

Title:

A Moment of Truth about Maxim Gorky

Word Count:

228

Summary:

Maxim Gorky (1868-1936) is widely considered a Bolshevik author, closely allied with the likes of Lenin and Stalin. But this is far from the truth.

Keywords:

Article Body:

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Gorky's real name was Alexei Maximovich Peshkov. He chose the pseudonym "Gorky" - "bitter" in Russian - to describe his early experiences from the age of eight as a menial worker. In his late teens he attempted suicide. The bullet pierced his lung, rendering him susceptible to Tuberculosis for the rest of his life.

Between 1899 and 1906 Gorky lived in St. Petersburg and participated in the activities of the Social Democratic Party. When it split in 1903, he, indeed, supported the Bolsheviks financially - though he never joined them formally. He was a strong critic of Lenin. Partly to avoid his wrath, he exiled himself to Capri, Italy in 1906.

Moreover, though he upheld the Bolsheviks' anti-war stance, he opposed the 1917 October Revolution (the Bolshevik coup against the post-Tsarist Social Democratic government). So damaging was his criticism of Lenin's dictatorial ways and the illegitimacy of the Bolshevik regime that his work was censored from July 1918 onwards.

Gorky left Russia in 1921 and lived in Sorrento, Italy until 1928 when he was lured back by a lavish celebration of his 60th birthday. The year after, he relocated permanently to Russia. In 1938, certain senior Soviet figures - like Nikolai Bukharin and Genrikh Yagoda - were accused of murdering him in 1936, while under medical treatment.