

- 39 Adrian Piotrovskii, "The Artist and the Client" ("Khudozhnik i zakazchik"), *Na sovetskii teatr* (Leningrad, 1925), 22-24.
- 40 Adrian Piotrovskii, "Anniversaries" ("Godovshchiny"), *Petrogradskaia pravda*, November 9, 1923, p. 5. For the same hypothesis in reference to the Greeks, see his contribution to *Istoriia evropeiskogo teatra* (Leningrad, 1931).
- 41 *Istoriia sovetskogo teatra*, p. xxv.
- 42 *Massovye prazdnestva*, p. 73.
- 43 See Adrian Piotrovskii, "Toward a Theory of Amateur Theater" ("K teorii samodeiatel'nogo teatra"), *Problemy sotsiologii teatru* (Leningrad, 1926), pp. 121-24.
- 44 Adrian Piotrovskii, "Edinye khudozhestvennye kruzhki," *Na sovetskii teatr*, pp. 7-8.
- 45 Piotrovskii, "Edinye," p. 7.
- 46 Grigorii Avlov, *Klubnyi samodeiatel'nyi teatr: evoliutsiia metodov i form* (Leningrad, 1930), p. 146.
- 47 See the articles in *Edinyi khudozhestvennyi kruzhok* (Leningrad, 1925).
- 48 Adrian Piotrovskii, "The Games of May" ("Maiskie igry"), *Zhizn' iskusstva*, July 15 1924, p. 5.
- 49 See V. Kerzhentsev, "O professionalizme," *Gorn* 4 (1919). The dilemma would last into NEP: S. Lukovskii, "Theater Studios, Circles, and Action-Cells" ("Teatral'naiia studiia, kruzhok ili deistvennaia iacheika," *Rabochii klub* 1 (1924), p. 12.
- 50 Stefan Mokul'skii, "On Amateur Theater" ("O samodeiatel'nom teatre"), *Zhizn' iskusstva*, July 15, 1924, pp. 6-7.
- 51 *Problemy sotsiologii iskusstva*, pp. 126-27.
- 52 Pavel Marinchik, *Rozhdenie komsomol'skogo teatra* (Moscow, 1963), pp. 80-82, etc.
- 53 See V. M. Mironova, *TRAM: Agitatsionnyi-molodezhnyi teatr 1920-30-kh gg.* (Leningrad, 1977), or Konstantin Rudnitsky, *Russian and Soviet Theater, 1905-1932* (New York, 1988), pp. 203-5.
- 54 Rudnitsky, *Russian and Soviet Theater*, p. 204.

CHAPTER 6

*Revolution as an esthetic phenomenon:
Nietzschean motifs in the reception of Isaac
Babel (1923-32)*

Gregory Freidin

My natural readers and listeners
are even now Russians,
Scandinavians and Frenchmen –
will it always be that way?

F. Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo* (p. 321)

Nietzsche, the Russian Nietzsche imprinted in the consciousness of Russian intelligentsia, holds the key to Babel's success in the 1920s. A few juxtapositions will suffice to amplify the presence of Nietzschean overtones in the reception of Babel's fiction:¹

Dare to devote some thought to the problem of restoring the health of a people which has been impaired by history, to how it may recover its instincts and therewith its integrity. (*H*, p. 25)

Babel:

Before saying goodbye, the Chief of Staff wrote a resolution over his grievance: "Restore the above-described stud to its primordial status." ("The Story of a Horse"²)

Nietzsche:

You say it is the good cause that hallows even war? I tell you: it is the good war that hallows any cause.

War and courage have done more great things than charity. Not your pity but your courage has saved the unfortunate up to now. (*Z*, p. 74)

Babel:

Afonka stuck the papers into his boot and fired a shot into Dolgushev's mouth. "Afonya," I said with a pathetic smile, and rode up to the Cossack, "I just couldn't do it." "Get away," he said, turning

pale, "I'm gonna kill you! You jerks with specs, you take pity on us folks like a cat pities its mouse . . ." ("The Death of Dolgushev," p. 67)

Nietzsche:

Only where the state ceases, does the man who is not superfluous begin: does the song of necessary man, the unique and irreplaceable melody begin.

There the state ceases – look there my brothers. Do you not see it: the rainbow and the bridges to the overman? (Z, pp. 77–78)

Babel:

"Where does police begin," he screamed, "and Benya end?" "Police ends where Benya begins," replied reasonable people. ("How It Was Done In Odessa," p. 169)

Alexander Blok:

Man is a beast; man is a plant, a flower; he shows the qualities of extreme cruelty, seemingly inhuman, animal cruelty, and the qualities of primordial tenderness – equally inhuman, almost vegetative . . . ("The Collapse of Humanism"³)

Babel:

You are tiger, lion, cat. You can spend the night with a Russian woman and the Russian woman will be satisfied. ("How It Was Done in Odessa," p. 165)

THE IRONY AND THE PATHOS OF THE REVOLUTION

It is a truth universally acknowledged that postrevolutionary Russian prose, with its palpable verbal texture and penchant for paradox – two key features of Babel's art – was a direct heir to the literary patrimony of the preceding decade. Continuity extended to other areas as well, not least because most of the stars who graced the post-1917 horizon had either been launched on their course before the Revolution (Babel, for one), or had been shaped by and matured in the twilight years of the Russian Empire (Zoshchenko, Olesha, Lunts). But even though they were rooted in the literary institutions of the old regime and largely unfettered by the new ones,⁴ these authors

could not write, could not afford to write, in Zoshchenko's understated phrase, "as though nothing had happened."⁵ The work-horse solution for this dilemma, common in a period of rapid change, was the deployment of the ironic mode.⁶ By and large, the ironic effect was produced by the use of local dialects and a densely metaphoric style (the "ornamental prose") or by using the technique of *skaz*.⁷ Both approaches were a foil for the stylistically "unmarked" prose and the "standard" literary Russian associated inevitably with the centralized order of the departed state.

Likewise, in searching for forms of emplotment, writers could no longer draw sustenance from the certainties of affirming or denying the truths of religion, science, progressive secular ideologies of the Enlightenment, not to mention everybody's tried-and-true favorite, the oppression of the old regime. Instead, they tended to structure their narratives along the lines of irreconcilable conflict and paradox, pitched a few ironic registers below Dostoevsky's high tragedy or the Symbolists' fascination with an apocalyptic *mêlée* (Blok's *The Twelve*, Pilniak's *The Naked Year* or Vsevolod Ivanov's *Dityo* can serve as prime examples). This ironic trend in the culture, which had bade farewell to the world of the old regime, provided a nurturing environment for Nietzschean paradigms, which had been deeply, at times seamlessly, assimilated (as well as contaminated) by the Russian intelligentsia.⁸ The resurgence of "the new barbarism," provoked by the Great War⁹ and culminating in the Civil War, made Nietzschean formulae particularly useful for making sense out of what was perceived as both an epochal cataclysm and an epochal opportunity for fundamental renewal. In the shadow cast by the iconic hammer-wielding proletarian of the socialist revolution a trained eye could discern the outlines of the *philosopher with a hammer*. For the contemporary Russian intellectuals, even those sitting in "opposite corners" (e.g., Ivanov and Gershenzon,¹⁰ Schloezer and Voronsky, Lunacharsky¹¹ and Blok) this blurring of the outlines was not a matter of confusion. On the contrary, for a member of the Russian intelligentsia, nurtured on the ideology of populism, it made perfect sense.

Little effort, then, was required of Babel's contemporaries to recognize in his stories that took Russia by storm in 1924–25 an articulation of this radically antinomian, Nietzschean vision of the Russian Revolution – a culmination of the world-historical drama, its irony based on “pushing down that which was falling,” its pathos inspired by the mind-boggling magnitude of the destruction and the desperate anticipation of the dawning of a new age. That antinomy *was* the Revolution, and to a Nietzscheanized mind, it could be “justified,” made supremely acceptable, to use the formulation in *The Birth of Tragedy*, “as an esthetic phenomenon.” A close look at contemporary reviews of Babel shows that for many critics, his stories did just that.

One of the first Soviet admirers of Babel's new fiction, Iakov Benni, saw this clearly and boldly declared that Babel managed to resolve the gaping antinomies of the revolution, indeed, to justify them through art, nothing but art:

The abiding contradiction, especially powerful at the time of revolution, the contradiction between art and life is resolved by Babel simply through the sense of the inevitability and the ultimate completeness [*tselesoobraznost'*] of art [...] The tormenting contradictions, greeting Babel the dreamer at the threshold of life, cannot repel him even when life appears before him as the passionate, cruel, crude, seething struggle. Babel looks back, sees something and forgets himself . . . At that point Babel the artist remains alone, standing face to face with the radiant, seething, reality, magnificent in its self-generated, legitimate, [*samozakonnost'*] . . . reality, not a tiny shade of which, be it sound, color, pain, joy, tragedy as much as laughter, can escape the artist, who has become all eyes. [...] His stories overwhelm one with their authenticity: a strange echo of the familiar laughter of a “tiny little Gogol” combined with the great intensity of the justification of sacrifice . . .¹²

Of all the Soviet critics, Benni was one of the least equivocal in praising Babel for establishing the Revolution's Nietzschean credentials as an esthetic phenomenon (“the self-generated legitimacy of reality,” “completeness of art,” etc.). Others, who came after him, were more or less oblique or, as happened often enough, were not even aware of their Nietzschean vocabulary. The question that I will address is how contempo-

rary criticism managed to assimilate Babel's fiction – an acknowledged postrevolutionary masterpiece yet patently Nietzschean in its language, sentiment, and emplotment – to the ostensibly Marxist Bolshevik scheme for Soviet art. The story of this assimilation is, in a sense, a case study in the formation of the intelligentsia consciousness, its growing acceptance, however grudging, of the Bolshevik regime during the period of the “breather” (*peredyshka*), as Lenin so aptly christened the NEP.

THE BABEL EXPLOSION

Proportion, symmetry, sense of scale and measure – they are easily discarded under the spell of Babel's art. So it was with the critical response to the paradoxically hyperbolic and spare stories, which would later form the *Red Cavalry* and *Odessa* cycles following their first appearance in 1923. In Shklovsky's unfailingly astute phrase, 1923–24 were the years of the first blush of the reader's “romance” with Babel.¹³ And a romance it was; for what, short of an infatuation, can explain why G. Lelevich, one of the most blustering and unromantic critics of the *On Guard* (which is blustering and unromantic indeed), would so sweetly serenade Babel after debunking unceremoniously such giants of postrevolutionary Russian prose as Ilia Ehrenburg, Vsevolod Ivanov, Nikolai Nikitin, and Boris Pilniak.¹⁴ “Of all the fellow-traveler fiction,” Lelevich wrote in his “1923: A Literary Summing-Up,”

the fragments by Babel, which have appeared in the periodical literature during the past year, represent the most interesting phenomenon, one most deserving of our attention. [...] No one has yet conveyed in fiction that image of Budennyi's troopers, with their heroism, their instinctive revolutionary consciousness, with their devil-may-care, guerrilla, Cossack spirit. There is not an iota of idealization. On the contrary – an ever-so-slight smile is present everywhere, but at the same time the reader receives the impression of *enormous revolutionary power*.¹⁵

Coming from the pen of Lelevich, these were the words of love indeed (Babel was the only writer in Lelevich's survey to merit

a whole separate section). What is more, Lelevich's panegyric was one of the earliest critical appraisals in which Babel was praised for presenting the Revolution as an eruption of the primordial will to power, a motif that would receive its supporters and detractors later on.

Not to be outdone in patronizing a promising new talent, Aleksandr Voronsky, Lelevich's nemesis among the Bolshevik literati, argued, eschewing, as he put it, "all exaggeration," that Babel was "a new milestone on the circuitous and complicated road along which contemporary literature was moving toward Communism."¹⁶ The magnitude of Babel's achievement was recognized by the émigré press as well,¹⁷ most notably by Prince Sviatopolk-Mirsky. Mirsky, who was situated at the opposite end of the cultural-political spectrum from his two Bolshevik colleagues and treated Babel as a consummate artist indifferent to ideology, unwittingly echoed Lelevich in a review of the first edition of *Red Cavalry*:

Among all the "Soviet writers" who have become famous since 1922, Babel, it seems, is the most famous, perhaps – without any exaggeration – the only truly popular author; for one, he is just about the only writer read outside Russia "for pleasure," not merely to keep abreast of what is happening "on the other shore." And this perception, one must admit, is fully justified: indeed, Babel is the only fully mature craftsman among the "fellow-travelers," the only one writing "for the reader" as well as "for himself." Other craftsmen, such as Pasternak, think the least about the reader, concentrating on their new artistic goals, whereas popular writers, like Seifullina, think least of all about their duty as artists and write in order to satisfy the communist demand.¹⁸

And so it went. By 1926, when *Red Cavalry* appeared in its first edition, the volume of ink and newsprint devoted to the critical appraisal of this short fiction, as one contemporary acknowledged in amazement, had easily exceeded the volume of Babel's own published work.¹⁹ For a while, it seemed as though Babel's star would never stop rising. In 1927, Viacheslav Polonsky, perhaps the most authoritative and least dogmatic Marxist critical voice of the late 1920s, pronounced with a somber finality: "In Soviet literature, Babel has rightly come to

occupy an exalted position. The very existence of *Red Cavalry* is a factor that defines the development of literary art."²⁰

BOLSHEVIZED NIETZSCHE: A CULTURAL MOTIF

All the vicissitudes of Babel's literary career notwithstanding, *Red Cavalry* and *Odessa Tales* have remained to this day the jewels in the crown of postrevolutionary Russian literature. In this regard, the praise lavished on them at the time of publication has limited heuristic value for one studying Nietzschean elements in Soviet culture. It is another matter when this remarkably expeditious response is located in the context of the cultural debates of the 1920s. Highly politicized, these debates involved not only a sorting out of a variety of blueprints for building a new culture but, more importantly for the purposes of the present discussion, revolved around determining the status of the Revolution in the eyes of the intelligentsia. Those who had accepted the Revolution as a preordained (the Hegelian *gesetzmässig*) or, at least, complete and mature (*gesetzt*) event, i.e., the Bolsheviks and people close to them, were trying to convert to their faith those, the majority, who were possessed by varying degrees of doubt. As in the case of major philosophical systems which, since Kant, could not be considered complete unless they accounted for the beautiful, the Bolshevik vision of Russia's "socialist revolution" required some form of legitimation in the esthetic sphere as well. The Revolution could not quite be considered *real*, so went the argument, if it failed to give birth to "new art" – a "red Lev Tolstoi," as contemporary wits would put it.

Whether they belonged to those who, in matters of esthetics, put their trust in History and were more or less satisfied with "organic" cultivation of Soviet art (among them, Trotsky, Voronsky, Lunacharsky, Polonsky, the champions of the "fellow-travelers"), or whether, like the members of LEF or the *On-Guardists*, they wished to employ more intrusive techniques, the agronomists of the Soviet culture garden became captives of their own cerebral expectations and schemes. Theirs was a barely concealed anxiety that the revolution, or

more precisely, the authenticity of the Bolshevik version of it, could be called into question if Soviet writers failed to produce new works rivaling in quality and profundity the best of the Imperial achievement (cinema, a new art form, could escape the severity of this test).

To put it differently and compactly, the Bolshevik position regarding art, especially literature, an authoritative and consecrated art form in Russia, combined two contradictory messages. On the one hand, art was able to express the very essence of social forces, "serving the purpose of analyzing," as Lunacharsky put it, "the reality of our milieu." "For us, Marxists," continued the People's Commissar of Enlightenment, known to harbor a weakness for the *philosopher with a hammer*, "the freedom of a [major] artist implies his highest engagement with the social forces. After all, we do not believe in an abstract free will. When man expresses himself freely, he gives the optimal expression to those social forces which exert their influence on him."²¹ On the other hand, "art *was* a social force" in its own right, because "sometimes consciously, sometimes unconsciously, a writer becomes a preacher [...] he selects his facts in such a way that they would move the reader toward a particular conclusion."²²

The latter point is a clear evocation of Bogdanov's theories which assigned art pretty much the same function as the "sacred" possesses in Durkheim – a force constitutive of a society.²³ The Russian intelligentsia's traditional privileging of *belles-lettres* no doubt played a crucial role in this theoretical elevation of literature to the lofty status of a civil religion.²⁴

The task that the Bolshevik culture-mongers thus set themselves was not merely to win writers over to their ideological position in order that they might preach, or prophesy, the Bolshevik gospel, but also so that they might do so "freely" under the compulsion of the invisible hand of the hegemonic working class. The former task represented an attempt at a political and ideological conquest of the intelligentsia. The latter involved the Bolsheviks' monistic compulsion to subject the historical authenticity of the *socialist* revolution to an ordeal by art. Indeed, it would have been far more convenient for the

Bolsheviks to accept the Formalists' view of art as an "autonomous series." Yet they would not let go, insisting, as Lunacharsky put it, that "all art was ideological as long as it is prompted by a powerful feeling, which, as it were, compels the artist to invade, to seize souls, to expand the power of his *dominant* [*dominanta*] over them."²⁵ This task, if we are to use a Nietzschean scheme, amounted to an esthetic justification of the Bolshevik Revolution – a justification deemed all the more precious if its source could be identified as coming from someone other than a brother-in-Marx. Babel – the author and his fiction – fit the bill, if ever so ambiguously and imperfectly.

THE PARADOX OF BABEL CRITICISM

As late as 1932, Sviatopolk-Mirsky, the same critic who five years earlier had singled out Babel as an unrivaled star of Russian letters writing under, not to say despite, the Bolsheviks,²⁶ was now declaring from the high rostrum of *Literaturnaia gazeta* that Babel's achievement was proof positive of the historical legitimacy of the Bolshevik Revolution and one of the factors persuading him to return from his self-imposed exile in the West.²⁷ For those who followed Babel's reception in the 1920s, Mirsky's earlier insistence on Babel's supreme estheticism – "his stories create a purely literary, esthetic impression; ideology for him is a constructive device" – was not necessarily incompatible with his later view that Babel's fiction legitimated Soviet achievement.

Apart from providing a basis for an esthetic legitimation, Babel's writings functioned as an artistically perfect paradox, a device capable of generating an endless critical discourse on the contradictions of the Revolution – a whetstone on which various critics sharpened their theoretical and ideological knives. Indeed, critics experienced a virtual compulsion to explain, classify, dissect, and reassemble his stories, ostensibly to guide the "infatuated" reader and, implicitly, to assimilate the paradox of the Revolution which seemed to have erupted with a mesmerizing force and undeniable authenticity in Babel's short fiction.

Much of what was written about Babel in Soviet Russia in the 1920s was informed, if not shaped, by key ideas associated with Nietzsche's teaching: that human existence may be justified only as an esthetic phenomenon (*The Birth of Tragedy*), a motif popularized by the Russian Symbolists; that the Christian ethic, with its ascetic ideal and *ressentiment*, represents an insidious ploy of the weak and unhealthy to suppress "life" and thus dominate the healthy and the strong (*The Genealogy of Morals*, assimilated through the turn-of-the-century debates); and that "life and action" must be served by history "to the advantage of a coming age," and not the other way around ("love of the distant one" in *Zarathustra*, elaborated in *On the Advantage and Disadvantage of History For Life*, and echoed by, among others, M. O. Gershenzon in his repartees to Viach. Ivanov).²⁸ In 1926, the year *Red Cavalry* was published, Lunacharsky had no compunction in acknowledging Nietzsche's appeal, specifically, his "militancy, his spirit of exaltation," and his own solidarity with Nietzsche's "contempt for petty-bourgeois morality and Christian romanticism"²⁹ – terms easily identified with the Populist humanism of Russia's cultural elite.

Babel's representation of the Revolution, deriving its authority from the intelligentsia's privileging of verbal art, retained the revolutionary paradox of cruelty for the sake of happiness on the intellectual level, but Babel the artist was able to reconcile this contradiction mimetically at the plane of art, appealing to the heavily "Nietzscheanized" esthetic sensibility of the intelligentsia. In Babel's fiction, to paraphrase the famous formula of Lévi-Strauss, the intelligentsia's "inability to connect two kinds of relationships" – that is the human abyss of the present and the all-too-distant radiant peaks, was "overcome (or rather replaced) by the assertion that contradictory relationships are identical inasmuch as they are both self-contradictory in a similar way."³⁰ Applied to the reception of Isaac Babel, this formula might run as follows: the cruelty of the Revolution and Civil War was to the beauty, or sublimity, of art what backward ravaged Russia was to the super-modernity of socialism. To puzzle out this mythic grasp of

experience, which *Red Cavalry* exemplified, was the thankless task of the contemporary critic.

FERSTEN-LIEBE AND THE POETRY OF BANDITRY

"Love For the Distant" ("*Liubov' k dal'nemu*" 1924) was the title of an early essay on Babel, penned by a Bolshevik historian and sociologist, Iakov Shafir.³¹ This miniature critical meditation on the few *Red Cavalry* stories that had appeared by 1924 has the distinction of being the only one in Soviet Russia to establish a direct link between *Red Cavalry* and one of Zarathustra's famous commandments, which Shafir uses as his title, albeit ironically and in a Marxist key. The sacrifices in the name of the Revolution, however harsh and inhuman they may have been, were made for the sake of future generations, not at their expense, as in the Great War with its lip service to humanist ethics. To this extent, at least, one could use Nietzsche with profit. So went the drift of Shafir's position from which he proposed to examine Babel. The value of Shafir's observations cannot be overestimated for yet another reason: he was one of the more prominent students of contemporary Soviet readership and, rather than offer an esthetic evaluation or elaboration of *Red Cavalry*, he treated the work pretty much as a slice of life served up *au naturel*, without any sauce of artistic mediation.³²

In an observation that would become a commonplace of Babel criticism, Shafir pointed to a key aspect of Babel's Nietzschean strategy: to justify the perpetrators of cruelty by surrounding them with the "enormously heroic, in the best sense of the word, pathos." As far as I know Shafir was the only one to see this strategy as originating in a nexus of specifically Nietzschean motifs, namely, justifying existence as an esthetic phenomenon. While lauding Babel's achievement, Shafir was enough of an orthodox Marxist to draw a line between a Nietzschean and a Marxist justification of violence.

With the delicacy befitting a critic taking on a popular idol, he gently chided Babel for leaning too much toward the former, perhaps even confusing the two. According to Shafir,

Babel not only failed to denounce vengeance, but he tended to see in it an appropriate means for righting the wrong. For Babel, he wrote, wreaking vengeance was tantamount to "restoring social justice."

Thereby vengeance becomes humanized. This attitude toward vengeance is profoundly "of the people" [*narodno*], but it has nothing in common with the attitudes of conscious proletarians, who are guided in their behavior and actions exclusively by the considerations of rational expediency [*tselesoobraznost'*]. Alas, not only does our artist depict vengeance as an act of the greatest justice in the minds of the Balmashevs [the story "Salt," G. F.], but it would seem that he himself perceives vengeance as justice. If we are not mistaken on this point, this is where we must take issue with Babel's fiction. But this is just an aside.³³

In the atmosphere of the ever-intensifying literary squabbles, even this gentle critical aside drew blood – not much, but enough to attract Vladislav Veshnev (Przeslavski), a Bolshevik rigorist from the journal *Young Guard* (*Molodaia gvardiia*). A rather astute and not entirely unsympathetic reader of Babel's stories, Veshnev adopted a position of one who had the interests of Soviet youth at heart, a position that compelled him to sound a note of caution amid the chorus of acclaim greeting the appearance of yet another piece of Babel's short fiction. Himself a writer of short fiction,³⁴ Veshnev did not mince words. Babel's popularity among the young, who could recite by heart pages from *The Tales of Odessa*, could lead to dire consequences, propagation of the ideals of "bestial banditry," for example, a transparent allusion to Nietzsche's Superman. Hence, "The Poetry of Banditry" (1924), as Veshnev unceremoniously entitled his critique.³⁵

Unlike other critics, who praised Babel's ability to balance the intelligentsia's humanistic morality with the Cossack justice "beyond good and evil," Veshnev insisted on Babel's privileging the former over the latter. In a surprisingly Nietzschean move, he accused Babel of insolence in his attempts to justify the revolutionary violence of the Cossacks with such petty bourgeois concepts as right and wrong: "Herein lies the key to the understanding of Babel's art. First of

all, we must note that Babel approached the revolution with a moral criterion. This alone is bad enough. Morality has no jurisdiction over revolution. On the contrary, revolution has jurisdiction over ethics."

Veshnev was equally hard to please when it came to esthetics: "Look how hard Babel is trying! In what luxuriant, colorful, subtle poetry does he cloak the bloody cruelty of the red heroes of the civil war." Indeed, Babel's greatest offense was in trying to justify the Revolution at all. How dare he, one can almost hear Veshnev exclaiming, imagine that the Revolution needs any justification at all: "Revolution is justified 'immanently,' by the meaning it itself generates (*sobstvennym svoim smyslom*)." This was a tall Nietzschean order, one that even the author of *Red Cavalry* would find difficult to fill.

ALEKSANDR VORONSKY

The founder and editor of *Red Virgin Soil* and the guardian angel of the fellow-travelers, Aleksandr Voronsky was one of the first and most astute readers of Babel and one of the cleverest mystifiers of Babel's Nietzschean motifs. Whether these mystifications were intentional or merely unwitting is beside the point. What matters is that they provide us with one of the best early examples of what we might call the Soviet crypto-Nietzscheanism. From the outset of his 1924 essay devoted to Babel,³⁶ Voronsky presented him as an author who is decidedly "Soviet" – a metonymous qualifier that becomes a legitimating synecdoche once it is paired with such a potent term of the Sovietese as "achievement." "Babel," Voronsky was unequivocal, "is a new achievement of the post-October Soviet literature" ("Babel," p. 148). The same claim is repeated a few pages later: "Babel is a very big hope of the Russian, contemporary, Soviet literature and already a big achievement." The Bolshevik Revolution could take credit for Babel and to that extent, at least, it was esthetically justified. To drive his point home, Voronsky informs his readers that Babel became a serious author only recently – an exaggeration, to say the least, since Babel's prerevolutionary publications in

Gorky's *Letopis'* were singled out by contemporary critics as were Babel's regular contributions to Gorky's anti-Leninist *Novaia zhizn'*.³⁷ Let us now take a close look at the character of this "hope and achievement" of Soviet Russian literature, as Voronsky defined it.

Voronsky's yardstick for measuring and the ultimate antecedent of Babel was Lev Tolstoi. Like Tolstoi, Babel is capable of isolating an insignificant detail, making it "more expressive of the *essence*," than any amount of digression can achieve ("Babel," p. 150). Generically, too, Babel and Tolstoi share a penchant for the "epic," although Babel, Voronsky admitted, did not intend to produce a "comprehensive, esthetically precise [*sic*] epic representation of the actual Red Cavalry Army by means of emphasizing its essential spirit and qualities, as, for example, Tolstoi had done in *War and Peace*" ("Babel," p. 155). Like Tolstoi, Babel works in the "classical, if modernized, tradition" ("Babel," pp. 147, 149). To be compared to Tolstoi would be high praise for any author, and Voronsky's virtual insistence on the legitimacy of this comparison bestowed on Babel's controversial art a certificate of what Pasternak later referred to as "safe conduct." Indeed, for many contemporary Marxist critics, Tolstoi possessed such exemplary authority that his art was virtually allowed to transcend its class origins.³⁸ Hence Voronsky's flattering juxtaposition functioned as an implicit acknowledgement that with regard to Babel criticism based on the "class approach" just would not do.

No less important (whether Voronsky intended it or not), Tolstoi, whose name served as a work horse hitched to most contemporary literary theories,³⁹ provided a cover for dealing with Babel's apparent Nietzscheanism, not as a liability, but as a most powerful asset. Like Tolstoi, Babel was a "physiological writer."

What is sacred for Babel is the immediacy [*dannost'*],⁴⁰ actuality, life, and primitive character of human interests, urges, passions, desires, psychology – everything that is commonly referred to as crude animal instincts. The sacred immediacy [of life for Babel] has nothing to do with the acceptance of life according to the formula: "everything real

is rational and everything existing is real." [This pointedly anti-Hegelian characterization of Babel, too, may suggest a Nietzschean subtext, *G.F.*] Babel is a pagan, a materialist, and an atheist in his art. He is alien to the Christian, idealistic world-view which treats flesh, matter as something base, sinful, while treating "spirit," "spirituality" as solely valuable essence of human life ("Babel," p. 151)

These qualifiers could have as easily been applied to Tolstoi (Tolstoi's "physiologism" was a topos of literary criticism in the 1920s), and since Shestov's brilliant analysis, they could have as easily defined the philosophical ground that Tolstoi shared with Nietzsche. "As in *War and Peace*, so in *Anna Karenina*," wrote Shestov,

not only does Count Tolstoi refuse to accept exchanging life for the Good, but he considers such an exchange unnatural, false, hypocritical, ultimately eliciting the opposite of the desired reaction even in the best human being.⁴¹

Reveling in the retelling of and quoting from Babel's famous anti-Dostoevskian parodies, "The Sin of Jesus" and "A Tale About a Wench," Voronsky rehearsed Nietzsche's categorical indictment of the "value of the value pity" (*GM*, I, p. 6; *Z*, I, p. 16, II, p. 3) and the life-denying "fantasies" and "spirituality." True, Babel is an estheticist, Voronsky readily conceded, but his estheticism, unlike that of the decadents, possesses a full-blooded Dionysian energy:

Babel's [...] estheticism has already earned him the attribute of a semi-decadent. Babel is no decadent. The truth lies elsewhere: in his fiction, the dreamer clashes with the realist, who has intuited the deep truth of the immediate, actual life, perhaps crude, but full-blooded and blossoming.

His characters are not mere brutes, murderers and marauders, but powerful men seeking their own version of justice – "concrete, entirely earthly, unreflective and instinctive." These words, which deny the validity of the distinction of "good and evil" while affirming that of the "good and bad" for life, could have been lifted from *On the Genealogy of Morals*. But instead of crediting Nietzsche, Voronsky links these Babelian *Bestiaen* to the folk and literary tradition of Russia's "truth-seekers"

(*pravdo-iskateli*), very likely having in mind the itinerant “philosophers” from the lower depths such as Gorky’s Nietzscheanized *boziaki*, Chelkash, Sharko and Malva.⁴²

Whatever his cultural loyalties, Babel’s narrator, according to Voronsky, also renounced *ressentiment*. With great pathos, Voronsky quotes from the opening of “Pan Apolek,” singling out for emphasis the attributes of *ressentiment*: “the sensuality of the *dreamy anger*, bitter disdain for the dogs and the swine of humanity, the fire of the *silent and intoxicating revenge* – I have sacrificed them to the new god” (“Babel,” p. 153). That god is “life,” in the Nietzschean, post-Darwinian understanding of the term, the immediate present that does not live “*at the expense of the future*” but itself is a payment for “*the highest power and splendor* actually possible for the type man” (*GM*, Preface, p. 20). Like his character “Apolek,” wrote Voronsky,

Babel treats the natural in man as the summit of creation, he writes about the truth of the “wenches” like Arina and Kseniia, about the truth of Afonka Bida, about the triumph of life in the moment of mortal battles. For he knows that Kseniias and Arinas are the fertile producers of life, but in the Alfreds, there is “plenty of play but ain’t nothing serious,” for one must be proud of the natural in human being, whereas disdain for the crude wench-life, attempts to follow Jehovah’s example and create out of oneself some little worlds, amount only to “blasphemy and lordly arrogance” of the little Alfreds and spectators without the binoculars. (p. 153)

Voronsky stepped on the most dangerous ground when he turned to “Gedali,” a story that echoes closely Nietzsche’s demystification of the ethic of charity, equality, and, by implication, the socialist ideals as the slave morality of *ressentiment*. Even in their outward appearances as dark and out-of-the-way places, Gedali’s Dickensian “old curiosity shop” and the residence of his Braclav Rabbi (“Rabbi”) come perilously close to Nietzsche’s subterranean “workshop,” a version no doubt of the satanic mills, “where ideals are manufactured” (*GM*, I, p. 14). “They tell me,” goes the passage in *GM*, “their misery is a sign of their being chosen by God; one beats the dogs one likes best.” “Blessed is the Lord,” announces Rabbi Motaleh of Braclav, as he “breaks the bread with his monkish fingers.”

“Blessed is the God of Israel for he has chosen us among all the peoples of the world” (“The Rabbi”). This is an intensely ironic moment – to have the traditional blessing pronounced by a leader of a religious culture, just a hair’s breadth away from its total demise. Highlighting the “monkish fingers” and the “breaking of bread,” Babel followed in Nietzsche’s footsteps. He conflated the Hebraic ritual of the Hasidim with the Christian Eucharist and had both echo in Gedali’s vegetarian War-Communist wish for “the International of kind people where each soul would be registered to receive a ration according to the top category.” Voronsky quoted this passage, an expression of “slave morality” par excellence, and left it hanging in the air, with but a brief comment saying simply that Gedali and his milieu belonged wholly to times past.

“Babel’s main theme,” Voronsky summed up his appreciative critique, “is Man, with a Capital ‘M,’ Man, who under the influence of the Revolution, has emerged from the lowest depths” (“Babel,” p. 160). In the long shadow cast by this new “Man” – the pinnacle of Bolshevik Futuristic anthropology, reminiscent of Trotsky’s vision in *Art and Revolution* – one can readily discern the features of Nietzsche’s Superman.

CONFUSION OF TONGUES

Voronsky pretty much set the tone for the Bolshevik reception of Babel. And while Babel’s “Nietzscheanism” remained the focal point in criticism, some found it more unsettling than did Voronsky. Georgy Gorbachev, a critic who shared many of Voronsky’s views, commended Babel for his invaluable contribution to the creation of the “new linguistic culture” and his “service to the cognition of life, development of technique, new expressiveness.” This was no mean achievement, “for language,” as Gorbachev went on to explain in the spirit of Nietzsche’s *On the Genealogy of Morals*, “represents the most important tool of enlightenment and communication among the masses, which have entered a period of great cultural and social ferment.”⁴³ Still, Gorbachev was apparently too much of a dialectician to accept comfortably Babel’s penchant for sharp

contrasts and paradox, the essential components (according to Georg Simmel's popular view⁴⁴) of Nietzsche's individualism and his yearning for *distance*, lacked any suggestion of the possibility of a resolution at a higher plane:

The most interesting thing for Babel is combining in one person, group, or action that most contradictory quality – the paradoxical nature of existence. Almost all the stories by Babel are paradoxical, especially, in *Red Cavalry*. [...] ⁴⁵

And while one could find a certain consolation in the fact that "Babel's paradoxes were recouped by the dialectic of the Revolution," Gorbachev chided the author for leaving no textual clues to that effect, indeed, even tempting the reader with a purely esthetic treatment of the Revolution.

Marxist strictures notwithstanding, Gorbachev the reader must have been deeply affected by Babel's fiction, and we see him slip eventually into a more appropriate analytical mode reminiscent of Nietzsche's Dionysian understanding of tragedy and its subsequent "reprise" in Bakhtin.⁴⁶ "Both style and structure of Babel's stories are pitched to a humorous key; his stories, as a rule, prompt laughter. But in the majority of Babel's stories, there gleams through the laughter a serious thought or a description of the tragic, terrifying and at the same time beautiful, powerful, burgeoning, and victorious life."⁴⁷

As Gorbachev moved toward his conclusions, however, the Bolshevik Marxist in him once again took the upper hand, even if the Nietzschean temptation was not altogether banished:

But, of course, most of all *Red Cavalry* tells the story of Babel the writer, the raconteur and the virtually irreplaceable protagonist of the stories: an *intelligent*, who has long ago become disillusioned about the old values; a skeptic, who has rejected old ideologies; a connoisseur of unusual situations, life's most exuberant manifestations, beautiful, strange and funny but always exuberant; an adventurer and the lover of the "spicy;" a cynic and estheticist [...] a spiritual brother of the author of *Sentimental Journey* and *Letters Not About Love*, that adventurer, witty thinker, cynic, mischief-maker and estheticist. ("O tvorchestve," p. 282).

What could have attracted this estheticist to the Bolsheviks? Interestingly enough Gorbachev produces a catalogue of Nietzschean virtues possessed, he proudly insists, by the Bolsheviks themselves: "Life is on our side, and so is freshness, power [*silia*], and youth, [lack of] prejudice" (p. 283).

If Babel's public pronouncements in support of "us," Gorbachev went on, indicated the author's desire to make his art truly revolutionary, Gorbachev had a recipe for him. Instead of indulging in the sight of existence "laid bare," with its conjuncture of "primitive desires" and the revolutionary "ideology," Babel must convert his muse to a "revolutionary romanticism,"

the romanticism of a conscious struggle under the banner of communism, the world-view that bravely looks straight in the eye of reality, unblinking in the face of difficulties of mistakes, muck and blood partially covering its way, but also the world-view that dictates to its envoys a buoyant readiness for sacrifices of all kinds for the sake of that inevitable result of the struggle – that "kingdom of the future" before whose might and joy pale all the miracles of the fairy tales and all romantic dreams ever created by mankind. ("O tvorchestve," pp. 284ff.)

Abram Lezhnev,⁴⁸ a prominent critic of the Voronsky camp (he belonged to "Pereval"), begged to differ with Gorbachev's assertion of Babel's amoral estheticism. Like Voronsky, and, if to a lesser extent, Gorbachev himself, Lezhnev used as his point of departure Babel's stupendous achievement, not its compatibility with a specific Marxist scheme. Where Gorbachev demanded that Babel transform at once the apparent antinomy of the Revolution into a Bolshevik dialectic, Lezhnev showed a far greater, Nietzschean appreciation for the irreconcilable paradox of the times. "Babel knows about the necessity of cruelty," wrote Lezhnev in 1926,

no less than those who criticize him. In his work, it is justified ("Salt," "The Death of Dolgushev"), justified with the revolutionary pathos. His cavalrymen are no brutes; otherwise *Red Cavalry* would have amounted to a libel of the Cavalry Army. But the justification of cruelty – in a strange and conflicting way – exists side by the side with his rejection of it. This contradiction cannot be resolved.⁴⁹

Except, he might have added, in the Bolshevik will to power.

Lezhnev introduces another Nietzschean motif when he turns to Babel's penchant for achieving the effect of epiphany by presenting his characters at the moment of an unbearable nervous tension or breakdown (*proryvy*) – the moments when the cavalrymen “lose control over themselves.” In those moments, “what is dormant, what cannot be uttered, what we can only guess about” comes to the surface. That here Lezhnev reaches out beyond Freud to Nietzsche can be gauged by what he includes in the list of the “repressed” that returns in the moments of the Cossack's Dionysian frenzy: “The elemental force of popular song that has been passed from generation to generation (the epileptics in Babel begin to speak in the figures and rhythm of a folk song), and the love the Cossack feels for his quiet native farmstead, and the enthusiasm of a participant in a revolutionary struggle . . .” (“I. Babel,” p. 84)

Curiously and characteristically, Lezhnev's acceptance of or, rather, tolerance for Nietzschean antinomies and his yearning for the primordial are intertwined with a naive biographical moralism with a Dostoevskian twist. Assuming, quite erroneously, as we now know, that Babel's narrator and the author were identical, Lezhnev found an explanation and a psychological excuse for Babel's focus on cruelty in the author's alleged childhood experience in a pogrom.⁵⁰ Lezhnev was referring to the stories “First Love” and “The Story of My Dovecot” (dedicated to Gorky), published in 1925 and ultimately intended as part of a long autobiographical fiction in the Gorky mold.⁵¹

BABEL'S RECEPTION OF BABEL, OR LIUTOV ROUTINIZED

Babel's turn to the theme of childhood, presented, as in *Red Cavalry*, in the first-person narrative voice, stemmed, I am inclined to think, from Babel's own attempts at assimilating his earlier triumphs to the new expectations of the literary establishment and the reader under NEP. Life, it seemed, was

returning to normal. The extraordinary, not to say Dionysian, intensity of existence under the conditions of revolution and civil war, with its manifest self-legitimation (*samozakonnost'* as in Benni, Veshnev, above), were gradually yielding to quotidian predictability. As a sociologist would put it, charismatic authority generated in the depths of the revolutionary experience was undergoing routinization, partly, by being transformed into a new “revolutionary tradition,” partly, because of the emerging institutions of bureaucracy and law which were letting in through the back door, so to speak, some of the condemned “petty-bourgeois” luxuries, among them, individual psychological motivation. One of the sure signs of this process, related directly to Babel, was an article by I. Ilinsky, “Legal Motifs in Babel's Writings” (1927),⁵² a study of popular conceptions of law and justice underlying the actions and sensibilities of Babel's protagonists.

The fictional continuity between the narrator of *Red Cavalry* and the narrator of the childhood stories, suggesting an identity between the boy victim and Liutov, makes this hypothesis highly plausible. If this was indeed the case, as I believe it was, Babel was merely taking the cue from his patrons and supporters among the critics: he was covering the Nietzschean tracks of *Red Cavalry* and *The Tales of Odessa* by having them blend with the more conventional mentality of the peaceful, still “vegetarian,” period of NEP. What the “childhood” stories seemed to be saying was that Liutov the man, Liutov the boy, and, by implication, their creator were not merely Nietzschean “adventurers and estheticists” (Gorbachev, Veshnev), inscrutably alien to the conventional view of life, but adults scarred deeply by the cruelties of the old regime at the most impressionable time of life, their childhood. Psychological and sociological motivations were now called upon the supplement the pure poetry of Babel's prose that struck the first readers of *Red Cavalry* as “completeness of art” (Benni).

Nietzschean motifs, individualistic, anti-statist, esthetic to the core, were growing ever fainter, barely discernible above the beat of the kettle-drums of the Stalinist superstate.

NOTES

- 1 For Babel's Nietzscheanism see James E. Falen, *Isaac Babel, Russian Master of Short Story* (Knoxville, 1974). See also my "Fat Tuesday in Odessa: Isaac Babel's 'Di Grasso' as Testament and Manifesto," *The Russian Review* 40: 2 (1981), pp. 101-21, and "Isaak Babel," *European Writers: The Twentieth Century* (New York, 1991).
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- 3 A. Blok, *Sobranie sochinenii v shesti tomakh*, ed. M. A. Dudina et al., IV (1982), p. 346.
- 4 B. Eikhenbaum, "V ozhidanii literatury," *Russkii sovremennik* 1 (1924), pp. 280-96. See also his "V poiskakh zhanra," *ibid.* 3 (1924), pp. 228-31.
- 5 M. Zoshchenko, "Literatura dolzhna byt' narodnoi," in his *1935-1937* (Leningrad, 1937), p. 394. Cited in M. Chudakova, *Poetika Mikhaila Zoshchenko* (Moscow, 1979), p. 70.
- 6 See M. Chudakova, "Puti slova v proze 1920-kh-1930-kh godov," *Poetika Mikhaila Zoshchenko*, pp. 98-130. See also my "Dying As Metaphor and the Ironic Mode," in *The Coat of Many Colors: Osip Mandelstam and His Mythologies of Self-Presentation* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 1987).
- 7 I define *skaz* as a first-person narrative which contains elements of vocabulary and grammar which (1) are not normally associated with published literature and (2) define the narrator as a social inferior of the implied reader.
- 8 See discussion in *Nietzsche in Russia*, especially, the Preface by George Kline and the Introduction by Bernice Glatzer Rosenthal. For the Nietzscheanism of Viacheslav Ivanov, a key figure in the Russian Symbolist movement, see Patricia Ann Mueller-Vollmer's Ph.D. Thesis, "Dionysos Reborn: Vjaceslav Ivanov's Theory of Symbolism" (Stanford University, 1985) and my "In Place of a Biography," *Coat of Many Colors*, pp. 155ff.
- 9 See, e.g., A. Voronskii, "Iz sovremennykh nastroyenii (po povodu odnogo spora)" *Krasnaia nov'* 3 (1921), p. 247.
- 10 Viach. I. Ivanov and Mikhail O. Gershenzon, *Perepiska iz dvukh uglov* (Petersburg, 1921). Voronskii, "Iz sovremennykh literaturnykh nastroyenii," *Krasnaia nov'* 3 (1921), pp. 244-55. P. S. Kogan, "Viach. Ivanov i M.O. Gershenzon, 'Perepiska iz dvukh uglov'" (review), *Pechat' i revoliutsiia* 3 (1921); Mikhail Kuzmin, "Mechtateli," in his *Uslovnosti: Stat'i ob iskusstve* (Petrograd,

- 1923). Sloezer, "Russkii spor o kul'ture," *Sovremennys zapiski* 11 (1922), pp. 197, 207.
- 11 A. Lunacharskii, "Simvolisty," in his *Ocherki po istorii russkoi literatury* (Moscow, 1976), pp. 433ff.
- 12 Ia. Benni, "I. Babel'," *Pechat' i revoliutsiia* 3 (1924), pp. 136 and 139.
- 13 Victor Shklovsky's view of Babel was similar to that of Benni and Mirsky and lies squarely in the esthetic sphere, i.e., in the category of the "justification of existence as an esthetic phenomenon." Consider: "Russian literature is as gray as a siskin, it needs raspberry-colored riding breeches and leather shoes the color of heavenly azure. [...] What literature needs is concreteness and to be cross-fertilized with the new style of life," V. Shklovskii, "Kriticheskii romans," *Lef, zhurnal levogo fronta iskusstva* 6 (1924), p. 152.
- 14 G. Lelevich, "1923 god: Literaturnye itogi," *Na postu* 5 (1924), pp. 82-87.
- 15 G. Lelevich, "1923 god: Literaturnye itogi," p. 87.
- 16 A. Voronskii, "I. Babel' i L. Seifullina," *Krasnaia nov'* 5 (1924), p. 281.
- 17 M. Tseitlin, "Obzor zhurnalov," *Sovremenniaia zapiski* 20 (1924), pp. 434-35, and his "Krasnaia nov'," *Sovremenniaia zapiski* 25 (1925), pp. 477-79.
- 18 D. Mirskii (Sviatopolk-Mirskii), "I. Babel'. Rasskazy. Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo. Moskva-Leningrad. 1925" (review), *Sovremenniaia zapiski* 26 (1925), p. 485.
- 19 A. Leznev, "I. I. [sic] Babel': Zametki k vykhodu 'Konarmii,'" *Pechat' i revoliutsiia* 6 (1926), p. 82.
- 20 Viach. Polonskii, "Babel'," in *O literature (Izbrannye raboty)* (Moscow, 1988), p. 78. Originally published as "Kristicheskie zametki o Babele," *Novyi mir* 1 (1927).
- 21 A. V. Lunacharskii, "Znachenie iskusstva s kommunisticheskoi tochki zreniia," *Nachalo puti: Iz sovetskoi literaturnoi kritiki 20-kh godov*, ed. O. V. Filimonov, (Moscow, 1987), p. 10. First published in *Rabochii put'* (Omsk) 229 (December, 21 1924).
- 22 Lunacharskii, *ibid.*, p. 4.
- 23 Cf. Venus de Milo in Bogdanov's *Iskusstvo i rabochii klass* (Moscow, 1918): "The temple was the center of the community, and the goddess was the center of the temple. Therefore she was the center of organization of the collective."
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- in the Modern Russian Tradition," *The Russian Review* 2 (1993).
- 25 A. V. Lunacharskii, "Formalizm v nauke ob iskusstve," *Pechat' i revoliutsiia* 5 (1924), p. 23.
- 26 Sviatopolk-Mirsky, "I. Babel'. Rasskazy," p. 486.
- 27 D. S. Mirsky, *Literaturnaia gazeta*, September 12, 1932.
- 28 Gershenzon and Ivanov, *Perepiska iz doulh uglov*. For a "Nietzschean" reading of this celebrated volume see B. Schloezer (Shletser), "Russkii spor o kul'ture," *Sovremennye zapiski* 11 (1922), pp. 195-211.
- 29 A. Lunacharsky, "Simvolisty" (1926), p. 443.
- 30 Claude Lévi-Strauss, "The Structural Study of Myth," in his *Structural Anthropology*, trans. Claire Jacobson and Brooke Grundfest Schoepf (New York, 1963), p. 216.
- 31 Shafir, "Liubov' k dal'nemu."
- 32 See his *Ocherki psikhologii chitatelia* (Moscow and Leningrad, 1927). The book deals with the popular attitudes to the work of selected "classics," i.e., Pushkin, Gogol, Lermontov, Turgenev, Goncharov, and Gorky.
- 33 Shafir, "Liubov' k dal'nemu."
- 34 V. Veshnev, *Rasskazy* (Moscow, 1927).
- 35 V. Veshnev (Vl. Przhetslavskii), "Poeziia banditizma," *Molodaia gvardiia* 7-8 (1924), pp. 274-80.
- 36 A. Voronskii, "Babel'," in his *Iskusstvo videt' mir: Portrety, stat'i* (Moscow, 1987), pp. 146-62. Pages, given in parentheses, refer to this edition. The essay was first published as "Babel', Seifullina," *Krasnaia nov' 5* (1924).
- 37 Babel's contributions to *Novaia zhizn'* were reprinted in *Zabytyi Babel': sbornik maloizvestnykh proizvedenii I. Babelia*, ed. and comp. Nikolas Stroud (Ann Arbor, MI, 1979).
- 38 See, for example, A. V. Lunacharsky's use of Tolstoi as ally in his polemic with the Formalists. Lunacharskii, "Formalizm v nauke ob iskusstve," *Pechat' i revoliutsiia* 5 (1924), pp. 25ff.
- 39 E. J. Brown, *The Proletarian Episode in Russian Literature: 1928-32* (New York, 1971), pp. 66ff. Samuel David Eisen, "Fox to Fox: Viktor Shklovsky's appeal to Tolstoi in the Twilight of NEP" (MA Thesis, Stanford University, 1989).
- 40 Cf. H. Bergson, *Essai sur les données immédiates de la conscience* (Paris, 1889), in English translated as *Time and Free Will*. Bergson was an acknowledged influence on Voronsky. See "Estetika Bergson i shkola Voronskogo," *Literature i iskusstvo* 1 (1930). The Russian word, *dannost'*, however, may as easily refer to Nietzsche's sense of life eliciting *amor fati*.

- 41 L. Shestov (Shvartsman), *Dobro v uchenii gr. Tolstogo i Fr. Nitsche: Filosofii i propoved'* (Petersburg, 1900), p. 7.
- 42 Cf. Platonov's *pravdoiskateli*, Voshchev in *Kotlovan*, Mekar from the *Bedniatskaia khronika*, etc.
- 43 Georgii Gorbachev, "O tvorchestve Babelia i po pobodu nego," *Zvezda* 4 (1925), pp. 270-86; quote is from p. 275.
- 44 Georg Simmel, "Fridrikh Nitsche: Etiko-filosofskii siluet," trans. N. Iuzhin, in A. Rihl and G. Simmel, *Nitsche* (Odessa, 1898), p. 148.
- 46 On Babel, Nietzsche, and Bakhtin, see G. Freidin, "Fat Tuesday in Odessa," pp. 1906-7.
- 47 G. Gorbachev, "O tvorchestve Babelia," p. 276.
- 48 See G. Belaia, *Iz istorii sovetskoi literaturno-kriticheskoi mysli 20-kh godov: esteticheskaia kontseptsiiia "Petervala"* (Moscow, 1985). See also E. J. Brown, *The Proletarian Episode in Russian Literature: 1928-32* (New York, 1971), p. 97 and passim.
- 49 Lezhnev, "I. Babel," p. 85.
- 50 Cf. Natalie Babel, "Introduction," in I. Babel, *The Lonely Years: 1925-1939 (Unpublished Stories and Private Correspondence)* (New York, 1964).
- 51 See my discussion of Babel's "autobiographical fiction" in "Isaac Babel," pp. 1886-87 and 1892-93.
- 52 I. Il'inskii, "Pravovye motivy v tvorchestve Babelia," *Krasnaia nov' 7* (1927), pp. 231-40.