



Sovietization of Literature: Power and Massovization



Early Soviet Literary Process, 1917-1932

Characterising the Period

☆ **“collapse of the entire cultural infrastructure”**

drastic changes after the Revolution – Civil War and the era of War Communism (1917-1921)

“problem of the intelligentsia”

loss of intellectuals due to hunger, disease, killings – on the one hand, emigration on the other

“the issue of the “cultural legacy”

Party's manoeuvring between “left” and “right” – proletarian writers and “fellow travelers”



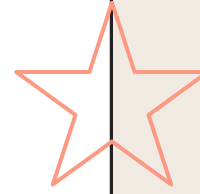
“Revolutionary art which inevitably reflects all the contradictions of a revolutionary social system, should not be confused with Socialist art for which no basis has as yet been made. On the other hand, one must not forget that Socialist art will grow out of the art of this transition period.”*

Lev Trotsky, Literature and Revolution (1924)



*Translation borrowed from: Leon Trotsky, *Literature and Revolution*, https://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/1924/lit_revo/ch08.htm.

What does Sovietization of literature mean?



**“Massovization” of
literature**

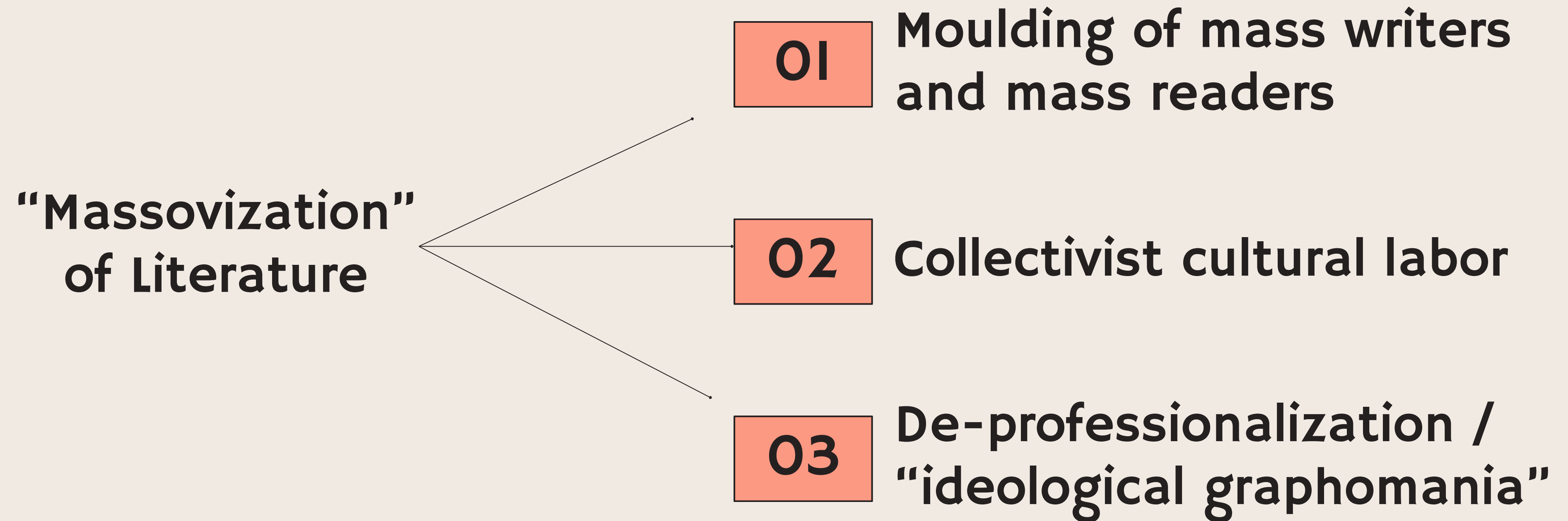
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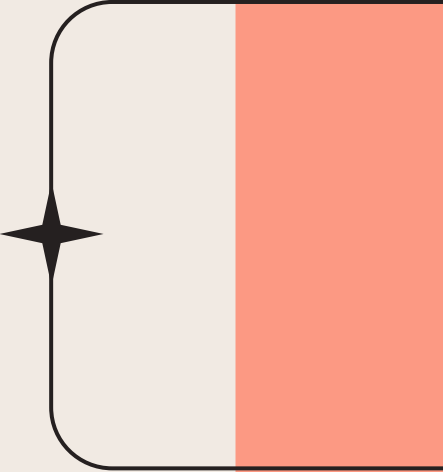
**The fusion of
literature and power**

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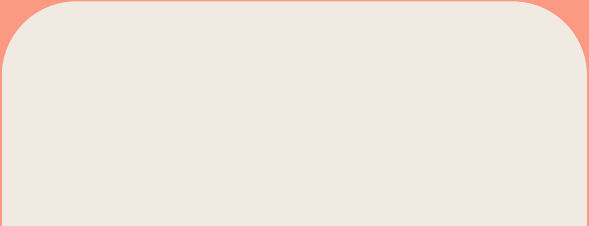
“Lively Creativity of the Masses”





"After the difficult transitional years, the number of those writing verses increased dramatically. Based on widespread malnutrition, the number of people whose intellectual awakening has a diseased character, and finds no outlet in any kind of healthy activity, has increased. [...] The basic characteristic of these people ... is aversion to any profession, almost always the lack of serious professional education, the lack of a taste for any particular trade. As if poetry begins where any other trade ends, which is of course untrue."

Osip Mandelshtam, Army of Poets (1923)



Origins of "Ideological Graphomania"

- "ominous spirit of rage"
- "half-mad verbiage mingled with a thirst for blood and hysterical exultation"
- "real hatred of mankind"
- "the pseudo-passion of ideological windbaggy and aggressiveness was substituted for the spiritual impulse implicit in the words"

Iuriï Kublanovskii, "U istokov ideologicheskoy grafomanii" (1989)

Literature and Power: RAPP

literature as a mirror of political struggle

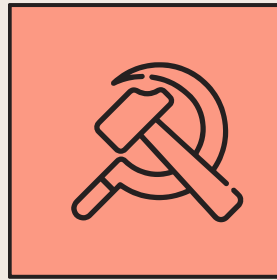
self-identification with power of the literary groups

RAPP (Russian Association of Proletarian Writers)

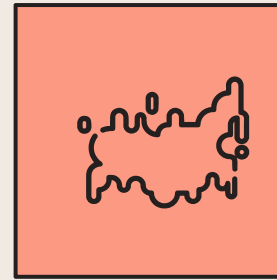
**– Stalin's testing ground of state control of
literature from within and ideological laboratory
of the Socialist Realism**



1920's and the Sovietization of Literature



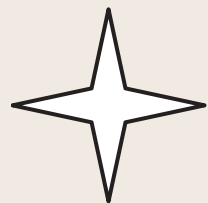
**organic transition
from the
revolutionary period
to Socialist Realism**



**massovization
as an
instrument of
power**



**laboratory of
the ideology**



Selected Bibliography

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**Thank
You for
Attention**