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THE STALIN PRIZE IN LITERATURE AND ARTS AS AN ENCOURAGING METHOD OF SOVIET ARTISTIC INTELLIGENTSIA

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The article deals with the analysis of Stalin Prize in literature and arts as a method of encouragement of Soviet artistic intelligentsia. A contemporary historiography of the problem has been described. The prerequisites and reasons for the establishment of the Stalin Prize have been highlighted, as well as its evolution in the field of literature and arts. It has been proved, that an important task of the created Prize was to strengthen ideological control over literature and art, to encourage the appearance of works loyal to the Soviet authorities. The legal texts regulating the process of awarding the Stalin Prize have been considered. A special attention has been paid to the beginnings of the Prize in literature and its special role in the Soviet ideological mechanism has been determined. The financial sources of the award's origin and the specifics of its presentation to the winners have been analyzed. The main amounts of the Prize have been highlighted and formal distinctions for the Stalin Prize have been described. A special attention has been paid to the specifics of awarding the Prize to several co-authors. The procedure for reviewing the nominees' works and the terms of their submission have been analyzed. The peculiarities of the work of the Competition Commission of the Stalin Prize in literature and art have been described. It is noted that the decisive role in Prizes awarding was played personally by J. Stalin. It has been emphasized that a distinctive feature of the entire mechanism for establishing and awarding Stalin Prizes was its constant adjustment, which was not always documented. This applies to both the time of setting the results and the number of candidates. A special attention has been paid to the nominees of the Stalin Prize in literature and art, and the record recipients of the Prize have been determined. It should be observed that a significant number of works, the authors of which became laureates of the Prize, were opportunistic to the Soviet power and reflected topical issues of the social realistic trend. At the same time a number of prominent Soviet artists did not receive the Stalin Prize due to an ideological conflict with the leadership, in particular A. Akhmatova, B. Pasternak, M. Zoshchenko. Finally, the reasons for the liquidation of the Stalin Prize and the establishment of its legal successor, the USSR State Prize, have been considered.

Key words: Stalin Prize, artistic intelligentsia, social realism, public and encouraging system, stimulation, award.

Цзоу Ченчжан. Сталінська премія в галузі літератури і мистецтва як метод заохочення радянської творчої інтелігенції

У статті розглядається Сталінська премія в галузі літератури та мистецтва як механізм заохочення творчої інтелігенції СРСР. Охарактеризовано сучасну історіографію проблеми. Висвітлено передумови та причини заснування премії, її еволюцію в галузі літератури та мистецтва. Доведено, що важливим завданням створеної премії було посилення ідеологічного контролю над літературою та мистецтвом, заохочення появи лояльних до влади творів. Розглянуто нормативні документи, які регламентували процес присудження Сталінської премії. Окрему увагу приділено появі премії в галузі літератури та визначено її особливу роль у радянському ідеологічному механізмі. Проаналізовано фінансові джерела походження премії та особливості її вручення лауреатам. Висвітлено основні суми нагород і описано формальні відзнаки за Сталінську премію. Окрему увагу приділено особливостям вручення премії кільком співавторам. Проаналізовано порядок розгляду робіт номінантів і терміни їх подання. Охарактеризовано особливості роботи конкурсної комісії Сталінської премії в галузі літератури та мистецтва. Зазначено, що вирішальну роль у присудженні премії відіграв особисто Й. Сталін. Наголошено, що характерною рисою всього механізму заснування та присудження Сталінських премій було його постійне коригування, яке не завжди було оформлено документально. Це стосується як часу встановлення результатів, так і кількості номінантів. Окрему увагу приділено номінантам Сталінської премії в галузі літератури та мистецтва, визначено рекордсменів із її присудження. Зазначено, що значна кількість творів, автори яких стали лауреатами премії, мала кон'юнктурний характер і відображала злободенні теми соціалістичного напрямку. Натомість низка видатних радянських митців через ідейний конфлікт із керівництвом не одержало Сталінську премію, зокрема А. Ахматова, Б. Пастернак, М. Зощенко. Насамкінець розглянуто причини ліквідації Сталінської премії та заснування її правонаступниці – Державної премії СРСР.

Ключові слова: Сталінська премія, тоталітарна система, творча інтелігенція, соціалістичний реалізм, публічно-заохочувальна система, стимулювання, нагорода.



Introduction. One of the significant incentive method for citizens' activities is awarding. The level, quantitative and qualitative characteristics of awarding mainly depend on the level and degree of achievement of the encouraged person in a particular field. One of the most prestigious and financially attractive awards during USSR period was the Stalin Prize. Its formation was preceded by the foundation and development of party-state bonuses at the industry, and later at the government level. In fact, the establishment of the Prize was due to the need to strengthen control over literature and art and was aimed at creation works loyal to the Soviet government. Before the formation of the Stalin Prize, the main methods of encouraging the artistic intelligentsia were the awarding the orders and medals, sometimes it was an appointment to positions of the state power.

The purpose of the article is to study the Stalin Prize in literature and art and its significance in the Soviet award system.

Historiographic review. The scientific works of V. Antipina [1] and A. Sarsembaev [2] are devoted to certain aspects of awarding artistic intelligentsia in the USSR. They provide separate information about the award and its amount. The history of the formation of the Stalin Prize, the features of its award and the most famous laureates are considered in the publications by I. Venyavkin [3] and the authors of the documentary collection "Stalin prizes: two sides of one medal" V. Svinyin and K. Oseev [4]. However, there is no comprehensive study devoted to the Stalin Prize as a method of encouraging the Soviet artistic intelligentsia, which reinforces the scientific relevance of this paper.

Main body. For the first time in the history of the Soviet public incentive mechanism, on June 23, 1925, the Lenin Prize was established as a party-state essence unit, which had an industry-specific incentive dimension. The main reason for its foundation was the perpetuation of the memory of V. Lenin by the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (bolsheviks) and the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR. It was awarded annually in the amount of five for "the most practically significant scientific works of citizens of the USSR, written after November 7, 1917, in all branches of knowledge" [16]. The award was adjudged by a special expert commission, first took place on August 17, 1926, and the prize was awarded until 1935 [5, p. 227].

The first prize of an exclusively state-incentive nature was the Stalin Prize, introduced by the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR, as is commonly believed, in commemoration of the 60th anniversary of J. Stalin on December 20, 1939. The number of nominees was supposed to be sixteen people (100 thousand rubles each) in order to annually reward scientists and artists for outstanding works in 16 branches: physical and mathematical, technical, chemical, biological, agricultural, medical, philosophical, economic, historical, philological and Legal Sciences, music, painting, sculpture, architecture, theater and cinematography.

However, the foundation of this award as a method of encouraging and stimulating creative activity was not accidental. The Soviet leadership intended to summarize the main achievements of the country during the 1930s in the fields of science, technology, literature and arts. The main idea was to involve representatives of the scientific and artistic intelligentsia in this process. This organizational form provided a complete ideological supervision of the Communist Party and made it possible to assess such important qualities for the authorities as loyalty, correct understanding of party policy, personal devotion to the leader, etc. in relation to each prominent figure of the artists. This also was required by the country's internal and foreign policy situation.

A special place in the system of awards was given to literature which was under Stalin personal oversight since the late 1920s. This area was the first one where the main ideological and organizational innovations of cultural policy were approved, first of all, the principle of partisanship and the method of socialist realism. Only after that these methods were transferred to other areas of art. The foundation the Stalin Prize in Literature on February 1, 1940 was a testament to the increasing role of literature. It was founded in the amount of 4 (100 thousand rubles each) and was awarded annually for outstanding works in the field of literature (1 each in poetry, prose, drama and literary criticism) [6].

Thus, literature was actually defined as an independent type of creative activity that had its own genera or subspecies. Such kind of division for music and cinematography was established much later. This was what corresponded to the Soviet leader's ideas about the role of literature in the ideological education of the masses.

Later, the size and number of awards were frequently changed, and these kinds of awards received the generalized name 'Stalin Prizes'. They were awarded directly by the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR to persons whose candidacies were submitted by two Award Committees under the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR: from Stalin prizes in science, military knowledge and invention and from Stalin prizes in literature and arts [7].

For the first time, the Stalin Prizes in literature and arts were awarded in 1941 in twelve areas: music, painting, sculpture, architecture, theater, opera, ballet, cinematography, prose, poetry, drama and literary



criticism. During the next 11 years 1,706 people became winners of the Prize, and both one author and a whole team could earn it [3]. The Stalin Prize in literature and arts comprised the financial rewards which were the same as in the scientific field: 100 thousand rubles for the first prize, 50 thousand for the second and 25 thousand rubles for the third. In total, during the existence of the Prizes, payments to nominees amounted to 57.7 million rubles [3].

Having received the award, the laureate also got a high social status and financial well-being, and in the conditions of totalitarian reality there were guarantees of personal immunity and meant the author's entry into the artistic elite.

The award set was accompanied by a certificate of its assignment and a gold badge. It had to be worn next to the orders on the right side of the chest.

The Stalin Prize was presented annually at the Kremlin Palace in the second half of March, and the money was transferred to the savings books of the winners later. If the prize was awarded to a performance group, then the money was sent to one of its members, who was first on the list, and further distribution should take place proportionally. In this regard, the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR issued a special resolution explaining how to divide the Prize amount if there are several participants: if there are two co-authors, the amount is divided in half, if three, half the amount is given to the manager, and performers get 0.25 each; if there were more co-authors, then the senior was provided with a third, the remaining funds were divided equally among the group members.

At the same time, all co-authors received the title of laureates of the Stalin Prize of the USSR and the special badge of honor. It should be noted that formally no work of art could be considered a prize winner, since prizes and titles of laureates were awarded only to its creators, and in the case of collective creativity (e.x. play or movie), not to each member. However, in fact, each co-author or actor believed that the performance as a whole received the highest approval.

Special attention should be paid to the analysis of the financial origin of funds for the Prize. It did not have a state fund, but was paid from the personal fund of J. Stalin, which was formed from the salaries and fees of the Soviet leader for publishing his works both in the USSR and abroad. This was the reason that it was unofficially called 'Pocket Prize'.

Formally, all decisions on awards should be prepared by the Committee on Stalin Prizes in literature and arts. Its first chairman was V. Nemirovich-Danchenko, and the members of literature section were the famous writers A. Tolstoy, A. Fadeev and M. Sholokhov. The first meeting of the Committee was held on September 16, 1940 in the premises of the Moscow Art Theater, and the final decision was to be made before December 21 [4, p. 22]. However, the Decree of the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR of December 20, 1940 expanded the time range of nominees from the current year to 6-7 previous years, that is, starting from 1934 [4, p. 24]. At the same time, the number of laureates was significantly increased: from each subspecies of literature to three nominees, and from all other types of arts, in addition to the three prizes of the first degree, five prizes of the second degree were formed.

In the end, all the main decisions regarding awards were made either personally by Stalin, or after a short discussion, during which his vote was decisive. One of these meetings, which took place on March 31, 1948, is described in his memoirs by K. Simonov, the six-time winner of the Prize in literature and arts: 'Stalin had a habit of... taking a small bundle of books and magazines with him to meetings. It lay to the left close at his hand... And there were literary works printed in books and magazines that were not included in any lists submitted for the award by the Committee. If it occurred to him to award something extra, in such cases he did not really consider the status of awards, he could nominate a book published two years ago...., even four years ago...' [10, p. 232]

According to the resolution of the USSR Sovnarkom, the category of competitive works included new works submitted for consideration by the Commission before October 15 of the current year. Members of the Committee were given a month and a half to review the works and discuss them, after which they had to submit their conclusions to the Sovnarkom no later than December 1, where final decisions were made. The works that were completed from October 15 to December 1 were considered in the following year. It should be noted that architectural projects, literary and musical works were submitted in one copy, while other works of art had to be presented in the original.

However, a special feature of the entire mechanism for establishing and awarding Stalin Prizes was its constant adjustment, which had not always been documented. Thus, in the 'Procedure for awarding Stalin Prizes', published on April 2, 1940 and approved by the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR, it was noted: 'The resolutions of the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR on awarding Stalin Prizes for outstanding works in science, military knowledge, invention, literature and arts are published in the Central



Press on December 21' [9]. This was the date of Stalin's birthday, which seemed quite symbolic. No other resolution set another specific date, but this date was not never followed. Sometimes the gap between the years for which the Prizes were awarded and the years of publication of the resolution was several years. This is also evidenced by the lists in reference books, where the year of publication is indicated next to the name of the laureate instead of the year of the resolution.

It should be noted that a significant part of the literature Prizes were awarded to writers who are currently little known even in their own countries, such as M. Nagnybida (Ukrainian SSR), Y. Chepurin and I. Likstanov (Russian SFSR) [11, p. 359]. A large number of laureates were writers of national republics, whose presence was supposed to symbolize the cultural diversity of the Soviet Union. From an ideological point of view, works in the style of socialist realism prevailed among the works of art, written mainly for the topic of the day and forgotten during the lifetime of their authors.

At the same time, the list of Stalin Prize winners includes many names and works that are still classics of literature: "Vasiliy Tyorkin" by A. Tvardovsky, "Two captains" by V. Kaverin, "In the Trenches of Stalingrad" by V. Nekrasov, V. Sosyura's poetry collection "To make the gardens noisy", "Standart-bearers" ('Praporonostsi') by Oles Honchar, Shakespeare's sonnets translated by S. Marshak, etc. In music field the works by composers M. Isakovsky, B. Lyatoshinsky, A. Surkov, D. Shostakovich are very popular. Meanwhile, the opportunistic nature of the award is evidenced by the absence of outstanding writers B. Pasternak, A. Akhmatova, M. Zoshchenko or A. Platonov in the list of its nominees.

Among writers and artists, the poet K. Simonov, composer S. Prokofiev, artist M. Bogolyubov, film directors I. Kopalyn, I. Pyryev, Y. Raizman received Prizes 6 times, which was the largest number of awards [4, p. 567–570]. For example, K. Simonov's awards are primarily explained by his proximity to J. Stalin and his presence in various literary genres – drama, prose and poetry. 5 prizes were awarded to Ukrainian playwright A. Korniyuchuk, actresses M. Ladygina and A. Tarasova [4, p. 571–578].

Among the former repressed persons, V. Azhaev received the Stalin Prize for his novel "Far from Moscow". This novel and biography of the writer even became the subject of study by the Canadian researcher T. Lahuzen, who pointed out the significant differences between the fiction book and the Soviet reality [12].

The Stalin Prize in literature and arts has been awarded for 11 years. However, after the death of J. Stalin in 1953, the new leader of the USSR, N. Khrushchev, refused to approve the list of nominees. Since J. Stalin did not leave his testament, there was nothing to pay to the laureates, and the Prize was annulled. Instead, in 1956, the Lenin Prize in science and art, which existed from 1925 to 1935, was restored [2, p. 76]. In 1966, the USSR State Prize was established, which became the legal successor of the Stalin Prize. Its winners were offered to exchange the attributes of the old award for badges and a diplomas of the new one.

Conclusions. Thus, the existence of the Stalin Prize in literature and arts showed its opportunistic nature and complete dependence on J. Stalin's will. At the same time, its laureates received or confirmed their high social status and significantly improved their financial situation. Some of the authors honored with the Prize became a literary or art classic.

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