

JPRS: 2847

21 June 1960

CREATIVE ACCOMPLISHMENT AND THEORETICAL THOUGHT:  
THE ALL-UNION CONFERENCE ON PROBLEMS OF SOCIALIST REALISM

- USSR -

RELATED TO MAIN FILE

19990113 098

ITEM QUALITY INSPECTED

Photocopies of this report may be purchased from:

PHOTODUPLICATION SERVICE  
LIBRARY OF CONGRESS  
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

---

U. S. JOINT PUBLICATIONS RESEARCH SERVICE  
205 EAST 42nd STREET, SUITE 300  
NEW YORK 17, N. Y.

# FOREWORD

This publication was prepared under contract by the UNITED STATES JOINT PUBLICATIONS RESEARCH SERVICE, a federal government organization established to service the translation and research needs of the various government departments.

CREATIVE ACCOMPLISHMENT AND THEORETICAL THOUGHT:  
THE ALL-UNION CONFERENCE ON PROBLEMS OF SOCIALIST REALISM

[ This is a translation of an article in Voprosy  
Literaturny (Problems of Literature), No. 6, 1959,  
pages 61-92. ]

The All-Union Conference on Problems of Socialist Realism held in March of this year by the Union of Soviet Writers and the Institute of World Literature took place under the banner of the historic resolutions of the 21st Congress of the CPSU, and played an important role in the theoretical treatment of urgent problems of literature, and in preparing for the Third Congress of Soviet Writers.

Those who attended the conference heard the following papers read: "The Classical Heritage and the Artistic Innovation of the Literature of Socialist Realism," by Ya. Elsberg; "Historical Optimism in Soviet Literature," by V. Pertsov; "The Diversity of Artistic Forms and Styles in the Literature of Socialist Realism," by L. Novichenko; "The Writer as a Creative Individual," by B. Bursov; and "Socialist Realism and Contemporary Foreign Literature" by A. Ivanshchenko. More than forty critics, literary historians, and writers from many cities, oblasts, and republics took part in the exchange of opinions.

The conference reflected the rising level of our literary criticism and literary history. Well-founded critical judgments, close attention to contemporary conditions, the endeavor to relate theoretical problems to the urgent questions of life and to processes of Soviet literature, and a militant polemic against bourgeois views and Revisionist and dogmatic perversions -- all of these things characterized the remarks of many of those participating in the discussion.

The work of the conference demonstrated the unity of the ideological-creative views of the Soviet critics and literary historians, and intransigence toward inimical ideology.

As the speakers rightly noted, we have emerged strong

and battle-hardened from the ideological struggles which have taken place in recent years. Our critics and literary historians have convincingly defended the historical correctness of the method of Socialist Realism and communist party spirit ['partiynost'], and have dealt telling blows to the Revisionists.

Despite the controversial nature and inadequate treatment of certain viewpoints, the papers and remarks as a whole testified to the fact of fruitful, creative investigations and a persistent endeavor to move ahead in studying and generalizing the literary process and the basic problems of Socialist Realism. Soviet literary men are carrying on a vigorous struggle against Scholasticism and Talmudism, against the separation of art and ideology, against sectarianism in the matter of an artistic diversity of styles and forms in our literature, etc.

At the same time it became clear at the conference that certain theoretical problems of Socialist Realism still await proper study, and that certain problems have been given only a narrow and superficial examination.

In opening the discussion, I. Anisimov, Director of the Institute of World Literature imeni A. M. Gorkiy, and A. Surkov, First Secretary of the Board, Union of Soviet Writers, discussed the nature of the conference and the problems facing literary criticism and literary history.

"This conference," A. Surkov said, "is taking place in the wake of an historic event, the 21st Party Congress, which summed up our development over a period of 40 years and signalled the transition to the expanded building of communism in our country. The ideas set forth at the congress will help us to cope with our problems more profoundly, more comprehensively, and with greater historical concreteness.

"Calling this conference in advance of the Third Writers' Congress," A. Surkov continued, "will help to promote a penetrating and meaningful discussion at the congress.

"In recent years, very strong attacks on Socialist Realism have been made in certain countries. This obliges us to work out the theory of Socialist Realism even more deeply, and to defend even more stubbornly the principle of the party-ness and folk character of our literature. It was not a matter of accident that N. S. Khrushchev posed so clearly and directly the problem of the interpenetration of the concepts

of partyness and folk character. If one does not take this into account -- if one does not take into account the world view of our artists -- one cannot discuss innovation in Socialist Realism.

"In their attacks on us, the bourgeois and Revisionist critics frequently make use of old methods and arguments which were being advanced as early as the Twenties and the Thirties. Just as Abstractionism is a repetition of what the older generation saw in the past at Modernist exhibits in St. Petersburg and Moscow, so the theoretical sophistries of our enemies are a throwback, and do not represent the latest thing.

"Socialist Realism developed before the term was invented. The term came into use in the early Thirties, since it was precisely then that the lively ferment in literature necessitated a new term to designate this phenomenon. The term was not invented by one man but by a large collective of literary men and theoreticians.

"We must now trace the entire process of the development of the new artistic method, not only in Russian literature but in the literatures of other peoples of the USSR. Our literary historians and critics have devoted very little study to national [minority] literatures, and to their reciprocal influences. And yet the national [minority] literatures are developing rapidly. Many of them have come into being in a period of time less than that between the publication of "Poor Liza" and "A Hero of Our Time." This is a very interesting process. It enables us to discover patterns of literary development. But meanwhile it often remains beyond the sphere of our attention. We must take a careful look at Soviet multinational literature in order to understand the process of the accumulation of esthetic values in all its diversity, as it has been built up during these 40 years. In basing our arguments on only one national source, we deprive ourselves of the possibility of seeing Socialist Realism in all of its nuances -- in all of the historical modulations of the vital process of literary development.

"There is one more very important problem which I would like to pose," the speaker continued. "Namely, that the time has come for us to learn to understand Socialist Realism in its artistic specificity, in the specificity of Literature as thinking in images, as the effective understanding of reality.

"We frequently forget that importance attaches not only to the totality of what is said by the author or by the characters in a novel, but also to the fact that the novel -- creative literature -- has its own laws for the reflection of reality.

"At this conference," A. Surkov said, "we must take a new step forward in clarifying the new qualities of Socialist Realism and their artistic specificity. In this way we can promote the development of esthetic culture in our writers and esthetic taste in readers. Indeed, every work of criticism and literary history should be written for both writers and readers. Thus must needs be mentioned, since critics sometimes write only for one another, and do not include even writers among their future readers. And we give very little thought to whether a broad category of readers can understand the ideas set forth in our critical articles and books -- whether they can overcome the difficulties of language, which is often too abstruse."

A. Surkov laid heavy emphasis, in his speech, upon the problem of esthetic education.

"We must envisage all of our problems," he said, "from the viewpoint of the future. By the end of the seven-year period, Soviet man will have two free days every week, and his living standard will have risen 40 percent. His spiritual needs -- his "appetite" for spiritual nourishment -- will grow in a gigantic progression. And among all products of spiritual nourishment, creative literature will be that for which he will present the largest bill. In order to pay this bill, our writers must come into even closer contact with life -- with the labor and daily lives of the people. Theory must provide the writer with wings and help him to gain a broader view of the horizons of his creative possibilities. It must illuminate the path of development of our literature."

### The Esthetic Innovation of Socialist Realism

### The Artistic Nature of the Method of Our Literature

One of the most central problems at the conference was that of innovation in our art. The paper by Ya. El'sberg, "The Classical Heritage and the Artistic Innovation of the Literature of Socialist Realism," was devoted to a clarification of this question.

This paper emphasized the fact that Socialist Realism developed in the mainstream of world art, constituting a new stage in its history. While drawing upon all of the preceding artistic development of man, Socialist Realism provided answers to the questions posed by the new historical period. Naturally, these answers were given in that unique form which is proper to art.

Socialist Realism was a very great esthetic discovery, since it reflected a new period of world history -- and reflected it in a manner, and from angles, inaccessible to other creative methods. The speaker felt that one of the main elements of innovation in Socialist Realism is in the emphasis laid by writers on the strong folk character, on the diversified growth of a man of the people, and the imaginative presentation of all aspects of his spiritual development -- his activities, intelligence, thoughts, and emotions.

"Innovational discoveries in literature," he said, "are always discoveries by man of his own era. At the present stage in the history of Soviet society, Socialist Realism is faced with the very difficult task of elaborating an artistic form which can embody the unprecedentedly new and rich content of our lives and reflect the multifaceted development of Soviet man, developing along with the people: his creative labor, the feeling of collectivism which is proper to him, and the strength of his thought. In this connection it is evident that scope, diversity and polychromy of form may be achieved by the most varied artistic means -- prompted, however, in each case, for all their diversity, by life itself, or by various aspects of life.

"But searches for new artistic form based on the requirements of life will be fruitful only when they draw upon classical artistic experience.

"The literary development of mankind has brought forth and emphasized classic esthetic solutions for several major problems posed by social life which have agitated mankind. The discoveries of Socialist Realism must necessarily draw upon these solutions. If the literature of Socialist Realism were to neglect the experience of the classical heritage in its presentation of new aspects of our society, it would be incapable of satisfying the vital requirements of our day." (The paper by Ya. El'sberg was published in No 4 of our journal of the current year.)

The speakers emphasized the necessity for a profound

study of the artistic nature of the innovation of our literature -- of studying all of its traits in the unity of their content and form.

A. Abramov (Voronezh) justly noted that we have devoted but little attention to the artistic aspect of Soviet literature; that we are doing a poor job of elucidating its esthetic features. He added: "Our enemies say that the element of novelty in Soviet literature is an external phenomenon; that it (our literature) is devoid of any new artistic method. It is impossible to disprove this without clarifying the esthetic essence of our literature, not to mention the features of its artistic form."

N. Gey (Moscow) came out against a dogmatic separation of ideology and art; against understanding them as different qualities mechanically combined in a work of art. "Critics," he said, "often consider the ideological content of a work as something existing outside its artistic fabric -- outside the figurative system. An example of this approach is to be found in M. Gus's article on Neo-Realism."

"Those views are incorrect," he continued, "which hold that a book dealing with the present is entitled to a kind of discount, since the immediacy of its content makes up for the shortcomings in its form. These views lead to a justification of illustrative writing -- of dry, mediocre literature. They compromise the completely valid requirement that literature should be imbued with the spirit of the contemporaneous."

N. Gey criticized the notion of artistic value as a purely formal quality of art. "Artistic value," he said, "is an alloy of all of the properties of the image: it is the quality and the content and the forms of literature. Artistic value is not something 'added' to principle of representation or expression -- to loftiness or truthfulness. It bears witness to that merger, that focus of art, in which everything comes together; that unity of all properties of art without which a work of art cannot be entire and complete, to say nothing of being finished. The question of artistic value has acquired special importance today: it postulates a discussion as to what a work of literature must be in order to express the great ideas of communism, to express the feeling of the era, to transmit the spirit of our times."

B. Meylakh (Leningrad) raised an important question at the conference.

"We shall never understand the genuine essence of



Socialist Realism," he said, "unless we approach it as a manifestation of a special type of creative thinking. It must be admitted that we utter the words 'creative thought' with caution, and that many persons feel these words should not be used at all... But this is totally wrong. Art is a special way of understanding life, which has its own devices. We must not be afraid of this expression. And I should be pleased if, as a result of this conference, it were granted citizenship in our language."

B. Meylakh then discussed the specificity of creative thought in Socialist Realism, which is based on the Marxist world view. As a result of this fact, artists have acquired the possibility of deep insight into the laws of life. They are equipped with a method of seeing, and this has changed the nature of artistic thought itself. In order to understand this thought, one must study the most profound areas of creation -- those moments when the artistic figure is engendered; the moments of the clear emergence of the relationships of reality to the esthetic judgments arising in the consciousness of the artists.

"We can render our greatest assistance to writers," the speaker said, "in solving the problems of artistic thought. But these problems cannot be solved by the devices of literary criticism alone. We must utilize the knowledge available in associated sciences -- in psychology, and in those areas of Pavlovian theory which have a bearing upon human thought."

Other speakers at the conference also discussed the problem of creative thought. In their opinion, this problem now occupies a place in the forward areas of science; and the failure to solve it is hindering the developing of many of its areas.

M. Kuznetsov (Moscow) opposed abstract logical constructions in scholarship, and discussed means of bringing literary history and literary criticism closer together. One such means consists in studying the process of the manifestation of innovation in Socialist Realism in different genres of literature.

"It is well known," the speaker said, "that the flourishing of the novel coincides with the flourishing of Realism; that the novel occupies a leading place in Realism. Therefore, all of the foreign attacks on the novel -- all of the talk about its bankruptcy -- usually constitute an attack on Realism." M. Kuznetsov also discussed the innovational

features of the Soviet novel: its historicism, its ability to give expression to the huge revolutionary movements of the masses, etc.

"But," he remarked, "some of our virtues are now beginning to turn into defects. Recently we have witnessed the appearance of works claiming to be epics -- to take in a huge area of reality. They contain many events and many historical figures, and their historical scope is 'extraordinary.' Some critics consider such works to be a great gain for us. Thus. V. Nazerenko, author of the article, 'Our Multi-Level Novel' ("Zvezda" / The Star /, 1958, No 8) arrives at the conclusion that Socialist Realism has introduced a new kind of novel where social forces are embodied in a special kind of 'total images.'"

Disagreeing with V. Nazerenko, M. Kuznetsov emphasized that most of the defects of such novels were attributable to these same epic strata -- these "total images." This is the case, in the speaker's opinion, with V. Zakrutkin's "Creation of the World," in which the world of antiquity is well portrayed, but where the broad epic background is unsuccessfully handled.

Some of our novels seem to expand in width rather than in depth. And it is scarcely proper to praise phenomena of this kind and claim that they are innovational achievements of Socialist Realism. We must insist on genuine innovation: on explorations in depth; on a substantial rise in the artistic level of our novels.

"In the course of the last three years," concluded M. Kuznetsov, "three great artists of our time, Sholokov, Fedin, and Tvardovskiy, have urgently posed the problem of improving the quality of our literature. This is the most important thing for us."

The paper read by V. Ordov (Leningrad) dealt with poetry and the innovational explorations therein.

"We have devoted very little study," he said, "to the genuine innovations in our poetry: to its innovational thought. And yet this is the root of the problem of innovation. Poetry begins where there is movement of thought embodied in an image. Mere versification begins with rhythm and rhyme, and ends with them.

"Poetic thought -- associative thought, and thought in the form of images -- is to the highest degree generalized thought, raising the private and the personal to the level of

the general... The majesty of true, genuinely great, and humanly necessary poetry consists in the fact that it is always able -- apparently even in microscopic themes -- by means of thought, to reflect something essential from those important and special phenomena which at the given historical moment constitute the content of life, and to signal the course of its forward development. This also applies to so-called intimate lyric poetry.

"Our poetry of the last few years," V. Orlov continued, "has often lacked that burning incandescence of thought one finds in Pushkin, Nekrasov, Blok, and Mayakovsky. It is precisely in this direction -- in the direction of thought -- that innovation in our poetry should be developed."

V. Diyeu (Moscow) finds that the greatest shortcoming in innovation in dramaturgy consists in the fact that authors frequently do not rise above the level of "cataloguing methods" or else seek for innovation in those aspects of dramaturgy which are proper to all genres of literature. By way of example he cited the article, "Traits of the Contemporary," from the journal, "Teatr," in which the analysis of the uniqueness of the new drama boiled down to a cursory list of such traits as folk character, optimism, the feeling of affirmation, etc. However, these traits do not apply merely to the drama, but to all literature.

The paper by Yu. Borev (Moscow) dealt with the history of tragedy and its basic traits. "Tragedy," the speaker stated, "is the most philosophical genre of art. It can provide a profound revelation of the heroism and strength of man, and can illuminate particular aspects of life, in a way impossible for the other genres."

Yu. Borev disagreed with those critics who maintain that the innovation in Soviet tragedy consists in its optimism. "In the history of world art," he said, "all genuine tragedy has been optimistic. The new element in Soviet tragedy is not its optimism, but the new character of its optimism, associated with a clear notion of the future of mankind -- with a distinct understanding of the trends of history; with our new ideal."

Ya. Niyedre (Riga) described how Socialist Realism had enriched the literature of Latvia with new genres. Disagreeing with the proponents of "independent art," who maintain that a literature imbued with Socialist ideology becomes fixed in its forms and cannonized, Ya. Niyedre convincingly

showed how the new method develops literature and makes it more diversified and of larger scope. In Latvian literature the fictional sketch has emerged and is flourishing. The short story, whose development has been due to an endeavor on the part of writers to give a more profound portrayal of their heroes in terms of the complex events and conflicts of life -- in the contrasts of critical changes in life -- has begun to occupy a prominent place in Latvian literature.

The prose genres are being enriched by the epic novel and the novel on the encyclopedic scale. The image of the author which has been typical of Latvian literature, is changing. All that remains of its old, traditional features is the peasant's reluctance to move fast -- the leisureliness in narration. Socialist Realism is introducing new developments in lyric poetry and in dramaturgy; and it is contributing to the skill of writers -- to their style.

The conference took up the question as to how our criticism has dealt with the problem of tradition and innovation in Soviet Realism.

I. Chicherov (Moscow) disagreed with Ya. El'sberg, who in his opening speech had criticized the former's article ("Oktyabr'," 1959, No 1) for opposing innovation to traditions, and for a schematic treatment of the traits of innovation in our literature.

"It seems to me," I. Chicherov said, "that the time has come when the tremendous artistic experience of our Soviet literature demands of us that we concentrate our attention on isolating what is specifically unique therein -- what is different from the literature of the past."

From this viewpoint he criticized the paper ready by Ya. El'sberg, in which, in his opinion, a great deal was said about traditions, succession, and artistic heritage, and very little was said about our innovation -- especially in artistic forms.

S. Petrov (Moscow) did not acknowledge the charge of underestimating the classical heritage which Ya. El'sberg had preferred against him in an article published in No 12 of the journal, "Moskva," last year. S. Petrov agreed with the statement of Galina Nikolayeva to the effect that the classical heritage was by no means capable of helping Soviet writers in all respects, since they are faced with a new society and new processes of life, which are forming human psychology anew. In this connection he disagreed with

G. Makogonenko, who, in the journal "Voprosy Literaturny," criticized G. Nikolayeva for underestimating the classical heritage. "However great the significance of the classical experience," he said, "its assimilation alone will not enable our writers to accomplish all tasks and solve all difficulties."

In his concluding words, Ya. El'sberg criticized the viewpoint of I. Chicherov and S. Petrov.

"The study of innovation," he said, "must not be made to the detriment of the literary heritage. The latter must not be undervalued. The source of Soviet literature is of course our new society. But the reflection of that society is integrally bound up with one's attitude toward the classical heritage. Actually, it is not a question of Soviet writers learning from classical authors only when and where the objects of their portrayals coincide. The essence of the matter lies in the artistic principles of reflecting society and man, which principles are being accorded organic innovative development in our art."

In the course of the discussion, a dispute arose as to the origin of Socialist Realism. Recently, the opinion has been expressed in certain verbal remarks that Socialist Realism developed long before Gorky, in the revolutionary literature of the Nineteenth Century. Ya. El'sberg argued this point in his paper. A. Illichevskiy (Kiev) disagreed. In his remarks, he tried to substantiate his hypothesis that the sources of Socialist Realism were to be found in the poetry of Ezhen Pot'ye, and that the revolutionary songs of the end of the Nineteenth and the beginning of the Twentieth centuries also contain elements of Socialist Realism.

In his concluding words, Ya. El'sberg took issue with A. Illichevskiy. He recalled that Lenin accurately described Pot'ye as a propagandist employing the medium of song. There is no basis for affirming that Pot'ye laid the groundwork for the new stage of Realism.

The conference demonstrated that in our literary criticism there is an incipient trend toward a deeper analysis of the creative nature of innovation in our art. But this trend needs to be strengthened. Remarks were delivered at the conference, in which the themes and problems of literature were divorced from the images, the content was separated from the form, the ideological aspect from the artistic value. Of course it was not remarks of this kind which set the tone of the discussion. Its essential tone was that of a struggle

against the Scholastic approach to the problem of innovation, and for studying it in all its complexity and specificity.

It is good that the disputes were carried on with due regard to the complexity and importance of the problems posed. And it is also good that the lapses into the Scholastic and vulgar approach to art were greeted with unconcealed irony by the delegates to the conference. The formula proposed by one of the speakers, according to which the problem of the innovation in the method of Socialist Realism could be solved simply -- that it has three aspects: a new object, a new subject, and new relations between them -- was regarded as ridiculous. It was remarked at the conference that this illusory simplicity did not take into account the artistic nature of the method, and was entirely divorced from the requirements of literary practice. The audience also laughed at an ill-prepared attempt by one of the speakers to invent a new term -- a new name -- for our creative method.

### Heroism and the Conflicts of Life

A good deal was said at the conference about the innovational view of life in our literature: about its optimism, and about the skill of Soviet writers in showing the bright and the dark sides of life, and its chief trends.

These questions were all discussed in the paper by V. Pertsov, "Concerning Optimism in Soviet Literature."

"The Realism of our literature," the speaker said, "is a militant Realism. For it, the conflict between light and darkness is not merely a method of representation; it is a basic principle of art which ensures its role as a motive force in life. The artist of Socialist Realism is faced with a reality pregnant with conflicts. But he is familiar with the springs activated by life. He sees the trends in its development, and therefore he believes in the future.

"The optimism of our literature is an optimism flowing from the meaning of the work, and not from a happy ending or from an arithmetic preponderance of good characters over negative ones. It is an optimism governed by a philosophical elaboration of the conflict in images, and not by the author's protectorate vis-a-vis the idea. This optimism has nothing in common with making things look either rosy or dark.

"Some of our enemies, either unable or unwilling to understand this, have attributed to us an optimism in the

spirit of Pangloss, who did not want to see the conflicts of life, and who escaped from them with the life-saving dictum, 'All is for the best in the best of all possible worlds.' But our historical optimism is based on a scientific concept of the movement of mankind toward communism which arms us with all the strength of self-criticism vis-a-vis ourselves. This acute and restless world view is directed toward each of us with the urgent requirement for the greatest of vigor. Therefore, emphasis on the conflicts of life has been typical of all of the best works of Soviet literature throughout the entire history of Soviet society.

"The life-affirmative tone of our literature is clearly apparent in the way it handles one of the most important of its themes: the enriching of the individual in the name of the interests of society. The individual, proving his devotion to the general case, is thereby enriched. Such is the viewpoint of our artists.

"The emergence of a new society and a new man is a process which is long, torturous, and sometimes tragic. Marx and Lenin spoke of the prolonged birthpains associated with the transition from capitalism to socialism. Science has not yet found a means of 'anaesthetizing' the birth of a new way of life and a new man. Soviet artists understand this, which adds to the absurdity of the accusations of 'bureaucratic optimism' coming from the camp of the enemy. Is there any resemblance to 'bureaucratic optimism' in the philosophical struggle portrayed by Aleksandr Fadeyev in the images of his 'Defeat'? And is it not the same demanding philosophy of optimism, not the same example of overcoming suffering, which constitutes the poignancy of 'How the Steel was Tempered'?

"The basis of the strength -- the source of the optimism -- of the 'real people' of our literature is the complete merging of the 'I' of the individual man with the other 'I's' of his comrades in the common cause -- with the entire people -- when the individual 'I' drinks in the common experience drop by drop.

"This merging of the individual's aspirations with the general aspirations is disclosed most completely in the tragic situation. Taking man at the extreme limit of his behavior, in an incredible conflict of passions, the tragic situation makes it possible to look in to the very depths, not only of his being, but also of the historical process

forming the given individual. This is borne out by these works which have become landmarks in Soviet literature: 'Quiet Flows the Don,' 'The Young Guards,' 'Zoya,' 'The House by the Side of the Road,' 'The Sea,' and 'The Russian Forest.' The tragedy of the struggle tempers the heroes -- such is the tone of many works in our literature."

V. Pertsov analyzed the problem of optimism and tragedy in the work of Mayakovsky, Yesenin, Sholokhov, and Dovzhenko -- writers attracted by the creative representation of the beautiful and tragic in life and capable, each in his own way, of affirming faith in man and in his bright future on earth.

"In disclosing the heroic element in our society," the speaker said, "one can also understand and illuminate its conflicts in artistic images. Optimistic heroism, beating a path through the complex and sometimes tragic conflicts of the era of the transition from capitalism to socialism -- such is the great tradition of Soviet literature. And it must be developed even today.

"This tradition," V. Pertsov noted, "will receive a new impetus and a new area for its development in new forms which it is difficult to envisage now, but which life itself will suggest. Life demands heroic poetry, a poetry of profundity in the sense of heroism, developing on the approaches to communism and always beating its own path through new conflicts.

"The poetry of nightmares and horrors is foreign to us -- the singers of a free land. Yes, we are optimists in our view of human nature. We can see in man something better than what is in him now -- something which will flower under communism. The historical optimism of our literature," V. Pertsov concluded, "dictates to the artist great vigor in combatting evil and defending good." ("Oktyabr'," No 3, 1959, contains an article by V. Pertsov, "Yes, We are Optimists," based on this paper.)

A disagreement as to the reflection of conflicts in life arose in connection with the aforementioned article by S. Petrov. Ya. El'sberg and others criticized a statement in this article to the effect that a lack of conflict is a disease of our literature, and that it came into being as a result of the elimination of antagonistic class conflicts in our country.

"S. Petrov," said B. Tyurikov (Moscow), "sees the lack



of conflict as a reflection of the elimination of antagonistic class conflicts... Actually, the 'theory of a lack of conflict' is a distorted and perverted reflection of certain phenomena in our society. S. Petrov states that a lack of conflict is a childhood disease, like the abstractionism and schematicism of the literature of the early days of the revolution. But no one plotted abstractionism and schematicism. They were genuine symptoms of childhood disease. They had no such theoretical rationale as does the lack of conflict in the form of the well-known formula of the full correspondence of productive capacities and production relations. That childhood disease had no such flow of critical articles based on the recipe, 'It's not like that in life.' The lack of conflict is not acceptable to us, because it is a distortion of the truth, because it does violence to reality, because it sacrifices living reality to dogma, to a subjective and abstract idea; because it is the inability to understand phenomena in motion, in development, in the struggle between the old and the new. The 'theory of a lack of conflict' is a manifestation of a dogmatism which does not see real life, which forces life into an abstract pattern; it is a concept which makes it possible to remove various negative phenomena of society from the scrutiny of literary criticism. It is not worth our while to be soft or indecisive toward the theory of a lack of conflict. We have not yet buried it; and it occasionally emerges in a new form. Consider, for example, the film, 'Ivan Brovkin on the Virgin Lands.' Does this not have characteristics making it similar to 'The Kuban Kazakhi'?

"The literature of Socialist Realism," continued B. Ryurikov, "is an optimistic and positive literature, which can and must affirm, can and must acclaim the new developments that are driving us forward. It is from this lofty viewpoint, and not from a viewpoint of grumbling pessimism, that Soviet writers will describe what has come down to us intact from the past, and what is hindering the advance of our society to communism. Pessimism and cheap skepticism are contrary to Socialist Realism; but rosy pictures are also contrary to it. And we must not vacillate from one side to the other in this case. Literature is not a pendulum

which swings from one side to the other.

"The struggle for communism requires a comprehensive analysis of all of the phenomena of our times -- the direction of all of the strength of the Soviet people; it requires devotion to the ideals of communism. How does our Party pose the problem? N. S. Khrushchev said: 'The confirmation of communist views and norms of behavior takes place in the struggle against vestiges of capitalism... We must not wait calmly until these vestiges of capitalism have disappeared of their own accord. We must wage a decisive struggle against them. We must direct public opinion against all manifestations of bourgeois views and morals -- against the anti-social elements.'

"thus does the Party pose the problem of vestiges of the old and how to combat them. The important role of literature consists in directing public opinion against everything that hinders the struggle for communism."

I. Eventov (Leningrad), in the paper which he read, dealt with the critical principle in Socialist Realism.

"We have not accorded much attention to this problem," he said, "and it is the task of literary criticism to study it. We recognize that the criticism of negative phenomena is one of the forms of affirming our society; we recognize that without criticism there can be no struggle for the new -- no genuinely realistic affirmation of advanced ideas and new forms of life. But in practice we frequently encounter a failure to understand the important role played by critical trends." In this connection, I. Eventov cited an article by K. Murzidi dealing with G. Nikolayeva's "Battle on the Road," and remarked that the film writers had so distorted the meaning of V. Nekrasov's story, "In One City," and had so glossed over its critical aspects, that no similarity to the original is left in the motion picture, "The City Sets Fires to Raging." A similar operation was performed in Kazakevich's "The Star," in which the basic conflict -- the death of Travkhin -- is eliminated.

Also taking issue with the book by Yu. Burev, "On the Comic," I. Eventov put forth the idea that in our society the comic is associated with vestiges of capitalism, and that any other view is profoundly mistaken.

This viewpoint was contested by many of the speakers. A. Illichevskiy, in particular, noted that according to this viewpoint, we must conclude that under communism there will

be nothing to laugh at, and that people will stop laughing altogether.

L. Yershov (Leningrad) also noted that I. Eventov's viewpoint was not only unconvincing but theoretically untenable. I. Eventov, he said, had defended the critical principle in Socialist Realism; but at the same time he had annihilated it in passing. After all, what does it mean to reduce all the efforts of our satirists to combatting vestiges of capitalism? It means closing our eyes to the difficulties of our own growth and glossing over our defects. Moreover, can it be said that stupidity, naivete, presumptuousness, and many other things are the fate of antagonistic formations alone? No, we shall have a need for laughter, comedy, and satire even under communism.

B. Zhgeiti (Tbilisi) reminded his listeners that we have recently witnessed the birth of a tendency toward the hypertrophied representation of the gloomy aspects of life. That works one-sidedly aimed at the negative side of life had appeared not only in Russian literature but also in Georgian and other national minority literatures.

"It is my opinion," said B. Zhgeiti, "that a thorough study of the problem of the interrelationship between the affirmative principle and the critical principle is essential. Whether our literature presents positive phenomena or portrays gloomy aspects, it affirms Soviet society and struggles for its further improvement. We must make a special effort to isolate and solve the problem of the presentation in Soviet literature of the leading trends in our life -- the problem of creating imposing and moving figures of advanced human beings."

This thought was voiced with special emphasis at the conference.

Many speakers said that the most important thing in our literature was its portrayal of the heroic -- of the great heroic deeds of the Soviet people. Therefore, the chief task of our writer is to portray his contemporary -- the man of great accomplishments -- on a large scale.

"Today," said B. Balyak (Moscow), "life is posing great tasks before our literature. Thus it may be that we are too exacting in judging the novels of contemporary life that are now being published. Not everything in these novels satisfies us -- primarily because we want to read a book with imposing characters, to read about men and women of great

passions and desires."

From this viewpoint B. Byalik criticized D. Granin's novel, "After the Wedding," which contains both dramatic situations and a psychological rendering of the characters, but in which the difficulties and obstacles overcome by the protagonists are not associated with the nature of their character.

"In the course of the past forty years in the Soviet Union," said G. Knovalov (Saratov), "the type of the New Man has been formed and crystallized in all of its aspects. It is the task of Soviet literature to see both the present day and the history of the development of this character in all of his diversity as it has formed in life.

"The time for heroic characters has arrived," he continued. "I do not intend to oversimplify and say that there is no need to portray passions and characters on the small scale. But our contemporary fellow man is increasingly crystallizing and being formed as an heroic character for whom great passions arising in important situations are fitting. And yet our drama, novels, and stories usually sketch out an heroic character who suddenly, at a given moment, begins to change his nature, allows himself to be diverted from the truth, to be led astray from the main path and into some by-path.

"An era of great feats," said V. Shcherbina (Moscow), "demands a decisive increase in our artistic measurements: this applies above all to the creation of the hero of the new times. The time has come when Soviet literature should create images of our contemporaries capable of comparison with Chapayev, Korchagin, or Levinson. We must not set up an opposition between the heroic and the quotidian in the lives of our people. We must see that heroism in the everyday doings of human beings; and in describing the quotidian, we must not treat it as commonplace."

It is the opinion of V. Schcherbina that such tendencies have been manifested in our recent literature -- especially in the works of Nekrasov and Panova.

V. Ozerov (Moscow) discussed the problem of the positive hero, which is a very urgent one for the art of Socialist Realism.

"We are all aware that the positive hero of our literature has been the object of special attacks on the part of the enemies of Socialist Realism -- the Revisionists. We are

also aware that there was a time when conversations on this subject provoked a kind of shame among us, and sometimes even a slight note of irony.

"While defending and affirming the legitimate here of contemporary art, we must be more confident in discussing the poetic force typical of Socialist Realism, affirming new qualities in Soviet men and women -- the qualities of the future. It is worthwhile to recall the words of Gorky, who said that Soviet literature must affirm man not only as he is today, but as he must and will be tomorrow. This statement of the problem does not lead to any kind of idealization, if the writer fixes his attention on the life of his contemporaries and shows therein the sprouts of the communist future. Moreover, the dialectics of the development of character is defined precisely as the representation of how new qualities are developed and strengthened in human beings -- how the development of character takes place in real conflicts.

"A creative account of the hero of our day portrayed in his full stature -- in all his spiritual potential -- is impossible without a complete rejection of the schematic approach to such a character. However, this approach has been more than once in our theory and criticism. The positive hero has been schematicized, deprived of his full-blooded nature and his vital richness. On occasion the critics have spoken of him 'in general' or 'on the whole,' having in mind a kind of single finished model to which all of the types of the era, and all human individuals, are reduced.

"The hero of our day is especially interesting to writers because of the richness of his spiritual nature and his intellectual and emotional life. It is all the more important to portray this life extensively and fully, since it is a question of the formation of the man of a communist society. Hence the task: to raise the standards of the quality of literature; to combat attempts to lower those standards; to struggle for an exploration in depth of the character of Soviet Man. Actually, the authors of certain works of recent years (some of them otherwise good) have not achieved mastery in the creation of heroic characters -- in the depth exploration of their psychology, their intellectual richness. The problem of the intellectualism of our literature is a very urgent one. The heroes of several of our books think, feel, argue, experience, and react to all

the events of their lives with less intensity than our living contemporaries. In this connection I must comment upon the work of G. Nikolayeva, whose novel, "Battle on the Road" I personally rate very high. But there, too, the rationalism is noticeable; many of the characters lack psychological depth; and their intimate life is described without the proper tact and sense of measure. The characters are schematically arranged or 'weighted' on the basis of criteria of 'positiveness' and 'negativeness': the negative first secretary of the oblast committee, the positive second secretary; the positive first secretary of the rayon committee, the negative second secretary, etc.

"The further growth of our literature," V. Ozerov concluded, "presupposes the persistent exploitation by writers of the artistic means which will make it possible more clearly to disclose the great fullness of the life of Soviet man; to convey the breadth of his spiritual and moral interests and aspirations; to portray the depth and strength of his feelings and sensations."

In his remarks at the conference, A. Britikov (Leningrad) took issue with V. Pertsov, who in his paper had criticized the former's article on the tragic element in "Quiet Flows the Don."

Others who spoke at the conference also discussed the lack of conflict and schematic quality in the presentation of the acts of heroism in our society and of the obstacle on our path to communism. They all agreed that optimistic tone of our literature and its heroic pathos are foreign to "the Realism of the complacent grunter" and the "Realism of the gloomy whiner," to use Lunacharsky's words. The chief task of our literature is to portray our contemporary in his full stature as a genuinely heroic man: to portray the development of the communist qualities in his character.

### Socialist Realism in Foreign Art

A number of problems associated with the innovation of Socialist Realism, with its origin and development, and with its relationship to other trends in literature, were posed on the basis of the materials of foreign art, although it must be noted that these materials could have been treated more extensively and in greater detail than was done at the conference.

In a paper with the title, "Socialist Realism and Contemporary Foreign Literature," A. Ivashchenko stated that recent years have seen a considerable growth in the scope and strength of the influence of Socialist Realism. (A. Ivashchenko's paper was published in No 5 of our journal this year.)

One of the basic conclusions expressed in A. Ivashchenko's paper was that Socialist Realism has become a very important factor in the national cultures of many countries in the world, and that it is gaining increased recognition as a literary trend on a worldwide scale.

Socialist Realism is successfully seeking a new artistic synthesis of reality, presenting its universality, in all of its aspects, and demonstrating thereby an astounding wholeness in the way it sees the world. This tendency is to be found in all of the great artists of Socialist Realism, foreign as well as Soviet: in Sholokhov and Aragon, Tvardovskiy and Neruda, Khikmet and Brecht, O'Casey, Eluard, and many others.

The analysis of the creative practice of contemporary foreign literature given in the paper by A. Ivashchenko, and also in the remarks of T. Motyleva, I. Fradkin, I. Bernshteyn, and others, showed that the scope of the influence of the principles of Socialist Realism is much broader and more impressive than it is sometimes said to be in articles and studies; that the diversity of artistic forms and national traits of the new art is much richer than has been made plain by the critics.

Contemporary literary development shows that the principles of Socialist Realism have had a marked influence on many writers with different esthetic views, and on whole trends in literature. A. Ivashchenko showed this in his analysis of the literature of Italian Neo-Realism. T. Motyleva (moscow) cited the example of R. Rolland and many other writers.

"Our press," she said, "often contains expressions of a vulgar point of view which holds that all Neo-Socialist Realists necessarily and automatically fall into decadence, or, at best, merely repeat the motifs of the past. This is not true. By comparing Critical and Socialist Realism in the contemporary literature of the West, we can see points of contact between them. Socialist Realism is not a closed and isolated area of contemporary Literature. In many

respects it is related to all of the great Realistic literature of our time."

T. Motyleva then discussed the differences between these two types of Realism, and the innovation of the method of Socialist Realism. On the basis of material in the works of Amadou, Aragon, Becker, Fuchik, Barndys, Brecht, Seghers, Purmanova, and Lindsay she took up the question of how the principle of representing life in its revolutionary development helps writers to penetrate into the very depths of life and portray the growth of man.

I. Bernshteyn (Moscow) dealt in her remarks with certain problems of the contemporary literature of Czechoslovakia. She discussed the creative experiments of the Czechoslovak writers, their controversies on problems of the novel, psychological analysis, etc. She noted that in these controversies fallacious opinions were sometimes expressed, and that the experimentation sometimes took unfruitful directions. Certain comrades, while justly criticizing those novels in which a person is portrayed schematically, have said that this is not a social problem but that the individual fate of a man must be the basis of the novel.

"We can hardly agree with such opinions," I. Bernshteyn continued, "because they lead to a rejection of the innovative gains of Socialist Realism and of the epic possibilities of the novel. The speaker who opposes the separate presentation of great social problems and the fates of individuals, says that criticism frequently by-passes the problems of psychological analysis, and that the failure to treat them is harmful to artistic practice. We reject psychological procedures which lead to the deformation of reality -- to subjective arbitrariness. But all those means of psychological analysis which make for a depth exploration of the human being must be employed by the literature of Socialist Realism."

The conclusion that the future world literature is associated with the development of Socialist Realism, which under present-day conditions provides all possibilities for the synthetic artistic mastery of the world, was clearly expressed at the conference.



## 2. Diversity of Styles and Artistic Forms

A prominent place on the agenda of the conference was occupied by problems of the artistic diversity of Socialist Realism: problems of style, the individualization of ways of writing, etc. These problems were discussed in the paper by L. Novichenko, "The Diversity of Artistic Forms and Styles in the Literature of Socialist Realism," and that by B. Bursov, "The Writer as a Creative Individual," which provoked a lively exchange of opinions.

Both those who read papers and those who offered comments emphasized that the necessity for a profound and thorough treatment of the problem of the artistic diversity of Socialist Realism is governed by basic interests of contemporary literary development. Today, when the Party has posed before Soviet writers the task of becoming the best in the world, not only in terms of content but also in terms of artistic strength and skill, it is the duty of creative thought to disclose the esthetic richness of Socialist Realism, to indicate the diversity of paths of artistic experiment, and thereby to help writers in struggling for high quality in literature.

The diversity of the art of Socialist Realism was considered in various of its aspects. This is at once the problem of individual styles, of the national diversity of styles and forms, and of creative trends in the literature of Socialist Realism.

### The Artist's Experimentation, and the Individual Style

In his paper on the writer as a creative individual, B. Bursov showed that Socialist Realism does not hamper the uniqueness of talents but, on the contrary, creates unprecedented possibilities for the flowering of the most varied artistic individualisms.

"A single ideological basis does not undermine the artist's feeling for experiment, his creative force, and his freedom, but rather it removes, for the first time in history, all hindrances to their manifestation," B. Bursov stated. "The Marxist-Leninist world view is the only completely scientific one. As such, it cannot possibly hinder a man's experimental thought, whether he be an artist, a scientist, or a politician. Marxism-Leninism has demonstrated

the possibility of a genuine and increasingly profound understanding of the world which is limitless -- as limitless as is the world itself in space and time. It is this which, in our modern Soviet society, has determined the creative attitude of man toward reality. And creativity is necessarily original.

"In studying the classical writers we frequently speak of their ideological searching. But when dealing with Soviet writers, we forget this. We feel it is incorrect. We thereby minimize the ideological function of Soviet literature. Actually, we indulge in so-called 'illustrativeness.'

"In the absence of an original ideological approach to the material of life, discovered by one's own labor and experience, there is inertia of content and of artistic form. The writer must plunge himself into life, into our Soviet society, in order to see how the ideas of the Party are materialized by the force and will of the people; to see how, in this work of their materialization, human beings change, life changes, complex human relations and profound and contradictory psychological processes develop; and, finally, how our world view itself is enriched.

"Reactionary criticism denies from the very outset the existence of artistic richness and diversity in our literature. It affirms that since all Soviet writers have the same ideological convictions, they do not differ from one another artistically."

Considering in this connection the work of such outstanding Soviet writers as Sholokhov, Fadeyev, and Leonov, B. Bursov showed that the work of each of them represents an individual and original ideological conception of our life.

"The fact is," he said, "that one conception does not contradict another: that they are complementary. But in practice we do not always follow that principle of Realistic esthetics which holds that a writer is to be judged according to whatever new discoveries he has made about life aided only by his own artistic resources.

"The demand that they be the best of their day applies of course to all Soviet writers, but it must be applied in a strictly individual manner, taking into account the uniqueness of the talent and experience of each of them. For example, one should not judge Panov with the yardstick suitable for Nikolayeva.

"Today our literature is experiencing a new upsurge of

creative force," B. Bursov emphasized. "This has been stimulated to no small degree by the Party's opposition to the cult of personality and its harmful consequences. The steps taken by the Party prior to the 20th Congress, and a fortiori the resolutions of the 20th Congress, have eliminated hindrances to the manifestation of the initiative of the masses and of each person individually. This period has seen a sharp rise in the social activeness of literature.

"The genuine innovators are those writers who, while not closing their eyes to the negative aspects of our society, are inspired by the powerful creative spirit of our time -- the period of the expanding building of communism.

"One of the typical figures of the literary life of the Fifties, unquestionably, is Ovechkin," the speaker continued. "Ovechkin's work is a lively response to the new demands imposed upon our literature. It has an openly journalistic character: the author's voice and the author's judgments play the decisive role. Ovechkin may be called a journalist-writer. The basic strength of his effect upon the reader is his social temperament, aided by brilliant artistic sketches.

"In contradistinction to Ovechkin, Tendryakov, while attacking similar problems, has no recourse whatsoever to journalistic digressions. His is a poetry of psychological analysis. Tendryakov traces the negative factors in the life of the kolkhoz countryside to the insuperable aspects of the private property world, understanding them rather broadly.

"The experience of Ovechkin and Tendryakov persuades us once again that the artistic individuality of the Soviet writer is formed in the process of his active participation in the varied activity of the people. This means that it is only in endeavoring to merge his work with the life of Soviet society that the writer finds himself, realizes his gifts, and becomes a genuinely artistic individual, whose characteristics he will unfailingly lose if he breaks his contact with his own era. We are familiar with examples of this.

"The general processes of the literary life of recent years have found their expression in the responsible genre of the novel," B. Bursov noted. "Today, when we are enroute to communism, the novel tends toward the synthetic representation of our entire society, overcoming the previous division into 'production' and 'kolkhoz.' In this connection considerable interest attaches to G. Nikolayeva's novel,

'Battle on the Road,' and D. Granin's 'After the Wedding' where these authors pose the problem and solve it, each in his own way. Actually, we are dealing here with two different ways of exploring the psychology of Soviet men and women -- our contemporaries. For Nikolayeva the point of departure is the psychology of the executive, whereas Granin studies the psychology of man considered in relation to his personal life. Nikolayeva moves from the work milieu to private life, Granin from private life to the work milieu. It is obvious that both approaches are legitimate, and that one is not to be given preference over the other. The whole thing is a matter of the writer's kind of personal endowment and experience."

In conclusion, B. Bursov stated: "The experience of Soviet literature shows that the genuine artist of Socialist Realism is always original and unique. For where repetition is possible, there is no creativity. However, the writer must think least of all of striving for originality. This leads only to the elaboration of superficial style. The writer must be concerned with how best to serve his own time. For this purpose he must know his own time, and be able to meet the demands of contemporary art." (B. Bursov's paper was published in No 6 of the journal "Zvezda" for 1959.)

The problem of the diversity of creative individualities in the literature of Socialist Realism engaged the attention of several comrades who offered remarks at the conference.

A. Adamovich (Minsk) commented: "The question can legitimately be asked: To what extent do we critics and literary specialists promote by our work the development of great artistic individualities in our literature? Is it not true that criticism sometimes reduces artistic diversity to the external -- or, more precisely, the arbitrary -- qualities of style? Certain critics solemnly 'permit' writers to write in any genre -- in any style -- and seriously believe that the genre and the style account for all the diversity of the literature of Socialist Realism.

"Fortunately, such is not the case. For example, when we read Sholokhov, and then Leonov, Mayakovsky, and then Tvardovskiy, Kulapa, and then Kuleshov or Maksim Tank, we feel that the difference among their works lies not only in the genre or the style, but in something bigger. All of these writers have one ideology -- the communist ideology.

But this does not prevent them from being very different in their thoughts about life, in the makeup of their emotions. Each of them is a pioneer in a completely new sphere of social life -- a discoverer of new socio-psychological types.

"B. Bursov's paper," A. Adamovich continued, "emphasized the Soviet artist's right to ideological seeking. If it is completely accurate to define 'ideological seekings' as the civic-minded endeavor of our writers, armed with Marxism-Leninism, to penetrate into the unexplored depths and conflicts of their day, then this is not only a right but a duty of the genuine writer -- both as an artist, and as a representative of philosophy, which not only explains the world but actively transforms it.

"The enemies of Marxism and Soviet literature affirm that the Marxist philosophy represses thought and talent, whereas in fact Marxism especially sharpens the vision of the artist, and enables him to penetrate into depths of social life and human psychology where no one else has ever before ventured. Thus Soviet literature is and must be (it is the task of criticism to struggle for this!) a literature of first discoveries. A. V. Lunacharsky wrote: 'The artist whose works illustrate principles of our program which have already been elaborated, is a bad artist. An artist is valuable by virtue of the fact that he brings out something new -- that he employs all of his intuition to penetrate into areas which are ordinarily of difficult access for statistics and logic.'

"Therefore, we must not measure the richness and diversity of literature merely by the variety of genres and styles. A diversity of genres and styles is very important, if it is associated with a richness in the content itself," A. Adamovich noted. "But haven't we often read Russian, Belorussian, and Kazakh novels, apparently differing in style and national flavor, but nonetheless uniformly ordinary in thought, unoriginal in observations, superficial in feeling? The struggle for artistic polychromy and vividness in our literature is above all a struggle for a literature of pioneering discovery as against illustrativeness.

"Recent works distinguished by their artistic discoveries include Stel'makh's 'Human Blood is not Water,' Nilin's 'Cruelty,' Tvardovskiy's 'Distance for Distance,' Nikolayeva's 'Battle on the Road,' the sketches of Ovechkin, the works of Tendryakov, Troyepol'skiy's 'Candidate of Sciences,' the poems

dealing with foreign countries written by the Belorussian poets Tank and Panchenko, etc.'

A. Adamovich concluded: "What, then makes a writer a genuinely creative individual -- a discoverer of new conflicts and types, and of a new style? Talent? Without talent, of course, there can be no great creative individuality. But talent is not manifested at the full until the writer feels the need to intervene in life with what he has to say. It is only when there is awakened within a man an acute feeling of personal responsibility for everything that happens in the world around him, that a person with natural gifts becomes a creative individual. An artist of this kind develops his own, genuinely significant view of the world, his own attitude towards it, his own style. The struggle for artistic richness -- for a diversity of artistic styles in literature -- begins with the struggle for a deeply personal, passionately pro-Party, and civic-minded attitude toward life on the part of each writer."

B. Kostelyanets (Leningrad), dealing with the question of the uniqueness of artistic individuality and the internal logic of the writer's development, discussed in some detail the work of V. Panova and E. Kazakevich.

"If we are to believe some critics," he said, "there is no single writer by the name of Kazakevich. There are at least two, and perhaps even three different writers, who just happen, through a misunderstanding, to have the same last name. One of these writers -- the author of 'The Star' and 'Springs on the Oder' -- is good. Another is the author of the bad story 'Twice in the Steppes' and 'Someone Else's Heart.' And a third is the author of the dubious piece of writing, 'A House on the Square.' But actually, these three are one writer with his own internal logic of development. Along this path there may be successes and quasi-successes and soaring achievements and failures. But the path must be considered in its entirety.

"We are afraid to say that sometimes our shortcomings are an extension or consequence of our good qualities. Otherwise we could explain to the reader that in the case of Kazakevich the same problem which was so well handled in 'The Star' was given a new twist in 'Twice in the Steppes,' and turned out badly. In this way we could show the internal logic of Kazakevich's development." In the speaker's opinion, the same thing applies to Viktor Nekrasov and Pavel Nilin.

V. Shcherbina took issue with B. Kostelyanets, maintaining that Kostelyanets absolutized the personality of the writer.

"The writer is not always at his own best level," V. Shcherbina said. "He may be ahead of his time, or behind it; at the height of his powers, or in their decline. If V. Panov wrote a talented work, but one which was less significant than her 'Companions' / or 'Sputniks' /, why should we not say so? We cannot equate works which are different."

T. Trifonova (Moscow) discussed the necessity of a thorough study of the individual styles of various writers and the inadmissibility of ignoring these styles in a critical evaluation of their work.

"However convincing the statement that there exists a Romantic style in Ukrainian prose, within this prose there exists a difference (for example, between Stel'makh and Gonchar) which is determined by the individual uniqueness and style of the writer (within the framework of Socialist Realism and that national specificity which is characteristic, as typical). It seems to me that our further research should proceed in this direction."

Z. Papernyy (Moscow) commented: "In his paper, B. Bursov correctly stated that one must not ignore the uniqueness of the writer; that Panova must not be measured with a yardstick for Nikolayeva. And yet this practice is still continuing."

In this connection, the speaker criticized the article by B. Suchkov published in No 1 of the journal "Znamya" / The Banner /. "Here we find a quotation from Goethe to the effect that in order to study a poet, one must visit his country," said Z. Papernyy. "And if the work of Panova be figurately regarded as a kind of country, B. Suchkov concludes: 'Why should I go to that country? We still have to figure out what kind of country it is.' And without crossing the borders of that country, he opens up with an unmotivated artillery barrage." (The reference is to 'A Sentimental Novel'.)

M. Polyakov (Moscow), while noting several positive aspects of B. Bursov's paper, stated that it replaced the objective problem of method and style by the abstract problem of personality. It turned out that the creative personality was something independent of either method or world view. But the uniqueness of a writer is manifested in the organic

unity of the personal and unique with the general; i.e., with that which Marx meant in his classic formula: "Man is the totality of social relations." We must not begin to separate the problem of the personality from the problem of the method, world view, and style.

In his concluding words, B. Bursov took issue with the criticism of his paper offered in the remarks of M. Polyakov, and developed the idea of the creative individuality of the writer in connection with his ideological seekings.

"It seems to me," added B. Bursov, "that B. Kostelyanets was not properly understood. It is not a question of amnestying a good writer for a bad work, but of criticizing him for that work, as the author of it."

### The Regional / "National" / Particularity of Art

The second aspect in which the diversity of our literature was considered at the conference, was the regional particularity of styles and forms. L. Novichenko laid heavy emphasis on this question in his paper.

"The various styles and forms of the literature of Socialist Realism really exist primarily in its unique regional aspect," said L. Novichenko. "The artistic richness of our literature is derived first of all from the richness of its regional hues.

"Soviet culture -- and hence Soviet literature as one of its integral parts -- is socialist in content and regional / "national" / in form. Moreover, since the category of content in literature is in no case abstract, features of a certain regional distinctness -- a regional particularity -- are proper not only to the form but also to the content of a literary work.

"The diversity of regional hues in Soviet literature has been formed historically, and in our day it is manifested together with the unity of the general ideological content distinguishing the literature of the socialist nations. Unity in diversity, close interaction while preserving the originality -- the unique regional character of each of the literatures of the peoples of the USSR: such is the most general formula for our literary development when considered in this aspect."

L. Novichenko then showed, on the basis of material from Latvian, Ukrainian, and Belorussian literature, together



with the literatures of the Soviet East, what regional color is acquired by various styles and forms of Socialist Realism, and how the character of the development of this method in the art of various peoples depends upon their regional artistic traditions.

The speaker proposes to undertake a more thoroughgoing study of "regional styles," not in the sense of their special regional genesis and exclusive relevance to a particular literature, but in the sense of their real existence in a particular literature.

In his opinion, the introduction into critical practice of the concept of the regional styles of the literature of Socialist Realism will help more fully and clearly to analyze the diversity of styles in each of our literatures, to ascertain the predominant trends in artistic development, and to bring out their strong and weak sides. (L. Novichenko's paper was published in No 5 of our journal for this year.)

Problems of the regional particularity of Soviet literature were also touched upon in several of the comments offered. The speakers emphasized that Socialist Realism arose in accordance with historical laws in the various regional literatures and facilitated their successful development.

"The thesis that the method of Socialist Realism was imposed upon Soviet literature, including the regional Soviet literatures, is completely untrue," said I. Sultanov (Tashkent). "For example, the history of Uzbek literature shows very plainly that the features of the method of Socialist Realism were elaborated in the historico-literary process itself long before the concept of 'Socialist Realism' was formulated. Visible signs of the new method engendered in the people's struggle for a socialist revolution were evident in the work of such pioneers of Uzbek Soviet literature as Khamza and Ayn in the very first years of the October Revolution.

"The detractors of Socialist Realism say that the recognition, in the Thirties, of Socialist Realism as our basic creative method hindered the normal development of Soviet literature. Is there the slightest confirmation of this in the facts? There is not. On the contrary, the entire history of regional Soviet literatures since the First Writers' Congress in our country has been characterized by a constant and rapid growth. This period has witnessed the full manifestation of the talent of such outstanding writers as Aybek, Gafur Gulyam, Khamid Alimdzhani, and Abdulla Kakhkhar in Uzbek

literature, Ayn and Mirzo Tursun-zade in Tadzhik literature, Auezov and Mukanov in Kazakh literature, Kerbabayev in Turkmen literature, etc. These and many other writers of the peoples of Central Asia and Kazakhstan have created numerous works which have become a part of the gold fund of Soviet literature.

"Our enemies talk of the levelling effect of the method of Socialist Realism. But the possession of a common method in literature has never meant a levelling -- an erosion of the regional peculiarities of the literatures of various peoples, or the individual traits of different writers," the speaker said. "No serious investigator can deny the uniqueness of the creative aspect of the most outstanding representatives of the literatures of the peoples of the USSR. The fine works of the regional Soviet literatures brilliantly reflect the uniqueness of the national character of the given people, its culture and way of life in the past and in the present, and the uniqueness of its metaphors -- in particular, as expressed in the literary language of the people.

"Apropos attacks by enemies, we must remember that in certain cases our own mistakes provide grist for provocative moves against Socialist Realism," I. Sultanov said further. "It is quite intolerable that works which are ideologically and artistically weak should be proclaimed models of the literature of Socialist Realism. Likewise fallacious is the practice, manifested in certain critical works, of exaggerating the role of literary influences in the success of a regional literature, while overlooking or minimizing the success of the regional literatures themselves. And critics make an equally great mistake when they try to show that the representatives of our regional Soviet literatures have learned only from Russian literature. Our regional writers learn not merely from Pushkin and Tolstoy, but from Balzac and Shakespeare, not only from Gorky, Mayakovsky, and Sholokhov, but from many other representatives of socialist literature at home and abroad."

The literatures of the peoples of the USSR, while undergoing the favorable influence of Russian and world literature, have at the same time remained true to regional traditions. In those literatures, national styles are successfully developed, and traditional national forms and images are utilized in new ways. The problem of regional styles and

forms was examined in considerable detail at the conference. In particular, R. Bikmukhmetov (Moscow) devoted his speech to this subject.

"Stylistic analysis," he said, "can serve as a basis for broad generalizations only if the threads reach back to classical and world literature. The problem of stylistic innovation in Soviet literature cannot be solved in any simple way without keeping in view the many centuries of evolution of styles in the given (and the world) literature. Otherwise a consideration of the problem bogs down in details and particulars, and ceases to be scientific. This applies especially to the Soviet eastern literatures. For example, Tatar poetry, having undergone the influence of Russian, Western European, and Oriental literatures, created in the past the most varied stylistic trends. These trends constituted the basis for the stylistic development of Soviet Tatar poetry.

"The first stylistic principle to be picked up by the Soviet poets, and the one which determined the entire character of the literature, was the Realistic. But together with this central, general principle, Tatar Soviet poetry has inherited other stylistic trends: the folklore-conventional, conventional-rhetorical, etc.

"The conventional-rhetorical style," R. Bikumkhametov noted, "has transmitted something else besides bad traditions. Existing over thousands of years, it elaborated a number of nontransitional esthetic values an encroachment upon which is equivalent to attacking the very essence of certain Eastern literatures. The conventional rhetorical style has implanted the tradition of a delicately refined perception of the objects and phenomena of nature, of the beauties of man, and of his inner world. In the process of nurturing in man a love for the unfading charm of nature -- of teaching him to value the delicacy and beauty of movements of the heart and of thought -- it has implanted human feelings.

"And yet a negative attitude toward the classical traditions of the Eastern literatures was maintained for a long time, and there are still evidences of it. In many articles and reviews one encounters distorted judgments as to the 'hackneyed' character of traditional images and symbols, and comments to the effect that they have 'outlived' their time, that they are not original, etc. But art must not be studied through the works of mediocrities," the speaker

concluded. "The literature of Socialist Realism must develop, and is developing, those national stylistic traditions which are organic for the given people and fruitful in our time."

The particularity of the national style of Georgian poetry was noted in the remarks by V. Orlov.

"In creating their great, lofty, and passionate art," he said, "the classical Georgian poets drew upon a rich folk tradition and elaborated a strictly monumental poetic style, genuinely unique in its regional particularity. In its best works, Soviet Georgian poetry is developing that national style."

"It is true that in the Thirties and Forties, an externally decorative and internally deadening hackneyed 'ornamentation' began to affect widely the work of several talented Georgian poets. But recently, Georgian poetry has successfully overcome this. Without losing any of its regional and particular uniqueness, it is now pushing back the boundaries of its world and is again spreading its wings."

"In this connection it should in no case be understood that the regional poet (in this case the Georgian poet) should reject the imagery and symbolism which are customary for him and which have developed historically. In particular, when it is a question of Georgian poetry (or of other poetry of the East), we need not fear the word 'symbolism,' since a symbolism which is always concrete -- always filled with real, vital content -- has been a typical feature of such poetry since time immemorial."

A. Abramovich (Irkutsk) suggested that the question of regional particularity should not be reduced to language alone. It is necessary to study the reflection of the national character in the literature. The speaker showed that features of Russian national character were reflected in several works by Siberian writers.

Ya. Niyedre discussed the development of Socialist Realism in Latvian literature. K. Zelinskiy (Moscow) analyzed certain trends in the development of contemporary Estonian literature. (The paper by K. Zelinskiy, in which his views on this subject are set forth, was published in No 4 of our journal for this year.)

Problems of national style were also considered in the remarks by G. Lomidze (Moscow).

"A high, solemn style, a poignant tension, and a

striving for beautiful and effective comparisons are proper to many of the metaphors of Eastern poetry," he said. "The thought flows in a broad current, taking with it many chunks of life in its impetuous flow. In the poetry of the Eastern classical poets it is not always possible to discover concrete and realistic details, the psychological motivation of deeds and acts, or exploration of the dialectics of the human soul. The poet's creative attention is directed toward other aspects of life: the heightened or the tragic. He loves broad, bold comparisons and parallels. He thinks on the grand scale.

"'Rhetoric and magniloquence,' strict guardians of the truth will say, failing to see into the heart of the matter, and measuring literary values by amorphous criteria. But," continued G. Lomidze, "if we examine the question seriously, studying the actual background -- social, historical, literary -- it becomes obvious that this is not rhetoric but genuine literary art, achieved through suffering and experience. Is it legitimate to equate a rhetoric which is cold and insincere with a solemn, lofty, elevated, and elegant style overflowing with great energy and passion?"

Emphasizing that style must be considered in connection with the regional particularities of creative thinking, G. Lomidze touched upon the question of the relationship between Realism and Romanticism.

"In Ukrainian, Azerbaydzhan, Uzbek, Armenian, Georgian, Tadzhik and certain other literatures," he noted, "Romanticism did not exist merely as a specific historico-literary trend. In those literatures Romanticism constituted a local stylistic trend which invariably accompanied literary development. The indissolubility of the Romantic form of art and the local literary tradition -- or, more precisely, the merger of the Romantic tradition and the local style -- endowed Romanticism with a special ideological and esthetic content. Through the Romantic color and the Romantic form shone real life."

The question of various stylistic trends existing in regional literatures naturally led the delegates to the problem of the existence in the art of Socialist Realism of various stylistic trends and creative tendencies.

### Stylistic Trends

The speakers emphasized the legitimacy of the writer's

resorting to the most varied forms, provided those forms made for a correct reflection of reality. In that connection the question arose as to whether the Romantic and conventional styles did not run counter to the basic principles of Socialist Realism, and in particular, to the principle of historical concreteness.

"A conventional, hyperbolic, Romantic form of art does not conflict with the method of Socialist Realism," G. Lomidze commented. "If we are to take the requirements of the esthetic of Socialist Realism in the sense of a norm, we shall have to throw out of the arsenal of our literature a large number of the works of Brecht, S. Vurgun, N. Khikmet, Yu. Yanovskiy, G. Leonidze, G. Gulyanm, O. Shiraz, and others. The work of these writers contains a good many Romantically exalted metaphors, allegories, and symbols -- a good deal that is conventional and hyperbolic.

"But how does all this accord with the poetics of Socialist Realism? How does it accord with one of the requirements of the method of Socialist Realism: to represent life concretely and historically? At first glance it would seem that a Romantic, conventional form of art completely rejects such requirements. Motivated by a charitable impulse to 'save' many beautiful works of literature from their deviation from Socialist Realism, certain critics have found a way out. 'We must reject historical concreteness,' they say, 'as not consonant with the diversified experience of the development of Soviet culture.'

"The delusion of these comrades consists in the fact that they are overly literal in their interpretation of the concept of 'the historical concreteness of representation.' Historical concreteness of representation does not mean a blind, unswerving adherence to the facts, documentary precision of representation, and absolute correspondence of the means of representation to the forms of that which is being represented. The concept of 'historical concreteness of representation' contains a more profound and significant meaning. It by no means compels us to consider art as a simple analogue of reality. Moreover, I am persuaded that 'historical concreteness of representation' applies not to poetics, not to the form of literary works, but to the thought of the writer: to the purposiveness, clarity, and specificity of artistic thinking. A conventional and Romantic form of art did not prevent either B. Brecht or

N. Khikmet or G. Leonidze from using these forms to express, not conventional, but very clear, vividly apprehended social ideas -- the great philosophy of our time. Artistic symbols and allegories sometimes do not weaken but, on the contrary, strengthen the resonance of that idea, and make the writer's thought tangible, sweeping, and acute."

The question of Romantic, conventional forms and historical concreteness was also discussed in the remarks of I. Fradkin (Moscow) and Ye. Tager (Moscow).

"All of us," said Ye. Tager, "reiterate the idea that Socialist Realism presupposes a diversity of artistic styles. But the formula is frequently interpreted as follows: a diversity of artistic styles is a diversity of creative individualities. Actually, this is nothing but a confirmation of the simple fact that the practitioner of Socialist Realism has an original and unique view of the world. This is quite true. But at the same time there is no specificity of the art of Socialist Realism. For is art in general possible in the absence of creative individuality?

"And yet a great diversity of styles is possible in the art of Socialist Realism. We have discussed here the Realistic and Romantic modes. But these are not the only stylistic modes of Socialist Realism. We are very poorly provided with terminology. Perhaps this is due to the fact that there is a good deal we simply do not know how to name. Stylistically, for example, the work of Mayakovsky cannot be described using only the concepts of the Realistic and Romantic styles.

"It seems to me," continued Ye. Tager, "that the basic difference between the method of Socialist Realism and the methods which preceded it consists in the much greater latitude in the conception of reality which is opened up before the artist in the socialist world. And this latitude of historic conception makes possible -- and even demands -- a diversified system of artistic vision, without which one cannot solve the great task of reproducing the truth of the revolutionary development of society which constitutes the foundation of Socialist Realism."

I. Yanovski (Novosibirsk) took issue with certain statements in the paper read by L. Novichenko. He said:

"What is the representation of reality in its revolutionary development? Today, in my opinion, it is the representation of what is, what must be, and what inevitably will be.

"If we analyze some of the statements in the paper read by L. Novichenko, they turn out to mean that in Socialist Realism there exists a Romantic trend and a Realistic trend, and that one of them (the Realistic) is the main one, of the first quality, while the other one is not so important, and of secondary quality. I have in mind particularly L. Novichenko's remark that 'esthetically, the minds and feelings of our contemporaries are moved not only -- and even not so much -- by Romantic styles (for all their undoubted significance to our literature) as by that great Realistic art which compels by virtue of its astounding plasticity and deep penetration into living reality, and which is the main mode and the main stylistic tradition of Socialist Realism.'

"But great Realistic art is, it would seem, the art of Socialist Realism, an integral part of which is revolutionary Romanticism. I of course understand that in the one instance it is a matter of method and in the other a matter of style. But the statement regarding the 'first-rate quality' of the Realistic style and the 'second-rate quality' of the Romantic style does not become any more understandable or correct because of this.

"Why is this so? Because, it seems to me, the Romantic trend in Socialist Realism is sometimes understood abstractly. Today, when we talk of revolutionary Romanticism, we base our remarks not on the experience of our literature, but on the old concept of Romanticism which was the child of its time. Naturally, it turns out that the Romantic trend is a second-rate trend. And yet the theoretical thought and artistic practice of such writers as Gorky and Fadeyev showed that outstanding Soviet writers have struggled for a solution of the problem of synthesizing revolutionary Romanticism and Realism.

"Who can doubt that Fadeyev and Vs. Ivanov, Lavrenev and Gaydar, Bagritskiy and Svetlov, Vishnevskiy and Paustovskiy were Realistic writers, while at the same time the "Romantic" element in their work was expressed clearly and forcefully? Thoughtful consideration of these instances in our literature should lead us to a clear understanding of the fact that Socialist Realism is inconceivable without revolutionary Romanticism. This is also borne out by recent works like the stories of Demet'yev, Kuznetsov, and Sartakov, and Sobko's novel. They have that loftiness, exalted spirit of creation, and striving for the future which may rightly be



called revolutionary Romanticism.

"An analysis of the many years of experience of Soviet literature convincingly shows that the representation of reality in its revolutionary development also includes a look at the future -- at the reality of tomorrow."

In his concluding remarks, L. Novichenko took issue with N. Yanovskiy. He emphasized that the consideration of Revolutionary Romanticism as an integral part of Socialist Realism does not exclude the fact that in the case of several writers the individual features of this Romanticism have assumed special forms of artistic expression, being manifested with great intensity. This means that we have writers using a definitely Romantic form as one of the many stylistic modes of Socialist Realism.

"Fedor Gladkov and Andrey Upit and Yuriy Yanovskiy are all Social Realists," commented L. Novichenko. "But we make very sharp distinctions among them in terms of the predominance or lack of Romantic modes of representation in a particular writer. My opponent states that there is revolutionary Romanticism in the work of Kuznetsov and Sobko. Naturally, this is a feature of the great majority of our books. However, one must distinguish between Romanticism as a definite vital striving -- as a feeling existing in life and in literature -- and Romanticism as a phenomenon of style with the means and devices of artistic expression proper to it.

"I am not in agreement with N. Yanovskiy when he says that in my paper the Romantic trend is held to be second-rate," continued L. Novichenko. "Such is not the case. But I do think that critics have the right, on the basis of the concrete regional conditions obtaining in each literature, to formulate the necessity of developing those creative and stylistic trends which they find the most fruitful at the given stage of development of the native literature."

The conference emphasized that there has so far been grossly inadequate recognition of the fact that various stylistic trends exist within the framework of Socialist Realism. It is essential to clarify the particularity of those trends, their concrete peculiarities, and the dialectics of the relationship between style and method. And this is a task which must be accomplished by our literary criticism. It is necessary to make a thorough and detailed study of the problem relating to the various forms of representation, including Realistic conventional forms, and at the same time to wage a decisive

struggle against Idealistic and formalistic interpretation of those important problems, which impel artists along the path of Subjectivism and Naturalism.

Many speakers tried to relate the discussion of the problems of the esthetic innovation of our method and the diversity of artistic forms and styles in Socialist Realism to the tasks now facing our literature.

The delegates continued the discussion begun by A. Surkov on the esthetic education of the people.

V. Inber (Moscow) discussed the mutual responsibility of the writer and the reader.

"There has been a certain deterioration in the taste of readers," she said, "and we must combat it. While paying close attention to what readers have to say, we must educate them and not be afraid to discuss their shortcomings with them. The reader is also responsible for the state of affairs in literature; and when its level drops somewhat, readers have a part in the process as well as do writers. Sometimes readers take over certain not entirely successful methods with which criticism operates."

V. Inber cited the example of certain readers' comments on G. Nikolayeva's "Battle on the Road." She mentioned the harmful influence exerted on youth by so-called "spy literature." They are also attracted to it because our serious literature is not entertaining: it is not interesting enough. "It frequently happens," V. Inber said, "that in reading a book we know in advance what will happen later on, and this kills our interest in it. Writers and critics must devote more attention to the plot and to composition, pitilessly combatting tediousness."

G. Brovman and A. Isbakh (Moscow) discussed the correct formation of esthetic taste in readers, and the question of enlarging the educational role of our literature.

V. Pankov (Moscow) noted that an urgent task of our contemporary literature is to devote attention not only to those types which have already been formed, but also to new types which are forming, growing, and developing under our very eyes.

V. Yermilov, in his remarks, posed the problem of the necessity of formulating and developing certain theoretical formulations of the statutes of the Writers' Union: on the method of Socialist Realism, the world view of the artist, and its relationship to life.

Substantive problems of contemporary literature were discussed in many other speeches -- a fact which distinguished this conference from certain theoretical discussions in the past. But the orientation toward the present which is taking place among our literary theoreticians and historians, is still inadequate. A good many of the remarks made at the conference were scholastic in nature, divorced from life, and imbued with a spirit of abstract theorizing. And some of the comments were lacking in content, empty, devoid of analysis, generalizations, or searching. However, they did not determine the general aspect of the conference. Its chief tendency was a rapprochement of literary history with criticism, of theory with practice.

The results of the conference were summed up by I. Anisimov.

"The conference," he said, "was interesting and meaningful because it succeeded in posing certain substantive problems of the socialist esthetic, not abstractly or speculatively, but in the closest connection with the requirements of life -- with the living practice of our art.

"The very rich creative experience of Soviet literature fructifies and advances our theory. At the same time, literary development depends upon the level of theoretical generalization of the phenomena of contemporary literature.

"There has been a certain lack of proportion in the treatment of particular aspects of the theory of Socialist Realism; and it would therefore be desirable to concentrate the chief emphasis on those areas where the least has been done. There is no question as to the genesis of Socialist Realism, although one still encounters, on occasion, viewpoints which presumably were rejected long ago. The philosophical foundation of Socialist Realism is likewise unquestionable and clear. Esthetic problems, in the strict sense of the word, have been solved to a considerably less degree. It is only by moving ahead in this sphere that we shall be able to discover the scope of our literature: its creative power and tremendous possibilities.

"It was with good reason, therefore, that the conference concentrated its main attention on studying the esthetic innovations of Socialist Realism. Above all, several valuable ideas were advanced, and some serious generalizations as well, concerning the artistic uniqueness of Soviet multi-national literature and clarifying the dialectics of

the development of Soviet literature in its unity and in the complex polychromy of its regional currents.

"It was very important to show that our esthetic conception, for all its clarity and definite character, is distinguished by great flexibility; that great latitude is proper to it. It is indisputable that this conception includes Romanticism. Our literature is able to express through the means of Socialist Realism everything that was formerly the special domain of Romanticism. The principle that Romanticism is contained in Socialist Realism is of very great importance. It emphasizes the scope of our creative method and its inherent force of historical synthesis.

"Some correct statements were also made as to other aspects of the esthetic richness and diversity of our literature.

"There is no question but what, within the framework of Socialist Realism, one can have works to which a conventionality of form is proper. Some critics manifest a certain prejudice in the presence of such works. Actually, however, everything is decided by the conception of the whole -- by what the writer wants to express by the means of literary conventions. And whereas all types of abstruseness and modernist artificiality are absolutely incompatible with Socialist Realism, the search for a form expressing socialist content with the greatest force cannot be limited a priori. So that the traits of conventionality in the work of any writer must always be considered in connection with what the work represents as an ideological-artistic unity. Here, as everywhere, the schematic approach is contraindicated.

"There were a great many disagreements as to the innovation of Socialist Realism and our classical traditions.

"It must not be thought that our constant interest in the classics is capable of restraining the innovational impulse of Soviet literature. As if our literature did not have its own physiognomy! As if it had not yet attained its maturity! The fruitfulness of the historical perspective for the systematic and all-encompassing study of the innovations of Soviet literature was convincingly demonstrated at the conference. The time has come when the problem of classical traditions should really be posed in its entirety, and when Soviet literature should more boldly measure its accomplishments against the scale of our great classical inheritance.

"Historical optimism constitutes the greatest innova-

tion of Soviet literature -- our greatest esthetic achievement. Naturally, however, it has nothing in common with superficial optimism, with the vulgar notion of the beautiful soul, or with remarks to the effect that we shall soon have done with the category of the tragic. No, the spirit of historical optimism means a new attitude toward reality: the possibility of fully disclosing that reality. This is an important aspect of our esthetic uniqueness.

"It was good, and very important, that the creative individuality of the writer was discussed. Naturally, the question of the creative individuality is indivisible from the question as to the social system under which that individuality is formed and develops. In the bourgeois world, which with no justification whatsoever calls itself 'free,' we encounter a concept of individuality which is very false. In our society, creative individuality is accorded unprecedentedly favorable conditions for its development. Under conditions of genuine freedom, ideological and creative searchings have unlimited horizons. To our way of thinking, the scope of creative individuality is equivalent to the scope of its creative responsibility.

"Unfortunately, the individual attempts which were made to define the creative individuality of the writer were not very successful. The transition from the correct postulate to judging the creative individuality of a given writer should have been made more thoughtfully, more accurately, and more meaningfully.

"As for the creative individuality of the Soviet critic or literary historian, it should be especially manifested in his intransigence toward dogmatism or the schematic approach. And yet there was a good deal of the schematic in some of the remarks offered at the conference. It would seem that certain comrades have completely forgotten that in the course of the past 40 years tremendous changes have taken place, and are still taking place every day. Their remarks left the impression that our criticism and literary history had long ceased to move ahead, and had been arrested in their development. What I have in mind is the re-emergence of the opposition between the individual and the collective, between the classical heritage and Soviet literature. Actually, these are problems which were solved long ago by life itself -- by the very experience of our literature.

"We must have a boldness, a taste for the new, an

intransigence toward the schematic, flat solution of problems. This is a very important feature of the creative individuality of the Soviet literary historian and critic.

"The conference showed a genuine intransigence toward the comments of the foreign Revisionists, and gave them that setback which they will always encounter in any attempt to slander Soviet literature.

"There is no doubt but what Soviet literary history and criticism have matured in recent years. Searching exploratory thought is pulsating intensively, and we are confidently moving forward.

"It may be said that very interesting changes are taking place among us imperceptibly. Thus the number of persons working on the most urgent problems of our literary development has substantially increased. The conference showed that many of our famous specialists in the literature of the Nineteenth Century are now successfully working on the theory of Socialist Realism. Thus unique diffusion among the students of the classics and of our contemporary literature is fruitful. One excellent feature of many of the remarks offered by literary historians and critics was the fact that they were closely related to life and the requirements of our literature, and were imbued with a spirit of contemporaneity. The conference was strongly oriented toward helping our literature to move forward on the basis of party-ness and intensifying its connection with life along the lines laid down by the 21st Congress of the CPSU.

"It is to be hoped," I. Anisimov emphasized in conclusion, "that the conference will strengthen the consolidation of the forces of Soviet literary history and criticism; that our future work will be on a higher level than it was in the past."

END