

Fadeyev, a Top Soviet Novelist Of Stalin Era, Commits Suicide

Moscow's Literary Dictator, Called Chronic Alcoholic, Had Been Depressed

By Reuters.

MOSCOW, May 14 (Reuters) — Alexander A. Fadeyev, 55, chief Soviet literary theorist of the Stalin era, whose views recently had been under fire, committed suicide yesterday, it was disclosed tonight.

The Soviet news agency Tass said Mr. Fadeyev suffered from chronic alcoholism and took his life "while in a state of grave mental depression."

It was reliably reported that Mr. Fadeyev had shot himself in his apartment.

He caused a sensation at the 1948 left-wing conference of intellectuals in Wroclaw, Poland, when he declared "if hyenas could type and jackals could use fountain pens, they would write like the poet, T. S. Eliot, and the playwrights, Eugene O'Neill and Jean-Paul Sartre."

Mr. Fadeyev was one of the architects of the Stalinist theories of literature that have been sharply criticized since Stalin's death for their failure to portray life in its true colors.

At the recent Soviet Communist party congress, he was demoted from a full to an alternate member of the Central Committee. He remained a member of the board of the Soviet Writers Union, of which he formerly was chairman.

His Works Were Translated

A Stalin Prize winner, his works were translated into most European languages. But he was chiefly regarded as a theoretician rather than as an outstanding writer.

When Mr. Fadeyev was a delegate to the Tenth Party Congress in 1921, it adjourned to Leningrad to suppress the Kronstadt naval mutiny and he was wounded in the fighting.

The Tass announcement said Mr. Fadeyev's chronic alcoholism had led to the virtual cessation of his creative activity as a writer and of his public and social work.

"Various medical measures taken by him for several years did not give positive results," the agency said.

It added that "the Soviet Government highly valued the services of A. Fadeyev and awarded him with two Orders of Lenin as well as various medals."

Rewrote His Major Novel

Mr. Fadeyev ruled Soviet literature under Stalin for more than a decade as Secretary General of the Union of Soviet Writers. Ironically, however, he also was a victim of Communist control over literature. He was forced to rewrite his major post-war novel, "Young Guard," to satisfy party demands for changes in it.

At the twentieth Congress of the Soviet Communist party last February, Mikhail Sholokhov, a novelist, described Mr. Fadeyev as a "power-loving general secretary" who delivered speeches and allocated apartments to writers but preferred not to write.

Mr. Fadeyev headed the post-war campaign to purge Soviet literature of Western influence and ideas. He took over as head of the writers' union in 1946,



The New York Times, 1949

Alexander A. Fadeyev

shortly after the late Andrei A. Zhdanov, a Politburo member and a protégé of Stalin, had bitterly attacked Soviet writers' "enthusiasm for the cheap, modern, bourgeois literature of the West."

In 1949, Mr. Fadeyev visited the United States as head of the Soviet delegation to the Cultural and Scientific Conference for World Peace. The meeting was attacked by many sources as a Communist propaganda effort. While in New York, Mr. Fadeyev denied that the Soviet regime placed restrictions on writers or that the Soviet people were not free to voice their opinions.

A month later in Paris he accused the United States of raising a generation of young criminals who would be used in a future war in the same way that German fascism had used its young people.

Mr. Fadeyev was born in the Volga River city of Kimry near Kalinin, in 1901. He was taken to the Far East at an early age and spent most of his childhood there. He joined the Communist party in 1918 and fought on the Bolshevik side in the civil war.

Mr. Fadeyev's first major literary success was the short novel "Razgrom" (The Rout), published in 1927. The story of a Communist partisan unit fighting against anti-Communist forces in the Far East, the book was hailed as being in the Tolstoyan tradition and as the work of a writer who could combine Communist ideology with the presentation of real, live human beings.

Mr. Fadeyev's greatest literary success was "Young Guard," the tale of young Communist underground fighters against the Nazis during World War II. The novel was received with tremendous acclaim in the early post-war period, and more than a million copies were sold.

Then the Communist party assailed the novel as "falsely" showing panic in the early days of World War II, as failing to give proper credit to Communist party leadership during the war, and as caricaturing Soviet generals. Mr. Fadeyev took three years to rewrite the novel. When he had finished, the second edition was hailed as both a political and literary success.