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The Russian Classical Literary Heritage and the Basic Concepts of Soviet Literary Education

Every effort is being made to retain in the literature programs of the Soviet schools and universities all the best work of the Russian literary giants of the nineteenth century. There is even a trend in Soviet scholarship to place the best literary work of the Soviet period in the tradition of the nineteenth-century Russian classics. Lenin repeated time and again that it was necessary "to assimilate critically all that is valuable from the preceding culture."¹ Some Soviet scholars go even further and claim that socialist realism and its best representatives are continuing the literary traditions of the great nineteenth-century Russian writers. Konstantin Fedin is thought of as one who continues Turgenev's "traditions of intellectualism" and shares his ability to be "a chronicler of his epoch, a creator of unforgettable women characters,"² and Sholokhov is regarded as a writer who further develops Tolstoy's style. Some Soviet critics even complain because there is no visible link in the educational programs to connect Mayakovsky with Pushkin and Lermontov.³

As far as the teaching of contemporary Soviet literature is concerned, the emphasis is on authors and works well known and approved by political and party leaders. The latest works appearing in Soviet literary magazines and journals do not find their way into the programs of educational institutions. It is little wonder, since much of contemporary Soviet literature passes unnoticed: "Four-fifths of the new works of literature receive no mention in literary criticism."⁴ The same is true of the literary groups that continued to exist in the early postrevolutionary period: "Their aesthetic platforms are treated in an obscure manner."⁵

Thus the teaching of literature and the humanities is "mainly turned to the past, toward the study of the history and literature of the presocialist

1. B. Meilakh, "Novye materialy o vzgliadakh Lenina na literaturu i iskusstvo," *Zvezda*, 1961, no. 4, p. 187.

2. T. P. Golovanov, "Turgenev i sovetskaia literatura," *Russkaia literatura*, 1968, no. 4, p. 25.

3. A. Shishkin, "Podstupy k resheniiu vazhnoi zadachi," *Zvezda*, 1950, no. 4, pp. 167-73.

4. From a speech by L. Timofeev delivered at a conference discussing the three-volume *Istoriia russkoi sovetskoi literatury*, at the Institute of World Literature named after A. M. Gorky. See *Voprosy literatury*, 1962, no. 3, pp. 59-60.

5. From a speech by P. Kraevsky at the same conference. *Ibid.*, p. 65.

epoch,"⁶ and the teacher must possess the necessary skill to extract from a work of art created in a bourgeois society, and by an artist alien to the socialist order of things, the components most useful for Soviet education. This skill is based on a knowledge of the basic precepts of Marx and Lenin. In practice these precepts are narrowed down, by Soviet literary theory, to a number of guidelines according to which every work of literature is to be judged. These principles are discussed in the Soviet theory of literature under the headings *klassovost'* (class character), *ideinost'* (moral substance), *narodnost'* (national spirit), and *partiinnost'* (partyness, party principles and spirit). Soviet literary history and criticism make use of these principles in different combinations and proportions depending on which work of art is being discussed.

It may seem to the uninitiated student of Russian literature that the principle of *klassovost'* is the least complicated and that by proceeding from the Leninist assumption that there are several cultures in each contemporary bourgeois nation (*natsional'nost'*) it would be enough to establish the class background of a writer and go on from there. The fact is, however, that "the analysis of the class direction of the writer's creative work presents one of the most difficult problems in the study of literature."⁷ The dilemma in applying the principle of *klassovost'* is that if the class background of a writer were to be the only measure of his *klassovost'*, there would be no room in Soviet education for the works of most prerevolutionary writers. The principle of *klassovost'* is that a member of a certain class expresses the class consciousness of his own stratum: "Whether the artist wants it or not he is connected with his epoch; but he is always an offspring of his class, and certain class interests, certain forms of class struggle, are always reflected in his work."⁸ The efforts to demonstrate this very truth and to find evidence that the nineteenth-century classics expressed the views of a bourgeois society are objectives of the so-called vulgar sociologists of literature. In connection with the denunciation of vulgar sociology and with the increased effort to emphasize the link between socialist culture and the best writing of the past, this proposition has been put forth: "In reality classes are not isolated one from another, but find themselves in a complex interaction. Owing to this, the ideologies of writers belonging to different classes often have, along with marked differences, similar, common traits. These similar, sometimes common, traits are the reason for the fact that a writer, while being a representative of a certain class, also expresses to a degree the feelings, moods, strivings, and

6. M. T. Iovchuk, "O meste gumanitarnykh nauk v sisteme formirovaniia kommunisticheskogo mirovozzreniia molodezhi," *Voprosy filosofii*, 1959, no. 6, p. 21.

7. A. I. Reviakin, *Problema tipicheskogo v khudozhestvennoi literature: Posobie dlia uchitelia* (Moscow, 1959), p. 28.

8. L. Plotkin, *Partiia i literatura* (Leningrad, 1960), p. 18.

interests of persons belonging to other classes.”⁹ Thus it is hinted that a member of one class can express to a degree the views of another class. According to Marxism-Leninism this does not mean, however, that the artist adopts a nonclass position. He remains consciously or unconsciously a member of his own class, and he speaks in the name of his class: “Even if an artist, as has happened many times, has become convinced of the historical injustice of the interests of his class, and, being honest with himself and with others, refuses to defend them, it does not mean in the least that by doing so he is going over to the position of another class.”¹⁰

The nineteenth-century Russian classical writers were members of a class whose interests were far from those of the radicals and revolutionaries, and although some of these writers were progressive for their time and age, their aims and philosophy of life did not come near the aims of the working class and the proletariat, in the sense in which these terms are understood today. The accepted (in Marxist-Leninist theory) division into classes can hardly be adopted for the purpose of analyzing the class character of Pushkin and his contemporaries.

With the denunciation of vulgar sociology, coupled with the effort to re-establish the nineteenth-century classics in a prominent place in Soviet education, the importance of *klassovost'* as a guiding principle for the evaluation of a prerevolutionary work of art diminishes. In the latest textbooks on the theory of literature the discussion of *klassovost'* as such is omitted altogether. “Class struggle,” it is suggested, “has different stages and degrees of development. On the higher stages, in the conditions of highly developed contradictions, it assumes a political character and it shapes itself into a struggle of parties.”¹¹ The class character of literature is thus associated with political struggle—an association which may be of some use in the interpretation of a Soviet work of art, but which is useless in the treatment of prerevolutionary literature retained in the programs.

A close similarity exists in Soviet literary theory in the treatment of the notions of *klassovost'* and *ideinost'*. There is hardly a textbook on literature that would have no mention at all of the *klassovost'* and *ideinost'* of a work studied. The program for the university course on “The Introduction to the Study of Literature” (“Vvedenie v literaturovedenie”) requires in the first chapter a discussion of *ideinost'* and *klassovost'* along with *narodnost'* and *partiinnost'*.¹² To the students' dismay, however, no clear-cut definition of

9. Reviakin, *Problema tipicheskogo*, p. 28.

10. G. Kunitsyn, “Klassovost' v literature,” *Znamia*, 1968, no. 1, p. 226.

11. Reviakin, *Problema tipicheskogo*, p. 32.

12. MGU, Kafedra russkoi literatury, *Proekt programma po kursu “Vvedenie v literaturovedenie (dlia filologicheskikh fakul'tetov gosudarstvennykh universitetov)”* (Moscow, 1960), p. 77.

klassovost' or *ideinosť*' is to be found in the approved textbooks on literary theory.

It is difficult, if not impossible, to regard *klassovost'* and *ideinosť*' as Marxist philosophical categories, since these notions were introduced into the Marxist-Leninist terminology in the post-Marxian period. But it is possible to deduce the meaning of *ideinosť*' from the Marxist explanation of ideas and perception. According to Marxism the creation of ideas has to do with man's participation in the process of production. Since ideas change along with the changes in the process of production, there is only a semblance of independence and "objectivity" of ideas.¹³ Thus literature, which is regarded as "one of the forms of social consciousness, one of the forms of ideology,"¹⁴ is conditioned by the existing economic situation, which expresses itself, in a given society, in the existing relation between the productive forces and the means of production: "*Ideinosť*' is perceived in the context of Lenin's literary judgment as something that has already been discovered in the *Weltanschauung* of the writer, something that has already been formed into a system of his views."¹⁵ In Soviet society Communist *ideinosť*' conditions "the main task of the literature of socialist realism—the active struggle for the building of a Communist society and a qualitatively new approach to all social problems: labor, peace and war, happiness, love and marriage, and so forth."¹⁶ In Soviet terminology to subscribe to the principles of *ideinosť*' simply means to adopt the positions of the party by subscribing to its ideology. In this sense *ideinosť*' must be regarded not only as a strong weapon of literary criticism but also as an indicator of how Soviet literature is to be written, and therefore it must reflect the latest theoretical and political developments in world communism. Since *ideinosť*' as applied to contemporary Soviet literature would mean the reflection in a work of art of Marxist-Leninist ideology as it is understood today by Soviet leaders, one must be aware of the latest developments on the "ideological front," which are often connected with political events, in order to project a proper point of view in a work of art. No longer is there a single source for the development and interpretation of Marxist dogma. In the present era of polycentrism in world communism the Soviet author must be more careful than ever if he is to stand up to rigid scrutiny in the light of *ideinosť*' and not be accused of deviating from the party line.

But what about the nineteenth-century Russian classics to which such an application of the principle of *ideinosť*' would be unsuitable because "the ob-

13. *Khrestomatiia po dialekticheskomu i istoricheskomu materializmu*, 2nd ed. (Moscow, 1970), p. 333.

14. Plotkin, *Partiia i literatura*, p. 13.

15. V. Kaminsky, "Problema khudozhestvennoi pravdy v literaturnykh otsenkakh V. I. Lenina," *Neva*, 1964, no. 4, p. 164.

16. Reviakin, *Problema tipicheskogo*, p. 325.

jective content of a work of art is determined by the author's subjective point of view concerning the society depicted by him"¹⁷ And the author's point of view is, in turn, determined by the conditions of his own society. It seems that the solution to this apparent contradiction is to apply to the nineteenth-century classics a concept of *ideinost'* that is divorced from the philosophical *Weltanschauung* of the writer, speaking of it in a broad sense. *Ideinost'* in this context is regarded as a moral quality connected with the writer's character and his personal philosophy of life, which expresses itself in his attitude toward the weak, humiliated, and downtrodden, and manifests itself in the positive deeds of the heroes in his works.

The only term discussed here which has been inherited by Soviet culture together with the works of the Russian classicists is *narodnost'*. The word was introduced into Russian literature by the poet and critic P. A. Viazemsky, who used it in a letter to A. I. Turgenev, in November 1819, and later in his article "A Conversation of a Classic with an Editor" (1825). Some of Viazemsky's contemporaries ascribe the introduction of this term to A. Bestuzhev (apparently without sufficient ground).¹⁸ Of course Viazemsky could not predict, nor could he expect, that the term would become so popular in the years to come. He simply chose to use the Russian word *narodnost'* for the French word *nationalité*. With Pushkin this term received new meaning. After stating that to different people the word means different things, Pushkin called *narodnost'* "a virtue which can be fully valued only by one's own fellow countrymen." He said that it was "a climate, a way of ruling, a faith giving each nation its particular physiognomy, which is, more or less, reflected in the mirror of poetry."¹⁹ In his commentaries on Pushkin as a poet Gogol often used the terms *narodnost'* and *natsional'nost'* (nationality) interchangeably. He claimed that it is not important what a writer depicts, but how he depicts it, and whether the spirit of his people is conveyed. He said that a poet could be national even in depicting other peoples and nations; he only has to look at them with the eyes of his own people, his own nation.²⁰

V. G. Belinsky, whose use of the term *narodnost'* is closer to the contemporary Soviet interpretation, gave this definition: "*Narodnost'* is not a virtue, it is a necessary condition of a true work of art, if under *narodnost'*

17. E. N. Kupreianova, *Estetika L. N. Tolstogo* (Moscow and Leningrad, 1966), p. 13.

18. M. G. Zel'dovich and L. Ia. Livshits, *Russkaia literatura XIX v.: Khrestomatiiia kriticheskikh materialov* (Moscow, 1964), pp. 110-11. A. Dremov claims that "the first thorough attempt to define the principle of *narodnost'* of art was made in Russia by the Decembrist O. Somov, in his monograph *O romanticheskoi poezii* (1823)." (See "Iskusstva vysshii kriterii," *Literaturnaia gazeta*, June 23, 1971, p. 4.)

19. A. S. Pushkin, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 16 vols. (Leningrad, 1937-50), 11:40.

20. N. V. Gogol, *Sobranie sochinenii v semi tomakh* (Moscow, 1967), 6:69-70.

we are to understand a truthful depiction of a people's or country's disposition, customs, and character. The life of any nation is expressed in its own unique forms. Consequently, if the depiction is *truthful*, it complies with the requirements of the term *narodnost'*."²¹ Though his interpretation of *narodnost'* is fairly close to the current one, Belinsky confused *narodnost'* with *natsionalnost'*. For the young Belinsky *narodnost'* in literature was connected with its national originality, and he could not reconcile the aristocratic background of some writers with the *narodnost'* of their works. Thus he criticized the tales of Pushkin, claiming that they contained "Russian words, but no Russian spirit."²²

Soviet texts on the theory of literature, approved for use in institutions of higher learning, endeavor to give a contemporary definition to the term *narodnost'*. L. I. Timofeev examines it as an aesthetic category in its chronological evolution, and finds it the highest form of artistry (*khudozhestvennost'*). In other words, no work of art can stand up against the measure of *narodnost'* unless it has high artistic value. The transition from artistry to *narodnost'* is determined by the conditions of *narodnost'* which are "revealed in the stating of problems of general national concern by the author, in an approach to these problems which favors the interests of the people, in a depiction of man which would contribute to the spiritual growth of the people, and in the democratism of form which would make sure that the masses understand the given work."²³

Timofeev says that in the past an author seldom expressed ideas that were a direct reflection of the people's interests. He claims, however, that the truthful and sensitive depiction of reality can "lead to correct conclusions, even though the writer himself has not done so."²⁴ This is the key to the use of *narodnost'*. The Soviet literary historian is given a free hand in the interpretation of a nineteenth-century work of literature, and he sometimes arrives at conclusions the author himself would never have dreamed of. Thus, regardless of what attitudes Turgenev, Tolstoy, and Dostoevsky had toward the aims and means of the revolution, they are still considered to be connected with the liberation movements in Russia, if only because their works depict members of society who were involved, in one way or another, in these movements and struggles. It has been assumed by Soviet literary historians that Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, and Turgenev were afraid of the tragic outcome of a bourgeois revolution in Russia and therefore looked for other paths in their search for the liberation of mankind—for justice and happiness. In most cases the path led toward moral self-improvement, a solution far from acceptable to

21. V. G. Belinsky, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 12 vols. (Moscow, 1953–56), 1:295.

22. *Ibid.*, p. 151.

23. L. I. Timofeev, *Osnovy teorii literatury* (Moscow, 1966), p. 124.

24. *Ibid.*, p. 121.

the radicals and revolutionaries: "But the power of these writers did not express itself in their preaching of moralism and utopia, but rather in artistic exploration of life. Realism helped to discover the terrible and real truth of social and political life in imperialist Russia."²⁵ Thus it is claimed that without even realizing it both Tolstoy and Dostoevsky joined hands with the revolutionary forces and supported them. According to Lenin, no great writer could avoid touching upon some of the essential aspects of the revolutionary movement. It is therefore the duty of Soviet literary history, "in the field of the interpretation of Russian classics, to search in nineteenth-century literature for the reflection of preparation for the twentieth century—the century of the victorious revolution in Russia."²⁶ This approach to the nineteenth-century Russian classics limits the need to tamper with the original texts. It remains only to put them in proper perspective by emphasizing what is important and overlooking the rest.²⁷ The use of *narodnost'* makes it possible to retain the Russian classical heritage in the Soviet school curricula, and

25. G. Makogonenko, "Russkaia klassicheskaia literatura v svete leninskoii kontseptsii osvoboditel'nogo dvizheniia," *Voprosy literatury*, 1968, no. 4, p. 10.

26. A. Solodovnikov, "Ob otnoshenii k klassicheskomu naslediiu," *Kommunist*, 1968, no. 13, p. 103.

27. Maurice Friedberg writes in the preface to *Russian Classics in Soviet Jackets* (New York and London, 1962): "So far as we know, the texts of literary works by the nineteenth-century Russian masters have not been tampered with by Soviet editors; in any case, no evidence to the contrary has been discovered to date by Western scholars, with the exception of some liberties that were taken in the selection and abridgment of the correspondence of Chekhov and Dostoyevsky" (pp. xii–xiii). In a later study, however, Friedberg expresses doubts about the conclusions quoted above. In his article "Keeping Up with the Censor," *Problems of Communism*, November–December 1964, pp. 22–31, he writes: "As to the occurrence of censorship changes in classical Russian literature, recent evidence seems to contradict this author's earlier conclusion that such texts do not appear to be tampered with by Soviet censors. Serious doubts in this matter have been raised by V. N. Orlov in an introduction to a book on the problems of publishing prerevolutionary Russian poetry" (p. 26). Friedberg quotes Orlov, who writes, "Not infrequently it turns out that—as a result of any number of accidental circumstances—the author's final version is *less valuable ideologically and artistically* than earlier versions, and to give preference to this version only because of formal adherence to the principle of following [the poet's] 'last will' is definitely incorrect." See *Izdanie klassicheskoi literatury: Iz opyta "Biblioteki poeta"* (Moscow, 1963), p. 12, italics added.

Examples of changes introduced by editors in the works of Russian classics are reported by Gleb Struve in his article "Chekhov in Communist Censorship," *Slavonic and East European Review*, 33, no. 1 (1955): 327–41. Struve analyzes in this article A. P. Chekhov's *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii i pisem*, 20 vols. (Moscow, 1944–51), and he points out that there are some omissions in the letters marked by square brackets and three dots inside. Though in some places these omissions are for the sake of propriety, in others they are for political reasons. For example, Chekhov's praise of the West, his praise of Vsevolod Meyerhold, and his criticism of the Russian theater are left out of the text. In some instances even the square brackets are omitted. Meyerhold's name is omitted from the indexes.

to emphasize the connection between socialist culture and the best that was written before the revolution.

Not all literary scholars fully agree with Timofeev's definition of *narodnost'*. For F. M. Golovenchenko, for example, along with other requirements the "*narodnost'* of a writer is always connected with a progressive ideology."²⁸ If the term "progressive" is used in its contemporary Soviet application, this prerequisite could disqualify many great nineteenth-century writers, including Gogol and Dostoevsky, from those approved in light of *narodnost'*. L. V. Shchepilova, on the other hand, connects *narodnost'* with the national character of a work of art, which in turn depends on the patriotism of the writer.²⁹ Such an interpretation of *narodnost'* could, perhaps, be of some use in the analysis of a postrevolutionary work of literature; but in the interpretation of *narodnost'* in a nineteenth-century work of art it is dangerous to proceed from the patriotism of the writer.

The connection between *narodnost'* and *natsional'nost'* is also confusing. Lenin's statement about the presence of two national cultures in each contemporary nationality partly clarifies the distinction between these two terms in literature.³⁰ This clarification, however, was sufficient for Lenin's own time, when there still were different classes in the young Soviet state. In our own day, when there are said to be no antagonistic classes in Soviet society, there is a tendency for these two notions to converge. Those who state that the two terms are synonymous regard the new Soviet nation as a homogeneous people, qualitatively different from a bourgeois class society with several cultures. The opponents of such an approach claim that national consciousness does not develop simultaneously with the changes occurring in the social sphere, and therefore these two terms should remain distinct even in Soviet society, the more so since there is no need to confuse sociological and aesthetic categories.³¹

At the present time the most important concept in Soviet art, which includes much that has been known until now under the notions of *narodnost'*, *klassovost'*, and *ideinost'*, is the principle of *partiinnost'*. It is not a new principle, and some theoreticians of Marxism try to trace it back to Marx and his ideas of tendentiousness in literature.³² With Marx, however, the tendentiousness, or *partiinnost'*, of literature worked only in the interests of a class or party,

28. F. M. Golovenchenko, *Vvedenie v literaturovedenie* (Moscow, 1964), p. 54.

29. L. V. Shchepilova, *Vvedenie v literaturovedenie*, 2nd ed. (Moscow, 1968), pp. 78-91.

30. *Ibid.*, p. 81.

31. N. Vorob'eva and S. Khitarova, "Nazad k 'istokam' ili ot 'istokov'—v budushchee?" *Literaturnaia gazeta*, Dec. 10, 1969, p. 4.
Literaturnaia gazeta, Dec. 10, 1969, p. 4.

32. A. N. Iezuitov, "V. I. Lenin o partiinosti literatury," in *Akademiia nauk SSSR, Institut russkoi literatury, V. I. Lenin i voprosy literaturovedeniia* (Moscow and Leningrad, 1961), pp. 60-117.

while in the Soviet Union, where the ideologies of the party and the state are synonymous, *partiinnost'* has become an official policy of the state.

Lenin used the term *partiinnost'* for the first time in his work *Ekonomicheskoie sodержanie narodnichestva i kritika ego v knige g. Struve* (1895).³³ A more detailed elaboration of the relationship between the party and its literature appeared after its defeat in the 1905 revolution, when literature remained, for a while, the only political weapon of the party. In the article "Party Organization and Party Literature,"³⁴ which was published in the November 13, 1905, issue of *Novaia zhizn'*, Lenin clarified the relationship between the party and its literature. He stated that newspapers must become party organs, and writers must join the party. He called for the creation of a free press—free from the control of capital, and free from anarchic bourgeois individualism. Lenin added, however, that he spoke only of party literature, which was subject to party control, while every writer outside the party was free to write and say whatever he pleased, without the slightest restriction. Indeed, in those days no one outside the party had to ask Lenin's permission when and how to write. And speaking of restrictions, it was rather the tsarist censorship that imposed them, and thus was to be feared. Nowadays it is different. The censorship of the tsarist state is replaced by a new Soviet censorship. The fact that party literature has actually become state literature makes it impossible to publish anything that is not in agreement with party ideology and party politics. It becomes obligatory for those who are not party members to subscribe in their writings to the same ideals as party members, because they are citizens of a state controlled and ruled by the party. Lenin himself gave the term *partiinnost'* different meanings at different times: it could mean belonging to a party, or the defense by a philosopher of a certain ideology, or a conscious political struggle in the defense of the interests of a certain class.³⁵

After Lenin's death and with the development of Stalin's "cult of personality," which dominated all aspects of party and Soviet life, there was less emphasis on Lenin's principle of *partiinnost'*, since all achievements of the Soviet state were associated with the name of Stalin. In the rare instances when the principle of *partiinnost'* was brought to the fore it was referred to as a Leninist-Stalinist principle developed by both of them. According to A. Belik the principle of *partiinnost'* would first of all mean the depiction of reality "in its revolutionary development; to see in it constantly a struggle between the new and the old, to participate actively in this struggle with the means of one's creative work on the side of the new; it would mean constantly to

33. *Ibid.*, p. 75.

34. V. I. Lenin, "Partiinaia organizatsiia i partiinaia literatura," *Sochineniia*, vol. 10 (n.p., 1947), pp. 26–31.

35. G. I. Kunitsyn, *V. I. Lenin o klassovosti i partiinosti literatury* (Moscow, 1960), pp. 20–21.

affirm Soviet reality and to criticize passionately, reject the old, capitalist, conservative—everything that hinders the victory of the new, Communist reality.”³⁶

With the affirmation of collective leadership in the party after the death of Stalin, different steps were taken to bolster the image of the party and to make it possible for the party to fill the vacuum left by the demise of its leader. In the arts this function was assigned to the principle of *partiinosť*, which was to permeate every aspect of artistic, creative, and critical activity. Lenin’s article “Party Organization and Party Literature” was quoted time and again, and after the Twentieth Party Congress Stalin’s name was left out altogether from the references dealing with the development of Soviet literary theory. The little intellectual freedom granted to artists after Stalin’s death was immediately felt in the field of literary theory, and the first to be attacked was the very principle of *partiinosť*. Some Soviet literary critics, along with several East European Marxist scholars of high repute, including the Yugoslavs I. Vidmar and B. Zicherl,³⁷ began to question whether the application of Lenin’s concept of *partiinosť*, as practiced in Eastern Europe today, was really what Lenin had meant. They emphasized that Lenin’s article made a clear distinction between those who were party members, and thus obliged to follow party policy, and those who were not party members, and therefore could write as they wished. The Soviet critic Ia. Stochkov wrote in *Literaturnaiia gazeta* that Lenin’s article had been addressed to the writer “who called himself a party member but conducted himself in his literary activity as non-party, not accountable to any one person.”³⁸ This was, of course, too much. All those who have tried to keep the principle of *partiinosť* from being applied to writers who are not party members have been severely attacked by official party spokesmen and accused of revisionism. The principle of *partiinosť* has received new political coloring. Previously it was mainly identified with the method of socialist realism in Soviet literature, but now it is also identified with fundamental party policy.

The Soviet approach in which literary theory is regarded as an exact science calls for a precise definition of the term *partiinosť*. But though all Soviet literary theoreticians agree that *partiinosť* is the very foundation of Soviet literature, “there exist as many definitions of the notion of ‘*partiinosť* of literature’ as there are scholars writing on this topic.”³⁹ Such a state of

36. A. Belik, “O nekotorykh oshibkakh v literaturovedenii,” *Oktiabr*, 1950, no. 2, p. 160.

37. Plotkin, *Partiia i literatura*, p. 57.

38. Ia. Stochkov, *Literaturnaiia gazeta*, Jan. 10, 1957, quoted in Kunitsyn, *V. I. Lenin o klassovosti i partiinosti literatury*, p. 72.

39. I. Dzeverin, “Znamia revoliutsionnogo iskusstva,” *Literaturnaiia gazeta*, Jan. 21, 1970, p. 5.

affairs is, of course, unacceptable in Soviet education, and therefore literary educators have worked out their own definitions of the term.

In Soviet publications used for educational purposes the essence of Communist *partiinosť* in literature is frequently described as "an open, consistent defense of party ideology; the participation of literature with its own specific means in the solution of the fundamental aims of the working class; the leadership of the party in the development of literature."⁴⁰ The political nature of the principle is explicit. Nevertheless, Soviet literary theory tries to connect it with the principles of *narodnost'* and *klassovost'*, and undertakes to show that the principle of *partiinosť* is the development of *narodnost'* and *klassovost'* in new Soviet conditions. *Partiinosť* is considered to be a development of *klassovost'* in a sense in which the artist becomes aware that he belongs to a class;⁴¹ it is a conscious realization of one's membership in a class and a readiness to fight for its aims. *Partiinosť* is also considered to be "the highest form of *narodnost'* in literature."⁴² The Communist *partiinosť* of a writer is claimed to be the very foundation of the *narodnost'* of his creative activity. The striving toward *narodnost'* leads, in turn, toward *partiinosť* in literature.⁴³ The aims of Communist *partiinosť* are seen as fundamentally national. All the same, even Soviet scholars have to agree that not all expressions of *narodnost'* in Soviet literature reach the level of Communist *partiinosť*. In other words, not all Soviet works of art can stand up to its requirements. On the other hand, *partiinosť* is the only criterion one should use to determine the level of *narodnost'* in a work of art.⁴⁴

Some Soviet scholars claim that in Soviet reality "the notions of *narodnost'*, *klassovost'*, and *partiinosť* lose their distinctions and definitely merge."⁴⁵ This union between *klassovost'*, *narodnost'*, *ideinosť*, and *partiinosť* is a convergence in which the interests of the working class itself are rather neglected. It is well known that according to Lenin "class political conscious-

40. G. I. Belen'ky, "Stat'i V. I. Lenina na urokhakh literatury," *Literatura v shkole*, 1969, no. 4, p. 24. Also in "Nekotorye voprosy podgotovki shkol k 100-letiiu so dnia rozhdeniia Vladimira Il'icha Lenina," *Narodnoe obrazovanie*, 1969, no. 9, p. 138.

41. Kunitsyn, *V. I. Lenin o klassovosti i partiinosi literatury*, p. 56.

42. Shchepilova, *Vvedenie v literaturovedenie*, p. 89. This view was until recently also held by one of the leading authorities in the area of Soviet literary theory dealing with problems of the *partiinosť* of literature, G. Kunitsyn. As of late, however, in an article "Partiinosť i narodnost' sovet'skoi literatury," which appeared in the April 17, 1968, issue of *Literaturnaia gazeta*, Kunitsyn introduced a notion that *narodnost'* is to be, in turn, regarded as a criterion of *partiinosť*. This statement drew sharp criticism from I. Dzeverin in the article "Znamia revoliutsionnogo iskusstva," which appeared in *Literaturnaia gazeta*, Jan. 21, 1970, p. 5.

43. Shchepilova, *Vvedenie v literaturovedenie*, p. 89.

44. A. I. Metchenko, "Formirovanie teorii sotsialisticheskogo realizma," in V. I. Kuleshov, ed., *Sovetskoe literaturovedenie za piat' desiat let* (Moscow, 1967), p. 132.

45. A. I. Reviakin, *O prepodavanii khudozhestvennoi literatury* (Moscow, 1968), p. 74.

ness can be brought to the workers only from without."⁴⁶ Workers now, as in the past, are more interested in improving their economic conditions than they are in political theories that offer no immediate benefits. To advocate in Soviet literature a struggle to improve the economic conditions of the working class would mean a departure from the political goals of the revolution, and a substitution of trade-unionism for political struggle—a trend which was vigorously opposed by Lenin, because "trade-unionism means ideological enslavement of the workers by the bourgeoisie."⁴⁷ Thus it is suggested that most workers lack the class consciousness and active ideology to carry on a political struggle. The task of arming the working class with a revolutionary ideology is carried out by the vanguard of the proletariat, which is organized in a political party. The party, which includes the most politically conscious workers, takes upon itself the task of developing an ideology which is to be considered not only the ideology of the party but also of the class. It becomes apparent, therefore, that the principles of *klassovost'* and *ideinost'* as applied to Soviet literature must be linked to the principle of *partiinnost'*, since the party is the only spokesman for the class, and the ideology of the party is the only ideology permitted in the Soviet state.

Some authors and teachers tend to use these terms interchangeably. Indeed, how can one expect students to be able to disentangle this mess when "even some lecturers are unable to understand it fully,"⁴⁸ and one of them, a certain A. I. Smirnov, even adds Tolstoy, Chekhov, and Korolenko to the list of party writers.⁴⁹

Considering the close connection between the principle of *partiinnost'* and the method of socialist realism in Soviet literature, which received new emphasis after the Third Congress of Soviet Writers in 1959, it is not surprising that the works which stand up to the scrutiny of *partiinnost'* are ones written in the manner demanded by the theoreticians of socialist realism and are usually included in the school and university programs. To name just a few: *Mat'* (*Mother*) by Maxim Gorky, *Chapaev* by Dmitrii Furmanov, *Kak zakalialas' stal'* (*How Steel Was Tempered*) by Nikolai Ostrovsky, and *Podniataia tselina* (*Virgin Soil Upturned*) by Mikhail Sholokhov.

The new theories of peaceful coexistence and competition between different social systems, developed in the face of the new realities of the atomic age, have profoundly affected the growing generation of Soviet youth. The rap-

46. V. I. Lenin, *What Is To Be Done?* (Moscow, n.d.), p. 133.

47. *Ibid.*, p. 67.

48. Reviakin, *O prepodavanii khudozhestvennoi literatury*, p. 74.

49. A. I. Smirnov, "O partiinosti literatury i iskusstva," *Uchenye zapiski Volgogradskogo pedagogicheskogo instituta imeni A. S. Serafimovicha, kafedra literatury*, vypusk 15 (Volgograd, 1961), pp. 22–23, quoted in Reviakin, *O prepodavanii khudozhestvennoi literatury*, p. 74.

prochement between East and West in the areas of economics, politics, and trade has also influenced the ideological sphere. It is difficult, however, to promote coexistence in one area and wage war in another. But this is exactly what is demanded by party ideologists. It is not surprising, therefore, that with the development of East-West relations there is a growing effort to increase vigilance against alien ideological penetration. In art it is done by re-emphasizing the principles of *narodnost'* and *partiinosť'* as the basic literary concepts of Lenin's legacy.

A special plenary meeting of the board members of Soviet creative artistic associations, including writers, painters, composers, and architects, was called in December 1969 to discuss the problem of the embodiment of the Leninist principles of *partiinosť'* and *narodnost'* in Soviet literature and arts. The speeches delivered by many leading artists and party ideologists could hardly qualify as contributions to the theory of art. The emphasis was mainly on the political aspects of literature and the arts, and on the need to guard and promote Lenin's ideological heritage. There is no doubt that the aims of the meeting were to raise the ideological and political consciousness of the younger generation and to remind the students and teachers of the true goals of artistic education in the Soviet Union. The time for such a meeting was considered ripe, because foreign ideological influence was on the increase, and because the hundredth anniversary of Lenin's birth was a most appropriate time for such a gathering. It is sufficient to quote from a speech delivered by Sergei Mikhalkov to realize that there are serious shortcomings in the methods of Soviet ideological education in literature. Speaking for the higher echelon of writers and literary politicians, Mikhalkov made an apparent attack on the literary educational establishment by saying, "Alarming signals are coming from schools and institutions of higher learning. It happens that pupils in the senior grades and even students in philological faculties know more about the problems of the theater of the absurd, about the novel without a hero, about all possible contemporary, bourgeois, reactionary trends in literature and the arts in the West than about the past and the present of the literature of their own motherland."⁵⁰

It is doubtful that Soviet students know more about Western literature and art than about Russian writers and poets. All the same, there is a growing interest among Soviet young people in Western life and culture, not because Russian literature is poor in content or quality, but because the Soviet student is tired of the stifling atmosphere in which literature is taught. He is tired of applying the same clichés and searching for the same truth in every work of literature he studies.

50. S. Mikhalkov, "Tvorchestvo eto bor'ba," *Literaturnaia Rossiia*, Dec. 19, 1969, no. 5 (363), p. 4.