peterburg 1995; Idem, *Roman A. S. Pushkina "Evgenii Onegin": Kommentarii*, Sankt-Peterburg 1995, pp. 21-184; S. Schahadat, *Das Leben zur Kunst machen. Lebenskunst in Russland vom 16. bis zum 20. Jahrhundert*, München 2004; K. Ospovat, *Terror and Pity: Aleksandr Sumarokov and the Theater of Power in Elizabethan Russia*, Boston 2016; A. Zorin, *Leo Tolstoi*, London 2020; D. Khitrova, *Lyric Complicity: Poetry and Readers in the Golden Age of Russian Literature*, Madison 2021.

[7] Another approach to microhistorical literary history is demonstrated in: S. Bru — L. Somigli — B. Van den Bossche, *Futurism: A Micro-*

acknowledged, microhistorical methods are particularly useful for studying literature of the late Soviet period.

Microhistory as a method is heuristically useful, and the text produced by the researcher can be entertaining and fascinating if the subject and corpus of sources analyzed are chosen with care. The researcher who works as a microhistorian often faces the challenge of creating an individualized, thick description[8] that leaves room for conjecture, hypothesis, dating and attribution, while at the same time pointing out questions that cannot be answered precisely. For this, one needs some excess or, at any rate, a fair amount of detail in the sources consulted. However, this compaction and excess of sources should stand out against a background of noticeable informational scarcity, if not a vacuum, when it comes to other aspects of history and culture of the same period. It is therefore no coincidence that microhistory became so popular in the study of the late Middle Ages and early Modern Age: the European 16th and 17th centuries are precisely the epochs in which particular events, characters or problems became the subjects of detailed descriptions which now allow for the illumination of potential objects of microhistorical study, for these objects to enter the spotlight.

In this respect, the history of Soviet literature hardly seems the most suitable period for microhistorical analysis: it has preserved, at first glance, too many sources, and the literary process of the late Soviet era looks like a fully illuminated stage with almost no areas of shadow and no visible darkness left. This impression, however, is misleading.

The public existence of late Soviet literature was defined by a series of rules and interactions, many of which were not formulated officially, but were realized through semi-private, behind-the-scenes communications between participants in the literary process. Moreover, in different local contexts — determined by the specifics of the region, city, publishing house or press, a literary group to which one or another author belonged, or the patrons he turned to for help — these backstage rules of the game could differ significantly, as did hierarchies of status, basic values, and the main goals of literary activity and literary struggle[9].

These rules, as well as the practices they engendered, which in turn led to adjustments of the rules, can be reconstructed using the methods of microhistory: here, the material is partially preserved, and evidence of such communications and isolated traces of discussions of the "rules of the game" can be found in the public record[10].

Moreover, the diversity of local contexts with their own rules of the game, typical of late Soviet literary life, seems to specifically call for microhistorical analysis, which involves a gradual, layered "dismantling" of contexts. At the same time, it should be noted that the actors themselves, who existed in several contexts at once, easily switched and moved from one set of rules, communication practices and values to another. Situations proved more difficult when actors (and authors!) who existed in different contexts and had little interest in what was happening outside their literary world (which they often considered the most important — if not the only — one) entered into private and public exchanges. This intentionally 'limited' view was often reinforced and became almost immutable when the defining factors for a given author's literary community, movement or single-mindedly formed context included the strug-

history, Cambridge [UK] 2017.

[8] The polemic between microhistorians and Clifford Geertz's cultural anthropology is well known (see, for example: G. Levi, *On Microhistory*, op. cit.). However, it is significant that it runs along the lines of uniqueness/multiplicity, homogeneity/heterogeneity of cultural contexts to be reconstructed and deciphered, but not the very possibility of creating 'thick descriptions'.

[9] On the concept of 'backstage' in late-Soviet literary history see: I. Kukulin — M. Mayofis — M. Chetverikova, *Kuluarnye improvizatsii: social'naia kooperatsiia, obkhod pravil i protsessy kul'turnogo proizvodstva v pozdnem SSSR. Stat'ia pervaia*, "Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie", 2022, 174, pp. 81-101; Idem, *Kuluarnye improvizatsii: social'naia kooperatsiia, obkhod pravil i protsessy kul'turnogo proizvodstva v pozdnem SSSR. Stat'ia vtoraia*, "Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie", 2022, 175, pp. 190-228.

[10] On the microhistorical skill of reading 'between the lines' when interpreting sources from the Soviet period, see: C. Ginzburg — I. Dayeh, *Philology and Microhistory: A Conversation with Carlo Ginzburg*, "Philological Encounters", 2022, 7, pp. 197-232. It is telling that, when discussing microhistorical research, Ginzburg praises Leo Strauss's essay *Persecution and the Art of Writing* (1941), one of the first historical descriptions of the ways in which authors used allegorical coding of meanings under totalitarian regimes.

gle against censorship, discrimination on political, ethnic, religious grounds, the consequences of repression and the restoration of the memory of repressed writers. The risks, costs and tensions of these struggles often made writers less sensitive to other contexts (and their rules and values), and this, in turn, would generate tension and even open conflict. The emergence of such quarrels and conflicts in Soviet public space offers literary historians an opportunity to spot this mismatch of contexts, to reconstruct them in detail, and to investigate why they remained mutually invisible to the participants in a literary battle.

When contemporary scholars interpret polemical exchanges in the Soviet press, they usually assume that these disputes were primarily motivated by ideological differences and/or by the authors' affiliation with different groups or currents. The examples of mismatched contexts that I analyze in this paper can help us reach a better understanding of a particular type of public communication in which the authors of polemical remarks could read and frame certain situations differently depending on the literary politics they considered most important to them.

2. This paper will focus on a discussion, or, more accurately, a quarrel, which broke out in late October – early November of 1960 on the pages of "Literary Gazette" [Literaturnaia gazeta], the main periodical of the Union of Soviet Writers, which was nicknamed "Literaturka" in Soviet literary circles. The discussion actually consisted of two open letters. The author of the first one, Maksym Ryl'skii, a renowned Soviet Ukrainian poet and recipient of two Stalin prizes, addressed his former friend, the famous prose writer Konstantin Paustovskii, accusing him of making unacceptable mistakes in the descriptions of Ukrainian culture of the late 19th – early 20th century, most of which in the third volume of his memoirs, *In that Dawn* (*Nachalo nevedomogo veka*), published in 1958.

Ryl'skii's letter opened with declarations of deep love and appreciation of Paustovskii's work, but then expressed keen regret that "in relying on his truly amazing, but not always precise memory", Paustovskii "is not very accurate with names, facts, quotations"[11]. Ryl'skii first points out minor mistakes, like describing the color of wild pigeons as white when it is actually grey ("sizyi"), or misquoting a famous poem by Mikhail Lermontov *Kogda volnuetsia zhelteiushchaia niva*... ("When, in the cornfield, yellow waves are rising...").

However, Ryl'skii soon proceeds to cases when Paustovskii's "negligence" leads to "much more impactful consequences". Among them is a fragment from *In that Dawn* where Paustovskii describes Simon Petliura's nationalist-democratic rule in Kyiv (1918-1919) and compares the people he calls "haydamaks" (a common term for paramilitary troops during the Civil war) to his memories of Ukrainian theatre from his early childhood, i.e. the 1890s. Paustovskii believed this was the theatre of Panas Saksaganskyii and remembered how "almost in every performance the same *haydamaks* had their eyes lined with chemical blue, and danced a rollicking *hopak*"[12].

This comparison elicited a lengthy admonition from Ryl'skii. First, he reminded Paustovskii that Saksaganskyi was a renowned theatre director, "one of the most glorious sons of our people" whose achievements "were acknowledged by many great masters of the Russian stage", including Stanislavskii, and that Saksaganskyi personally opposed self-exoticizing elements, like the *hopak*, and fought for a "realistic and democratic theatre". Then, Ryl'skii points out that Saksaganskyi's theatre did not exist in Kyiv at the time of Paustovskii's childhood, and the theatre he remembers was probably an enterprise of Saksaganskyi's cousin, Mykola Sadovskyi, which staged such historical dramas as *Savva Chalyi*, *Handzia*, and *Bondarivna* by Ivan Karpenko-Karyi, and *Bohdan Khmelnitskyi* by Mykhailo Staritskyi. Thus, Paustovskii's reminiscences about the vulgar *hopak* appeared very

[11] Here and subsequently, the article cites the following publication: M. Ryl'skii, *Otkrytoe pis'mo Paustovskomu*, "Literaturnaia gazeta", 29.10.1960, p. 4.

[12] A Ukrainian folk dance that first emerged as a male dance among the Zaporozhian Cossacks. After *hopak* began to be performed on stage since the end of the 18th century, it became a concert dance and was included to operas, ballets and films.

selective and biased.

The second criticism was directed at Paustovskii's characterization of the Ukrainian artist Mykola Pymonenko. Paustovskii considered him a representative of the same self-exoticizing trend that he had noted in the theatre: "This aged man worked in his workshop from memory alone. With incredible speed and carelessness, he painted all sorts of pretty huts, cherry orchards, mallows, sunflowers, and girls in head-to-toe ribbons". The whole passage concludes with the following statement: "Petliura tried to revive this sugary Ukraine. But, of course, nothing came of it". For Ryl'skii, this reference to Pymonenko's art also seemed contemptuous. He reminded readers of Pymonenko's achievements, as well as the books and articles devoted to his work.

The final point of Ryl'skii's claims concerned the characterization of the Ukrainian language at the time of Petliura and the Directory, which Paustovskii provides in his memoirs. Paustovskii calls this language "Galician" and condemns the large number of foreign borrowings and its heavy-handedness in favor of the popular language of the "perky young maidens", familiar to him from his childhood. Ryl'skii argues that the language criticized by Paustovskii is the very language "in which Kotliarevskyi, Kvitka, Shevchenko, Marko Vovchok, Panas Mirnyi, Lesia Ukrainka, Kotsiubinskyi..." [i.e. the most popular classics of Ukrainian literature – *M.M.*] had written, and that the writer's linguistic expertise should not be limited to the language of the "Kyiv milkmaids".

Paustovskii responded with his own confused and aggrieved "Open letter" in the same newspaper a week later. He could not understand or explain to readers why, after many years of collaboration and friendship, Ryl'skii was harshly criticizing his autobiographical prose and even Paustovskii himself as a person and writer. Some of Ryl'skii's accusations, according to Paustovskii, originated in his desire to prove that the theatrical character of Petliura's rule in Kyiv (which Paustovskii points out in his memoirs) casts a pall over all of Ukrainian culture of this period. Paustovskii also thought that in some cases Ryl'skii had not listed actual mistakes, but facts which could be represented in a variety of ways, or merely enforced his own taste and views as the only correct option available to respectable literati, as in the case of Mykola Pymonenko.

> So why are you trying to impose your taste and your evaluation of that artist on me and to translate a simple, substantive conversation about Pymonenko "into a plan" of resentment against Ukraine? You put the question in such a way as to say that my non-recognition of Pymonenko is evidence of my dislike of all Ukrainian culture. Such conclusions are simply unbelievable. And one more thing. You cannot seriously argue that Pymonenko is a great artist just because he was friends with Repin[13].

To neutralize the criticism of his work, Paustovskii provided the reader with proof of his deep and sincere ties with Ukrainian culture and with Ryl'skii in particular.

> I remember a lot. I remember the sandy steep banks of the Dnipro, the quiet and warm backwaters where we wandered with you, our so-called 'Aksakov-style' fishing, the curious interlocutors – 'grandpas', who were born 'back in the time of Tsar Alexander II', our remarkable companion-writer Vadim Okhremenko, a magically beautiful pond with golden carps somewhere around Fastov or Popelnaia, where we tried to go several times but never went; the sonnets you have dedicated to me; the steamships on the Dnipro, where you used to read your poems and [Alexander Pushkin's] *Eugene Onegin* [in Ryl'skii's translation into Ukrainian] to the female collective farmers (almost all of them were or seemed beautiful to me), women wiped their tears with shawls made of printed cotton, the kindest Alexander Kopylenko, who took us on his 'Antelope-Gnu' [i.e. rattletrap car], fierce disputes with [the famous film director Oleksandr] Dovzhenko about what poems should be read to a beloved girl, winter Crimea in the light snow, playing the piano to the roar of the North-East wind, jokes and arguments, those first days of the war in Kyiv, when you and Iurii Ianovskii saw me off to the front and we said good-bye fraternally somewhere in the Great Podvalnaia Street – and many, many other things[14].

3. On the day after Paustovskii's letter was published in "Literaturnaia gazeta", the central newspaper of the All-Union Supreme Soviet "Izvestiia" addressed this dispute with a short, but very remarkable anonymous note. It was most probably written by the editors of the newspaper and was addressed to the editors of "Literaturnaia gazeta". It sounded like a real reprimand, saying that there was no reason for this dispute to take place in a public venue.

> In both M. T. Ryl'skii's letter and K. G. Paustovskii's reply, it is difficult to find anything that could serve as an occasion for a

[13] "Literaturnaia gazeta", 03.11.1960, p. 6.
[14] Ibidem.

> serious dispute. Therefore, it is impossible for the reader to understand what caused the harsh tone of the letters, especially since both writers are worthy representatives of fraternal literatures [i.e. Ukrainian and Russian – *M.M.*] and their participation in truly great literary affairs is dear to all.
> It is surprising that the editorial board of *Literary Gazette* saw fit to print these letters. It would have been much more reasonable if the authors had exchanged their quips by regular mail...[15]

This note came out on November 4, three days before the holiday commemorating the October revolution. The common rule for the major Soviet newspapers of this period was as follows: the closer a newspaper issue was to the anniversary of the October revolution, the more optimistic and uncritical the published texts should be, and the more praise of the achievements of the Soviet state, economics and society should be included. Although the note about Ryl'skii's and Paustovskii's exchange was printed on the very last page of the issue, it was a clear sign that the publication of the two open letters was seen as unwelcome by the highest ranks of Soviet leadership. Given that the chief editor of "Izvestiia" was Nikita Khrushchev's son-in-law Aleksei Adzhubei, the reprimand to "Literaturka" could have been written under Khrushchev's direct order. The text of the reprimand leaves no doubt about what was considered undesirable and even dangerous. The quarrel seemed to destroy the very important propagandistic image of "fraternal collaboration" between writers living and working in the Russian Federation and in the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic.

A month later, the editor in chief of "Literaturnaia Gazeta" Sergei Smirnov had to resign from his position. We know from archival publications that Smirnov had already attempted to resign in August, 1960, but was kept in his position by the Department of propaganda of the Central Committee of the Communist Party[16]. That is why his resignation in late 1960 seemed unexpected. For many weeks after the decision had been made, he was replaced not by an actual editor-in-chief, but by an 'acting' editor-in-chief, Valerii Kosolapov. So, we may conclude that the 'open letter affair' could be one of the reasons for Smirnov's forced resignation.

Ryl'skii's essay is rather well known in Ukrainian literary scholarship. It is considered a skillful and successful attempt to use a specific occasion to speak about national stereotypes and Russian chauvinism[17]. Volodymyr Panchenko argues that even though Paustovskii was criticizing the same feature of Ukrainian culture of the 1920s that other Ukrainian poets, such as Mykola Bazhan, also regarded as fruitless self-exoticization, Bazhan was doing it from inside the culture, while Paustovskii did it from the outside. Ryl'skii had every reason to think that his former friend Paustovskii did not notice, or did not want to notice, any Ukrainian cultural phenomena besides the archaic and exotic – and also exoticized – peasant culture[18].

While I agree with all these conclusions, I nevertheless insist they are not sufficient for an adequate understanding of this quarrel. There are several curious details that make us pose additional questions and search for possible answers. Let me list these details in order:

1. Ryl'skii's open letter was published long after the novel he was criticizing had appeared: the second part of the memoir cycle *In that Dawn* came out in early 1958, in the third volume of Paustovskii's collected works, while Ryl'skii's open letter was written in October 1960. This means we are analyzing not an immediate, but rather a delayed and self-restrained reaction.
2. The publication of Ryl'skii's open letter was unexpected and painful for Paustovskii, it led to a breach in his friendship with Ryl'skii, and their ties were not restored before Ryl'skii's death in 1964. However, Ryl'skii himself continued to mention Paustovskii in a positive light in his critical essays on ecological

[15] "Izvestiia", 04.11.1960, p. 4.

[16] V. Ogryzko, *Nerazgadannye tainy Kataeva*, "Literaturnaia gazeta", 2017, 4 https://reading-hall.ru/publication.php?id=17839 (latest access: 03.05.2023) (Full text of this article is published only on the Internet. I am forced to cite a relatively recent issue of "Literaturnaia gazeta", which is notorious for being an ultra-rightist periodical, since this interview provides the only reference to the archival source that mentions Smirnov's attempt to resign in August, 1960).

[17] V. Aheieva, *Mystetstvo rivnovahy: Maksym Ryl'skii na tli epohy*, Kyiv 2012, pp. 310-311.

[18] V. Panchenko, *Estafetna palichka "velmozhnikh, ale laskavikh chuzhozemtsiv..."*, "Ukrainskii Tizhden", 07.06.2015, https://tyzhden.ua/estafetna-palychka-velmozhnykh-ale-laskavykh-chuzhozemtsiv/ (latest access: 03.05.2023).

topics, calling him one of the best writers at describing the beauty of nature.

3. Ryl'skii first formulated the key critical points of this open letter in his correspondence with a schoolteacher and ardent student of Ukrainian culture, Mykola Kosharnivskyi, in March 1960, i.e. more than six months before he sent his open letter to "Literaturnaia gazeta"[19]. He admitted that he had intended to publish something about Paustovskii's memoirs and promised that perhaps one day he would do so.

4. For some reason, that day comes seven months later, i.e. in October 1960. In his cover letter to "Literaturnaia gazeta" Ryl'skii asks the editor-in-chief to publish his text as soon as possible[20].

5. According to the cover letter, the text first had a different title, *On some mistakes and blunders of K. Paustovskii*[21]. This title obviously refers to an established journalistic style and recalls the critical 'exposé' articles of the Stalin-era 'anti-cosmopolitan' period more than the 'open letter' style. Judging from this cover letter to the chief editor of "Literaturka", we may presume that initially Ryl'skii did not plan a public letter exchange, and prepared a monologue that would demonstrate his willingness to defend Ukrainian culture from vulgarization and external attacks.

6. The editors of "Literaturka" decided to change the form and genre of Ryl'skii's text, transforming it into an open letter that invited a response. Changes of this magnitude would have required serious editing and negotiations over the text, as well as communication with the addressee, who had to confirm ahead of time that he would submit a response. However, the editors honored Ryl'skii's wishes and published his text just two weeks after it had been sent to them from Kyiv. Knowing the usual pace of editorial work, we may assume that everything was done quite fast, and yet we still do not know the reason for this urgency.

If we also consider the editorial note from "Izvestiia" and Smirnov's subsequent resignation from the position of chief editor, the entire story turns out to be not a "small thing," as Vira Aheieva calls it in her monograph on Ryl'skii's poetry[22], but a serious incident that attracted the attention of party leadership and influenced the future fate of the major Soviet literary periodical. This is why it deserves thorough micro-historical analysis, and I would like to present its preliminary results.

4. The first thing that should be mentioned about these two remarkable publications from 1960 is that they were preceded almost two years prior by another letter exchange which, however, was not accessible to the general public. In late 1958, a group of Ukrainian writers addressed a letter to Paustovskii which they first sent to the editors of "Literaturnaia gazeta", and which the editors, in turn, forwarded to the for State Publishing House for Literary Works, the publisher of Paustovskii's six-volume collected works, including the third part of his memoir cycle, the novel *In that Dawn*. The letter was signed by a group of Ukrainian writers that included Ryl'skii. The very idea of sending the letter not to the publisher, but to the editors of the central newspaper of the Soviet literary world proves that idea of publicly criticizing Paustovskii had emerged long before October 1960, but apparently was not supported by the editors of "Literaturnaia gazeta". The main – and only – accusation that Paustovskii received from these Ukrainian poets concerned the same issue that Ryl'skii would address in 1960: Paustovskii's characterization of the artist Pymonenko. They did not agree with Paustovskii's representation of Pymonenko as depicting Ukraine in an overly sugary and glamorous manner (Ryl'skii would criticize Paustovskii about this same point in 1960). In his response, Paustovskii formulated some of the statements he would later use in his open letter to Ryl'skii. First, he emphasized that he was very devoted to Ukraine and its culture, and that blaming him for insulting Ukraine because of his low estimation of Pymonenko's work was not fair. Second, he claimed that the Ukrainian writers' reprimands

[19] M. Ryl'skii, *Zibrannia tvoriv v dvadtsiati tomakh*, 20: Listi. 1957-1964, Kyiv 1990, p. 117.
[20] Ivi, pp. 184-185.
[21] Ibidem.
[22] V. Aheieva, *Mystetztvo rivnovahy*, op. cit., p. 310.

over his description of Pymonenko simply proved that they tended to enforce a specific type of censorship: "The Ukrainian cultural figures who sent a letter to the *Literary Gazette* are attacking the independence of judgment, freedom of taste, and criticism"[23]. Last but not least, Paustovskii interpreted the whole situation of addressing a collective critique to him as appealing to rhetorical devices that were characteristic for the campaigns of the Stalinist period and should be set aside for good under the new political and social conditions of the Thaw. He was particularly angered by the word "unprincipled" ("besprintsipnyi") which, in his view, had belonged to the language of Stalinist campaigns and had usually been deployed to completely discredit the opponent on ideological grounds.

When preparing his response to Ryl'skii's letter, Paustovskii would repeat some of the fragments of this text from January 1959 word for word. The final idea expressed in the earlier, unpublished letter is, however, omitted in the open letter published in November 1960, yet important for understanding its major implications and consequences. This was a declaration of significantly diverging views on Ukrainian culture shared by Paustovskii, on one side, and by his opponents from Ukraine, on the other. The vocabulary he uses here is also worth our attention. He speaks of a "true", or "authentic" ("podlinnyi") Ukraine, insisting that his ideas for how it should develop were more relevant than those of his counterparts who criticized him for not loving Pymonenko's works. Although the letter was not published, Ryl'skii and its other authors, who would certainly have been apprised of Paustovskii's response, would have been offended by his insistence on having not just a right, but a claim to authority in speaking of Ukrainian culture.

Thus, this series of letters of 1958-1959 reveals the main polemical strategies used by both sides. The first, elaborated by Ryl'skii and his Ukrainian colleagues, included, among other things, unreflexive usage of the vocabulary of late Stalinist propaganda. The second, suggested by Paustovskii, took this very unreflexivity as proof of his moral righteousness and basis for his own self-confident view on how to describe Ukraine. The fact that a previous letter criticizing Paustovskii for his dislike of Pymonenko was written and sent to him in 1958, can explain Paustovskii's anger and anxiety in the late 1960: he was struck not by Ryl'skii's position as such, since he already knew it, but by the fact it was widely publicized by the main Soviet literary periodical.

5. First, what did Paustovskii write in the third part of his memoir cycle that made Ryl'skii so furious about his depictions of Ukrainian culture in 1918-1919, and why did the memoirist make such clumsy and inaccurate statements? Paustovskii understood quite well that the third part of his memoir cycle, the novel *In that Dawn*, was the most questionable of all the parts he had already published. Therefore, he did not even attempt to submit it to any of the 'thick' literary journals and saved this text for his upcoming collection of works. The problematic status of the text was due to two reasons. The first was Paustovskii's political position in 1917-1920. He was not an orthodox Bolshevik, and the decisions he made about his own work and movements were dictated by his unwillingness to live in and work for Soviet Russia. The second was his own concept of the revolution and its role in his own biography. It was too aestheticized, very different from the descriptions of the major historical forces already canonized by the classics of socialist realism. So, it had to be presented not as a part of the contemporary literary process, but rather as a part of the personal heritage of the mature writer.

Let us turn to the first of the two reasons. Paustovskii had to somehow explain in his memoirs his hasty departure for Kyiv from revolutionary Moscow in the summer of 1918, his work as a journalist during the rule of Hetman Pavlo Skoropadskyi (April-December 1918), then the Directory (in Kyiv, December 1918-August 1919), and then, after the capture of the Ukrainian capital, under the Whites in August-October 1919. The explanations Paus-

[23] K. Paustovskii, *Pis'mo k gosudarstvennomu izdatel'stvu khudozhestvennoi literatury*, 07.01.1959, http://paustovskiy-lit.ru/paustovskiy/letters/letter-311.htm (latest access: 03.05.2023).

tovskii provided about his own actions and their motives were rather vague, but his writing became much clearer when addressing subjects that, as he had learned long before, required univocal evaluation. One of those subjects was Skoropadskyi's and Petliura's rule in Kyiv. Paustovskii tried to express his utmost disdain towards not just the governments, but the elites and cultures that emerged and were formed in that period. So, in trying to distance himself from the political forces that were considered hostile and incompetent, he slandered all of Ukrainian culture during that brief period. According to Paustovskii, it was immature and chaotic, as everything in the political life of that time seemed to be. For Ryl'skii, on the contrary, it was the beginning of the future Ukrainian cultural Renaissance of the 1920s, when the complicated (and, in his view, very democratic) prerevolutionary culture was passing its legacy on to the diverse and multi-faceted culture of the 1920s.

The dispute over the Ukrainian language was particularly crucial here. Paustovskii considered the Ukrainian language of Petliura's Ukraine a product of artificial and superficial Galician influence, since the full development of the literary language had been blocked by the policy of Russification until the Revolution of 1905, when the so-called Ems Ukaz, or Ems Decree, aimed at suppressing Ukrainian culture, lost its legal power. In fact, at this time, Halychyna, or Galicia, i.e., the Ukrainian area of Austro-Hungary, was one of the places where the real modernization of the Ukrainian language was carried out by local intellectuals; that is why Paustovskii called this modernized language "Galician". However, the literary work and linguistic innovations of the writers who lived on the territory of the Russian Empire were also significant[24]. For Ryl'skii, this language was a legitimate heir to the classic Ukrainian literature of the second half of the 19th-early 20th centuries: "[...] it is the language of a great people, the language of wonderful literature, represented before the October Revolution by the names of Kotlyarevskyi, Kvitka, Shevchenko, Marko Vovchok, Panas Mirny, Lesia Ukrainka, Kotsiubinskyi"[25].

While Ryl'skii tried to rehabilitate many of the writers of the Ukrainian Renaissance repressed during the Great Terror and forcibly forgotten after it – such as his friend and colleague Mykola Zerov (1890-1937) – and insisted that the diversity of the literary field of the 1920s could serve as an example for contemporary literary development[26], Paustovskii did not acknowledge the validity and distinctiveness of that culture.

In a 2015 publication, Volodymyr Panchenko noted that the way Paustovskii treated Ukrainian culture in the third part of his memoir cycle could have reminded Ryl'skii of a similar incident that happened around the time period described in *In that Dawn*[27]. In November 1919, Il'ia Erenburg published in the newspaper "Kievskaya zhizn'" [Kyiv Life] an article entitled *On Ukrainian Art*. Although Erenburg agreed that there was a phenomenon that could be designated by the terms "Ukrainian art" and "Ukrainian culture", he nevertheless was quite reserved in recognizing its richness and originality. He insisted that contemporary Ukrainian poetry was much indebted to the Russian poetry of the Silver Age, that the state of the fine arts was even more deplorable, that Ukrainian "Young theatre" was "poisoned" with "undemanding modernism". He was also very critical of the contemporary Ukrainian language: "The Ukrainian language has grown and lived in the countryside; transplanted to the office of a philosopher or to the street of a modern city, it has faded and withered away"[28].

This publication would not have gone unnoticed by the Ukrainian literary community. Several weeks later, the poet, translator, literary scholar (and, what is important for our story, close friend of Ryl'skii) Mykola Zerov published a review, or more accurately, a response to Erenburg's article. Zerov insisted that Erenburg's text was very characteristic

[24] Iu. Shevel'ov, *Vnesok Halychyny u formuvannia ukrainskoi literaturnoi movy*, Kyiv 2003.

[25] M. Ryl'skii, *Otkrytoe pis'mo*, op. cit.

[26] See his poetic manifesto published just a couple of weeks after the open letter: M. Ryl'skii, *Naddesnianskie razdumia*, "Sovetskaia kul'tura", 12.11.1960, p. 2.

[27] V. Panchenko, *Estafetna palichka*, op. cit.

[28] Erenburg's article is cited from the publication: I. Erenburg, *Ob ukrainskom iskusstve*, in *Na tonushchem korable: stat'i i fel'etony 1917-1919 gg.*, Sankt-Peterburg 2000, pp. 154-157.

of its time, the period of the "persistent campaign of Kyiv's agents of the volunteer [Denikin – *M.M.*] government against Ukrainian books, schools, and science"[29]. Zerov even admits that some of Erenburg's points are fair, but he argues that the most important thing is not 'what' Erenburg said, but 'how, in what tone' he said it. Erenburg was too arrogant and contemptuous, which prevented him from adequately understanding the new Ukrainian art and its origins. "Like every representative of the pan-Russian culture from the local philistines, he considers himself competent to pass authoritative verdicts on Ukrainian culture – without a thorough study of it".

However, if Ryl'skii was clearly inspired by the analogous Erenburg-Zerov polemic, Paustovskii could have been unaware of it, as he had left Kyiv for Odesa soon after the city was recaptured by the Denikin army (the so-called Volunteer Army of Russia's South) on October 17th, 1919, and the government announced a new wave of mobilization. At least, this is how Paustovskii describes his escape from Kyiv in the autumn of 1919 in the final chapters of *In that Dawn*[30]. In other words, the similarity in the assessment of Ukrainian culture in Erenburg's texts of 1919 and Paustovskii's memoirs of the late 1950s was most likely a product of what Zerov defined as the specific position of Russo-centric cultural elites both in Russia and in Ukraine, rather than Paustovskii intentionally aligning himself with Erenburg's position. According to Zerov, they could not express solidarity with the policy of national persecution (first by the tsarist and then by the Denikin government), and at the same time, they did not have the courage to openly protest it. In my view, when it comes to the late 1910s and late 1950s, this position was defined by a belief that one's cultural outlook, life experience and Ukrainian episodes in one's biography could give one the right to determine within what boundaries and in what way the Ukrainian national revival of the late 1910s-early 1920s should have taken place.

There was one more important factor that could have made Ryl'skii take particular offense at some fragments from Paustovskii's Kyiv chapters. The entire memoir cycle features a consistent leitmotif, which can be described as the author consciously and explicitly rejecting his Ukrainian and Polish heritage and substituting it for a Russian identity (or, as Paustovskii more often calls it, Middle Russian). This motif is on display in statements such as the following:

> Since this summer, I have been forever and with all my heart attached to Central Russia. I know of no country with such great lyrical power and so touchingly picturesque – with all its sadness, tranquility, and vastness – as the middle belt of Russia. The magnitude of this love is difficult to measure. Everyone just knows it. You love every blade of grass, drooping with dew or warmed by the sun, every mug of water from a forest well, every tree over a lake, its leaves fluttering in the windless air, every cry of a rooster, and every cloud that floats across the pale and high sky.
>
> And if I sometimes wish I could live to be a hundred and twenty years old, as Grandpa Nechipor[31] had predicted, it is only because one life is not enough to experience in full all the charm and all the healing power of our Russian nature[32].

In other words, Ryl'skii might have understood quite well why Paustovskii had to describe his time in Kyiv in 1918 and 1919 with a certain degree of self-alienation. But he could not forgive Paustovskii's superficial and sweeping conclusions about the cultural situation of this period, which was dear to him, and which had suddenly become a topic of great attention and sharp demand in Ukraine, as he well knew.

6. That same year, 1960, an artistic group entitled

[29] Zerov's article is cited from the following publication: M. Zerov, *Ukrainske pismenstvo*, ed. by M. Sulima, Kyiv 2003, p. 304. On November 8/21, 1919, i.e. 5 days after the publication of Erenburg's article and apparently several days before the publication of Zerov's piece, Denikin's counter-intelligence officers shot two prominent Ukrainian poets, Vasyl Chumak and Gnat Mykhailychenko. We may presume that the term "Kyiv agents" pointed to the fact that someone was speculating on deficiencies in Ukrainian culture, while its best representatives were killed on the order of those who called themselves representatives of the all-embracing Russian culture. I am very grateful to Mykhailo Nazarenko for calling my attention to the connection between Zerov's publication and the execution of these two poets.

[30] K. Paustovskii, *Nachalo nevedomogo veka*, in *Sobranie sochinenii*, IV, Moskva 1982, pp. 667-685.

[31] It is very characteristic that Paustovskii uses the Ukrainian name in the "Middle-Russian" context, as if he wants to specifically emphasize the ethnic legacy he rejects.

[32] K. Paustovskii, *Povest' o zhizni*, in *Sobranie sochinenii*, IV, Moskva 1982, p. 79.

"The Club for Creative Youth" was officially organized at the Kyiv October palace. It consisted of several branches, for musicians, visual artists, theater directors and actors and writers, but the literary branch was perhaps the most influential[33]. Among its members were young poets such as V. Symonenko, M. Vinhranovskyi, I. Zhylenko, V. Stus, L. Kostenko, I. Drach, M. Kholodnyi, the prose writers E. Hutsalo, Ie. Kontsevich, V. Shevchuk, and the literary critics I. Svitlycnyi, I. Dziuba, E. Sverstiuk. They soon became known as representatives of the 1960s generation in Ukrainian literature, and some of them, like Vasyl Stus, became active participants in the dissident movement. Their literary and political worldview was largely shaped by the poetic anthologies of Ukrainian poets repressed and killed by the Soviet regime[34]. All these anthologies were published abroad, but were disseminated among the Kyiv oppositional intelligentsia. Ryl'skii knew these young poets quite well. There is a story about how the future members of the club went caroling on New Year's Eve in 1959, and visited Ryl'skii in his country house, and he generously received them with food and wine[35].

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, Ryl'skii was engaged in political and literary rehabilitation of his old friends and colleagues, the poets and novelists of the 1920s, who had perished in the carnage of the 1930s[36]. And these efforts made him ideologically and aesthetically closer to the representatives of the younger generation.

The writer, critic, and Soviet dissident Ivan Dziuba recalled in an interview in 2012:

> Maksym Tadeyevych, for all his cautiousness, was very much invested in the problems of young artists. I must say that the people of the sixties at first were sharply opposed to the older generation. But very soon they realized that not every member of this generation was the same. And that Dovzhenko, Tychina, Ryl'skii, Yanovsky created Ukrainian culture even under terrible conditions of non-freedom...[37]

We can assume that when Ryl'skii conceived of and wrote his essay, and especially when he negotiated its publication in "Literaturka", he was thinking specifically about this literary *milieu* and was trying to gain its respect by being just and brave.

1960 was also the year of a demonstrative public performance of establishing and strengthening ties between Ukrainians living in the USSR and those living in foreign countries[38]. The Society of cultural ties with Ukrainians abroad was created to systematically inform Ukrainian communities abroad that Ukrainian culture was not oppressed on the all-union level[39]. Although that claim was not true, the underlying goal of demonstrating the prosperity and diversity of Soviet Ukrainian culture was behind many initiatives from that period. It could be that Ryl'skii's letter to Paustovskii was also presented to the party authorities that sanctioned the publication as an example of the support provided to Ukrainian culture by the government of the USSR, which meant that even a minor insult, no matter if it had come from a famous or little-known Soviet writer, had to be noticed and corrected.

7. As we look at the events of 1960 more closely, we have to provide a convincing explanation for how and why Ryl'skii chose that specific moment for the publication of his letter, and why he insisted that the article appear as soon as possible. The reason for this choice can be easily found on the pages of the same paper that published the letters. It was the

[33] G. Kasianov, *Nezhodni: Ukrains'ka inteligensia v rusi Oporu 1960-80-kh rokiv*, Kyiv 1995, p. 19.

[34] *Rozstriliana muza*, ed. by Ia. Slavutich, [Detroit] 1955; *Obirvani struny: Antologya poezii poliaglyh, rozstriljanyh, zamuchenyh i zaslanyh 1920-1945*, ed. by B. Kravtsiv, New York 1955; *Rozstriliane vidrodzhennya: Antologiia 1917-1933*, ed. by Iu. Lavrynenko, [Paris] 1959.

[35] V. Ageeva, *Komnata n. 13, v kotoroi rodilis' shestidesiatniki*, "BBC News Ukraina", 30.08.2017, https://www.bbc.com/ukrainian/blogs-russian-41096714 (latest access: 03.05.2023).

[36] M. Ryl'skii, *Poeziia O. Olesia*, in O. Oles', *Vybrane*, Kyiv 1958; Idem, *Pro Hrygoriia Kosynku*, in G. Kosynka, *Novely*, Kyiv 1962; Idem, *Mykola Zerov – poet i perekladach*, "Zhovten'", 1965, 1; Idem, *Mykola Zerov – poet i perekladach*, in M. Zerov, *Vibrane*, Kyiv 1966.

[37] I. Dziuba, *"V samye glukhie vremena Vasil' Simonenko skazal: 'Ti znaesh, scho ti — liudina?'"*, "Fakty", 24.08.2012 https://fakty.ua/ru/152223-ivan-dzyuba-v-samye-gluhie-vremena-vasil-simonenko-skazal-ti-zna-sh-csho-ti---lyudina (latest access: 03.05.2023).

[38] V. Danilenko, *Politychny zminy v SRSR i Ukraini v period khruschovs'koi 'vidlyhy'*, "Ukraina XX st.: kul'tura, ideologiia, politika", 2008, 14, p. 11.

[39] See: P. Kravchuk, *Eti knigi chitaiut v Kanade*, "Literaturnaia gazeta", 19.11.1960, p. 4.

so called "*Decada* [ten-day festival] of Ukrainian literature and art", which was held in Moscow on November 12-22. The *decadas* of literature and art were a special Soviet cultural institution created in the mid-1930s to represent the diversity of ethnic cultures of the Soviet Union, as well as the so called 'friendship of peoples', the mutual interest of different national republics in each other's culture and the intensive support that the 'center' extended to imperial 'peripheries'[40]. Apart from the goal of representing these specific ideas, the *decada* was a mode of (re)-establishing cultural hierarchies in the multiethnic USSR.

Until 1950, the *decadas* of literature and art were held separately, but after 1950 they began to be held together. This meant that, alongside discussions of literary works, there were presentations by theaters, music and dance groups, sometimes even premieres of new movies. The ten-day festivals were always timed to coincide with the publication of a large volume of Russian translations of works from the national literature being presented.

The famous Soviet writer and translator Semen Lipkin wrote about the special role of these *decadas* in his novel of the same name (*Dekada*, 1983), although it is devoted not to a *decada* of Ukrainian culture, but a *decada* of one of the North Caucasian republics of the RSFSR (Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic)[41]. One of the *decadas* he depicted took place in 1950, and another, presumably, in 1958, judging by the scenes of mass riots in Grozny in the summer of 1958 included in the novel. He demonstrated that a *decada* was not only an occasion for the representation of a republic in the imperial capital, but also a time of renegotiation of contracts, redistribution of power, and establishment of new conventions of public representation of the 'invited' culture, and the acceptable set of images and discourses that could be used in these representations. Lipkin also accurately pointed to another important semantic link characteristic of the Khrushchev era. It was the memory of Stalin's repressions of national cultures and the ethnicities with which they were associated. Despite, or perhaps because of, Khrushchev's repeal of certain Stalinist decrees and the rehabilitation of certain repressed individuals, the memory of the repressions and deportations was still very fresh in the minds of those involved in the organization of the *decadas* held during the Thaw.

In the context of Ryl'skii's 'open letter', it is important to know that the *decada* was always preceded by preliminary press coverage: multiple publications of Ukrainian writers and poets, and numerous reviews of significant recent Ukrainian works appeared in late October and early November of 1960.

The chosen timing could also have another reason. Among Paustovskii's many mistakes, Ryl'skii mentions an incorrect quotation from a short poem by Lermontov that Paustovskii included with the publication of the fifth part of his memoirs, *Throw to the South*, which appeared not long before in the October issue of the literary journal "Znamia". This means that Ryl'skii most likely made his final decision to write the anti-Paustovskii note as soon as he became acquainted with the text of Part 5. His criticism of the Lermontov misquotation is clearly not his main complaint about the author of the memoir *Throw to the South*. It is here that Paustovskii describes in detail literary life in Odesa in the early 1920s, his talks and interactions with Isaac Babel, Eduard Bagritskii and other Odesa Russophone writers. Comparing the extensive descriptions of literary Odesa with the absence of any representation of literary Kyiv, Ryl'skii might have been particularly hurt: it turned out that Paustovskii simply did not want to notice Kyiv's literary life! It was hardly possible to express these claims openly, but it is very likely that the bright Odesa chapters of *Throw to the South* became the trigger for Ryl'skii's text.

Ryl'skii was notified about the upcoming "*decada* of Ukrainian culture" well in advance. Staying at the Writer's Art House in Gagra in August 1960, he was already planning his publications on the eve of

[40] On *decadas* see: I. Kaplan, *Comrades in Arts: The Soviet Dekada of National Art and the Friendship of Peoples*, "RUDN Journal of Russian History", 2020 (XIX), 1, pp. 78-94; I. Kukulin – M. Mayofis, *Kritika sovetskoi modeli romana vospitaniia v dvukh knigakh nachala 1980-kh godov ob etnicheskikh deportaciiakh*, "Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie", 2024, 4 (forthcoming).

[41] S. Lipkin, *A Decade* (sic!) [*Декада*]: A novel. New York 1983 (in Russian).

the *decada*. There, in Gagra, he was actively corresponding with Moscow writers and leaders of the Writers' Union. It is possible that the preliminary agreements about the "attack on Paustovskii" were made precisely in that period, i.e. in August 1960. And this may explain why Ryl'skii's cover letter sent to Smirnov in mid-October was so brief, and clearly lacking sufficient arguments for the publication of such harsh criticism of the renowned writer.

Less clear are the reasons for Smirnov's consent to publish Ryl'skii's piece, despite the fact that it could be (and actually was) read as questioning the established 'friendship of peoples'. It is highly unlikely that Smirnov, who had no strong biographical or working ties with Ukraine, actually cared about the correctness of Paustovskii's portrayal of Ukrainian cultural life in 1918-1919.

Therefore, the motives that inspired the editorial board of "Literaturnaia gazeta" to prepare this publication can probably be explained by internal Moscow circumstances, which we will try to reconstruct here.

8. From 1956, Paustovskii caused increased anxiety among the leadership of the Writers' Union and party officials who oversaw literature. This was first provoked by Paustovskii's speech at a public discussion of Vladimir Dudintsev's novel *Not by Bread Alone* (October 22, 1956), where Paustovskii declared that the bureaucrats depicted in the novel were people who had risen through the Great Terror and were responsible for it[42]. Later, in 1957, he was criticized for his participation in and editing of the literary almanac "Literaturnaia Moskva", which was published in two issues in 1956-1957 and then branded by the leadership of the Writers' Union and by N. Khrushchev himself as a manifestation of what they called "groupism" (*gruppovshchina*), meaning an attempt to create an alternative current within official Soviet literature.

After his talk at the public debate on Dudintsev's novel and especially after "Literaturnaia Moskva" was almost banned, Paustovskii tried to openly express his civic views and writer's credo. In May 1959, he wrote an article titled *To Whom Should We Pass Our Arms?* where he made several important statements. The first one was about him being completely ready to relinquish his place to the younger generation of writers. The second was about his own generation, which, in his view, spent too much time and resources on fighting censorship and bureaucracy. The third was an appeal to the leadership of the Union of Soviet Writers to spare the new generation from the same troubles with censorship that could lead to compromises and loss of aesthetic originality[43].

The article was intended for the newspaper "Literatura i zhizn'" [Literature and Life], but as soon as the editors received a copy of it, they sent it to the Department of propaganda of the Central Committee of the Communist Party to let their officials decide whether this text was worth publishing. The answer was negative; all the major figures who were responsible for managing Soviet literary life, such as the secretaries of the Central Committee and members of the Presidium of the Central Committee Mikhail Suslov and Ekaterina Furtseva, and the head of the Department of Culture of the Central Committee Dmitrii Polikarpov, became acquainted with it.

Reports of Paustovskii's suspicious or even dangerous behavior kept reaching Central Committee officials throughout 1959. On May 16, Nikolai Kazmin, head of the Department of Schools, Science, and Culture of the Central Committee, informed his superiors that Paustovskii was taking the most radical position among the opposition-minded Moscow literati and was allegedly persuading his colleagues to speak openly against the prevailing orders and rules: "They did not do anything to Pasternak. One cannot be sent to prison now. They would not do anything to us either. They cannot do anything: they are afraid of the opinion of the international community. Now it is not so easy to offend a writer. It is time for us to speak out, too". Kazmin

[42] For a discussion of Paustovskii's 1956 talk, see: O. Rozenblium, *Sozdat' "publitsistiku v nastoiashhem smysle slova" (1956): zapis' obsuzhdeniia romana V. Dudintseva kak gazetnyi otchet i dokument samizdata*, "Acta samizdatica / Zapiski o samizdate", 2018 (IV), pp. 91-139.

[43] K. Paustovskii, *Komu peredavat' oruzhie?*, in *Apparat TsK KPSS i kul'tura: 1958-1964*, ed. by V. Afiani – Z. Vodopianova – T. Domracheva *et al.*, Moskva 2005, pp. 235-238.

also described Paustovskii's cunning plan: on the one hand, to put people close to the circle of "Literaturnaia Moskva" on the editorial boards of literary periodicals, on the other "to capture the minds of talented creative young people"[44].

Meanwhile, Paustovskii was gaining more and more popularity, first among anti-Stalinists, and also among the young generation of readers who were particularly impressed by his memoirs. That is why the Department of propaganda of the Central Committee of the Communist party mentioned Paustovskii several times in its analytical notes in a rather negative context. Party officials were concerned about the growing number of copies of Paustovskii's collected volumes and individual editions that came out in the late 1950s.

> The circulation of K. Paustovskii's works was planned at 75.000 copies, and the subscription was 225.000 copies. However, four months after the subscription had already been closed and four volumes had been printed, the Bookseller's Office demanded the printing of an additional 75.000 copies. Thus, the circulation of Paustovskii's works reached 300 thousand copies. [...] For the collection of his works, Paustovskii will get a honorary fee of 1.2 million rubles[45].

At the same time, those groups of Soviet writers who proved to be not just anti-Stalinist, but rather liberal-minded, often expressed their growing frustration and sometimes even exasperation with Paustovskii's memoir project. They were mainly representatives of the older generation, the one Paustovskii belonged to, and several younger ones, up to the cohort born in the mid-1920s. Some of these writers did not agree with the aestheticized worldview that became the dominant characteristic of both the protagonist and the narrative; some objected to Paustovskii's treatment of historical facts and historical material; some argued that he was just repeating, in a rather simplified form, the ideas and stylistic discoveries of modernist literature[46].

We may presume that the editors of "Literaturnaia gazeta" were well acquainted with this growing wave of dissatisfaction and realized that a public reprimand of Paustovskii from his former friend and collaborator would be silently supported by many of his colleagues. I will further quote a fragment from a letter by Alexander Deich (1893-1972), a literary critic, writer and translator who, like Paustovskii, grew up in Kyiv and moved to Moscow in the mid-1920s. Deich was a close friend of Ryl'skii and, having done numerous translations of Ukrainian writers into Russian, was regarded as an ambassador of Ukrainian culture in Moscow. It is important to know that Deich and Ryl'skii maintained permanent contact via mail and telephone, and actively exchanged information about Moscow and Kyiv literary events. As soon as Deich read Ryl'skii's 'open letter' in "Literaturka", he wrote to his friend and co-author about the reaction it caused in Moscow literary circles. It is rather interesting that he does not say a single word about the reception of Paustovskii's letter in Ukraine. For him, this entire story was about Paustovskii being inaccurate in his use of historical details and too arrogant. And all this was said by someone who was certainly aware of the Ukrainian cultural context of the late 1910s as well as the attempted political and literary rehabilitation of the murdered authors in the late 1950s:

> It was impossible to sleep this morning. And it's all your fault: your open letter to Paustovskii made such an impression on Muscovites that a hail of calls came pouring in, and various callers started conversations with me about your letter. I heard not a single objection to its merits, all acknowledged the truthfulness and fairness of your speech. Only hardened admirers of Paustovskii and absolute philanthropists complained that perhaps we should not have touched him, because he was old and sick. In view of the fact that I, too, am old and sick, I can have my own judgment about it, and I find your letter necessary and timely. Back in Peredelkino, Asmus and I were indignant that he called Prof. Giliarov "an ardent admirer of German idealist philosophy", whereas Alexei Nikitich hated German idealism and was a true Platonist. It should be added that K.G. does not hesitate to assert that Lunacharskii wrote under the pseudonym Homo Novus, whereas it is known that this was the signature of A. Kugel. Moreover, in the [Paustovskii's] story you liked about Shevchenko, even provocateur Petrov, who exposed the society of Cyril and Methodius, is persistently referred to as Popov,

[44] *Informatsiia otdela nauki, shkol i kul'tury TsK KPSS po RSFSR o nastroeniiakh riada moskovskikh pisatelei*, in *Apparat TsK KPSS i kul'tura*, op. cit., pp. 239-240.

[45] *Zapiska otdela propagandy i agitatsii TsK KPSS po soiuznym respublikam i otdela kul'tury TsK KPSS, 12.08.1958*, in *Ideologicheskie komissii TsK KPSS. 1958-1964: Dokumenty*, Moskva 1998, pp. 82, 83.

[46] I examine this topic in great detail in my forthcoming article *Konstantin Paustovskii's Memoirs as an Intergenerational Landmark* (in the journal "АvtobiografiЯ").

which casts a shadow on the venerable Pavel Nikolaevich[47].

Further evidence that Moscow journalists and administrators who promoted and supported the publication of Ryl'skii's article – or joyfully accepted it – did not know much about either the Ukrainian context in 1918 and 1919, or about contemporary cultural politics in and around Ukrainian literature, can be found in another publication in "Literaturnaia gazeta" which had been arranged two days before Ryl'skii's open letter appeared, meaning the editors had already decided (or been notified) that a text condemning Paustovskii for his inappropriate representation of Ukrainian culture would come out in a few days. But this time, it was a declaration of love, not of neglect or discomfort. The published essay partly described Kyiv's cultural life in 1918 and 1919, although with a small addition about 1943, and was written by none other than Il'ia Erenburg. It was a part of his own memoir cycle *People. Years. Life* entitled *Kyiv*, and contained descriptions of those years no less ruthless than Paustovskii's in *In that Dawn*, but added a vivid conclusion:

> "Kyiv. Kyiv, my homeland..." [...] I lived in Kyiv from the fall of 1918 to November 1919 – one year. During that time, there were four changes of governments, orders, flags, even signs. Only the walls against which people were shot did not change. This is the unkind story I have to tell. If I began with a lyrical digression, it is because almost all proverbs lie (or rather, present the truth in an opposite way), including the classical proverbs of the classical Romans, who said "Ubi bene, ibi patria" – "where all is well, there is my homeland". In fact, the homeland is also where things are very bad[48].

These two publications with clearly opposite messages, which came out in quick succession in the same newspaper, created a stark contrast between Paustovskii, who despised the political life of Ukraine in 1918 and 1919 and undervalued its culture, and Erenburg, who, in spite of all the political turbulence, still called Ukraine his homeland. This ideological contrast would have been more overt if the editors, as well as their overseers at the Central Committee of the Communist Party, knew nothing about the Erenburg-Zerov polemic of 1919.

9. In our recent articles on 'backstage' cultural practices[49], we have only briefly addressed the question of the literary scandals of the Thaw period, primarily focusing on 'behind the scenes' negotiations that helped avoid scandals. The discussion described in this article has all the characteristics of a scandal, but it shows that public conflicts also relied on a system of negotiations, as they too were part of the indirect, circumlocutory communication characteristic of the Soviet public sphere[50].

We can assume that the Moscow lobbyists who published Ryl'skii's anti-Paustovskii article were, unlike its author, not concerned with the current status of Ukrainian culture and the restoration of the image of literary life in Kyiv in 1918-1919, but rather with the possibility of challenging Paustovskii's authority in the eyes of his readers. It is almost beyond doubt that these lobbyists existed and that the decision to publish such a harsh text, especially on the eve of the *decada* of Ukrainian culture, was coordinated by higher authorities, though not personally by Khrushchev, who eventually could have criticized the publication with help from his son-in-law Adzhubei. Of course, both Ryl'skii and the editor-in-chief of "Literaturnaia gazeta", Smirnov, could argue that Ryl'skii's text would allow him to attract patriotic Ukrainian youth to his side and thus calm down their fervor; but either way, the main motive of Ryl'skii's Moscow accomplices/supporters was to discredit Paustovskii. And Paustovskii himself understood this exceedingly clearly.

When work on this article was almost completed, I got access to the draft of Paustovskii's response which was kept among his papers at the Russian State Archive of Literature and Arts (RGALI)[51].

[47] M. Petrovskii, *"Zhivem soderzhatel'no i pateticheski bestolkovo..." Pis'ma A. Dejcha M. Ryl'skomu*, "Egupets", 2010 (XIX), p. 254. Alexei Nikitich Gilyarov (1855-1938), was a professor of philosophy at Kyiv University; Pavel Nikolaevich Popov, 1890-1971, was a famous Ukrainian scholar of folklore.

[48] I. Erenburg, *Kyiv*, "Literaturnaia gazeta", 27.10.1960, p. 3.

[49] I. Kukulin – M. Mayofis – M. Chetverikova, *Kuluarnye improvizatsii. Stat'ia pervaia*, op. cit.; Idem, *Kuluarnye improvizatsii. Stat'ia vtoraia*, op. cit.

[50] On Soviet public sphere see, for example: T. Atnashev – M. Velizhev – T. Vajzer, *Dvesti let opyta: ot burzhuaznoi publichnoi sfery k rossiiskim rezhimam publichnosti*, in *Nesovershennaia publichnaia sfera. Istoriia rezhimov epublichnosti v Rossii. Sbornik statei*, ed. by Idem, Moskva 2021, pp. 5-80.

[51] RGALI, f. 2119, op. 1, d. 518, l. 1-7. Unfortunately, drafts of the

This draft significantly differs from the final version published in "Literaturnaia gazeta". First, there are fragments where Paustovskii clearly argues that Ryl'skii's letter is a part of a larger literary battle and represents the "enmity of some literary groups toward non-conformist (writers)"[52]. In paragraphs later excluded from publication, he notices that Ryl'skii's essay appeared more than two years after the novel it was criticizing had come out, and – surprisingly – on the eve of the "*decada* of Ukrainian culture", when all writers were called to unity. In other words, Paustovskii read Ryl'skii's letter as an assault by conservative literary circles and party functionaries who wanted to undermine his authority and ruin his reputation for his previous non-conformist public statements.

Another characteristic trait of this draft is Paustovskii's uncertainty about how to formulate the rhetorical and grammatical structure of his text, i.e. whether to address Ryl'skii directly using the formal second person, or to present a more distant and reserved narrative, writing about his opponent in the third person.

Paustovskii's draft is much more emotional than the published version, and, in a series of rhetorical questions highlighting the strangeness of Ryl'skii's letter, Paustovskii tries to openly describe Ryl'skii's statement as morally reprehensible, as sounding more like the voice of repressive power than of fair friendly critique.

Comparing the draft to the final version, one can quickly see that the editors also made efforts to change Paustovskii's text so that it attacked Ryl'skii's person rather than the literary and party officials whose role Paustovskii addressed in his draft. Strangely enough, despite personal accusations thrown in Ryl'skii's face, this type of rhetoric made Paustovskii's response look moderate and, at the same time, more convenient for censors and supervisors who consented to the publication or, at least, retrospectively approved it.

This draft leaves us, contemporary readers, with final proof that this quarrel unfolded in two cultural contexts simultaneously: the inner Ukrainian context of the Thaw-era rehabilitation of the Renaissance of the 1920s, and the Moscow fight between the conservative party supervisors with writers they considered influential and dangerous. A target of heavy critique from conservative forces, Paustovskii was primed to see any critical publication about him as an attack. Thus, he was unable to read Ryl'skii's text differently and to see his own bias in describing Ukrainian culture.

The polemic between Ryl'skii, who in his youth was one of the brightest representatives of Ukrainian modernism, and Paustovskii, who in the 1950-1960s sought to reinvent a softened version of Russian modernism, has remained one of the many 'non-encounters' between writers of the two cultures, trapped by the bureaucratic rules of the game of the Soviet era. The history of these 'non-encounters' is a separate and important research topic which may be more important today than ever.

Appendix

Ответ М. Т. Рыльскому[53]

Ваше «открытое письмо», Максим Тадеевич, настолько поразило меня [грубой несправедливостью] грубой пристрастностью и враждебным тоном, что вначале я даже не хотел отвечать на него и вступать в какие бы то ни было объяснения с Вами. [(Что касается читателей, к которым Вы обращались, то я был вполне уверен, что они прекрасно разберутся в характере Ваших обвинений.)]

Но я вспомнил многие годы нашего знакомства и даже дружбы и все же решил ответить Вам. И прежде всего напомнить об этих годах.

Я помню многое. Помню [крепкозернистые] пес-

open letter to Paustovskii are missing from Ryl'skii's archive at the National Institute of Literature of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences in Kyiv. Nevertheless, I am very grateful to Bohdan Tsymbal for his help.

[52] The quote based on the text published in the Appendix to this article.

[53] © Konstantin Paustovskii, heirs, 2024. I thank Angelika Igorevna Dormidontova, Director of the K. Paustovskii Museum, for her help in securing permission to publish this draft. Text in angle brackets was added to the version published in "Literaturnaia gazeta". Text in square brackets is crossed out in the draft version. Text typed in cursive is present in the draft version, but omitted from the final publication.

чаные крутояры Днепра [в Сваромье[54]], огромные и теплые затоны, где мы бродили с Вами, нашу, так называемую «аксаковскую» рыбную ловлю, любопытных собеседников-«дидов», которые родились «ще за царя Александра Второго», замечательного нашего спутника писателя Вадима Охременко, какой-то феерически-прекрасный пруд с золотыми карпами где-то за Фастовом или Попельней, куда мы несколько раз мечтали поехать, но так и не поехали, [прекрасные] сонеты, которые Вы посвящали мне, днепровские пароходы, где Вы читали на палубе колхозницам (почти все они были или казались мне красавицами) свои стихи и «Евгения Онегина», а женщины вытирали слезы ситцевыми хустками, добрейшего Александра Копыленко, возившего нас на своей «Антилопе-Гну», яростные споры с Довженко о том, какие стихи следует читать любимой девушке, зимний Крым <в легком снегу>, *пение* <игра на рояле> под гул норд-оста, розыгрыши и споры, первые дни войны в Киеве, когда Вы и Юрий Яновский провожали меня на Южный фронт и мы простились по-братски где-то на Большой Подвальной улице — и многое, многое другое.

[Что-то хорошее, почти родственное, было для меня в вашем голосе, и слегка прищуренных глазах, в юморе, в вашей неторопливости.]

И вот — «открытое письмо» от вас, *как удар в спину*.

Я пытаюсь понять, что произошло — и напрасно — понять трудно. Но все же письмо есть, - *и раз вы нашли необходимым оповестить о нем весь Советский Союз*, и как всякое письмо оно требует ответа.

Что же я могу сказать [вам, М.Т.] *М.Т. Рыльскому?*

Вы пишете о своей любви ко мне. Но я предпочел бы, чтобы Вы выражали [свою любовь ко мне] ее более достойным способом, чем это «открытое письмо», написанное [в манере, Вам несвойственной], безосновательно и злобно.

Я испытал одно из тяжелейших разочарований в [своей] жизни. Тем более горькое, что Вы не имеете никаких оснований обвинять меня в тех вымышленных смертных грехах против Украины, в которых Вы решились меня обвинить.

Вы, Максим Тадеевич, великолепно знаете, как я отношусь к Украине, к ее народу и культуре. Мы об этом говорили и притом же с глазу на глаз. Вы сами [пишете], что знаете, с какой любовью я писал [биографическую] повесть о Шевченко.

Достаточно прочитать все, написанное мною об Украине [(а я, как Вы знаете, наполовину украинец, выросший и воспитывавшийся на Украине)] — «Далекие годы», «Тарас Шевченко», «Поводыря», «Корчму на Брагинке», «Синеву», «Александра Довженко», «Народную медицину», «Днепровские кручи» и ряд других вещей; чтобы точно узнать мое отношение к Украине и чтобы понять, что в Ваших обвинениях все [(кроме случая с Лермонтовым] притянуто за волосы, раздуто и потому легко опровергается.

Необычайный для вас раздраженный тон письма, передержки, придирки — все это так не похоже на Вас, что меня не оставляет мысль, что это «открытое письмо» хотя и написано Вами, но отражает вражду каких-то литературных группировок к инакомыслящим.

Вообще же я считаю, что Ваше письмо в гораздо большей степени факт морального порядка, чем литературное выступление. <В этом меня убеждает та сноска, в которой Вы намекаете на общность моих мыслей с царской цензурой. Вот, мол, Паустовский здесь пользуется тем правописанием, каким заставляла печатать украинские книги царская цензура.>

Я не могу рассказать все, что я передумал по поводу Вашего письма. Мы оба — старые люди и нам незачем причинять друг другу обиды и огорчения. Но именно потому, что мы старые люди, нам нужно *не забывать свою молодость* <проверять

[54] Svaromya (Russian name: Svaromie) is a village that had existed since ancient times on the territory of the present Kyiv region. In 1964-1966, a large part of the village was flooded during the construction of the Kyiv reservoir.

себя своей молодостью>. Среди жизни, полной признания, почета, наград и сановности, полезно почаще возвращаться к своей молодости и оценивать теперешние поступки с точки зрения чистого и расположенного к людям юноши.

Признаться, я плохо понимаю, в чем существо Вашего письма. Для чего оно написано? Каких результатов от него Вы ждете?

Чего вообще Вы хотели, выступая со своими запоздалыми (через два года после выхода книги) обвинениями? [Чего хотят люди, с Вами согласные?] Объявить меня великодержавным русским шовинистом? В это Вы сами не поверите, да и не поверит никто, кроме действительных шовинистов. Может быть, Вы хотели дискредитировать меня как писателя? Зачем? Вообще, я не могу понять, да и не только я один, Ваших побуждений.

Но я хотел бы, чтобы Вы, Максим Тадеевич, ответили, почему [в дни призывов к консолидации писателей] Вы приурочили свое выступление к украинской декаде?

И еще один вопрос — как расценить сноску, где Вы намекаете на общность моих мыслей с царской цензурой? Сноска — [это скороговорка], выглядит как шепоток. Вот, мол, между прочим [(именно — между прочим)] Паустовский здесь пользуется тем правописанием, которым заставляла печатать украинские книги царская цензура.

На что Вы намекаете? [Говорите прямо, а как называются такие сообщения, мне кажется, знают все. Все это останется на Вашей совести — посоветуйтесь с ней.] Как называются такие намеки «между прочим» - известно всем[55].

Все мы люди народа. И Вы, и я. Если мы любим его подлинной любовью, то нам незачем льстить [своему народу] ему. Это принесет только вред. И незачем оскорбляться на мнения, не совпадающие с Вашими. И требовать от писателей и художников полного единства взглядов в области искусства.

Теперь *позвольте* <я попытаюсь> ответить <Вам> по порядку Ваших обвинений <хотя, говоря откровенно, мне не очень хочется тратить на это силы и время>.

Обвинение, открывающее *Вашу статью* <Ваше письмо> — самое мелкое и, пожалуй, мелочное. Я назвал диких голубей белыми. Вы охотник и пишете, что дикие голуби сизые. Я это знаю *не хуже* Вас и не хуже любого школьника[56]. Но неужели Вы, как знаток природы, не знаете, что на фоне глухой и черной грозовой тучи, очень многое кажется белым, не только сизые голуби, но даже сорванная ветром зеленая листва деревьев? Здесь, очевидно, закон контраста и освещения. [(Проверьте это. Меня только огорчает, что за этими белыми голубями Вы не заметили содержания рассказа, как мне кажется, очень Вам близкого по своей поэтической сущности.)]

[2. Цитата из Лермонтова перепутана. Да. В этом я сознаюсь и каюсь. Было бы недостойно и глупо отрицать это. Эти два пункта обвинения Рыльский [вы] сам[и] считает[е] незначительными, так как говорит[е], что не поднял[и] бы разговора, если бы дело ограничилось только этими, [по Вашим словам] по его словам, недосмотрами. Дальше идут главные обвинения.]

<Цитата из Лермонтова. В данном случае цитирует не автор книги, а рассказчик, ее лирический герой, и цитирует несколько вольно, — так стихи ему запомнились и ему легче их произносить. Так часто бывает в повседневной жизни. Вспомните Стиву Облонского у Толстого с его цитатами из Пушкина. Да и сам Толстой упорно читал некоторые отрывки из «Евгения Онегина» очень вольно, по-своему. Точность цитат безусловно нужна в научных работах, в статьях, в учебниках, но в жизни она часто нарушается.>

3. О Саксаканском (sic!) — [гопаке] и гайдамаках. [В детстве] Малышом я часто бывал в

[55] Another version of this paragraph reads: «И еще один вопрос — как расценивать сноску, где М.Т. намекает на общность моих мыслей с царской цензурой? Неужели это указующий перст тому, кому ведать надлежит, как сообщение (правда в сноске, скороговоркой) о том, что «между прочим Паустовский пользуется здесь правописанием, которым заставляла печатать украинские книги царская цензура». На что Вы здесь намекаете, М.Т.? Какой злой туман застилает Вам глаза? [Остается повторить] Ну что ж, это заявление тоже целиком останется на совести Рыльского».

[56] Another version: «Я это знаю с детства».

украинском театре — *по-моему, Саксаганского, но М.Т. утверждает, что Садовского*. <Вы утверждаете, что руководил театром в то время брат Саксаганского Садовский. Возможно.> [Очевидно] Возможно, он прав. В этом театре работали мои родные и потому я был там вечным контрамарочником. Чаще всего я смотрел «Запорожца за Дунаем», где [меня] мое воображение потрясли казаки, танцующие гопак. Начинал танец старый казак. Остальные при этом пели именно ту песню, которую Рыльский [вы] считает[е], видно, зазорной для украинского народа. *Именно* <Веселую> песню «Гей, гоп, ты, куме, не журысь, туды-сюды повернысь». [Опять язык, навязанный царской цензурой. Но если [поставить правильно] написать по-украински, т.е. «не журись, повернись», то русский читатель так и прочтет, тогда как выговаривается это «журысь», «повернысь».]

Такая песня есть, не я ее [изобрел] выдумал, [ничего] в ней нет плохого. Поэтому отождествлять меня с озлобленным тургеневским Пигасовым, изобретателем пресловутого «грае, грае, воропае» просто грубо и возмутительно. *Я читаю и все время спохватываюсь (?). Да [вы] Рыльский ли это писал[и]?* [Бросьте, не может этого быть.]

Я <любил и> люблю украинский театр [и всех его деятелей], *тем более, что мне повезло, и я видел М.К. Заньковецкую*. Я *очень* Ценю Сагсаганского, Капренко-Карого, Кропивницкого, я знаю о них, может быть, немного больше, чем написано в Б. Сов. Энциклопедии [от ваших слов] *(от … Рыльского остается впечатление, что эта энциклопедия — единственный источник информации для писателей.)*. [Вы укоряете меня в пренебрежении к этой энциклопедии два раза.]

Ни Саксаганский, <или Садовский, если в то время он был во главе театра — от этого дело не меняется,> ни автор «Начала неведомого века» не виноваты в том, что Петлюра нарядил своих молодчиков в костюмы гайдамаков. Впечатление же от вашей гневной тирады о гайдамаках такое, будто я считаю Саксаганского духовным отцом петлюровцев. *Где это сказано? Откуда вы это взяли? В таких случаях наши предки только разводили руками и говорили: «Ну, знаете!»*

<Проследите за ходом Вашей мысли. Он совершенно абсурден. Паустовский пишет, что петлюровцы были похожи на гайдамаков из старых пьес в театре Саксаганского. Значит (такой вывод делаете Вы), Паустовский «валит» Саксаганского «в одну кучу с оголтелыми человеконенавистниками, пьяными петлюровскими молодчиками!». И тем самым позволяет себе оскорбительные высказыванья о деятелях украинской культуры.

Все это неправда. В этом может убедиться каждый, кто прочтет книгу. Вы извините меня, Максим Тадеевич, но причудливость Вашей мысли в этом случае похожа на делириум.>

4. О художнике Пимоненко. Вот уже второй раз вы, Максим Тадеевич, берете на себя [неблагодарную миссию] задачу убедить меня в том, что Пимоненко — замечательный художник. Я так не думаю. <Я люблю многих других замечательных украинских художников, например, Дерегуса.> Это — дело вкуса. Зачем-то вы пытаетесь навязать мне свой вкус и свои оценки и переводите простой по существу разговор о нем «в план» обиды за Украину. Вы ставите вопрос так, что, <мол,> мое непризнание Пимоненко *чуть ли* не свидетельствует о моем неприязненном отношении ко всей украинской культуре. [Как называется такой прием, к счастью, не знаю.] *Это, конечно, чудесный прием*. <Такие выводы просто невероятны.>

И почему мое мнение о Пимоненко так [вас] взволновало Рыльского? Могу уверить, что «массы в этом деле за мной не пойдут, и популярности Пимоненко ничто не угрожает. И еще. Нельзя же всерьез доказывать, что Пимоненко был большим художником только потому, что он дружил с Репиным.

<В связи с пейзажами Пимоненко, я пишу: «Петлюра пытался возродить эту слащавую Украину». И вот Вы, Максим Тадеевич, в этом месте позволяете себе явную передержку или, скажем, подтасовку. Вы пишете: «Я уже оставляю в стороне более чем странную оценку исторической роли Петлюры. Этот лютый враг трудового народа, выходит, всего-навсего хотел воскресить

«слащавую», «открыточную» Украину!» В споре надо хоть немного уважать своего противника и не представлять его дураком. А Вы это пытаетесь сделать, приписывая мне мысль, что Петлюра «всего-навсего» хотел возродить открыточную Украину, а других целей у него не было. Я не хочу разбираться в добросовестности этого обветшалого приема, который Вы нашли возможным применить.>

И, наконец, последнее — *обвинения* <обвинение> в «неосмотрительных мыслях» об украинском языке.

Я вырос на Украине. Мои [родственники все] родные со стороны отца говорили только по-украински. С детства я полюбил певучий, гибкий, легкий, бесконечно богатый образами и интонациями украинский язык. Другого языка я не знал.

Но во времена Петлюры газеты на Украине начали печататься на [каком-то винегрете из русского, польского, украинского языков. Этот язык назывался галицийским.] <так называемом> галицийском языке. Во всяком случае, его так тогда называли. Он был сложен, тяжел, неблагозвучен, включал много иностранных слов. Естественно, что я не мог принять этот язык. Я весь еще жил [во власти и поэзии] в поэтической власти народного языка, — того языка, каким писал Шевченко *и Квитка*, Леся Украинка и многие другие писатели. *Я говорил о красоте украинского языка много, особенно в «Далеких годах».*

Это мое предпочтение народного украинского языка языку галицийскому (газетному) равно как [облыжно] приписанные мне плохие отзывы о деятелях украинской культуры (таких отзывов, повторю, совершенно нет) Рыльский объявляет «оскорблением украинского народа». [Старый недобросовестный термин, который расцвел во времена культа личности] Старый … демагогический прием.

Кстати, киевские молочницы [очень] образно и хорошо говорят по-украински.

[Да, чуть не забыл.] Я пишу о «блестящем, действительно, жемчужном, как зубы задорных молодиц, остром, поющем» народном языке. < Это дало повод Вам уколоть меня тем, что я знаю украинский язык только от «задорных молодиц», — то есть, добавляете Вы от себя, от «киевских молочниц». Просто неудобно читать такие «придумки», как говорят украинские дети. И, кстати, киевские молочницы не заслуживают Вашего пренебрежения, — говорят они живо и образно.> *Рыльский упрекает меня в том, что я знаю этот язык только от «задорных молодиц» (т.е. добавляет явную отсебятину — очевидно, от «киевских молочниц»*).

Могу окончить свой ответ *словами Рыльского* <Вашими же словами>. «Все это очень грустно», М.Т. Вместо [щедрой помощи друг другу], живого обмена *мнениями* <мыслями и>, взаимного понимания, как это должно быть между *советскими* писателями, вы решили поссорить со мной *украинских читателей* <украинского читателя>. *Но этого [никогда] не будет.* <Мне почему-то кажется, что это Вам не удастся.> Я надеюсь, что в будущем *лучшие листы (?) моей прозы я еще посвящу этой* <я еще напишу о> пленительной и великой стране *и ее народу* < — Украине и ее народе со всей силой, на какую способен.>.

Таруса

1 ноября 1960 года.

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♢ *Two Views on Ukrainian Culture of the Late 1910s-Early 1920s in Two Open Letters from the Year 1960* ♢

Maria Mayofis

Abstract

In this article, I analyze two open letters published in 1960 in "Literaturnaia Gazeta". In the first letter, Maksim Ryl'skii, a renowned Soviet Ukrainian poet and two-time winner of the Stalin Prize, accuses the famous writer (and his former friend) Konstantin Paustovskii of making unacceptable errors in describing Ukrainian culture of the late 19th-early 20th century in the third and fifth volumes of his memoirs, and Paustovskii answers him in a week in the same periodical. I propose reconstructing the key contexts that may explain the harsh polemic between these two former friends, pointing to the very different assessments of Ukrainian culture of the late 1910s and 1920s characteristic for both writers in the late 1950s, as well as to the hidden tensions within the Soviet writers' milieu that made Paustovskii feel particularly vulnerable.

Keywords

Konstantin Paustovskii, Maxim Ryl'skii, Mykola Zerov, Ukrainian Renaissance of the 1920s, Soviet *Decadas* of National Literature and Art, "Literaturnaia Gazeta", Open Letters.

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