

**CREATIVE WORK FOR THE PEOPLE,
IN THE NAME OF COMMUNISM**

*Speech by L. F. ILYICHOV,
Secretary of the CPSU Central
Committee, at a Meeting Between
Party and Government Leaders and
Writers and Artists on December
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Nearly two and a half years have passed since the last meeting between writers and artists and leaders of the Party and government.

Much water has flowed under the bridges since then and many important events have taken place in our country and in the international arena. The 22nd Congress of the Party has been held, and a new Programme of the CPSU has been adopted. Our Party and the Soviet people are following the Leninist road to the triumph of communism. The international prestige of the Soviet Union has risen still higher.

Today we have met once again to exchange opinions on questions of the greatest concern to all of us in connection with the development of socialist culture. Nothing extraordinary or very unusual has taken place, of course. The Central Committee of our Party is satisfied with the state of affairs in the cultural sphere—culture is developing on a healthy basis, in the right direction, and in step with the times. Our art is achieving its goal.

Meetings and sincere and frank talks between the leaders of the Party and the government and people working in the cultural field in the Soviet Union have become a tradition of which everyone approves.

The talks in the past were useful, judging by everything. They played a positive role in consolidating all the creative forces of Soviet culture. Today's meeting, which it is to be hoped will also be useful, is continuing the good tradition. It will certainly help to further unite writers and artists in the service of the noble cause of building communism.

That the time is ripe for such a meeting has been acknowledged both by the Central Committee of the Party and by writers and artists. Quite a few sharp ideological issues have arisen which have to be tackled jointly, on which views must be clarified and positions defined so as to advance with still greater success.

The ideological arsenal of our intellectuals has been replenished lately with such magnificent documents of creative Marxism-Leninism as the material of the 22nd Congress and Programme of the CPSU, and the speeches of N. S. Khrushchov on literature and art.

Every Soviet artist can now understand more profoundly the great message of literature and art, his place in the struggle of the people for communism. Now that we have entered the epoch of the full-scale building of communism, the responsibility

of the intellectuals for developing the ideological and spiritual life of Soviet society has grown infinitely.

We cannot but think of the purity and stability of our ideological positions, of the main trend, the main course in the development of Soviet literature and art.

N. S. Khrushchov and other leaders of the Party and the government recently visited the Moscow Art Exhibition, inspected works by abstract artists and by sculptor E. Neizvestny. At that exhibition these works, as well as formalistic works by other artists, were subjected to severe but just criticism. Devoid of any common sense, the abstract daubs on canvas are nothing but unwholesome eccentricities, miserable imitations of corrupt formalistic art in the bourgeois West.

"Such 'art,'" said N. S. Khrushchov, "is alien to our people, they reject it. This is something that people who call themselves artists and produce 'paintings' of such a kind that it is hard to say whether they have been drawn by the hand of man or painted by a donkey's tail should give thought to. They have to understand their delusions and work for the people."

In this way N. S. Khrushchov and the other comrades voiced their negative attitude to formalism and abstractionism, and in a business-like way and very convincingly criticized formalistic art primarily because of its isolation from the life of the people, because it deliberately gives an ugly picture of reality. **The policy of our Party on the development of socialist culture has been and will continue to be based on the Leninist principles of partisanship and closeness to the people.**

It was no mere chance, of course, that Party and government leaders met with Moscow artists at the exhibition devoted to the 30th anniversary of the Moscow branch of the Artists' Union.

The Central Committee of the Party, the Council of Ministers and Nikita Sergeyevich Khrushchov have lately been receiving letters in which representatives of various groups of people working in the arts have posed acute, perhaps the most fundamental questions concerning the development of our art.

What, briefly speaking, is the gist of these letters? Those who wrote them emphatically protest against instances of defiance of realistic traditions—the pride of Russian classical and Soviet art. Some artists, for instance, have shown an increasingly distinct tendency towards abstract painting. This fact is arousing concern. Abstract artists have become more active. They organize exhibitions of their "works," assiduously plug them within the country and outside it, pose as the only representatives of genuine art and treat as "conservatives" those who adhere to socialist realism.

There are those who challenge the demand that art should be understandable and accessible to the people. Some claim that genuinely innovatory art is always impossible to understand because, they say, the masses of the people cannot perceive the modern language of art and that alongside artists whose works are comprehended by the masses there can and must be artists who create for the few, the select.

A large group of artists recently wrote to the presidium of the recent meeting of the Party Central Committee:

"At present the formalists call into question as outdated, statements made by Lenin and the Party decisions on realistic art. Their statements and practical activity are directed to the restoration of formalistic trends denounced by the Party in its decisions.

"We ask the Central Committee of the Party to say what has become outdated in these decisions. If they have not become outdated then the statements made against them in the press, on radio and television must be regarded as revisionist, conducive to the penetration of an ideology alien to us."

A group of advocates of the formalistic trend, the letter said, seized upon the formerly wrong attitude to art of such artists as D. Shterenberg, S. Shevchenko, R. Falk and A. Drevin and adopted the formalistic works of these artists as a banner. Under this banner they are trying to smuggle an alien ideology into our fine arts.

At the Moscow Art Exhibition a lively, at times, very heated argument often flares up around such canvases as *The Nude and Still Life*, by R. Falk, *Aniska and Still Life. A Herring*, by D. Shterenberg, *Breakfast*, by A. Vasnetsov, *Geologists*, by P. Nikonov and the sculpture *Maternity*, by A. Pologova.

We cannot but agree with the visitors to the exhibition, the overwhelming majority of whom condemn these paintings and express indignation at the distorted portrayal of the Soviet people and of our life as a whole.

A more distressing, and simply repulsive, impression is made by the "works" of the abstractionists, for instance B. Zhutovsky's *Self-Portrait* and *Tolka*, B. Shorts' *Cosmonauts* and *Reach*, L. Gribkov's *Year of 1917*, and others. A feeling of protest is evoked likewise by E. Neizvestny's *Classic Destroyed*, *Cancer*, and several other works.

Whereas it is still possible to debate the merits and demerits of the works of P. Nikonov, R. Falk and A. Vasnetsov, the so-called "canvases" of the young abstractionists, who have grouped themselves around E. Belyutin and call themselves "seekers," cannot raise any argument, in general, because they are outside of art. These formalists held an "exhibition" of their own "works" in November. And, naturally, foreign journalists turned up, and cameras and cinecameras went into action (which means that yet another film of a notorious type will appear shortly abroad). They took interviews and then described all this in detail in the bourgeois press. In other words, they presented this as a major "event" in the cultural life of the Soviet capital, clearly for the sole reason of insulting and humiliating our genuinely Soviet art, as though to say: "Look, the realistic traditions of Repin are coming to an end."

But the trouble is not only and even not so much that the Moscow Art Exhibition has formalistic paintings portraying some kind of inconsolably gloomy, sullen, and abnormal people, and obviously copying bourgeois art in the period of its decline. The main thing is that the paintings of the formalists are being lauded by indiscriminate Soviet critics and theorists as innovatory, as being the only kind with a right to existence, and are opposed to all the best and vital features of realistic art. They want in this way to represent formalism and even its extreme expression, abstract art, as being the high road of socialist art.

When you read articles by such "theorists," you grow convinced that they are attempting to assert a **formalistic uniformity** under the guise of a drive for **multiformity**. They are endeavouring, under the cloak of overcoming **imaginary dictates**, to impose real **dictates of subjective tastes** which have divorced people from life and are alien to every normal, healthy-minded person.

It is under this guise that even murky-looking daubs are hailed as the latest word of "artistic insight."

We have some art critics who are ready to claim that the main trouble with our art is that abstract art, which, in their opinion, can breathe new life of some kind into socialist art, is insufficiently widespread. At the same time, and this is the whole irony of the situation, even in the West the craze for abstract art is dying down, shows held by abstract artists are flops, and their pictures are being ridiculed. And it serves them right. The people are beginning little by little to see through them.

Some artists' feelings were hurt by the just criticism of abstract art and formalism by the Soviet public.

But was there any reason to feel hurt? After all, **abstract and modern "innovations"** are a trend which has never stood for real art; this is a **retreat from the main line of the development of Soviet literature and art**, this is an abandonment of the ties between art and the life of the people, the practice of communist construction.

How contemptuous one must have grown of his own people to declare that the people "are not mature enough" yet to understand the revelations of abstract art!

But to what state are they to mature? To the loss of common sense and normal human tastes? And how can one go so far as to give up the wonderful socialist traditions of our art, which have grown strong in the struggle and have been tested in life? Why should worship for bourgeois art which, as V. I. Lenin put it, tries to tread upon man and paralyze his will and energy in the struggle for a bright future, be considered an advanced, progressive position?

Let's be absolutely frank about it. Our, so to say, home-grown abstract artists and admirers of bourgeois fashions have entered into direct antagonism with the Party Programme approved of by the entire Soviet people.

Attempts to represent not only A. V. Lunacharsky but even V. I. Lenin as almost a champion of abstract "innovation" are not uncommon. It is wrong to talk like this about Lunacharsky and with regard to Lenin it is simply sacrilege.

Recall the deadly sarcasm with which Lenin spoke of the abstract artists' claims to innovation in his talk with Clara Zetkin:

"Yes, dear Clara, we can't help it, we're both old. It is enough for us that we remain young and are in the first ranks, at least in the revolution. We cannot keep pace with the new art and shall lag behind."

Who will not feel the bitter irony of Lenin's words! It is not V. I. Lenin and the Party but the ill-starred innovators of modernist tendencies that have always lagged

behind the revolutionary transforming activity of the masses and, consequently, behind genuinely revolutionary art. You will recall that A. V. Lunacharsky, as is known, compared the modernists of all shades and colours to little boys running along shouting in front of the first platoon and foolishly imitating the real soldiers.

Unfortunately, formalistic trends have begun to spread not only in the graphic arts, but also in music, literature and cinema.

In music, for example, infatuation with the wild howling of different foreign (and not only foreign) jazz orchestras is observed against a general background of progress. What is meant is not jazz, in general, but the cacophony which is sometimes poured out on audiences and is called music out of sheer misapprehension.

Films which are ideologically immature and suffer from over-refinement and complexity of form, and are therefore rejected by our audiences, also appear in film art, where in general there is a creative advance owing to the beneficial transformations in all spheres of our life.

Works of fiction and poetry are often published which in the frantic search for originality of form, with the aim of being "different," have been emasculated of vital content, have frequently lost all meaning and in which the Russian language has been maimed and adulterated.

There are authors and artists who have a passion for pottering about in the backyard, but are loath to see what is happening in the main avenues of our development.

It is commonly known that foreign special-mission "tourists" and certain bourgeois correspondents in our country look out for people who are dissatisfied at something and can wield a pen. They try to get from such penpushers all kinds of diatribes disparaging our life.

A book by a certain Alexander Esenin-Volpin entitled *Spring Leaf* was published and widely advertised in New York a short time ago. The book contains a pretentious and semi-literate "philosophical treatise" as well as anti-Soviet misanthropic verses, like a lunatic's ravings.

The "philosophical treatise" reveals the author's "credo": "Anarchy is my political ideal." In his poetry this ideal looks like this:

*I don't know why I live
And what I want from the beasts,
In vicious Moscow caged.*

A. Esenin-Volpin writes about our young people with scorn and urges them to the blackest deeds. Nourishing his thoughts with the "juice of the gall-bladder" and hating everything in the world, he promises nothing good even to those who will follow him. "Kill all" is his motto.

*Yes, these boys can fully grasp
That it's silly to love or believe.
Their tyrants—mums and dads
Should have long been put to death!
It's the noose that awaits these boys
But no one will condemn me,
As to this poetry, it will be
Read by the maniacs in a hundred years!*

What's this? Can a normal human being write this kind of poetry and someone publish it? But it is this kind of evil-minded concoction, which any healthy person can only loathe, that our enemies are making such a noise about. No wonder! It is permeated with fierce hatred for Soviet society, for the Soviet people. The book by A. Esenin-Volpin is represented abroad as the "manifesto" of the new Soviet generation "in revolt."

Nonsense, this rogue certainly represents no one. He is merely a poisoned fungus, rotten to the core.

However, the fuss raised around his scribblings which are worthless in every respect is most characteristic and indicative. It shows that hostile propaganda stops at nothing in an attempt to spread the poison of scepticism, to confuse the inexperienced, to exaggerate unhealthy phenomena and tendencies in our art, especially in the work of the youth, to engineer a clash between generations, to set off "fathers against children." Our ideological opponents are shouting at the top of their voices about a "new wave," about "voices of discord," about a "crisis" in Soviet art.

Young people working in the cultural sphere in the Soviet Union, who are proudly taking over the baton from the older generations, reject these malicious concoctions and insinuations. It is necessary, however, to be vigilant and uncompromising towards all mistaken tendencies and ideological vacillations, to remember that formalist sleight-of-hand is not an innocent prank but capitulation to alien ideology in art. It is necessary to carry high the banner of socialist realism in the future as well.

Our literature and art are, on the whole, developing in the right direction, our creative intelligentsia are a reliable assistant of the Party in the communist remoulding of the world, in educating the working people. However, this is precisely why any retreat from the main line of development of our literature and art is intolerable. Such deviations have met and will continue to meet with protests from our people, who are able to distinguish genuine spiritual values from an ideological counterfeit and artistic ersatz.

Then why is it that in our fine arts (and is it only in the fine arts?) that some people started to deviate from the principled positions of socialist realism and to imitate those tendencies which were characterized by V. I. Lenin as clowning of the most absurd kind?

Apparently such phenomena are not accidental. They show that certain comrades

incorrectly understand the nature of the struggle against bourgeois ideology, and at times forget about the irreconcilability and uncompromising nature of our ideological positions.

We should bear in mind as an immutable truth that art always has an ideological-political trend, that in one way or another it expresses and upholds the interests of definite classes and social strata. And when we encounter a particular tendency in art, the first question which naturally arises is whose interests does it serve, what does it call for, what social ideals does it proclaim?

If we turn to the essence of abstract art, then there can be no two opinions: it does not serve the interests of the people, it does not express the frame of mind of the working people, it is designed for the perverted tastes of the satiated.

Indeed, can abstract art, decadent art in general, be the banner of progressive classes, particularly that of the Soviet people building communism? There can be only one reply: those who are isolated from life are incapable of serving the transformation of life, the spiritual weapon of a dying class is not in a position to increase the militancy of a class advancing towards victory; it is impossible to build the culture of communism from the products of the disintegration of the old society.

Sometimes people ask whether a man devoted to the Soviet system can be reproached with serving the interests of classes hostile to socialism on the sole ground, say, that his creative method and the methods of an art alien to us are as like as two peas. For the artist himself does not want to harm our country, for which he possibly shed his blood during the last war; he is motivated by the best intentions.

The complexity of the problem is that the subjective intentions of an artist are by no means always equivalent to the objective meaning of his creative work. The good intentions of an artist do not at all exclude the fact that objectively his works may serve the interests of hostile forces.

Remember what V. I. Lenin wrote to A. M. Gorky when the great proletarian writer showed signs of ideological vacillation.—"... Your good intention," Vladimir Ilyich said, "remains your private affair, a subjective 'innocent desire.' Once you have expressed it, it reaches the masses and its significance is determined not by your good wish but by the correlation of social forces, the objective correlations of classes."

Whatever good intentions our formalists in art may be guided by, they must necessarily remember the wise warning of Lenin. It should always be borne in mind that the ideological adversaries of communism may seize, and are already doing this, upon their errors for purposes inimical to the Soviet people.

3

After the Party and government leaders had visited the art exhibition in the Manège and criticized abstract and formalist artists, rumours spread among some intellectuals that a crusade against people who are searching for new forms, new ways in art had begun.

N. S. Khrushchov received a few letters whose writers expressed the following thought: please do everything to prevent the repetition of what took place in the period of the Stalin personality cult.

I shall read out excerpts from a letter sent to the CPSU Central Committee by a group of people working in literature and the arts. They write:

"Dear Nikita Sergeevich, we appeal to you as a man who has done most of all to root out Stalinist high-handedness in the life of our country.

"We people of different generations work in different fields of art. Each of us has his own style, his own artistic convictions. We are united in this appeal to you by common concern for the future of Soviet art and literature.

"We rejoiced," the letter went on, "to see that the Party is restoring the Leninist principles of freedom and justice. The architects rejoiced at the opportunity to construct modern buildings, writers at the chance to write true-to-life books. Composers and theatre workers are also breathing more freely now. Our film workers now shoot pictures of varying artistic trends, pictures which meet with understanding and recognition both among our people and abroad."

Having expressed satisfaction at the opening of the Moscow Art Exhibition which displays works by artists belonging to different trends the authors of the letter pointed out:

"This exhibition became possible only after the 20th and 22nd Party Congresses. Among us there may be different opinions of particular works in the show. If we are all writing this letter to you, it is only because we want to say in all sincerity that art is doomed unless various trends are permitted.

"We see now how your words at the art show are beginning to be interpreted by artists of that very trend which was the only one to flourish under Stalin, giving the others no chance to work and even live.

"We are profoundly convinced that you did not want this and that you are against it. We make this request to you to stop a return to former methods in the field of fine arts which are against the spirit of our time."

Shortly afterwards a similar letter was received; it had some variations and was signed by another group of comrades. Incidentally, the letter contained even a call for "peaceful coexistence" of all trends in art, which objectively speaking sounds like a call to peaceful coexistence in the field of ideology.

But the comrades who signed this last letter, having thought things over once again, decided to recall the letter, and took it back. They had probably not thought out well all the points they raised in their letter, and it should be regarded presumably as a draft and not as a document.

However, what prompted these appeals from people working in literature and the arts to the Central Committee of the CPSU?

Undoubtedly they were prompted by deep concern with the state of affairs in literature and the arts and by a sincere desire to help them to develop successfully and flourish. But the authors of the letters are apparently mixing up two different questions:

creative co-operation between people working in literature and the arts who adhere to Marxist-Leninist principles, and the attitude to various alien ideological trends in art.

Creative co-operation between people in literature and the arts who, with their different styles and individual approaches, follow the line of socialist realism and faithfully depict life is one thing. The Party stands for this kind of co-operation, for the most comradely, genuinely fraternal relationships between the different groups of our creative intelligentsia.

Socialist realism opens up broad opportunities for co-operation and creative competition between artists of the most diverse kinds: supporters of the generalizing-romantic, the strictly analytic, and other styles in our art. There can be no development in our Soviet literature, our Soviet art without such co-operation.

But does this mean that we stand for co-operation, for "peaceful coexistence" of such adverse ideological trends in art as socialist realism and abstract art, which reflect, in the final count, not only opposing ideological-aesthetic but even political, class positions?

We must introduce full clarity:

There has not been, and cannot be, peaceful coexistence between socialist ideology and bourgeois ideology. The Party has always been against bourgeois ideology, against any of its manifestations, and will continue to be so. Following the directions of Vladimir Ilyich Lenin it has always defended and will continue to defend partisanship in literature and the arts.

The Party has always resolutely and firmly stood for the Leninist course in the development of literature and the arts.

In ideology a fight with the bourgeois world is going on without ceasing for a moment, a struggle for the minds and hearts of the people, particularly the youth, a struggle to mould the young people, to see what they will derive from the past and bring with them to the future. We have no right to underestimate the danger of subversion by bourgeois ideology in the sphere of literature and the arts, too.

The idea of coexistence in the field of ideology is actually nothing but betrayal of the interests of Marxism-Leninism, the interests of socialism.

And in art we sometimes meet deviations from class and Party positions, we come across instances of conciliation with bourgeois ideology. This is particularly expressed in the false interpretation of "human nature," in propaganda of abstract humanism, a sort of evangelical all-forgiveness: as though there are no hostile classes, no capitalism in the world, and no struggle for communism!

We Communists inherit and multiply all the genuine human values that were distorted and perverted in private property society. But we are resolutely against a non-class treatment of human nature, against the replacement of Communist Party spirit and militant socialist humanism by false preaching of class peace and all-forgiveness.

In our epoch genuine human traits common to man are precisely communist traits for it is in communist society that the personality and all the best human traits and

qualities are developed to the full. One cannot therefore dissolve our communist ideals in some abstract and non-class conceptions because this would inevitably lead to giving up our ideological positions.

In a letter addressed to the CPSU Central Committee a group of young abstract artists assure us that they are seeking their way in socialist art and that there cannot be any advance without such searching. They assert that they strive to glorify the "purity of the Russian woman," to express the "beauty of Soviet man exploring outer space."

As for the purity and beauty of the Russian woman I must say that it is enough to glance at the opuses of the abstract artists to see to what absurdities one may go when chasing after styles alien to us. As for "searches," I would like to tell the abstract artists: you are not doing the seeking, you have been found and made to follow, it is precisely in your formalist "works" that our enemies are trying to acquire a bridgehead to attack communist ideology.

This is something worth pondering over not only for the young formalists but also their defenders and inspirers.

4

The Party pursues the policy of the further development of democracy in Soviet society.

Who can deny that the entire atmosphere of our life has become much more free and creative and that favourable conditions have been created to enable our artists to work. But there seem to be people among those working in the arts, or rather in the near-art milieu, who want to make it appear that the time has come for anarchistic elements to do as they like with impunity.

It is precisely these people who chatter about artistic freedom who come out against Party guidance of the arts.

There must be complete clarity on this point. Remember how Lenin, while coming out for genuine freedom, freedom for the people, exposed the demagogic attempts to assert the anarchistic concept of freedom as **freedom from society, from duty to the people.**

We have full freedom to fight for communism. We have not, nor can we have, freedom to fight against communism.

Maxim Gorky was profoundly correct when he passionately declaimed against anarchistic do-as-you-please. "... I'm against freedom beyond that line at which freedom becomes abandon, and this conversion is known to begin where man, no longer aware of his actual social-cultural value, gives free rein to the ancient Philistine individualism concealed in him and cries out 'I'm so charming, original, unique, but I am not allowed to live as I please.' It is a good thing, too, if he just shouts, for when he begins to act of his own volition, he becomes either a counter-revolutionary or a hooligan, which is almost equivalent to being mean and harmful."

World reaction and its ideologists would like very much to restore in the Soviet Union "freedom" of exploitation, "freedom" of deception of the working people, but for a start they would like to establish the anarchistic variety of the bourgeois concepts of "freedom" in art.

There are people who view the matter in this way: since arbitrary rule has been ended in our country and no one is arrested for political heterodoxy it means that everything is allowed and there is no restriction upon one's desire. One cannot only paint ugly pictures, but also laud them as innovatory searchings. One can run down the advanced traditions of our art, but one cannot defend them, it appears, because this is, you see, "restriction" of freedom, "pressure" and "ordering-about."

Such people would not like anyone to thwart them when they try to disparage everything created by our people in the hard, yet great struggle for the victory of the socialist system.

It is said that the atmosphere created sometimes in the discussion of art problems at a meeting is such that it is thought tactless and outdated to defend the correct Party positions, one can get the reputation of being a retrograde and conservative and be accused of dogmatism, sectarianism, narrow-mindedness, backwardness, Stalinism, etc.

The other day the well-known film director Sergei Gerasimov said with alarm at the conference of film workers that now it takes courage to defend the positions of socialist realism and that revolutionary barricades sometimes become shaky fences over which one can easily climb back and forth.

Do we have to tolerate such phenomena, no matter how seldom they may occur? Do we have to follow in the wake of antiquated moods?

Condemning formalistic eccentricities in fine art in the early period after the Revolution, V. I. Lenin stressed that they are alien to the healthy taste of a normal human being. And it is highly indicative, that Vladimir Ilyich considered it very important for the realist painters themselves to come out, equipped with full professional knowledge and experience, against customs and trends in contemporary art that are alien and hostile to us. This was in the first years of Soviet government, when the forces of the new socialist art were still very weak.

How can those who have created art and won the affection and respect of millions of people in our country and abroad tolerate the revival of formalistic trickery!

I would like to speak of one more thing.

We sometimes hear such a statement: let us create as we wish, don't impose any prescriptions on us, don't hold us back. Hence, the demand for exhibitions without a jury, books without an editor, the right of an artist to exhibit whatever he wants without intermediaries. This amounts in essence to nothing but an attempt to secure totally unrestricted possibilities for imposing one's own subjective will, exaggerated beyond its importance on the people. This means placing personal interests above the interests of the people, the interests of society as a whole.

True freedom for creative work is incompatible with anarchy. V. I. Lenin called anarchism "bourgeois mentality turned inside out."

It is extremely fortunate for our art that the Party, which expresses the basic interests of the people and whose entire work is based on the most progressive outlook, defines the tasks and trends of art.

Indeed, if it is not the people who are to be the supreme judges of works of art and literature, who should be? And why is it we sometimes see in our country a haughty and scornful attitude towards the evaluation of these works by the public? Why is public opinion often slighted as "plebeian," whereas the appraisal by a small group of aesthetes is regarded as the expression of indisputable truths?

Our people in the arts and literature are coming out most resolutely against all who are ready to write off the great accomplishments of Soviet culture to please any craze abroad. We cannot support those who share the views of Neuvazhai-Koryto (Scorn-the-Trough), a notorious character in one of Shchedrin's books. Such people are ready to ridicule, boo and reject everything.

The Soviet people are carefully preserving and developing the finest traditions of socialist art, traditions of the truth of life, communist partisanship and affinity with the people, and lofty revolutionary spirit and sense of civic duty.

5

What is the main line and the main purport of the development of our art, what is our attitude towards the so-called "critical trend"?

The main line of the development of literature and the arts is defined by the Programme of our Party. This line is to strengthen connections with the life of the people, to give a faithful and deeply artistic reflection of socialist life in its many aspects, to portray in an inspired and striking way the new, genuinely communist realities and to expose everything which impedes the forward movement of our society.

The Party furnishes all the conditions for the successful development of literature and the arts.

There are some comrades, however, who try to assure us that criticisms of negative phenomena are obstructed and the Party does not support or encourage critically orientated works. Such claims are not true: no more true, indeed, than the allegations that socialist realism calls for the furbishing up of reality, the smoothing out of contradictions, rosy complacency, Philistine complacency, etc.

On the contrary, the highest criterion, the core of socialist realism, is truth of art and life, no matter how grim it may be.

It is precisely our Party, its Leninist Central Committee who courageously told the truth to the people about the Stalin personality cult, exposed his crimes to the Party and the people and are vigorously eradicating the consequences of the personality cult in all spheres of life.

Our Party supports the healthy, vital and critical trend in the art of socialist realism. Artistically and politically mature works exposing the arbitrariness admitted during the period of the personality cult have recently been published with the

approval of the Central Committee of the CPSU. Suffice it to mention *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*, by A. Solzhenitsyn.

Thus the problem is not to give a wide birth to negative manifestations of life, there are such things and the Party sets an example in eradicating them.

The problem is to expose boldly everything that interferes with us without striking at Soviet society itself. We must differentiate between vital works with a sharp critical orientation which inspire people for the struggle against shortcomings, and decadent, panic-ridden, disparaging works which instil distrust in Soviet society and weaken the power and energy of the people in the struggle for communism.

The authors of the letters to the CPSU Central Committee interpreted the criticisms levelled against the faults and harmful trends in art as a danger of the return to the former methods of guidance of the arts. What a delusion! What are the grounds for such inferences? It appears that it was enough to level some criticisms at formalistic distortions and there came the "alarm signal"—the return to the old methods predominating in the period of the personality cult.

This problem is of fundamental importance and we must analyze it.

During the period of the personality cult there were considerable unhealthy developments and distortions in the field of spiritual culture. The Party exposed and cast them aside, removed the obstacles to the development and further advance of the art of socialist realism. Having corrected and removed the mistakes and distortions of the past, our Party laid down in its new Programme that it would invariably concern itself with seeing that literature and the arts develop in the right direction, that they reach a high ideological and artistic level, and that it would unflinchingly carry into effect Lenin's behests on the guidance of the arts.

V. I. Lenin ridiculed and rejected the position of non-interference by the Party in the development of socialist culture.

Some comrades have apparently erroneously and very arbitrarily interpreted the course of the Party for the resolute overcoming of the effects of the personality cult, for the development of broad democracy in every sphere of our life.

Yes, the Party has followed and will continue actively and consistently to follow the Leninist course. It is removing every possible barrier and hindrance retarding the development of the people's creative forces. Only under such conditions will the activity, initiative and talents of the Soviet people receive full rein and ensure the swift advance of our country to the road of communist construction.

Is there any need to speak of the importance all this has for the development of literature and the arts, of the profound satisfaction with which the Leninist course of the Party has been greeted by those working in the sphere of culture in the Soviet Union?

Here, as everywhere else, we see the stormy growth of creative initiative and activity, the advance of new young creative forces. Workers in the arts are striving to depict in a proper manner the arduous, heroic, and only true Leninist road covered by our country on the way to the new life.

But it would be wrong to close our eyes to negative phenomena and incorrect tendencies in the arts.

While exposing the Stalin personality cult the Party casts aside everything hindering us in our progress. But we cannot, under the pretext of the struggle against the personality cult for socialist society, allow socialist ideology and socialist culture to be shattered and weakened. The exposure of the personality cult and the overcoming of its effects should strengthen rather than weaken our forces. If under the pretext of criticism of the effects of the personality cult we should strike out against our society, our ideology, we would not create the great art of communism but would lose what we have already gained.

The Soviet people know and see the great achievements of Soviet art, the beneficial influence which the new atmosphere of our life has exerted on it. They highly value the work of their creative intelligentsia and appreciate its enormous significance for the entire intellectual life of the country.

The sharp critical remarks made by the leaders of the Party and government during their visit to the Moscow Artists' Exhibition have been received by the Soviet people as a fresh manifestation of the Party's concern for our socialist art and have evoked profound satisfaction.

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When N. S. Khrushchov's remarks on the abstract artists were published, Soviet public opinion saw them as an important step in the struggle of the Party for the culture of communism, as the beginning of a new stage in the improvement of Party guidance of the development of artistic work. It is said that some comrades have summed up the Party criticism by analogy with the well-known words: "There is such a Party!"

Yes, there is such a Party, which has led and will continue to lead, has formulated and, using V. I. Lenin's words, will continue to formulate the results of the artistic process in our country. This is the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

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