

Title: Inside Stalin's Wartime Mind: Narrative Structures and Soviet Power Hierarchies in Vladimir Bogomolov's *The Moment of Truth*
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Vladimir Bogomolov's novel *The Moment of Truth* (1973), despite its formal affiliation with the canon of later Socialist realism, enjoyed immense popularity with the Soviet reading public, and still remains one of the most widely read books dealing with WWII. However, the novel received virtually no critical attention in the West where it remains unknown even to specialists on post-war Soviet literature. Nor, for that matter, did it enjoy much critical attention from Russian literary scholars who, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, found themselves disinclined to study the literary by-products of Socialist realism's recently active propaganda industry. Despite being one of these by-products, Bogomolov's novel represents an odd and fascinating specimen of the Socialist realist canon possessing an intricate and elaborate narrative structure which accounts for its continuing appeal to the Russian reading public.

The introduction of multiple narrative perspectives, "military-clock" temporality, and Joycean technique of stream of consciousness as well as ample use of recently declassified archival documents, allow Bogomolov to stage a bold literary experiment previously unknown to the genre of Socialist realism and simultaneously actualize through the novel's narrative structure the elements of the Stalinist power hierarchy that no work of the canon might ever dwell upon. As a result, the novel's action can be conceived as unfolding (from) within the very origin/source of the above hierarchy – Stalin's purported all-inclusive mind. In addition, Bogomolov gives the subject matter of *The Moment of Truth*, the counter-intelligence work of the ill-reputed NKVD during WWII, a surprising interpretation, as the organs' main wartime function becomes concerned with life (i.e., catching spies alive) rather than death, as was the case in pre- and post-war years.

Even if conceived as a last-ditch attempt at salvaging the reputation of both its host genre and the KGB, Bogomolov's only novel remains an ominously alive specimen of literary experimentation within later Socialist realism.