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TALKS AT
THE YENAN FORUM
ON
ART AND LITERATURE

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

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INTRODUCTION TO THE DISCUSSION
(May 2, 1942)

Comrades! You are invited today to exchange views and ascertain the proper relationship between artistic and literary activities and revolutionary activities in general, to determine what is the proper path of development for revolutionary art and literature and how they can give better help to other revolutionary activities, so that we can overthrow our national enemy and accomplish the task of national liberation.

In our struggle for the liberation of the Chinese people there are various fronts, two of which are: the civilians' front and the soldiers' front, or the cultural front and the military front. To defeat the enemy we must rely primarily on armed troops. But this is not enough; we also need a cultural army which is absolutely indispensable for our own unity and the defeat of the enemy. Since the May 4 Movement of 1919 this cultural army has taken shape in China and has contributed to the Chinese revolution by gradually reducing the domain and weakening the influence of feudal culture and of comprador culture which serves imperialist aggression. To oppose the new culture the Chinese reactionaries can now only resort to "pitting quantity against quality"; in other words, though they
are unable to produce anything of merit they have plenty of money and can well afford to turn out an immense quantity of stuff. On the cultural front, art and literature have formed an important sector and done good work since the May 4 Movement. During the ten years' civil war, much progress was made in revolutionary art and literature. Although this movement and the revolutionary war headed in the same general direction, their practical activities lacked co-ordination, because the two brother armies participating in them were cut off from each other by the reactionaries. It is a very good thing that since the outbreak of the War of Resistance, revolutionary artists and writers are coming in increasing numbers to Yenan and other anti-Japanese base areas. But to arrive at these base areas is not the same as to identify oneself completely with the people here. In pushing forward the revolutionary work, it is necessary to identify oneself completely with the people. The express purpose of our meeting today is to make art and literature a component part of the whole revolutionary machine, to make them a powerful weapon for uniting and educating the people and for attacking and destroying the enemy, and to help the people to fight with one heart and one mind. What are the problems to be solved to achieve this objective? In my opinion, they are the standpoint, the attitude and the public of the artists and writers, and how they should work and study.

Standpoint: We take the standpoint of the proletariat and the mass of the people. For members of the Com-
munist Party, this means that they should adopt the standpoint of the Party, abide by the spirit and the policy of the Party. Are there any of our artists and writers who still lack a correct or clear understanding of this point? I think there are. Quite a number of our comrades have often deviated from the correct standpoint.

Attitude: Our specific attitudes towards specific things arise from our standpoint. For instance: Should we praise or should we expose? This is a question of attitude. Which of these two attitudes should we adopt? My answer is: Both; it all depends on whom you are dealing with. There are three kinds of people: our enemies, our allies in the united front and our own people, that is, the masses and their vanguard. Towards these three kinds of people there should be three different attitudes. With regard to our enemies, the Japanese imperialists and all other enemies of the people, the task of revolutionary artists and writers is to expose their cruelty and deceit, point out their inevitable defeat and encourage the anti-Japanese army and people to overthrow them by fighting resolutely with one heart and one mind. In our attitude towards our various allies in the united front, we should strengthen unity and at the same time make criticisms, and there should be different kinds of unity and different forms of criticism. We support their resistance to Japan and commend their achievements. But we ought to criticize them if they do not put up an active resistance. Against anyone who opposes communism and
the people and becomes increasingly reactionary, we must adopt an attitude of uncompromising struggle. As to the mass of the people, we should of course honour them, their efforts, their struggles, their army and their party. However, the people also have shortcomings. There is a hang-over of petty-bourgeois ideology among many proletarians and backward ideas are found in both the peasantry and the urban petty bourgeoisie; these are the burdens hampering them in their struggle. We should spend a long time and be patient in educating them and helping them to remove these handicaps and fight against their own shortcomings and errors so that they can take big strides forward. In the course of their struggles they have remoulded or are remoulding themselves, and our art and literature should depict this process. We should not take a one-sided view and make the mistake of ridiculing them or taking a hostile attitude towards them unless they persist in their errors. Our artistic and literary productions should enable them to unite, to advance and to fight with one heart and one mind, discarding what is backward and promoting what is revolutionary; they certainly should not do the opposite.

The public: The question here is: For whom are our artistic and literary works produced? In the Shensi-Kansu-Ningsia Border Region and the anti-Japanese base areas in North and Central China, the problem is different from that in the Kuomintang-controlled areas and particularly from that in Shanghai before the War of Resistance. In pre-war Shanghai the public for
revolutionary art and literature consisted mainly of a section of the students, office workers and shop assistants. In the Kuomintang-controlled areas the scope has been somewhat extended since the outbreak of the War of Resistance, but these people still remain the main public because the authorities have prevented the workers, peasants and soldiers from gaining access to revolutionary art and literature. Here in our base areas the situation is entirely different. The public is made up of workers, peasants, soldiers and revolutionary cadres. There are students too, but they are either ex-cadres or would-be cadres and therefore different from the students of the old type. The public for our art and literature consists of cadres of all kinds, soldiers in the armed forces, workers in the factories and peasants in the villages who all want to read books and newspapers if they have become literate and if not, to enjoy plays, see pictures, sing songs and hear music. The cadres, for instance, far from being few in number as you might suppose, outnumber considerably the readers of a new book published in the Kuomintang-controlled areas. There one edition of a book usually runs to only two thousand copies and three editions total only six thousand, while here in Yenan alone there are more than ten thousand cadres who can read. Moreover, many of them are well-steeled revolutionaries who have come from all parts of the country and will go to work in different places, hence the great importance of their education. For the cadres, our artists and writers must make special efforts.
Since the public for our art and literature is made up of workers, peasants, soldiers and their cadres, the problem arises of how to get to know them and understand them thoroughly. A great deal has to be done in order to understand thoroughly all kinds of people and all sorts of things in the Party organizations and government bodies, in the villages and factories and in the Eighth Route and New Fourth Armies. It is the job of our artists and writers to work in their own fields, but their first and foremost duty is to understand the people and understand them thoroughly.

How did our artists and writers stand in this regard in the past? I would say that they lacked thorough knowledge and understanding and therefore the field to display their prowess. What is meant by lack of thorough knowledge? They lacked a thorough knowledge of the people. They were acquainted neither with their subjects nor with their public; in fact they were even perfect strangers to both. They were not intimate with the workers, peasants, soldiers and their cadres. What is meant by lack of understanding? They did not understand the language. They lacked an adequate knowledge of the rich and lively language of the people. Many writers, standing aloof from the people and leading a dull and empty life, are of course unfamiliar with the people’s language and not only use an insipid language in their writings, but often coin awkward expressions quite alien to popular usage. Many comrades love to talk about mass appeal, but what does that mean? It means that the ideas and feelings of our artists and writers should be fused with
those of the mass of the workers, peasants and soldiers. In order to do so we should conscientiously study the language of the people. If we find much of the language of the people unintelligible, how can we talk about artistic and literary creation? Lack of field to display one’s prowess refers to the fact that one’s high-falutin ideas meet with no response from the people. The more you try to prove yourself experienced, to display your prowess, to put yourself over, the less likely are the people to be impressed. If you want to be understood by and identified with the people, you must make up your mind to undergo a long and even painful process of remoulding.

I might mention here my own experience in undergoing a change of heart. As a student and having acquired at school the habits of a student, I used to feel it undignified to do any manual labour, such as carrying my own luggage in the presence of a crowd of fellow students who could not fetch and carry for themselves. At that time it seemed to me that the intellectuals alone were clean while the workers and peasants were rather dirty. I could put on the clothes of other intellectuals because I thought them clean, but would not put on clothes belonging to a worker or peasant because I thought them dirty. The revolution brought me into the ranks of the workers, peasants and soldiers in the revolutionary army, and gradually I became familiar with them and they with me. It was then and only then that a fundamental change occurred in the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois
feelings implanted in me by the bourgeois schools. I came to feel that the unremoulded intellectuals were unclean as compared with the workers and peasants who are the cleanest people, cleaner than the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois intellectuals, even though their hands are blackened by work and their feet smeared with cow dung. This is what is meant by a change of heart, a transformation of the feelings of one class into those of another. If our artists and writers of the intelligentsia want the people to give a warm reception to their works, they must change and remould their ideas and feelings. Otherwise they will be ill-adapted to their task and do nothing worthwhile.

The last problem is that of study, I mean the study of Marxism-Leninism and of society. One who considers himself a Marxist revolutionary writer, especially a Communist writer, must have a knowledge of Marxism-Leninism. Some comrades, however, do not even take the fundamental Marxist viewpoint. For instance, a fundamental Marxist viewpoint is that existence determines consciousness, that is, the objective reality of class struggle and national struggle determines our thoughts and feelings. Some of our comrades, however, reverse the proper order of things and maintain that everything ought to start from love. Now as for love, in a class society there can be only class love; but these comrades are seeking a love that transcends the classes, love in the abstract as well as freedom in the abstract, truth in the abstract, human nature in the abstract, and so on. This shows that
these comrades have been deeply influenced by the bourgeoisie. They must thoroughly rid themselves of this influence and study Marxism-Leninism with an open mind. True, artists and writers must learn how to produce artistic and literary works, but the science of Marxism-Leninism is a required course of study for all revolutionaries, not excepting artists and writers. Artists and writers should also make a study of society, that is, a study of the various classes in society, their mutual relations and respective conditions, their external features and what they feel and think. Only when these things are clearly grasped will our art and literature have a rich content and a correct orientation.

I raise these problems today by way of introduction and hope you will all give your opinions on these and other related questions.

**SUMMING UP THE DISCUSSION**
*(May 23, 1942)*

Comrades! We have met three times during this month. In the pursuit of truth, we have carried on heated debates in which scores of Party and non-Party comrades have spoken, uncovering the problems involved, and putting them in specific terms. I think the whole artistic and literary movement will benefit from this.

In any discussion, we should start not from definitions, but from actual facts. We shall be following
the wrong method if we first look up definitions of art and literature in the textbooks and then use them to determine the direction of the present artistic and literary movement or to judge current views and controversies. We are Marxists and have learned from Marxism that in our approach to a problem we should start not from abstract definitions but from objective facts and, by analysing these facts, determine our orientation, our policy and method. We should do the same in our present discussion of art and literature.

What are the facts facing us? The facts are: the War of Resistance that China has been fighting for five years; the world-wide anti-fascist war; the vacillation of China’s big landlords and big bourgeoisie in the War of Resistance and their policy of ruthless oppression of the people; the great contributions to the revolution made in the last twenty-three years since May 4, 1919 by the movement of revolutionary art and literature and its many shortcomings; the anti-Japanese democratic base areas of the Eighth Route and New Fourth Armies, where large numbers of artists and writers have aligned themselves with the armed forces, and with the workers and peasants; the difference in circumstances and tasks between the artists and writers in our base areas and those in the Kuomintang-controlled areas; and the controversies which have arisen over art and literature in Yenan and other anti-Japanese base areas. These are the undeniable facts in the light of which we have to examine our problems.
What then is the crux of the matter? In my opinion there are two fundamental problems: to work for the people and how to work for the people. If these two problems are not solved, or are only solved inadequately, our artists and writers will not be able to adapt themselves to the circumstances or fit themselves for their tasks, but will come up against a series of difficulties from within and without. My summing-up will centre round these two problems and touch upon some others related to them.

The first problem is: For whom are our art and literature intended?

This problem, as a matter of fact, was solved long ago by Marxists, and especially by Lenin. As far back as 1905 Lenin emphatically pointed out that our art and literature should "serve the millions upon millions of working people".  

1 In "The Party's Organization and the Party's Literature", Lenin described the characteristics of proletarian literature as follows:

"This will be a free literature because neither covetousness nor careerism but rather the idea of socialism and feelings for the working people will draw ever fresh forces into its ranks. This will be a free literature because it will serve millions and tens of millions of working people who constitute the strength and future of the country. This will be a free literature because it will fructify the latest events in the revolutionary thought of mankind with the experience and
rades working in art and literature in the anti-Japanese base areas this is no longer a problem and further discussion is unnecessary. But actually this is not the case. Many comrades have by no means arrived at a clear understanding of this problem. Consequently their sentiments, their works, their actions and their views concerning the guiding principles of art and literature have failed more or less to meet the demands of the people or the needs of actual struggles. Among the large numbers of cultured people, of artists, writers and people engaged in artistic and literary pursuits in general who, together with the Communist Party and the Eighth Route and New Fourth Armies, have participated in the great struggle for liberation, there may of course be some opportunists who will not remain with us long, but the great majority are energetically working for the common cause. Thanks to the efforts of these comrades, our achievements in literature, drama, music and art have been considerable. Many of them began their work after the outbreak of the Anti-Japanese War; others started working for the revolution long before the war, and they underwent many hardships and exercised much influence upon the mass of the people by their actions and their works. Why, then, should I say that even some of these comrades

daily work of the socialist proletariat, creating a permanent inter-relationship between the experience of the past (scientific socialism, which completed the development of socialism from its primitive, utopian forms) with the experience of the present (the present day struggle of our worker comrades).” (Lenin, Collected Works, Russian ed., Moscow, 1947, Vol. X, pp. 30-31).
have not found a clear answer to the question: For whom are art and literature intended? Is it possible that there are people who still maintain that revolutionary art and literature are intended not for the people but for the exploiters and oppressors?

It is true that there are art and literature intended for the exploiters and oppressors. The art and literature for the landlord class are feudal art and literature. Such are the art and literature of the ruling classes of China's feudal epoch. Even today such stuff still has considerable influence in China. The art and literature for the bourgeoisie are bourgeois art and literature. People like Liang Shih-ch'iu, whom Lu Hsun criticized, may talk about art and literature as transcending the classes, but in fact they all uphold bourgeois art and literature in opposition to proletarian art and literature. The art and literature intended for the imperialists, as represented by the works of Chou Tso-jen, Chang Tze-p'ing and their like, are collaborationist art and literature. So far as we are concerned, art and literature are intended for the masses, and not for any of the above-mentioned types of people. We have said that China's new culture at the present stage is an anti-feudal, anti-imperialist culture of the people under the leadership of the

1 A member of the counter-revolutionary National Socialist Party. He propagated the literary theory of the American reactionary bourgeoisie, stubbornly opposed the revolution and denounced revolutionary literature.

2 Two writers who became collaborators when the Japanese invaders occupied Peking and Shanghai in 1937.
proletariat. Anything that truly belongs to the people is now of necessity under the leadership of the proletariat. Nothing under the leadership of the bourgeoisie can possibly belong to the people. Naturally the same applies to the new art and literature which form part of the new culture. While we should take over the rich legacy and keep up the fine tradition of Chinese and foreign art and literature, we must do so with our eyes upon the people. We do not refuse to make use of the artistic and literary forms of the past, and when we reshape them and fill them with new content, they also become things which serve the revolution and the people.

Who, then, are the people? The overwhelming majority constituting more than 90 per cent of our total population are the workers, peasants, soldiers and the urban petty bourgeoisie. So our art and literature are first of all for the workers, the class which leads the revolution. Secondly, they are for the peasants, the most numerous and steadfast allies in the revolution. Thirdly, they are for the armed workers and peasants, the Eighth Route and New Fourth Armies and other people's armed forces, which are the main forces of the revolutionary war. Fourthly, they are for the working people and the intelligentsia of the urban petty bourgeoisie who are also our allies in the revolution and are capable of lasting co-operation with us. These four kinds of people form the overwhelming majority of the Chinese nation and are consequently the mass of the people.
Our art and literature should be intended for these four kinds of people. To serve them we must take the standpoint of the proletariat instead of that of the petty bourgeoisie. Today writers and artists who cling to their individualist petty-bourgeois standpoint cannot truly serve the mass of revolutionary workers, peasants and soldiers, but will be interested mainly in the small number of petty-bourgeois intellectuals. This is the reason why some comrades are unable to find a correct answer to the question: For whom are our art and literature intended? Here I am not referring to their theory. No one in our ranks advocates the theory or says in plain words that the workers, peasants and soldiers are less important than the petty-bourgeois intellectuals. Here I am speaking of their deeds and actions. Do they in their deeds and actions regard the petty-bourgeois intellectuals as more important than the workers, peasants and soldiers? I think they do.

Many comrades are concerned with studying the petty-bourgeois intellectuals, analysing their psychology, giving effective expression to their life and excusing or even defending their shortcomings, rather than guiding the intellectuals to get closer, together with themselves, to the workers, peasants and soldiers, join in their actual struggles, give expression to their life and educate them. Many comrades who are petty-bourgeois in origin and intellectuals themselves, seek friends only in the ranks of the intellectuals and concentrate their attention on studying and describing them. This would be quite proper if their studies and descriptions were made from a proletarian
standpoint. But this is not the case, or at any rate not completely. They take the standpoint of the petty bourgeoisie and their works are a form of self-expression of the petty bourgeoisie, as can be seen in quite a number of our artistic and literary productions. They often express great sympathy for the intellectuals of petty-bourgeois origin, they sympathize with or even praise their shortcomings. On the other hand, they seldom come into contact with the workers, peasants and soldiers, do not understand or study them, do not have close friends among them and do not show much skill in depicting them; if and when they do depict them, the result is merely petty-bourgeois intellectuals in the clothing of working people. In certain respects they also love the workers, peasants and soldiers and the cadres springing from them; but in some respects and at times they do not love them: they do not appreciate their emotions, their manners, their budding art and literature such as wall newspapers, murals, folk songs, and folk tales. To be sure they sometimes like these things too, but only because these things have novelty value, or because they can borrow from them to embellish their own works, or because certain backward features appeal to them. At other times they openly despise things of this kind and prefer what belongs to the petty-bourgeois intellectuals or even the bourgeoisie. The feet of these comrades are still planted squarely on the side of the petty-bourgeois intellectuals, or, to put it more elegantly, their innermost soul is still the domain of the petty-bourgeois intelligentsia. Thus they have not found the answer
or at any rate, an unequivocal answer to the question: For whom are art and literature intended? I have in mind not only the newcomers to Yenan, but also many who have been to the front and worked for a number of years in our base areas and in the Eighth Route and New Fourth Armies.

A complete solution of this problem will require a long time, maybe eight or ten years. But, no matter how long it takes, we must find the solution, and it must be unequivocal and complete. Our artists and writers must fulfil this task; they must gradually shift their standpoint over to the side of the workers, peasants and soldiers, to the side of the proletariat by going into their midst and plunging into the actual struggle and by studying Marxism and society. Only in this way can we have art and literature that are genuinely for the workers, peasants and soldiers, and genuinely proletarian.

For whom are art and literature intended? This is a fundamental question, a question of principle. Hitherto the controversies, divergences, conflicts and discord among some of our comrades have not arisen on this fundamental issue of principle but on secondary issues or even issues that do not involve any principle. On this question of principle, however, the disputants have shown little divergence but have in almost perfect agreement tended to some extent to look down on the workers, peasants and soldiers and isolate themselves from the people. I say "to some extent" because, generally speaking, those comrades are not like the Kuomintang in its disdain of the workers,
peasants and soldiers and its isolation from the people, but all the same the tendency is there. Unless this fundamental question is answered, it will be difficult to answer many other questions.

Take, for instance, the question of sectarianism in artistic and literary circles, which is also a question of principle. Only by putting forward and effectively carrying out such slogans as "Serve the workers and peasants!" "Serve the Eighth Route and New Fourth Armies!" and "Go into the midst of the people!" can we get rid of sectarianism; in no other way can the problem be solved. Lu Hsun once said:

The necessary condition for the united front is a common aim. . . . The discord in our front shows that we are not agreed on the aim, some working only for small groups and others working in fact for themselves. If we all aim at serving the mass of workers and peasants, our front will of course be united.¹

The same problem cropped up in Shanghai in Lu Hsun's time just as it now crops up in Chungking. In such places it is difficult to solve the problem completely, because the authorities there oppress the revolutionary artists and writers and deprive them of the freedom to go into the midst of the workers, peasants and soldiers. But here among us the situation is entirely different. Here revolutionary artists and writers are encouraged to work and mix freely with the workers,

¹ Lu Hsun, "My View on the Alliance of Left-Wing Writers", Complete Works, Chinese ed., Vol. IV.
peasants and soldiers and given full freedom to go into their midst and create genuinely revolutionary art and literature. With us here, then, the problem is nearing solution. But to be nearing the solution is not the same as arriving at a complete and unequivocal solution and it is precisely for this complete and unequivocal solution that we must, as we have already said, study Marxism and society. By Marxism we mean not Marxist catchwords, but living Marxism which has practical bearings on the life and struggle of the people. When Marxist catchwords are transformed into Marxism in real life, there will be no more sectarianism. And then not only will the problem of sectarianism be solved but many other problems as well.

II

Having solved the problem of whom to serve, we come now to the problem of how to serve. As our comrades put it: Should we devote ourselves to elevation\(^1\) or to popularization?

In the past some comrades to some extent or even very much despised and neglected popularization and

\(^1\) "Elevation" is used to translate the Chinese term *t'í-kao* which as employed in this connection does not seem to have an exact English equivalent. It means, as can be seen from the context, the raising of standard or level in literary appreciation, criticism and creation.
unduly stressed elevation. It is right to stress elevation, but it is wrong to stress it exclusively in disregard of any other factor and to excess. The lack of clarity and thoroughness in the solution of the problem of whom to serve shows itself also in this connection. Since they have not solved that problem, these comrades naturally fail to find the proper criterion for what they mean by elevation and popularization, let alone an understanding of the proper relation between the two. Since our art and literature are primarily intended for the workers, peasants and soldiers, popularization means diffusion of art and literature among them while elevation means the raising of their artistic and literary standards. What should we popularize among them? The stuff needed and readily accepted by the feudal landlord class? By the bourgeoisie? Or by the petty-bourgeois intelligentsia? No, none of these will do. We must popularize what is needed and can be readily accepted by the workers, peasants and soldiers themselves. Consequently the duty of learning from the workers, peasants and soldiers precedes the task of educating them. This is even more true of elevation. There must be a level from which to elevate. When we lift a bucket of water, for instance, are we not lifting something that lies on the ground rather than hangs in mid-air? What then is the level from which the standard of our art and literature is to be raised? From the feudal level? The bourgeois level? Or the level of the petty-bourgeois intelligentsia? No. It can only be raised from the level of the workers, peasants and soldiers. And this means not that we
raise the workers, peasants and soldiers to the level of the feudal class, the bourgeoisie or the petitbourgeois intelligentsia, but that we raise them up along their own line of ascent, along the line of ascent of the proletariat. Here again the task of learning from the workers, peasants and soldiers comes in. Only by making the workers, peasants and soldiers our point of departure can we have a correct understanding of elevation and popularization and find the proper relation between the two.

What in the last analysis is the source of all art and literature? Ideological expressions in the form of artistic or literary work are the product of the human brain reflecting the life of a given society. Revolutionary art and literature are the products of the brains of revolutionary artists and writers reflecting the life of the people. In the life of the people there lies a mine of raw material for art and literature, namely, things in their natural state, crude but at the same time the most lively, rich and fundamental; in this sense, they throw all art and literature into the shade and provide for them a unique and inexhaustible source. This is the only source; there can be no other. Some may ask: Is there not another source in the books, in the artistic and literary works of past ages and foreign countries? As a matter of fact, these works are not the source but the stream; they are the products which our predecessors and the foreigners created out of the artistic and literary raw material they lit upon in the people's life of their own times and in their own countries. We must take over all the fine artistic and literary legacy
and critically assimilate from it what is useful to us and learn from its example when we try to work over the artistic and literary raw material found in the life of the people in our own times and in our own country. It makes a difference whether or not one has such examples to learn from, a difference which explains why some works are refined and others crude, some polished and others rough, some superior and others inferior, some smoothly and others laboriously executed. Therefore we must not reject the legacy of the ancients and the foreigners, even though it is feudal or bourgeois, or refuse to learn from them. But inheritance of a legacy and learning from examples should never take the place of our own creative work, for nothing can take its place. The most sterile and harmful doctrinairism in art and literature consists in uncritically borrowing and copying from our predecessors and foreigners.

All revolutionary artists and writers of China, all artists and writers of promise, must for long periods of time unreservedly and whole-heartedly go into the midst of the masses, into the midst of the workers, peasants and soldiers: they must temper themselves in the flames of struggle and go to the only, the broadest and richest source to observe, learn, study and analyse various persons, various classes and various communities, all the vivid patterns of life and struggle and all the raw material of art and literature before they can proceed to creative work. Otherwise, for all their labour, they will have nothing to work on and will become the kind of "phoney artists or writers"
whose example Lu Hsun, in his will, so earnestly cautioned his son not to follow.¹

Though man's social life is the only source of art and literature and is incomparably richer and more vivid, the people are not satisfied with life alone and demand art and literature. Why? Because, although both are beautiful, life as reflected in artistic and literary works can and ought to be on a higher level and of a greater intensity than real life, in sharper focus and more typical, nearer the ideal, and therefore more universal. Revolutionary art and literature should create all kinds of characters drawn from real life and help the people to make new history. For instance, there are on the one hand the victims of hunger, cold and oppression and on the other those who exploit and oppress their fellow men, and this contrast exists everywhere and seems quite commonplace; artists and writers, however, can create art and literature out of such daily occurrences by bringing them into organized form and sharper focus and making the contradictions and struggles typical of life and so awaken and arouse the masses and impel them to unite and struggle to change their environment. Without such art and literature, this task cannot be fulfilled or at least not so effectively and speedily fulfilled.

What are popularization and elevation in art and literature? What is the relation between the two? Works of popularization, being comparatively simple and plain, are more readily accepted by the mass of

the people of today. On the other hand, works of a higher artistic level demand a more subtle workmanship, and therefore it is harder to produce them and also harder for them to become immediately popular among the mass of the people at present. The problem facing the workers, peasants and soldiers today is this: They are engaged in a ruthless and sanguinary struggle against the enemy, they are illiterate and uncultured as a result of the prolonged rule of the feudal and bourgeois classes and therefore they badly need a widespread campaign of enlightenment; they eagerly seek culture, knowledge, art and literature which meet their immediate needs, are readily acceptable and can heighten their will to fight and their confidence in victory and strengthen their unity, and thus enable them to fight with one heart and one mind. In meeting this primary need, we are not to “embellish the brocade with embroidery” but to “offer fuel in snowy weather”. Under present conditions, therefore, popularization is the more pressing task. To despise and neglect it is wrong.

However, there is no sharp dividing line between popularization and elevation. Even now it is possible to popularize some works of higher quality; moreover the cultural level of the people will continue to rise. If popularization remains at the same level, supplying month after month and year after year such stuff as “Little Cowherd”,¹ or such reading

¹A popular Chinese operetta with a cast of only two characters, a cowherd and a village girl. With its songs reworded
material as "man, hand, mouth, knife, cow, goat", will not the teacher and the taught remain at the same level? What is such popularization worth? The people need popularization to start with, and then elevation and further elevation. Popularization is popularization for the people and elevation is elevation for the people. Elevation does not take place in mid-air, nor behind closed doors, but is based on popularization. It is at one and the same time conditioned by and gives orientation to popularization. In China the revolution and revolutionary culture develop unevenly and spread only gradually; while in one place popularization and elevation on the basis of popularization may have been carried out, in other places even popularization may not have begun. Thus the lessons drawn from experiences of popularization leading to elevation in one place may serve as a guide in another place to avoid the repetition of the same trials and errors. Internationally, the helpful experiences of foreign countries, especially of the Soviet Union, can serve as our guide. Thus our elevation is based on popularization while our popularization is guided by elevation. Far from being an obstacle to elevation, popularization in our sense affords a basis for our work of elevation on a limited scale at present, and creates the necessary conditions for our work of elevation on a much more extensive scale in the future.

for the purpose of anti-Japanese propaganda, it was immensely popular in the early days of the War of Resistance.

1 In Chinese, these are simple characters of few strokes, usually given in the first lessons of old primers.
Besides the elevation that directly answers the needs of the people there is the elevation that answers their needs indirectly, the elevation needed by the cadres. The cadres, being advanced members of the people, are generally better educated and need a higher level of art and literature; it would be a mistake to ignore this need. Anything done for the cadres is done wholly for the people, because it is only through the cadres that we can give education and guidance to the people. If we depart from this objective, if what we give to the cadres cannot help them to educate and guide the people, then our work of elevation will be like random shooting, a departure from our fundamental principle of serving the people.

To sum up: through the creative labour of revolutionary artists and writers the raw material of art and literature in the life of the people becomes art and literature in an ideological form in the service of the people. There are, on the one hand, the more advanced art and literature developed on the basis of elementary art and literature and needed by the more advanced section of the people or primarily by the cadres and, on the other, elementary art and literature produced under the guidance of the more advanced art and literature which often meet the urgent needs of the overwhelming majority of the people of today. Whether advanced or elementary, our art and literature are intended for the people, primarily for the workers, peasants and soldiers, created for them and enjoyed by them.
Now that we have solved the problem of the proper relation between popularization and elevation, the problem of the proper relation between specialists and popularizers can be readily settled. Our specialists not only serve the cadres, but also—and chiefly—serve the people. Our writers should pay attention to the wall newspapers of the people and the reportage writings in the armed forces and the villages. Our dramatists should pay attention to the small troupes in the armed forces and the villages. Our musicians should pay attention to the songs of the people. Our artists should pay attention to the fine arts of the people. All these comrades should keep in close touch with the popularizers of art and literature among the people, help and guide them and learn from them, and through them draw inspiration from the people to enrich and invigorate their art so that what they produce with their special skills will not be empty, lifeless fantasies detached from the people and from reality. Specialists are very valuable to our cause and should be respected. But they should also be reminded that no revolutionary artist or writer can produce any work of significance unless he is in close touch with the people, gives expression to their thoughts and feelings, and becomes their loyal spokesman. Only by speaking for the people can he educate them and only by becoming their pupil can he become their teacher. If he regards himself as the master of the people, or as an aristocrat who lords it over the “lower orders”, then the people will have no use for
him, however talented he may be, and there is no future for his work.

Is this utilitarianism? Materialists are not opposed to utilitarianism in general, but to the utilitarianism of the feudal, bourgeois and petty-bourgeois classes and to those hypocrites who attack utilitarianism in words but embrace the most selfish and shortsighted utilitarianism in deeds. In this world there is no utilitarianism which transcends the classes; in a class society utilitarianism is either of this or of that particular class. We are proletarian, revolutionary utilitarians and we take as our point of departure the uniting of the present and future interests of the great majority, more than 90 per cent, of the people of the country; therefore we are revolutionary utilitarians who pursue interests of the broadest scope and the longest range, not narrow utilitarians who are concerned only with what is limited and immediate. If, for instance, you reproach the people for their utilitarianism, and yet for the benefit of an individual or a clique you insist upon placing on the market and advertising among the people a work pleasing only to a few but useless or even harmful to most people, then you are not only insulting the people but blinded by your own conceit. A thing is good only when it brings real benefit to the people. Your work, which caters only for a few for the time being, may be as good as “The Spring Snow”, but it is the “Song of the Rustics”\(^1\) that appeals to the people; and if you simply

\(^1\) This and “The Spring Snow” were songs of the third century B.C. sung by the people of Ch’u, one of the largest states
denounce instead of trying to improve the taste of the people, you will be wasting your words. The problem now is how to integrate "The Spring Snow" with the "Song of the Rustics", to integrate elevation with popularization. If the two are not integrated, then the most artistic product of any kind of specialist skill will only serve the most narrow utilitarian end; one may flatter oneself and call this art pure and noble, but the people will not agree.

Having solved the problem concerning the fundamental principle of serving the workers, peasants and soldiers and how to serve them, we have also solved such problems as whether to depict the bright or the dark side of life and how to achieve unity among our artists and writers. If we are all agreed upon the fundamental principle, then it must be adhered to by our artists and writers, in our schools of art and literature, in our artistic and literary publications and organizations, and in all our artistic and literary activities. It is wrong to deviate from this principle, and anything at variance with it must be duly corrected.

III

Since our art and literature are intended for the people, we can proceed to discuss a problem of inner-

in ancient China. When a singer sang "The Spring Snow" only a few dozens would join in the chorus, but when he sang the "Song of the Rustics", thousands of people joined in.
Party relations, the relation between the Party's artistic and literary activity and the Party's activity as a whole, and a problem of the Party's external relations, the relation between the Party's artistic and literary activity and non-Party artistic and literary activity, the problem of the united front in art and literature.

Let us consider the first problem. In the world today all culture, all art and literature belong to definite classes and follow definite political lines. There is in fact no such thing as art for art's sake, art which stands above classes or art which runs parallel to or remains independent of politics. Proletarian art and literature are part of the whole cause of the proletarian revolution, in the words of Lenin, "cogs and screws in the whole machine". Therefore the Party's artistic and literary activity occupies a definite and assigned position in the Party's total revolutionary work and is subordinated to the prescribed revolutionary task of the Party in a given revolutionary period. Any opposition to this assignment will certainly lead to dualism or pluralism, and in essence amounts to Trotsky's

1 In "The Party's Organization and the Party's Literature" Lenin said: "The cause of literature should form a part of the entire cause of the proletariat and become one of the 'cogs and screws' in the great united, social-democratic machine operated by the whole awakened vanguard of the working class." (Lenin, Collected Works, Russian ed., Moscow, 1947, Vol. X, p. 27.)
formulas: “politics — Marxist; art — bourgeois”. We do not want to stress unduly the importance of art and literature, but we are also against underestimating it. Art and literature are subordinate to politics, but in turn exert a great influence on politics. As a part of the whole cause of the revolution, as the cogs and screws in the whole machine, revolutionary art and literature are necessary and indispensable, though in comparison with some other parts, less important, less essential, secondary. If we had no art and literature even in the broadest and most general sense, then the revolutionary movement could not be carried on to victory. It would be a mistake not to realize this.

Furthermore, in saying that art and literature are subordinate to politics, we mean class politics and mass politics, not the so-called politics of a few statesmen. Politics, whether revolutionary or counter-revolutionary, represent the struggle of one class against another, not the activity of a few individuals. Revolutionary struggles on the ideological and artistic fronts must be subordinate to the political struggle because only through politics can the needs of the class and the people be expressed in concentrated form. A revolutionary statesman or political expert who has mastered the science or art of revolutionary politics is merely a leader of millions of mass-statesmen with the task of collecting their ideas and, after judicious sifting and summing-up, handing them back for the people to accept and act upon; he is not the aristocratic “statesman” who draws up plans out of touch with
reality, fondly imagining that he has a monopoly of wisdom. This is the essential difference between the statesmen of the proletariat and those of the decadent bourgeoisie. That is why there is perfect harmony between the political character of our art and literature and the truthfulness of their presentation. It would be a mistake not to recognize this point and cheapen the politics and statesmanship of the proletariat.

Let us consider next the question of the united front in art and literature. Since art and literature are subordinate to politics and since China's first and foremost political problem today is resistance to Japan, Party artists and writers must first of all unite on this issue with all non-Party petty-bourgeois artists and writers who sympathize with the Party, and all bourgeois and landlord-class artists and writers who support the resistance. We should also seek unity on the issue of democracy, but as some anti-Japanese artists and writers do not accept this, the range of unity will be more limited. Then again, we must seek unity on the issues peculiar to artistic and literary circles, those of method and style, but as we are for socialist realism, to which certain other people object, the range of unity may be further limited. Thus unity can be achieved on one issue while struggle and criticism take place on other issues. As all issues are at the same time separate and inter-related, even on the issue forming the basis of unity, such as resistance to Japan, there are at the same time struggle and criticism. In a united front, unity to the exclusion of struggle and
struggle to the exclusion of unity are wrong policies, for instance, the lines of Right capitulationism and tailism or "Left" exclusivism and sectarianism followed by some comrades in the past. The same is true of art and literature as of politics.

Petty-bourgeois artists and writers in China constitute an important force in the united front of art and literature. In spite of their many ideological and artistic shortcomings, they are, comparatively speaking, in favour of the revolution and comparatively close to the working people. Therefore it is especially important to help them to overcome their shortcomings and win them over to the front that serves the working people.

IV

One of the principal methods of struggle in the artistic and literary world is criticism. Art and literary criticism should be developed and, as many comrades have rightly pointed out, our work in this respect has been quite inadequate. Such criticism presents a complex problem and requires a great deal of special study. Here I shall stress only the basic problem of criteria in criticism. I shall also comment briefly on certain other problems and wrong ideas put forward by some comrades.

There are two criteria in art and literary criticism: political and artistic. According to the political criterion, all works are good which strengthen unity and resistance to Japan, encourage the people to be of one
heart and one mind and oppose retrogression and promote progress; on the other hand, all works are bad which undermine unity and resistance to Japan, sow dissension and discord among the people and oppose progress and drag the people back.

How can we tell the good from the bad — by the motive (subjective intention) or by the effect (practical results on society)? Idealists stress motive and ignore effect, while mechanical materialists stress effect and ignore motive; in contradistinction to both, we dialectical materialists insist on the unity of motive and effect. The motive of serving the people is inseparable from the effect of winning their approval, and we must unite the two. The motive of serving the individual or a small clique is not good, nor can the motive of serving the people be good if it does not produce the effect of winning their support and benefiting them. In examining the subjective intention of an artist, that is, whether his motive is good and proper, we do not judge by his professions but by the effect of his activities, mainly his works, on society and the people. Social practice and its effect are the criteria for judging the subjective intention or the motive.

We reject sectarianism in our criticism and, on the general principle of unity for resistance to Japan, we must permit the appearance of all artistic and literary works expressing every kind of political opinion. But at the same time we must firmly uphold our principles in our criticism, and adhere to our standpoint and severely criticize and repudiate all artistic and literary
works containing anti-national, anti-scientific, anti-
popular and anti-Communist views, because such
works proceed from the motive and produce the effect
of undermining unity and resistance to Japan.
According to the artistic criterion, all works are good
or comparatively good that are of a high artistic
quality, and bad or comparatively bad that are of a low
artistic quality. Of course, this distinction also de­
pends on social effect. As there is hardly an artist
who does not consider his own work excellent, our
criticism ought to permit the free competition of all
varieties of artistic works; but on the other hand, these
works should be correctly assessed according to artistic
criteria so that we can gradually raise art of a
lower level to a higher level, and transform art which
does not meet the requirements of the struggle of the
people into art that does.
There are thus a political criterion and an artistic
criterion. How are the two related? Politics is not
the equivalent of art, nor is a general world outlook
equivalent to the method of artistic creation and crit­
icism. We believe there is neither an abstract and
absolutely unchangeable political criterion, nor an
abstract and absolutely unchangeable artistic criterion,
for every class in a class society has its own political
and artistic criteria. But all classes in all class socie­
ties place the political criterion before the artistic. The
bourgeoisie always rejects proletarian artistic and lit­
erary works, no matter how great their artistic
achievement. The proletariat too must treat the art and
literature of the past according to their attitude to the
people and whether they are progressive in the light of history. Some works which are completely reactionary from the political point of view may yet be of some artistic merit. But the more artistic such a work may be, the greater harm will it do to the people, and the more reason for us to reject it. The contradiction between reactionary political content and artistic form is a common characteristic of the art and literature of all exploiting classes in their decline. What we demand is unity of politics and art, of content and form, and of the revolutionary political content and the highest possible degree of perfection in artistic form. Works of art, however politically progressive, are ineffective if they lack artistic quality. Therefore we are opposed equally to works with wrong political approaches and to the tendency of poster and slogan style which is correct only in political approach but lacks artistic power. We must carry struggle on two fronts in art and literature.

Both these tendencies exist in the minds of many of our comrades. Those who tend to neglect artistic quality should strive to cultivate it. But as I see it, the political side is at present the greater problem. Lack of elementary political knowledge on the part of some comrades has given rise to all kinds of confused ideas. Let me give a few instances found in Yenan. One example is "the theory of human nature". Is there such a thing as human nature? Of course there is. But there is only human nature in the concrete, no human nature in the abstract. In a class society there is only human nature that bears the stamp of a class;
human nature that transcends classes does not exist. We uphold the human nature of the proletariat and of the mass of the people, while the landlord and bourgeois classes uphold the human nature of their own classes as if — though they do not say so outright — it were the only kind of human nature. The human nature boosted by certain petty-bourgeois intellectuals is also divorced from or opposed to that of the mass of the people; what they call human nature is in substance nothing but bourgeois individualism, and consequently in their eyes proletarian human nature is contrary to their human nature. This is the theory of human nature advocated by some people in Yenan as the so-called basis of their theory of art and literature. It is utterly mistaken.

There is another view: “The fundamental point of departure for art and literature is love, the love of mankind”. Now love may serve as a point of departure, but there is still a more fundamental one. Love is a concept, a product of objective practice. Fundamentally, we do not start from a concept but from objective practice. Our artists and writers who come from the intelligentsia love the proletariat because the impact of society has made them feel that they share the same fate with the proletariat. We hate Japanese imperialism because the Japanese imperialists oppress us. There is no love or hatred in the world that has not its cause. There has not been any such all-embracing love of mankind since the division of mankind into classes. All the ruling classes in the past liked to advocate this love, and so did many of the so-called sages and wise men,
but nobody has ever put it into practice for the very good reason that it is impracticable in a class society. Genuine love of mankind will be born only when class distinctions have been eliminated throughout the world. It is the classes that have caused the division of society into many antagonistic sections and it will be only after their elimination, certainly not now, that love of all mankind can exist. We cannot love our enemies or social evils; our aim is to eliminate both. How can our artists and writers fail to understand this common sense view?

Others say: "Art and literature have always described the bright as well as the dark side of things impartially and equally." This statement contains a number of confused ideas. Art and literature have not always done so. Many petty-bourgeois writers have never found the bright side and have devoted their works to exposing the dark side, the so-called literature of exposure; some have even made it their special mission to preach pessimism and misanthropy. On the other hand, Soviet literature during the period of socialist reconstruction portrays mainly the bright side. It also describes weaknesses and bad characters, but such descriptions are not included for the sake of equal treatment of both sides but only to accentuate the brightness of the whole picture. Bourgeois writers in periods of reaction portray the revolutionary masses as ruffians and the bourgeois as saints, thus reversing the bright and dark sides. Only truly revolutionary artists and writers can correctly solve the problem whether to extol or to expose. The fundamental task
of all revolutionary artists and writers is to expose all
dark forces which endanger the people and to extol
all the revolutionary struggles of the people.

It is also said that "the task of art and literature has
always been to expose". This sort of argument, like
the previous one, arises from lack of knowledge of the
science of history. We have already shown that the
task of art and literature does not consist solely in ex­
posure. For the revolutionary artists and writers the
objects to be exposed can never be the people, but
only the aggressors, exploiters and oppressors and the
ever effects of their activities on the people. The
people have their shortcomings too, but these are to
be removed by means of criticism and self-criticism
within the ranks of the people themselves, and one of
the most important tasks of art and literature is to
conduct such criticism and self-criticism. We should
not regard such criticism as "exposure" of the people.
Our fundamental problem is how to educate the people
and raise their level. Only counter-revolutionary
artists and writers describe the people as born fools
and the revolutionary masses as tyrannical mobs.

Others say: "This is still a period of the feuilleton,
and the style of Lu Hsun still meets the needs." Living
in a realm of reaction and deprived of freedom of
speech, Lu Hsun was entirely right in choosing as his
weapons scorching satire and freezing irony in the form
of feuilletons. We too must make the fascists, the
Chinese reactionaries and everything endangering the
people the butt of our remorseless satire; but in the
Border Region of Shensi-Kansu-Ningsia and the anti-
Japanese base areas in the enemy’s rear, where counter-revolutionaries alone are deprived of freedom and democratic rights, our revolutionary writers who are in full enjoyment of these things must no longer write feuilletons simply in the style of Lu Hsun. Here we can shout at the top of our voices, and need not resort to ambiguous and veiled expressions which tax the understanding of the mass of the people. In dealing with the people themselves as distinct from their enemies, Lu Hsun even in his feuilleton period did not ridicule or attack the revolutionary masses and the revolutionary parties, and employed a style entirely different from that of his feuilletons against the enemy. We must, as we have already said, criticize the shortcomings of the people, but we do so from their standpoint and out of a sincere desire to protect and educate them. If we treat our comrades like enemies, then we are taking the standpoint of the enemy. Are we then to give up satire altogether? No. Satire is always necessary. But there are different kinds of satire, satire of our enemies, satire of our allies and satire of ourselves — each of them reflects a different attitude. We are not opposed to satire in general, but we must not abuse it.

Still others say: “We are not given to praise and eulogy; works which extol the bright side of things are not necessarily great, nor are works which depict the dark side necessarily worthless.” If you are a bourgeois artist or writer, you will extol not the proletariat but the bourgeoisie, and if you are a proletarian artist or writer, you will extol not the bourgeoisie but
the proletariat and the working people: you must do one or the other. Those works which extol the bright side of the bourgeoisie are not necessarily great while those which depict its dark side are not necessarily worthless, and those works which extol the bright side of the proletariat are not necessarily worthless, while those works which depict the so-called dark side of the proletariat are certainly worthless. Are these not facts recorded in the history of art and literature? Why should we not extol the people who make the history of mankind? Why should we not extol the proletariat, the Communist Party, the New Democracy and socialism? Of course, there are persons who have no enthusiasm for the people's cause and stand aloof, looking with cold indifference on the struggle and the victory of the proletariat and its vanguard, and take pleasure only in singing endless praises of themselves, and perhaps a few persons in their own coterie. Such petty-bourgeois individualists are naturally unwilling to praise the heroic deeds of the revolutionary people or to heighten their courage in struggle and confidence in victory. They are the corrupters in the revolutionary ranks; the revolutionary people have indeed no use for such "singers".

Another opinion has also been expressed: "It is not a matter of standpoint; the standpoint is correct, the intention is good, and the understanding is sound, but the expression is faulty and produces a bad effect." I have already spoken about the dialectical materialist view of motive and effect. Now I want to ask: Can the effect be separated from the standpoint? Anyone
who bases his actions only on his motive and disregards the effect is very much like a doctor who hands out prescriptions and does not care how many patients die of them. Or what of a political party which keeps on making pronouncements but does nothing about carrying them out? Is its standpoint correct? Are its intentions good? Of course, anyone can be mistaken in estimating beforehand the effect of a certain action; but are his intentions really good if he adheres to the old course of action even when its bad effects have become evident? In judging an artist or a writer, we must look at the practice and the effect, just as in judging a political party or a doctor. Anyone who has a truly good intention must take the effect into consideration, sum up his experiences and study the proper methods or, in the case of artistic creation, the means of expression. Anyone who has a truly good intention must criticize with the utmost candour the shortcomings and mistakes in his work and make up his mind to correct them. That is why the Communists have adopted the method of self-criticism. Only such a standpoint is correct. It is only through such a process of conscientious and responsible practice that we can arrive at a gradual understanding and firm grasp of the correct standpoint. If we refuse to proceed along this line in our practice, then, for all our complacent assertion to the contrary, we really have no understanding of the correct standpoint.

We have also heard people say: "To advocate the study of Marxism is a repetition of the mistake of using dialectical materialist formulas in our creative work,
and this will stifle our creative impulse.” We study Marxism in order to apply the dialectical materialist and historical materialist viewpoint in our approach to the world, to society and to art and literature, but not in order to turn our works of art and literature into philosophical discourses. Marxism includes realism in artistic and literary creation, but cannot replace it, just as it includes atomics and electronics in physics but cannot replace them. Empty, cut-and-dried doctrinaire formulas will certainly destroy our creative impulse; indeed they destroy Marxism itself. Doctrinaire Marxism is not Marxist but anti-Marxist. But will not Marxism destroy any creative impulses? It will; it will certainly destroy the creative impulses that arise from feudal, bourgeois and petty-bourgeois ideology, from liberalism, individualism and nihilism, from art-for-art’s sake, from the aristocratic, decadent and pessimistic outlook—indeed any creative impulse that is not rooted in the people and the proletariat. So far as proletarian artists and writers are concerned, should not these creative impulses be destroyed? I think they should; indeed they must be utterly destroyed and while they are being destroyed, new things can be built up.

V

What is the significance of these problems which face us in Yenan artistic and literary circles? They signify that in our artistic and literary circles incorrect
styles in work still exist to a serious extent; that we need a thoroughgoing and serious campaign to correct them and to remove such defects as idealism, doctrinaireism, utopianism, empty talk, contempt of practice and aloofness from the people which are still found among our comrades.

Many of our comrades remain confused about the difference between the proletariat and the petty bourgeoisie. Many Party members are Communists only in the organizational sense; ideologically they are not fully Communists or are not Communists at all. Those who are not ideologically Communists still carry in their heads many of the rotten ideas of the exploiting classes and have not the slightest understanding of proletarian ideology, communism, or the Party. They say to themselves: “Proletarian ideology! Isn’t it just the same old stuff?” They have no idea that to acquire this stuff is by no means easy; some people, for instance, have never in their lives had the slightest trace of a Communist about them, and are bound to end up by leaving the Party.

Therefore, though the majority of our Party and in our ranks are clean and honest, we must nevertheless make a conscientious organizational and ideological overhaul, so that we can better advance the revolution and win earlier victory. But an organizational overhaul presupposes an ideological overhaul, and we have to combat non-proletarian ideas with proletarian ideas. In artistic and literary circles in Yenan an ideological struggle, which is entirely necessary, has already begun. By various ways and means, including artistic
and literary means, intellectuals of petty-bourgeois origin always stubbornly try to express themselves, spread their own opinions, and demand that the Party and the world should be remoulded in their image. In these circumstances it is our duty to say to them bluntly: "Comrades! Your stuff won't do! The proletariat cannot compromise with you; to yield to you is to yield to the big bourgeoisie and the big landlord class and to risk the destruction of our Party and our country." Whom then should we take as the model? We can only remould the Party and the world in the image of the vanguard of the proletariat. We hope our comrades in artistic and literary circles will realize the seriousness of this great controversy and actively join in this struggle, so that everyone of them will have a clean bill of health and our whole Party will become truly united and consolidated ideologically and organizationally.

As a result of ideological confusion many comrades have failed to distinguish clearly between our revolutionary base areas and Kuomintang-controlled areas and have consequently made many mistakes. A number of comrades have arrived here from the garrets of Shanghai;¹ in coming from such garrets to the revolutionary base areas, they have passed not only from one region to another, but also from one historical epoch to another. One is a semi-feudal, semi-colonial society under the rule of the big landlords and big bourgeoisie.

¹In Shanghai, in those days, the impecunious artists, writers, intellectuals, and small office employees mostly lived in cheap and congested quarters.
while the other is a revolutionary society of New De-
mocracy under the leadership of the proletariat. Ar-
arrival at our bases means coming under a regime of
the mass of the people, a regime unprecedented in the
thousands of years of Chinese history. Here we find
an entirely different set of people around us and an
entirely different public for our propaganda. The past
epoch is gone and gone for ever. We must therefore
unite unhesitatingly with the new mass of the people.
If, living among the new people, you comrades still, as I
said before, lack thorough knowledge and understanding
of them and thus lack the field to display your prowess,
then you will meet with difficulties not only when you
go to the villages, but right here in Yenan. Some com-
rades think that they would rather go on writing for
the readers in the “big rear”,¹ as they understand the
conditions there well and can thus produce works of
“national significance”. This view is entirely wrong.
The big rear is also changing and the readers there
expect authors in the revolutionary base areas to tell
them about new people and a new world, not to bore
them with the same old stories. Therefore the more
a work is intended for the people of the revolutionary
bases, the more national significance will it have. A.

¹ During the Anti-Japanese War people used to call the vast
areas under Kuomintang control in south-western and north-
western China which were not occupied by the Japanese, the
“big rear”, as distinguished from the “small rear” — the anti-
Japanese base areas in the enemy rear under Communist
leadership.
Fadeyev's *The Nineteen* only tells the story of a small guerrilla unit and does not cater for the tastes of the readers of the old world; yet it has produced a worldwide effect, or at any rate, as all of you here well know, a tremendous effect in China. China is going forward, not backward, and it is the revolutionary base areas, not any backward, retrogressive regions, that are leading her forward. This is the fundamental fact that you comrades must first of all clearly recognize in the course of the campaign to correct style in work.

Since we must adapt ourselves to the new epoch of the people, we must find a complete solution to the problem of the relationship between the individual and the people. Lu Hsun's couplet should be our motto: "With frowning brows I disdainfully defy the thousands who point accusing fingers at me; with bowed head I meekly submit like an ox for the child to ride on." The thousands refer to our enemies, and we will never yield to them no matter how fierce they may be. The child refers to the proletariat and the mass of the people. Every Communist, revolutionary, revolutionary artist or writer should follow the example of Lu Hsun and be the ox for the proletariat and the mass of the people, "bending his back to the burden until he breathes his last". Before the intellectuals

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1 Published in 1927 and translated into Chinese by Lu Hsun.
3 A famous quotation from one of Chukeh Liang's memorials to the throne. Chukeh Liang (A.D. 181-234), who lived in the
can unite with and work for the masses, they must go through a process in which they and the people come to know and understand each other. Although this process may be and is sometimes bound to be full of suffering and conflict, once you have made up your minds you will be equal to the test.

What I have said today covers only some of the fundamental problems of the direction of our artistic and literary movement; many other specific problems await further study. I believe that you comrades are determined to go in this direction. I also believe that, in the course of the campaign to correct style in work and in your long period of study and work in the future, you will be able to remould yourselves, change the character of your work, create many excellent things which will be warmly welcomed by the people, and advance to a glorious new stage the artistic and literary movement in our revolutionary base areas and throughout the whole country.

Epoch of the Three Kingdoms, has become among the Chinese a byword for statesmanship, wisdom and passionate loyalty to a good cause.
can work with and work for the masses. They must go through a process in which they and the people come to know and understand each other. Although the process may be slow and at times be full of suffering and conflict, once you have made up your mind you will be equal to the task.

What I have said today covers only some of the fundamental problems of the direction of our artistic and literary movements; many other specific problems await further study. I believe that you are well prepared and determined to go in this direction. I also believe that in the course of the campaign to correct style in work and in your long period of study and work in the future, you will be able to remould yourselves, change the character of your work, create many excellent things which will be warmly welcomed by the people and advance to a glorious new stage the artistic and literary movement in our revolutionary base areas and throughout the whole country.

毛 泽 东
在延安文艺座谈会上的講話

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