

Pridvorov, b. 1883), the Communist poet laureate, is no more than an able and sometimes witty writer of rhymed propaganda.

During the years of civil war and blockade (1918-21) Russian prose writers almost ceased from production and poetry ruled supreme. Of the "advanced" poetical groups, the Futurists were the most prominent. The Futurist movement began about 1912 as a revolt against the hieratic mysticism of the Symbolists. It united several fundamentally different tendencies, and there is little in common between its two principal representatives, Victor Khlebnikov (1885-1922) and Vladimir Mayakovsky (b. 1893), besides the common desire to give poetry a more rugged and virile accent and to tear it away from the withering hold of traditional poetical associations. Khlebnikov was a recluse and a stammerer, a mole who lived, as it were, at the linguistic roots of poetry. His work is caviare to the general public, but highly appreciated by fellow poets. Mayakovsky is an open-air orator. Much of his verse is revolutionary propaganda. Though totally lacking in the "finer touch," it is intensely original and highly craftsmanlike. Boris Pasternak (b. 1890), unquestionably the greatest living Russian poet (principal book of lyrics, *My Sister, Life*, written 1917, published 1922) is externally connected with some aspects of Futurism, but in substance he is nearer to the traditions of Tyutchev and Fet. His poetry is marked by an absolute freshness of perception and diction combined with a tensivity of lyrical emotion that is to be found only in the greatest. His prose (*Tales*, 1925) is also of the highest order, and being concerned with the realities of the soul stands apart from that of his contemporaries. Next to Pasternak the most significant recent poet is Marina Tsvetayeva (an *émigrée* since 1922), whose poetry is marked by an exceptional variety and richness of rhythmical imagination, and an exuberant vitality. Sergey Esenin (1895-1925) (*q.v.*), the favourite poet of the post-revolutionary intelligentsia, was at one time connected with "advanced" movements, but in reality he is a poet of sentiment of an essentially "19th century" type. After 1921 poetry began to lose its ascendancy. None of the poets who have come forward since then are of any very great significance, though the "proletarian poet" Vasilii Kazin has a genuine gift of song, and Nicolas Tikhonov and Ilya Selvinsky are consummate and original masters of technique.

Post-Revolutionary Prose.—The period of the "New Economic Policy" (inaugurated 1921) saw the rise of a whole host of prose-writers who, while remaining outside the pale of party Communism, sympathized with the Communist Revolution. They have been given the name of *poputchiki*, which means "fellow-travellers up to a certain point." The first of the *poputchiki* were strongly under the influence of the "ornamental" style of Bely and Remizov, and of the "formalist" school of criticism, which insisted on the complete reduction of all literary facts to form. The most prominent of the "formalists" was Victor Shklovsky (b. 1893), a vivacious and clever critic, and the author of a very remarkable book of reminiscences of the War and the Revolution (*A Sentimental Journey*, 1923). The young "ornamental" novelists laid all their emphasis on style and formal originality, almost abandoning all pretence of narrative. The spirit of the Revolution expressed itself in their work in their treatment of mass movements. In the early novels of Boris Pilnyak (b. 1893) (*q.v.*) and of Vsevolod Ivanov (b. 1895) there are no individual characters, only vast movements of masses, crowds or peoples. Ivanov has overcome the limitations of "dynamism" and his later stories show more grit. The tales of Isaac Babel (b. 1894) are "intensified anecdotes" with a maximum of artistic concentration. He is a supreme master in the imaginative treatment of slang and mongrel dialects, and the most perfect artist of the younger generation. His best stories are about the Polish War of 1920. Leonid Leonov (b. 1899) is a more old-fashioned writer, related in tone and subject-matter to earlier masters, and full of sympathy for the underdogs of the Revolution. Other novelists tried to remedy the lack of narrative interest inherent in "ornamental" and "dynamic" fiction. Ilya Erenburg (b. 1891), who had been made famous by *The Adventures of Julio Jurenito* (1922), a satire of Capitalist Europe, won

still greater fame by crude novels of melodrama and adventure. Constantine Fedin (b. 1892) is a more serious writer; his novel *Cities and Years* (1924), a powerful story of War and Revolution, restored to a place of honour the ethical conception of human conduct, as opposed to the elemental dynamics of the masses. Since about 1925 "Soviet workdays" have replaced the civil war as the chief subject of fiction. Most of this new fiction of "Soviet manners" is not above the level of good journalism. Among those who represent Soviet life in a humorous or satirical light the most popular is Michael Zoshchenko, but Sergey Zayaitzky is the only writer of this description to have shown real imaginative power. Other writers like Lydia Seyfullina (b. 1889), in a curious type of best-seller, try to answer the Soviet typist's demand for "uplift." Recently there has grown up a great interest in the historical novel. Those by Yuri Tymyanov and by Olga Forsch (b. 1879) are works of real and solid merit.

By the side of the *poputchiki*, the "proletarian" novelists at first cut a rather inferior figure. The work of Yuri Libedinsky (b. 1898; *The Week*, Eng. trans. 1923), of Theodore Gladkov (b. 1883; *Cement*, 1926) and of D. Furmanov (d. 1926) is hardly literature, but it is interesting as reflecting the optimistic energy of the men who won the civil war and shouldered the work of reconstruction after it. The younger proletarian generation has produced writers of real talent. Artem Vesely (b. 1898) carried the "dynamic" novel to its highest perfection (*My Native Land*, 1926), infusing into it a vitality and cheerfulness entirely alien to its *poputchiki* initiators. A. Fadeyev and Sergey Semenov, on the other hand, are more interested in individual and ethical man. Fadeyev's *The Defeat* (1927) and Semenov's *Natalia Tarpova* (1927) are works of great merit and still greater promise.

The drama, in spite of the continued vitality of the theatre, has produced little of importance. The realistic tradition has been abandoned. The plays of Nicolas Evreinov (b. 1879), a leading theatrical producer, have many points in common with Pirandello's. The Futurists at one time attempted to create a high-standard, boldly Aristophanesque propaganda play; but the only successful venture was Mayakovsky's *A Mystery-Bouffe* (1918). The dominant type of drama is a kind of conventional puppet-play with characters stripped of all reality and humanity. Such are the crude and mediocre plays of Lunacharsky (Eng. trans. *Three Plays*, 1923). Only the plays of the regretted Leo Lunts (1901-24) are on a much higher level. They are simplified tragedies of pure action, full of a genuine heroic spirit.

Historians.—Modern Russian historiography begins with V. N. Tatishchev (1686-1750); his history of Russia is a laborious but uncritical compilation from the chronicles. Gerhard Friedrich Müller (1705-83), a German member of the Petersburg academy and a pioneer in many fields, was the first to open up the jungle of official acts and records. A critical spirit was first introduced by another German, August Ludwig v. Schloezer, and by the amateur historian I. N. Boltin (1735-92). Karamzin's (*q.v.*) *History of the Russian State* (12 vol., 1818-26) summed up the work of the 18th century, to which it essentially belongs: it is moralizing and rhetorical, and devoid of all "sense of period." Its conception of autocracy as the only constructive and beneficent force in the Russian past made it the bible of official and conservative Russia. But before Karamzin was dead new ideas were abroad; and acquaintance with Niebuhr and Hegel demanded a new approach to Russian history. Nicolas Polevoy (*see p. 754*) in his *History of the Russian People* (1830-33) attempted to supply the demand, but being no more than a journalist, failed. Michael Pagodin (1800-75), who did much to advance a critical and detailed knowledge of Russia's past, was prevented from achieving a synthesis by the provincial conservatism of his outlook. The younger Slavophiles were more imaginative, and being convinced that the chief hero of history was the People and not the State, concentrated their attention on the history of the masses. Their best historian was I. D. Belyaev (1810-73). The same predilection for social history and for the masses marks the work of the Radical historians, N. I. Kostomarov (1817-85) the most "literary" and widely read historian of the time, and A. P. Shchapov (1830-76), who tried to apply to Russian history the