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THE CASE OF YEVTUSHENKO

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In his speech before the 22nd Congress of the CPSU, the novelist Mikhail Sholokhov brought down the house with his ironical description of the way young writers of the provinces are attracted to Moscow. "They have heard of the triumphal literary evenings in Moscow," he said; "of our fashionable boudoir poets with their ranks of mounted police and the hysterical screams of young women. They also want to show themselves off in front of these easy-to-please women in incredibly narrow trousers and absurd broadshouldered jackets (Universal laughter and applause)."

Sholokhov's words in fact represented a sharp attack on the current favorite of the sub rosa and unofficial Moscow literary world, Evgen Yevtushenko. In early October, on poetry day, when the city's young devotees assembled in the streets around the statue of the famous revolutionary poet, Makyakovsky, to hear their favorites read their latest works, Yevtushenko first stopped the show, then stole it. Le Monde's correspondent, Michel Tatu, an eye-witness, has told how the crowds of young people blocked traffic on a main artery of the Soviet capital and chanted "We want Yevtushenko," until the official organizers of the program had to summon him from the crowd. He came, almost precisely the figure Sholokhov described. In Tatu's words he is an "immense figure de 'stiliague,' blond, au visage angelique," with "une profonde voix de stenter parfaitement timbrée pour la déclamation." He read two poems, and the enthusiastic applause continued so long that he had to return to the platform to appeal for silence. He finally escaped the gathering by literally fighting his way through the crowds to a trolley bus.

Explaining why young writers converge upon Moscow, Sholokhov said: "The want to taste the fruits of glory, and so they rush to Moscow as the faithful do to Mecca." This does little justice to the truth. In the case of Yevtushenko and many of his peers (both writers and readers), the issues at stake involve far more than glory and the screams of hysterical young women.

Fundamentally, Yevtushenko represents the young poet who eternally longs to speak freely about truth and justice, to respond to the world as he sees it, and to do so in the courageous and untrammelled fashion of a Pushkin or of the greatest poets of the West. Yevtushenko makes good use of the poet's subjective ability to personalize life; he writes of small people and deep tragedy, of the most intimate feelings of the young. And, of course, his poems clash with the realities of Soviet society. He is not a revisionist, attacking the straw men of the Soviet regime; rather he is a man with a genuinely "uneasy conscience," with uncompromising standards of truth and justice, and a compulsion to speak out about hypocrisy and sham. In short, his talent, courage and youth have led him into open antagonism with the particular world he lives in. The narrow-trousered poet, in other words, is a thorn in the flesh of the powers that be, and he has been so since 1956, when in conjunction with the "freedom writers" he tried to make use of Khrushchev's denunciation of Stalinism to gain more creative freedom for Soviet writers.

The poem "Babyi Yar," which recently fell victim to fierce criticism from at least one wing of Soviet critics, illustrates very clearly the Yevtushenko dash with reality and some of the issues behind it. Apparently in all artistic innocence, Yevtushenko found the ravine near Kiev, where in 1941 some 40,000 to 70,000 Jews were slaughtered and buried by the Nazis, a fit subject for a cry against the anti-Semitism which still flourishes in the Soviet Union. Putting himself in the mind of a Jew, he expressed the tragedy of the slaughter, and made clear his judgment that no Russian who bears feelings of anti-Semitism in his heart can be a "true Russian."

For this eminently virtuous poem, Yevtushenko has been called a "pygmy," a "cosmopolitan," and a man whose soul "like pants grown tight, has narrowed...." It should be noted that this attack came from the literary journal Literatura i zhizn, September 24, p. 4), which represents at the moment, so far as can be told, not the official or Khrushchevian line of criticism, but the die-hard line of those "Stalinists" who wish for something like total control of Soviet writers.

The principal attack made in Literatura i zhizn against Babyi Yar (L. D. Starikov, September 27) only too clearly delineates the gap that still remains between literature and life in the Soviet Union. Starikov's first point is somewhat involved. He deplores the emphasis of the poem upon anti-Semitism, and indeed, would have asserted that it does not exist, if he had dared. Since he could not in good conscience make such an assertion, his approach had to be made obliquely. He considers it insulting to all the other peoples of the Soviet Union that Yevtushenko makes so much of this single Jewish tragedy. After all, Starikov insists, and he illustrates this point with several stark passages of Nazi brutalities, the Jews represented only a tiny portion of those who suffered in the Soviet Union during the war. Why mention the Jews at all, particularly when in the



same breath one mentions anti-Semitism as if it were something that still exists in the Soviet Union? Yevtushenko should have emphasized the great heroism of the Russian people. The following passage emphasizes Starikov's point:

Why did Yevg. Yevtushenko revert to this theme now, in 1961?

Was it because he was reminding us of Babi Yar to warn the world against fascism? Was it because he could not be silent after hearing the hysterical howling of the West German revanchist mongrels? Was it because he wanted to remind some of the young men and women of his own generation of the bravery, the feats, the glory and the great sacrifices of their fathers?

Nothing of the sort! Standing on the steep bluff of Babi Yar, the young Soviet writer found here a theme only for verse about anti-Semitism! Thinking today about those who fell -- the "old man who was shot," the "child who was shot" -- he was thinking only about the fact that they were Jews! To him this proved the most important, the chief, the most soul-stirring thing!

Secondly, Starikov, representing the Communist Party and its determination to have all literature serve its political purposes, is painfully aware of a propaganda opportunity Yevtushenko has lost. With the question of a German peace treaty very topical in September, and with the party propaganda machines multiplying frightening tales of West German revanchism, the ambitions of Hitler's generals, and the threat of a new Hitler in the octagenarian Adenauer, Yevtushenko ought to have known that the moral of his poem should have been the aims of "the maniac Hitler."

Strange as it may be, Starikov writes of Yevtushenko, he has evidently not heard that genocide, the destruction of entire peoples, is an organic part of fascism's ideology; that the anti-Semitism of the fascists is only a part of their misanthropic policy of genocide; that for the Hitlerite rabble the destruction of the Jews was only the beginning of just as thoroughly planned and just as cruel a destruction of "the lower races," including the Slavs.

But Yevtushenko failed. "Monstrous though it be," Starikov continues:

Yevtushenko really did this: He uttered not a syllable about Hitlerism, about the fascist invaders -- this did not enter his mind when he stood at Babi Yar! And it was not all because the Russian people headed the fight against the world murderers that he thought about this people and not because this people bore incalculable losses in the fight and not because this people, together with all the peoples of the Soviet Union and of the entire camp of socialism, is now heading the struggle to prevent a repeti-

tion -- a tenfold repetition! -- of the tragedy of the world.

Finally, and this is always present in official Soviet criticism, Starikov argues that Yevtushenko should have used his poem to demonstrate the greatness of the Communist Party. Rather than encouraging the development of nationalist narrow-mindedness, writers have, in Starikov's words, a "sacred duty" as:

the Party's first assistants in all its works, to educate the working people in internationalism and socialist patriotism, in intolerance of any manifestations of nationalism and chauvinism. But in order to wage a genuine fight against this filth, in order effectively to get rid of all its survivals, one must first of all know for the sake of what this struggle is conducted and against what it is conducted. One must clearly and soberly realize that in today's historical conditions there can flower luxuriantly on the soil of age-old nationalist prejudices poisonous flowers of all sorts of supra-class -- essentially petty-bourgeois -- illusions, nurturing both chauvinism and nationalism alike. Obviously, white is the opposite of black. But is the white banner of pacifism the banner of true fighters against the black bandit flag? Is the six-pointed star of David the emblem of true fighters against anti-Semitism?

Starikov's criticisms appear to totally submerge the poet's fragile dedication to truth and justice. One would think that this sort of "official criticism" would suppress and completely destroy Yevtushenko. Yet the poet has been a cause célèbre for five years; he lives and moves about in Moscow freely continuing his literary efforts. The explanation appears to be that the dogmatic line of Literatura i zhizn does not represent Khrushchev's views of literature, which is represented more closely by the Literaturnaya gazeta. The latter paper published Babyi Yar. In short the intellectual climate of Party criticism has changed to the extent that a Yevtushenko may live and voice his thoughts without official suppression. How long this situation will last and whether it will improve are matters for conjecture.

The important fact is that such is the situation now. When Yevtushenko and others like him speak in the Soviet Union of today, there are thousands of like-minded young people who see their own lives and emotions mirrored in the poets' words. They no longer hide their sympathy, nor is their fear of retribution what it has been. Instead they fall out in the streets to demonstrate their strong feelings, to chant for the poet who dares to speak out.

Russia's poets have never ruled Russia in the past; nor will they in the future; but they apparently still capture the hearts and minds of the youth.



CONCERNING A POEM\*

By D. Starikov  
Literatura i zhizn  
September 27, 1961

This concerns Yevg. Yevtushenko's poem "Babi Yar," published September 19 in Literaturnaya gazeta. I do not know how others may feel, but in speaking about this poem I cannot be bothered about the rhythm, let us say, or regret the poem's not very high literary merit. Babi Yar. Does Yevg. Yevtushenko's young reader or auditor of today know what Babi Yar is? Have not the middle-aged, the elderly and the old forgotten about it? And did the poet himself give real thought to it?

For three evenings in succession now I have been re-reading articles of the war years -- the writings of Mikhail Sholokhov, Ilya Ehrenburg, Alexei Tolstoy, Leonid Leonov, Alexander Fadeyev. From these historic pages arises a tremendous, indescribable grief as it really was, the grief of millions of peaceable people.

A crowd of one and a half thousand -- old men, women and children -- was herded along the road. Pits had already been dug for them three kilometers from the city. They were forced to strip. Five at a time, they were driven into the pits and machine gunned. Some, still half alive, stirred under a thin layer of earth. The earth stirred. The earth groaned.

Maria Bilyk, wife of a front-line soldier, was rounded up during the day. They came for the children at night. Eleven-year-old Volodya carried two-year-old Fedya in his arms. Behind them walked little Tanyusha and Ganulya. Mikolka balked and had to be dragged by his harness belt. They were thrown alive into the pit. When our men arrived and dug up the great grave, they found Fedya in Volodya's close embrace. Anton Bilyk asked in his letter how Maria and the children were.

The night after the shooting a naked, mud-covered woman arose from one of the pits, staggered a few steps and fell to earth dead.

The death machine was "an eight-ton Diesel truck with a chamber lined with strong sheet metal which it was impossible to bite or scratch through. The exhaust gas of the motor was pumped into this hermetically sealed chamber through a pipe protected against being plugged up." Nastasya Suprun and her 14-year-old niece were held by the Gestapo on suspicion of having been in touch with our intelligence service. "Ninotchka was brought in again after torture. She lay unconscious for three hours, blood frothing from her mouth. When she came to, she

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\* Current Digest of the Soviet Press, Vol. XIII, No. 36, p. 18. Babi Yar -- Grandmother's Ravine -- is near Kiev. There Nazis machine-gunned to death 40,000 Jews in 1941. -- Trans.

said softly, 'Aunt Asya, what will become of me?' When the death machine returned after mass murder, Ninochka was sent to clean and wash it. Ninochka related that bits of torn clothing, hair, eyeglasses and excrement littered the floor of the chamber. Ninochka was taken away again for questioning, beaten once more and again returned unconscious....Ninochka was taken from the cell November 4 and no one ever saw her again...."

When the corpses were exhumed, balls and dolls were found.

Where was this -- in the gullies and ravines at Smolensk? In Babi Yar near Kiev? Near Priyatin in Poltava Province? In the ravine at Tripolye, on the road to Obukhov? At Zimiyevskaya Gorge in Rostov? At the anti-tank ditch behind the glass factory a kilometer out of Mineralniye Vody? Or at Drobitsky Yar beyond the tractor plant in Kharkov?

"The word yar -- ravine -- used to be a good word, it recalled grass and river banks and sand and large daisies which the girls used to pluck to guess whether they were loved. Now the word ravine has become a terrible word. One imagines that the dead will walk out of the ravine at any moment. No, the person who forgets about this is not human!"

Where did they drag off those girls? To Frankfurt, Berlin, Kuestrin?

"Greetings, dear mama, brother Genya and Semyon Ivanovich! My dear family, don't forget me. Dear mama, my life is ruined, surely no one will rescue me from here. Dear mama, it is beyond endurance the way they mistreat us, the way they torture us for hard labor. Mama, they beat us, they force us to work to exhaustion. We go naked and barefoot. It is cold, mama. And if you say anything, you'll be sorry. God, why do they torture us, what have we done to them? The life is so hard that the girls swallow needles and go out of their minds. Goodbye, mama, boodbye, goodbye, live for me."

"...By March 1 we shall be given three Ukrainian girls to work in the garden and two girls for house work. Rest assured, they'll work hard. In addition, we are being given two prisoners of war. I hope that then things will go well in our household. All those who already have Russians working for them say that they are an inexpensive pleasure in general."

Oh, no, not many documents, not many names, not many pictures -- after all, this is all only a thousandth, only a millionth part of what the name Babi Yar represents! What words does one choose to describe this?

"No memorials"? "Like a crude headstone"? "Rustling of wild grass"? "Trees look fearsome"? More: "I am filled with dread"; "I feel myself slowly turning gray; and I myself am like a continuous soundless scream"; "No part of me will ever forget this"? This is how Yevg. Yevtushenko speaks of Babi Yar.



No, these are not my words. Ilya Ehrenburg's 1944 verse is far closer to me today. It too is called "Babi Yar":

Once I lived in cities  
And loved living persons  
Now on dreary wastelands  
I must open up the graves.  
Now I know every ravine  
And each ravine's my home.  
I used to kiss the hand  
Of this beloved woman,  
Although, when I was with the living,  
I did not know this woman.

I confess that these are painful lines -- painful as a tremendous open wound.

Blow out the light. Lower the flags.  
We have come to you. Not we -- ravines.

Terrible. But before this spectacle I cannot discuss how terrible it was to me, how I bared my head and how my hair turns gray.

No, I do not wish to talk about poems, to compare them. Nor am I discussing different talents, and especially the difference in the degree of talent. It is a question of literature and life. Or, more accurately, literature and death. And the writer's attitude toward the life and death of millions.

Why did Ilya Ehrenburg write the poem about Babi Yar in those days, in 1944?

What a silly, absurd question! Why does one cry or laugh, why does the heart beat faster and why does it hurt? The writer's unfeigned pain and just wrath brought forth a response in the hearts of the soldiers, and hatred for the enemy flared brighter in them and their hands became steadier and the eye sharper as it looked through the sight at the target.

Why did Yevg. Yevtushenko revert to this theme now, in 1961?

Was it because he was reminding us of Babi Yar to warn the world against fascism? Was it because he could not be silent after hearing the hysterical howling of the West German revanchist mongrels? Was it because he wanted to remind some of the young men and women of his own generation of the bravery, the feats, the glory and the great sacrifices of their fathers?

Nothing of the sort! Standing on the steep bluff of Babi Yar, the young Soviet writer found here a theme only for verse about anti-Semitism! Thinking today about those who fell -- the "old man who was shot," the "child who was shot" -- he was thinking only about the fact that they were Jews! To him this proved the most important, the chief, the most soul-stirring thing!

Three days ago I talked with a no longer young Russian Soviet writer who is, by his passport, Jewish.\* Among other things he related how, immediately after the war, when he was serving in our occupation troops in Germany, an officer of one of the Allied staffs asked him to attend, as a Soviet representative, religious services for the Jews who had fallen at the hands of the fascists. Jewish officers of the British, American and French units of the local garrison had agreed to attend the services. "I realize that, as a Communist, you are an atheist, but of course you cannot refuse to attend the solemn services; you are, after all, a Jew too." The Soviet man replied: "I do not doubt the good intention of the officers, but the services they are planning are a sacrilege to all the persons of many nationalities who died in the struggle against Hitlerism. We are internationalists."

Yes, the fascist aggressors shot tens of thousands of people -- of Jewish nationality -- at Babi Yar near Kiev. "The vileness of Hitler Germany showed most clearly in the murder of Jewish old men and babies. But do the fascists not do the same to Russians and Ukrainians, Poles and Yugoslavs?" wrote Ilya Ehrenburg in 1944. "Why did the Germans kill Jews?" he wrote in 1943 about the Piryatin tragedy. "An idle question. They killed hundreds of Ukrainians at this same Piryatin. They killed 200 Belorussians in the village of Klubovka. They are killing Frenchmen in Grenoble and Greeks on Crete. They have to kill the helpless; this is the meaning of their existence." "They say: 'We are against the Jews.' A lie. In Yugoslavia the Germans proclaimed the Serbs a 'lower race.' In Poland they turned Poles into slaves. They hate all peoples...." This is from an Ilya Ehrenburg article of 1941.

I searched his wartime articles for lines about the anti-Semitism of the fascists to understand fully why in his poem about Babi Yar he had not stressed the fact that it was Jews who were killed there. I found the explanation for this not only in the sincerity and depth of the writer's emotions, absolutely excluding classification of the dead by their origin, and not only in the natural internationalism of his then view of the world, but, in this connection, also in his understanding of "the nature of fascism," "the nature of the Hitlerite army."

All the Soviet writers who fought alongside the people realized this. It is distressing that a young writer of today who was eight or nine years old during the war did not want to learn from his elders who saw so much and experienced so much. Strange as it may be, evidently he has not heard that genocide, the destruction of entire peoples, is an organic part of fascism's ideology; that the anti-Semitism of the fascists is only a part of their misanthropic policy of genocide; that for the Hitlerite rabble the destruction of the Jews was only the beginning of just as thoroughly planned and just as cruel a

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\* The internal pass port which all Soviet citizens carry indicates the nationality of the bearer.--Trans.



destruction of "the lower races," including the Slavs. ("As racial scum, the Slav human mass is unworthy of possessing its own lands....," proclaimed the maniac Hitler in his "Mein Kampf." "Who can dispute my right to destroy millions of Slavs...?")

A writer is obliged to know all this, regardless of the intentions with which he approaches his theme, for he has no right to fail to ponder the concrete-historical content and meaning of what is called, "Babi Yar" when he enters into battle with anti-Semitism -- that centuries-old infamy that the Hitlerlites picked out of history's garbage pit and nailed to their flagstaff.

Is the tragedy of Babi Yar to be viewed only as one of history's examples of anti-Semitism?! The destinies of the persons who died there cry out against this, linked as they are by hundreds of visible and invisible threads with the destinies of all others who fell in those terrible years, all who went through those years and all who conquered.

The logic of life is inexorable: It can fool you, but you cannot fool it. Were we to close our eyes for a second, to turn away for a moment from Babi Yar as it was in actuality and from all those gorges, ravines and pits that it brings to mind and from all those clouds of black ashes that have not yet been dispersed by the winds of time, then we, following Yevtushenko, would step out into a very deceptive path. Careful! The foul, swampy quagmire is greedy and implacable. How many has it not swallowed already! One cannot close one's eyes. One cannot turn one's head aside. Here it is, the first and already fateful step:

I am as old today  
as the Jewish people itself.  
I imagine that I am now  
an Israelite.  
Here I am, plodding my way through ancient Egypt.  
And here I am, crucified, breathing my last  
and to this day I bear the traces of the nails.

Oh, how bold, how noble, is it not? But should one not, incidentally, give some thought to which predominates in this declamation -- the insulting condescension of "not like them" ("there is no Jewish blood in mine," Yevtushenko informs us) or the "sacred simplicity" of ignorance or, finally, political tactlessness?

The fascists loved to draw genealogical trees. Are we not being offered here instead a kind of "reverse racism"? What real historical links existed indeed between the immediate descendants of the lovable Tevye the Milkman /a Sholom Aleichem character/ who were brutally murdered in Babi Yar and the ancient Hebrews whose legends have come down to us in the Old Testament? Are they both "Semites"? Truly, this approach to the national question might deserve the warmest gratitude of the "Aryans." "The Jews crucified our Christ," the pogrom-makers

once used to scream. Surely this stupid abomination should not be replaced by another: Christ was, if you please, a Jew!

Can we not do without this kind of "scientific" polemics?

And as for the real merit of the exclamation, as illiterate as it is unthinking, about "the Jewish people" as such "in general" -- this is better described by others; by, say, those few of our fellow-citizens who, heeding the mystic "call of the blood" (coinciding miraculously with the sweet call of the sirens of nationalist bourgeois propaganda), believed that one could be "a Jew in general" and rushed off to Israel. That they decided to exchange their Soviet Motherland for an alleged "motherland of all Jews" is a matter for their civic and human consciences. But the tragedy of the majority of those who left the Soviet Union and went to Israel -- why did this not stir the writer who, cocksure, set out on a bold, dramatic gallop through ancient, modern and recent history all in one?

Yevtushenko feels free and easy at the unenviable job of fanning, whether deliberately or involuntarily, the dying flames of nationalist attitudes. This is freedom from truthfulness, from responsibility for his words. This is extraordinary easiness in thought. Babi Yar aroused in him quite strange "historical" associations that he hastened to share with the readers of Literaturnaya gazeta.

Strange associations? Rather, insulting. After all, in essence he insulted the memory of fallen Soviet people. He insulted Soviet Jews too. But this was not enough.

Oh, Russian people mine!

I know

that you

are at heart internationalist.

But often those whose hands were unclean  
brandished your purest of names.

I know the goodness of my land.

How vile

that anti-Semites should have had the gall  
to dub themselves bombastically

"The Union of the Russian People"!

It is exactly two years since one of the magazines published a previous Yevtushenko declaration addressed just as directly "to Russia," "to the Russian people." At that time he told readers the following about the Russian people: no matter how Russians were beaten with ramrods till the blood flowed, no matter how they were threatened,

the sad martyr-like eyes  
remained kind

and he declared, looking innocently at the toilers, the warriors, the revolutionaries and the conquerors of outer space:



You, Russia,  
were made great  
By your great sufferings!

Ridiculous: Yevtushenko admitting Russia's greatness! "Admitting" it -- on the basis of the humiliating libel that only the obscurantists and reactionaries whom Belinsky, back in his day, had wrathfully answered in his "Letter to Gogol"!

Yevtushenko achieved his goal: The critics made a big fuss over him then and later, spoke and wrote of him rightly and wrongly, subtly and crudely, vividly and colorlessly -- but mostly about how unattractively he had behaved in washing his dirty linen publicly in quite another poem. They recalled Pushkin's poem, "The Wonderful Moment," they defended the honor of that woman although no one knew whether her honor was worth defending.

As for the verse about Russia, they were silent. Perhaps because they were indulgent of the poet's youthfulness: He'll grow up, he'll straighten out. Perhaps also because for some persons it is not fashionable now to talk of politics in art when a specific writer and a specific work are in question: Let's not have political labels, let's dispense with political accusations.

Well, then, does this mean that "everything is permitted"? Evidently Yevtushenko decided it was. Incidentally, they say he has now grown up. And high time. But here he is now, with the blessings of Literaturnaya gazeta, again climbing the ladder of lines of verse and again crying: "Oh, Russian people mine!"

Why does he publicly address those who have entrusted him with their word, who have shared with him a grain of their talent and their glory, those who gave birth to him, fed him and defended him, those who toil in the fields and at the lathe, the builders of the Volzhsky 22nd Party Congress Hydroelectric Station and the virgin lands settlers, the soldiers who have extended their term of service, the writers and cosmonauts No. 1 and No. 2? What did he say to them?

"You know, incidentally -- You see, I wanted to remind you -- Oh, no, I admit your goodness, I know that you are 'at heart' internationalist -- But you see there were dregs and scum that also called themselves Russians --".

Monstrous though it be, Yevtushenko really did this: He uttered not a syllable about Hitlerism, about the fascist invaders -- this did not enter his mind when he stood at Babi Yar! And it was not at all because the Russian people headed the fight against the world murderers that he thought about this people and not because this people bore incalculable losses in the fight and not because this people, together with all the peoples of the Soviet Union and of the entire camp of socialism, is now heading the struggle to prevent a repetition -- a tenfold repetition! -- of the tragedy of the world.

What is this "forgetfulness" if not an insult?

"The Union of the Archangel Michael" -- "Many-pawed, drunken, breaking into wolfish howls, convulsed by a St. Vitus' dance, beasts and filthy old saddle-cloths in human form," as Konstantin Fedin described a pogrom mob in "The Brothers." But what has this to do with the Russian people who set up workers' detachments to fight the Black Hundreds and the Archangel mobs? What has this to do with the people who said their burning weighty word -- loudest in the world -- against anti-Semitism through the voices of Leo Tolstoy, Chekhov, Korolenko, Gorky and Vladimir Ilyich Lenin; the people who united all the peoples of our boundless country into the unified, mighty Union of Soviet Socialist Republics? The friendship of our peoples is now stronger and more monolithic than ever before. Why then should the editors of the all-Union newspaper of the writers now permit Yevtushenko to insult the triumph of the Leninist national policy by comparisons and "reminders" that cannot be considered anything but provocational? Why does Yevtushenko erupt now, trying to outshout the triumphant roar of our working life, the polyphony of complex international affairs, into which the hollow underground explosions of new nuclear tests are clearly trying to break?

The Communist Party of the Soviet Union, in the draft of its new Program, advances the task of continuing "consistently applying the principles of internationalism in the field of national relations; strengthening the friendship of peoples as one of the most important gains of socialism; conducting an uncompromising struggle against manifestations and survivals of any kind of nationalism and chauvinism, against trends of national narrow-mindedness and exclusiveness, idealization of the past and the veiling of social contradictions in the history of peoples, and against obsolete customs and ways." The Party points out that "manifestations of nationalism and national narrow-mindedness do not disappear automatically with the establishment of a socialist system. Nationalist prejudices and the survival of former national friction are a sphere in which resistance to social progress may be most prolonged, stubborn, fierce and insidious."

It is a sacred duty of writers, the Party's first assistants in all its works, to educate the working people in internationalism and socialist patriotism, in intolerance of any manifestations of nationalism and chauvinism. But in order to wage a genuine fight against this filth, in order effectively to get rid of all its survivals, one must first of all know for the sake of what this struggle is conducted and against what it is conducted. One must clearly and soberly realize that in today's historical conditions there can flower luxuriantly on the soil of age-old nationalist prejudices poisonous flowers of all sorts of supra-class-essentially petty-bourgeois-illusions, nurturing both chauvinism and nationalism alike. Obviously, white is the opposite of black. But is the white banner of pacifism the banner of true fighters against the black bandit flag? Is the six-pointed star of David the emblem of true fighters against anti-Semitism?



Our banner is the red banner of the Revolution; our emblem is the hammer and sickle, the emblem of Labor; the crimson, five-pointed star will never fade on the helmets of our warriors. We shall sweep away both chauvinism and nationalism, with their "reciprocal nature," we shall sweep them away, like all kinds of socio-philosophical doctrines that represent variations of petty-bourgeois illusions preventing class struggle, for, as the draft Program of the CPSU states, they "mislead the masses of the people, retard development of the national-liberation movement and jeopardize its gains."

I am not interested in and cannot be interested in Yevg. Yuvtushenko's intentions when he wrote about Babi Yar. As is well known, the road to hell is paved with good intentions. No doubt one can assume here bad intentions too, all those same old intentions of his to startle the public and hook it with any bait. But this is not what is important. It is important that the intolerable falsehood that pervades his "Babi Yar" stems from an obvious retreat from Communist ideology to an ideology of a bourgeois viewpoint. This is indisputable.

On September 27 Komsomolskaya pravda printed a front-page poem by Yevg. Yevtushenko on the seven-year plan and on pages 2 and 3 a review of current poetry in the course of which it gave him passing praise for other poems.

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#### MY REPLY

By Alexei Markov  
Literatura i zhizn  
September 24, 1961

What sort of real Russian are you  
If you've forgotten about your own people?  
Your soul, like pants grown tight, has narrowed,  
Become as empty as a stair-well.  
You've forgotten how with the rust-colored swastika  
They very nearly enveloped the planet,  
How power after power  
Was wiped from the map and from the face of earth,  
How the Auschwitzes echoed with groans,  
How the smoke in obelisks  
Stretched black on the horizon,  
Higher and higher into the abyss of darkness.  
The world's flesh crept at Babi Yar,  
But that was merely the first ravine.  
It would have flamed up in a conflagration  
Covering this globe of ours.  
But then it was -- each should by name  
Be mentioned in a line on stone --  
Oh, how many the millions  
Of Russian crew-cut lads who fell.

Their names the winds can never blow away,  
Nor can a pygmy's spittle them defile.  
No, we did not ask for birth certificates  
When big-eyed children we did shield.  
Or perhaps it was not Russia that blocked  
That embrasure with its own body?!  
But enough of disturbing the dead,  
It gives them pain, is more than they can bear.  
As long as graveyards are trampled on  
By even a single cosmopolitan,  
I say: People, I am a Russian!  
And the ashes set my heart pounding.