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Literature

Rumanian Poetry - A Weapon In The Hands Of The State And Party.

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DATE OF OBSERVATION: current period

From 23 August 1944, the day of the Rumanian "liberation" by the Soviet troops, until today, a slow but inexorable evolution - parallel to the political-economical one, has transformed the whole intellectual life of the Rumanians in every field and even in the sacred sphere of art. This phenomenon is known, but its proportions are probably unknown to the West. Regarding poetry - like all the other arts, it must be put under a unique heading - all Rumanian poets or recently forged pseudo-poets, are to adapt themselves to sail under the slogan: Participate in the realizations and battles of the workers, guided by the Party of the working class. Realize, at all costs, the Unique Front of the Combatant Poetry.

Such a front was constituted, whether or not to the advantage of poetry we shall see at a later stage - effectively collecting in its ranks a large number of writers who had started to follow a variety of directions: some of them who in making these attempts had to take considerable setbacks, and others who had already initiated the fight against the bourgeois ideology. Today their ranks are compact. Fight for peace and Socialism is their slogan, poetry being completely at the service of the Party's ideals and utterly subjugated to the State's orders.

Before 23 August 1944 some writers had given their pens to the service of Communism. But those writers can be considered in the wake of realistic tradition of Rumanian poetry, inspired by the deeds and pains of the Rumanian people - like EMINESCU M., VLAHATUA AL. and COSBUC Gh.

This tradition has been successfully followed by TOMA Alexandru who, inspired by the problems of class struggle, had already realized some beautiful pieces of poetry in the period between the two great wars.

Together with TOMA, ISAC Emil, BARIUS Maria, BRESLASU M. CORBEA D., PARASCHIEVESCU Miron, BENIUC M. and others, had already

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written, in the past, verses full of hatred against the bourgeois class and the rule of the landowners. These writers continued their work after the liberation with a fresh impetus, and it must be said that their work definitely is not lacking poetic inspiration. There is no doubt as to their sincerity and they have effectively interpreted emotions and sentiments they really feel.

But the amazing phenomenon is the metamorphosis of other writers who have always been true poets and today are political poets. Their transformation and the reasons for it are obvious: Their verses - their work cannot be defined as poetry any longer - disclose the preoccupation to please the master, to faithfully follow the themes developed in other fields, always inspired by the Socialist development and the fight for peace. Some of those bear well known names such as JEBELEANU Eugen, CASSIAN Nina, BUREANU Radu, THEODORESCU Cicerone. Others are first arms with poetry and have initiated their career as official State poets, with a fix and secure salary and other equally secure privileges.

This last category of writers comes directly from the country and workshops and belongs to the new generation of the very young. Their number is considerable and is steadily increasing, their life being easy and free from danger, and their work being well remunerated.

Of this latter group the best-known names are BACONSKI A., FRUNZA Eugeniu, SAVRIL Mihail, IUSTER Solo, IURES Stefan, SERUBREANU Ion, and VICOL Dragos.

The essential exterior traits - not the poetical contents which are absolutely nil - characterizing these poets, are general orientation toward the reality of life and the way of realistic expression.

In other terms, poetry is exclusively inspired by the workers' life and is exclusively addressed to the working classes. Above, all, this kind of poetry produces hatred; a hatred steadily increasing against everything, which does not entirely conform to the Kremlin.

Following we give a specimen of the Socialist expression of the present Rumanian poetry:

Here are some verses by TOMA A.:

"Today your country is your house,
Industrious people of workers:
Today you are no more any master's servant,
And nobody can kick you.

Also when you were suffering under the whip,
Your tenderness for your country was great,
But you have been able to lift your head,
Today and forever you command.

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You who were strong enough to liberate it;
Love it with ever increasing ardor;
So as to see boys and girls grow
Ardent in need and in leisure.

BANUS Maria poetess, has, perhaps, poetic expressions, which might be applied to all eras - but she is lately being looked at with diffidence. There are certain forms of the past which possibly could make her being considered an ideological deviationist from the Party's official line. Here is a very gracious quartine of hers:

"I don't know songs, because I did not learn to sing,
But I love to sing about my country.
I know no songs, but sing
About the good land of our home."

Many poets have tried the more difficult road of poems of an ampler form: a good sample of that kind is the "Lazar de Rusca" of Dan DESLIU. This poem is written in the style of the old Rumanian songs and ballads, "Corbea" and "Iovan Iorgovan," heroes known to every Rumanian. This poem is a hymn of hatred against the tyrants and hangmen of Lazzaro.

"Ohé - Dirty people - Alto Lá"
Screamed Lazzaro to the wretched fellows.

"Your power is a small thing: A partridge's eye
Smaller even than a grain of rice,
or an ant's leg.

But our strength is like the mountains,
We are the people and the country.

You are like wolves
lying in ambush down in your holes.
You are nothing but dust and ashes.
We are fighting to defend ourselves.

Drunk with fury, the hangmen
Double the blows with the bar.
But he, Lazzaro, straight and proud,
While bleeding, screamed again:

"Sons of vipers, full of poison
We are the strong, the tough ones, Your hatred
Will never prevent us from stighting
Fiercely our fronts,
To unite all pieces of land
To escape misery.

Nobody shall prevent this people from getting what it wants,
Who could resist it?"

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To date, one of the principal preoccupations of the Socialist poetry is stakhanovism. In this sense PORUBACH Veronica's poem "Comrade Martei receives the Labor Decoration" is written. (MARTEI is a young innovator.)

Referring to DESLIU Dan, following is a poem addressed to STALIN, the Great Forger of Nations:

"For the smile which you made come into men's eyes,
 For the happy and healthy laughter, which you made rise
 around the furnaces,
 For this invincible blade, which always points against
 the enemy,
 For our beautiful mornings always more blue and luminous,
 For the great teaching of so just a war,
 For all your caretaking of our women and children,
 For your strong words, illuminating our wondering hearts,
 For the joy of the effort consented us, for the bundance
 of our harvests,
 Oh glory without end, summit of men, snow-fairy crowned
 with sun...
 Grant to our workshops, whose prosperity is a hymn of
 praise,
 The joy to offer you - tempered in the fire of our furnaces -
 The shining salute forged by so many arms of steel
 For you, Great Forger of so many populations."

Finally, we want to remember the homage addressed to STALIN on his 70th birthday anniversary by the Rumanian poets:

"The Rumanian poets united their hearts and send them to the Kremlin - to the First Engineer of Souls, the Hero of the Great Revolution, the Victor over Fascism, the Constructor of Socialism, on whom the eyes of all peoples of the world are turned..."

EVAL. COMMENT: Confirmed; mentioned poets are known. On the other hand, it is reported that a black list was published by the Propaganda and Agitation Section, an index of about 8,000 titles of prohibited literary works. See also Item 6775/52 on the priority granted to Soviet authors and Item 3057/52 (Creative power of writers.) See also "Minimum Royalty Tariff" for authors decreed by the Decision N. 9175 of 28 February 1951. See for reference Item 2600/51 (Attack launched by the official paper "Scanteia" against the Communist Rumanian poetess BANUS Maria - deviation.) BENIUC Mihail is the Secretary of the Writers' Union.