the new rulers of his country. Webern persisted in the quixotic belief that the historical inevitability of dodecaphonic music paralleled the historical inevitability of Nazism, that both were the fruits of German greatness, and that eventually he (or someone) would be able "to convince the Hitler regime of the rightness of the twelve-tone system."[28] It would be far too simple, as well as invidious, to draw direct parallels between the order that Webern sought in his art and the order that, to Hartmann's dismay, he upheld in political discussions. But here, too, Webern was not alone. Although Schoenberg would have been persecuted for his ethnic background no matter what kind of music he wrote, twelve-tone music was indeed tainted by association in Nazi eyes as "Jewish" as well as "Bolshevik." Or so many official documents proclaimed. And yet, amazingly enough, there was an officially tolerated cadre of twelve-tone composers in the Third Reich. Its members included Winfried Zillig (1905–63), a former pupil of Schoenberg, who had a successful career as an opera conductor in German-occupied Poland during the war; and Paul von Klenau (1883–1946), a Danish composer who made his career in Germany, and whose historical operas — *Michael Kohlhaas* (1933), *Rembrandt van Rijn* (1937), and *Elisabeth von England* (1939) — were successfully produced there despite his use of twelve-tone procedures.

Nor did von Klenau keep them hidden. On the contrary, exactly as Webern might have wished, he proclaimed the virtues — the specifically Nazi virtues — of twelve-tone music in the public press, openly touting the method as "totalitarian," and claiming that its strict discipline made it "entirely appropriate to the future direction of the 'National Socialist World.'" He justified it further as "consistent with Nazi insistence on technical competence," and, in its strictness, as an antidote to the "individualistic arbitrariness" that had formerly plagued modern music.[29]

So was it inherently "degenerate" or inherently "totalitarian"? Inherently Jewish or inherently Nazi? The questions, one must surely recognize by now, are silly. Musical techniques do not have political sympathies or ethnic backgrounds; the people who use them are the ones that do. And as people are inconstant and inconsistent, their means of expression are shaped and colored by their expressive aims. Twelve-tone music has been interpreted in many cultural contexts and in the light of many subtexts. The most contentious period of such readings took place after the war, and will be dealt with in the next chapter.

One foreshadow of it is relevant here. In his *Doktor Faustus* (1949), an allegory of the Nazi period in the form of the biography of a fictitious composer who is the complete inner emigrant, the war-exiled German novelist Thomas Mann (1875–1955) made an elaborate, though implicit, comparison between the twelve-tone system and the Nazi political regime. Its point was a dual paradox: as Hitler enslaved the German people so as to liberate "Germany," so the twelve-tone system regimented the notes in a musical composition to an unprecedented degree in order to achieve the ultimate artistic "autonomy." (In a note added to the English translation at the insistence of its infuriated inventor, Mann called the twelve-tone system "the intellectual property of a contemporary composer and theoretician, Arnold Schoenberg"; Schoenberg's rejoinder: "We will see who is whose contemporary!")[30]

SOCIALIST REALISM AND THE SOVIET AVANT-GARDE

Inner emigration, by and large, was not an option for the artists of Soviet Russia. While the overtly genocidal policies of the Nazi regime have earned it supremacy in the annals of human horror, most historians agree that the Soviet regime, particularly during the reign of Joseph Stalin (1879–1953), its most adamant dictator, was the most oppressive of the twentieth-century totalitarian states in terms of general regimentation of the population, and the most intrusive into the daily lives of its inhabitants. In a bitterly ironic twist, it was precisely the egalitarian and communitarian ideals on which the Communist regime was founded — "from each according to his ability; to each according to his needs,"[31] in the words of Marx — that eventually justified what may have been the bloodiest political terror the world had ever seen. It was a replay of the aftermath of the French Revolution, but on a scale only twentieth-century technology could enable.

Principled or alienated withdrawal from public affairs in such a society was impossible. Anyone not engaged in productive, salaried employment (and all citizens were in effect the government's employees) was judged a social parasite and prosecuted under law. Nowhere were the demands of citizenship more pervasive or more zealously enforced, and artists were citizens above all. Neither in Fascist Italy nor in Nazi Germany were the arts so policed and watchdogged as in the Soviet Union, nor did the Italian or German governments ever promulgate a theory that would effectively transform the arts into a delivery system for state propaganda, as did the Soviet government under Stalin.

That theory was called "socialist realism." It was defined in countless encyclopedias and dictionaries as "a creative method based on the truthful, historically concrete artistic reflection of reality in its revolutionary development."[32] The wording was framed by Andrey Alexandrovich Zhdanov (1896–1948), a member of the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party with responsibilities for overseeing the arts, and was enunciated in 1932, at the first Congress of the Union of Soviet Writers, by the famous novelist Maxim Gorky (1868–1936), who had just returned from emigration, and who allowed himself to be used as a figurehead for the dissemination of official doctrine.

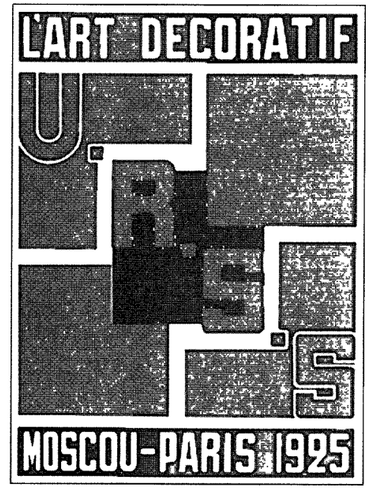

FIG. 59-7 Poster by Alexander Rodchenko for the Soviet section of the Paris Art Deco Exposition, 1925.

It is from that year, 1932, in which official unions were set up for writers, graphic and plastic artists, and composers, that stringent Stalinist controls over the arts are usually said to date. During the first decade and a half after the Russian revolution, the arts were far less subject to direct state intervention. Nor was modernism discouraged, since revolutionary politics was seen as a

form of avant-gardism that sought an appropriately maximalistic reflection in art. "You are revolutionaries in art, we are revolutionaries in life" said Anatoly Lunacharsky, the first Soviet commissar of culture and education, to Prokofieff when the latter announced his intention to emigrate. "We ought to work together."[33]

The most spectacular instances of this collaboration occurred in the visual arts, not in music, and took the form of Soviet propaganda posters and placards designed by the most advanced—"futurist," "suprematist," "constructivist"—painters and photographers of the day, like Kazimir Malevich (1878–1935), Lazar (El) Lissitsky (1890–1941), and Alexander Rodchenko (1891–1956). At the Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes (International Exhibition of Modern Decorative and Industrial Arts) in 1925—the event from which the term "art-deco" was derived—the Soviet contingent made a colossal impression on viewers and critics in Paris, the very nerve center of international modernism.

Amazed by it, Sergey Diaghilev commissioned from one of the Soviet artists exhibited there, Georgiy Bogdanovich Yakulov (1884–1928), a "constructivist" set for a ballet, to be composed by Prokofieff, that would celebrate Soviet industrialization. The cacophonous work that emerged from this collaboration, *Le pas d'acier* ("The leap of steel," 1928), was best seen in its Parisian modernist context as an exercise in "radical chic." (Stravinsky, from whose *The Rite of Spring* it poached a bit, but who was by then completely cold to Russia and to primitivism, declared that it made him ill.) But it gave Prokofieff specious reassurance that the atmosphere back home would be hospitable to his work, and was one of the first nudges in the direction of his eventual return to Russia.

With one exception, however, the early Soviet musical scene was devoid of a real avant-garde. And that is because, owing to a combination of powerful patronage incentives and a strong educational establishment, there had been virtually no musical avant-garde to speak of in the immediate prerevolutionary period, with Scriabin prematurely dead and Stravinsky already living abroad. Not even Prokofieff, conservatory-trained and proud of it, was truly an avant-garde artist. His technique, like Stravinsky's or Scriabin's, may have been "advanced" by conservatory standards, but it was elite, highly professionalized, and, like all maximalism, committed to extending a tradition. That implies loyalty to the tradition one is extending, even if one is extending it to the point of "decadence." An avant-garde is something else. The term is military, and it implies belligerence: countercultural hostility, antagonism to existing institutions and traditions. That was indeed the fear among traditional artists, no matter how advanced, in the aftermath of the revolution. It seemed at first inevitable that a "workers' and peasants'" government would be hostile to the art institutions of the aristocracy and the bourgeoisie, which had harbored the art of what Lenin called the "bored upper ten thousand."[34] It seemed to elite establishmentarians that the handwriting was on the wall, and they left—the Rachmaninoffs and the Prokofieffs alike.

But if Prokofieff was no true revolutionary in art, neither, it turned out, were Lenin or Lunacharsky. They too were committed traditionalists in art. On reflection that should not be surprising since, although the Soviet government was set up in

the name of the workers and the peasants, the revolution that produced it was led not "from below" by workers or peasants but "from above," by the descendents of the urban intelligentsia, whose tastes were formed within the social class from which they had emerged. In a famous conversation with the German Communist Clara Zetkin, Lenin had no hesitation in proclaiming himself a philistine with respect to modern art movements, and even derided the sentiment Lunacharsky expressed to Prokofieff. "We are good revolutionaries," he said, "but somehow we feel obliged to prove that we are on a par with 'contemporary culture.' But I have the courage to declare myself a 'barbarian.' I am unable to count the works of expressionism, futurism, cubism, and similar 'isms' among the highest manifestations of creative genius. I do not understand them. I do not derive any pleasure from them."[35] If Lenin had gone on to say that therefore the art of the traditional high culture was corrupt and had to be replaced with a proletarian culture, he would have qualified as an avant-gardist. But he said nothing of the kind. In fact, he said, "We must preserve the beautiful, take it as a model, use it as a starting point, even if it is 'old.' Why must we bow low in front of the new, as if it were God, only because it is 'new'?" That traditionalism, under the paradoxical (or hypocritical) cover of revolutionary rhetoric, would later be canonized in the doctrine of socialist realism.

But during the 1920s, the period of the so-called New Economic Policy (a limited free-market economy that Lenin reintroduced in 1921 and that lasted until 1929), a genuine Soviet avant-garde emerged. In 1923, two major professional associations of musicians were organized on the initiative of their memberships. One, the Association of Contemporary Music (called the ASM after its Russian initials) comprised the traditional establishment, including the traditional modernists. Its leading creative figure, Nikolai Yakovlevich Myaskovsky (1881–1950), became the Soviet "classicist" par excellence with twenty-seven symphonies and thirteen string quartets to his credit. Its fierce and frightening adversary, the Russian Association of Proletarian Musicians (RAPM), was the Soviet avant-garde. Militantly countercultural, hopelessly doctrinaire, intolerant, self-righteous, these radical proletarians (and not the Soviet government) were the ones who wanted to throw out all sophisticated traditions and build the new Soviet music on the rubble.

RAPM defined itself by what it opposed: it was antimodernist, anti-Western, and anti-jazz, but also anti-folklore and antinationalist in the spirit of Marxist internationalism. In place of all existing classical, popular, and folk music (except revolutionary songs and a few works of Beethoven, the "voice of the French revolution") RAPM proffered revolutionary utilitarian music—what in "new-objective" Germany would have been called *Gebrauchsmusik*: mainly marchlike "mass songs" for group singing, set to agitational propaganda (*agitprop*) lyrics. For six years ASM and RAPM contended, until in 1929 the NEP came to an end and the country entered its harsh totalitarian phase with the inauguration of the first Five Year Plan. As part of the general centralization of authority now imposed, RAPM was given administrative control over Soviet musical institutions.

This was the period during which the Moscow Conservatory was renamed the Felix Kon School of Higher Musical Education, after a firebrand politician of the period

who edited the newspaper *Rabochaya gazeta*, The Workers' Gazette. A nonmusician, Boleslaw Przybyszewski, the doctrinaire Marxist son of a famous symbolist writer, was installed as rector. Myaskovsky, together with Reinhold Glière (1875–1956) and Mikhail Gnesin (1883–1957), his fellow stalwarts of the prerevolutionary creative elite, were denounced and fired from the faculty. Grades and examinations were abolished, and admission restricted to students of acceptable class background. Composers were exhorted to spurn all styles and genres that had flourished under the tsars. The only politically correct concept of authorship was collective, epitomized in the so-called Prokoll, a group of Moscow Conservatory students who banded together to produce revolutionary operas and oratorios that were in essence medleys of mass songs.

The joyous declaration after three years of a prematurely successful completion to the first Five Year Plan was the Soviet (now firmly Stalinist) leadership's way of retreating from a ruinous situation without admitting error. The country was in misery—a misery that could be blamed on local administrators and "wreckers" in the case of the real tragedies like forced collectivization of agriculture, in which millions had died as a result of mass starvation tactics. This was the beginning of the era of Soviet "show trials," in which scapegoats were subjected to orchestrated campaigns of denunciation and coerced confessions that deflected popular discontent away from the real culprits, the economic planners themselves and their enforcers. On the artistic and intellectual fronts, all excesses were blamed on "left deviationism" from the true Party line.

The same Party that installed the proletarianists in 1929 suppressed them in 1932 in the name of a benign administrative *perestroyka* or "restructuring." The RAPM and its sister organizations in the other arts were "liquidated," along with ASM, and replaced by the all-encompassing creative unions. The RAPMists were stripped of power and forced to make public recantations. Nominal power reverted to the old guard, from whose standpoint the 1932 *perestroyka* meant salvation from chaos and obscurantism. The grateful old conservatory professors were given back their classrooms and installed as willing figureheads in the organizational structure of the Composers' Union. To all appearances, the union was a service organization, even a fraternal club.

The real power, of course, lay elsewhere, and the real purpose of the organization, though this was not immediately apparent, was to be a conduit of centralized authority and largesse. As the guarantor of its members' right to work, as the channeler of state patronage through commissions, and as dispenser of material assistance, the union was ostensibly engaged in protecting the interests of composers, but by the same token it was implicitly endowed with the power to enforce conformity. Its chief social functions were the so-called internal *pokazï*—meetings at which composers submitted their work in progress to comradely peer review in the spirit of idealistic "Bolshevik self-criticism," and open forums at which composers and musical intellectuals shared the floor discussing topics like Soviet opera or "symphonism" for eventual publication in *Sovetskaya muzïka* (Soviet Music), the union's official organ.

Early discussions of Socialist Realism and the problems of its application to music, the least inherently "realistic" of the arts, were also carried by the journal. As in the

case of literature and the fine arts, the nature of the doctrine was fully revealed in its application rather than its theory. It turned out to have far less to do with Marxist socialism than with more traditional Russian attitudes to the arts, particularly those associated most recently with the Christian doctrines of Count Leo Tolstoy, and more remotely with the doctrine of official nationalism that was promulgated a round century before in the early reign of Tsar Nikolai I (see chapter 36).

It may seem bizarre to trace a militantly atheistic ideology like Socialist Realism back to a militant Christian thinker, but their common militancy, and their shared contempt for "art for art's sake," provided the link. In his tract *What Is Art?* (1898), Tolstoy asserted that all art must contain the Good and the Important. If these are present, a work of art is "moral" and satisfies one of Tolstoy's three criteria for consideration as art, the others being intelligibility and sincerity. Tolstoy defined the Good as "that which is always necessary to all people,"[36] namely "feeling that can unite people with God and with one another."[37] The Important, for Tolstoy, was "that which causes people to understand and to love what previously they did not understand or love."[38] Thus, in order to deserve its existence and dissemination, art must be communitarian, didactic, and comprehensible to all.

Modernism, socially divisive and "elitist," is immediately excluded. Substitute the words Socialist for Christian, Socialism for Christianity, political for religious, and the following passage from Tolstoy could easily have issued from the pen of a Gorky, a Lunacharsky, or a Lenin:

> The art of our time should be appraised differently from former art chiefly in this, that the art of our time, that is, Christian art (basing itself on a religious perception which demands the union of man), excludes, from the domain of art good in subject-matter, everything transmitting exclusive feelings which do not unite men but divide them. It relegates such work to the category of art that is bad in its subject-matter; while on the other hand it includes in the category of art that is good in subject-matter a section not formerly admitted as deserving of selection and respect, namely, universal art transmitting even the most trifling and simple feelings if only they are accessible to all men without exception, and therefore unite them. Such art cannot but be esteemed good in our time, for it attains the end which Christianity, the religious perception of our time, sets before humanity.[39]

Here in embryo is the essence of Socialist Realism as expressed by a trio of terms that was fashioned by Zhdanov as if expressly to echo the trio—*pravoslaviye* (Orthodoxy), *samoderzhaviye* (autocracy), *narodnost'* (nationality)—that had characterized Russian official nationalism a century before. The last term, *narodnost'*, remained the same. Like the earlier concept, Socialist Realism demanded that art be rooted in folklore, or at least in styles familiar and meaningful to all without special preparation. The other terms were *partiynost'* and *ideynost'*. The former means loyalty to the Communist Party and conformity with its official line—which, though it claimed to be a stable point of political and moral reference, proved to be as changeable as the weather, and therefore dangerous to artists. The latter term, *ideynost'*, means "being full of ideas," which in practice amounted to a requirement that works of art have a content that is easily grasped and paraphrased.

This last was a difficult demand to enforce in the case of textless music. The difficulty had two consequences. At times it led to the catastrophic downgrading of the instrumental genres in the Soviet scheme of musical value. At other times it led to theorizing the means whereby the ideological content of instrumental music could be rendered "objectively" intelligible (and therefore censorable). The chief theorizer was Boris Asafyev (1884–1949), a mediocre composer but a brilliant musicologist, in a book called *Muzïkal'naya forma kak protsess* ("Musical form as process"), first issued in 1930 and continually reworked and reissued as Asafyev refined his thinking according to changing political demands.

Asafyev theorized that instrumental music contained semantic units comparable to what linguists call morphemes—minimal bearers of meaning. Asafyev's term for his musical morphemes was "intonation" (*intonatsiya*); in combination, intonations produced musical "imagery" (*obraznost'*) that could be verbally paraphrased just as iconographical codes might be invoked to translate the meaning of a painting into words. Ironically enough, these formulations of Asafyev's were all adaptations of theories associated with "Russian formalism," a school of criticism that flourished in the 1920s, which interpreted works of literature "semiotically" (according, that is, to a "sign language" of tacit codes and signaling "devices" that made form as meaningful as content). Formalism as a literary practice was officially banned as modernist in the 1930s; indeed the very word "formalist" became an all-purpose and much dreaded term of Stalinist abuse. But as adapted by Asafyev (not, originally, with any political purpose in mind), and called by another name, it remained viable for music, because it could in principle help render instrumental music policeable.

PROTAGONIST OR VICTIM?

So much for theory. The story of Stalinist totalitarianism in practice, where music was concerned, can best be told—in fact, in some ways can *only* be told—in terms of the creative biography of Dmitriy Dmitriyevich Shostakovich (1906–75), the Soviet Union's emblematic composer. Shostakovich was the one composer wholly formed in the Soviet Union to achieve unquestionable world eminence. In that sense his work was not only regarded, but was actively promoted by the regime, as an emblem of Soviet cultural achievement and a vindication of the theory of socialist realism. His actual biography, containing as it did dramatic collisions and painful compromises with Soviet authority, is emblematic in another way, symbolizing the plight of artists who are subject to direct political control under uniquely modern conditions. And the controversies that have swirled about his legacy since his death (and since the collapse of the Soviet Union) are emblematic in yet a third way, exemplifying the contests over the meaning of art to which conditions of censorship and political manipulation inevitably give rise.

Shostakovich was a composing prodigy. He became nationally famous at the age of nineteen, when his First Symphony, his conservatory graduation piece, was publicly performed in Leningrad (the former Russian capital, St. Petersburg, renamed in honor of Lenin) on 12 May 1926. (Shostakovich celebrated the date for the rest of his life as a personal holiday.) World fame followed less than a year later, when Bruno Walter

FIG. 59-8 Dmitriy Shostakovich at a rehearsal of Vladimir Mayakovsky's *Bedbug* in Leningrad, 1929. Seated beside the composer is the director Vsevolod Meyerhold. Standing behind are (left) the designer, Alexander Rodchenko; and (right) Mayakovsky.

performed the symphony with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra on 5 May 1927. The American premiere, by Leopold Stokowski and the Philadelphia Orchestra, took place in November 1928. By then Shostakovich had won recognition as a pianist as well, receiving a prize at the International Chopin Competition in Warsaw.

The precocious symphony, very much a sign of its times, shows Shostakovich to have been well abreast of all the fashionable currents in European music. In form it was impeccably "neoclassical," while in content it was full of "new-objective" irony in its allusions to "subartistic" or utilitarian genres and its sarcastic tendency to take things to laughable expressive extremes. The first and second themes in the opening movement, for example, are a cheeky military march and a shyly coquettish waltz. The second movement, nominally a scherzo and trio, contrasts a maniacal galop (in which the piano takes a leading part) with some sort of weirdly antiquated hymn or ersatz medieval organum. The finale, another galop (or possibly a circus march), brazenly and explicitly mocks the pathos of the affecting slow movement—and implicitly mocks the listener who had been taken in by it. The main sentiment of *neue Sachlichkeit*—"We won't be fooled again!"—is written all over this icily brilliant score.

The piano's conspicuous mischief-making in the second and fourth movements is perhaps a reminder of the composer's apprenticeship, during the hard days following the Bolshevik coup and the ensuing civil war, as low-paid pianist in a cold silent movie theater, where he may have acquired his lifelong taste for satirical intrusions of "low"