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LITERARY DEBATE CONCLUDED

The protracted literary debate between Soviet and Polish writers has never really developed beyond the stage of presentation of the preliminary arguments. Except for the heated controversy and polemics during the Moscow Youth Festival, published only in part in Sztandar Mlodych, 5 August 1957 and only faintly reflected in the Soviet press, no genuine exchange of opinions has taken place. (See Background Information; Literary Debate Renewed, 1 October 1957). Last month A. Surkov, the chief Soviet spokesman throughout this muted dialogue summarized, for the benefit of a Yugoslav journalist, the unresolved stalemate as follows:

"We have been sniffing each other for a long time, but there is no real cooperation. The Polish comrades assert that our mutual relations have become colder. They claim that Zhdanov destroyed Soviet literature, (they speak) as if Sholokhov and Leonov were dead... In our mutual relations we should reach the point at which minimal objectivity could be maintained. It seems to me that some of the Yugoslav as well as some of the Polish writers have deviated too much from Marxism... (Mladost, Belgrade, 2 October 1957.)

The most authoritative summation of the Soviet case against the Polish writers, however, has appeared in the new literary magazine, Voprosy Literaturny, No. 2, 1957, see below pp. 1-11), written by V. Ozerov, director of the Gorki Institute of World Literature. Without any important omissions from the list of ideological sins presented last year (Literaturnaya Gazeta, 20 September 1957), Ozerov's article claims complete victory for the Soviet critics as part of the "large scale consolidation of the artists on the platform of socialist realism." In the Soviet Union this boast will, of course, pass unchallenged; in the bloc from Pankow to Peking it will be accepted with little dispute; even in Poland where it was thought that Socialist Realism "was buried for good" at the Warsaw Congress of Writers Union in November 1956, the December meeting in Poznan (Pap, 21 October 1957) will hardly be in a position to raise strenuous objections. Those who have left the Party - Andrejewski, Jastrun, Herz, Zulawski, Wazyk, and Kott - may still be determined to speak as they did a year ago; those who have remained will be silenced by the acceptance of Party discipline as Po Prostu and Europa were by Party censorship. The Polish-Soviet literary debate, prevented from taking its normal course by Soviet fears of ideological defeat and Polish concern for political consequences, has come to an abortive close. Those who like A. Slonimski are fighting for "free rational human thought" to prevail must once again prepare to join battle with the "deities and demons of totalitarianism."

CONJECTURES PERISH, FACTS REMAIN

ONCE MORE ON STATEMENTS OF SEVERAL POLISH WRITERS

Voprosy Literatry

No. 2, Released to printer July 25, 1957

V. Ozerov
(excerpts)

More than a year separates us now from those historical days when the 20th Party Congress concluded its work...And what does this past period in the life of the Soviet artistic intelligentsia amount to? Certainly nobody will argue that it was not a period of ideological-political growth, of a great spiritual and creative search. It was necessary to comprehend everything which had happened, to define one's tasks, to consider the work done in the past, to safeguard one thing, to discard another, and to develop further a third.

The difficult and complicated search included everything: firm belief in one's cause, readiness for practical work, doubts in one's own ability, unclearness and failure. It could not have been different at such a crucial point of history. The really important thing is that the search was truly creative, that the disputes advanced us, that the multitude of forces created one will illuminated by clear thought...

Contemplating the tasks of art, the Soviet writers clearly realized the necessity to defend and creatively develop their artistic methods as the basis for a beneficial service of art to the cause of the construction of a new society a large-scale consolidation of the artists on the platform of socialist realism is still going on.

Reviewing the past year one cannot pass over in silence the state in which this consolidation proceeds. It proceeds in a state of an intense and hard struggle for the aesthetic and spiritual riches collected by Soviet literature. Our ideological opponents, having started a new kind of ideological "cold war", made efforts to destroy the belief of the Soviet people in the achievements and advantages of the Soviet order and the socialist culture...

Soviet literary workers respond to the liars and slanderers with wrathful contempt. The faithfulness to the socialist ideas and the principles of socialist realism is proved not only by statements of writers but also by dozens of profoundly party minded, militant, highly artistic works... The writers' plenums and meetings held this year, the congresses of artists and composers unanimously reflected the striving to advance this method, and to unmask our ideological opponents even more energetically and actively.

This struggle does not lead to uninspired repetition of the same views and truths. It is again accompanied by a creative search aimed at correcting the errors committed, revealing and developing the truthful principles of socialist realism. The task is necessary, great, and responsible and it is just that which turns it into a real task. It is incompatible with the arbitrary refutation of everything valuable that has already been achieved, with efforts to negate and revise even things which stand to reason.

It would be silly and dishonest to close one's eyes to the shortcomings in the current literature and to errors in esthetical science. It would be equally untruthful and improper, however, to attribute everything to them, to get panicky and lose the over-all view of the course of the literary process. This is no longer a search but a convulsion which will bring no benefit but do great harm. When we dart from one extreme to the other, lose perspective, get frightened and frighten others, it is not possible to solve constructive tasks, one may only bewilder the people, confuse and disorient them.

That is just what happened to a few participants of the discussion on socialist realism which evolved this year. The Polish literary worker Jan Kott unthinkingly started his attack against the principles of socialist realism which could be welcomed only by those for whom it is alien and hateful. The first statements and articles may have been classified as written and said in excitement, in the fervor of polemics. Their theses, however, were expounded in other statements, and there were retorts to the replies of the Soviet literary workers.

Some of the new material contained also correct statements and important thoughts, but their general trend as before evokes the feeling of profound grief. How is it possible to escape this feeling if they again contain the mood of a "burial."

Expressing a generally detectable trend, one Polish literary worker predicted in the pages of Trybuna Ludu in November 1956 that socialist realism "will be solemnly buried at the Warsaw Congress (of Polish writers)". In December another Polish literary worker summing up the results of the Congress noted with satisfaction in Zycie Warszawy that socialist realism is "in the present period buried for good, and nobody has any desire to resurrect and preserve it."

Soviet literary workers as well as their colleagues in the peoples' democratic countries prefer a comradely dispute to formal silence with a cold, diplomatic politeness which is incompatible with relations between friends. The very fact of the beginning of polemics was also positively assessed by the Polish press.

If, however, the striving to annihilate the very cause of discussion is a prerequisite to it, if the necessity to explain what there is rational in the position of the other side is rejected beforehand -- what kind of discussion can there be and what would be the benefits of such an exchange of opinions?

There is no sense in entering into dispute with someone who begins to discuss problems of socialist realism from a position of a categorical denunciation and derision of all its experiences, since the discussion would only lead to a not very profitable tautology of "we sowed millet, and now we are stamping it out."

We will not speak of the disrespectful attitude toward Russian culture, toward the great proletarian writer Gorki, reflected in statements like the article of K.T. Toeplitz "Twilight of Prophets". Nobody who is actually and not only verbally interested in strengthening cooperation with wide circles of foreign intelligentsia and all the more so with a friendly country will think of replying to him in kind.

It is noteworthy that several of our opponents had to back away from the grossly false position of Toeplitz. There were also other indicative signs. Many have already realized the absurdity of conclusions based on the allegation that socialist realism has been artificially and arbitrarily introduced by Stalin and Gorki, that it is no longer recognized by anybody anywhere, and so on.

The basic position of the article of Zemowit Fedetsky "Several Facts and Truisms" (Journal Tworczone) appears to us generally disputable, but it is marked by its effort already to struggle on "two fronts," that is, not only against his major opponents Dementiev and Ozerov but also against the entirely unfavorable attitude toward the theory and practice of Soviet art.

The author of the article admits that the creative method of Soviet literature "was not established by Stalin and Zhdanov as a 'stick to slay art,'" it "formed itself independently..." It continues to "remain a natural program of action," and works written in its spirit "find readers even among us." Fedetski opposes attempts to blacken the role of Gorki in the development of Soviet literature and does not agree with the idealization of the literary relations in the 20s.

Obviously the nihilists of the type of Toeplitz are acting too roughly and loudly if even Jadwiga Siekierska, despite her clearly revisionist views, had to divide her article "on socialism and in the defense of Gorki" into two parts, one of which was devoted to polemics against the Soviet critics, and the other directed against the same Toeplitz.

Though her critical remarks against "Twilight of Prophets" do not lack particular sharpness, she nevertheless emphasizes her polemics against the defenders of socialist realism and here repeats arguments and considerations which have become fashionable, but still not reasonable for that.

The existence of disputes on socialist realism is not only of an esthetic but also of a political significance, directly linked with the assessment of a large period in the life of our country and the entire socialist camp. Here, too, two different views, too contradicting concepts are clashing.

For Jan Kott, J. Siekierska, and several others the exposing of the cult of the individual is identical with the acknowledgement of an erroneous development of the entire Soviet state over a period of twenty years. They even do not mention the grand path covered by the Soviet Union in this period, creating a powerful industry, and the building kolkhozes, transforming itself into a country of solid literacy and high culture, defending its freedom against the fascist robbers and rebuilding its destroyed economy within a brief period.

They simply do not note all this and instead see only errors, shortcomings, arbitrariness and lawlessness. From here it is not far to doubting the vitality of the social order developing and consolidating itself in the USSR. It is also closely linked with a particular attitude toward art: since the entire policy was "incorrect", the literature guided by this policy was also incorrect and the cause for mistakes in the field of art lies in the foolishness of the social order.

Jadwiga Siekierska openly speaks in this spirit. She writes: "The dispute is not over formulas. The reason for the moral incompetence and practical uselessness of socialist realism must be sought in politics. Socialist realism was turned into an official, monopolist, esthetic doctrine which became an obedient tool for 'higher considerations' of the Stalinist policy. We are surprised that the Soviet critics and theoreticians are only speaking half or a quarter of the truth on the topic of the political functions of socialist realism."

Let us not contest the formulations and terms, even though the word "Stalinism" is here undoubtedly used in the same sense as in the bourgeois press which continuously sounds off on the "downfall" of Soviet experiences. It is a superfluous confirmation of the ideological depravity of the position of J. Siekierska. Let us speak the truth, the "full truth" and the "quarter of the truth."

Let us talk about why we, in analyzing the errors committed and the shortcomings in literature do not speak in the notorious terms of "degeneration" but of the cult of the individual. Our public in discussing this matter treats it as a deviation from the Leninist principles of life, misinterpretations which were possible only in a situation created by the cult of the individual.

Nobody denies the errors of the past period which had a negative influence on our literature. We only refuse to disregard a no less important circumstance: those misinterpretations have nothing in common with the socialist order, party policy, and its general line on problems of literature.

These misinterpretations are alien to the very nature of the Soviet society and the basis of our ideology, and that is why Soviet literary workers logically consider them as consequences of the cult of the individual with its characteristic disregard for collectiveness, initiative, and creative originality. The elimination of the mistakes is implemented by our Party on the basis of a further rallying of all forces and possibilities of the Soviet order and the liquidation of any deviation from Party policy.

Considering the "political functions of socialist realism" we also cannot attribute them to the errors originating with the cult of the individual, as serious as they were. The literature accompanied us in the years of the war through a hard struggle and its "political function" consisted of strengthening the spiritual power of the plain people, of the fighter and patriot. In the postwar period it had to experience no few difficulties and the writers speak of them with painful sincerity.

And all this is still "half of the truth" if one follows the definition of Jadwiga Siekierska! The second half, however, which we also do not want to disregard in this account consists of the fact that an increasing number of books is appearing which help the comprehension of the present stage of social development...

Now our opponents may say that all these are facts of the most recent period, while the general results of the twenty years are quite different. Charging socialist realism with "degeneration", they consider it necessary to refer to concrete history of literature which allegedly confirms the thesis on the deep "crisis" of Soviet art.

Jadwiga Siekierska proposes to let oneself be guided in one's attitude toward socialist realism above all by practical evaluations and in this connection inquires rhetorically: "One would like to ask Ozerov and Dementyev (see their article in Innostrannaya Literatura, No. 9, 1956) what is the sense of passionately defending well-known postulates of socialist realism (which are abstractly harmless) if its trend of development has definitely lowered the level of Soviet literature and art in the past twenty years."

Jadwiga Siekierska is not very respectful in her treatment of Soviet literature and of the entire rank of Soviet writers. Without beating about the bush she reveals that in the Soviet Union "the writers (no exception is made for anyone!) have ceased to be carriers of the banner of truth and conscience of their people."...

So she asserts that facts speak of a "stagnation" of twenty years. Actually, however, the very references to facts by the critics of socialist realism proves their authors are wrong.

Sometimes facts are listed which we have criticized ourselves, sometimes they apply imprecise data to say the least. Jadwiga Siekierska recalls that the literature "passed over in silence the most difficult and tragic problems in the life of the peoples of the socialist camp." Her supporters speak of a lowering of the level of Soviet art, of stagnation of satire, dramaturgy and film. Let us determine the "percentage" of truth in these accusations...

True, there were great difficulties. The writers expounding vital problems of that period still did not concern themselves with a few urgent topics, but can they be charged with losing their conscience if one recalls the fact that they did not know at that time what became apparent later, after the twentieth CPSU congress...

It is sufficient to recall the rich contents and clear artistic form of dozens of similar works and we realize at one glance: the sensational conjectures on the poverty of literary practice in the 30s evaporates and the facts of its stormy advance remain unshakable. Naturally, this must not disturb the exposing of the complications of the real literary process which did not develop mechanically from one peak to another but by means of searching, struggle and contradictions. Nobody wishes to hid this, but it is necessary that the errors and shortcomings do not distort the perspectives of the literary development.

It is a different matter that, in the future, it will be also necessary to sharply criticize dullness, mediocrity, and falseness in literature, and to be more exacting toward it. One must not "write off" shortcomings because of vulgarized dogmas. The harm of these dogmas is great, but they do not explain all shortcomings in literature. There still remains the important and topical struggle against the divorce of the writer from life, against artistic cliché and lack of individuality.

The readers are distressed by the barrenness of many contemporary works, by the lack of a broad, independent view of life among authors, and the absence of new, artistic discoveries. Up to now books were published which describe reality in a schematic and streamlined manner, without its inner complications and contradictions, where the heroes do not act out of the logic of life and their character but in line with preconceived abstract theses.

Our literature must make great efforts to fully and profoundly reveal the forming spiritual image of contemporary man, and this is sufficiently outspokenly discussed in the press, at writers meetings and readers' conferences even though everywhere a positive attitude is displayed toward Soviet art.

There is no contradiction in the fact that while safeguarding the achievements of twenty years like a good housekeeper we at the same time express dissatisfaction over our work. It would have been possible to do more and better. Literature is still poorer than life and far from fully meeting the increasing requirements of the people.

Is literature lagging behind life? Yes, it still is. Has everything possible been done to eliminate this backlog? No, by far not. There is still a heap of work to do. But is it necessary to view for this reason the entire surrounding in black colours, to consider our literature as a barren, stamped out field, to refuse oneself an optimistic outlook of the matters for which we are charged by our irreconcilable opponents?

We consider it considerably better to work without panic and boasting, to eliminate shortcomings and to develop and improve all good in art, everything which has stood the test of time...

The thesis of an imaginary rift between Soviet literature and revolutionary innovation posed by Jan Kott has found its supporters. Zemowit Fedetski already uses it as an axiom. He writes: "A generally known fact also is the 'tragical antinomy between revolutionary-ness and innovation' as mentioned by Kott..."

A remark that allegedly "the influence of Soviet art on world art has considerably lessened mostly due to the rift between creative, artistic and scientific trends gravitating toward Marxist ideology" is in the same spirit. Fedetski asserts that the great artistic achievements of the contemporary period have not been brought by socialist realism but by other "trends", so, for example, Italian films, American school of prose, and the architecture of a number of Western countries. He directs his polemics against Soviet critics who allegedly accept only works of socialist realism and pronounce everything else as decadent.

Fedetski presents equally upside down the problem of tradition. He is seriously convinced that socialist realism has directly and mechanically adopted the traditions of the 19th century. We read in his article: "Socialist realism is rooted deeper in the 19th century than in the twentieth. Any outstanding writer of the past century, with the possible exception of Dostoevski and his school may be considered as the natural but not accepted "father of socialist realism."

The author asserts that literature is somehow by "its inertia" moving ahead, but that movie art has "fully proved the ineligibility of the conventions of the 19th century and the fact that it is impossible to adapt them to contemporary requirements. The sorry results of the experiences of socialist realism in this field speak for themselves."

So the tradition is not applicable and there has been no innovation! It is a black picture which is painted by the article "several facts and truisms". But the truisms and the hackneyed truths which the author ascribes to his opponents are more the fruits of his own conjecture.

Within the scope of this article it is neither possible nor necessary to give a detailed characteristic of the innovative essence of Soviet literature and to show its main traditions...One-sidedness is dangerous even in everyday life, in theory it is detrimental. It is equally erroneous to use the term innovation in contrast to tradition or tradeition in contrast to innovation...

A thorough analysis of contemporary facts also disproves the negative conclusion regarding the role of Soviet art in the development of the word art. Fedetski is fighting an imaginary enemy if he charges Soviet critics with mistreating all foreign literature which is not literature of socialist realism. Our public correctly condemns a disdainful attitude toward progressive Western art as manifestations of sectarianism and vulgarization.

Socialist realism is not and cannot be antagonistic to critical realism...They are mutually influencing and enrich each other, while the more active role belongs to the literature of socialist realism which is continuously expanding its influence. One need not be a prophet to predict that the objective course of literary development will show the Polish writers that it advances and will advance on the road of socialist realism...

Contrary to the sinister prognoses, we believe that this influence will grow even more and that thus it is all the more necessary to adopt an attitude of safeguarding all that is healthy and progressive in the work of literary workers who do not stand on the platform of socialist realism. Here one must not fall from one extreme into another but use a calm, businesslike approach.

The growth of our mutual relations depends on two factors. First, on a resolute opposition to the sectarian assertions that everything in foreign literature which is not fully in line with the principles of socialist realism must not be criticized but annihilated as something alien and hostile. Such assertions are very far from the general line of our literary policy and we will continue to combat them no less resolutely than desired by Fedetski with one essential correction, namely, that we will not identify them with the requirements of socialist realism itself.

Second, the strengthening of progressive forces in contemporary literature requires a militant, active struggle against reactionary trends in art which are also trying to recruit supporters among the artistic intelligentsia. Care for a fully popular, realistic art cannot be separated from irreconcilability in ideological questions and an intolerant attitude toward manifestations of a lack of ideal-mindedness, amoralism, and attempts to destroy the artistic forms.

We do not hide the fact that it strikes us as strange that several Polish literary workers who display a very critical attitude towards socialist realism have for some reason taken from their daily schedule the struggle against decadent, anti-people's art and do not shrink from propagating low images of modernism. It is impossible to agree with such a concept of innovation, and this is not only for reasons of different aesthetic positions.

What matters is the role which art must play in the contemporary struggle for peace, socialism and democracy. Socialist realism has written on its banner the requirements of an active struggle for progress and against reaction, for peace and against war. Modernistic art is anti-social, it distracts the reader and viewer from the struggle which decides and will decide the fate of not only our but also future generations. This is also a "criterion of practice" and its disregard may have serious effects on future mankind.

The theory and practice of Soviet literature differs greatly from conjectures which are found in article on socialist realism reviewed here. This applies also to their presentation of our literary policy.

Here also certain authors see only errors and incorrectness. Our Party has sharply and directly commented on the existing shortcomings. They have been forever condemned as the effect of a definite historical period and their remnants are combatted and will be combatted. Life always remains life, and it would be naive to expect an easy victory of the progressive principles. Does this mean that it is necessary to be endlessly terrified by the old mistakes as are Jan Kott, K. Toeplitz, J. Sierkierska, and Z. Fedetski, or even worse, to identify the errors of the past with the Party policy in the field of literature?

The Communist Party has categorically disapproved of the method of administrativeness in the field of art and it demands an attentive and competent approach to it. The tenor of barren tutelage, high-sounding exhortations, yells, and commands is increasingly disappearing from our everyday life and these are facts which are hard to overlook if one reads the press attentively or listens to discussions and reviews.

Why do these literary workers who aspire to assess Soviet art pass this over in silence while tendentiously collecting data on our failures which are exposed by the same Soviet public? Of the great bulk of literary-critical works why are those predominantly quoted only those which do not contain constructive tasks but only a negative assessment of the work done?

In particular, Nowa Kultura interprets Soviet literature in an obviously tendentious manner. Its sympathies are with the works which are criticized by our public. At the end of April the magazine published an article on the second Literary Moscow anthology under an immense headline. The main attention of the article was focused on works which are ideologically defective, but of the criticism to which they have been subjected in the Soviet Union nothing was said. The author delights in the "problems" (!) raised by Nagibin and Zhdanov, the mercilessly critical views of Yashin and Kron, the passionate exposures in the pages of Kaverin.

Differences in views concerning the essence of the problem are evidently not explained by the fact that in examining them the proceed from a completely wrong conception, to put it mildly, of the freedom to create. In the interpretation used by Sierkierska and her comrades, this is petty bourgeois freedom, complete independence for the individualist writer from the interests of his people and state, from party guidance. One should read the statements which

the bourgeois press gladly reprinted to the effect that socialist realism is playing the part of a "muzzle" closing the mouths of writers, that the Union of Polish Writers "should never again be the obedient and uncritical mouthpiece or advocate of the current policy of 'the powers that be'". A remarkable phrase! "The powers that be" include the régime of the people itself, for the sake of which literature and every honest writer live and work.

Anarchic indifference towards politics, the chaos of anarchy guided by no one and by nothing are proposed for us in exchange for the ideas of partiinost which allegedly fetters the freedom of writers. And references are made to Lenin's statements on art, "forgetting", that Lenin opposed incompetent intervention in literature and also opposed connivance in chaos, but advocated well-directed Party guidance of art...

In practice such an attitude goes along with a nihilistic negation of positive work done by the people. Without seeing anything bright in their life, without noting the growth of positive, new qualities among the people, such writers try to paint a sinister picture of reality, above all condemning everything. They believe that they can correct one extreme by another. While before life was regarded through rosy spectacles, so now it is necessary to put on black ones... While formerly angels without wings occupied the pages of literary works, so now it is necessary to populate them with inveterate villains.

If you, referring to the course of the literary process, remind them of the fact that the method of socialist realism is incompatible with thoughtless lily gilding, as well as onesided blackening of reality, they pronounce this thesis dogmatic. But why is it necessary to commit new errors to replace the old, why, correcting the former onesidedness, is it necessary to depict it again in a one-sided manner? There will be no return to the theory of no conflicts, but it must not be replaced by the admiration for the black color...

Many sharply critical works have clearly displayed the pathos of struggle and confirmation and these, such as the books of Ovechkin and Tendryakov, have been widely approved by the Soviet public. Others have been criticized just for the lack of wide perspectives, of mobilizing and rallying forces, and not for exposing shortcomings, as alleged by Jadwiga Siekierska.

She is indignant over the negative evaluation given by critics to a few works of Soviet literature. In the opinion of Jadwiga Siekierska the writers suffered for trying to "expose carefully hidden sores," for "saying the truth". Among those who have suffered innocently she includes I. Ehrenburg, V. Panova, V. Nekrasov, Yu. Yanovsky, I. Zorin, and V. Pomerantsev without taking into consideration that they were not all criticized from the same position.

But let us take works which were not disapproved by the critics for individual failures but for the falsities of their ideological-artistic concept, as, for example, "Quests" by I. Zorin. The subject of exposure selected by the author, namely a high-ranking bureaucrat, is not new, it has been repeatedly unmasked in literature and exposed to public view in the comedies of V. Minko, A. Makaenka, in the drama of A. Stein "Personnel Matter," written almost at the same

time as "Guests".

So the author did not expose a "carefully hidden sore." He was not criticized for exposing bureaucratism. Criticism was aimed at the hopelessly downcast tenor of the entire work, at its obvious one-sidedness, where one type was described in a satirical-exaggerated manner as the impersonated evil, while the others in a tearful and sentimental manner as the living picture of a humiliated "little man." The onesided description of complicated social relations led to a distortion of the picture of the socialist society.

The play failed to open new horizons before its readers and its audience, it did not inspire an active striving to a better life and work, but a powerless feeling of oppression and confusion. It is opportune to recall this play if only because the novel of V. Dudintsev "Not By Bread Alone" and the story of A. Yashin "Levers" contained similar defects...

The Soviet artist is irreconcilable to amoral, antihuman works. He tries to promote a hardening of the will of his readers. Their spiritual growth and the cohesion and strengthening of the Soviet society. If works of literature not only fail to create this feeling but are morally disarming their readers, they will not meet with sympathies from our critics. This is only natural if one recalls the grand scope and the difficulties of the tasks to the resolving of which the readers are prepared by literature, if one recalls how much efforts are invested by the enemy in impairing the Soviet society, denouncing its experiences and destroying it from within.

Was it not that the author of the article in the journal Ekonomista played with such thoughts when he called upon the Soviet writers for a continuous and destructive criticism of the socialist reality? We read in Ekonomista: "The critics and writers in Tsarist Russia were the conscience of their nation, whether they intended it or not, but by their literary works they sped the downfall of the Tsarist regime. And they did it in backward, illiterate Mother Russia. Now, when everyone can read, when books are published in millions of copies and reach the most remote corners of the country, a Soviet Gogol may prove to be dynamite."

The hostile hissing regarding "dynamite" provokes only a smile from the Soviet writers whom nothing and nobody can separate from their native people and the Communist Party.

There is a multitude of problems of socialist realism which we are ready to debate and discuss. However, the question of the patriotic trend of Soviet literature, its intention to strengthen the cause of socialism, peace and progress, its struggle against lack of ideamindedness and indolence is for us no topic for discussion.

We are convinced that the literary workers who so far have not realized it will sooner or later revise their views. The process of democratization of literary life does not eliminate but strengthens the necessity of an outright and sharp rejection of ideologically unfounded and artistically false works. Broadmindedness and lack of prejudice towards views regarding art, care for its variety and respect for the opinion of others still does not mean indiscriminate absorbing and loss of a principaled attitude in resolving important problems.

If they are resolved in the light of the principle interests of Soviet literature, the position of our critics cannot be shaken by such charges as voiced in the article of Jadwiga Siekierska and several others. It is a different matter that our (Soviet -ed.) critics have still not overcome many of their shortcomings which were caused, however, not by faithfulness to the principles of socialist realism, but by deviations from it.

It is not the first time that these matters have been discussed openly and truthfully. It is not a secret that our literary critics have gravely sinned against the creative spirit of socialist realism, treating it in a dogmatic manner and even actually putting it down as normative esthetics. These errors for which also the author of this article is partly responsible, hampered the understanding of the variety of our art and a fruitful study of problems of the new creative method.

There can be no doubt that the state of life forces the critics to work in an increasingly creative and independent manner. Everyone knows that one can only advance by working creatively and in such a manner as to prevent anybody from dethroning basic ideas of socialist realism under the guise of the struggle against dogmatism. We value the paths of creative search of the writers and critics striving for overcoming schematism and bookishness and to profoundly grasp the true nature and very spirit of socialist realism.

Such searchings help to advance the cause and inspire purposeful and successful work. We consider the "theoretical" convulsions of the revisionists of socialist realism who pour out the baby with the bathwater and together with death-born dogmas throw away the everlasting principles of Soviet literature as useless.

We wish that the majority of our opponents who are passing through a period of doubt and convulsions will overcome their nihilistic attitude and will begin to evaluate social and esthetic problems in a more objective and politically mature manner. This would be in their own interest, in the interest of all Polish literary workers, and in the interest of the entire art of socialist realism.

If someone finally departs from this art, the position of socialist realism will not be shaken. Therefore the explanation and elimination of all differences of opinion and confusion among the supporters of this creative method helps to rally the forces on a principled basis for a serious advance of socialist literature.

Let there be debates, reviews, discussions. It is only important that as a result of these disputes our socialist position will be strengthened, that the problems of art are reviewed in the light of an affirmation of this position. Then the literary workers will make a new contribution to the grand struggle at present waged by the people for the presence and future of mankind.