

WRITERS AND ARTISTS ARE ASSISTANTS OF THE PARTY FOR THE COMMUNIST EDUCATION OF OUR PEOPLE

Speech delivered at the meeting of the Secretariat of the CC of the PLA concerning the implementation to date of the tasks in literature and art set by the 4th Plenum of the CC of the PLA

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I asked the comrades of the Ministry of Education and Culture as well as the comrades of the apparatus of the Central Committee engaged in problems of literature and art how they activate the writers, poets and artists, because they should not burden them with office routine, involving them in one way or the other in the machinery of bureaucracy. I asked this question because I think that the League of Artists and Writers should not be turned into a bureaucratic organ. On the contrary, it must be a centre where there is a lively threshing out of philosophical, artistic, aesthetic and other, opinions. We must not allow the League of Artists and Writers to be turned into an organ for control over the various writings of all the writers and poets of the country, but, primarily, it should work in many different ways and forms to inspire them to write better and better ...

Over these thirty years of a free existence in a country such as ours, in which socialism is being built, we have achieved many successes in the fields of the economy and culture. There is no doubt whatever that these successes would not have been achieved without the existence of the Party of Labour, without its correct Marxist-Leninist line, without the establishment of the people's power, without the dictatorship of the proletariat and without the continuous waging of the class struggle. All these factors have resulted in major transformations being carried out in the socio-economic field and linked with them, in the all-round education of the working people. The economic and cultural life of our people has changed, has progressed. Our people work, produce, create, learn and consume.

In all this development the Party has continually made all-round analyses of key moments, which have helped the communists and all the working people to see the good aspects, as well as the weak ones, during the process of this development.

Some people have not, appreciated these analyses made by the Party as much as they should. They have not seen in them the essence of the policy and philosophy of the Party, to point out that the results of a given stage have their good aspects, but also have weak aspects associated with them; there are positive and negative factors and these factors are both objective and subjective. In the opinion of these people, social life develops outside their will, because, they allege, events will take their 'predestined' course willy-nilly. Such people differ in appearance from those who philosophize in an idealist and mystical way, but they do not differ at all in their world outlook. At one time, people said and believed that this or that 'had been ordained', 'it was bound to happen so', 'there is a supernatural power, the decisions of which cannot be opposed'. They called this 'extraordinary force', 'God, Heaven, Christ, Mohammed' and all kinds of saintly names. Even now there are people who think metaphysically and believe in certain 'forces' which they raise as factors that allegedly set development in motion, such as 'the bureaucracy, the administration, selfishness, the sense of private property, ambition, position, etc.'. For them heaven has been transformed and taken root precisely in those world outlooks and signposts in life which have consolidated the idealist inspiration and the life of the capitalist, merchant or money-lending bourgeoisie. Naturally under our regime, the sphere of action of such people has been narrowed and is becoming narrower, but their harmful mentalities are not without effect in life. These views operate in life in various forms, frequently seem to be quite harmless and normal, and lie hidden under a mentality which allegedly conforms to the laws, the customs and even to the new 'patriotism' of the epoch of the Party. This is that petty-bourgeois mentality, these are those bourgeois and petty-bourgeois remnants, which the

Marxist-Leninist party fights and will continue to fight until the classless society is achieved.

It must not be imagined that the people have shaken off these remnants, we should not think that after a few moralizing articles these dangerous vices and world outlooks disappear without a trace, we should not think that, with the improvement of the living standards of the people, our men and women become immune to these 'diseases'. Otherwise, we may have a reminder of them, and this time shouting 'long live the Party' which created abundance for us. But together with the abundance and well-being, the Party must create in individuals and in society precisely that world outlook, those customs, those feelings, those tastes, those ethics, that revolutionary philosophy, which will not permit the revival or the spread of petty-bourgeois and bourgeois world outlooks, either.

Of course, this is not an easy task and that is just what the bourgeoisie, capitalism, relies on when it hopes for the 'failure of socialist society', 'the defeat of communism'. It is precisely that philosophy, those world outlooks and those economic relations on which the development and consolidation of its state power are based, that capitalism is counting on. Its whole structure and superstructure have, of course, oppressed man in a twofold way: both spiritually and physically. During the entire course of history, the reign of capital, of religion, of the aristocracy and the bourgeoisie has dashed with the progressive forces, with progress, and has lost many limbs in these wars. Now it has reached the stage of its decay. Capitalism, imperialism, has lost its economic, political and ideological positions one after another. The revolution, the peoples, are eroding its foundations. Marxism-Leninism is leading the peoples towards the new life, socialism and communism, but we must not think that in face of the defeats it is suffering, world capitalism has laid down its arms. In its objectives, capitalism relies precisely on its barbarous attacks and on predatory imperialist wars against the liberation of the peoples from its yoke, but it also counts on that world outlook and on those remnants which burden the consciousness of men and have kept them as its slaves for life.

In this direction, the propaganda of imperialism for the degeneration of men and women and society as a whole, for the revival of every form and aspect of the former vices, feelings, sentiments, appetites, selfishness, robbery, and gangsterism of those individuals and those societies that supported its power, has never before known such a broad extension and range as it has at the present time. All this is a reflection of the savage face of capital, a reflection of its degeneration. Nevertheless, with this way of life it is still striving to prolong its existence and domination, by influencing the peoples with its propaganda in order to demoralize them, to divert them from the road of the revolution.

Capitalism and imperialism are afraid of the revolution, of the proletariat, but not of the lumpen elements or of those democrats and socialists who fight them with kid gloves, nor of the modern revisionists, like those of the Soviet Union and others, who have betrayed the ideas of Marxism-Leninism. All these, dressed up in various pseudo-revolutionary ideologies, are forces and means of the counter-revolution which capitalism and imperialism use for their own purposes.

In view of these things, and being aware of the danger of them at every moment, our Party teaches and educates the people, throws them into struggle for the construction of socialist society and the consolidation of the victories achieved, and to prepare the ground for those new objectives which must be achieved. Hence, every citizen of our country must reflect deeply on what the Party means when it says that 'we must fight with all our strength against the external and internal pressure of the bourgeois and revisionist ideology'. This double and, at the same time, single enemy is not imaginary but real. The struggle must be waged every day, must be active and take place in all the manifestations of life, in the philosophy of all these manifestations. The struggle must be waged with all the means, through education, in schools, in factories, in fields, at work and at home, with the family and *tete a tete* with the mother, the wife, the sister, the children, the neighbours, in all their manifestations, pointing out and encouraging the good things and condemning the bad things.

If we act in this way, we have triumphed step by step over the enemy. We must not allow his evil seed to germinate, and, as soon as it puts up a sprout, we must nip it off at once.

The writers and artists have an exceptionally great role in this direction. The people and the Party need them. Through their creativity and talents they should give more help in eliminating those remnants I spoke of earlier from the dark corners of human consciousness and should bring out the majesty of the socialist world and the virtues of its new men and women. Under the leadership of the Party, our workers of literature and art should do that profound ideological, political, moral, and ethical work which is needed to combat the influences and poisons of the old world and of the present-day capitalist and revisionist world, to bring out the lofty communist virtues and implant them in the character of our men and women. They should struggle to always play the role of the assistant of the Party in the formation of the new man. I regret to have to say that many communists and leaders of party committees and state institutions do not properly understand the importance of literature and art. In their reports they repeat Lenin's golden words about the role of literature and art in educating the masses, but when it comes to practice, they underrate or forget them.

In the direction of the development of literature and art the Party has helped to bring about a great qualitative leap forward. Life in our country is so great, so broad, so varied, so beautiful and so open that if you immerse yourself in it you cannot fail to be inspired to write whatever you like - novels, poems, plays, music, comedies, etc.

The comrade writers, poets, musicians, artists, actors and directors of drama, opera and ballet theatres, cinematography, etc., inspired by the work and heroic deeds of the people, have achieved very great progress in the development of literature and art in our country. The best evidence of this is the creative literary-artistic work done on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the liberation of our Homeland. Inspired by the decisions of the 4th Plenum of the CC of the PLA, our artists and writers came to that great jubilee with all those beautiful works. These achievements, in the series of others, testify, among other things, to the possibilities created when the people are in power and are led by a revolutionary Marxist-Leninist party, such as our Party of Labour.

Among the works of foreign authors of various countries which I have read, there are some that I have liked, for instance, the works of classical poetry and outstanding French and other prose writers, but there are also some which I have not liked at all, such as many new novels which I have happened to pick up and tried to read, but which, to tell the truth, I have thrown away, because they are worthless. Let alone the modem 'poetry' which I have read, which is unimaginably awful. Reading such 'poetry' I ask myself, who are these people who write such stuff. Meanwhile, compared to this corrupt and worthless creativity, the magnificence of our literature and art of socialist realism, the value of our exceptionally beautiful folk songs and dances, becomes ever greater.

Among our poets and prose writers there are authors who turn out literary and artistic creations of value, others who produce works of less value; then there are those who write materials without any special value. Who is going to help the latter, particularly the young poets and writers, progress? We must pay great attention to this question, we must encourage and help them, and our affirmed writers and poets, as well as those who have had more training than the young ones, have a special duty in this direction. But the first and continuing aid we must give them is to open the eyes of their consciousness to the reality of our country and our people. They themselves must learn to see with their own eyes and feel with their own hearts the vigorous development of the life of our people and faithfully reflect it in their diverse creativity. We must understand the most profound and diverse aspects of this development, which are discovered through knowledge of the material life and the feelings which arise in each period, through the clash of opinions created by internal and external antagonisms, which were and are inseparable in the life of a people, in whatever period and in

whatever corner of the continents this people may live and fight for its existence, for a better life, a life in freedom and economic and political independence.

A poet who does not know the reality is quite unable to produce a powerful poem, no matter how developed his imagination may be. But if he combines his imagination with the objective reality of the country, with the vivid life of the people, if in his writings he combats expressions full of pompous phrases, he, too, can become a talented writer.

We must not be discouraged because, alongside the recognized poets and writers, we do not see new talents of high calibre emerging, as was said here. It must be borne in mind that it is not easy to create worthwhile literary pieces, poems, novels, etc. in a short time. You need time to write valuable works; besides, you must link yourself with men and women, with the people, must go deep into the heart of the masses, not just to find the subject for your novel or poem and then immediately leave the village or the factory, considering the birth of the idea to be sufficient. No fine work, no achievement, can come out in this way, that is why it is required of the writer to really get to know people, to know their lives, their difficulties and worries, their pleasures and hopes, etc., as I said earlier.

The majority of our young writers have a cultural horizon, but their task is to link this culture well with the life of the country, with the directives of the Party. I am convinced that, by drawing inspiration from the life of the people and the correct line of the Party, in time the young writers, too, will mature and succeed in winning recognition.

There are two ways of viewing the development of life: one is the idealist, mystical, pessimistic and conservative view, and the other is the realist view, with a revolutionary spirit, fruit of a materialist analysis of events and history, a view full of optimistic feelings about a further positive change and development of history and about the advancement of society, of a classless society. This view becomes the property and outlook of those men and women with pure revolutionary virtues, who, uniting with the progressive classes, strike powerful blows at the entire abhorred ideological and political-moral arsenal of the reactionary forces. In order to educate and help the young writers and artists, it is essential that we teach them, and make understandable to them, the ideology that guides our Party and our working class - Marxism-Leninism.

We must teach our young writers and artists how to read the open book of the socialist life of our country, how to study and grasp the content of this wonderful book. We must make them love every 'letter' of this book of life, make them see and feel the powerful pulse of the strength, feelings and ardent desires of our people. We must work to make them see and handle the colossal achievements of our people in all fields, see how our new man of socialist society, led by a Marxist-Leninist party, has transformed the plains, the mountains, has harnessed the flow of rivers, and built entire cities from nothing. We must make these young people see all these beauties, all this rich colour of our people and nature. From this wonderful book, which is the life of the people, they should make deductions and put all these great treasures of our socialist life in their books, novels and poems, in their songs and plays, in the paintings and sculptures they create.

If our artists and writers proceed in these directions and are imbued with these teachings, if they immerse themselves completely in the revolutionary current of life with all their strength of character and the depth of their pure and ardent feelings, they will certainly give the people and their Homeland wonderful works which will be a reflection of the mighty work being done in our country for the construction of socialism and the formation of the new man. As to their usefulness and majesty, their works will be like the giant hydro-power stations, factories and combines, the beautiful wheat fields and the hills covered with fruit trees; they will be like the beauties of our cities, schools and creches, where the happy children of our socialist country laugh and sing, where

our working class, co-operativist peasantry and people's intelligentsia, with their minds and skills, are creating and building a new, happy, and prosperous life.

I think that another special sort of help which should be given to the young, less experienced and as yet unformed writers, apart from the friendly advice of the outstanding poets, writers, painters and musicians, or the comments they will make about the creative work of the young people, will be the beautiful and rich creativity of our great talents, the splendid writings and compositions they bring out, which will inspire those who are younger and with less training from the ideological and artistic viewpoint. The works of poetry, prose, music, painting, etc., provided by our well-known writers and artists, should become major subjects for study to inspire all those engaged in literature and art, in regard to their ethics, content, treatment of problems, etc. This creativity is and will remain a great school and assistance provided for the young by the recognized artists, from whose works not only those who have just begun to write, but also the readers, all those who are not engaged in writing, learn and gain education, because they inspire us, too.

The fine works of the outstanding writers, poets and artists please us, because they are permeated by valuable ideas and thoughts, which do not drop from the skies, but stem from knowledge of the real state of things, of our reality, of the development of the political and social life of our people. These ideas and thoughts correctly and accurately reflect the desires, joys and sorrows, the life and depth of the thinking of the people, they are linked with our future, therefore, they not only please us, but also inspire us and invigorate our work. Hence, the successful works of the outstanding authors should become the main source of assistance to the young creators, rather than any schematic organization of giving help on their part. When the works of the writers and artists, their paintings and musical compositions, express the profound thinking and great-heartedness of the people and portray real characters from life, this makes those who are reflected in these creations think: With the work we carry out, do we deserve this honour? And this question which they ask themselves inspires them and multiplies their strength to work even harder.

The works of our writers, including the young ones, contain inspiration, ideas, taste, art. All these things may not be always profound, may not be perfect. It is known that the tree does not yield fruit as soon as it sprouts from the soil. It is like this also with the young writers and artists, but in time they, too, will grow up, will mature in their thoughts and will know how to create works which are more beautiful, of greater and more lasting value.

In their creative work the young writers must draw inspiration, first of all, from the line of the Party and the colossal activity of the men of labour, but, as I said, they must also learn from their older and more experienced writer, poet, and artist comrades. Among the young artists and men of letters, indeed also among the older ones, through systematic educational work, we must patiently fight and eliminate egoism, ambition and conceit, which linger among us as stains from the society with antagonistic classes. This work is indispensable for a massive development and blooming of the beautiful, fragrant, multi-coloured flowers of a socialist garden such as ours. But, I think, we cannot expect that all talents will reach that level of development at the same time. Therefore, we must not make unwarranted comparisons between individuals engaged in creative work, saying that the productions of this one or that are superlative, while those of the others are nothing! No, we must not act in this way. The literature, art, music, and indeed the economy, the sciences and the entire culture of the countries and peoples of the world have not developed all at one time. but have passed, step by step, from the lowest stages to the highest. Differences, of course, have always existed, not only when high levels of science, literature and culture have been attained, but also when they have not. Time and life themselves will make the differentiation.

In the world literature of different epochs and centuries, mention is made of men who, in their own time, have been among the most renowned, but in the later centuries their value has fallen right

away and they have been forgotten. A book about the French Academy writes of those outstanding French and world authorities who were never admitted to the Academy, such as Moliere, Rousseau, Diderot, Balzac, etc. It says that many of them were turned down when they presented their candidatures for membership of the Academy. But who turned them down and who was chosen in their stead? The authors of the book show that those who were elected instead of these authorities were men whose creative work had no great value, therefore, with the passage of time, many of them have been forgotten and some have disappeared without a trace. In this book, one of these authors, himself an academician, presents the grandeur and immortality of Moliere who was never admitted to the Academy. In the final account, what did Moliere want with the luxurious armchair of the French Academy when, even today, millions of men and women go and respectfully touch the old armchair in which he died, playing his immortal comedies?

I mentioned the instance of the French Academy to illustrate the idea that time is what does the sorting out of many people and works. Those which are of the greatest value, the masterpieces, last through centuries as immortal monuments whose glory never fades. Others, of a certain mediocre value, are talked about for a time. whereas those which are worthless are entirely rejected and nobody even mentions them. Thus, do what you will to impose a valueless work, it will be short-lived. The opposite is just as true, do whatever you like, organize cabals, invent baseless criticism in a spirit of ambition and denigration about a fine work, nevertheless it will not disappear, its worth is not reduced but resists any action, and, finally, it imposes itself through its great values.

I think that a work, of whatever genre, has its good aspects, but it has also its weak aspects. This is precisely why criticism is necessary, but not denigrating criticism impelled by ambition and other unhealthy feelings, but fair, objective, constructive criticism.

I make no claim at all, through these few elementary thoughts I am expressing, to pose as, or place myself, in the role of a literary critic. No, I am not in that category, but I think that a work, of whatever genre, must have its essence in the correct political, ideological, moral road and present the situation, its general and typical aspects realistically. First of all, the work must inspire, educate, and enthuse the reader. The force and intensity with which it will do this, depends on the profundity of its ideological content and on the forms, style, figures, colours, etc., used by the author.

In their colossal work, our great classical teachers - Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin, have dealt with the problems of literature and art, too. The revisionists and Trotskyites try to minimize this major contribution of the classics. They do this with a view to opening broad fields for their filth of all genres which they are pouring out in all directions.

I advise the writers and artists, particularly the literary and art critics that along with their study of the Marxist-Leninist theory they should read with especially great care those more than a few instances in which our classics make criticism of writers and artists. They are profound analyses and models of how we should judge a literary-artistic work.

As I have said, I do not want to go into detail about what a critic should be, but I hope you will forgive me, because I would like to make a criticism of our literary critics. Sometimes their criticism is neither simple nor understandable, thus it cannot always be grasped by those who read it and who want to learn. Many of these criticisms are verbose, what should be pointed out is drowned in a flood of analysis and, frequently' abstruse and 'specific' phrases and terminology are used to give the impression of 'competence' and of having thoroughly studied the work. But in acting in this way, they forget the reader, on whom this kind of criticism has no great effect. If I may give some advice, this is that our critics should abandon any inclinations, if these appear among some of them, to imitate the bourgeois modernist critics of the present time who make their criticisms obscure, confused, and corrupting, under the pretext that they must allegedly adapt their criticism to the

works of the times.

In the field of the literary and artistic criticism of the bourgeoisie in various epochs, too, we shall see various stages and forms of it. Without aspiring to the heights of the criticisms of Voltaire, which were as incisive and profound as they were simple and understandable, but just taking the criticisms of the early decades of our century, we shall notice that they were not so double-distilled, so tangled and twisted, to the degree to which the present bourgeois and revisionist art, literature and criticism have degenerated.

Our literary-artistic criticism must be inspired by and pursue the principled course of the great classical teachers and our Party. Our criticisms should be realist, like the works they analyse; they should be simple, understandable, concise and able to be grasped by the public. Criticism must be educational, therefore, he who makes it must not regard himself as speaking from the 'peak of Olympus' but should consider the author of a work as a comrade, to whom he talks to give him advice, always with good intentions.

We must also show a little tact, comrades, in the help given to those who create. We should bear in mind the psychology and feelings of a person. The observation made here concerning subjective criticism is correct. Sometimes the criticisms made about literary or musical works are exaggerated and subjective. We must demand from our writers, poets and artists that the content, the essence of their work should be on a correct party road and be inspired by a sound revolutionary spirit in the service of socialism. This is the main thing which our authors must bear in mind in their creative work. As to how one or the other will construct the theme he has chosen, the characters, this is the business of the writer, the poet, or the musician. He, better than anyone else, finds for himself the artistic figures which please him, knows which moment must be underlined to further strengthen the ideological and political core of his work, and so on. On questions like these, each must decide for himself. It would not be advisable at all, for example, to say to one writer or another: 'If you will remove this idea or line and add that other one, if you will shorten it a little here and extend it there, remove this artistic figure and put in another,' etc. In such a case the writer would have the right to retort: 'Then why don't you write your own verse the way you want it and stop messing me about?' We must never interfere expressively with uncalled for criticism of literary-artistic works, because such subjective interference is not assistance, but massacre. Criticisms must not be made in this way. If we allow others to make one comment after another, endlessly, about the publication of a poem, a play, etc., the work will end up a disaster and be turned into a 'Russian salad'. We should be particularly careful to pursue a correct policy of aid and criticism in regard to the young writers, in the sense that we should neither depress nor intimidate them by telling them baldly, 'Your poem is worthless', 'Your writing is very poor', etc. We should also bear in mind the other aspect, that we should not turn their heads with undue praise otherwise they might get 'stuck up'. The aim is to help them advance, so that they, like all the others, serve the people with devotion.

In a few words, when a work is correct in line and does not lack artistic values, but which may be a bit lame somewhere with regard to this or that aspect, there should not be too much hesitation to publish, exhibit, perform, or stage it. On the other hand, I want to re-emphasise that it would not be right and proper for the people of art and literature to take a contemptuous attitude towards the fair criticisms and suggestions of an essentially ideological and artistic character made by the critics or the readers.

Our theatre, both of drama and of opera and ballet, has gained experience and has created a tradition, but efforts must never cease to find other, newer, ways and means with a revolutionary spirit to enrich and further improve this experience and these traditions. Our theatre must reflect our revolutionary reality, the demands of the working class and co-operativist peasantry to consolidate the new society. Of course, for us the theatre is a political and ideological weapon for the education

of people, therefore, it must be understandable and, in order to be so. it must express their feelings and desires.

It is essential that our dramaturgy should be raised to the highest possible level of perfection, should avoid banality, and not only respond to the present level of culture of the masses who frequent our theatre, but should be, at the same time, the inspirer of a further advance in the tastes and revolutionary impulse for a more cultured life.

Naturally, we are opposed to the literature of modernist dramatic art which tries to entangle and enslave people in the consumer society, to deprive them of their pure feelings and of a revolutionary human morality in thoughts and actions.

Of course, our revolutionary theatre does not and cannot have the individual features of one artist, but has the finest features of our masses, of our socialist society. This in no way means that our revolutionary theatre lovers, underrates, or entirely eliminates the personality and creative talent of the artist, as the bourgeoisie and its 'theories' about theatre claim. On the contrary, our revolutionary theatre opens to the artists a very wide field of feelings and thoughts which greatly enrich their creative spirit and possibilities.

The inner world of our artists does not know those restrictions which are imposed on the artist in bourgeois society. Such artists in bourgeois society have only the illusion of 'freedom of creation', while, in fact, their activity is conditioned and, of course, orientated by the bourgeois reality, by a life full of abnormal, amoral, extravagant phenomena. It is precisely these corrupting phenomena and this extravagance that give the bourgeois writers and artists the impression of having 'freedom to create' The darkened halls of their cinemas and theatres are dominated by the aim of creating anguish in the hearts of the audiences, so that this anguish will stay with them the whole day and the whole week and become their second life. This content, this aim, this form and these aesthetics are rejected and combated by our revolutionary aesthetics, inspired by the pure feelings of our people and intended to serve the masses of the people.

In this sense we should give a great impulse to our popular art through the development of the amateur art movement, too, and with this we should not think only of our folk songs and dances. We must extend and enrich these two genres which the people love.

Now we have people who are masters of the pen. I am not saying that they should not write novels and poems, because they are a sound and indispensable nourishment. for the education of our men and women of socialist society, but I notice that there is a marked inclination among the literary people to follow those who have blazed the trail in creativity with novels and poems, and a trend to underestimation or lack of interest in- writing plays, film librettos and scripts and sketches for the variety theatre. I have heard people say: 'what can we do, one cannot write without the desire', 'there are no inclinations, no talents for these genres'. What unfounded and harmful ideas! These people are making a great mistake, because they are neglecting or, what is worse, underrating these genres, which are also of incalculable importance for the education of our people. Little by little, even those who have had inclinations for these genres and who have distinguished themselves in this field of literary and artistic creativity, have begun to neglect them. We see our theatres filled to capacity. Our cinemas, likewise, are packed every night. But what do the audiences see? The repertoires are old, not in the sense that they are useless, but they have no new subjects. We make few films, very few. We should not expect to have theatrical pieces in perfect form. Such a requirement would certainly lead us to close down the theatre and would make us see the dramatization of the novel 'The Gadfly' day and night, as we do. Why should we not put on more of our own works but always persist with 'The Gadfly' till our eyes are sticking out from watching it on television? 'The Gadfly', with a subject from the history of the carbonari, hasn't so much value that it should be put on so

often.

Our cinemas are screening bad foreign, capitalist, and revisionist, films. How do our people endure the showing of revisionist Czechoslovak, Rumanian or Hungarian films, for example, 'How I Became a Policeman', and similar vile rubbish? Not only is the selection of foreign films alone badly, which does great harm to the education of our people and our youth, but hackneyed excuses are made: 'What are we to do? We have no films,' they say. My opinion is that the films produced by our film-studio are very good, they are marvellous in comparison with those dished up to us from abroad, with bandits and cowboys.

We have wonderful artists whom, without the least hesitation, I consider to be of world calibre. With these wonderful actors and the talented directors we have, we can produce not two or three films a year, but many more, provided we prepare the scripts for them and their working and living conditions. These treasures we possess but do not know to use them properly.

We have wonderful singers whom we say belong to the opera. It may be so, but these and the variety show singers, as well as singers from the ranks of the people, greatly please the public with the concerts they give. Well, these great artists and others, a little less great, could they not play in films? Couldn't we use them in films in which they would sing to this beautiful life blooming before our eyes, to this life which we are building with our own hands? Of course, we could.

In no way must our variety theatres in districts confine themselves to a few songs, a few sketches which they put on in the cities where they have been set up. My opinion is that the professional variety shows and theatres of the districts must be turned into powerful centres and means for organization and propaganda to encourage a great development, both in extent and quality, in the setting up of theatrical and variety groups in work centres, schools, and particularly in the agricultural co-operatives.

We are filled with great enthusiasm when we see on the stages of the Opera and Ballet Theatre of the capital, in the concerts and variety shows of the districts, hundreds upon hundreds of young girls and boys who play so perfectly and sing with such fine, harmonious and melodious voices that we forget that they are lathe operators, workers of the 'Migjeni' artistic products enterprise, or the 'Stalin' textile combine, wool workers from Kukes, girl students from Shkodra, or school girls from Gramsh.

What great development our art has achieved! These talented young people are capable of stage performances full of feeling and pathos, of playing important roles in films, of learning all sorts of songs and dances. I am speaking of all those who have not been through schools of art. We have opened schools and we shall extend them, but we should not forget and should not underestimate the great art which is like a precious jewel in the bosom of the people, and which is developing from day to day towards new heights. This we must organize even better.

I am aware of the instructions given, according to which our professional variety shows and theatres of the cities must give performances in the villages, too. From what I have heard, however, these institutions are not yet implementing this directive of the Party properly, because even today they give few performances in villages and the greater part of them in villages near the cities. It is the duty of our professional theatres and variety shows to extend their activity even to the most remote areas, covering our entire countryside with their artistic performances.

Today, in all the agricultural cooperatives everywhere in our country, there are groups of outstanding folk singer, and dancers, there are talented instrumentalists who please and educate the broad masses of the co-operativists with their performances, and new ones are emerging every day.

There is no doubt that along with them in the villages there are also talents with inclinations towards dramatic art, people capable in this field, fine humourists, with whom variety groups could be created in every agricultural cooperative to give theatrical and variety performances there. Therefore, when the professional theatres and variety shows of the cities go to the villages, they should discover these talents in the ranks of the masses, should urge them and encourage them, and organize amateur theatre troupes with them, help to organize them and get them going. Appoint artistic leaders from among their own company, who will look after these amateur groups and help them until they are able to stand on their own feet. Thus in our socialist countryside amateur dramatic art will flourish, too, new people and new talents will emerge who will enrich the stages and the repertoire of our professional theatres.

The teachers who work in agricultural cooperatives; communists and non-party people, art-loving boys and girls, must help to extend the artistic activity in the countryside. All-around them are people with rare dramatic talents, capable people, with a keen sense of humour which is both educative and amusing. The houses of culture in the cooperatives should become real cultural centres in the full meaning of the term. See the great talent with which our people perform folk dances and songs! These cooperative farmers are able to play theatrical parts, too. They know life well and, if we organize them properly, they will find great satisfaction for themselves, and they will please others and make them happy, too.

But we must go still further. In every period, talented artists have emerged in the ranks of the people, who, though illiterate, have created works of a great artistic value, even including some masterpieces. But now, when all the boys and girls have seven- and eight-year schooling can this not occur? Of course, it can. Therefore, we must work, look for them, encourage them, support them wherever they are; on the jobs, in production, in the villages, and then we shall have lots of co-operativists, lathe operators, textile workers and women workers, like those of the 'Migjeni' enterprise, who will create artistic works so beautiful that they will enthuse and inspire the professional artists, too. Let us smash the rigid walls of academicism, the petrified forms, let us thaw the ice which keeps so many new talents paralysed because, allegedly, you need school for this and school for that. The Party is not opposed to school, but even when we did not have special schools for poetry, music, painting, etc., our people have created and continue to create, to produce wonderful talents from their ranks.

Personally, I feel a satisfaction when I listen to music, whether that of the great classical and progressive composers of the world, or the musical works of our own composers. But, to tell the truth, the beautiful songs and dances of the people please me most, move me with their beauty and power and, at the same time, with their simplicity. I am not saying this just because I am an Albanian. No, but because our folk songs and dances are really beautiful, very beautiful indeed. The Party has done a great thing that it elevated to a high pedestal and perpetuated all this rare wealth we have inherited from the past. Since the first years of Liberation, when our people were still poor and living in great privation, it set about this work vigorously, insisting that folk instruments should be produced and that the folk songs and dances should not be neglected. Do you remember, comrades, when the instructions were given on these matters? And today the folk songs and instruments have become a very healthy spiritual nutriment for our working masses and our youth.

If the writer or poet desires to write, or the musician to compose a musical piece inspired by the sufferings of the Albanian people in the past and their joys, let him turn to the songs and melodies of the people, in which he will find a powerful source of inspiration. Recall, for instance, the song 'I was left there comrades, left there' which Dritero Agolli has included in his poem 'Mother Albania'. This is a song of value not only for the words chosen with rare artistic mastery, for its great spiritual power, but also because its content is a profound synthesis and reflection of the past suffering of the Albanian people. You never tire of hearing this song interpreted with such rare mastery by the folk

singers of the Skrapar district, Demir Ziko, Medi Kushi, and others.

Our people have always been optimistic. In sorrows and joys they have never lost their faith in the future, and this great optimism has been perpetuated in the rich heritage of oral literature, in their songs, in their dances, in their costumes and their other wonderful traditions. This is something great which only the genius of the people realizes perfectly in art.

Sometimes I see concerts by the groups of folk singers of various districts on TV. Among them there are many beautiful pieces of a really high level of content and melody. In many instances I have noticed that they have managed to achieve a logical and attractive integration between the form of the folk melody and the new content of the song. For instance, I am very fond of the songs which the folk singer Fatime Sokoli sings with so much feeling and love about the hero of Dragobia, Bajram Curri, and about the heroic feats of the warrior people of those regions. In another television programme I very much liked some songs by folk singers from the town of Kavaja about the girls with golden hands who weave carpets, about the workers of the glass works who decorate vases with designs of such beautiful roses, that when you hear them sing, it seems their fragrance is wafting round you. I heard another programme of songs with singers from Elbasan, a city with musical traditions, where 60 years ago the Normal School was established, one of the important educational institutions, which, besides a whole army of patriotic teachers, also turned out musicians and composers. But, to tell the truth, without wanting to underrate them, the 'arranged' melodies of the folk song festival of this district seemed to me feeble and cold in comparison with the colour, freshness and beauty of the songs full of spirit of folk art. This does not mean that our composers should give up the 'arrangement' of folk songs or dances, cultivated music, as it is called, but these 'arrangements' and 'cultivations' should always be based on the national heritage, not just here and there with a chord or motif, but should be formed from the very soil of this land, should be inspired by the creativity, the work and aspirations of this people, and be dedicated to them, please them and arouse their spirit. If you depart from this background, you neither serve your own people, nor give other peoples any reason to value you, because you are not bringing anything new to the common treasury of the world's progressive culture and art.

Another evening I heard on television the interpretation of some folk motifs for cello and piano. Not only was I greatly pleased, but I said: How beautifully our cultivated music can be developed on the basis of folk motifs.

On this correct road valuable works have been created like those composed by Cesk Zadeja, Tish Daija, and many others. Songs like the one entitled 'For You, My Homeland', composed by Pjeter Gaci and interpreted by the People's Artist Mentor Xhemali will remain immortal in the treasury of our new art. This song is a hymn to our socialist Homeland, to our unconquerable people and Party. It was born at the difficult moments of the revisionist blockade and is permeated by a lofty revolutionary and optimistic spirit. If not every day, at least every two or three days, in moments of joy or difficulty, I like to listen to it on my tape recorder and it always moves me and inspires me to work ...

On no account must we neglect our folk songs; on the contrary, we should strive to have our composers base themselves firmly precisely on these songs. It is not right that at the 'Jordan Misja' secondary school of art the pupils begin to learn foreign classical music first, and Albanian folk music later. The remark made on this question by Comrade Ramiz Alia is quite right. However, much effort may be made to teach the pupils foreign music, they will not reach the heights of Liszt, for example, who became a famous composer precisely because he knew how to revive the Hungarian folk rhapsodies. The same can be said of Chopin, Bizet, etc., who won renown with folk music as their basis.

The broad and varied life of our country needs a multitude of people working in art, in music. Let us discover them, support them, put them on the stage, and some among them who distinguish themselves will be sent to special schools and then return in large numbers to the bosom of our art-loving people.

Our Party wants every work which comes out to be as nearly perfect as possible from all aspects, and it strives for this, but perfection is not easy to attain. It takes time, requires experience, requires ability, too, things which are not innate in man but are developed and worked up during the process of the continuous education of his inclinations. Our people have many inclinations which ought to be utilized and developed for the good of our socialist society. In this direction, as in everything, the Party must play the decisive role, not only from the material aspect, but especially from the aspect of ideas, by inspiring people with its ideology, with Marxism-Leninism. Our-poets, writers, musicians, etc., all our artists, should learn Marxism-Leninism not only from books, but also from life, there where it is concretely applied by the people. Books have great importance for the information and education of man, therefore, our people must have books and read them zealously. But to inspire people, to form their world outlook and their education, this cannot be confined to books alone. Moreover, in the case of people lacking in ideological and political development, who have extravagant inclinations contrary to the orientations of the Party, it is even more necessary that they should not be given books of any old kind, particularly those with a harmful, poisonous content, for this has a negative influence on their formation. We must provide our readers with that literature which has a revolutionary character. However, we must bear in mind that there are writers of other countries who seek to arouse the working class to revolution, but who do not conceive the revolution in the way Marxists do; consequently, they are unable to handle the question of the revolution, in prose or poetry, like our writers, poets and artists. Therefore, we must always be very careful to continually mould our young artists and writers with the ideas of Marxism-Leninism so that, under the leadership of the Party, they will mature, create for the people and think like the people. If we act in this way, what fine, healthy fruit we shall have!

In our post-Liberation literature many Albanian writers and poets have distinguished themselves. A good many of them have long won recognition, therefore, I think that the works of value which they have produced and which please us so much should become subjects for study, not in an amateurish way, but systematically. I remember how in the French school that I went through we were given a thorough systematic foundation knowledge of the works of French writers and poets. But our poets and writers also have wonderful talents and are linked closely with the people, are inspired and learn from them and, on this healthy soil, create popular works of ideological and artistic value. Therefore, it is essential that their works should not be simply skimmed just to say we have read them or read once and then put back on the shelf, but should be studied attentively and persistently, because the mighty reality of life, the heroism of our people who are building socialism is reflected in them.

The beautiful works of our writers not only please us, but foreigners like them, too. Here I am not speaking only of Ismail Kadare's novels or Dritero Agolli's poems and those of some others of our literary men, which have been translated into foreign languages, but of the works of many other writers and poets. If we can manage to train our own really able translators in foreign languages (because foreigners have always ignored our beautiful language and that is why you do not find people in other countries who have mastered the Albanian language thoroughly), we shall have great success in popularizing Albanian literary-artistic works abroad. Therefore, let's get down to the job of training our own cadres who will really master other languages so that they are capable of translating the works of our writers into them.

We have been informed that the exhibition 'Albanian Art Through the Centuries' which we opened in Paris has aroused great interest among the progressive French public. We have been told that

thousands upon thousands of people, including critics, literary men, artists, philosophers, diplomats, etc., have gone eagerly to visit our exhibition, which they have appraised as one of the best put on in the French capital. The visitors were astounded at the development of our art, just as foreign audiences were astonished at the Second National Folklore Festival in Gjirokastra when they saw it on film, or a few years ago at our folk music and dances at the Dijon Festival where our wonderful folk art was presented. Imagine when the foreigners are able to get really good translations of the works of our poets and writers, they will discover and get to know many aspects of the material and spiritual life of our people, who are building the new life of a genuine socialist society.

Thus, in this direction we must work very hard indeed. It is not sufficient to publicize abroad the grandeur of the Albanian people in the field of national traditions alone, but we must also make world opinion acquainted with the great struggle and work of the Party, of this Marxist-Leninist Party which is building socialism in its own country, quite unafraid of the all-sided struggle which the bourgeoisie and the modern revisionists wage against it. We must make the bourgeois-revisionist world see the great force of Marxism-Leninism in Albania, not only in the economic field, but also in that of art and culture. We are building in all directions with the maximum we have, and our friends can see this in the works produced and draw inspiration from the heroism of our people.

There are many foreigners who, even though they are bourgeois, sneak well of our country. In the past, Albania was a 'blank space' to foreigners, about which they knew nothing. Now, when they see the development of our archaeology and the scientific level of our research work in this field, they are amazed and ask: 'How is it possible that all these treasures have lain hidden in this country!' 'It is a good thing that you have discovered them for yourselves,' they tell us, 'because had you sought the help of others they would have robbed you of them.'

In the outside world there are people with great artistic culture who have the Byzantine culture and art, for instance, at their fingertips. The appraisal which these critics make of the mural paintings of Onufri (1) and the works of other Albanian artists is exceptionally high. In these artistic works they do not see the plastic qualities of Byzantine art. In these paintings, in the colours, even in the rocks of our soil which are reflected in them, they observe a special living quality. 'Even the saints,' they say, 'have human faces and are presented like the mountain eagles.'

'Reports and Speeches 1974-1975'

(1) Albanian painter of the 16th century. His works are distinguished by the positive spirit of the European Renaissance art and by the special red colour, which is known in the history and criticism of art as 'Onufri red'.

From Enver Hoxha, [Selected Works, Volume 4](#), 8 Nentori Publishing House, Tirana, 1982, pp888-917.