



**THE CULTURAL  
RENAISSANCE  
IN UKRAINE**

**Polemical Pamphlets 1925-1926**

**MYKOLA KHVYLOVY**

**Mykola Khvylovy**

**The Cultural Renaissance  
in Ukraine**

*Polemical Pamphlets, 1925–1926*

**Translated, Edited and Introduced by  
Myroslav Shkandrij**

**Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies  
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## Foreword

Must we take it for granted that literature and politics do not mix? While it is true that on the whole literature thrives in the absence of political constraints which always tend to crush, it is not necessarily true that politically *engagé* writers are bad writers. Brecht, Maiakovsky, Céline and Orwell disprove that. Sometimes, politics may, indeed, fuel the creative energy. While politics is rarely at the core of artistic experience, it may be an inspiration or trigger. It is so especially in the case of a literature whose development has long been impeded by political factors. The history of European literature, Ireland and Ukraine, as well as some other countries, provide examples of this phenomenon. Throughout the nineteenth century both countries were politically and culturally oppressed. Their languages and literatures became the first line of defence against national annihilation. In Ireland, indeed, the battle for the Irish literary language was lost, but a distinct Irish literature in English emerged which helped to sustain the Irish identity. In Ukraine, where the Ukrainian literary language was proscribed by the tsarist decrees of 1863 and 1876, the fight for complete linguistic and cultural freedom was not won until 1917. After the fall of the Ukrainian People's Republic in 1919, the country came under Soviet rule, but its cultural and linguistic freedom lingered during the 1920s. During the decade various artistic and literary trends emerged, some clearly apolitical, while others claimed to speak in the name of socialism and communism. During the literary debates, which culminated in the so-called "Literary Discussion" (1925–8) the nature of Ukrainian literature was thoroughly exposed. Here and there were young writers of promise eager to gain readers, but also eager to assert some kind of cultural orientation. Literary groups and organizations, promising guidance in these matters, proliferated. Ideology and politics once more invaded literature, not, as had happened earlier, in defence of linguistic rights, but,

basking in the shimmering, though illusory, light of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, in postulating a programme for a new national literature. No one would have listened, in those days to any advice in favour of cultural *laissez-faire*. There was enough fervour left from the revolution itself to demand for the new Soviet Ukrainian state at least some clear cultural and literary guidelines. After all, under socialism, was not everything to be planned for the better?

No one was more dedicated to the future of the young Ukrainian literature than the communist Mykola Khvylovy. To him, this future meant blending with the Utopian image of the "commune beyond the hills." There are, therefore, not only communist-nationalist elements in Khvylovy's outlook, but also the Utopian-universalist. The latter tendency places him well within the tradition of the Ukrainian intelligentsia, a tradition beginning in 1846, with the foundation in Kiev of the Brotherhood of Sts. Cyril and Methodius. The Brotherhood's Utopian Christian ideals as well as their Slavic federalist strivings were transformed by Khvylovy into communist internationalism and the primacy of Ukraine among the formerly oppressed peoples.

The nationalist message of Khvylovy's pamphlets is clear. What no Ukrainian intellectual before him could express with such clarity, he managed to do with a single motto: *Away from Moscow*. Stalin could never forgive him for this and Stalin's successors saw to it that Khvylovy's name was expunged from the annals of Ukrainian literature. In itself, chauvinist as this call may appear, it summed up the desire of Ukrainians to be masters of their own country (Shevchenko's insistence that "truth be in one's own home"), which is not unreasonable. And although this independence was to apply primarily to culture, to a Marxist this also entailed the substructure, the economic and political order. Both Khvylovy and Stalin realized the audacity of this idea. Moreover, Khvylovy's nationalism went hand in hand with a pro-Western orientation and his messianic belief in Ukraine's mission in a future Asiatic Renaissance. To a Muscovite cast of mind this bordered on sheer insanity, to a Ukrainian intellectual it opened the doors to the outside world after centuries of forced isolation. It is in this extraordinary mixture of Marxism, nationalism, universalism and pro-Europeanism that the fascination of Khvylovy's writings lies. Borrowing from Marx, Spengler and Plekhanov he articulated his beliefs boldly and iconoclastically with an unheard of, truly romantic, linguistic virtuosity. Within the stale and placid backwater that was Ukraine this tornado appeared.

Khvylovy demanded that in literature artistic quality alone, not ideology, should be the yardstick of merit. This is reminiscent of the Russian critic Voronsky, who, like Khvylovy, tried to combine this belief with Marxism. Unlike, Voronsky, Khvylovy was the author of many

excellent, completely apolitical, lyrical short stories and at least one unfinished novel. Some Ukrainian critics maintain, indeed, that the apolitical writer was greater than the author of the pamphlets. Yet in Ukrainian intellectual history the pamphlets have left, despite the ban on them in Ukraine, an indelible mark. Their impatience with native Philistinism and red *prosvita* alone has earned them a permanent place of honour. So has their thrust toward intellectual independence from dogma.

There is a touch of deep tragedy about Khvylovy's pamphlets, and not only because he deliberately took his own life in 1933 in protest against communist policies in Ukraine. Khvylovy's fiery words were delivered from what he considered to be a position of strength. He spoke as a Ukrainian communist, in a Ukrainian communist state. However, this position of strength was illusory. Ukrainian communists in the 1920s thought they had achieved power, but in fact they had none. Then, as now, ultimate power rested in the hands of Moscow, where all the final decisions were made. The slightest challenge to the central authority of the party was rejected; open rebellion, like Khvylovy's, was crushed. One can, of course, commiserate with him, or be scornful of the naiveté with which people like Khvylovy behaved. Or one can, in Khvylovy's own words, marvel at "the madness of the brave."

George S. N. Luckyj  
University of Toronto, 1985

## **Preface**

This publication would not have been possible without the financial support of the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies and the generous assistance of many individuals. In particular I would like to acknowledge my debt to James Mace and Myroslav Yurkevich for their suggestions, their comments on the translation and help with footnotes. A special debt of gratitude is due to Hryhorii Kostiuk for his invaluable aid in decoding many cryptic references in the text, and to George Luckyj, Manoly Lupul, Bohdan Krawchenko and Natalka Chomiak for their encouragement and advice.

Myroslav Shkandrij  
University of Ottawa, 1985



# **Introduction**

## **Mykola Khvylovy and the Literary Discussion**

**Myroslav Shkandrij**

“It is only by such external functions as the millions have in common, their uniform and simultaneous movements, that the many can be united in a higher unity: marching, keeping in step, shouting ‘hurrah’ in unison, festal singing in chorus, united attacks on the enemy, these are the manifestations of life which are to give birth to the new and superior type of humanity. Everything that divides the many from each other, that fosters the illusion of the individual importance of man, especially the ‘soul,’ hinders this higher evolution, and must consequently be destroyed.”

Rene Fülöp-Miller

“Cannons are not enough: you will never institute Socialism without music.”

Pavlo Tychyna

\* \* \*

The life of Mykola Khvylovy (1893–1933) coincides with the dramatic growth of the national movement in Ukraine: its sudden appearance on the political stage following the collapse of the Russian Empire in 1917, its meteoric rise to power and defeat. It is only natural, therefore, that his writings should reflect the passionate concern with political and cultural questions, the impetuous hopes for national sovereignty, the agonizing self-analysis and the despair that characterized literature of the period.

In the years leading up to the Revolution of 1917 two issues dominated the thinking of Ukrainian intellectuals. One was the loss of sovereignty and collapse of national identity over the previous century. During the period of national autonomy in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Ukraine arguably had a higher level of literacy, a better educational system and a stronger sense of national purpose than under Russian rule in the nineteenth. The repressive edicts of tsarism had proscribed publishing, performing, translating and even printing the words to songs in the Ukrainian language. Understandably, the Ukrainian intelligentsia was obsessively concerned with questions of education, literacy, language and history—with the entire question of national consciousness. The second issue to occupy their attention was the distorted social structure of Ukraine. The people were predominantly peasant. The urban environment was thoroughly Russified and the small indigenous intelligentsia—the carrier of Ukrainian cultural values—had to struggle to assert itself. As for the old Ukrainian gentry, it had over the years denationalized and thrown in its lot with the Poles or the Russians.

Still the depth and power of the national movement seems to have taken most observers by surprise, when between 1917 and 1920 thousands of nationally-conscious Ukrainians threw themselves into the struggle to maintain an independent state. Furthermore, during this period the potential development of Ukrainian civilization was glimpsed by many more individuals as they witnessed the establishment of centres for the performing and visual arts, academies, institutes, publishing houses, the creation of newspapers, journals and literary groups.

The short-lived national revolution, however, suffered a crushing defeat and the Bolsheviks were able to consolidate their hold on the country in 1920. In the course of these events, the Ukrainian political forces became polarized and a small Ukrainian left emerged (which included Khvylovy). It supported the concept of an autonomous but Soviet Ukraine. Although the Bolsheviks were able to win over some of the best cadres of the radicalizing Ukrainian Socialist parties, they, nevertheless, took power in Ukraine with the opprobrium of an alien, invasionary force, and for years the country remained a hotbed of discontent and revolt.

The Communist Party (Bolshevik) of Ukraine (CP(B)U) was itself split into two groups: the Russian cadre with a base in the Russified working class and the Ukrainian cadre that had come over to the side of the Bolsheviks during the Revolution and Civil War. This Ukrainian element, the "organic" Ukrainian intellectuals and activists, who wielded authority among the Ukrainian masses and who considered themselves the legitimate representatives of the Ukrainian population, began a struggle to continue the process of self-determination set in motion during the Revolution and the years of independence. Their leadership—Mykola Skrypnyk,

Oleksander Shumsky, Mykola Khvylovy and others—supported far-reaching concessions to national aspirations.

Among the demands of this group, which is generally referred to as the “national Communist current,” were: the control of certain government bodies (economic, political, educational, etc.), the Ukrainization of the party, government, press and civil life in general, the promotion of Ukrainians to positions of leadership and the creation of a modern Ukrainian culture.

To exacerbate the already formidable problems facing the Bolsheviks in Ukraine, their policy during early years was an almost unmitigated disaster. On the economic front they were reduced to requisitioning grain from the villages; on the political front, the Russian administrators and military, desensitized by years of Civil War, took every opportunity to punish a defeated peasantry and an outlawed national movement; and on the cultural front, the theory of “the struggle between two cultures” was proclaimed, a move that in effect sanctioned an unabated wave of Russian chauvinism.

Only in April 1923, when the Bolsheviks realized that if they wanted peace in Ukraine they would have to make concessions to national aspirations, was a policy of Ukrainization finally announced. It took yet another two years of internal wrangling and the slow retreat of the Russian cadre from its anti-Ukrainian positions before the path was cleared for any real progress on this question.

To an outsider, the situation in Ukraine in May 1925 may have looked auspicious for the development of Ukrainian culture. In that month, Lazar Kaganovich, the new First Secretary of the CP(B)U, initiated a committed and energetic policy of Ukrainization: time limits were set for the complete transition to the Ukrainian language of the civil service; the percentage of Ukrainians within the party began to rise;<sup>1</sup> and a re-emigration of intellectuals, formerly associated with the defeated governments of the Central Rada and Directory, commenced. However, although the Ukrainization policy scored successes in such areas as the spread of literacy, the establishment of an educational system, and the creation of a network of publications,<sup>2</sup> it was far less successful in dominating the key sectors of the new Ukrainian Republic's life. From 1925 to 1927, the Soviet Ukrainian press constantly lamented the slow pace of Ukrainization in the government bureaucracy, the party, the trade union apparatus and heavy industry.<sup>3</sup>

Beneath the surface the much heralded and apparently healthy cultural revolution was floundering. Even in the sphere of press and publications—an obvious litmus test of the policy's success—the Russian language continued to dominate in the mid-twenties. By the end of 1925, *Visty VUTsVK* (*News of the All-Ukrainian Central Executive*

*Committee*),<sup>4</sup> the official organ of the Soviet government in Ukraine, had captured only 15,000 subscribers, whereas the Russian language *Kommunist (Communist)* and *Proletarskaia pravda (Proletarian Truth)* could each claim 30,000.<sup>5</sup> Although Ukrainian-language publishing overtook Russian in volume of production during this period, more Russian titles than Ukrainian continued to appear in the republic, and much of the Ukrainian production remained at the popular, propagandistic level.<sup>6</sup>

It was in this atmosphere that one of the most brilliant of the younger generation of writers in Ukraine, Mykola Khvylovy, backed by Oleksander Shumsky and other high-ranking Ukrainians in the CP(B)U, launched a campaign for a more rapid Ukrainization and a more vigorous struggle against Great Russian chauvinism. An underlying political motif in their declarations was the accusation that although the Twelfth Congress of the Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik) (RCP(B)) had proclaimed national equality, that equality had not arrived, and, in fact, would not be possible until the towns and the proletariat were Ukrainian. The greatest single obstacle to this was the resistance of the Russian chauvinist, whom Khvylovy dubbed the "all-Union Philistine."

The "national communist current" was a broadly-based challenge to Russian hegemony in Ukraine. Oleksander Shumsky led the struggle within the party apparatus; Mykola Skrypnyk defended the new republic's interest at the Union level; Mykhailo Volobuiev offered an economic policy for the movement; Matvii Iavorsky developed a school of history; and Mykola Khvylovy took up the question of Ukrainian culture.<sup>7</sup>

In April 1925 Khvylovy initiated what became known as the Literary Discussion. He called for a cultural revolution in Ukraine that would finally enable the Ukrainian people, in possession of a distinct culture and a separate state, to take their place alongside the most advanced nations of Europe. His ideas, a fusion of Marxist class concepts with a measure of Ukrainian messianism, exerted a powerful influence on his contemporaries, who found nothing inconsistent in his claim that the road to Socialism lay through national renaissance.

The Literary Discussion began formally with the publication of articles by M. Bykovets<sup>8</sup> and especially one by H. Iakovenko entitled "On Critics and Criticism in Literature," which appeared in *Kultura i pobut (Culture and Daily Life)* on 30 April 1925. Iakovenko, who was offended by the outcome of a literary competition held by the journal *Chervonyi shliakh (Red Path)*, complained that various "grey-haired old men" and "olympians" were rejecting literature about tractors, communes and the "negative behaviour of monks." These same patented proletarian critics, according to Iakovenko, were being applauded for producing works such as Mykola Khvylovy's "I," a story that could only be read by "Philistines and degenerates, for whom the Revolution was an example of acute spiritual

sadism." Iakovenko felt that "proletarian literature ought to be elementary and simple, but healthy and useful. . . ." In concluding, he asked—rather threateningly—that "controlling sections, composed of ideologically proven people who completely understand the demands of proletarian creativity, be attached to the editorial boards of journals and newspapers in order to check the reviews of established writers. . . ."

### *Khvylovy's Pamphlets*

Mykola Khvylovy responded with his "First Letter to Literary Youth" entitled "On 'Satan in a Barrel,' Graphomaniacs, Speculators and Other Prosvita-Types,"<sup>9</sup> in which he ridiculed Iakovenko as a representative of all that was uncultured, boorish and humiliatingly backward in Ukrainian society. ("Satan in a Barrel" was the title of a primitive one-act farce popular at the turn of the century.) The fact that his reply appeared on the same page as Iakovenko's article shows that the editors provided Khvylovy with the letter and solicited a response from him. He, furthermore, was able to quote from and deride Iakovenko's short story submission to the contest in order to make the point that the process of Ukrainization was allowing ignorant and illiterate Philistines to gain positions of leadership in the literary community. Unable to provide anything worthy of the name literature, they substitute ideological debate for artistic competence. His conclusion: hacks like Bykovets and Iakovenko (both of whom were, incidentally, members of the peasants' writers union, Pluh) should remain journalists and not "poke their nose into art."

Iakovenko responded with a second article, "Not About 'the Other,' but About the Same," on 21 May, in which he called the thirty-one-year old Khvylovy "an old *littérateur* educated on Spenglerian ideas."

It shortly became clear that there was support for Iakovenko's ideas in a sector of the Ukrainian public. A letter from "Workers and Founders of the Kharkiv Institute of Public Education"<sup>10</sup> counterposed a local patriotism and reliance on one's own forces to what they perceived as Khvylovy's orientation to literary standards set by Western Europe. There were distinct political overtones in this letter, notably references to the current debate between Trotsky and Stalin on the possibility of building "Socialism in one country." This political debate, which had followed the reluctant recognition that the Revolution had failed to spread to Western Europe and would be isolated for many years to a backward land with a largely agrarian economy, was linked, in the minds of the Kharkiv group, to the literary sparring. Both Trotsky and Khvylovy were seen as unpatriotic and lacking faith in the capacities of their own people. The letter rejected Europe as "decadent and rotten." It also issued a denial of

Khvylovy's claim, following Trotsky, that great art had a universal significance, transcending the limitations of time, nation and class. The Kharkiv group counterposed to this a utilitarian view of literature: they subordinated it to the political imperatives of the day and considered Dante's *Divine Comedy*, for example, to be merely a document of small cultural and historical interest. Bluntly rejecting Khvylovy's call for a highbrow literature, they asked for "a mass literature that would be accessible to and that is so badly needed by workers."<sup>11</sup>

Khvylovy's second pamphlet, "On Copernicus of Frauenburg, or the Alphabet of the Asiatic Renaissance in Art," appeared on 31 May, and his third, "On Demagogic Water, or the Real Address of Ukrainian Voronskyism, Free Competition and so on," on 21 June. These three pamphlets were republished that same year under the title *Kamo hriadeshy[?] Pamflety (Quo Vadis? Pamphlets)*.

Composed not merely as logical expositions of the writer's ideas on literature, these essays were in themselves literature, much in the same way as Voltaire's essays or the manifestos of the Surrealist movement were inspired expressions of an attitude to life. Full of striking images, wit, playful tones and written in a compelling flow of thought that snatches up the reader and carries him along, they appealed strongly to the Ukrainian intelligentsia. According to one critic, Mohyliansky: "The impression, after Khvylovy's article, was as if in a room so stuffy that breathing was difficult, the windows had been suddenly opened, and the lungs felt the air again."<sup>12</sup> Indeed, a measure of the success of these writings, as had been pointed out more than once by critics, is the refusal to this day of Soviet authorities to discuss their ideas or to sanction their reprinting.

In *Quo Vadis?*, Khvylovy develops four central images: Europe, *prosvita*, the Asiatic renaissance and art. In the course of his discussion with the reader, he gives more than one definition of each image, elaborating it by continually adding new metaphors. Thus, by the end of his pamphlet, he has created a sparkling, highly evocative—if somewhat imprecise—symbol, compared to which his opponent's arguments seem pedantic and colourless. He picks up the thread of one of these key images, toys with it, drops it as his fancy suggests another line of thought, and then returns to it. It is probable that Khvylovy formulated his ideas in the course of penning his essays. This method of writing allowed him to build his case around poetic symbols to which he could return at any time to expand his ideas; it also facilitated the untrammelled flow of ideas in a writer who was giving full bent to his imagination.

The style was revealing of the man, and the message, in other ways also. The form of presentation was that of a dialogue, a conversation with the reader. Ukrainian literature, which has always faced difficulties creating convincing dialogue based on the urban *intelligentsia*, was

suddenly presented with the intonations of the young, cocky Kharkiv urbanite, a language which differed profoundly from anything previously heard in Ukrainian literature. In order to create this new language Khvylovy had to fuse various traditions and linguistic levels: the traditional concerns of the populist Ukrainian intelligentsia were interspersed with references to Western literature, Marxist political theory, the macaronic language of the Russified civil service and the racy idiom of the town proletariat. The purpose of breaking through the confines of established literary diction, however, was not only necessary to introduce the voice of the new Ukrainian intellectual; the discovery of a new tone and idiom was also indispensable for the creation of a new literary public. The twenties saw a democratization of literary culture of unprecedented proportions: the introduction of mass education, mass publications, radio and cinema meant that the dominant nineteenth-century genres of lyric poetry and the theatre of ethnographic realism were challenged by other forms of cultural expression. The group around Khvylovy hoped to take advantage of this spread of interest in cultural matters among youth, as their keen desire to work with mass methods of communication and experimentation with a variety of artistic media indicates. Hence, also, the introduction of colloquial expressions, the racy, idiomatic tone and the dialogue with the urbanite in Khvylovy's works.

The phenomenal rise of interest in literature and cultural problems after the Revolution was not, however, without its dangers. The Ukrainian intellectual was confronted with a situation of general illiteracy in the villages and semi-literacy among many sectors of the urban population.

A public innocent of the mysteries of style, yet desirous of the prestige and distinction that the designation "writer" carried with it, flocked to the publishers during these years. In the 1922 census, in Kiev alone, ten thousand individuals gave "writer" as their profession.<sup>13</sup> The quality of many of the efforts of these aspiring writers, of course, left much to be desired. One illustration, perhaps, will suffice. The following editorial comment appeared in *Visnyk UNR* (*Herald of the UPR* [Ukrainian Peoples Republic]), the first organ of the Soviet government in Ukraine:

Comrade Iakym! We are publishing your poem after reworking it. In the future we ask you to pay attention to proportion, rhyme and orthography. You can learn all this from reading the best Ukrainian poets: Shevchenko, Franko, Oles.<sup>14</sup>

A second major difficulty stemmed from the overwhelming presence of non-Ukrainian (primarily Russian and Russian-speaking Jewish) populations in the cities. Khvylovy's pamphlets were aimed at the element that would change this situation: the educated young Ukrainians who were moving into the cities from the surrounding sea of Ukrainian villages.

These pamphlets challenged the intelligent reader and made no concessions to the ignoramus, the plodding dullard, or to the prejudiced member of the dominant Russified city culture who viewed all things Ukrainian with condescension or contempt. Indeed, they were written in a style that was inaccessible to this latter type, full of intuitive jumps, references to historical, political and literary figures and unexplained terms. They were, in sum, a passionate exhortation to Ukrainian youth to set demanding goals, to study and to create a new movement in art that befitted a young nation and a historic social revolution.

The first symbol advanced by Khvylovy was "Europe."

Europe is the experience of many ages. Not the Europe that Spengler announced was "in decline," not the one that is rotting and which we despise. It is the Europe of a grandiose civilization, the Europe of Goethe, Darwin, Byron, Newton, Marx and so on and so forth.<sup>15</sup>

Toying with this idea, Khvylovy gradually adds to the picture:

when we speak of Europe we are thinking of more than its technical expertise. Bare technique is not enough for us; there is something more weighty than the latter. We conceive of Europe also as a psychological category which thrusts humanity forward, out of *prosvita* and onto the great highway of progress.

Marx, having assimilated the technical skills of Europe, would not have been Marx if the sum of his spiritual values had not entered into the category we have named. Einsteins, both great and small are Europeans, and half-baked professors are *prosvita*-types.<sup>16</sup>

The symbol imperceptibly becomes entangled with the image of Mykola Zerov, the leading Ukrainian literary critic, a scholar of antiquity and an accomplished poet belonging to the "Neoclassicists":

we have to use the Zerovs not only for their technical skills, but also in their psychological dimension. The single, at first glance insignificant... fact that they are so resolutely going "against the current" in translating the Romans, gives us the right to view them as real Europeans.<sup>17</sup>

Other metaphors are also associated with this general symbol: Les Kurbas, the *avant-garde* director, whom Khvylovy greatly admired, Expressionism, which he was influenced by, and so on. Just as the introduction of the concrete figure of Mykola Zerov is quickly blurred by the use of the plural, "Zerovs," and through repetition becomes more an abstract idea than a reference to a concrete individual, Khvylovy's other references take on the warm glow of emotive abstractions, all contributing to the light of the overall symbol.



The second symbol developed by the pamphlets was "*prosvita*." This was the name of a popular enlightenment society which operated mainly in the Ukrainian village in the pre-revolutionary years. In Khvylovy's polemics it becomes a symbol of provincialism and primitivism. It includes the third-rate theatre director, Harkun-Zadunaisky, the popular and trashy play, "Satan in a Barrel," the nameless and faceless hacks whose name is "-enko" or "-tsia" (again a generalization from the original concrete examples of H. Iakovenko and P. Kyianytsia), poems about communes and tractors, Akakii Akakievich and Denikin's flagbearer Smerdyupenko. All this meant to say that Ukrainian literature had to break with its past backwardness, its traditions of populism and ethnographism and had to finally build a literature that would serve the interests of a demanding intelligentsia.

A third symbol, one that became a slogan for Khvylovy, was the "Asiatic Renaissance." The Revolution would lead to a political and cultural revival of the people of the East:

The powerful Asiatic renaissance in art is approaching, and its forerunners are we, the "olympians." Just as Petrarch, Michaelangelo, Raphael etc., in their time from a corner of Italy set fire to Europe with the flame of the Renaissance, thus the new artists of the once oppressed Asian countries, the new artists-communards who are following us, will climb Mount Helicon, and will place the lantern of the Renaissance there, and, accompanied by the distant roar of barricade battles, the purple-azure five-cornered star will flare over the dark European night.<sup>18</sup>

Picking up the same thread again in a later passage, Khvylovy explains that he understands by this term an unheard of flowering of the arts in such countries as China and India, a great spiritual reawakening stretching over several centuries. The first period of this great renaissance would unfold in the transitional age, the age through which we are now living, and would be characterized by an art that Khvylovy described as both Romantic and vital: Romantic vitalism. Ukraine, on the boundary between East and West, long an oppressed nation, had a special role to play in this renaissance: for this South-Eastern republic of communes would bring the new word, the new art to Europe. The great art of the future, the art of the Asiatic Renaissance, would not reject the past, but would build upon its achievements. Greece, Rome and the European Renaissance were not dead letters: they were sign-posts to the future.

His fourth symbol, art, he described as the product of genius, of brilliant individuality:

Romantic vitatism, will be created not by "enko's" but by communards. It, like all art, is for developed intellects. It is the sum of new observations, new ways of perceiving the world, new and complex vibrations.<sup>19</sup>

Art had to provoke society, to stir its emotions and to prevent complacency. In dissecting the contemporary soul, in exposing the conflicting forces that compose the human psyche, it would urge men and women to struggle against the socio-economic order that produces spiritual cripples: capitalism. Art, in Khvylovy's conception, was to be one of the highest vocations: it was not to be understood as the propagation of convenient political slogans, but as the playful composition of profound ideas and complex imagery. Ironically, the Communist who in 1921 had advised "burning all the rottenness of feudal and bourgeois aesthetics and morals, . . . severing all links, denying all foregoing traditions,"<sup>20</sup> emerges in 1925 as a defender of past cultural values and a spokesman for a profound continuity in intellectual culture.

These themes were reiterated and developed further in his second series of pamphlets, *Dumky proty techii (Thoughts Against the Current)*,<sup>21</sup> and they constitute the basis of his "artistic platform" in the wide-ranging and passionate debate that ensued. The Literary Discussion, which has been described as "one of the most important events in the history of Ukrainian culture,"<sup>22</sup> ended in 1928 with the complete defeat of the Khvylovy camp. Understandably, this defeat has generally been regarded as mainly a political matter. The intervention of both Ukrainian and Russian Party plenipotentiaries turned the debate in an overtly political direction: Khvylovy and his literary organization, "VAPLITE" (*Vilna Akademiia Proletarskoi Literatury*—The Free Academy of Proletarian Literature), could no longer be viewed as a literary school developing a style for its age; it was treated by the regime as a competing political ideology. Such an outcome was all the more inevitable because the Literary Discussion coincided with and overlapped a crucial struggle for power among factions within the CP(B)U. The argument between these factions, which focused on national policy in Ukraine and the tempo of Ukrainization, quickly overshadowed the debate over literature and culture with which the discussion had begun.

However, it ought to be stressed that the Literary Discussion was not simply a political manifestation; and the significance of VAPLITE (the organization existed from 20 November 1925 to 29 February 1928) went beyond that of a quasi-political group: it was an artistic and organizational alternative to the primitivization of the arts that was taking place in the republic and it charted a course for Soviet culture radically different from the one that was eventually imposed. For over two years it dominated intellectual life in Ukraine. The group's defeat was gradual: first political,

then organizational, and finally artistic, each set-back narrowing its room for manoeuvre and restricting possibilities for self-expression within the republic as a whole. The group's fate is symbolic of, and mirrors, the loss of faith and destruction of a generation that threw itself into a revolution of the spirit, a Ukrainian renaissance and a new dawn of history only to see its vision rejected and, in a nightmarish sequence of events, a humourless cult of the primitive, uncouth and dogmatic assert itself.

### *The Political Debate*

VAPLITE was formed on 20 November 1925. Khvylovy laid the ideological foundations of the new organization in his pamphlets. Although his first two series of pamphlets, *Quo Vadis?* and *Thoughts Against the Current*, elicited a startling response with over 600 books, pamphlets and articles in the first year of the Discussion, it was his third series, "Apolohety pysaryzmu" ("Apologists of Scribbling"),<sup>23</sup> which caused the greatest sensation.

It is significant that although many reasonable voices were raised and perceptive comments expressed on numerous occasions during this first year of the Discussion, nowhere in the stream of articles and brochures addressing the issue of Ukraine's cultural and political development was the problem of Russian chauvinism attacked. In the last chapter of "Apologists of Scribbling," the polemicist, in his own words, "removed the 'black mask' from the all-Ukrainian polemical champion, Mykola Khvylovy." He finally decided to strike at the heart of this problem. In his view the intelligentsia had to create a literature which, while expressing the ideology of the working class, would satisfy a sophisticated, urban readership. This discriminating public, however, continued to cower in the cities before the Russian master, who still dominated urban centres, who had over the centuries assimilated a Philistine and condescending attitude toward Ukrainian culture and who was insulted by the suggestion that he become a Ukrainian. Therefore, the cities had to be de-Russified, the state apparatus Ukrainized, and the Ukrainian Republic given rights equal with the Russian. Only then could the question of an independent Ukrainian culture be resolved. The passage which caused the greatest stir read as follows:

The Ukrainian economy is not the same thing as the Russian economy, and cannot be the same thing, because, for one thing, Ukrainian culture, which grows out of its own economy, has a reciprocal influence on the latter, hence our economy acquires a specific form and character. In a word, the Union remains a Union and Ukraine is a independent entity.... Since our

literature at last can follow its own path of development, we are faced with the following question: by which of the world's literatures should we set our course? *On no account by the Russian*. This is absolute and unconditional. Our political union must not be confused with literature. Ukrainian poetry must flee as quickly as possible from Russian literature and its styles. The Poles would never have produced Mickiewicz if they had not stopped orientating themselves toward the art of Moscow. The point is that Russian literature has weighed down upon us for centuries as master of the situation, as one who has conditioned our psyche to play the slavish imitator. And so, to nourish our young art on it would be to impede its development. The proletariat's ideas did not reach us through Muscovite art; on the contrary, we, as representatives of a young nation, can better apprehend these ideas, better cast them in the appropriate images. Our orientation is to Western European art, its style, its techniques.<sup>24</sup>

In an unpublished brochure, "Ukraine or Little Russia," which was also written during this period and which circulated among party leaders, literary figures and students, Khvylovy made the sensational accusation that the reason why the Communist Party in Ukraine was not doing enough to Ukrainize public life was because it was completely dominated by Russians or culturally Russified elements who represented the worst elements of the colonial-settler mentality.

Although the Communist Party contained some Marxist intellectuals who were educated in the best traditions of European social-democracy and who were genuine internationalists, he felt that it was floundering in a sea of traditional Russian chauvinism and, cut off from the intellectual debates and more advanced forms of political life which had fed the Marxist movement in the past, it was degenerating into an instrument of the Russian chauvinism that was again oppressing Ukraine:

Today the centre of an all-Union Philistinism is Moscow, in which the proletarian factories, the Comintern and the All-Union Communist Party figure as an oasis on the world-scale. Whereas in Ukraine, particularly in the centre, one can only hear the term "Comrade," over there they have long ago moved from "Citizen" to "Mr." Moscow has strong traditions which are deeply rooted in Philistinism. Moscow itself (and even Russia as a whole, if we discount Siberia) essentially never saw the October Revolution and its heroic struggle. Russian revolutionary democracy is one thing, the thin-bearded Muscovite intellectual quite another.<sup>25</sup>

"Ukraine or Little Russia" was a long pamphlet, consisting of some seventy to eighty pages which sounded the alarm: the national question had not been solved and the old scourge, Russian chauvinism, was gaining the upper hand. Khvylovy had shifted the focus of his polemic to a sensitive political problem and had pointed a finger at the party. Although at this point he still seems to have felt that the party could rectify the

problem, within a year and a half he was considering breaking with it completely, and, by 1928, after a performance of Mykola Kulish's "The People's Malakhii," his comment on the USSR was: "A prison! We are living in a prison!"<sup>26</sup>

Only fragments, unfortunately, are available of this latter pamphlet,<sup>27</sup> but accounts by those who did read it in manuscript form clearly indicate that this was a major theoretical effort. There were sections devoted to the "overall cultural" problem, to the "political problem," to the "national question," and, finally to the "Asiatic renaissance."

In 1926 VAPLITE began a programme of publications, culminating, finally, in the production of its own journal, which was on sale in 1927. Its appearance stirred wide interest among Ukrainian intellectuals and won the group considerable support and popularity. This period was also one of great optimism, enthusiasm and creativity for the organization, as the correspondence and diaries of its members indicate.<sup>28</sup>

All, however, was not going well for the group. Throughout 1926 the Central Committee of the CP(B)U was locked in debate over the national question, Khvylovy's ideas, and cultural developments in Ukraine. This internal crisis and its outcome, which came to be known as the "Shumsky Affair" was to have immediate repercussions for VAPLITE.

Oleksander Shumsky was the Ukrainian Commissar of Education and thus head of the powerful ministry charged with overseeing the Ukrainization process. He was a former member of the indigenous Ukrainian Communist party, the Borotbists, who fused with the Bolsheviks in 1919. In the six years following this fusion, Shumsky had repeatedly criticized the party's cultural policy in Ukraine. He wanted to see a quicker pace of Ukrainization, the promotion of Ukrainians to leading positions in the CP(B)U, an end to the erosion of the republic's independence in budgetary matters and a thorough discrediting of Russian chauvinist attitudes which still lingered from the time of the Revolution. Early in 1926 his views were debated by the Ukrainian leadership and communicated to Moscow. On 26 April 1926, in a letter to Lazar Kaganovich, who at the time was the Secretary of the CP(B)U, Stalin wrote that although the Ukrainization of the republic's proletariat was inevitable, it should be a "long, spontaneous, and natural process" and should not be forced upon the Russian workers against their will:

Comrade Shumsky does not realize that in the Ukraine, where the Communist cadres are weak, such a movement, led everywhere by the non-Communist intelligentsia, may assume in places the character of a struggle for the alienation of Ukrainian culture from the all-Soviet culture, a struggle against "Moscow," against the Russians, against the Russian culture and its greatest achievement, Leninism, altogether. I need not point out that such a danger grows more and more real in Ukraine. I should only like to

mention that even some Ukrainian Communists are not free from such defects. I have in mind that well-known article by the noted Communist, Khvylovy, in the Ukrainian press. Khvylovy's demands that the proletariat in Ukraine be immediately de-Russified, his belief that "Ukrainian poetry should keep as far away as possible from Russian literature and style," his pronouncement that "proletarian ideas are familiar to us without the help of Russian art," his passionate belief in some messianic role for the young Ukrainian intelligentsia, his ridiculous and non-Marxist attempt to divorce culture from politics—all this and much more in the mouth of this Ukrainian Communist sounds (and cannot but sound) more than strange. At a time when the Western European proletarian classes and their Communist Parties are full of affection for Moscow, this citadel of the international revolutionary movement, at a time when Western European proletarians look with enthusiasm to the flag that flies over Moscow, this Ukrainian Communist Khvylovy has nothing to say in favour of Moscow except to call on Ukrainian leaders to run away from Moscow as fast as possible. And this is called internationalism. What can we say about other members of the Ukrainian intelligentsia from the non-Communist camp when the Communists begin to talk and not only to talk but indeed to write in our Soviet press with Khvylovy's words. Comrade Shumsky does not understand that in order to dominate the new movement for Ukrainian culture in Ukraine the extreme views of Khvylovy within the Communist ranks must be combated; Comrade Shumsky does not understand that only by combating such extremist views is it possible to transform the rising Ukrainian culture and Ukrainian social life into a Soviet culture and Soviet social life.<sup>29</sup>

Stalin's criticism of Shumsky provided the basic materials for an attack on the latter by opponents in the CP(B)U, who forced a confrontation at a Central Committee meeting on 12 May and at a plenary session of the CP(B)U on 1-6 June 1926. Several speakers outlined the case against Shumsky and Khvylovy. V. Zatonsky quoted from Khvylovy's story, "I" to show the negative light in which the latter portrayed the Revolution, ridiculed his concept of an "Asiatic renaissance" and accused Khvylovy of neglecting the class principle in his discussion of Europe.<sup>30</sup> H. Petrovsky attacked Shumsky for calling several Ukrainian members of the Central Committee "malorosy" ("Little Russians"),<sup>31</sup> and accused him of being the leader of a group of party people, including Khvylovy and the poet, V. Sosiura, who "were waging a campaign on the national question that could only be described as an attack on the Central Committee."<sup>32</sup>

Shumsky replied that the problem was not with a group of "evil agitators" but with the party's failure to resolve the national question, that if Communists such as Khvylovy and Sosiura made mistakes it was because they were receiving scant help from the party in encouraging and guiding the tide of Ukrainization. The party in Ukraine, he said, was still largely Russian or Russified, was out of touch with the language and

cultural interests of the population and, consequently, the leadership of the national renaissance was passing to intellectuals like M. Hrushevsky, O. Doroshkevych, I. Hermaize, S. Iefremov, A. Nikovsky and M. Zerov—individuals who did not sympathize with Marxism. In order to grasp leadership of the socio-cultural process under way in Ukraine, “the party had to become Ukrainian in language and culture.”<sup>33</sup> As for Khvylovy, Shumsky said:

I am deeply convinced that Khvylovy wants to build Socialism. But I also know that Khvylovy has not been given any clear, defined perspectives by the party as to the development of Ukrainian culture and literature. He is choking in the provincial backwardness of Ukraine. He cannot see those broad vistas for the young, boisterous cultural process and is attempting to chart them.<sup>34</sup>

The June Plenum ended with the passing of “Theses on the Results of Ukrainization,” several paragraphs of which went against the positions of Shumsky and Khvylovy. It was affirmed that:

the party stands for the independent development of Ukrainian culture, for an expression of all creative forces displayed by the Ukrainian people. The party supports the wide use by the Ukrainian Socialist culture of all the treasures of world culture. It is in favour of a definite break with the traditions of provincial narrowness, in favour of the creation of new cultural values worthy of a great class. However, in the party's view, this cannot be done by contrasting Ukrainian culture with the cultures of other nations, but only through brotherly co-operation between the working class and toiling masses of all nationalities in the raising of an international culture to which the Ukrainian working class will be able to contribute its share.<sup>35</sup>

The same theses also characterized negatively the “Neoclassicists,” whom Khvylovy had defended:

At the present moment among Ukrainian literary groupings such as the “Neoclassicists” and in circles of the upper intelligentsia, we see ideological work which is aimed at the satisfaction of the needs of the growing Ukrainian bourgeoisie. A characteristic of these groups is the desire to direct the Ukrainian economy along the road of capitalist development, to steer a course toward links with the European bourgeoisie, contrasting the interests of Ukraine with the interests of other Soviet republics.<sup>36</sup>

Khvylovy's slogans, “Europe” and “Away from Moscow,” were condemned as “useful only for the flag of the Ukrainian petty bourgeoisie, which understands the national revival as a bourgeois restoration, and considers the orientation toward Europe as an orientation toward capitalist Europe. . . .”<sup>37</sup>

Shumsky's opponents had won a victory, but they had failed to make him recant. At the Plenum he had stated that he "did not intend to repudiate his past," and that "from the first days of the Revolution" he "had been a Ukrainian Bolshevik," and he "is one now." As for Khvylovy, Shumsky stated that he regarded him as a "cultured young proletarian who feels it is his duty to carry on a cultural revolution."<sup>38</sup> Although, at a meeting in the commissariat of education, Shumsky privately repudiated some of Khvylovy's ideas, he refused to allow his lecture to be published as an article.<sup>39</sup>

It was, consequently, a shock to party officials to read the publication *Vaplite: zoshyt pershyii* (*Vaplite: First Notebook*), which appeared over a month after the June Plenum. The article by O. Dosvitnii, a party member, which treated the "Neoclassicists" favourably, patently contradicted the June "Theses" and appeared to be a clear breach of discipline. But there were further surprises in store for the party leaders. Khvylovy's article on the Ukrainian theatre appeared in *Nove mystetstvo* (*New Art*), in which he continued to argue for a Western European cultural influence.<sup>40</sup> This was followed by the appearance of a review by M. Mohyliansky in the *Red Path*. Mohyliansky had been black-listed by the party after his short-story "The Murder", which appeared earlier that year,<sup>41</sup> had been found slanderous of the Soviet society, and the editors had been given specific instructions not to print any more contributions by him. Another breach of discipline, it seemed. Finally, a favourable review of *Vaplite: First Notebook*, this time written by a non-party member, Pavlo Khrystiuk, was printed in what was the party's main literary and political journal.<sup>42</sup>

The party struck back by censoring Ialovy, the *de facto* editor of the *Red Path* at the time, and by publishing on 14 September the following resolution of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the CP(B)U:

The *Red Path* has recently, without the required critical attitude, taken a course in favour of the old formation of the Europeanized, essentially bourgeois, Ukrainian intelligentsia (the Neoclassicists and similar groups), and has failed to provide a Marxist analysis of social and political life, especially in creative literature, a fact that was particularly evident in the critical and bibliographical sections. The Politburo considers it essential to reorganize the *Red Path* with a view to improving educational Marxist work.<sup>43</sup>

Khvylovy and Ialovy responded immediately by handing in their resignations from the journal's editorial board.<sup>44</sup>

The whole matter was discussed at a Politburo meeting on 20 November 1926. Andrii Khvyliia, a former Borotbist and companion of Shumsky, who the opposition claimed "had sold himself for a gold coin,"



presented the case against the editors. He declared that the present editorial board had done almost nothing to fulfill its declared intentions, as formulated in the first issue in 1923,<sup>45</sup> and that in the last years the Neoclassicists had "strengthened their position in the journal."<sup>46</sup>

In the acrimonious debate that followed, Shumsky accused Khvyliia of trying to poison the atmosphere against the VAPLITE writers and himself, of twisting the facts and of making it impossible for him to work within the party. Realizing that the attack on the *Red Path*, of which he had from its foundation been the editor-in-chief, was an indirect blow at himself, he repudiated the charge that the journal in four years of existence had twisted the party line, and announced that henceforth he refused to work on any committee with Khvyliia.

This defence was, however, to no avail. Kaganovich voiced the opinion of other members by demanding a written admission of mistakes from the three literary deviationists, Khvylovy, Ialovy and Dosvitnii, and accused Shumsky of encouraging them and acting as their protector.<sup>47</sup> The Politburo resolved to relieve Khvylovy and Ialovy of their duties as editors and to reorganize the editorial board.<sup>48</sup>

Under this intense fire from the party, Khvylovy, Ialovy and Dosvitnii signed an open letter in which they admitted having made mistakes:

We acknowledge that the slogan of orientation toward "psychological Europe," no matter whether past or present, proletarian or bourgeois, coupled with an attempt to sever relations with Russian culture and to ignore Moscow (which is the centre of world revolution) as a centre of world Philistinism, were definite deviations from the proletarian line on internationalism. . . . We fully share the opinion of the Central Committee of the CP(B)U about literary groups like the Neoclassicists. . . . We regard, therefore, Khvylovy's . . . formula of using these groups "psychologically" as erroneous. In the same way we view the "analogy" of the "Neoclassicists" in the *First Notebook* of VAPLITE as a mistake. . . . We recognize our ideological and political errors and we openly repudiate them. We do not in any way dissent from the party line and recognize its policy and work, directed by the Central Committee of the CP(B)U, in the field of cultural reconstruction as entirely correct.<sup>49</sup>

Nevertheless, pressure continued to mount against VAPLITE as the party recruited new forces in its campaign to discredit the group. Volodymyr Koriak gave a lecture on "The Three Musketeers" at the Artem Communist Institute in Kharkiv on 11 December, in which he attacked Khvylovy, Ialovy and Dosvitnii. B. Kovalenko lambasted VAPLITE in a speech the following day. The censorship held up the publication of the first issue of *Vaplite*. The new journal's subsidy was cut by 666 roubles, and attacks continued to appear in the press. In order to save VAPLITE from further persecution, the journal's general meeting of 28 January

1927, expelled Khvylovy, Ialovy and Dosvitnii from its ranks.<sup>50</sup>

The party was after Shumsky's head and therefore was taken aback by this move, which forestalled any further action against the literary group or its protector. Obviously upset by what it considered yet another act of insubordination, it issued a resolution, marked "top secret," in which it informed the Communist fraction in VAPLITE that the expulsion was an "incorrect action" which should have been "submitted to the Central Committee for sanction."<sup>51</sup>

The debate within the Central Committee over the Shumsky-Khvylovy "deviation" did not abate during 1927. Several Politburo members, including Kaganovich, Vlas Chubar and Mykola Skrypnyk were instructed to hold private conversations with Shumsky impressing upon him that he had to disassociate himself from Khvylovy. Eventually Shumsky obliged with an article to *Bilshovyk Ukrainy (Bolshevik of Ukraine)* where he stated: "from time to time individual comrades fall under the influence of one or another nationalist camp, depart from the party's position and, without realizing it, begin to speak in the language of these camps."<sup>52</sup> This, Kaganovich remarked, was "a step in the right direction," but Shumsky had "declined to admit his old mistakes. He refused to admit to the mistake of sheltering Khvylovy."<sup>53</sup> The Kaganovich group massed its forces for a final assault on Shumsky's supporters at the March 1927 Plenum of the Central Committee. Here Khvyliia again played the role of prosecutor. He charged that Shumsky had used his position on the editorial board of the *Red Path* to sabotage the work of the party concerning the national question and that he "in fact had taken Khvylovy's position, a position condemned by the party."<sup>54</sup> As for Khvylovy, it was stated that his latest article on the poet Vasyl Blakytyn was an indication of his continuing disparagement of Soviet society and Bolshevik policies.<sup>55</sup>

Another leading Ukrainian Bolshevik and prominent ex-Borotbist, Panas Liubchenko, expressed alarm at the fact that the ideas of Shumsky and Khvylovy were finding widespread support in the population and that many Communist writers "were not teaching people how to think, were not taking part in the cultural process as Communists, as Soviet people, but were becoming a simple membrane, a loudspeaker of the auditorium, and were not formulating in literature the positions being put forward by the party." Liubchenko detected the emergence of two contradictory positions "On one side stood the party, and on the other were the workers in the cultural process."<sup>56</sup>

Shumsky's own statements during this crucial meeting show that he was in agreement with many of Khvylovy's ideas:

Why do Ukrainians not voice their opinions? Because they have been browbeaten, persecuted and compose a minority, even arithmetically speaking, not to mention their influence.... The Russian Communist dominates the party. He is suspicious of and unfriendly to the Ukrainian Communist, to put it mildly. His domination rests upon the shameful, vilely egotistical Little Russian type, who in all historical periods has exhibited a similar unprincipled, hypocritical, servile duplicity and treacherous obsequiousness. This type even now underlines his pseudo-internationalism, flaunts his indifferent attitude to everything Ukrainian and is always prepared to vilify it (perhaps sometimes in the Ukrainian language), if through this he can be of service and secure for himself a warm place.<sup>57</sup>

The constant charges of nationalism thrown against Ukrainians in the party were, according to Shumsky, producing a pathological phenomenon. They were creating

the Communist type *à la* Comrade Khvyliia (during Lebed's time, in 1921-2, this type was personified by Comrade Musulbas, who, it is said, tore down even portraits of Shevchenko in clubs, considering them expressions of nationalism), who in the race to capture the trust of the Russophile part of the party ends by adulating the leadership and exhibiting sadism in the struggle with Ukrainian nationalism.<sup>58</sup>

In spite of his eloquent and brave defence, the defiant ex-Borotbist was relieved of his duties as chief editor of the *Red Path*, dismissed from his position as commissar of education, and condemned by a declaration of the Central Committee of the CP(B)U to the Executive Committee of the Comintern.<sup>59</sup> Shortly thereafter he was removed to Leningrad. Eventually Shumsky was expelled from the party, then arrested and deported in 1933. He was last seen on Popov Island in the Solovetsky Islands' forced labour camp in June 1934.

### *The Organizational Defeat*

Under such concerted and sustained criticism from the party, VAPLITE began to lose support. The discussion in the Communist Youth League (Komsomol) went against it. Hryhorii Epik had argued that young writers should follow VAPLITE.<sup>60</sup> Instead, they qualified the latter as a current under the spell of the "Ukrainian nationalist bourgeoisie," excessively concerned with aesthetics and exhibiting "pretensions to setting the *bon ton*" in literature.<sup>61</sup> The Komsomol's new publication, *Molodniak (Youth)*, which began appearing in January 1927, pledged loyalty to the party and opposition to VAPLITE's "nationalism."<sup>62</sup>

*Youth* also supported the new literary organization which the party sponsored at this time in order to defeat VAPLITE. The new body, whose chief Ukrainian organizers were Andrii Khvyliia, Volodymyr Koriak, Ivan Mykytenko and Boris Kovalenko, held its first conference on 25–28 January 1927. VUSPP (*Vseukrainska spilka proletarskykh pysmennykiv*—The All-Ukrainian Union of Proletarian Writers), whose creation Khvyliia envisaged as a final “consolidation of all the forces of proletarian literature in one centre,”<sup>63</sup> invited VAPLITE to this conference only at the last minute. Ivan Mykytenko, on behalf of VUSPP’s organizing committee informed VAPLITE on 25 January that they had until 6pm to appoint a delegate. This invitation was rejected by a general meeting of VAPLITE. Thus two rival literary organizations emerged and, eventually, VUSPP’s party backing ensured the silencing of its rival.

The fifth issue of *Vaplite*, which, in many ways, was the turning point in the Literary Discussion, contained several controversial materials. Mykola Kulish contributed a spirited defence of VAPLITE (of which he was now the president), and complained that VUSPP members were assuming a privileged position, viewing themselves as party favourites in the debate and hence beyond criticism.<sup>64</sup> Another article, written by Pavlo Khrystiuk, who was not a member of VAPLITE, created a stir. Khrystiuk felt that there was a “mechanical approach” to many themes in contemporary literature; that the obligation to write only about positive features of Soviet life and only in an optimistic tone was ruining literature; and that writers should, on the contrary, write about the problems of Soviet society. He praised the work of Hryhorii Epik, while criticizing Volodymyr Sosiura, a recent defector from VAPLITE to VUSPP, for “an artificial, faked optimism.”<sup>65</sup>

A still greater outcry was caused by the publication in the same issue of the first part of Khvylovy’s *roman engagé*, *Valdshnepy* (*The Woodsnipes*).<sup>66</sup> The conflict in the novel is between the disillusioned Communist, Karamazov, and a strong-willed Ahlaia who is of Russian origin, but has become a fervent convert to Ukrainian nationalism. Ahlaia is attracted to Ukraine because the Revolution has not been as deeply compromised there as it has in Russia. She foresees a national and cultural awakening and considers that the nation’s will shall express itself through a new generation of courageous activists who will “create a programme for a new world outlook.” Although we have no way of guessing the *dénouement* held in store for the reader, the plot seemed to indicate Ahlaia’s victory and hinted at the rise of a new generation of nationalists who would draw their own conclusions from the fruitless marriage of Ukrainian intellectuals of Karamazov’s generation to Communism.

This was exactly how, through Khvyliia, the party and VUSPP interpreted the novel. His comment was: “This is a publicistic work dressed up

in artistic garb." Khvyliia saw in the *Woodsnipes* the artistic expression of a rounded programme of opposition. According to him, the novel had been written:

to show that the Soviet Ukraine is not Soviet, that the dictatorship of the proletariat is not real, that the nationality policy is a sham, that the Ukrainian people are backward and have no will, that a great rebirth is still to come, and, finally, that the party itself is an organization of hypocrites.<sup>67</sup>

The author's programme, according to Khvyliia, was straightforward. The party is rapidly degenerating and "Thermidor (here he follows Trotsky) is inevitable." To the critic the plot implied that under these conditions the rise of Ukrainian nationalism, as the only mass opposition to the party, was a progressive force. In fact, thought Khvyliia, the novel showed that its author had evolved to a position of support for the heroine, Ahlaia, whom the critic described as "a Ukrainian nationalist and a fascist." Through her Khvylovy appeared to be calling for:

a struggle against our society; he acknowledged that the Revolution... had found itself in a blind alley, that the party had become a group of Pharisees, that there is no hope, and therefore the only watchword should be to educate, in the spirit of Ukrainian nationalism, young men who will lead the Ukraine to her national regeneration.<sup>68</sup>

So fierce was the reaction to this fifth issue of *Vaplite* that it ensured the banning of the publication and the organization's liquidation. The sixth issue was printed, but was immediately confiscated. It contained the second part of Khvylovy's *Woodsnipes* and an article by I. Senchenko painting a great future for Ukraine on the world's cultural stage. By the time of its publication, however, the anti-VAPLITE and anti-Shumsky tendencies in the party had taken complete control and were demanding the suppression of the opposition. Their campaign culminated in the publication of an article by F. Taran in the *Communist*, on 10 January 1928, linking VAPLITE to the Ukrainian Socialist-Revolutionaries in emigration, and in effect calling the organization a fifth column working for Volodymyr Vynnychenko and Mykyta Shapoval, who at the time were leading figures in the Ukrainian political emigration residing in Western Europe. After this article bookstores began to refuse to carry copies of the journal and the general public was instructed to view the group as nothing less than a semi-legal, political opposition.

Although the organization's president, Kulish, wrote a letter to the *Communist* in which he took responsibility for the "political error" of publishing Khrystiuk's article and in which he admitted that VAPLITE had made another error in not barring Khvylovy, Dosvitnii and Ialovy from the pages of the journal after expelling them from the organization, the

editors of the party's organ insisted that this was not "an answer to the questions put to it (VAPLITE)." As far as they were concerned, there were "no guarantees that the dangerous political tendencies had been liquidated. . . ."69

The unmistakable suggestion in these articles was that VAPLITE was "beyond the pale." It became impossible for members of the group to function as writers. On 12 January 1928 the group held its final meeting and decided to disband.

### *International Repercussions*

Ironically, Mykola Khvylovy, the driving force in VAPLITE's formation and still the group's spiritual leader, found himself abroad at this time. He left the USSR early in December 1927 for Berlin, Vienna and Paris. It was precisely at this juncture that the Shumsky affair led to a political crisis within the Comintern, leading to the defection of the Communist Party of Western Ukraine (CPWU).

The Eighth Congress of the CPWU, 13-16 January 1928, accused the Kaganovich faction within the CP(B)U of capitulating to Russian chauvinism and declared that "Shumskyism . . . represented the Leninist line in the national question. Therefore its condemnation as a nationalist deviation is incorrect."<sup>70</sup>

The resolutions of this Congress of the CPWU constituted a definite break with the Comintern and the parties of the Third International. It was the first such act by a constituent party and, in view of the fact that the *casus belli* was the highly sensitive national question, it caused an international scandal and led to a fierce polemic between the CPWU on one side and the Comintern, CP(B)U and Communist Party of Poland (CPP) on the other.

Mykola Khvylovy, who was in Germany at the time, was asked to meet with the CPWU leaders. Although there is some doubt as to when the meeting actually took place, it must have been shortly—perhaps a matter of days—before the defection of the CPWU; in any case it was at the height of the crisis.<sup>71</sup> The exchange of views occurred in Gdansk (Danzig) where Khvylovy learned from Turiansky (real name Roman Kuzma) of the dramatic political schism that was occurring and was presented with the case of the dissident party. Khvylovy was later to describe this meeting in the following terms, during an interrogation at a Central Controlling Committee of the CP(B)U:

Comrade Khvyliia: You spoke of your interview with Turiansky and others. How did this interview occur and what did they, in fact, propose to you?

Comrade Khvylovy: The interview happened as follows. I came to B.'s place at the same time as L. and N. were there. We had discussions and I "slammed" the national policy of the Central Committee; they harmonized with me. Then L. approached me and said, that the Central Committee of the CPWU would like to see me (this was before the break) and proposed that I drive to them. I agreed. We entered Turiansky's place. After a certain amount of time, the Central Committee of the CPWU gathered in the apartment of CPWU member (whose name I do not know). At first Turiansky informed me about affairs in Western Ukraine; then I gave information about affairs in [Eastern] Ukraine. What I said is clear. I said the same thing that I said in my articles. In a word, I criticized the line of the General Secretary, Comrade Kaganovich, and, of course, made this criticism from the positions of Khvylovism. Turiansky and the others, I repeat, made no corrections.

Comrade Khvyliia: Did they propose that you should stay there?

Comrade Khvylovy: They told me it would be fine if I were to remain with them. I said that, at the present moment, I could not say anything about this. At this point we parted. After some time, when I was in Vienna, Vasylykiv asked me twice to come and work for them in their journals; to move there. I am not, by the way, familiar with Vasylykiv.

Comrade Hirchak: When was this, roughly?

Comrade Khvylovy: When the break began; in January, I believe.<sup>72</sup>

These meetings with members of the CPWU offered Khvylovy an alternative to capitulation to the party. He did not, however, accept this offer of joining a declared opposition, preferring to share the fate of his colleagues in Ukraine. On 22 February 1928, he wrote a letter of recantation to the *Communist*, returned to the Soviet Union and for the next five years fought a sort of rearguard action against the steadily deteriorating tone of civic and cultural life.

### *The Artistic Alternative*

In contrast to the cult of the lowest common denominator put forward by VUSPP, VAPLITE defended a "high art" and extolled talent, originality and artistic experimentation. Significantly, the greatest achievements in film (Oleksander Dovzhenko), theatre (Les Kurbas, Mykola Kulish) and

art (the school of Mykola Boychuk), as well as in literature, came from individuals who were either members of, or closely associated with VAPLITE.

VAPLITE members sought a portrayal of the fully developed individual, of complex, often contradictory, experiences, refusing to edit their work in order to present the politically acceptable. They opposed the party's and VUSPP's endorsement of "heroic realism," (which later became "Socialist Realism"). They tended toward the intuitive, the ecstatic and the subliminal in their anti-mimetic revolt. Often their stories were rather transparent parodies of the officially-sanctioned style.

In the course of the Literary Discussion this group firmly opposed the iconoclastic rejection of the past—a position they defined as anti-cultural and purely demagogic. All cultural phenomena, they felt, show continuity with the past and ought to learn from it. The VAPLITE members showed admiration for the achievements of past cultural flowerings—in particular those of Greece, the Renaissance and Romanticism—and insisted that contemporary literature and art had in the end to be measured against these pinnacles of European cultural development, and not by the narrowly utilitarian—in fact anti-cultural—slogan of class content.

Finally, VAPLITE voiced the legitimate aspirations of the Ukrainian intelligentsia for a fully developed national culture, one represented in all spheres of creativity and all genres, and one that could take its rightful place alongside other European cultures. They perceived the fact that they were blocked from direct, unmediated contact and dialogue with Western Europe as yet another attempt to suppress the development of Ukrainian literature and culture by chauvinistic attitudes among the Russians, whose monopoly such contacts had been in the past.

In struggling for the view that art was the unique expression of an individual, and the product of exceptional talent they were counteracting the levelling process, the crude imposition of political criteria in evaluating art and the harnessing of art to "party-mindedness" (*partiinost*), a view that eventually led to art being considered nothing but the handmaiden of party policy.

After the political defeat and the liquidation of the organization, the artistic programme survived for several years. The former members of VAPLITE, under different organizational umbrellas—*Literaturnyi iarmarok* (*Literary Fair*) and "Prolitfront"—continued to produce nonconformist literature until the imposition of "Socialist Realism" in the early thirties and the herding of all writers into one union in 1934. Even so, elements of VAPLITE's artistic programme have periodically surfaced during years of "liberalization," and future generations of Ukrainian writers have repeatedly found inspiration in the group's ideas.



*The D eb acle*

The Russo-Ukrainian conflict was never resolved. Throughout the twenties and early thirties the Ukrainian countryside and Russian city faced each other in sullen hostility. In 1933-4, Stalin made a sudden change in the national policy of the All-Union Communist Party, proclaiming the chief enemy to be "local nationalism" and giving the order to halt and crush Ukrainization. This attack coincided with the unleashing of the forced collectivization programme, the campaign to "liquidate the kulaks as a class" and the famine in which five to seven million Ukrainians perished.

This terror was supervised in Ukraine by the Second Secretary of the Central Committee of the CP(B)U, Pavel Postyshev, who was sent by Stalin to the republic in January 1933. With the new leader arrived a large number of Russian party cadres, whose task was to replace the purged Ukrainians and to gain control of the CP(B)U. Almost all Ukrainian party activists who had at any time shown loyalty to Ukrainian Communist leaders such as Shumsky, Khvylovy or Skrypnyk were liquidated in widespread purges, thus eliminating all the older revolutionaries who had, in fact, created the CP(B)U and established Soviet rule in Ukraine.

In 1936, a second sweeping purge saw the repression of 45,000 more members, and a third in 1937-8 punished a further 162,000—50 per cent of the total membership. In the course of this last purge even Postyshev was liquidated. In the latter half of 1937 almost the entire Central Committee of the CP(B)U and the government of the Ukrainian Republic was executed.

It is no exaggeration to state that during these terrible years an entire Ukrainian intelligentsia perished in labour camps and the execution chambers of the NKVD and any mass support the Communist Party may have had in Ukraine was permanently destroyed.

On 13 May 1933, with the famine raging in the countryside and a mass purge sweeping the CP(B)U, Khvylovy invited several of his friends to his apartment for breakfast. Several moments after their arrival he walked into his study and shot himself. When his friends reached him he was already dead. On the table lay a letter addressed to the Central Committee of the CP(B)U in which he accused the party of betraying the Revolution and called the terror then gripping Ukraine the beginning of a new Thermidor. He wished his suicide to be considered a protest against the party's politics.

His funeral in Kharkiv became the occasion for a massive demonstration of national mourning.

Although he is universally acknowledged as one of the most talented of the post-Revolutionary Ukrainian prose writers, after his suicide the Soviet

ensorship banned all his works and has never allowed any of them to be republished.

The present text, which appears over fifty years after the writer's death, is the first translation of his pamphlets into English. To the three pamphlet series—*Quo Vadis?*, *Thoughts Against the Current*, and *Apologists of Scribbling*—have been added the existing fragments of "Ukraine or Little Russia?" This last, unpublished treatise in fact constitutes a fourth series of pamphlets, which bring Khvylovy's ideas to a conclusion. Its partial reconstruction is based entirely on quotations contained in hostile reviews and therefore can give only an imperfect impression of the whole. The arrangement of these fragments and the headings given to each section are not necessarily Khvylovy's: they rest upon the recollection of Hryhorii Kostiuk, who read the treatise when it circulated among the student body at Kharkiv University in the twenties.<sup>73</sup>

Although the writings included in this volume do not exhaust Khvylovy's critical essays, they do contain all the polemical pamphlets that made him famous—the essential core of his argument developed from 30 April 1925, to the summer of 1926. These four pamphlet series in large measure defined the topics and charted the course of the Literary Discussion of those years. They are, therefore, an indispensable introduction to the polemics of the twenties and—it is hoped—will contribute to a better understanding in the English-speaking world of an important and yet long-ignored episode in the cultural and political history of the USSR.

Myroslav Shkandrij

## Notes

1. Until 1927 Ukrainians still constituted less than 50 per cent of CP(B)U members. See B. Dmytryshyn, "National and Social Composition of the Communist Party (bolshevik) of the Ukraine," *Journal of Central European Affairs* 17, no. 3 (1957): 243-58.
2. For information on the Ukrainization of the press see: B. Dmytryshyn, *Moscow and the Ukraine, 1918-1953: A Study of Russian Bolshevik Nationality Policy* (New York 1956), 78-80; G. Liber, "Language, Literature and Book Publishing in the Ukrainian SSR, 1923-1928," *Slavic Review* 41 (Winter 1982): 673-85.
3. See: N. Rabichev, "Iazyk kultraboty," *Kommunist*, 7 November 1925; "Iak prokhodyt ukrainizatsiia aparatu derzhavnykh ta hospodarchykh ustanov," *Visty*, 6 December 1925; P. Kostenko, "Proletariat Ukrainy," *Literatura, nauka, mystetstvo*, 1 May 1925; H. K. Shevchuk, *Kulturne budivnytstvo na Ukraini v 1921-1925 rr.* (Kiev 1963), 416-17; Dmytryshyn, *Moscow and Ukraine*, 80-3.
4. The daily published in Kharkiv by the Soviet Ukrainian state was entitled *Visty VUTSVK* until 1 January 1929. After that date the adoption of the new Skrypnyk orthography changed the title to *Visti VUTSVK*.
5. Shevchuk, *Kulturne budivnytstvo*, 359.
6. See: A. Kozachenko, "Shliakh za polovynu," *Kultura i pobut*, 23 June 1927.
7. For a thorough discussion of national Communism in Ukraine, see J. E. Mace, *Communism and the Dilemmas of National Liberation: National Communism in Soviet Ukraine, 1918-1933* (Cambridge, Mass. 1983).
8. See M. Bykovets, "Dyskusiia na literaturnomu fronti," *Znannia*, 6 April 1925.
9. Prosvita was a popular enlightenment society allowed to exist briefly after the 1905 Revolution and revived in 1917 following the overthrow of the tsarist regime. It was liquidated by the Soviet authorities in the early twenties.
10. The Kharkiv Institute of Public Education was created in 1921 out of the former Kharkiv State University. In 1932-3 it was again renamed Kharkiv State University.
11. Hrupa robfakivtsiv i osnovnykiv KhINO, "Lyst do redaktsii v spravi litydyskuii," *Kultura i pobut*, 3 May 1925.
12. *Shliakhy rozvytku suchasnoi literatury: Dysput 24 travnia 1925* (Kiev 1925), 43.
13. B. Antonenko-Davydovych, *Zdaleka y zblyzka: literaturni syluety y krytychni narysy* (Kiev 1979), 200.
14. *Visnyk UNR*, 27 February 1918; quoted in M. D. Rodko, *Ukrainska poeziia pershykh pozhovtnevykh rokiv* (Kiev 1971), 15.
15. M. Khvylovy, *Kamo hriadeshy. Pamflety* (Kharkiv 1925), 42.
16. *Ibid.*, 61.
17. *Ibid.*

18. *Ibid.*, 31–3.
19. *Ibid.*, 37.
20. A. Leites and M. Iashek, *Desiat rokiv ukrainskoi literatury, 1917–1927* (Kharkiv, 1928), 2: 63.
21. *Dumky proty techii. Pamflety* was published in Kharkiv early in 1926. The book contained the entire second cycle of pamphlets, which appeared in *Kultura i pobut*, 22, 29 November and 13 December 1925. It also included the essay “‘Akhtanabil’ suchasnosty abo Valerian Polishchuk u roli lektora komunistychnoho universytetu,” which originally had appeared in *Chervonyi shliakh*, no. 11–12 (1925): 309–27.
22. Ia. Hordynsky, *Literaturna krytyka pidsovietskoi Ukrainy* (Lviv-Kiev 1939), 57.
23. “Apolohety pysaryzmu. Do problem kulturnoi revoliutsii” appeared in *Kultura i pobut* issues no., 9 (28 February 1926), 10 (7 March 1926), 11 (14 March 1926), 12 (21 March 1926) and 13 (28 March 1926).
24. M. Khvylovy, “Apolohety pysaryzmu,” *Kultura i pobut*, 28 March 1926.
25. Quoted in *Budivnytstvo radianskoi Ukrainy: Zbirnyk*, Vypusk 1, (Kharkiv 1928), 127.
26. A. Liubchenko, “Spohady pro Khvylovoho,” in G. Luckyj, *The Vaplite Collection (Vaplitianskyi zbirnyk)*, (Edmonton 1977), 36.
27. Quotations from “Ukraina chy Malorosiiia” appeared in Ie. Hirschak, *Na dva fronta v borbe s natsionalizmom* (M-L., 1930) and *Shumskizm i rozlam v KPZU* (Kharkiv 1928); and in A. Khvyliia’s *Vid Ukhylyu u pryv: pro Valdshnepy Khvylovoho* (Kharkiv 1928). It is from these sources that the original is reconstructed.
28. See Luckyj, ed., *The Vaplite Collection* for the collected correspondence and diaries of the VAPLITE group.
29. In 1948 the full text of this letter was published for the first time (I.V. Stalin, *Sochineniia*, 8: 149–54), revealing that at this time Stalin had an extended conversation with Shumsky. “He thinks,” Stalin wrote, “that Ukrainization is slow, that it is regarded as an unpleasant duty and therefore is carried out with great delay. He thinks that the growth of a Ukrainian culture and of the Ukrainian intelligentsia are proceeding at a rapid pace and that if we do not take this movement into our hands, it may pass us by. He thinks that at the head of this movement should be placed those people who believe in the cause of Ukrainian culture, who know and desire to know this culture. He is particularly dissatisfied with the behaviour of the party and trade union elite in Ukraine, who, in his opinion, have put the brakes on Ukrainization. He thinks that one of the greatest sins of this elite is the fact that it does not attract to the leadership of the party and trade union work those Communists who are directly connected with Ukrainian culture. He thinks that Ukrainization should be carried out first of all within the ranks of the party and among the proletariat... He proposes to raise Hryenko to the post of the Chairman of the Council of the People’s Commissars, to make Chubar the Secretary of the CP(B)U... He is especially dissatisfied with the work of Kaganovich. He thinks that Kaganovich has succeeded in regulating the organization of the party, but that the organizational methods

employed by Kaganovich make normal work impossible." Stalin's reply was that "Shumsky is right in maintaining that the party and other elites in Ukraine should become Ukrainian. However, he is wrong as to the pace of it, which is now the most important thing. He forgets that purely Ukrainian Marxist cadres are at present insufficient for that purpose. He forgets that these cadres cannot be created artificially. . . . I am in favour of reinforcing the composition of the Secretariat and the Politburo of the Central Committee of the CP(B)U with Ukrainian elements. However, one cannot consider the case as if there were no Ukrainians in the leading organs of the party and the Soviets. What about Skrypnyk, Zatonsky, Chubar, Petrovsky, Hrynko and Shumsky—aren't they Ukrainians?" Cited in Luckyj, *Literary Politics in the Soviet Ukraine 1917–1934* (New York 1956), 68.

30. See V. Zatonsky, "Pro pidsumky ukrainizatsii: Z dopovidi na chervnevomu plenumi TsKKP(b)U 1926 roku," in *Budivnytstvo*, 7-24.
31. See L. Kahanovych, "Promova na chervnevomu plenumi TsKKP(b)U 1926 r.," in *Budivnytstvo*, 45-6.
32. H. Petrovsky, "Promova na chervnevomu plenumi TsKKP(b)U 1926 r.," in *Budivnytstvo*, 57.
33. *Ibid.*, 55.
34. Shumsky, "Promova na chervnevomu plenumi TsKKP(b)U," *Budivnytstvo*, 29.
35. *Ibid.*, 30.
36. *Komunist*, 15 June 1926; also in *Budivnytstvo*, 64.
37. *Budivnytstvo*, 63.
38. *Ibid.*, 64.
39. See M. Skrypnyk, *Dzherela ta prychny rozlamu v KPZU* (Kharkiv 1928), 13-14.
40. *Ibid.*, 18, 20.
41. Khvylovy, "Zolote cherevo" iak vykhid iz repertuarnoho tupyka: Stenohrama odniiie rozmovy," *Nove mystetstvo*, no. 28 (1926); reprinted in Luckyj, ed., *The Vaplite Collection*, 49-56.
42. M. Mohyliansky, "Vbystvo," *Chervonyi shliakh*, no. 1 (1926): 53-5.
43. P. Khrystiuk, *Chervonyi shliakh*, no. 9 (1926): 264-5.
44. *Budivnytstvo*, 103.
45. For the text of the resignations, see *Budivnystvo*, 102-3.
46. *Ibid.*, 101.
47. *Ibid.*, 103.
48. *Ibid.*, 109.
49. *Ibid.*, 112-13.
50. The text of the resolution is reprinted in *Budivnytstvo*, 114-15.
51. *Visty VUTsVK*, 4 December 1926; also Leites and Iashek, *Desiat rokov*, 2: 205-6.
52. See Luckyj, ed., *The Vaplite Collection*, 234, for VAPLITE'S resolution.
53. Khvylia's complaint from the press section of the Central Committee, VAPLITE'S reply, and the secret "Excerpt from the 69th Meeting of the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the CP(B)U on March 14, 1927" are reprinted in *The Vaplite Collection*, 235-7.

54. Shumsky, "Ideolohichna borotba v ukrainskomu kulturnomu protsesi," *Bilshovyk Ukrainy*, no. 2 (1927): 11-25.
55. *Budivnytstvo*, 122.
56. *Ibid.*, 129.
57. *Ibid.*, 127. Khvylovy's article appeared as an introduction to V. Blakytyn (Vas. Ellan), *Poezii* (Kharkiv 1927).
58. *Budivnytstvo*, 132.
59. *Ibid.*, 138.
60. *Ibid.*, 135.
61. *Ibid.*, 221-8.
62. H. Epik, "Iak zhe buty? Do problemy orhanizatsii litmolodniaka," *Kultura i pobut*, 4 April 1926.
63. O. Kundzich, "Molodniak," *Komunist*, 12 December 1926.
64. See the editorial comment to the first issue: *Molodniak*, no. 1 (1927); also in *Desiat rokiv*, 2: 216-17.
65. Khvyliia, "Do orhanizatsii literaturnykh syl," *Komunist*, 22 January 1927.
66. M. Kulish, "Krytyka chy prokurorskyi dopyt," *Vaplite*, no. 5 (1927): 146-57.
67. P. Khrystiuk, "Rozpechenym perom," *Vaplite*, no. 5 (1927): 194-203.
68. M. Khvylovy, "Valdshnepy," *Vaplite*, no. 5 (1927), 5-69.
69. Khvyliia, *Vid ukhylu v prirvu* (Kharkiv 1928), 3; quoted in Luckyj, *Literary Politics*, 83.
70. *Ibid.*, 25; quoted in Luckyj, *Literary Politics*, 83.
71. "Lyst do redaktsii," *Komunist*, 12 January 1928; and "Od redaktsii" in the same issue.
72. Kommunistische Partei der West-Ukraine (KPZU), *Die Ukrainische Nationale Frage der sogenannten Ukrainischen nationalen Abweichungen ("Shumskismus") in der Kommunistischen Partie der Ukraine und der Kommunistischen Partei der West-Ukraine* (Lviv 1928), 42.
73. A couple of sources mention this meeting. S. Anysh in "Shumskism u Kanadi," *Vilna Ukraina*, no. 4 (1955), 46, describes Khvylovy as being "tired and depressed and disillusioned by his first, and last meeting with Europe. When R. Turiansky made a short, but pertinent, speech about the goals and tasks of Shumskism, Khvylovy did not say a word in response. Either he was shocked by the unusual nature of such a lecture, or with the circumspection common to Soviet citizens did not want to express his opinion to people he hardly knew." The editorial of *Bilshovyk Ukrainy*, no. 18 (1928), quotes from an interrogation of Khvylovy on 5 May 1928, where he mentions this meeting.
74. *Bilshovyk Ukrainy*, no. 18 (1928): 5-6.
75. Khvylovy, "V iakomy vidnoshenniui do 'khvylovyzmu' 'vsi ti'..." *Budivnytstvo*, 263.
76. His recollections and reconstruction of the text can be found in Mykola Khvylovy, *Tvory v piatokh tomakh*, ed., H. Kostyuk (New York, Baltimore, Toronto 1983), 4: 413-22.

# Glossary of Acronyms, Terms and Abbreviations

## **ARMU**

—*Asotsiatsiia revoliutsiinykh mystsiv Ukrainy*—Association of Revolutionary Artists of Ukraine. From its creation in 1925 to its liquidation in 1932, it was one of the largest and most influential artistic groups in Ukraine. By stressing both the national traditions and the need to study current developments in Western Europe it espoused an artistic programme which resembled Khvylovy's literary credo.

## **Borotbists**

—offshoot of the Ukrainian Socialist Revolutionaries formed in 1918. They took their name from their organ *Borotba* (Struggle) and stood for an independent Ukrainian Soviet republic. Most of the Borotbists were admitted into the CP(B)U in 1920.

## **Central Rada**

—the Ukrainian national council established in 1917 that proclaimed and governed the independent Ukrainian People's Republic. The Rada was replaced by the Hetmanate in the spring of 1918, but its traditions were later continued by the Directory.

## **Cheka**

—Bolshevik political police of the War Communism period (1917–21).

## **Comintern**

—The Communist International, also known as the Third International, was an international organization uniting all the world's Communist parties. Formed in 1919 in Moscow and dominated by the RCP(B), it soon became an agency of Russian foreign policy. The Ukrainian question was often discussed in the Comintern in 1919–20; in 1924 the Ukrainian problem was declared a matter of international significance; and in 1927–9 the

issue of Shumsky and Khvylovy and Bolshevik national policy in Ukraine was hotly debated. Stalin liquidated the Comintern in 1943.

### **CP(B)U**

—*Komunistychna Partiia (bilshovykiv) Ukrainy*—Communist Party (Bolshevik) of Ukraine.

### **CPWU**

—*Kommunistychna Partiia Zakhidnoi Ukrainy*—Communist Party of Western Ukraine, an autonomous section of the Communist Party of Poland until 1938.

### **Directory**

—Ukrainian government led by Volodymyr Vynnychenko and Symon Petliura; it took power at the end of 1918 and fought the Bolsheviks until 1921.

### **Ego-futurists**

—an early Russian Futurist group that was active between 1911 and 1914 and exerted a strong influence on Mykhail Semenko, the leader of Ukrainian Futurism.

### **GPU**

—Bolshevik political police during the 1920s and early 1930s, replaced the Cheka and was replaced by the NKVD.

### **Intelligent**

—a member of the intelligentsia.

### **Hart**

—“Tempering,” the first important union of Ukrainian proletarian writers led by Vasyl Ellan-Blakytny, existed from January 1923 until the autumn of 1925

### **Kombidy**

—committees of poor peasants, the Ukrainian counterpart to the Russian *kombedy*; disbanded and replaced by *komnezamy* in Ukraine in 1920.

### **Komnezamy**

—short for komitety nezamozhnykh selian, committees of poor peasants that replaced the *kombidy* in 1920. These committees functioned in a manner identical to the *kombidy* except for the fact that they included some middle peasants in their membership. They dominated the village until 1925, when they were reorganized and state power was taken away from them, but they were retained in Ukraine until 1933.

### **Komsomol**

—The Communist Youth League.



**Kulak**

—rich peasant. This more familiar Russian term has been used in preference to the Ukrainian terms *kurkul* and *hlytai*.

**Lanka**

—“Link.” A group of Ukrainian fellow-traveler writers who were grouped around the journal *Life and Revolution*. In 1926 the group renamed itself MARS (*Maisternia Revoliutsiinoho Slova*—Workshop of the Revolutionary Word).

**LEF**

—The Left Front of Art was the chief literary organization of the Russian Futurists. It published an organ of the same name (1923–5) and later *Novyi LEF* (*New LEF*).

**Massism**

—the idea that the literature of the Revolution would be produced by the broad masses themselves.

**Neoclassicists**

—a group of writers whose concern with aesthetics and interest in the themes and images of antiquity led to their condemnation by the CP(B)U. They supported Khvylovy in the Literary Discussion. The group consisted of five poets: Mykola Zerov, Maksym Rylsky, Pavlo Fylypovych, Mykhailo Drai-Khmara and Osvald Burghardt; and two critics: Mykhaylo Mohyliansky and Viktor Petrov.

**NEP**

—*Novaia Ekonomicheskaiia Politika*, the New Economic Policy, a policy of limited free enterprise and toleration pursued by the Soviet government, 1921–8.

**NKVD**

—People’s Commissariat of Internal Affairs, assumed political police functions under Stalin, successor of GPU and ancestor of KGB.

**October**

—*Oktiabr*, was the chief organizational successor to *Proletcult*. Formed late in 1922, it published the journals *On Guard* (1923) and *October* (1924).

**"Olympians"**

—a group of writers led by Mykola Khvylovy, Oles Dosvitnii and Mykola Ialovy, who formed an opposition within Hart to combat the tendency toward "massism." They argued that a brilliant revolutionary literature would only be produced by brilliant individuals through whom the masses speak.

**Onguardists**

—took their name from the journal *Na postu (On Guard)*, which appeared from 1923 to 1925. They favoured a militantly proletarian art, rejected the cultural heritage of the past and and ignored the claims of national cultures within the USSR.

**OPOIAZ**

—*Obshchestvo Izucheniia Poeticheskogo Iazyka*—Society for the Study of Poetic Language. Out of this group, formed during the First World War, grew the so-called formalist school of Russian literary criticism.

**Panfuturists**

—an avant-garde literary current in Ukraine that was very active in the early twenties. They proclaimed the death of Romantic notions of art, counterposing scientific analysis and technical expertise to the cult of feelings. It was led by Mykhail Semenko.

**Pluh**

—"Plough," a union of peasant writers headed by Serhii Pylypenko.

**Proletcult**

—an acronym for the Proletarian Cultural and Educational Association, founded in 1917. The movement wanted to create a proletarian literature for and by the proletariat and to set up workshops which would turn workers into writers. Notorious for its insensitivity to non-Russian cultures, unsuccessful in its attempts to develop young writers, the movement collapsed around 1922. Its leaders, however, continued to exert an influence through the journal, *On Guard*.

**Prosvita**

—a Ukrainian self-education society which sprung up in Ukraine after the 1905 and 1917 Revolutions and was liquidated by the Bolsheviks in the twenties.

**RCP(B)**

—*Rossiiskaia Kommunisticheskaia Partia (bolshevikov)*—the Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik), later renamed the All-Union Communist

Party (Bolshevik), then the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

### **Smenovekhovets**

—member of the *Smena Vekh* (Changing Landmarks) group led by N. V. Ustrialov. Although not Marxists, they admired Russian Bolshevism for its continuation of the traditions of Russian nationalism.

### **Socialist-Revolutionaries or SRs**

—members of the *Ukrainska Partiiia Sotsiialistiv-Revoliutsioneriv*, Ukrainian Party of Socialist-Revolutionaries, agrarian socialists and the dominant force in the Central Rada.

### **Social-Democrats or SDs**

—members of the *Ukrainska Sotsiial-Demokratychna Robitnycha Partiiia*, Ukrainian Social-Democratic Workers' Party, the Marxist wing of the Ukrainian revolutionary movement after 1905.

### **Symbolists**

—the Ukrainian Symbolists formed a distinct literary current in Kiev in 1918 and published the journal *Muzaget* (*Muzagete*) in 1919. The group included Pavlo Tychyna, Volodymyr Iaroshenko, Dmytro Zahul, Iakiv Savchenko and Oleksa Slisarenko.

### **VAPLITE**

—*Vilna Akademiia Proletarskoi Literatury*, the Free Academy of Proletarian Literature, the followers of Mykola Khvylovy, disbanded by the party in 1928.

### **VUAN**

—*Vseukrainska Akademiia Nauk*, the All-Ukrainian Academy of Sciences.

### **VUSPP**

—*Vseukrainska Spilka Proletarskykh Pysmennykiv*—the All-Ukrainian Union of Proletarian Writers. Formed in January 1927, and sponsored by the CP(B)U, it attacked all other literary groups, accusing them of national deviations. Its leaders were Ivan Kulyk, Ivan Mykytenko, Ivan Kyrylenko and Volodymyr Koriak.

### **War Communism**

—Bolshevik policy preceding the NEP; based on wholesale nationalization of industry, rationing, and compulsory requisition of agricultural produce from the peasantry.

**Worker-peasant correspondent (*robselkor*) movement**

—a programme which encouraged workers and peasants to contribute to Soviet newspapers and which was widely discussed in the early twenties.

**White Guards**

—Russian counterrevolutionary army; those forces active in Ukraine were led by General Denikin and later General Wrangel.

**Zhovten**

—Zhovten was a very short-lived Ukrainian literary organization formed in 1925 of disgruntled Panfuturists who at the same time refused to join *Hart* or *Pluh*.

**Polemical Pamphlets**

**by**

**Mykola Khvylovy**

**Quo Vadis?**

## Author's Foreword

There are two literary, revolutionary organizations: Hart, the union of proletarian writers, and Pluh, the union of peasant writers.<sup>1</sup> Many disagreements have recently arisen between these two groupings. Pluh, which, by its own admission, is a union of poorly qualified writers—more correctly, simply a voluntary cultural-educational organization that for some reason has pretensions to playing a role in art—is unable to accept the existence of Hart and continually attacks it. This offensive began during the Moscow conference of proletarian writers, where the Pluh camp, in opposition to Hart, accepted the so-called “*On Guardist* platform,”<sup>2</sup> which has since completely discredited itself, and recognized, again in opposition to Hart, the so-called “All-Union Centre,” which has since been effectively liquidated. The offensive continued during the Hart conference at which Pluh members “harassed” Hart, having established a bloc with the Russian *On Guardists* who had come to literary Ukraine for “a bit of partisan activity”: their affairs had not prospered in Moscow. This battle has for the moment ended on the pages of *Kultura i pobut* (*Culture and Daily Life*), a supplement to *Visty* (*News*).<sup>3</sup> Now, once again these very same unrestrainable Pluh adherents have opened fire. We “olympians” (the name given us by our literary opponents) have answered them. Since our concern was with the future of proletarian art and not with the Hart and Pluh groupings, we made a conscious attempt to rise above organizational questions. We were primarily concerned with the idea of the Asiatic renaissance and the explanation of two psychological categories: Europe and *prosvita*.<sup>4</sup> The first two letters are our reply to one of the *prosvita*-types, whom we generalize by simply calling “enko.” The third letter is our reply to Comrade Pylypenko,<sup>5</sup> the leader of Pluh. Since not everything will be comprehensible here, we ask the reader's pardon: the letters were written as answers, in the heat of the moment; at present we do not have time to rework them. Nevertheless, they do raise many topical questions. We therefore hope that our pamphlets will be the first elementary paragraph to a theory of the new art. The theoretician himself

must arrive—we await him. He will be a vitaistic Romantic: an agitator and propagandizer of our premises.

Mykola Khvylovy



**On "Satan in a Barrel"**  
or  
**On Graphomaniacs, Speculators**  
**And Other Prosvita-Types**  
**(A First Letter to Literary Youth)**

*I*

In one of his brochures Spengler wrote: "I elevate Bach and Mozart to inaccessible heights, but it does not follow from this that thousands of scribes and philosophers who inhabit our large cities should be given the title of artist and thinker."

And again: "Progress in art is demonstrated by fact, not by logical proofs."

We quote from Spengler precisely in order to irritate "Satan in a barrel"<sup>6</sup> with his hopako-wide-trousered (our own expression), now ultra-red *prosvita*. (Incidentally, we fear that our opponents are hearing such a surname for the first time and, therefore, are compelled to affirm that Spengler<sup>7</sup> is neither on Hart's membership lists nor among the "olympians.") And also in order to thank Trotsky again and again for the classic aphorism: "If Vardin gets his multiplication tables wrong, and Voronsky gets the same result as a White Guard who knows his arithmetic, there is still no threat to Voronsky's political reputation."

Finally, we quote from Spengler in order again and again daringly and with a clear conscience to underline our solidarity with the fascist thinker in those "premises" concerning art which have been and will continue to be arithmetical axioms for all times, for all peoples and for every type of class society.

As you can see, the path of the "olympians" will never cross that of literary speculators and profaners of the young art; as you can see, it would be a great mistake to think that the generation of young proletarian writers might lose its bearings during an offensive mounted by militant literary trash. Its intellectual abilities have yet to fail it and, probably, will not do so. History, too, never made nonsense.

Just this and this above all must be grasped by our talented literary youth, which is now stubbornly improving itself in backwaters throughout the length and breadth of the republic and drop by drop falling into the "olympian" phalanx.

And so, let this be the prologue; now to the substance.

## II

*Sine ira et studio*: without anger and sympathy, as Tacitus said, himself a powerful voice against various hecklers and provocateurs. Let us take an objective look at the contemporary situation in art and ourselves put forward several elementary principles.

It has recently become fashionable to speak of a "difference of opinion" between "young" and "old" proletarian writers. Things have reached the point where someone has even suggested the "thesis," based on these differences, that we are witnessing the birth of a second generation of proletarian artists. As one might have expected, the literary speculators seized upon this thesis and, as one critic put it, a "revolution" began. Fire and smoke, the requirements of every battle, appeared in the arena.

Therefore let us sniff the smoke and take a look at the fire.

Firstly, if we are going to speak of the "second generation," then why not call it the third? After all, logically the first was Chumak, Mykhailychenko,<sup>8</sup> etc.; the second: Sosiura, Iohansen,<sup>9</sup> etc.; the third: Usenko, Ivaniv,<sup>10</sup> etc.

We believe that this carelessly constructed "thesis" was thrown out for effect and that it is entirely without foundation. For how is one to divide proletarian artists? According to age? Then we ought to inform you that among the so-called "youth" are to be counted writers who are older than are we "olympians." Perhaps, however, you had in mind their artistic potential? Then here you would also be mistaken: there are and can be no examples in literary history of a generation that said all it had to say in five-six years. A writer is not an American typewriter, and literary works are not Poltava dumplings.

So the "thesis" concerning a second generation will be of service only to obscurantists who will use it for their own ends. It is the smoke we

mentioned, which in time will be dispersed by the boisterous "olympian" breeze.

Secondly, undoubtedly there is a fire. It is raging in the "second generation," if you will (minus the hecklers, of course), one part of which (the more mature intellectually, emotionally and however else you like) will, in our opinion, inevitably and organically fuse with the "olympians," while a second (less educated, though talented) will become the reserve which will "generate" an authentic second generation in ten or fifteen years.

The fire can be explained only in this way. Only in this way should contemporary proletarian artists be divided. Other "theses" only inflame passions and hinder the business of developing a new proletarian literature. The other theses—we repeat a bit more concretely—only serve some folk in the acquisition of a little social capital, and instead of making, say, useful Soviet journalists out of workers and peasants, create poetasters and other penpushers who are of no benefit to anyone.

Thus, the "olympians" place great hopes in the fire, and it is through no fault of theirs that the pungent smoke has produced an artificial curtain between the "young" and the "old." If one considers our differences of principle, one can speak of only one thing. Figuratively it can be presented as a choice:

Zerov<sup>11</sup> or Harkun-Zadunaisky<sup>12</sup>? Put another way: Europe or *prosvita*?

It is evident to us all that the young art will never find its feet without the technical aid of the Soviet intelligentsia. There is not a writer among us who does not consider himself a God-Almighty while floundering among "universals," "platforms," and "manifestoes"; it suffices only to step back from "logical proofs" and to try to demonstrate one's truth through the "literary fact" to be reduced to helplessness.

What is the problem?

The problem is that we are not armed with the artistic technique that a qualified artist possesses. And it is no accident that in worker-peasant literary organizations one can always count a large percentage of members of the intelligentsia: only in concert with the latter does the worker-peasant writer create new artistic-community values, only with the intelligentsia, with its direct aid does he himself eventually become an *intelligent* in the best sense of the term, that is to say—in this instance—a genuine writer.

Therefore, if this is so (and it certainly is!), we get the figurative question:

Zerov or Harkun-Zadunaisky?

We "olympians," with a deep sense of responsibility for the future of the new art, state:

There can be no doubt that for proletarian creative literature the Soviet *intelligent* Zerov who is armed with the higher mathematics of art is—hyperbolically speaking—a million times more useful than a hundred

*prosvita*-types, who are about as well versed in this art as a pig in orange-growing, who in the seventh year of the Revolution have suddenly become more revolutionary than Lenin himself and now throw around "red" phrases in various Soviet journals over the signature of a "tsia" or an "enko."<sup>13</sup>

We put this cardinal, truly principled question to our literary "youth," which has to answer it. . . . If not for us, then for itself.

Why do we insist upon this?

Is this not perhaps a tactical move by Hart?

We believe that, because of the acceleration of the so-called Ukrainization, proletarian art finds itself in temporary danger.

"Satan in a barrel" from the hopako-wide-trousered *prosvita* has crawled out of his traditional nesting place and is moving toward the city like a cloud of locusts. It would be a great mistake to think that the "black earth has arisen," that we are dealing here with the artist to whom Tychyna<sup>14</sup> "sent his nerves." This is merely the illiterate Philistine. This is the same "native *prosvita*" in an embroidered shirt and with a world-view formed in suburban backwaters that was in its time the ideologist of the kulak. Now, owing to its unprincipled nature, having lost the ground from beneath its feet and unexpectedly stumbling upon a new opportunity (accelerated Ukrainization), it becomes "red" and sets out to "villagize" (more accurately: to profane) urban proletarian culture.

This is what the "youth" should remember at all times; then there will be no disagreements between us.

In order to demonstrate the pressing nature of our premises, let us look at the following lines of the letter under consideration.<sup>15</sup>

First of all, allow us to assure the "youth" that we, "olympians,"<sup>16</sup> were never patriots of Hart. Indeed, we would never put on a show of false enthusiasm for any new talented work by any of the "youth"; on the contrary, we would greet it—speaking somewhat sentimentally—with genuine, hot tears of joy.

We, therefore, ask the reader not to search for hidden motives, because the issue here is not Hart, but one of the "enkos," who today is one of the avant-garde warriors of an agitated *prosvita*. Observe how he confuses the "youth" and inflames passions:

Representatives of Pluh and Hart disagree, and this disagreement, of course, issued from the differences between the two organizations, in particular between their ideological platforms. [The journal *Znannia (Knowledge)*]

Do you hear? Until now we thought that Pluh and Hart differed in their territorial influence, but according to this "enko" things appear "quite the opposite": the main difference is ideological. In other words, whereas Hart took as its ideology the Communist Party's demands, Pluh,

according to "enکو," obviously had in mind *prosvita's* ideology. We consider this completely incorrect, and certainly incorrect as concerns that part of Pluh which is called the "youth" and that part which holds party cards.

Why, then, does "enکو" tell such lies about his own organization? Read on and you will understand him:

The fusion of Pluh with Molot<sup>17</sup> or Hart or any other proletarian organization would be a mistake, a twisting of the Leninist line, as would be the fusion, to take an analogous example, of the *komnezamy*<sup>18</sup> with the trade unions.

There is the reason why. He is terribly frightened by the possibility of a merger of Pluh and Hart. (Molot here is a purely rhetorical flourish, as everyone knows that it is a colonial property of the "enkos," so to speak.) Yes he fears such a merger terribly because he does not want to return to the suburban backwaters. This is where both the ideological differences and the slander against his own organization come from. Do you hear how he swears by the "Communist God"—"the Leninist line"?

Having put forward these basic "premises," "enکو" continues to inflame passions, to, as it were, manipulate the "youth":

Representatives of VAPP and Zaboi demonstratively quit the Hart conference; Pluh joined these organizations.<sup>19</sup>

Do you hear? All the organizations left the Hart conference. Do you hear? All! But when did this take place? Never! You see, the rules of ethics have not yet been written for a *prosvita*-type; he needs the inter-organizational struggle for the same reason he needs muddy waters... to catch fish. Small wonder, then, that further on he chokes with enthusiasm over the "Komsomol"<sup>20</sup> revolution within Hart, praising to the skies the settler population coming from his own Molot colony.

"Enکو" is, nevertheless, an abject coward and fears the "olympians" above everything. Knowing, therefore, that the latter abound in Hart, in order to neutralize his fierce enemies at least formally, he creates the "premise" about the expedience of simultaneous adherence to "two consonant organizations"; he at once attacks Hart and pretends to be entering it.

Hart was unable and unwilling [complains our *prosvitian*] to spread its influence among the lower ranks, as if afraid of these unpolished working-class writers and accepted with caution even those who had already shown themselves to be qualified writers.

Do you hear his song? But whom does he consider to be "unpolished"? The young working-class correspondents<sup>21</sup> or the young working-class creative artists? Let us assume it is the former. The Communist Party and

plain common sense do not recommend "influencing" them, because to do so according to "enko's" formula would mean organizing them into a Pluh or Hart party. Let us then suppose he means the second. Having made this assumption, one would have to recognize that artists "are not dumplings and oilcake" and cannot be made to order; they are not of the same stuff as *prosvitians*, whose philosophy is take whatever is at hand.

So what are we left with: an empty manger? No! Then perhaps this was pure speculation or the mischievous prank of an idiot? Not this either! What, then?

Well, you see, behind the mask of an "unpolished working class" we detect the insolent physiognomy of a "qualified writer" from the immortal *prosvita*. It is he who wants to get into Hart. It is the illiterate "enko" striving to strengthen his position so that he can play not the last role in the development of proletarian literature. He will give out certificates of "qualification" right and left. What does he care that some Khvylovy, in spite of dozens of articles and reviews about his work still does not talk about his own qualifications and is even unsure whether he has the right to call himself a writer. What does "enko" care! He will make school children into qualified writers, and his business will prosper nicely. And then we shall have only one comment: Wretched qualification! Wretched the youth "from the ranks" whom "enko" qualified!

This is where the comparison of art with *komnezamy* and trade unions comes from. This is the source also of our "differences" with the young youth and the senseless profanation of proletarian literature. "Satan," having seized the opportune moment, climbed out of his "barrel" and, having taken up a position at the head of contemporary literature under the surname of a "tsia" or "enko," has begun to bellow triumphantly:

How will it end, they ask? We shall see! There is talk of creating an All-Ukrainian Centre of Proletarian Organizations with Molot at the helm [we remind readers: Molot is a colony of the "enkos"]. If this transpires then there is nothing wrong with the current literary polemics. Truth is born of arguments.

This is how our valiant "villagizer" finished his article. Do you hear? He sees nothing detrimental to himself in such an outcome. Do you hear, "young" youth? "Enko" knows that only during polemics will he "catch fish." Do you hear him? He does not want literary facts, which demonstrate the progress of art, because this is Spenglerism, and he is "red." He wants "logical proofs," arguments, because without them he would be powerless and would have to go to work in the suburban backwaters for *prosvita*. Do you hear his call, "young" youth: break decisively with the "olympians," fight Hart!

## III

"Enko," however, does not fight as much as "fry" Hart from two sides. Under one surname he promotes school children to qualified writers and sets "young" against "old" in order to create a base for himself. Under a second surname, assuming a profoundly thoughtful countenance, he begins to speak of criticism and does not miss the opportunity even here of speculating a little on the sick vanity of young authors and of lashing out at one of the "olympians," Khvylovy in particular.

Let us take up this second "enko" and put forward a few of our own principles of criticism.

The Achilles' heel of Ukrainian proletarian writing is not so much the lack of an appropriate critical literature and criticism as the lack of a literature that would be worth criticizing. The great Russian critical Pleiad—Belinsky, Dobroliubov, Chernyshevsky—in their literary dimension were the product of an equally great Pleiad of creative writers. If there had been no Ostrovsky, say, there would not have been any "Dark Kingdom."<sup>22</sup> The same could be said about Lessing, Brandes<sup>23</sup> and so on.

It is hardly a coincidence, therefore, that even today's Marxist critics and sociologists still turn to the past. In analyzing it, they reach—in the best of cases—some general conclusions which in some measure and very tentatively touch upon the production of proletarian artists. Take Koriak<sup>24</sup> as an example. Has he written at least one article about the works of contemporary revolutionary writers?

Not one!

To some this is the product of an excessive caution; Koriak himself, obviously, insists that he is not a critic but a historian of literature; we, however, assure you:

There are deeper reasons and one of them is the desolate condition of our young writing.

Honestly, what is there to write about? Ten or twenty literate stories and fifty to a hundred excellent poems? And all this over a period of several years? Clearly, complaints that one's works are being ignored are simply twaddle. A critic begins to develop his own ideas when he sees other ideas in a work and not empty vignettes. True, we know cases in the history of literature when a future coryphaeus was ignored, but it is also true that such coryphaei are few and far between and, besides, have nothing in common with *prosvita's* graphomaniacs.

So much for "being ignored."

Now, the second category of graphomaniacs, on the other hand, complains about the great number of critics who block their path. Among them are numbered "grey-haired old men," "olympians" and even some kind of "sprinters." The "ideologist" of this category is the second "enko," in other words, an apple from the very same tree.

We therefore take this apple and bite it. Two pips fall out: these are the pretentious philosophical "premises" of *prosvita*.

The first:

Criticism is the name given to a healthy discussion of a literary work, based on the demands of the day and with the single aim of establishing the work's value, both in terms of art and readability.

Here you have the "pearls" of the "young" philosopher "enko," who, incidentally, if no older than ourselves is certainly not any younger, who has absolutely nothing in common with those "unpolished" writers with whom the previous "enko" is so concerned. Therefore listen and learn what criticism is; this is the definition you will get in the suburban backwaters! Furthermore, art is counterposed to readability, "both and." You disagree? Too bad!

The second:

the kind of literary production that serves the construction of life, that creates the efforts we need [study "enko's" metaphorical language] is the most necessary and indispensable literature.

What a pearl! What a definition! And how it could possibly flow from the first "premise" is none of your business. Where is the logic? That's not your business either! We will, however, pose "enko" a question: Bukharin, for instance, whom even the *prosvita* philosophers recognize as a person "thoroughly saturated in the demands of the day," commends *Julio-Jurenito*<sup>25</sup> in an article, because he considers that this "literary production serves the construction of life and creates the effects we need." Now Rodov,<sup>26</sup> an ideologist of the "enkos," is of the opposite opinion and views this work as counter-revolutionary. And so we pose the question: Is *Julio-Jurenito* "necessary and indispensable literature" or not? Well?

Such are the two basic "premises" of this sophisticated article. The rest is the babbling of some offended failure and a rabid fury directed at "olympians," "grey-haired old men," etc. We wish to pose one more question, this time to our "young youth":

It must surely be evident that in this case as well, our "differences" with "enko" stem essentially from the cardinal difference: Europe or *prosvita*? Surely you must agree with us, "olympians," that such illiterate babbling about first premises ought to be thrown straight into the editor's trash



basket, that such "works," if we do not want to compromise the Soviet press, can only be printed as examples of graphomania and literary hooliganism? Do you really think that the author of such "premises" can enrich our proletarian literature?

Here is an excerpt from the short story of citizen "enکو" which was submitted for the competition and which he will undoubtedly not be able to improve upon in the next few years. After reading it the "grey-haired old man" Doroshkevych<sup>27</sup> commented: "This is not a monk but some kind of Rocambole. Not worth printing." This is the story on which the author prides himself, of which like a gypsy he sings the praises before youth, and of which this "belletrist" plaintively writes: "the review played its role and a work useful to the peasantry [praise yourself, buckwheat groats!] was left unpublished."

And so here is an excerpt from this document and short story:

Troshka threw himself feet first into the crowd.

"Stop fighting! I'll shoot!" They were not people any more, but animals. They heard nothing. Troshka fired three times into the air. It did not help. No attention.

"Boys, fire high!"

A number of salvos rang out from the boys in the self-defence guard. No one heard. The living meat twisted like a snake, tensed and went off in all directions!

Kost grabbed someone by the throat.

"Lived . . . Loved . . . a-ah . . ."

Troshka and the boys could hardly drag Kost away from him.

"What kind of man are you, anyway?"

Give me land . . . Let me live . . . I'm sick with land hunger . . ."

And so on and so forth. In a word, a "parable," as "enکو" says himself in this same short-story entry. Well, where do you think the action is taking place? Where is this meat going off in all directions? (What an image! Die, *prosvita*, you'll never write any better!) Where is it, then?

You'll never guess, because this is happening in a monastery during a "general meeting." You would never have guessed, because you knew very well that any peasants' "general meeting" would have dispersed upon one poor shot being fired, never mind a salvo. Kopystka is not frightened by

such an "incident," but Kost, to be sure, would run so hard he'd lose his trousers. We "olympians" have seen similar events: someone breaks wind and that's the end of the "general meeting."

And then what kind of peasants are these that utter such a melodramatic: "I'm sick with land hunger!" We have heard: "sick in the head," but this is another matter. Therefore it is no surprise that "enko" in his "competitive" (forgive the expression) short-story made the monks Rocamboles, though he may not have known what sort of birds they were: "intuitively," as Sosiura says.

Unfortunately, we cannot quote more "pearls" from this story in order to assure the "young" youth that we are not doing anything pernicious to our young literature. We believe that it is already in solidarity with us. Just think for a moment about what is happening: the graphomaniacs are not only assuming the unconditional publication of their works in serious journals, but are demanding that their works win prizes.

Here lies the source of speculation on the ingenuousness of youth. This is why they operate with various insinuations and swear by "red *prosvita*." Indeed, one might expect such brazenness and insolence only from the sons of an impudent "Satan" from an ultra-philistinish "barrel." Because where earlier "enkos" used to ambush "defenceless" literary figures like Doroshkevych, they are now moving against the "olympians." It is a pity, however, that they did not calculate their forces carefully, nor take an interest in the forces of "olympus." We fear that "Satan" himself may end up again in his suburban backwater with his tail, metaphorically and vulgarly speaking, between his legs.

Nevertheless, again: *sine ira et studio*. We are not writing our article out of an interest in the grey "tsias" and "enkos"; our article is specially dedicated to the "young" youth, for whom we are explaining the essence of our single difference:

Europe or *prosvita*?

And so let us summarize what we have said and attempt to come to some conclusions.

There have never been so many opportunities for the development of Ukrainian proletarian literature and for literature in general as now in our republic of communes.

Neither has there ever been such a shamelessly rowdy song-and-dance in the same Ukrainian literature as in our day. It suffices for any "enko" to acquire a membership card from a writer's organization and he immediately considers himself to be infallible in questions of art. And when he calls his work "The Nechaiv Commune" or "By the Tractors," such a work immediately becomes the holy shroud itself. One has to possess a great deal of civic courage to throw this ungifted "Nechaiv Commune" into the editor's waste basket; one has to have solid revolutionary credentials

behind one to throw a critical "full-nelson" on such a work. Just think, "enko" is "red," "enko" has become so red that he has even "discovered America": the Revolution was not made by degenerates; so red that he has even begun "communizing" the masses in Soviet periodicals under the surname "tsia."

Hands off our "enko"! He has now become fashionable.

Naturally, the really talented youth gets lost in this "satanic" song-and-dance. Some of them instead of studying fall under the influence of "enkos" and become "qualified writers," capturing the market with "red" graphomania; others, stunned and thrown out of kilter by the "original" articles of various illiterate "tsias" and other "enkos," are sitting around in some quiet corners and biding their time. The upshot has been that the "young" youth over several years has failed to produce a single decent book, and this today, when there are so many opportunities, today, when the age of renaissance is upon us, when we are on the eve of an untold flowering of the young literature!

Therefore, our conclusions:

First, one must immediately reply to the question: Europe or *prosvita*? with the answer: Europe. This is all the more necessary now that the first rumblings of the Asiatic Renaissance are audible, and now that "Satan" has led his impulsive and determined attack from his "barrel" against the city and against urban culture.

Second, our "young" youth must study, study and study, as Lenin said, and then it will see that the differences are only a provocation by the various "enkos." The real artistic youth does not rush into print with its works, because it is aware that no "olympians" will deny the merits of a really valuable piece of proletarian literature. "Young" youth should respect creative literature and understand that the name of artist carries with it some responsibilities, that it is not quite so easy to earn it: one has to gain a great deal of lived experience and have a good knowledge of the old literature. Finally, "young" youth must become aware that the reason for the currency of pulp writing lies not in "readability" but in simple Ukrainization, which compels some charitable institutions to purchase it in bales and store it in cellars where it is chewed and read only by mice.

Third, the various penpushers who know more or less how to write a journalistic observation, who poke their noses into art and, moreover, try to govern it, must immediately be pushed aside or, at the very least, put in their place. Then it will become clear that so-called mass art is the product of the hard work of many generations, and not of "red" pot-boiling. The simplicity and clarity of a Tolstoi is art of the highest skill. It made its appearance, however, during the "twilight" of the Russian bourgeoisie and gentry. As for the masses, we would do better at present to give them Sinclair<sup>28</sup> in millions of copies.

Fourth, it should be recognized that the first phalanx (not generation) of proletarian writers came on the scene at the junction of two epochs, in the heat of a romantic age when the old society was dying and the new one was being born. Therefore, the types (and characters in general) of our works will not always be close to the hearts of the real youth, or of "enkos" (who are only speculators in this realm). One should not, however, draw any hasty conclusions from this, but take an honest glance at oneself and say: Yes, his people are foreign to me. But I can see that the "olympians" not only loved the Revolution but also loved proletarian art. I will learn to love it too. I will also travel that joyful path of mistakes: because only he who makes no demands on himself does not err.

Fifth, the new art is being created by workers and peasants. On condition, however, that they be intellectually developed, talented, people of genius. Whoever does not understand this is a fool. And whoever does understand it but keeps silent is a speculator.

Sixth, and last, youth must be also morally clean. The Savchenko<sup>29</sup> kind of writing not only harms the young literature, but leads to a shameful song-and-dance. One should not try to decipher the pseudonyms of authors who do not desire this. One should not crawl around the tables of the "olympians" with cameras trying to photograph signatures on this table in order to acquire one more "document." One should not poke around in the brief-cases of other editors. One should not . . . etc., etc.

We put forward this advice and these conclusions for our "young" youth. We believe that this youth, which has been summoned to create a mighty renaissance, will in the end follow the path laid down for it by history.

**On Copernicus of Frauenburg**  
**or**  
**The ABC of the Asiatic Renaissance in**  
**Art**  
**(a Second Letter to Literary Youth)**

*I*

First a couple of words about the character of our letters, whose “stylistic manner” has elicited a little dissatisfaction.

We are not concerned here with our “enkos” who began with phrases like “sadism,” continued with “unpolished,” sectarian, *khatian*<sup>30</sup> forms of address toward Comrade Khvylovy (the cunning like to play games and always impute their own sickness to others), but we are speaking of those literary figures who found “too many abusive Russian borrowings” in our previous letter. Well, to the latter a gallant curtsey. Although we never studied in the Institute for Gentlewomen, we know that a pamphlet without a few “juicy” “isms” is not a pamphlet.

As you see, we are not dissemblers: our articles are militant pamphlets... Though their nature is not lampoonish but Voltairian. Here, by the way, “enko” can heave a sigh of relief: not only do we admit to having “leafed through” Voltaire, we even announce ourselves as Voltairians.

Full stop.

Now, with your permission, a little Latin. Following *prosvita*'s logic we shall take none other than Lord Zerov as our medium and evoke the spirit of Ovid through those “metamorphoses” which our inveterate neoclassicist translates.

Therefore, a little Latin—more correctly, a Latin proverb—which translated reads approximately like this: an eagle does not catch flies.

By this we do not wish to confirm that “roses are red, violets are blue,” but to suggest that we “olympians” would never have entered our polemic with citizen “enko” (this is, after all, just what he needed!) if the more “serious” element within *prosvita* could count among its leaders more writers and less obscure and boring *littérateurs*, if it had not trusted its second, botched, compilatory article to the collective creativity of several “enkos,” but instead had assigned its writing to an advocate who was at least competent enough to turn so-called “Proletcult”<sup>31</sup> trash into humorous window-dressing after the manner of LEF’s<sup>32</sup> theoretical nonsense.

However, facts, as they say, are facts. Therefore, we take the last article of citizen “enko” as a further example of the premises of “Octobrist”<sup>33</sup> *prosvita*, because we consider it necessary to make our voice heard once more. Because the “enkos” are quite correct in thinking that their abysmally wretched articles have given us the “occasion” to express our justified comments.

## II

Whenever you have to speak to an audience that has educated itself on the *hopak*,<sup>34</sup> before raising the topic of the comet Encke,<sup>35</sup> you had better first reject the old, hackneyed faith, put it to a vote and pass the following resolution: Whereas Copernicus was of proletarian origin, this assembly attests that the earth does, indeed, circle around the sun.

Unfortunately, we failed to put forward similar resolutions before publishing our previous article and, therefore, now find it necessary to return to the ABC of proletarian art in order to “have it resolved.” We believe that after this procedure everything will become clear to everyone and, above all, it will become quite evident why Europe and not *prosvita*. We trust also that our ABC will sufficiently disturb “young” youth that the latter will take a critical view of those “inscribed truths” which “enko” preaches. For in the previous articles we explained our differences with the “second generation,” and in this one we are going to explain those points on which we will never see eye-to-eye with *prosvita*.

What is “art in general,” ask the “olympians,” beginning their second letter.

To answer this question, you do not have to be a theoretician.

“Art in general” is an arch-specific branch of human activity, which attempts to satisfy one of the needs of the human “spirit,” namely love of the beautiful.

Such an apparently highly aesthetic definition after a few algebraic manipulations takes on a much more convincing appearance. It deals essentially with fundamental principles and identity.

What can be puzzling in this premise? Nothing other than the "love of the beautiful" and the idealistic "spirit." If, following Chernyshevsky, we say that we equate beauty with life, our definition already begins to take on a half-materialistic appearance, becomes more concrete. This, however, still leaves us with the "spirit?" True! But this latter is not always in contradiction with Marxism. After all, according to Plekhanov—not Chernyshevsky this time!—"art is one of the means of spiritual communication between people."

However, we are not going to attribute this formula either to "art in general." We recognize the classic formula which, by the way, our "young" youth ought to know by now, in order that they might avoid getting tied up in *prosvita's* "undefined" and boundless illiteracy. We have in mind the very same Plekhanov, who wrote: "Art is the cognition of life through images."

His pupils add: "in the form of contemplation of emotions." And they are right, because "the father of Russian Marxism" in one of his works states unequivocally that "the cognition of beauty takes place through the faculty of contemplation." Precisely through this contemplative [*sozertsatelnyi*] faculty which the all-Union *prosvita*, both in its erudite Russian and two-pamphlet Ukrainian form, is up in arms against. Here we should, by the way, remind our "native" *prosvita* that cognition of the useful takes place through the intellect. Therefore, if our *prosvita* indeed suffers so much from utilitarianism, then it would not do it any harm to put aside intuitive theorizing and make some use of its brains.

The point is that in spite of our desire to polemicize specifically with our own *prosvita*, we are compelled unfortunately to turn to its Russian exponents in order to explain fully the nature of the *prosvita* phenomenon. One cannot, after all, debate with troglodytes. As for the latter, we can only express our deep respect for their antediluvian intellectual cunning. And so, we "olympians" do not intend to write a tract on the subject of "scientific aesthetics." We are concerned with the basic alphabet and are writing it only because we are compelled to do so. For we "olympians," who view art as a great factor in the era of the struggle for Communism, who have taken as our slogan "Long live the new art!"—we "olympians" are disturbed by the revisionism in Marxist aesthetics and by the liquidationist attitudes which have developed in the last years into a semi-Bogdanovism<sup>36</sup> of quite considerable proportions.

The history of this phenomenon in Ukraine is a long one. It began with the famous Proletcult, continued with the inglorious end of panfuturism and the flowering of the so-called "Octobrist *On Guardism*." Back in 1921

it was Khvylovy himself from among the "olympians" who as a Don Quixada raised the flag against proletcultism. This was at the time when Proletcult was, so to speak, in control, a law unto itself. At that time no one wanted to believe the "olympians." Now, it seems, they have come to accept his view, but . . . unfortunately, fail to understand that "Octobrist *On Guardism*" and the Octobrist platform with its Ukrainian corrections and added *tutti frutti* is still the same semi-Bogdanovism which Lenin himself fought against so fiercely.

Accusing us of being "fellow-travellers," failing to understand that "fellow-travelling" is essentially an expression of zoological nationalism (whether of the mother-Ukraine or the mother-Russia variety), that it is not Doctor Tahabat at all, not the "Cat in High-Boots," not Anarch, not Ohre<sup>37</sup>—our opponents have succeeded in tangling themselves up completely and have failed to recognize one "cardinal truth."

All of them are given to *jurare in verba magistri* ("swearing by the words of the teacher," Lenin in this case), but they are all from the same kettle of fish. However strange it may seem, they are all alike: the *On Guardists*, *Lefists*, the Proletcultists, the ones who recognize the Octobrist platform, the Panfuturists<sup>38</sup> and their name is Legion. All of them come from the same basic definition of art: "a method of constructing life."

This cabal ought to take as its ideologist Chuzhak,<sup>39</sup> who is fighting with such determination against contemplation, against Plekhanov's definition of art "as a method of cognizing life."

For in fact they are all against Bukharin's "systematization of emotions in images," and against Tolstoi's "emotional infection"; they are against much else besides: against "idealism," against "the old aesthetic."

What, however, is their aesthetic? To say that art is "a method of constructing life" is to say quite a lot for us "olympians," and to say nothing at all for the "young" youth. What do they understand by this?

We cannot go into a detailed critique of this hodgepodge; we will take their fundamental argument against Plekhanov's aesthetic, examine it and reveal their true face.

"The principle of demoralization [writes Chuzhak] is the basis of the old art."

Demoralization? This must obviously be because the old art accepted the function of contemplation? The same contemplation against which the "enkos" war intuitively? We understand: contemplation has always been a "passive" category. Pray tell, however, why was the old art nevertheless a great positive factor in the development of society? Did it demoralize only the proletariat? You say nothing about this. No, you have in mind its negative influence upon the psyche in general. You believe that an epoch of artistic renaissance also demoralized its society, that Pushkin was a conservative factor, that Voltaire played a negative role in its progress,



that Michaelangelo was wasting his time, that the "Cloud in Trousers"<sup>40</sup> was also demoralizing.

Or do you believe that the "principle of demoralization" is not an absolute rule? If so, you should explain yourselves. Because in our opinion your meaning is quite clear. You reject the "passive" element in contemplation, hence your "demoralization." Our own "enkos" understand you through their own petty-bourgeois nature. Yet you forget that contemplation always carries within itself behind the mask of passivity the highest activity, the highest dynamism, because it is the "cognition of life."

Such is the fundamental argument of LEF and the *On Guardists*. And when we scrutinize it a little more closely we shall see:

Behind the "method of constructing life" lies not so much a narrow-minded utilitarianism, a Pisarevism painted "red," a liquidationist attitude toward art, a revisionism toward Plekhanov's aesthetic, a German "enlightenment," as much as the petty-bourgeois demand of the new formation's rentier, namely the *nepman*.<sup>41</sup> This latter is completely satisfied with the New Economic Policy;<sup>42</sup> he refuses to consider it a definite stage in the dictatorship of the proletariat. He equates our "seriously and for a long time" with eternity, because the NEP is his end goal, his ideal. He wishes to construct a life "after his own image and likeness": quiet, with a samovar, a canary and a tavern nearby. "Red" for him is now becoming a symbol of "market-place carnivals" and of that pale-pink republic to which he aspires and which he will be able to achieve without any great upheavals, whose name is France. He, the *nepman*, will not allow the workers' avant-garde to understand the whole complexity of the transitional period through its artists. This, after all, is the laying of preparations for new upheavals! And the rentier assures us: This is mere amusement, read *Capital*. Await the world revolution, I certainly have nothing against this. But stop analyzing the present situation. It's in your own interests, he says, to build an economic fortress, and not to soar about the ether. Contemplation gives us nothing, because it leads to "counter-revolutionary conclusions."

And therefore it is no wonder that yesterday's playboy, the concentration-camp releasee type, some Smerdyupenko who used to be Denikin's flag-bearer, takes to revising Marxism and loudly accuses Trotsky of counter-revolution. And why not? Smerdyupenko is now a revolutionary, didn't you know? Isn't he the one that teaches you to "construct life" and to drop "cognizing and contemplating" it? He is completely red. Do you hear that? Red!

This is such delicate sophistry, such an inescapable web, that not only the "young" youth gets tangled up in it, but the Chuzhaks as well. Indeed, who would even guess that we, "olympians," do not counterpose our own—more correctly, Plekhanov's—"contemplation" to the construction of

life as such? Who would even guess that we view the construction of life on the world scale quite correctly as possible only through its cognition and, obviously, contemplation, without which there can be no cognition.

Who would guess this after the *nepman's* sophistry? It is one thing to build a few co-operatives (we not only vote for co-operatives, but help in their construction ourselves), and quite another thing to take a peek at the future perspective not only from our own "mother-Ukraine's" point of view but from that of the future of the proletariat and from that of the future of all humanity. And not only to take a peek at it, but to trace some paths for its further development. You won't get far with your "construct" alone here, nor will "left infantilism" help you. It is precisely here that Plekhanov's "cognition" can be of service.

This is why the new rentier opposes it with his "construct." He understands very well that art is a great factor in the development of society (he is no Chuzhak), and he adds to it a liquidationist, conservative doctrine: "Art as a method of constructing life."

He makes a poor aesthete; not surprisingly artists, actors and musicians despise the contemporary audience so much. This is not the great bourgeois who produced Beethoven and Mozart; this is the new rentier who rides to the theatre not to listen to the symphony orchestra but to show off the large lumpish diamonds in his rings, his gaudy, expensive, tasteless clothing, who goes to daydream a little and to have a snooze. This is not the great bourgeois who is leaving the historical arena having played his great role; this is the petty-bourgeois rentier from a backward country.

However, this rentier understands his interests: hence his artistic doctrine and the "construct without cognition," which is to say liquidate art.

Therefore it is no surprise at all that all these "*Lefs*" (who are essentially "rights"), *On Guardists*, "Octobrists," and such like, have united around this doctrine. Whether willingly or not, they have become the ideologists of our *nepman*. Not all so-called anarchists were aware of their dependence on the kulak either.

They should all be reminded of Plekhanov's:

In order to make sense of what I have called the living clothing of ideology, one has to have talent, or, at the very least, the artistic sense. Such a sense is all the more useful when we try to define the sociological equivalent of an artistic work.

All these "rights" and *On Guardists*, suffer from an eye illness and the name of their complaint is presbyopia (senile long-sightedness): they are under the impression that they can see very far, but this is only an illusion, because the distant perspective no longer moves them, it constitutes a dark uninspiring smudge for them and nothing more. And they are incapable of

focusing on anything at all under their own noses.

This is how we decipher this "red" definition. This is also how we view "art in general." Perhaps even now you are confused as to what art is?

Then allow us to rephrase things in a more popular fashion.

When a *prosvita*-type stands on the pasture over which the heavenly sun is setting, inhaling the faint steam of goat dung, he feels a sense of malaise. He sits down, writes a sack of poems or stories about cherry orchards and, chiefly, about "Let the red NEP live for ever!" and carries them to the city. In the city it becomes clear that his works are utterly worthless. Which is to say—in "enکو's" terminology—that his "complex of reflexological<sup>43</sup> reflectors" (As you can see, Comrade Maifet,<sup>44</sup> we did read your article after all!)—that this complex is in a rather primitive state of development. The *prosvita*-type, however, refuses to accept this and decides to adhere to the "Octobrist" platform.

In such a fashion we have reached the second premise that is certain to disillusion our "enکو": only an exceptionally brilliant individuality which has acquired not only a large amount of lived experience, but in addition, by virtue of several Freudian preconditions, has succeeded in regulating its creative activity along certain channels designated by blind Nature for this purpose—only such an individuality can be "an artist in general."

You may respond that this is an abstraction? We will advise you to study psychoanalysis. You may say that this is only a step away from mysticism? And we will advise you not to confuse concepts: mysticism is one thing, psychoanalysis another, and in speaking of psychic phenomena one has to deal with abstractions. You may say that this is agitation on behalf of the "superman"? And we will reply:

What about Lenin, and Marx, and Newton, and... and... Surely they are more than ordinary people? Or do you suggest that they differ in no way from the *prosvita*-type? You are wrong! History, of course, is made not by them but by the masses, not by heroes but by classes. But we would be timid materialists indeed if we took fright at your illiterate accusations of idealism. Marxism differs from panic-mongering precisely because it always looks truth straight in the eyes. There are no "supermen," but there are brilliant individuals.

This is quite enough for us not to rush forward with cheap phrases about the "Octobrist" collective art and pretensions to having prerogatives in this field.

We are not as interested here in the theory, however, as we are in the "practice." We believe that an artist can be recognized without Freud (although reading Freud is a useful exercise). This is how the very same Plekhanov recognizes an artist. We quote:

When a writer operates with logical proofs instead of images [quite obviously he must also have lifted this from Spengler], or when he thinks up his images in order to prove a certain theme, then he is not an artist but a publicist, even if he does not write research papers and articles but novels, stories and theatre plays.

Hear ye! Hear ye! Hear ye! Or do you not hear even now?

"One has to be objective in the process of artistic creativity and subjective in the assessment of political movements," says the founder of Marxist aesthetics. And when *prosvita* compels us to sing the praises of that community tractor run by the former flag-bearer Smerdyupenko, we say:

We support Smerdyupenko because he helps us to rebuild the economy, but we are not going to create poems about him. Firstly, we want to sing about people, not "tractors." Secondly, Smerdyupenko is for us an odious figure. And thirdly, "not every idea can be forced into an artistic work." The English critic Ruskin has the following to say about this: "A girl can sing about a lost love, but a miser cannot sing about lost money."

In a word, taking the kind of logical jump that the *prosvitians* are fond of: you have to be born an artist (*nascuntur poetae...*), because no "Octobrist" platform is going to save you otherwise. (How terrible! Isn't it, comrades of "KhAPP," "LAPP," "MAPP"?)<sup>45</sup>

### III

What does our erudite "enko" have to say about art in general? And does he have anything at all to say about it?

Here we are compelled to use an ace against the collectively written article of *prosvita*.

Forgive us, Comrade Pylypenko, but it has to be admitted that the lodgers sheltering under your fur coat failed to take your example: they immediately took the bull by the horns without commencing their article with an economic analysis of the contemporary village, as you did on the eighteenth of this month in your lecture "Europe or *prosvita*."

What definition of "art in general" does the *prosvitian* give?

After having ground three bags of poppycock on the subject of how Khvylovy and "certain others" view this bird, having hinted at how his own innovativeness shows "the stamp of an original mind" (what a cliché), he defines it as follows:

Therefore, your very same "enko" says: some show an exclusive preference for Spengler, Bach and Mozart, others—for these, Ostap Vyshnia, Bohuslavsky<sup>46</sup> and red marching tunes. I like them all!

Die again, *prosvita!* You'll never write any better! As long as he was talking about Khvylovy's view, "enko" tried to explain the "inscribed truth" by twisting the facts to his heart's content. When it came to giving an account of his own view of this "art in general" he at first went weak in the knees . . . , then giving it a moment's thought, decided to try a bit of speculation on Vyshnia and Bohuslavsky, and did so.

However, we do not blame him for this. Indeed, what could he do, given that his erudition is comprised entirely of two pamphlets: the *Octobrist platform* and *Lenin's Speeches at the 3rd All-Russian Komsomol Conference*.

Allow us, dear friends, nevertheless to qualify this as unpardonable intellectual poverty that ought not to be allowed anywhere near the theorization of the new art. Allow us to state that a locksmith is a locksmith, and if he does not know what his tools are called he gets sent to locksmith school where they will certainly not let him idle his time away. Similarly, an artist is an artist, and if he does not know what art is the suggestion should be put to him that he at least take a trip to the Briusov Institute<sup>47</sup> and thus be prevented from making a complete ass of himself. Just listen to the logic: when we were talking "about high art" it was all "Down with abstraction"! Now that we have come down to the basic alphabet, he says: our social, *prosvitian* origins will not lead us astray.

Well, we are intrigued by the following question: Surely all our "young" youth does not suffer so hopelessly from a weakness of intellect as does this ageing "enko" who is trying to represent it?

No! A thousand times no! This is a scandalous misunderstanding, this symbiosis of "enkos" and our youth. Only the immortal, insolent *prosvita* can crawl onto the pages of our periodicals with this kind of devastating logic. It is no accident that the so-called Molot group, having read our article with interest, has so far been unable to come up with a reply to it. (And they were the ones who made so bold as to challenge us!)

We understand very well that our position is a highly uncomfortable one. On the one hand the so-called "Octobrist" Proletcult has so fed the youth with its tasty *kasha* that they have begun to make noises about a "dog's ideology" (the *On Guardist* Lelevich),<sup>48</sup> and have succeeded in totally confusing the social role of arithmetic with the abstractions of an idiot while attempting to press some kind of class content into the equation  $2 \times 2$ . On the other hand—and we are very well aware of this—the demagogy and speculation of "enkos" is much more convenient for the youth. It does not require a great deal of thought and gives out

"qualification" labels with the speed of a cinematographic apparatus. All one has to do is to sit on a cherry tree, close one's eyes and to sing lasciviously like a nightingale in early spring...until in the end fortune approaches and puts you into a cage for failures.

We understand all this. But we also remember Chekhov's advice:

When a child is born, it should first of all be beaten and told not to write poems and stories lest it become a time-waster.

We have enough civic nerve to say this openly and believe that our bitter truth eventually will appeal—if not tomorrow then the day after—to the taste of our "young" youth more than *prosvita's* "inscribed truths." It is of no importance that "enko" continues to defend his backwaters of Kobeliaky and Zadrypanka which are today flooding the large towns. It is of no consequence because the thoughtful student body has already understood us and knows that we, in speaking of "Satan in a Barrel," were referring to the idlers "with a guitar under their coat" who followed the children of the poor into the cities, dragging their ribbons and sacks of verse with them.

\* \* \*

But let us go on. Let us get to *prosvita's* definition of the artist.

I give the name of artist [says "enko"] to the Philistine, the man-in-the-street who, keeping pace with the development of the victorious class, succeeds in giving society a useful work.

But that is the whole point: he cannot be called an artist, because, unfortunately, he will not produce a useful work. Because an artist who "keeps pace with the development of the victorious class" ceases to be an artist. Marxism would not be Marxism if it did not build its theory on the experience of past ages. And the past states: real artists, as artists, were always ahead of their class and never kept pace with it. Any other—forgive the expression—theory not only profanes proletarian art but becomes a profoundly conservative factor in the development of society. We ought not to confuse concepts. The liquidation of illiteracy is one thing, art another. Our proletariat still derives greater enjoyment from watching a hack performance of "Satan in a Barrel" than a Kurbas<sup>49</sup> production. This, however, does not mean that anyone who writes a red "Satan in a Barrel" becomes an artist. He too is a hack. And it is no accident that a large proportion of what is called agitational literature was written by the unprincipled, philistinish semi-intelligentsia which had and

has nothing to do with the proletariat. Ideology played no part in it; it was simply a question of an honorarium.

Undoubtedly, a red "Satan in a Barrel" will also be given its place on a shelf. But it should not be considered a "revolutionary-artistic fact"; at best it could qualify as a "revolutionary" fact. One indication of art is its irresistible influence on the developed intellect. Therefore, when we succeed in liquidating illiteracy among the proletariat, then the proletarian art, of which we shall speak in a moment, will indeed create wonders, will indeed become a powerful factor in the development of humanity and will lead it to the "quiet lakes of the commune beyond the hills" which the *prosvita*-type hates so intensely, where mankind will meet the "personified archetype of that extraordinary Maria, who stands at the boundaries of unknown ages."

#### IV

How do we view proletarian art? How do we treat the paths of its development?

A few years ago a group of unknown *littérateurs*, together with their teacher Volodymyr Koriak, published a "universal" announcing a new era in art.<sup>50</sup>

Were there any "olympians" among them?

There were!

Do they take responsibility for this historic document?

They do!

This first revolutionary-paradoxical document sharply distinguished the old art from the new and was one of the first forerunners of the great Asiatic renaissance.

We know that our last phrase has just brought a smile not only to the lips of the sceptics, but even to those of Koriak.

Well, now for Koriak.

Dear Comrade Volodymyr, there is still powder in the Romantic powder-horns and Don Quixada is still alive. "Kurilka lives!"<sup>51</sup> For unfortunately (or perhaps fortunately?) life cannot get along without him, and art, well, art just keeps casting those glances at Cervantes' hero, because without his aid there is no way of going forward.

Are you perhaps recalling the rebellion against you?

Then we reply: poor are the students who, seeing the mistakes of their teacher, fail to lead a revolt against him. In a word, like Aristotle, "we love Plato, but we love truth more."

Therefore, the powerful Asiatic renaissance in art is approaching and its forerunners are we, the "olympians." Just as Petrarch, Michaelangelo, Raphael and others in their time from a tiny corner of Italy set Europe

afire with the flame of the Renaissance, in the same way the new artists from the once oppressed Asiatic countries, the new artist-communards who are travelling with us will climb the peak of Mount Helicon and place there the lamp of the Renaissance, and, under the distant thunder of fighting on the barricades, it will cast the light of its fiery purple-blue pentangle over the dark European night.

You do not believe us. That is why you stand in opposition to the miserable, confused sceptics doomed to a Spenglerian "decline." We know, however, that you would like to believe. Because even those who have jumped headlong into utilitarianism, they too groan in disgust when leafing through *prosvita's* art. Heine had them in mind when he wrote:

*Sie trinken heimlich Wein  
Und predigen öffentlich Wasser.*

Which is to say: "they drink wine in secret, and preach water in public."

How, then, do we view proletarian art?

We are not, of course, going to speak of its class content for the thousandth time. Firstly, because this is the task of the *prosvitians*; secondly, because this "inscribed truth" has become hackneyed for us and quite obvious. We have set ourselves the task of explaining its artistic nature in its opening period, the time and the perspectives of the latter.

In the first place:

One has to approach art as art, in Trotsky's words.<sup>52</sup> Hence, proletarian art exhibits all the qualities of "art in general."

Why, then, is it called proletarian?

Because every class, that has played a role in history, in every epoch has brought something of its own to art, something which bears its own stamp. Today it is the proletariat that has taken upon itself the leading role and is creating its own artistry. Therefore it is proletarian.

The main problem, however, is with the stamp. A number of our opponents believe that the proletariat exhibits a "his kingdom shall have no end" stamp, and therefore its art must evolve into placid, comprehensible, essentially proletcultist "red" novels. A second group, to which Trotsky also belongs, categorically denies the existence of a proletarian art on the grounds that the proletariat will not have enough time to develop its own artistry before the transition to a classless society.

We will take up the first argument in a moment; as for the second one we say:

When the guns speak, the muses are silent. That is so. But the Revolution, as reality shows us, does not have a permanent character. The epoch of civil wars has begun, but it will be composed of lengthy "breathing spaces" in one country or another. Thus, during these "breathing spaces" the art of the transitional period will be created, and



we have given this art the name "proletarian." It will become a profoundly revolutionary factor, a herald of the ideas of its class, it will do for its epoch what Voltaire did for his, what Dante did for the Middle Ages. One should not forget that art is an arch-specific branch of human creative activity, and therefore it should be treated as "arch" and not confused with general culture. To talk about proletcult, about proletarian culture, is absurd, because class culture, namely the sum total of everything created by the efforts of the master of the situation, has conservative tendencies: it convinces a class of the endlessness, the eternal nature of its dictatorship. Art being a perceptive sentry, an ideological superstructure, liberates itself from these tendencies. The principle of classlessness is more comprehensible for a proletarian art than for other branches of creative activity. Moreover, bearing in mind that even in bourgeois creative activity there were elements of a striving for the liberation of humanity in general, art in general is a progressive phenomenon. Therefore, proletarian art which is devoted to the task of serving its class, a class struggling for classlessness, can never play a conservative role.

Will it, however, have enough time to flower?

We believe it will. Being an emotional category, it finds a rich soil in the epoch of civil strife. It is precisely in this epoch that the theory of a struggle for classlessness becomes a fact, that this fact is felt as revolutionary pathos, courage, self-sacrifice, determination, even... and even fanaticism. This is the first point. The second:

Speaking of the Asiatic Renaissance, we mean the future unheard-of flowering of art among such nations as China, India, and so forth. We see it as a great spiritual reawakening of the backward Asian countries. It has to appear, this Asiatic Renaissance, because the idea of Communism stalks like a spectre not so much over Europe as over Asia; because Asia, realising that only Communism will liberate it from economic slavery, will utilize art as a factor in the battle. Hence, a new *Ramayana*<sup>53</sup> will appear. The Asiatic Renaissance is the culminating point of the transitional epoch. And it would be lame to argue that the Asian economies are backward. This is what Marx had to say on the topic:

As for art, it is clear that certain periods of its flowering do not correspond at all to the general development of society and, therefore, to the material base of the latter.

We are not talking of short-term developments here. Without any doubt:

Proletarian art has time to blossom.

And now the question: can it be called proletarian?

We believe that it can. Of course, the essence of the matter is not in terminology. But allow us to quote Engels:

The class that becomes the chief material force will at the same time be the chief spiritual force.

And further:

the revolutionary class acts not as a class, but as the representative of the entire society.

Although it may appear strange, proletarian art is the name we give to the sum of various artistic groups, often with a confused ideology, which in one way or another express the epoch's ideas, the ideas of a young class that is stepping onto the historical arena. However "paradoxical" it may appear, when future generations cast a retrospective glance back upon our day they will not see some "red" "enko"; instead the very same "grey-haired old man" will rise before their bright eyes. And—most "terrible" of all—the future generations will treat the "old man's creativity" as an objective factor in the development of proletarian art. Because in the end the epoch will make the "old man" its own, whether he wishes it or not, if he is a real artist. And he will differ from some "olympians" only insofar as he lacked the "olympian's" indefatigable will to create a new art. The "old man" had something in common with the French Parnassians, but just as the latter cannot be called feudalists, neither can the "old man" be called bourgeois. The division into "fellow-travellers" and so forth has merely a practical aim: it helps the intelligentsia in the transitional period to make some sense of the complex politico-economic situation. In what may be termed the artistic retrospective, however, the "grey-haired old man" ceases to be a "fellow-traveller," because in recreating within himself the psyche of his epoch he quickly liberates himself from the stamp of that art upon which he was educated. The future historian will have to search for the "fellow-traveller" among the folios of the new artistic creativity with a microscope.

Do we, then, view proletarian art as a single artistic monolith? No, we reply! It is subject to the same laws of development as bourgeois art. Schools, tendencies—these are its stages, along which it will travel to the heights of perfection. The epoch of the European Renaissance took more than a century. The great Asiatic renaissance will doubtless span several centuries... even if the world social revolution should be completed tomorrow, because the struggles on the barricades against the old psyche will not end even in the twenty-third century. In the meantime we shall witness the appearance of more than one school and more than one tendency. Thus, all the chatter about the "absolute" realism of proletarian art is, in our opinion, wholly without foundation. The Asiatic renaissance will be characterized by several periods. The periods will be characterized

by one or another dominant artistic tendency. Proletarian art will pass through stages: romanticism, realism, etc. This is the closed circle of the laws of artistic development.

And if today we ask ourselves which tendency must characterize and does characterize our period of the transitional era, we reply:

Romantic vitalism (*vita*—life).

Today our period is throwing all its energies into a struggle against liquidationist attitudes toward art. Our current slogan is: *vita!* We realize that the proletcultist leftist (more correctly rightist) pseudoclassicism is playing the role of an ideologist of the new rentier despite itself. And we grasp our romantic blade. Just as in their own time the French Parnassians, the first Realists, etc., did. Gautier, Leconte de Lisle, Baudelaire, Flaubert marched against various Augier<sup>54</sup> who sang the praises of the canary-loving bourgeois so realistically. Similarly, we, "olympians," cannot remain silent when we see worthless, symptomatic "enkos" by our side.

"Just hold on a minute," they will tell us, "you did not read far enough. Didn't your teacher of aesthetics, Plekhanov, after having taken French Romanticism apart, reach the conclusion that its character was arch-bourgeois? Didn't Trotsky, with whom you also agree on occasion, compare it to mysticism"?

All this is true, we answer, but we know that in Germany Romanticism played a semi-conservative role, while in France quite the opposite occurred, even though it was arch-bourgeois, because there it led art to Realism which was able to show us the true nature of the bourgeois. Obviously, it is not the same everywhere and does not play the same role in every case. We believe that the psychology of the proletariat in the present historical conditions responds to our romanticism. We believe that even the conservative pessimism of the romantic is more progressive than the conservative optimism of Dumas-fils.<sup>55</sup> We believe, finally, that the utilitarian approach to art sympathizes not only with the social order, but also with the social ideal. This last statement, if we are not mistaken, is a rephrasing of the same teacher of aesthetics. "The French Romantics did not sympathize with Socialism, and therefore, in practice lacked content." Besides, the idealism of an artist cannot be equated with the idealism of a political figure; whereas the latter deals with a real economy, an artist who is a product of the same economy deals with an irritation (a sickly inflammation) and incorporeal images. To quote again from Marx on art:

a social development which excluded the mythologization of nature, which demanded of the artist a fantasy independent of mythology would never have been able to create the ground for Greek art.

Mythology? Its influence on fantasy? The mythologization of nature? Well this, the "Octobrists" will tell us, is idealism, from which it is only a step to romanticism.

True, friends? Which is why we put forward the concept of Romantic vitaism for our time. This is the art of the militant stage of the transitional period. It has nothing in common with red *prosvita*. Again we repeat: the real liquidators of proletarian artistic achievement are the "Octobrist" simplifiers and vulgarizers. In Russia under pressure from old Mother Kaluga they have degenerated into "factory sirens and chimneys"; here they are degenerating into "tractors and ploughs." The *prosvita*-types are "resting on their laurels," "constructing the new life"; they are completely oblivious of and have absolutely no desire to sense the coming world catastrophe, the epoch of civil wars.

The proletarian art of our days is the Marsellaise which will lead the avant-garde of the world proletariat into battle on the barricades. Romantic vitaism will be created not by "enkos" but by communards. Like all art, it is for developed intellects. It is the sum of new perceptions, of a new world-view, of new and complex vibrations. It is the art of the first period of the Asiatic renaissance. From Ukraine it must flow forth to all parts of the world and play there not a local, limited role but one of significance for humanity in general. Hence, the time of Romantic vitaism, the epoch of civil wars.

Hence, its artistic nature is militant "idealism" (in parentheses) of the young class, the proletariat.

Hence, its perspectives are to play the role of a field marshal in the future battles on the barricades.

Here, however, we add a warning. When we impute to our art a militant signification, this does not at all mean that we see it in terms of that stream of versified "militant" graphomania which has of late been making the rounds of our territory. In order to create a real militant art one must be able to sense one's epoch, to know its sicknesses. We would not, for instance, exchange one of Tychyna's "Storms" or one of Iohansen's "Communes"<sup>56</sup> for all the cart-loads of verse that groan along the highway on the way to the city. We would not, for example, exchange one honest novella for all *prosvita*'s sacks of stories.

We, "olympians," not only sense the temper of our time, but analyze all the complexities of the transitional period.

Our slogan is: castigate yourself and others. Galvanize society, do not let it fall asleep. Our slogan is: expose the duality of the person of today, reveal your true "ego." This will give you the chance to go further, because if you are not a *prosvita*-type, you will move to protest the order that formed you—capitalism.

But here the viperish irony of one of the “enkos” gets thrown across our path:

“What kind of a revolutionary are you if your “ego” has split?”

We reply contentedly, taking up the “if”: if you are a *prosvitian* log, then, of course, you can lie peacefully for another age without seeing an axe. But if you are a human being, then “existence defines your consciousness,” and “not even your arch-proletarian origins will save you,” to use the words of a well-known and tolerably good Marxist. If you are a revolutionary, you will split your “ego” more than once. But if you are a Philistine and serve in some department, let us say, then even if you objectively have a penchant for being the king of the beasts, subjectively you are a Gogolian hero. There is really only one issue: are you going to be an Akakii Akakievich or a Derzhymorda? This is your choice.

This, as you can see, is the complex situation in proletarian art.

How does “enko” treat it?

## V

First of all, as might be expected, he “did a little quoting” from Lenin, from the very brochure we have already mentioned and, incidentally, not at all to his benefit. This, however, is the nature of *prosvita*’s logic; you say a few words about Lenin’s “laws of development of proletarian culture” and “put your money down”:

Some of us are able to feel shame and not everyone dares conjure up images of Maria.

In short, speculate George—today’s your day. Frankly, there are so many quotations that one could fill entire volumes with them! Here, for instance, is one from the pamphlet, *Better Fewer, but Better*:

in questions of culture a dashing about and grabbing in all directions is more harmful than anything else [Lenin obviously has in mind two novels and ten stories in seven months.] Many of our young *littérateurs* would do well to take this advice to heart.

And here is another from *What Is To Be Done?*:

workers participate in the production of Socialist ideology not as workers, but as theoreticians of Socialism, as did the Proudhons and Weitlings<sup>57</sup>.... If they are to do this successfully they have to avoid getting trapped in the artificial framework of literature for the workers and instead learn to master all of literature.

We could provide many more such quotations.

Well and how does *prosvita* treat our art?

It begins by writing down its "premise" concerning art's class nature, and proceeds by presenting the following—forgive the expression—formula:

The future art cannot be "contemplative" or "abstract"; it will flow from the bosom of life itself.

We have already explained what this actually means: it is the ideology of the new rentier. But for the "young" youth the issue is the question of idealism and the materialist tractor from the "Nechaiv Commune."

If this is the case (and it is!), then allow us to decipher the poverty of *prosvitian* thought with one final quotation from Lenin (since citing from him seems to be in order), namely from his fifth letter to M. Gorky:

I consider that an artist can gain a great deal from all philosophy. Finally, I am in complete agreement that in questions of artistic creativity all books are valuable for you [for Gorky, that is] and that in taking this range of views both from your own artistic experience and from philosophy, even idealist philosophy, you can reach conclusions that will be of tremendous value for the workers' party.

Will this suffice? We think so!

Every young writer ought to make this classic paragraph his desiderata and keep it on his work-desk, the more so since Lenin, if we are not mistaken, made no other comments about artistic creativity.

Well, and how does our "enko" continue to botch things up? Where else does he employ his shameless and unpardonable logic? Where will the "olympian" pen catch up with him again? How will we next succeed in tearing his attractive mask from him?

We affirm the existence of a proletarian culture built only upon the examples of the past [states *prosvita* and suddenly adds] the proletarian writer cannot educate himself exclusively on the old bourgeois literature.

On the one hand "only," on the other "cannot." If you build something on some kind of examples, then obviously you are educating yourself upon them. "Enko" heard the bell, but he evidently could not tell where the sound was coming from. To take an example: if I restrict myself to the Romanesque or Gothic style in building a house, then, as an artist, I am educating myself upon this style. However, having educated myself upon it and having grasped its inner content, I can then revolt against it. We consider "enko" to be incapable of this. The proof lies in his "only" and "cannot." This is the bell we mentioned. Unfortunately, *prosvita* still fails to understand the issue, because it is "unable to educate itself exclusively on

bourgeois culture." It feels more comfortable in the troglodyte age.

Therefore, it should be no great wonder that we get:

the complex of reflectors of the proletarian writer ought to function as observers of contemporary phenomena.

Thus spake Zarathustra from the suburban backwaters. Thus says "enko."

Nevertheless, why the categorical "contemporary"? Why not yesterday's? Can we not "muse on past ages" and take up the study of the days of the Paris Commune or of the great French Revolution? Can we not write a work about them? No? And we never even realized it! Now we understand; it would be a counter-revolutionary factor and would not correspond to the "educational tasks of the class."

Then perhaps you will allow us to have a quick glance at the future? You forbid us to write something akin to Wells'<sup>58</sup> fantasies? We swear it will be completely "red and trustworthy."

"Enko," however, knits his brows sternly and refuses permission. Then we approach him with a quotation from none other than Karl Marx "himself":

Why should the childhood of human society, in which it developed most marvellously, not be an eternal joy for us as a stage that will never be repeated?

So much for the luxuries of the present! But, anyway, why is this so? Because, says Plekhanov with a smile, "the artistic value of a creative work determines the share value of its content." That's why!

But let us read on:

The proletarian writer will compose his emotional lyrics around machines and tractors.

What a pearl! Every letter reeks of the *prosvita*-type. Leaving aside the fact that we will have to drag our ploughs around for a long time to come, "enko" shows that his creative imagination is incapable of reaching beyond the tractor. You can lay your bets that while we tune in to a concert on the radio, the *prosvitian* living in the same building is "playing his one gramophone record."

Well, enough! We get enough criticism for our venomous pen.

## VI

What, in the end, is this mysterious *prosvita*?

Expressing ourselves in the high style, *prosvita* is the name attributed not to that living "enکو" for whom Serhii Volodymyrovych Pylypenko sacrificed himself in his last lecture, but the abstract category in the social psyche which in our time constitutes an arch-concrete, conservative factor. "Duality," as "enکو" informs us, is something it "does not understand," but it does have a penchant for playing the logician. It is "our ignorant native land." As the same "enکو" tells us, "it finds complexity detestable." Yet it wishes to live, because it is quite definitely "searching for directions on how to utilize bourgeois knowledge," because quite definitely it complains that "life has not yet assumed stable forms" and, of course, life continues to exhibit that complexity which it detests so intensely. It is, in the Ukrainian context, the new rentier of peasant NEP. *Prosvita* constantly gets into a tangle somewhere between "the landlord's threshing-machine and the community's tractor," and does not know what it wants.

We know, and we say:

It should join the programme to liquidate illiteracy; it should give up writing stories and get to work. It should learn some basic grammar, then begin teaching the millions of illiterate peasants. It ought to make a cultural revolution in the village. This is its historical role. It should forget about verse and go train the village correspondents to be good journalists, because it is one thing to dream up trashy "Nechaiv Communes" and something quite different to write an observer's account of the life of some real commune in the Poltava oblast. We ourselves will read such an account of this real commune, not to speak of the workers and peasants from the dull backwaters. This account will not be a work of art, but a useful piece of journalism. Drop the high-flying materials and keep to your own tasks. . . . And in any case, the epoch of civil wars has already begun. This, then, is our criticism, which the "young" youth has been awaiting.

Comarade Pylypenko, we need workers in the clubs, heads of village halls,<sup>59</sup> even economists and engineers, and instead, whether we like it or not, we are educating, forgive the harsh words, idlers. Here we come to Pluh's role.

Firstly:

Pylypenko was mistaken in thinking that, when we referred to *prosvita*, we had his organization in mind. We did not mention Hart or Pluh. Otherwise we would have quoted from their books. We were speaking of *prosvita*. But we do not deny that within Pluh *prosvita* has a tremendous



influence upon the masses. This, however, does not mean that the criticisms were directed against this particular organization.

Secondly:

Pluh has fulfilled one of its historical missions. Pylypenko's name (without any irony, quite seriously) has found its way onto the red plaque of honour. But, dear comrade Serhii, be a revolutionary to the end—especially on this question. One has to be consistent in one's thinking; one has to say that Pluh, in fact, inevitably had to evolve into an organization for general cultural education, even though it began as an artists' union. Now it ought to assume a different role, no less rewarding and more useful.

Pluh should become a voluntary association of cultural educators which will provide us with the benefits we have already mentioned. This certainly does not mean that there are and ought to be no artists in Pluh; they are to be found there and this is as it should be. The entire organization as such must, however, be given an orientation toward the real tractor, not the one that some graphomaniac has dreamed up. The limitless dark steppe awaits your great energy and initiative. Throw yourself into this task and we "olympians" will erect a "glorious" monument to you, because you will help us to lead our young art out of the stinking atmosphere of careerism, speculation and other forms of graphomania. Then all defections from one organization to another and all exploitation of dark instincts will cease. Then our young country will indeed embark upon a cultural flowering.

All this is, of course, hyperbole, but you will also find "inscribed truths" therein.

If you, Comrade Serhii, do not take up this task, history will do it for you.

What then is Europe?

Europe is the experience of many ages. It is not the Europe that Spengler announced was "in decline," not the one that is rotting and which we despise. It is the Europe of a grandiose civilization, the Europe of Goethe, Darwin, Byron, Newton, Marx and so on and so forth. It is the Europe that the first phalanxes of the Asiatic renaissance cannot do without. And if Zerov knows this Europe (and he does!), then we reach out our hand to him. We are not helpless epigones, we are brave pioneers moving "into the dazzling world of Communism." This is what we wrote in our "universal." At that time we were able to "differentiate the red front from the specialists," and now we have the courage to think dialectically. It was not just Koriak, but we also who announced "death to Ukrainian art." However, we never confused Europe with "Europe." And we now sense that we are strong enough to mock all discussions about the influence of alien ideologies.

If we turn now to Hart, it has to be admitted that this organization, under the influence of various "Octobrist" platforms has begun to get itself tangled up in various *prosvita* affairs. This is its present infirmity. Potentially, however, it is the only association on the territory of the Soviet Union that can undertake the organization of a truly proletarian art. To do this it must reject the massism that is being foisted on it. The new art is being tempered in laboratories. The mass character of an artist's work only manifests itself after several years, when his works are distributed in millions of copies.

This is how we view Europe. This is how we view *prosvita*. And so: Europe or *prosvita*? For art there can only be one answer: Europe.

We speak on behalf of the young proletarian intelligentsia that has appeared over the last few years and has been tempered in the fire of civil strife. We stand prepared to answer before the tribunal of the Commune for everything we have said. We wish to be communards who recognize their own value and we bravely present you with one more quotation, this time from Kulish:<sup>60</sup>

Yes, Kulish is not a man to quake before human hostility. To stand for the truth not only against one ne'er-do-well but even against a whole cohort of good-for-nothings—this, one can say, is his cult.

In ending our article we, "olympians," desire our "young" youth to devote some thought to it. Because we know: the "young" youth will join forces with us only when it hears the distant extraordinary roar of the approaching Asiatic renaissance.

**On Waters of Demagogy  
or  
The Real Address of Ukrainian  
Voronskyism,  
Free Competition, VUAN, ETC.  
(A Third Letter to Literary Youth)<sup>61</sup>**

“What kind of a Ieruslan is this? Tee-hee!”

S. Pylypenko

*I*

What a touching union: Pylypenko the revolutionary and...miserable, reactionary *prosvita*. We can only surmise that the explanation for this unnatural marriage lies in the sad fact that, even after several years of work in literary organizations, our friend still has not made so bold as to try to grasp the nature of art.

Naturally, we do not intend going over the same ground and rewriting the alphabet; let Comrade Pylypenko read our second article again a little more carefully. We will move on and put forward several more relevant questions.

Once again “we venture onto slippery ice and call on Trotsky”:

if I feel embarrassment, it is not because during the course of these polemics I find myself in formal agreement with some White Guard officer who knows what art is, but because in the presence of this White Guard I am compelled to explain the first letters of the alphabet of art to a party publicist concerned with artistic values.

We, too, feel this same embarrassment! In all honesty, Comrade Pylypenko, we are embarrassed! But, unfortunately, we see that this leaves you indifferent, otherwise you would not have larded yourself with such devastating epithets. You demand, in short, that we treat you as another afflicted member of the "snotty-nosed" cohort.

You have no idea how much we hoped to avoid this; you are a friend, companion, and party colleague too. Nevertheless, it seems that your wish will have to be fulfilled.

\* \* \*

Ah, at last! At last we can polemicize with a literate man... and not with just anyone, but with the titan Ierusan Lazarevych (this is one of the names our honourable opponent goes by). He was so infuriated by "the eagle Khvylovy who smirks at our worker-peasant youth" that without waiting for a reply he immediately fired off a volley of two articles. Well, so be it: we pick up the gauntlet. May our flower also find a place in his triumphal wreath.

The "olympians" plan to devote several essays to his publication.

Let the maestro, however, not labour under the misconception that we value his articles highly; at issue is our literary opponent's authority in questions of art. "Olympus" launches its third attack on this fortress.

Today's engagement is of enormous importance both for us and for all Soviet society; if we succeed in dismantling even half the armour of the Ukrainian "theoretician" of *On Guardist* aesthetics, proletarian art will celebrate a great victory on the field of literary-historical conflicts.

Therefore we openly announce to our honourable *Grossmeister*: his "original" essays suffer from cheap rhetoric and from an abysmally poor and insipid content. They are a play upon the dark instincts—nothing more. And, therefore, on the five-point scale, as we have already mentioned to someone, they merit a 1+ (one with a plus sign). Furthermore, we have very serious doubts that these articles were aimed at the literate... Otherwise we would not tell you the following story:

Where this took place—no-one knows. But once upon a time "ten wise men" got together and set about reading the letters from "Olympus." They read and read, and just couldn't make sense of them. They didn't know what to do. So they decided to call Khvylovy, who said to them: "Well, you see,

Messrs. wise men, I want to be very honest with you. Everyone knows you are wise, but no-one has ever heard that you are the opposite of wise. The parable's meaning is very simple: in the first letter the author poses the question 'Europe or *prosvita*,' and in the second he explains what art in general, and proletarian in particular, is. Do you understand now?"

"No," says Comrade Pylypenko, "my wise men can't unravel it even now. There is a lot of philosophy here, and they want life to be uncomplicated."

"This is a pity," replied Khvylovy. "Perhaps, in that case, they would be able to distinguish the different types of article? The first type is that of theoretical masturbation ("the rights"), the second—that of empty demagoguery (our *prosvita*), and, finally, the third—that of living thoughts in living clothing ("Olympus"). This last is what Khvylovy's articles represent."

"What conceit!" the maestro shouts.

You have guessed our game, we reply, but how are we to avoid self-praise if our opponents refuse to think?

Our "conceit and contempt" are not aimed at the young youth but at these same "ten wise men" produced by the good-for-nothing *prosvita*.

They are our real target.

The maestro, however, keeps a stubborn silence and launches further "sorties."

"Why are you doing this?," he is asked. "Can't you see that Khvylovy only brought out his quotations from the patristic texts of Marxism when one of the 'enkos' together with 'papasha' (only now is the truth being told) began to cite Lenin from his village library?"

"Well," answers Pylypenko, "all this irritated the noses of my *prosvitians* . . . and so they went 'moo'!"

Let us shake your hand, maestro. But, you must admit, we said as much: "if it comes down to this" we do not mind leafing through a dozen volumes. Enough of trying to frighten us with "the fathers of Marxism"; we can read them for ourselves. Moreover, we know why you throw around empty statements. You learned from Pletnev, the proletcultist, that Voronsky left out half a quotation from Belinsky somewhere.

However, all these are small defects in comparison with those enormous lapses of which we are about to speak. Here we take up the essential arguments of our article, so as not to run around in circles as does Comrade Ieruslan Lazarevych (forgive us, friend, for using your anecdotal pseudonym). You are about to hear the first drop fall on the stone of the artistic authority of our brilliant maestro.

## II

In his letter entitled "Don't Poke Your Nose, Kid,"<sup>62</sup> our friend Pylypenko writes:

Comrade Khvylovy made full use of only one book, A. Voronsky's *Iskusstvo kak poznanie zhizni* (*Art as the Cognition of Life*). It is to this book that I direct readers who might be asking themselves in amazement where he learned his philosophy; they will soon realize from reading it that he has a good memory.

We are not, of course, going to take up the issue of "the olympian learning his philosophy" from one brochure by Voronsky. If the maestro wanted to deliver a sting, he, unfortunately, failed to do so. Firstly, Khvylovy never had pretensions to the title of critic, ideologist, or leader, still less philosopher. Secondly, he entitled his articles the ABC, obviously having in mind the fact that their entire philosophy was comprised of elementary truths which are self-evident and have been well known for a long time. Only our opponent could view this as philosophy. But we ought to say, openly and unequivocally, even though it pains us to do so: Comrade Pylypenko ought to immediately enrol in a programme for the liquidation of artistic illiteracy.

Indeed, what a disconcerting fact! How could it happen that the ideologist and leader of a writers' organization still cannot make any sense of Voronsky, still does not know what Voronskyism is? Is this literary current really nothing more than "conceit and contempt for the young youth?" It was precisely his misunderstanding of this Voronskyism which provoked our friend to his insinuating "winks and nods," to his "tee-hees" and in general to his entire ill-conceived publication.

First of all, our opponent is quite justified in thinking that the real Voronskyism is not the same as its Ukrainian version. Unfortunately, however, this is nothing more than an intuitive foreboding, because Pylypenko has never made an analysis of this current, otherwise he would have looked elsewhere for the address of our "native" Voronskyism.

We will say a couple of words about the Ukrainian version further on. But, in explaining the first version, we are obliged to dwell for a moment on the condition of Russian and our own creative literature.

Well, what about this literature? What does Voronskyism have to do with it?—we will be asked. And, finally, what does all this have to do with the artistic authority of our invincible maestro? Is this not the same kind of demagogy that Comrade Pylypenko openly prides himself on?

Let us take a closer look.

The great October Revolution led in the field of the arts to an "upheaval" not of the "old concept of literature," as our friend thinks (this "concept" was always founded on class), but of those buildings in which the bourgeois apologists lived: the Merezhkovskys, Kuprins, Bunins.<sup>63</sup> At the same time as Zinaida Gippius and our own Cherkasenkos,<sup>64</sup> with their "old concept" of literature—which resembled ours in that it was class-based, although it was not pro-Communist but pro-Cadet<sup>65</sup>—continued to invoke thunder and lightning upon us from across the border—at this same time the artistic fields of the Soviet republics were laid waste. This was particularly noticeable in the field of Russian art. Even an optimist like Gorky began to have doubts. Not a single name appeared, not a single book.

Society did not remain under this impression for long, however.. From 1918 the young people began to step forward confidently from the heart of the village and the city. These were the first detachments of the young art. They were destined to fill the gaps. These were young men and women from the flesh and blood of the class which had so brilliantly passed its first examination for the role of historical dictator. They came forward with fiery eyes, with a profound faith that they would also be victorious on this mysterious front.

But, having arrived, they saw that they were unarmed. They lacked broad erudition, because they were either completely uneducated or possessed only a certificate from a "church school." It appeared that they had to either flee from this front or perish in an unequal struggle.

At this point they were offered the helping hand of *prosvita*—all those narrow-minded ideologists of *On Guardism*, *Octobristm* and so on and so forth.

These were all those half-baked, self-satisfied Pupyshkins and Mamochkas from "Liliuli,"<sup>66</sup> all that incompetent, hopeless, half-witted, Philistine semi-intelligentsia living in the Proletcults. And it was only later, owing to a misunderstanding, that it was joined by Pylypenko, one of that better part of the intelligentsia which at the time commanded the red regiments and divisions.

But what could the Pupyshkins teach the young youth? Nothing, as we have already explained, because they themselves knew nothing.

"Just a moment," one of the afflicted corrects us, "what about demagogy?"

We accept the correction. The demagogy began, and was immediately followed by speculation, graphomania, etc., etc. This lasted for several years... until the arrival of NEP, when the "fellow-traveller" appeared on the scene, namely the revolutionary-nationalistic sector of the intelligentsia, the really well-armed artists.

Proletcult sounded the alarm. But . . . it was too late.

This was when Voronsky, the now well-known critic whom Comrade Ierusan Lazarevych denounces, stepped forward with his Voronskyism. This latter represented the mind of proletarian art which had been bringing up the rear and had, consequently, fallen into the embrace of a stranger.

Therefore, let us explain what Voronskyism is.

\* \* \*

Let it be known by our friends that there are two sides to this coin: a positive and a negative.

In setting about the study of contemporary creative literature, Voronsky decided the following: I am a Marxist; if I am going to have dealings with art, I have to know what kind of bird this is. Without wasting any time, he surrounded himself with a good library and began to work. This, then, was his first serious meeting with Marxist aesthetics, or, more accurately, with Plekhanov. The meeting led to pleasant results: Voronsky, seeing the half-baked illiteracy of the Pupyshkins who were leading the young people to a dead end, came out decisively with a reiteration of the old and well-known precepts of Marxist aesthetics, which, unfortunately, are *terra incognita* for our maestro. Voronsky began from a popularization of Plekhanov's understanding of art as "a method of cognizing life." Comrade Pylypenko is making a mistake in "winking" knowingly in the direction of *Art as the Cognition of Life*.<sup>67</sup> This is what we read at the end of its second chapter:

everything I have said here concerning art is no "discovery." It is all taken from Belinsky, Chernyshevsky and—chiefly—from Plekhanov.

Voronsky grasped that without an ABC of art, there could be no criticism and no artist. He understands perfectly that Pylypenko's demagoguery serves only one purpose: to be exploited by graphomaniacs and speculators, and by them alone. Indeed, there were dilettante artists, but their names were Tolstoi, France,<sup>68</sup> Gorky. Without erudition, at least past the level of secondary school, an artist won't be worth a damn. And you have to begin with a knowledge of Plekhanov. Neither Pluh nor today's Hart provide any knowledge of Marxist aesthetics. Pylypenko does not understand this; Voronsky did. The latter we qualify as an intelligent man, and we are pleased to ascertain that Khvylovy is keeping up with him.

We have just described the first, positive side of Voronskyism. Can we dub it Voronskyism? As the reader sees, we cannot. It is Plekhanovism, a Communist concept of art. And if our opponent refuses to accept this, we can only proclaim: he is playing on Chuzhak's pipe; in other words, he is



joining the "snotty-nosed" cohort, the supporters of the new rentier. Khvylovy found himself in agreement with Voronsky at the point where Voronsky accepts Marxism, but this does not at all mean that these two surnames can be identified one with the other. Our maestro might also find himself in agreement with the given critic on the given point. However, this will not mean that he suffers from Voronskyism any more than we do. The politician Vandervelde<sup>69</sup> takes Marx as his starting point; are we also to search here for an identity with the political views of Pylypenko? Since the latter has taken such a liking to Trotsky, he will enjoy listening to one more quotation from him:

all forms of cognition begin with the differentiation of objects and phenomena, and not from their chaotic confusion.

Do you perhaps detect some element of "contempt for or sneering at the young people?"

"Of course not," answers Comrade Pylypenko in his second article, "because this is demagoguery."

Yes, demagoguery! But, Serhii Volodymyrovych, it is inappropriate for you yourself to make use of it. You know very well that Maupassant visited Flaubert until he was thirty years old, and only risked publishing his first work when he was thirty-one. Why do you not teach this to the young people? You know very well that all that "mass literature" you print does not come anywhere near art. Why do you incite this youth against Khvylovy? Why do you keep it in the dark and refuse to tell it that Lenin's works alone are far, far too little for an artist? Why do you not advise it to turn to Zerov, who would encourage it to read reactionaries like Vico, Professor Vipper,<sup>70</sup> etc.? Do you fear for its safety? Do not be afraid; you yourself studied all this and it never prevented you from being an exemplary Communist. A writer has to know all intelligent literature, even that which is reactionary. And only the Zerovs can familiarize him with it. Only then will he see the real literary horizon. The "village library," those Sunday-afternoon writing exercises, and those gatherings of a winter's evening—which generally take place on Mondays—they all constitute elementary cultural-educational work, nothing more. They are necessary, but they have nothing in common with art. Surely you do not disagree? Then why play such unbecoming games with Khvylovy's name? Surely you recognize the fact that Khvylovy won himself a "name" not on account of Pylypenko's review of his work (for which we thank you kindly), but because this author obviously has some talent and prior to publishing his work struggled long and hard to improve himself. Do you remember those fairy-tales the same Khvylovy used to bring you very nervously not so long ago as practice pieces? Why do you not tell the youth about this?

"Because . . .," says Pylypenko, "tell us, if you will, about the negative side of Voronskyism."

The positive, then, is the old, long-familiar Marxist aesthetics. We should be grateful to Voronsky for this. He, and not the "olympians," produced this only because he is the son of a nation that is not bringing up the rear and has nothing in common with *khokhols* and "Little Russians."<sup>71</sup> The negative side is the really original work of the same Voronsky, which, unfortunately, "Olympus" cannot accept.

### III

Voronsky developed in an atmosphere defined exclusively by his fellow-traveller environment. Russian proletarian literature has for the time being completely degenerated. It has not succeeded in winning positions for itself, because it has suffered from narrow-mindedness and the *prosvita* phenomenon. The half-baked, self-contented hacks from Proletcult beat it to death. It should not come as any great wonder, therefore, that Voronsky, who began with Plekhanov, was unable to apply him to the dictatorship of the proletariat. A reiteration of the elements of Plekhanov is far too little for our epoch. One also has to uncover some perspective for the future, and this is what is lacking in Voronsky.

Therefore, the first and chief sin of Voronskyism is its lack of a perspective. On the one hand it announces loudly in the book *Na perevale (At the Crossing Point)*<sup>72</sup> that the time of "great thoughts and great emotions" has arrived, while in a second article devoted to art it takes a quotation from Lenin and comes up with the following combination: "for the time being, in the transitional period, genuine bourgeois culture will be enough for us to begin with."

While agreeing completely that the art of the new age will be created by "great thoughts and emotions," we nevertheless have to observe that this remains an empty, lifeless idea inasmuch as the age of "great thoughts and emotions" in art has still not arrived and will not as long as Voronskyism continues to put forward the view that "the art of the transitional period differs from bourgeois art only in its orientation toward the proletariat," and, above all, if it continues to interpret Lenin to this effect, that is: to view the new art as the continued development of bourgeois art with a repainted ideology.

In his last letter to Khvylovy, Mykola Zerov accepted our idea of the Asiatic renaissance, writing:

I like all adherents of "cyclical theories." The hallmarks of a belief in cyclicity are pathos, the tragic vision, and profound sentiment, and this is why it is able to captivate.

This cyclicity is our proposition. It will engender those "great thoughts and emotions" about which Voronsky speaks. His own "continuous progress" leads to the "catafalque of art," to panfuturism, to liquidationist attitudes. The bourgeois cycle has exhausted itself and has entered a period of internal conflicts, and it is not in Voronsky's powers to lead it onto the joyful path of ardent enthusiasm. In his same book, *Art as the Cognition of Life*, he bends the stick of objectivism too far. Only in this way can we explain the fact that German Expressionism is, for Voronsky a "decadent" current. This is not the way we see it; for us this is another forerunner of the great Asiatic renaissance. Because Expressionism is not Dadaism, is not the Unanimism of a Jules Romains, of a dull little "transfigured city"—it is one more attempt to provide a cyclical theory. And only because it appeared prior to the era of civil conflicts did the theory fail to take root in reality and succeed only in producing a dazzling Pleiad of artists with Edschmidt's<sup>73</sup> will and thirst for life.

Therefore, only the "cyclical theory" has any perspective. This is not Spengler's theory of the entire system; this is the cyclical theory of one art. Only it will give birth to "great thoughts and emotions." We expressed the same idea in somewhat different fashion in our second article. From all that has been said it should be clear that we have nothing in common with Voronskyism. The latter suffers, as we have said, from the lack of a vision; we, on the contrary, set our gaze upon wide horizons. The new art that Europe is awaiting will issue from the South-Eastern republic of the communes, from none other than Soviet Ukraine. The lack of a vision of the future is a feature of *prosvita*. Therefore, if we are to brand someone with Voronskyism, then it ought to be you, maestro.

What, then, is Voronsky's second sin?

His second sin flows from the first: it is the propagandizing of absolute realism. This is what Voronsky writes in the same wretched booklet:

realist art is real art, because romanticism is more subjective and considers the cognition of life the least of its tasks.

Does this resemble what we have written in our own articles? Very little indeed: we propose Romantic vitalism. In the first place, this flows naturally from our theory of cycles. In the second, a heedless objectivism (Voronsky, for some reason, considers this realism) also leads to the liquidation of art, because it eventually gets reduced to a hackneyed naturalism. Plekhanov and France said it already: even elements of . . . publicistics—of subjectivism, in short—must find their way into art. Voronsky's evidence here is very flimsy, even if he does cite Akselrod.<sup>74</sup> Here is an example:

Tolstoi was a realist in the true meaning of the word. . . . And Marx? One of his favourite authors was Shakespeare, undeniably a realist.

We are not here about to take up the question whether Shakespeare was indeed a realist or not. We might, however, pause to ask Voronsky: if Tolstoi and Shakespeare were realists, and Marx loved the latter, and if all this is evidence that "dialectical materialism leads to realism in art," then why is it that Tolstoi couldn't stand Shakespeare?

Here Voronsky spins a confused tale for several pages without convincing us at all. But he long ago succeeded in convincing *prosvita*; the latter accepted this absolute realism quite some while back, even without reading his booklet carefully. Here we turn to the reactionary K. Leontev,<sup>75</sup> a supporter of "cyclical theories," who in his little-known booklet on Tolstoi's novels says:

It is interesting that the most gifted of our Realists (namely Tolstoi) in the full flowering of his talent refuted the devices of the same school of which he had so long been the chief representative. This is a sign of the times.

Yes, this is a sign of the times. The reactionary Leontev actually displays more dialectical thinking in this one statement than the revolutionary Voronsky does in his entire chapter on absolute realism. Nothing is eternal—this is our dialectics. Such is the second sin of Voronskyism.

What is the third?

The third issues from the encirclement by fellow-travellers. Its name is muzhikophilia, bowing and scraping to the muzhik, and it occurs in every line of his *Rossia (Russia)*.<sup>76</sup> If we were to begin quoting Voronsky in this case, we would simply end up republishing him. The lack of any vision of the future had to lead in the end to populism, to his being cast in the role of a second—Soviet—edition of Belinsky. Voronsky, without being aware of it himself, applies the gains of October to the specific needs of Kaluga. He, obviously, has nothing against Gorky's statement that Lenin accomplished the mission of a new Peter the Great. Here the Russian critic would do well to take a look at a second reactionary, and also a theoretician of "cyclical" theories, Professor Zelinsky. This is what the latter has to say in his article about the Greek lyric poet Bachylides:

When Athens came to power in Hellas, and democracy in Athens, then it was that the poets of the aristocratic world-view disappeared. Certainly, we do not say that the victors of the fifth century lacked poets, but they were of a middling quality, like the panegyrist whom Aristophanes made fun of in his *Birds*.

And the reactionary Zelinsky was more perceptive than the revolutionary

Voronsky. The former would naturally say that one could hardly expect "great thoughts and great emotions" from the *muzhikophile* average in the epoch of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

#### IV

As you see, maestro, we disagree with Voronsky on almost every point. You, on the other hand, accept all three sins of Voronsky, including *muzhikophilia*. It is simply through a misunderstanding that you fail to sympathize with this Russian critic, as it is through a misunderstanding that he accepted Plekhanov's (and also our, "olympian") aesthetics. These are, so to speak, the tricks of fortune and nothing more. Even our critique of your formula, "art as the construction of life," is completely original. Take it and compare it once more with Voronsky's booklet! . . . As for the Asiatic renaissance, can there be any doubt as to its originality?

Khvylovy would be extremely pleased if the reader were to take Comrade Pylypenko's advice and open up *Art as the Cognition of Life*. He would, however, be even more pleased if the reader were also to open up the following books, which we made use of in writing our letters: the same Voronsky's *Iskusstvo i Zhizn (Art and Life)*, *Na styke (At the Junction)*, Beltov's *Za dvadtsat let (In Twenty Years)*, Plekhanov's *Iskusstvo (Art)*, Bukharin's *Teoriia Istoricheskogo materializma (Theory of Historical Materialism)*, *Lef*, the books of Trotsky, the anthologies of *Voinstvuiushchii materializm (Militant Materialism)*, the works of Lenin, Freud, Spengler, Dobroliubov, Belinsky and so on and so forth. This, of course constitutes a hundredth part of what we have glanced through briefly.

The remainder of the materials made use of were entrusted to our good memory. We are writing all this not with the purpose of displaying our, in fact, terribly poor, erudition, but in order to prod our young youth toward those books it needs to read. It has to be aware that from nothing can only come nothing. This is what happened with Comrade Pylypenko, who made use of nothing.

Therefore, the Ukrainian Voronskyism consists of Voronsky's three sins without his Marxist aesthetics. And its true address is the backward, suburban *prosvita*. Voronskyism is an element of *prosvita*, and not Khvylovy but Pylypenko sins by it . . . even when it is defined as "contempt for the young youth," because there never has been and never will be any greater contempt than keeping young people under one's fur coat and preventing them from seeing anything. Whoever can prove to us that this is not so will receive a prize in the form of free board and lodgings for twelve months courtesy of Khvylovy. Our disagreements essentially come

down to the following: does the artist have to know what art is or doesn't he? If he does, then is every human being capable of making sense of it? If not every one, then isn't it about time Pluh developed an orientation to the real tractor? It is surprising to hear a phrase such as the following from the director of a large organization:

Get back, kids, mind your own business, learn to be mechanics and agronomists and stay away from poetry.

Listen, Comrade Pylypenko, we feel that this is an insult to the agronomists. Can a poet really be set higher than an agronomist? Or does our maestro imagine poetry to be the occupation of a clique? If so, we warn him that the olympians only accept an honorarium when they feel that they have earned it. The republic of communes has no need for hayseed authors who instead of writing one decent newspaper report compose sacks of verse, and on top of this consider them to be "artistic masterpieces." It is embarrassing even to have to speak about this. We need groups of worker and peasant correspondents which eventually will produce new artists and in which we will ourselves participate, but not organizations that are based on the graphomaniac. And it is no good swearing by the worker-peasant correspondents, Comrade Pylypenko; they are the result of our party's work and not of "a new concept of literature." They are the first swallows of the cultural revolution, produced by the liquidation of illiteracy programme in the villages and factories. Pluh must also become a similar organization, for it is quite symptomatic that the same Pluh has over a period of several years of work failed to produce a single artist. (Panch and two or three other names are not evidence to the contrary.) It has, however, produced a "mass literature" that no one reads. This, too, is symptomatic. Here we again point the same finger at Hart: the latter is only potentially an artistic organization. If it shows signs of stubbornness, it will also have to turn itself into an organization for cultural education. This would not be a bad thing either, because Comrade Shumsky, the People's Commissar of Education, who has placed the great task of a cultural revolution on the agenda, will obviously be delighted with such support. Then inflamed passions would cool and Comrade Pylypenko would not have as much occasion to mention Venus and, above all, he would not be called upon to prove that the "devil-knows-how-they-were-made busts of Comrade Lenin" have some artistic value, because he would be better informed about the work of the commission created in order to take down these busts, which were found to be anti-artistic products with such artistic imperfections that they serve only to demoralize.

It remains for us only to make a few comments about the question to which we devoted most of our second article.

## V

Here things get still more serious, because Comrade Pylypenko felt it necessary "to raise the issue on the pages of a large political newspaper." In short, it's a political matter. We have to deal here with insinuating "winks and nods" toward the "ideological NEP" that Khvylovy is trying to introduce.

We understand our maestro; he dislikes our statement that the theory of "Octobrist *On Guardism*" is essentially the ideology of the new rentier. Well, in that case, what he obviously ought to do is provide evidence to the contrary. This would be a more original course of action. Furthermore, he should look for genuine evidence and, by the way, not be so naive: the reader is no idiot, and unless the author avoids all demagoguery from the beginning, he will not be credited with an ounce of truth. This is what Comrade Pylypenko writes:

demagoguery is called for because Comrade Khvylovy has forgotten the cruel, relentless dialectic of struggle: everything that is useful to our enemies is harmful to our friends.

This really does remind one of Gogol's petty officer's widow who "beat herself up." Surely Comrade Pylypenko does not believe that Plekhanov wrote his aesthetics so that the same Comrade Pylypenko on the eve of the Revolution's ninth year could drag demagoguery into the discussion by its ears? Surely thousands of books have not been published about art never to be opened?

So this is why we must expect our "literary water" to be spiked with a very unsavoury drug!

But what's all this about a "political mill-wheel" that Khvylovy has "begun to turn?"

In making some unsubstantiated statements concerning a certain "olympian's" ideas (for the most part taken from Plekhanov), which are, apparently, "directed at the creation of an ideological NEP" and are "in essence an attack on the proletarian dictatorship" our maestro plays the role of informer with great pathos:

on the twenty-fourth of May the citadel of the old Ukrainian word and of old Ukrainian ideas answered Comrade Khvylovy's call: VUAN organised a public debate.

Well, and so what? What does this prove? Obviously, only the topical nature of this question. We are well aware that several lackeys from the

Philistine-Petliurist camp will harness themselves to us (as they also will do to you, Comrade Pylypenko). But we know that for them there exist the GPU and the censor. Why are you so afraid of VUAN? Isn't it a Soviet institution? This is nothing more than "left infantilism" and you will not succeed in building a new Soviet state with it. We are deeply convinced that the Petliurist riff-raff hate not Pylypenko, but Khyvlovy, because the latter—ironically—looks deeper to the very root of the matter. Is it not about time for all this barking at our academy to stop? In the eighth year of the Revolution have we really no other methods of struggle? The head of the Kiev branch of Pluh, Comrade Shchupak, knows how to look further: he has put forward a theory of co-operation in place of the outdated one of exploitation. What does this mean? It means that the time of so-called intellectual battles is upon us.

By creating an atmosphere of co-operation, and drawing our academics out into a public debate, we shall achieve three useful purposes.

Firstly, they will provide us with the kind of knowledge that is not easily available and that one can only come across in direct conversation. Because in the present conditions "the dialectic of struggle" does not read: "everything that is useful to our enemies is harmful to our friends." This is simply weak logic, or, more accurately, passable sophistry. Secondly, we shall get to know our foes more quickly this way. And thirdly, by force of our mature intellect we shall eventually compromise the "academic ideology." Which is to say that we shall sovietize VUAN by a few more percentage points.

"Just wait a moment," cries the maestro. "What's this sovietization all about if the 'citadel' continues to preach 'an ideological NEP'?" Through Zerov's lips the fellow-travelling phalanx makes the following demand:

We should allow free competition in literature, we should end the protectionism granted proletarian organizations, because all of this encourages careerism and speculation.

"So you see," continues our opponent, "the political cats have slipped out of the bag; no further explanation is even necessary."

Really? We are of quite the opposite opinion, that some explanation really is required, because Olympus also subscribes to Zerov's statements.

Here Comrade Pylypenko will suffer an attack of nausea and will reach for a glass not of demagogic but of real water. Then, in order to pacify him a little, we shall quote from that rather well-known and tolerably good Communist N. Bukharin, who explains exactly why we agree with Zerov:

It seems to me [writes N. Bukharin] that the best way to ruin proletarian literature, whose supporter I am, the best way to shut it off from the world is to deny the principles of free anarchic competition, because it is impossible to



make good writers out of people who have not completed a certain course of instruction in both literature and life, who have not won a place in the sun for themselves, who have not fought successfully for every step in reaching their positions. If, on the other hand, we decide upon a literature that has to be regulated by state power and that will have the advantage of various kinds of privilege, then by force of this we shall without any doubt shut proletarian literature off from the world.

Is it clear now why we agree with Zerov? We do not wish to "shut proletarian literature off from the world." Subsidies and protectionism are needed for organizations of worker-peasant correspondents, but not for artistic organisations.

We have already spoken about this long ago. We conceive of patronage in the arts as help for particular individuals. The patronage of a particular group can only occur if this group is made up of proven creative artists. Anarchic competition in the arts has never yet "been followed by freedom of the press" because the latter cannot be while class society still exists.

Therefore, Comrade Pylypenko, you need not look for an "ideological NEP" in Zerov's statements. Instead of pouring demagogic water and dreaming up a "political mill-wheel," you would do better to ascertain what the Zerovs of this world are.

The Zerovs are that sector of our young Ukrainian intelligentsia who for one reason or another have closely identified themselves with the fate of the old generation. If the Zerovs did not take an active part in the October Revolution, then at the same time they did not all poke sticks into the revolving spokes of its victorious wheels. Ideologically they are far removed from us; we must always approach their ideology with circumspection. But technically and even psychologically we need them. Here, incidentally, we must say a few more words about Europe.

Even our friends still fail to understand us; when we speak of Europe, we are thinking of more than its technical expertise. Bare technique is not enough for us; there is something more weighty than the latter. We conceive of Europe also as a psychological category which thrusts humanity forward, out of *prosvita* onto the great highway of progress.

Marx, having assimilated the technical skills of Europe, would not have been Marx if the sum of his spiritual values had not entered into the category we have named. Einsteins, both great and small, are Europeans, and half-baked professors are *prosvita*-types. Obviously, technique is not the be all and end all.

Therefore we have to use the Zerovs not only for their technical skills, but also in their psychological dimension. The single, at first glance insignificant (and, in the opinion of some, counter-revolutionary) fact—that they are so resolutely going "against the current" in translating the Romans, gives us the right to view them as real Europeans. The Zerovs

have sensed the temper of our epoch and have realized that the new art has to turn to models . . . taken from the culture of antiquity. The Asiatic renaissance is the epoch of the European Renaissance plus the unsurpassed, vigorous and joyful Graeco-Roman art. One should not be astonished, then, that a neoclassicism appeared recently even in bourgeois France. Neoclassicism is as necessary for Romantic vitaism as is the very faith in the truth of the great Asiatic renaissance.

Ideology is the product not only of particular class origins, but also of the intellect. Hence intellectual battles take place over these issues. We have acknowledged the technical skills of the Zerovs, the Zerovs have to acknowledge our ideology . . . and not only to acknowledge it, but consciously to accept it. And they will accept it, because *we* shall be the victors on this front, we who are supported by the invincible warrior—history.

Zerov is no fellow-traveller in the ordinary sense of this word. He is no *muzhikophile*, revolutionary-nationalist intellectual with narrow vision and no perspective. He is, if you like, a Martov in the arts, consciously and conscientiously working in the conditions of Soviet statehood. In the end we have to learn how to engage him, and them—the Zerovs.

Such is the nature of the “political mill-wheel.” Such is the nature of the “cats that have slipped out of our bag.” You, Comrade Pylypenko, will not frighten “Olympus” with an “ideological NEP.” Look for another addressee. Namely—among the illiterate. We are firmly convinced that the revolutionary Soviet society will reject your demagoguery. Since you enjoy Trotsky so much, listen once more to his opinion:

one cannot approach art in the same way one does politics.

Do you hear, maestro? Or do you disagree with this too? Then give us the evidence, we repeat, and do it without demagogic water. Rest assured, we will find it in us to believe you, the more so since you are one of our closest friends.

But “stop bluffing”, grant us a little respect. Do you really still not understand that it was not conceit that spoke through our pen but the feeling of joy that blazes near our hearts, that rises with every moment of our intellectual growth like the “silver-winged ships” of Iohansen, “ever higher, and higher, and higher.”

## VI

Is it worth summarizing? We think not. However, we turn to the young people in this letter also: Quo vadis?

Biblical wisdom tells us that when two blind men walk together, both will fall into the pit.

Truly, young artists have no business following Comrade Pylypenko's artistic authority; disenchantment awaits them.

"Olympus" is something quite different. We reject Little Russianness, *prosvita*, and any other doomed narrow-mindedness and summon you to the undiscovered horizons of the fabulous Asiatic renaissance.

We summon you to the creation of the art that Europe is awaiting. We know our path is difficult and we are taking a great burden upon ourselves. But it is a thrilling journey of inspired struggles, a journey that takes us into the future beyond the purple horses of our brilliant Revolution.

Say, young men and women: whither do you go?

# **Thoughts Against The Current**

## Author's Foreword

In publishing our second series of pamphlets we again deem it necessary to beg the reader's indulgence: not everything will be entirely comprehensible here either.

Then why rush into print with these pamphlets?

Because, dear reader, life does not wait for us. The ideas which we put forward in our first pamphlet series (*Quo Vadis?*; Knyhospilka, 1925) are searching for support. Therefore, whoever has followed the course of the literary discussion throughout the past year will understand us. Moreover, he will excuse our sharp tongue; when the future of the young art is at stake, there can be no room for sentimentality.

This collection contains the articles printed over the course of December 1925 in *Culture and Daily Life* (a supplement to the *News*) and in *Red Path*.<sup>1</sup> We have also attached the pamphlet on V. Polishchuk<sup>2</sup> as an addendum; the "essays" of this last opponent of ours should be seen as nothing more than a prank . . . the work of a perhaps delightful, but all the same unserious protagonist.

Therefore, dear reader, accept the "Authormobile of Today" as a cheerful witticism for your after-dinner entertainment. As for the rest of our work, we ask you to give it some serious thought. And, if you become convinced that we are fundamentally correct, carry our ideas into the most God-forsaken corners of our republic and support us everywhere. Only through concerted action will we succeed in leading our "Khokhlandia"<sup>3</sup> out onto the great highway of history.

## A Foreword to the Chapter "Two Forces"

Several months have now passed since the extraordinarily dismal article of our offended *prosvita* appeared. This talented elegy, to its own surprise, found itself in a role of, so to speak, universal significance: it was dubbed with the completely international name of *casus belli*. Only in this way can we explain its successful competition with Einstein's work on the principle of relativity: it too elicited an entire flood of literature. Even we, modest "olympians," devoted a whole notebook of four signatures to it, and named our book *Quo Vadis?* after Sienkiewicz's work.<sup>4</sup> In this first pamphlet series we made an effort to systematize our thoughts concerning the current situation in the arts.

But how did our literary "massists" react toward *prosvita's* public statement?

Well, they also deemed it necessary to throw in their coin, but... and here comes the traditional "but." Putting it gently, all their responses have been *a trifle* foggy... if one compares them to the autumn fogs of St. Petersburg, and *a trifle* short-sighted... comparing them to a hen's substantial short-sightedness. The only thought that came through clearly, that pursued the reader incessantly, was the following: Khvylovy and the "rightist" circles are trying to prevent the young workers and peasants from entering literature because they lack faith in them, because they despise them.

If it were only a question of this sympathetic accusation, we would never have bothered to take up our pen once more, but would simply have directed our honourable opponents to Anatole France's open letter addressed to the Legion of Honour, in particular to the following passage:

in your own interests we ask you not to do what you ought not to do. Refrain from a judgment that is ineffably far beyond your competence.

The matter is, however, deeper than this, and this explains why we are taking up the task of systematizing a few *more* ideas.

Firstly, let us turn our attention toward that piquant phenomenon that can be observed in the public pronouncements of our opponents. It is interesting that, in diligently ferreting out the supporters of the "olympian" theses among the young Ukrainian intelligentsia, they never once in the course of the last several months cast a glance over their own shoulders and took an interest in who was backing them, who sympathized with them. The poorly informed reader was under the impression all the while that "rightist circles" were pulling for us, while the literary "massists" were drawing on the aid of the truest, crystal-pure working-class and peasant youth. Well, the time has come to put an end to this sweet illusion.

We will leave the Hart and Pluh masses out of this for the time being and turn our attention to the Ukrainian intelligentsia.

Let us assume, for the moment, that Zerov, Fylypovych and Mohyliansky<sup>5</sup> represent in literature the most right-wing elements of society (we say society because we are not discussing artistic forms here but ideology). Let us assume that today's Rylsky,<sup>6</sup> who, in our opinion, ideologically rises head and shoulders above contemporary proletarian poets, let us assume that he is an aristocrat continuing the populist traditions of his famous father Tadei. Let us assume, finally, that all these Ukrainian intellectuals support "Olympus" wholeheartedly.

Then let's take a look at who supports our arch-revolutionaries from the same circles of the Ukrainian intelligentsia that in one way or another is linked to the cultural traditions of the past.

Here we touch upon a very delicate matter; we are compelled to name those surnames which "massist" literature diplomatically avoids in this discussion.

Whom are we referring to? We will not beat about the bush; we are speaking of Zahul, of Tereshchenko, of Iaroshenko, of Savchenko,<sup>7</sup> etc. Obviously, no one will be in any doubt that today's Pluh member Zahul belongs to the so-called fellow-travellers. No one would even suspect Tereshchenko, the author of "sorrows and laments," of belonging to the worker-peasant youth. And yet no one would for a moment doubt that they all support "massism" against "Olympus."

To be sure, our opponents will here play their last ace, which goes by the name of differentiation, saying that Savchenko has "differentiated" himself so much that one simply cannot put him in the rightist camp.

We will assume this to be so. We will assume, finally, that they are all arch-leftists, that they are all passionately in love with proletarian literature. Having begun with "a," however, one has to proceed to "b." One has to *prove* this "theorem."

Go ahead and prove it! We will not only be pleased to listen to your argument, we are prepared to believe it. However, the simple fact that they support "massist" literature (in quotation marks) is nothing but a

hollow phrase for us, because over this "theory" hang a good hundred enormous question marks.

Is there, perhaps, some other evidence? Of course not. The differentiation, according to the resolution of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party,<sup>8</sup> is progressing rapidly. However, it applies equally to all circles of the *young* Ukrainian intelligentsia, drawing them to our side in equal measure, and pushing them away from the old Ukrainian circles in equal measure.

Indeed, in what way does Zerov's group differ from Zahul's and others?

Above all in its greater cultivation. Secondly, in its respectful, serious attitude toward the historical moment, toward the young society, and, finally, toward itself. Only shallow loudmouths and hypocrites can shout that Fylypovych, for instance, belongs to the most right-wing circles. We are convinced, that ninety-nine per cent of them have never read the works of Zerov, have never read anything in fact. Do we not constantly hear:

"Zerov is a formalist! Zerov does not recognize class literature!"

We do.

But we are aware that not one of these "critics" has taken the trouble to actually read *Nove ukrainske pysmenstvo* (*New Ukrainian Writing*),<sup>9</sup> in which he would see Zerov the sociologist, in which he would read the most devastating characterizations of the Pleiad of pro-landlord writers.

This may be so, they answer, but his sociology leads us in a different direction. Where do you see his attitude to our Revolution?

As you please:

The Revolution opened up broad vistas for the development of Ukrainian culture. Since 1917 not a single attempt at forcing it back into narrower bounds has been successful. And today, when the slogan of Ukrainization is loudly proclaimed, new social forces that are destined to play a leadership role after the liquidation of the old order must also succeed in creating normal conditions for our cultural activity.

This is taken from Zerov's last article, and so is the following:

When and where did I, or Mohyliansky, or Fylypovych express hostility toward proletarian writers? The "class enmity" we were more than once accused of never prevented any of us from expressing enthusiasm for, let us say, Bebel's speeches or P. Hamp's *Viennese Gold-Hunters*.<sup>10</sup> Naturally, none of us are going to confess, swear and beat our breasts to convince Comrade Kyianytsia.<sup>11</sup> He can believe us or he can refuse to do so. If, however, he wishes to accuse us of a prejudiced ill-will toward proletarian art, then he *must support his statements with evidence*.

Zerov's emphasis. Here is your attitude both to our Revolution and to proletarian creativity.... And if this is still insufficient, allow us to "discover the self-evident":



One does not have to lose one's sense of human dignity in order to display one's sympathies. This is the first point. The second: he who rushes too much will soon find himself "huffing and puffing," as the hero of Kulish's play says, . . . and, above all, he will certainly create great difficulties both for himself and for others. Moreover, it should not be forgotten that these statements by Zerov are not his only recommendation. Just take a look, for instance, at his article on Sosiura for the clearest evidence to the contrary. And if it does differ in some ways (ideologically) from a similar article (about the same Sosiura) by the "massist" Savchenko, then only in the absence of the "huffing and puffing" mentioned above.<sup>12</sup> Our writers do not require compliments; they need serious, friendly advice, and nothing more.

So that is how the matter stands with Zerov. Now let us take a second parallel. At the same time as Fylypovych has over the years been gradually and quite naturally moving toward the accomplishment represented by his collection of poems, *Prostir (Wide Range)*, while simultaneously publishing solid, scholarly articles on Lesia Ukrainka and Franko—at this same time Comrade Zahul, who used to be an excellent poet, taking example from the unfortunate Kuprin's reworking of the "Duel,"<sup>13</sup> decides to touch up his past poems with some red paint—and, in doing so, does the new society no good at all; because after the reworking they lost a large part of their artistic value and, hence, a significant contingent of their readers. We ask: who needs this? The workers, the peasants, or the Revolution? We viewed the first edition of these poems as a historical document; now we view the second simply as trash. Obviously, the only person pleased by this operation is Comrade Pylypenko.

Or let us take the poet who at one time showed great promise and whose name was Iaroshenko. Who is he now? The field-watcher has quit Ukraine.<sup>14</sup> Even Tereshchenko, the author of "Tsen'-tsan,"<sup>15</sup> ended up writing production verse for which only the State Publishing House can find any use.

All these facts state, very eloquently, that the sector of the Ukrainian intelligentsia which supports Pylypenko's "massism" has never committed the sin of real leftism. Perhaps it harboured the desire to commit this "sin," but this irresistible desire led it to . . . hackwork. At the same time it ended up "huffing and puffing" and getting completely out of breath. Therefore our "massists" have absolutely no reason for congratulating themselves on being the most left-wing circles of the Ukrainian intelligentsia. The most limited investigation into the real state of affairs quickly reveals "all the cards." Moreover, it unexpectedly informs us that such "rightists" as Mezhenko<sup>16</sup> are essentially supporting *On Guardism*. His speech at the debate in Kiev is a case in point. Did he not talk himself

into espousing the liquidation of art? Granted that we are dealing here with a different kind of liquidator, because Pylypenko, we think, does not consider the opera to be "a mummy." We are not too concerned, however, about how they both reached the same conclusions. The Pluh representative found his way to the "catafalque" through misunderstanding the laws of art, while the once excellent *Muzagete*<sup>17</sup> critic through stuffing himself with them.

Therefore, in Mezhenko "massism" found itself a "rightist."

And has not Oleksander Doroshkevych, a respected figure in the community, offered—figuratively speaking—his wide erudition and services in the realm of theory as a substitute for the childish "prattle" of the Shchupaks? Although we support this figure in all his endeavours as valuable for the Soviet Republic, this still does not mean that he has to agree with our view of art.

In such fashion we begin to see how the active, young Ukrainian intelligentsia has, through a process of differentiation, moved away from that isolated spot over which hangs a sign reading: "The Rightists." Naturally, it still to some degree exhibits the tendency to form a separate group, but its world-view from now on will be determined to a large extent by the ideological positions of those "new social forces," which, to use Zerov's words, "are destined to liquidate the old order."

And now, returning to literature, we declare: Inasmuch as among the "new forces" in the arts two camps have arisen, this intelligentsia will naturally take an active part in this struggle, supporting either one or the other.

Therefore, if we succeed in explaining the nature of these two forces, we will also explain who among the intelligentsia is playing a positive and who a negative role. The following short essay will help us to understand how the meaning of the term "the most right-wing circles" has, owing to a number of complex socio-political processes, lost its former clarity and assumed a corresponding complexity. We hope that we will finally be able to demonstrate how flippantly our opponents approach the problem of our future in juggling with this term so carelessly.

## Two Forces

“An obedient bear is more dangerous than an enemy.”

To be sure. But this noble animal is, of course, not the point.

Almost all the literary “massists,” and the respected O. Doroshkevych too, assume naively that the initial impulse for our articles was chiefly an “ethical criterion.” They all insinuate in one way or another that we have departed from Marxism. Many of them even now approach Khvylovy and quietly whisper:

“You know . . . I am holding my tongue only because I feel sorry for you. But they might—God forbid—compel me to make a public statement concerning your *Quo Vadis?* in which case there will not be a stone left unturned.”

We detect such a touching attitude toward ourselves everywhere we turn. How do we explain it?

Oh, there are many reasons, to be sure. Let us therefore list a few of them. The first is a lack of “powder.” There are many who desire to “clip our wings” but, you see . . . they cannot be bothered with digging through books. Everyone is convinced that we have erred somewhere, but where exactly—the devil only knows. More precisely, our error is obvious, but there again one ought to support one’s statements with some thorough evidence. The second is our pathos. My goodness, how naive this Khvylovy is: “communes beyond the hills,” he says; well, clearly, this is romanticism. We ought to take pity on him. The third is our attitude to ourselves. We are, after all, such celestial angels. Precisely what the French call *pruderie*. Now, how can he say such things about us? Strange fellow! . . . We really must give him a word of warning.

There is, in addition, a fourth, and a fifth, and a tenth reason. But this will do.

We propose, however, to speak candidly without mincing words, because at the present moment a *fight* is on not over portfolios but over *proletarian art* (proletarian not in the proletcultist but in the Marxist understanding of this term).

The relevant resolution of the CC RCP<sup>18</sup> in its third paragraph speaks of the appearance “from the community’s bosom of new ideological agents of the bourgeoisie” who will in one way or another manifest themselves in literature. However, we have never approached this paragraph or any other of this resolution the way the ideologist of massism, S. Pylypenko, does.

How does he check his ideological line in the arts?

He calls a plenary meeting of Pluh, we suppose, reads the aforementioned resolution there, compares it to his own Pluh platform, mentions a few books from the village library, throws a little red colour around with a “red” poem during the post-plenary evening gatherings and has done with it.

Too little?

A bit skimpy!

“The class nature of art in general, and literature in particular, expresses itself in forms that are infinitely more varied than they are, for instance, in politics,” states the same CC RCP resolution.

We bear this in mind at all times. That is why, in scrutinizing our ideological line, we never simplify that which resists vulgarization.

In the first place, in dealing with proletarian art’s future paths of development, we begin with the concrete Ukrainian reality. Secondly, we always try to keep pace with life, and therefore we do not apply to our reality those theses which lie in the archives of “war communism”; we do not confuse yesterday’s fellow-travellers with today’s, which would only add to the muddle of an already muddled issue.

When we read the paragraph in the resolution of the CC RCP concerning the ideological agents of the bourgeoisie, we first pose this question:

“*Where must they come from?*”

In order to preserve the purity of our world-view, we have to know on which side to dig our wolf-holes, to avoid digging them accidentally on our own torso.

Inasmuch as elements of capitalism can be detected in our society, thus far the young bourgeoisie is showing signs of life. In the towns we have the urban bourgeois—the *nepman*, in the village—the strengthened kulak. Both will influence the new art. But at the same time as the growth of the town bourgeoisie is progressing relatively slowly, the million-strong kulak has grown so powerful that he has completely swamped the urban shopkeeper. Therefore, in the invisible struggle for influence over art, which has to occur between the kulak and the *nepman* (because their

interests do not always coincide), the first has the greater chances for victory. This does not at all mean that nothing will remain of the urban bourgeois. It means that *we should anticipate the main ideological invasion from Stolypin's "land parcel."*<sup>19</sup> It means that, as long as the *nepman* has not found his feet, as long as he has not placed his Jemmies on a "stabilized" capitalism, eight out of ten wolf-holes have to be dug on the side facing the kulaks from the steppe, and only two facing the private shops in the town.

We must emphasize this all the more when we apply this formula to Ukrainian art. Here the picture looks basically like this:

Up to the Revolution the Ukrainian intelligentsia was ideologically nourished exclusively by the village and more by the poor peasantry than by the kulaks, as much of its membership was made up of the offspring of this stratum. Its links with the proletariat and with the urban bourgeoisie were very weak. Approximately the same situation holds today. But with the difference that there are signs of a tendency toward a change in the near future. We have in mind Ukrainization.

Of course, to attach any great importance to the *Ukrainian* urban bourgeoisie, which will soon put up its shops in the Kharkiv market-place and which, in comparison with the Russian bourgeois, for instance, must exert a much wider influence on the circles of our intelligentsia—to attach any great importance to it at present is not our intention. But we should not forget that Ukrainization, while opening up doors to the world for our nation and speeding up the process of class differentiation in Ukraine, is simultaneously providing a broadcasting system on one of the central streets of the town for the ideology issuing from Stolypin's "land parcel."

This is why, taking the "ethical criterion"—to use Comrade Doroshkevych's words—as our starting-point in *Quo Vadis?*, having characterized *prosvita* not only as a psychological category but also as the ideology of the bourgeois of the peasant NEP we did not forget to underline the word "peasant." This is why the corresponding resolution of the CC CP(B)U recommends among other things that Pluh not become too inflated.

We have satisfied the kulak fully... up to and including his "forty hectares."<sup>20</sup> Materially he is thriving on his splendid holdings. But he feels the need to satisfy his "spiritual" interests also. He now knows his own value. Here is a characteristic picture for you. It is dark. The waggons creak. One hears: "Who goes there?" The haughty reply: "Kulaks!"

This is the very same shark who several years ago loudly denied his social nickname and swore that he was a Bolshevik. Obviously the time has arrived in our community life when he can sense his own power. Obviously he has mounted an offensive on art too as the ideological superstructure where he will not only satisfy his "spiritual" interests, but will also create

the conditions that will enable him to struggle for power.

Now let us consider which of us is in the greater danger: we, "olympians"—as the quarrelsome *prosvita* refers to us communards—or the literary "massists."

As is well known, we constitute a very small group of artists. This group has long ago severed all family or ideological ties (if it ever had any) not only with the kulak, but with the village in general. Therefore it would be absurd to assume that this completely urban group of writers would even unconsciously act as a representative of the kulak's ideology. As for unconsciously representing the *nepman's* ideology, this is a possibility... if the group becomes divorced from the party. Since half the group are Communists, the party imposes guidelines on its work *directly*; hence the obvious absurdity of such an assumption.

It is also significant that we have taken as our allies that sector of the Ukrainian intelligentsia that grew up in the city. We are creating (as the CC RCP resolution says) "a close comradely collaboration" with those cultural activists who are completely urbanized.

True, we might unexpectedly feel the influence of the urban bourgeois on account of this, but it is also true that one has to choose the lesser of two evils (such a choice is demanded of us by the party), because we know that the urban bourgeois is about as close to today's urbanized intelligentsia as, say, Shchupak is to Wu Pei-Fu.<sup>21</sup>

Naturally, our opponents consider Zerov to be an aristocrat (he wears a pince-nez, doesn't he?), but, as they say, freedom for the free, heaven for the saved.

Comrade Doroshkevych in his fine article<sup>22</sup> on the occasion of "The October Anniversary" disagrees with Comrade Lunacharsky that one of the functions of the intelligentsia is to "protect, enrich and organize human experience." We consider that Zerov and his group have fulfilled this function assiduously.

Now let us take a look at Comrade Pylypenko and his pupils, who are—both artistically and in Marxist terms—giftless (forgive the polemical vitriol) and semi-literate—the likes of Comrade Kyianytsia and Comrade Shchupak.

Pluh has 200 members and 1,000 students. Hart is two or three times smaller. Whom are they composed of?

"Of worker-peasant youth!"

"Are they really?"

We think that this is a "small" inaccuracy which requires a hefty correction.

In the first place, about the working-class youth.

We are not going to examine the membership lists of these organizations and check how many in Pluh and Hart have had any contact

with the working masses. One can discuss America without ever having been there.

If out of 1,000 we discover two or three such young people, they will simply be the exception that confirms the rule. And the rule is:

The working class in Ukraine has thus far been so cut off from Ukrainian culture that at the present time it cannot provide activists for this culture directly from among its numbers.

Therefore there never were any working-class masses in the Hart and Pluh organizations and will not be any for a good long time.

Now for the peasant youth. The situation is better here. Indeed, such a youth does exist. Moreover, a not insignificant percentage is made up of the poorer peasant youth. However, there is, obviously, also another element there—the one from Stolypin's land parcels.

Therefore, taking into account the fact that the ideological leadership apparatus of these organizations is terribly weak in comparison with the pressure exerted on it by the economically and culturally powerful kulak, taking into account that this apparatus essentially devotes itself to official correspondence and is in any case largely a fiction, it has, to be said that our literary "massists" have long since faced the great danger of conceding their ideological positions in art.

The whole tragedy lies in the fact that their organizations have pretensions, not to fulfilling ordinary cultural-educational functions where control over ideology would be relatively easily maintained, but *to leading the artistic movement—this most complex of all movements, the artistic movement of the class that is leading a population of thirty million*. The whole tragedy lies in the fact that pretensions to the leadership of such an exceedingly subtle ideological superstructure, such an arch-specific branch of creative activity which must now play such an enormous role in the construction of the new life, are being voiced by people who are semi-literate in both art and Marxism, and who are in addition agents of the peasant petty-bourgeois.

Objectively, the picture is as follows: whether Comrade Pylypenko wants to or not (he, obviously, does not), he will, nevertheless, be compelled to surrender one position after another to the kulak. And has already begun to do so.

It was not flippantly, but quite deliberately, that we posed the question: Europe or *prosvita*? *This is one of the most cardinal questions of our age*. In the psychological category of Europe is to be found the sum total of those possibilities which we can counterpose in art to *prosvita*, another psychological category, one from which the kulak takes sustenance. Although it is an abstract phenomenon, in a concrete time, in a concrete society, it plays an equally concrete role.

Therefore, it is not surprising *that two forces are at war in contemporary literature: the first is orientating itself toward Europe, the second is being exploited by prosvita*, in other words the kulak. The first is continuing the old Marxist traditions, the second professes vulgar Marxism. Between these two forces there can be no quarter, because the first will not allow "small," "Menshevik" corrections to its opinions on art, and the second, on account of its illiteracy, is convinced of its correctness and is incapable of grasping that these "small corrections" have been dictated by the kulak.

How must the *potential* bourgeois view art, and how does he view it?

Not constituting a class, but only a stratum, not taking upon himself the same kind of mission as did the "third estate" and as does the proletariat, he approaches all socio-political categories from the point of view of his own personal well-being, never taking into account either consciously or unconsciously the interests of the entire society. This is why he has a narrowly utilitarian approach to all issues. He is a psychological Makhnovist.<sup>23</sup>

This nature of his also defines his attitude to art. From the history of world literature we know of not a few examples where the decline of art was accompanied by the victorious march of *regressive*, populist, kulakizing ideas. This is portentous! This is exactly the way it has to be, because since the flowering of art is always marked by the flowering of a *historical* class, such a process represents the relatively sorrowful position of the potential bourgeois. We do not intend this to mean that art represents the prosperity of a class, although, being an ideological superstructure, it does take upon itself part of this function; we have in mind the following: inasmuch as the proletariat has conquered hegemony for itself, its art should also defeat kulakizing tendencies.

The day of victory lies in the near future. Today, however, the kulak gives his "final and decisive battle"—and precisely in those organizations, Hart and Pluh, where vulgar Marxism, the faithful subconscious servant of our enemy, is the ruler.

The fact that vulgar Marxism in our Ukrainian reality has its roots in the Stolypin land parcels is evidenced by its very similarity with *prosvita*, the mother of the kulak. But let us speak in more concrete terms.

First of all about Comrade S. Pylypenko as the ideologist of massism.

There was a time when, to put it crudely, we "bluffed" him. Not knowing very well how he defined art (and we needed to know this, because within this definition lay his artistic ideology), after having thought carefully about the whole socio-artistic situation, we stated unequivocally that he understood it as "a method of constructing life." In such a fashion we challenged him to be candid.



Well, and what do you think? We were not mistaken. He wishes "to construct—through cognition." The "small" correction, the little hyphen between construction and cognition, is quite typical. Lacking the courage to entirely reject "cognition," he adds it to handsome "construction"; not, however, in the same sense as we interpreted it in our previous articles, but, as became evident later in personal discussions with him, with the purpose of devising the following formula:

"Art is a method of cognizing-constructing life."

The essence of the matter does not, of course, lie in words, in the terms used, but in this: one should not confuse concepts and one should not add corrections to a clear Marxist formula. We understand quite well what lies hidden behind this "construction." Pylypenko has told us on more than one occasion:

Literature [he has in mind creative literature] is the name we give to the sign outside the State Publishing House, the aphorisms on a fence, and the verse on the toilet wall.

Therefore this innocuous little "correction" is, in fact, a deviation toward the liquidation of art. And, since this is the case, it has been dictated by the very same kulak.

Or take the following statement:

"There is no crisis in revolutionary literature."

At a time when almost all proletarian artists are struggling with the problem of how to find a way out of the cul-de-sac that revolutionary literature has entered, when they are unable to discover the right atmosphere so as to devote themselves to the production of high-quality literature—at this time Pylypenko pulls a naive face and states:

"There is no crisis."

This is called a Marxist approach.... But even here the wretched potential bourgeois is involved: it is he that dictates this text, because this celebrated "all is quiet in the tavern" is in his interest.

Or take this logic for example. On the one hand Comrade Pylypenko cries that the "fellow-traveller, bourgeois camp" is raising its head, and on the other he writes:

at the same time we put forward the slogan of one Soviet front in the form of a Ukrainian federation of Soviet writers—Hart, Molot, Zhovten, Pluh, Lanka and others.

Three or four years ago perhaps such an organization might have been expedient. But now, when even Petrushevych<sup>24</sup> is for Soviet power, this idea raises enormous doubts.

Why is this? Because Molot and Zhovten, as everyone knows, are no more than a fiction (Pylypenko said so himself at the Pluh plenum). Hart

without the "olympians" has almost ceased to exist—which leaves us with Lanka,<sup>25</sup> Pluh and "others." We believe everyone knows what Lanka is. Therefore we hear the kulak's dictation here also.

Let us, however, leave Comrade Pylypenko and listen to his pupils.

Firstly, let us take a look at Kyianytsia. Although he did refer to us in very gracious terms, the facts and a sense of civic obligation compel us to count him also among the staunch pupils of vulgar Marxism.

According to Zerov [he writes in the journal *Zhyttia i revoliutsiia (Life and Revolution)*] competition has to rule. But what kind of competition? Not the traditional European one, which is, for the time being, bourgeois and provides a free space for the development of all sorts of ideologies in literature.

Well, here is what you might call a masterpiece of analysis. Can one really come up with anything better designed to completely compromise our criticism? Kyianytsia's logic is as follows: only in our Soviet Union do we deny the "free space for the development of all sorts of ideologies," because the bourgeoisie does the opposite in this matter.

We do not know what provoked Comrade Kyianytsia to make such a statement, but we must inform him that *there is no "free space" in Europe*. One cannot take seriously a few pacifist writers who are typical fellow-travellers of the bourgeoisie. As for such writers as Sinclair in America, or Becher in Germany,<sup>26</sup> rest assured: they are only granted about the same amount of "free space" as the area covered by the Marxist education of our honourable massist critics.

Therefore we should not be surprised at all if the same Zerov were to make fun of Kyianytsia—he has every right to do so. It is a shame, merely, that any such public criticism would be labelled an attack on "worker-peasant youth."

And really, how cheap all this is, how primitive, and, finally, how illiterate! Do our literary massists really think that they will build a new art with demagogy about "free trade?" Is it really a secret that Zerov, speaking of competition, was only translating the words of Comrade Bukharin?

Why approach such a serious matter so narrow-mindedly, so scandalously!

But, of course, Kyianytsia still does not understand us, because his Marxist baggage is far too inadequate. Just listen to this unpardonable excerpt from his creativity:

He [Mohyliansky] teaches youth that in order to become a literate Marxist one has to finish a course of study in classical English political economy and German idealist philosophy, because Marx himself was educated on this.

You would perhaps think that Kyianytsia would be grateful to Mohyliansky for this advice. Nothing of the kind! *He is speaking ironically*. Because, according to him:

even without Mohyliansky's programme of education the youth will become sufficiently competent in Marxism to recognize the class approach of Mohyliansky.

What is this? Where and when are we living? Who is writing this? At the very time that we are making quality the password in all branches of our construction, this extraordinary man is trying to turn us back to 1917! Who is this? A pupil in the third grade of a Soviet school or is he really a critic? Truly, we blush with shame before the same Zerov, because Kyianytsia is, it seems, a member of the same party to which we belong.

Obviously, and unfortunately, it was not Kyianytsia who was destined to correct "the mistaken theses of Khvylovy"; for this task we advise the solicitation of more literate Marxists.

Khvylovy, however, is not the point; the point is vulgar Marxism, whose founder in Ukrainian conditions is Comrade S. Pylypenko. The point is that this "Marxism" has its social roots, that it has been dictated by the kulak.

But let us leave Kyianytsia; it is clear whom we are dealing with and how we should approach his critical studies. Let us turn for one brief moment to a second pupil of Pylypenko. We are speaking of S. Shchupak.

This comrade is, happily, a less naive person. But he also demonstrates the same lack of acquaintance with art that characterizes his colleagues. S. Shchupak "knows all this very well" (his favourite phrase) and he, it seems, does not have any pretensions to posing as a researcher of European free spaces. Unfortunately, however, he also harms the young art *by his pedestrian approach*. Shchupak thinks for some reason that proletarian literature cannot do without penpushers and this encourages him to create his own group.

Naturally, we have nothing against this comrade's active participation in the artistic movement; on the contrary, we welcome such a good neighbour. But we demand the following:

If you want to have any dealings with art, go ahead, we wish you luck. You do not have to be an artist, but you must be an expert on art. Therefore take a walk to the library, pick up the relevant literature, and study this area. *Because art does not require penpushers*.

In order not to make unsubstantiated statements and in order to leave no doubt as to Comrade Shchupak's penpushing capabilities, we refer our readers to his article in the newspaper *Proletarian Truth*.<sup>27</sup>

This is an example of how he poses the question:

we are aware that several of Khvylovy's comrades, while they were in Kiev, were not above testing the ground for the creation of a group of his sympathizers in Kiev.

Does this quotation not remind you of Gogol's "pleasant" ladies? It does? Well, it reminded us of Lunacharskaia's article in the journal *October*,<sup>28</sup> where she describes her impressions of the conference of proletarian writers:

"No, these people are positively relentless," said a fierce supporter of Voronsky to me, her glance searching for sympathy, and shrugged her shoulders.

Does your ear catch some consonance in these words: "supporter" and "sympathizers?"

"Oh, what are you saying, Sophia Ivanovna," said the lady who was pleasant in all regards and clapped her hands.

Really, this is "Anna Grigorievna" Comrade Shchupak; we are quite serious.

"Well, we congratulate you: frills are no longer in fashion—they wear festoons now."

"You don't say!" cried Lunacharskaia, followed by Shchupak:

Just listen—Demian Bedny's wonderful, sharp-witted words can be heard. They are so clear and simple. There are no disagreements. What is there to disagree about? Isn't it evident to everyone that only humanity's turn to Communism will give it a real victory over the slavery of necessity. And the attentive gaze of the masses [i.e., the proletarian writers] flashes with a steely determination.

Do you hear, a "steely determination," because everything is "so clear and simple" one wants to weep tears of tender emotion, what the Russians call "*umilenie*." We meet exactly the same approach to complex artistic problems in Comrade Shchupak.

Whoever takes Khvylovy's new organizational path has to subscribe to his *Quo Vadis?*

What organizational path is this? Where did Shchupak hear about it? Was it, perhaps, from the lady "who is pleasant in every regard?" He is not so much a Pluh supporter, more a gossip-monger!

Although our capital on the Lopan<sup>29</sup> does not much resemble a capital, we, nevertheless, have the right in this case to sigh deeply:

"Ah, the provinces!"

As you see, even this last phrase reeks of the same "sympathizers." No one any longer doubts that there are two sides to Khvylovy in his pamphlets: about one there can be no reservations—this is his critique of massism; and the second—as some say "paradoxical"—side, which Khvylovy alone answers for at the present time—this is his thesis concerning the Asiatic renaissance. Obviously, merely because the two theses occurred together in one book, the supporters of a new organizational path (which does, in fact, exist, although it is not the one that *Proletarian Truth* has in mind) do not necessarily have to "subscribe also to *Quo Vadis?*" We surmise that Comrade S. Shchupak, like every sensible penpusher, understands this too, but he could not say otherwise because all his public statements in the end come down to the existence of some "supporters," of some "sympathizers," an opposition of someone to somebody and so on and so forth. In a word, he wants to play on the egotism of fools who, without having the foggiest notion of what the question is about, will revolt against "communes beyond the hills" and will join the sympathizers of Shchupak. Let the head of the Kiev Pluh not take offence, but we do not trust his ideological classification of literary groups either. Because not long ago he was agitating for collaboration with those whom he today places among the "most right-wing circles." Neither do we think that he would shun making an accommodation with the panfuturists whom he detests so much—were they to enter the ranks of his "sympathizers." But, however this may be, we shall say this: what sense is there in Shchupak's "faith in the young forces," when this faith is of very little use to anyone?

This, then, is the second pupil of vulgar Marxism, although he too is in the clutches of the kulak.

And, therefore, it is not surprising that the development of proletarian art can be measured for our literary massists by the "practical calendar," which, under the rubric of "historical events," lists Khvylovy's birthday. It is not surprising that some F. Ia. from the newspaper *Proletarian Truth* comes forward with this critique:

O. Kopylenko,<sup>30</sup> as has now become evident, is not simply an accidental, pale star in some secondary galaxy. He really is a star of the first magnitude and one that radiates an independent light!

Perhaps for the backwaters of Zadrypanka O. Kopylenko really is a star "of the first magnitude and one that radiates an independent light," but for us he is a good writer who shows promise. Besides, why do we have to "break chairs" over it? And besides, why do a disservice to the young art? It is a good thing that Kopylenko only laughed at this review. But just imagine if it had "gone to his head?"

This is what the slogans of vulgar Marxism lead to. And when Shmyhelsky<sup>31</sup> complains in the same *Proletarian Truth* that he does not know whom to follow, we understand and sympathize with him. On the one hand he reads a newspaper paragraph from which he learns that the state has assigned a million roubles to the publication of L. Tolstoi's complete works; on the other hand he is advised to drop studying English political economy, because we can discover the class analysis of Mohyliansky without it. On the one hand he hears that Żeromski obtained a beautiful villa from the president of Poland for his "Bolshevik" novel *Przedwiośnie (Before Spring)*;<sup>32</sup> on the other hand it is explained to him that talent is something dreamed up by "Olympus," and that a wise man would never nourish this talent for the benefit of his class, because the real creative literature is the one scrawled on a fence.

Our "critics" refuse to understand such a simple and long-accepted fact:

Lope de Vega<sup>33</sup> in his time wrote a hundred times more than all today's proletarian writers put together. Therefore there was something to read and there was something which met the reader's needs. But Lope de Vega had talent and that is why he was read, and that is why he did more for his class than all of us together will, obviously, be able to accomplish for ours.

Our task is to prepare the right ground and the right atmosphere, which will lead to the growth of our own—even a small—Lope de Vega. Because, as reality demonstrates, he alone will play a historic role in art, he alone will provide his class with what it demands.

Therefore, to summarize:

With the crisis of proletarian literary creativity a fierce struggle has arisen for the existence of this same proletarian literary creativity. The deadliest enemy of proletarian art is the ideology issuing from Stolypin's land parcels. Its invisible agents have already made their presence felt. Vulgar Marxism is a product of their work. Therefore the struggle with vulgar Marxism is on the day's agenda as a most pressing question.

The *young* Ukrainian intelligentsia is today a supporter of Soviet power. It takes an active part in the struggle between the two forces, not, however, as a completely isolated organization, but as a rather differentiated group of the "force that is destined to liquidate the old order." A sector of it, the less steadfast, has succumbed to vulgar Marxism.

\* \* \*

The chapter on the "Two Forces" is finished. Now we shall pass on to a more detailed account of some points that were not entirely clear to our readers. We consider it necessary to explain, finally, what we mean by

psychological Europe, how we view formalism, which we are accused of, and so on. These questions are no less interesting; so allow us to move on to the next chapter.

## Psychological Europe

The task of the Marxist analyst is to take into account all features of development, all the complex inter-relationships among protagonists and influences.

*The ABC of Communism*

We have already stated that Comrade Pylypenko in professing vulgar Marxism in art is objectively doing the will of a hostile social group. We underline *objectively*, because it would indeed be ludicrous to suggest that a person should wish himself evil, and also because otherwise it would be absurd to transfer the question onto another plane, as we are about to do; we are dealing not with just any average citizen, but with a prominent Communist.

But where did this vulgar Marxism come from?

It undoubtedly flowed from the fundamental error of massism's leader. Comrade Pylypenko is of the firm opinion that our peasantry is the potential proletariat.

Who among us has not heard him use this formula? How many times has it been repeated at Pluh evenings? What a wonderful symphony it sounded for several years!

The dialectic is the revolutionary nerve of Marxism and it is at the same time a logic of contradictions. "Everything is in flux," said the ancient philosopher Heracleitus. When one is dealing with a movement that is in the process of establishing itself, one has to apply the formula: "either yes, or no." Under the conditions of bourgeois statehood the less prosperous sector of the peasantry undoubtedly constitutes a potential proletariat; without being a proletarian class, it exhibits tendencies to become one.

But are we, then, to apply this formula without any reservations to the peasantry as a whole, and under the conditions of the New Economic Policy?



Inasmuch as we have entered the NEP phase, inasmuch as we do not set ourselves the tasks of big capital—the exploitation and eventual proletarianization of this petty-bourgeois stratum—we provide plenty of room for the development of this same petty bourgeoisie. In other words:

Not only do we refrain from ruining the small landowner, on the contrary—we take pains to ensure that he gets through the period of accumulation of wealth as painlessly as possible.<sup>34</sup>

Thus, one may speak of the peasantry as a potential proletariat in the given concrete situation only with the utmost caution. In any case the kulak must always be identified and classified as a potential bourgeois.

And if Comrade Pylypenko refuses to do this, then by this very fact he is accepting vulgar Marxism. There's the rub.

We believe that the argumentation of a second adherent of massism issues from the same roots. We are speaking of a prominent Ukrainian community activist.

In No. 6-7 of the journal *Life and Revolution* there appeared an article entitled "One More Word About Europe."<sup>35</sup> Its author was Comrade Oleksander Doroshkevych. This is really the first public statement by our opponents which we have no right to answer, even if we wanted to, in a joking manner. Doroshkevych approached the ideas we put forward quite seriously, as befits a respected individual.

But do we agree with his corrections?

Certainly not! However, we acknowledge that his article is the strongest blow directed against our premises.

Therefore, we must hasten to expose the errors of our esteemed opponent. Comrade Doroshkevych must forgive us, but we have always been of the opinion that the aphorism *errare humanum est* can be applied to every human being, including himself.

We divide our opponent's article into two parts. The first is the one where he agrees with us completely, and, incidentally, lauds Khvylovy for quite the wrong reasons (if Khvylovy had not said what he did, someone else would have); it is the part where he analyzes us as "the unmaskers" of *prosvita*. In the second part of the article our opponent himself takes up the role of "unmasker," . . . this time of our romanticism, of our inability to plot the further paths of development of Ukrainian literature. This is precisely what he writes:

I consider all his [Khvylovy's] calls to a psychological, artistic and intellectual acceptance of Europe to be only a lyrical refrain.

Of course, it would be a great mistake to think that we, like Caesar, are trying to report: "I came, I saw, I conquered!" If we are going to draw history into it, then we prefer to compare ourselves to Cato the Elder, who ended all his speeches with the celebrated: *Carthage must be destroyed*.

It would not be amiss, however, to explain to what extent our calls were "only a lyrical refrain" and whether all our pathos was only a witness to our misunderstanding of Europe, which we presented as an antithesis to backwardness.

At present, when *prosvita* temporarily finds itself in a state of disorganization, we have no fear of admitting that the first phase of the struggle was characterized—using Semenko's phrase—by an accentuation of the destructive aspect.

What does this mean?

It means that all our attention was concentrated upon the emotional side of the issue. New ideals, which are put forth against the old, already sufficiently discredited ones, must initially influence the emotions more than the intellect. Such are the tactics of every struggle. This, and this alone, was what gave rise to our irrepressible and, at first glance, naive lyricism.

But does this mean that our entire position "reeks of the same ethical criterion?"

We think not. Things are simpler than this: Comrade Doroshkevych took our tactical device as a "good coin"; he was disturbed by the pathos which, if taken in the abstract, appears to be essentially the fruit of an immature mind. The "massist" critic, educated on Uman simplifications, saw the most real devil from the idealist hell in our positions, and the erudite Kievan, refusing to believe in our strength, became alarmed over our apparent abandonment of the social criterion. Because indeed:

The girl who spoke at the debate in Kiev openly recommended Khvylovy as an agitator for a "Europe in patent leather boots."

And Doroshkevych? Did he also not conceal a similar recommendation between the lines of his article?

Therefore, allow us to say that his restating of elementary materialism is not always and not entirely interesting. Would it not be better if some critics—like the "massists," for instance—were to take the *ABC of Communism*<sup>36</sup> and read it and others—like Doroshkevych—were to believe our assurances that, after all, we do have some small understanding of Marxism.

Well, in any case, "it's an ill wind that blows no good," as Russian revolutionary literature tells us—a fact that our opponent advises us to mention. (This latter advice, by the way, is a complete joke. The half-witted Kindermann once gave the revealing, paradoxical reply: "of the Communist authors I have read Dostoevsky and Tolstoi.") Not just our opponents are at fault; not even all the supporters of our theses are sufficiently aware of the kind of baggage they will be taking with them when they go out to organize the young art in those places where *prosvita*

has been defeated. Therefore, in the following answers to one of our opponents we come across the *beginning* of the next, what we might call the constructive phase of the struggle.

*What is this psychological Europe that so frightens Doroshkevych?*

Art is not only a method of cognizing life, but also—on a different plane—an ideological superstructure. Thus, since we are dealing with art, we must become acquainted with the Marxist scheme of superstructures.

In other words: if we, let us suppose, pick up Nietzsche, his *Morgenröthe (Dawn)*, and come across the following line from the Rig-Veda: "There are many morning stars that have never shone," then, in order to explain the meaning of the presence of an Indian hymn in this book, we are compelled to enter into a labyrinth of factors which are situated at a distance of thrice-nine kingdoms from their economic base.

We deliberately chose such a "confused" example in order to say: "Olympus" completely understands the Pluh penpushers, who have not the least idea what the term "psychological Europe" represents.

Historical materialism, as is well known, never neglects the psychological factor. On the contrary, it admits its influence upon events, and considers it an entirely normal phenomenon in socio-political life. Therefore, the word "psychology" is not so very threatening, and would be even less so, if timid people were to leaf through the *ABC of Communism* a little more often; *they would then discover that this factor, which they find so mysterious and inaccessible, is nothing other than the living human being, with his or her conceptions, will, and talents.*

There now remains for us only to draw on elementary logic and come up with a syllogism that reads something like this: if the psychological factor influences socio-political life, and the living human being is identical with this factor, then, obviously, history is made not only by economics but also by living people.

Engels has already said the same thing:

the development of politics, law, philosophy, literature, art, etc., take the economic base as their starting-point. However, they influence one another and the economic base.

But, who are these living people? How are we to decipher this term more concretely?

The motive-force of history is, as you know, the so-called "variable relation" of man and nature. To put it another way, we are dealing with the struggle of social man against nature. *Therefore, that living creation which we identify with the psychological factor is in essence the social person.*

And when we speak of the psychological category which is "thrusting humanity out of *prosvita*," then, obviously, we have in mind some social unit.

These elementary premises concerning the human being's role in history need restating so that we may ask ourselves:

*Has Europe not provided some type of creation which—in the measure with which the so-called "variable relation" endows it—makes history?*

You ask: "Which Europe?" Take whichever you like, "past or present, bourgeois or proletarian, eternal or ever-changing." Because, to be sure, Hamlets, Don Juans or Tartuffes existed in the past, but they also exist today; they used to be bourgeois, but they are also proletarian; you can consider them "eternal," but they will be "ever-changing." Such is the coquettish path the dialectic takes when it wanders through the labyrinth of superstructures.

Here, finally, we come upon the *ideal of a civic person*, who over the course of many ages has perfected his biological, or more accurately his psycho-physiological nature, and who *is the property of all classes*.

In this sense we have nothing against equating Lenin with Peter the Great; both belonged to the civic person type, the ideal one, that Europe has given us. The Roman Emperor Augustus, the bourgeois philosopher Voltaire, and the proletarian theorist Marx—all in this sense resemble one another.

This does not at all mean that each of them, taken in his concrete setting and in his concrete time, constitutes a supra-class phenomenon. The first, and the second, and the fifth served their own class. However, insofar as their service, while raising the culture of their class, summoned the development of new forces, that characterized the concept of progress, that superseded them and sometimes constituted their antipode—thus far one can place equation marks between Lenin and Peter the Great. Both the priest Luther and the workers' leader Bebel belong to one and the same type of European civic person. The first, and second, and fifth, and tenth did not divorce themselves from their social base, but they were all the motive forces of history in the degree that the same "variable relation" permitted. Their intellects and natures were conditioned by their socio-economic and political order. We conceive of this classic type as being in a permanent intellectual, volitional, etc., dynamic. This is the person whose biological nature is always troubled, always fully engaged.

*This is the European intelligent in the best sense of the word. This, if you like, is the sorcerer from Württemberg who revealed a grandiose civilization to us and opened up limitless vistas to our gaze. This is Doctor Faust, if we conceive of the latter as the inquisitive human spirit.*

And Spengler is quite mistaken: it is not Faust that he is carrying on his catafalque, but the "third estate," because the Württemberg doctor is immortal, as long as strong, healthy people exist.

"Aha . . . so this is what you were talking about! But isn't there some idealism in these words of yours?" Let us take a look.

The first quotation is from Mehring:<sup>37</sup>

Historical materialism never ignores the activity of spiritual forces.

The second quotation is from Plekhanov:

A great human being sees *further* than others and wills *more strongly* than others. He is a hero. Not in the sense that he can, as it were, stop or change the course of things, but in the sense that his activity is the conscious and free expression of this necessary and subconscious course. In this lies his significance; in this is his power. *This, however, is a colossal significance, a fearful power.*

This fearful power is the type we were speaking of and is the psychological Europe to which we must orient ourselves. This is what will lead our young art out onto the great and joyful highway to the universal goal.

Socialism is, on the one hand, the theory of struggle for the kingdom of freedom, on the other hand—a concrete stage in the struggle of man with nature. Therefore, one has to take a broader and deeper look at things, and one should not think that a thousand Kashchenkos,<sup>38</sup> even if they are Communists, are doing the epoch's bidding, that they will "set the tone" for a rotten, territorial Europe, that they will pull Europe out of the mud into which it has been dragged by the once mighty and glorious, now old and decrepit bourgeoisie.

This, then, is the psychological Europe, whose antithesis is Harkun-Zadunaisky's *prosvita*.

A psychological category is a living person with thoughts, a will and talents. A living person is a social one. The classic type of the civic person was developed by the West. As a superstructural phenomenon, this type influenced the economic base and the well-being of feudalists and the bourgeoisie. He or she will also influence the well-being of the proletariat. His or her social meaning is to be found in a widespread and profound activity. *For this reason one cannot conceptualize the social criterion without the psychological Europe.*

"Is that everything?"

No, now allow us to devote a few words to *prosvita*.

## Cultural Epigonism

The task of the Marxist analyst is to take into account all features of development, all the complex interrelationships among protagonists and influences.

*The ABC of Communism*

We have received an astonishing literary inheritance; we, Communists, have a tremendous responsibility for the literature that the new Russia will provide, after Pushkin, Gogol and Tolstoi.

This is the note trumpeted by *Krasnaia nov (Red Virgin Soil)*<sup>39</sup> throughout the length and breadth of the USSR. Here in Ukraine we also cry at the top of our voices, though the tune is somewhat different.

To the past belong extraordinary works of art. The "third estate" gave us the age of the Renaissance, Byron, Goethe, Hugo and so forth. We, communards, carry a tremendous responsibility: it depends entirely on us what kind of art the proletariat will produce in the period of its dictatorship.

This responsibility becomes all the more difficult when we realize that this art must be created by a culturally backward nation.

Until now no one has taken the trouble to explain the confused situation with which we are confronted in *Ukrainian* culture.

Naturally, it is not particularly difficult for some *smenovekhovets*, some Professor Kliuchnikov,<sup>40</sup> to divide the sphere of ethics into morality, law and politics, come up with the basic universal programmes, and in such a fashion defeat the irrationality of history. Because this is all done with the ultimate purpose of emphasizing on some page 177 that "Russia is the world's first liberator." Neither is it difficult for some thick-headed Petliurist to offer his solution to this problem. But for us, who do not view

the national factor as an end in itself, the questions wrapped up with this factor become even more complicated.

We are faced with this *fundamental and unexplained* dilemma:

*Are we going to approach our national art as fulfilling a service (in the given instance—serving the proletariat) and as forever subordinate, forever a reserve for those of the world's arts that have attained a high level of development?*

*Or, on the contrary, while retaining the service role shall we find it necessary to raise its artistic level to that of the world's masterpieces?*

We believe that this question can only be resolved in this way:

Since the Ukrainian nation has striven for its liberation over a period of several centuries, we consider this to be its irresistible desire to *express and realize fully* its national (not nationalistic) features.

These national features express themselves in its culture and—in conditions of free development, in conditions similar to those prevailing in the present situation—do so with the same verve, the same will to achieve parity with other peoples that we witnessed in the Romans, who in a relatively shorter period of time narrowed the gap with Greek culture. This national essence has to play itself out in art as well.

If our opinions in this case bear a resemblance to the anguished cries of our petty bourgeoisie and even fascists, this does not at all mean that we are mistaken.

Because in fact national features are nothing but the ordinary features of the culture of a given nation. They are utilized by all classes. The "third estate" made better use of them than any other. And, if the petty bourgeoisie seizes upon our idea, firstly we must say that this is because it sees in our idea a *nationalistic* essence; secondly, to the extent that their critique is justified, we sometimes have to deal with anti-Soviet positions that contain legitimate grievances.

In short, when the "national-Bolshevik" Ustrialov<sup>41</sup> accepts the Communist Party's programme, this does not mean that the programme requires correction.

*Our formulation of the question flows logically from our Party's policy on the national question.* Through such a formulation we can finally—in the realm of art—solve this "accursed problem," which is holding back the class differentiation in Ukraine, and, as a result, humanity's progress toward a Communist society.

But now, if we are to turn our attention to the actual state of affairs, we must say:

Our formulation will only lead to real results if our society begins to view our art in the focus of artistic collisions on the world scale. In other words, without for one moment losing sight of all relevant achievements of other countries, *we must find the shortest of all routes to a full flowering,*

because otherwise the way we posed the question is pointless. As for the fact that we exhibit more tendencies to backwardness—the entire history of our nation speaks for this.

This is the classic country of Harkun-Zadunaiskyism, of *prosvita*, of cultural epigonism. This is the classic country of a servile psychology. It is no accident that it gave birth to the antithesis of the psychological Europe: the “ideal” *prosvita*. When Comrade Stalin says that the development of a national culture depends on the nation which wishes to create this culture, our epigones understand this to mean: “Come and be our masters.”

From Kotliarevsky, Hulak, Metlynsky, through the “Brotherhood”<sup>42</sup> and up to and including the present day, the Ukrainian intelligentsia, with the exception of a few rebels, has suffered and continues to suffer from cultural backwardness. Our cultural activist cannot conceive of himself with the Russian conductor. He is capable only of repeating what has already gone before, of aping. He simply cannot grasp that a nation can express its cultural potential only if it discovers its own particular path of development. He cannot grasp this, because he is afraid—to dare!

Are not our current discussions about a mass art a sign of backwardness? Do we not still find ourselves reaching for the ignominious figure of Harkun and placing him on a par with Europe, if only for the sake of contrast? Perhaps you will call this lyricism too? Perhaps this is also “beating around the bush of *personalia*”?

Comrade Doroshkevych equivocates over which is preferable—*prosvita* or the aestheticizing Philistine. We do not hesitate, we say: neither is worth a penny. Philistinism is always Philistinism and always fetches the same price.

If, however, we examine concrete figures from our past who admired aestheticism, then Ievshan, and the young Semenko, and Vorony<sup>43</sup> are for us not only the representatives of certain social groups, but also tragic moments in the history of our literature. If we take the conditions in which our Khokhlandia grew and developed, if we take into account the atmosphere of frightful backwardness in which the very same poet Vorony lived, then it is no wonder that our aesthetes went to extremes.

Has the remarkable slogan *l'art pour l'art* not gone through a definite evolution from the days of Ariosto?<sup>44</sup> Has not the ancient pass-word “beauty,” with the greater definition of class forces, not sought another kind of harmony in which could be heard civic motifs? Was not the same Pushkin (turning again to “Russian revolutionary literature”) a brilliant example of this? Is it not true that behind *Ruslan and Liudmyla*, this *Orlando furioso*, we see the civic-minded Pushkin?

Pushkin, however, lived in a normal atmosphere of cultural construction, whereas Kobylanska,<sup>45</sup> for example, found herself behind a Great Wall of China, among savages and epigones. Could she, an average talent perhaps,



in setting herself a great goal, possibly have emerged the victor?

Ukrainian aestheticism, as Comrade Doroshkevych tells us, "constituted the most superficial membrane in our civic life and the least influential one in our literature." Does this, however, signify that it was an anti-social phenomenon?

If the formula "art for art's sake" is a symptom of the degeneration of art, and of society as well, it must be said that in the period of our Ukrainian aestheticism our national art and our national society were only just beginning to find their feet. But, even if we do not accept this premise, in calling for the acceptance of the psychological West we simultaneously attach great social significance to the representatives of our Modernist, ethical Europe. *Because we set out not from the saccharine, populist premises, which retard national development, but from a profound understanding of the national problem.*

Ukrainian art must find the highest aesthetic values. And on this path the Voronys and Ievshans were a phenomenon of social importance. For us the eminent "muzhik" Franko, who considers Flaubert to have been a fool, is less dear than (let this not be *personalia!*) the aesthetic Semenko, this tragic figure against the backdrop of our backward reality.

As for an ideal revolutionary and citizen—you will find none greater than Panko Kulish.<sup>46</sup> As far as we can make out he is the only bright light that shines out of the dark Ukrainian past. He alone can be considered a true European, a man who came close to being the type of the Western intellectual. And we fail entirely to understand why Comrade Doroshkevych considers him a representative of "black Europe;" in our opinion this is precisely red Europe. Because we see in "red" nothing other than a symbol of struggle.

Kulish was, in essence, an ideologist of a strong "third estate," and were he not to have come up against the dead wall of cultural epigonism in the contemporary Ukrainian intelligentsia, we would never have had during the Civil War the kind of leaders who always followed the tail of the masses. *Just as in the history of humanity national wars were a revolutionary, red phenomenon in their day, in the same way for our country Kulish was the progressive, red Europe.*

Does this mean we are advising that Kobylianska or Kulish be taken as an ideal? Whoever might think so would be naive. We only want to look truth in the eyes.

These people were on the right path, but, having come up against native backwardness, they remained tragic figures, full of contradictions and errors. As for their ideology, clearly it was bourgeois—which is to say that at the given moment it is regressive, counter-revolutionary and unnecessary for us.

"But just wait a moment," Doroshkevych stays us:

to place such abstract, European demands before our writer now—forgive us, but this is to underestimate the social possibilities and demands of our age. Our writer, who is the product of the poor—and middle-peasant village and seldom of the town, does not finish the classical high school, does not complete a course at the historico-philological faculty of St. Vladimir's University.

Our honourable opponent must forgive us, but in this tirade we sense, in the first place, the aristocratic tone of the populist intelligent, and, in the second place, we detect here the very same "underestimation of the social possibilities of our age."

First of all, what are the demands of our age?

This age demands of us, as a young class, and as a young nation, the creation at all costs of a new and genuine art.

Secondly, what are its social possibilities? To be sure, the social possibilities of the writer about whom Comrade Doroshkevych spoke are identical with the corresponding possibilities of some savage.

But is he a writer? This is the heart of the question.

In our opinion, of course not!... as long as we are speaking not of a penpusher, but a real writer. As far as a genuine artist of the word is concerned, he can even do without being a watchman in St. Vladimir's University (Gorky, for instance, was never a watchman), *but he must understand this abstract Europe.*

We have already cited Marx to the effect that "certain periods in the flowering of art do not in any way correspond to the general development of society." We could quote him again, but we think enough is enough! What can be unclear when we say that every class, including the proletariat, creates its own art *through its more or less talented youth* and absolutely not through the totality of its members. Is it not self-evident that this youth can in cultural terms stand a hundred, a thousand heads above its class?

Our real-life capabilities are indeed of a low order. But this still does not mean that we have to take delight in that primitive, half-savage writing which our new *raznochinets* provides for us. Vergil the provincial did not attend St. Vladimir's Classical Grammar School either and all the same... all the same he was Vergil. Zlatovratsky and Uspensky<sup>47</sup> failed to produce works on the level of Turgenev's not because they were *raznochintsy*, but mainly because Russian bourgeois-landlord literature went into a decline... and (returning to what we said earlier) because the social group which they represented, namely the petty-bourgeois Philistines and the peasantry, will never be able to take upon themselves a historical mission, because—again we repeat ourselves—for this stratum art has a

narrowly-utilitarian significance. As a rule they are *raznochintsy* among the masses.

If we take particular individuals who attempted to represent the "third estate," then nothing prevented "the raging Vissarion,"<sup>48</sup> for example, a typical *raznochinets*, from becoming the greatest Russian critic, head and shoulders above all the critics from the gentry. Even our opponent's perception of the *raznochinets* Dostoevsky is somewhat off-beam. Dostoevsky's "Notes"<sup>49</sup> carry greater weight in world literature than does the "French" Turgenev. This is *our* opinion—Doroshkevych thinks otherwise.

In general it must be said that the *raznochinets*—peasant-worker analogy is "a little, and even more than a little" unsuccessful. It cannot be used to give evidence on behalf of—more correctly, to justify—contemporary Zlatovratskys in miniature.

Let Comrade Doroshkevych forgive us one more time, but we sense in such attempts the fragrance of the magical apple "with a stain upon it" from the basket of the beautiful, but distant and inaccessible "Lisa Kalitina."<sup>50</sup> More concretely: these are all accessories from the populist trunk, and they derive their genealogy from that culture of the Ukrainian intelligentsia which follows the conductor's baton wielded by the Russian "grandfather of the 1860s."

Life is becoming more complex. Other parallels, comparisons, analogies must be sought. It is not a question of our striking up an alliance with Hrinchenko's<sup>51</sup> generation. We, like the proletariat, trace our lineage from Kulish, from the great "third estate." We have nothing in common with the potential bourgeois. We shall not produce narrowly utilitarian saccharin.

Comrade Doroshkevych failed to justify the illiteracy of our writer, because he approached the system of superstructures too crudely. Art does not always present us with the following logical sequence: nobleman-*raznochinets*—peasant-worker. Sometimes we get: the nobleman, followed by the peasant Shevchenko. And where is Vynnychenko,<sup>52</sup> then? In emigration, obviously.

Comrade Doroshkevych, in justifying the illiteracy of our writer, who is incapable of understanding the psychological Europe, is by this very act propagating so-called massism. In as much as this "red" trash is produced under the pressure of the ideology of the Stolypin peasant, we find that we are able to cite the following passage from Tugenhold<sup>53</sup> without troubling our conscience:

decadence is the ever growing over-production of artists: colossal exhibitions, markets full of pictures, where the genuine works of arts become lost in a whole sea of weeds, a countless throng of epigones—those squealing piglets

who throw themselves insatiably on every greater artist, who sully and drag into absurdity every great idea. Finally, decadence is the complete estrangement between the people and artistic culture, between the public and the artist. But all these symptoms bear witness not so much to the decline of art as to the twilight of our culture.

We perceive all these signs among ourselves. Decadence has reached its culmination point. We beat the tocsin and proclaim:

The class which gave us the brilliant theoreticians and practitioners of revolution cannot fail to soon give us artists of greater and lesser talent. A Vergil will come... perhaps even now he is making his way from the provinces, perhaps even now he is not alone. He was not even a watchman at the University of St. Vladimir, but he (if this really is he!) will open a new page in the history of world art. With his arrival cultural epigonism will be dealt a terrible mortal blow.

Oh, hell! Forgive us: more lyricism. So on to the last question.

## Formalism?

Yes, we have no literature! "Well that's wonderful! Just listen to this!" I hear a thousand voices reply to my bold comment. "And what about our journals, that are devoted to angling for European enlightenment. And our almanacs, full of brilliant extracts from unfinished poems, dramas, fantasies; and our libraries crammed full of many thousands of Russian works; and our Homers, Shakespeares, Goethes, Walter Scotts, Byrons, Schillers, Balzacs, Corneilles, Molières, Aristophanes? Have we not produced Lomonosov, Kheraskov, Derzhavin, Bogdanovich, Petrov, Dmitriev, Karamzin, Krylov, Batiushkov, Zhukovsky, Pushkin, Baratynsky and many others? What will you say to that?" Only this, gentlemen: although I do not have the honour of being a nobleman, I do possess my own fancy, as a result of which I steadfastly keep to the fatal opinion that, in spite... [there follows an enormous hiatus] of all this, we have not literature.

Vissarion Belinsky,  
*Literaturnye mechtaniia (Literary Musings)*

"The Devil take it!" How sick we are of all this! Sometimes one sits and ponders: "Perhaps this is all just milling the wind?" And this brings on such an attack of despair, one could crawl into the grave right there. Only the sporting "come on, then!" summons one: "come on, then, prove that you have the energy; come on, prove that you are able to remain faithful to your convictions and not betray them; come on, then!"

We envy you, "raging" Vissarion..., because there were no *opoiazovtsy*<sup>54</sup> in your day. Believe us, you too would have been a formalist. Indeed, with such a magnificent Pleiad of writers behind you, you maintained: "We have no literature." Is this not formalism? We in our day have not even had the pleasure of finally reading a few bad Pushkins..., but just try to express your "fancy" today! Eh? Comrade Pylypenko will "give you such a sermon," you won't even make it to the grave!

"What? We have no literature, you say? Ah, you 'macromane,' you bloody maniac... you miserable formalist!"

In short, our opponents know how to swear (see issue no. 5 of *Pluzhanyyn (Ploughman)* . . . ; but unfortunately their curses are bare-faced, empty and quite unconvincing.

On what do they base their accusation of formalism, the same hackneyed demagoguery or a misunderstanding of this term?

In any case, both assumptions are equally "flattering." If but we take the first one, it does them no honour; but the second . . . does them no honour either.

Therefore, we ought to take something in-between: you have heard that there is some kind of formalism, that it defines some kind of idealist school, that some kind of *opoiazovtsy* profess it, that these *opoiazovtsy* are, so to speak, "in opposition" to someone or other. And you have also heard tell that the "olympians" (by the way, a tremendous achievement: Comrade Pylypenko has finally placed the "olympians" in parentheses) are very aggressive about the artistic side of things. Therefore, why not call them formalists, the more so since they cry: "We have no literature!"

This is exactly how the ideologist of massism put it:

There was a time Comrade Trotsky fought a good fight with the formalists in poetry (and here Khvylovy is playing this very same role of a formalist).

That Trotsky "fought a good fight with the formalists"—is true. But what does Khvylovy have to do with it? Where has he stated his views concerning formalism? When did this occur?—allow us to ask.

"What do you mean 'when did this occur?' What about 'Romantic vitaism'? Is this not formalism? Is this not idealism? Is this not, after all . . . Zerovism?" (Our leader had not yet read Zerov at the time he wrote this.)

Comrade Pylypenko goes on to support his argument. He agrees that

every class and its art pass through definite cycles of development: birth, decline and death. A "closed circle." But the labouring class *will never* die. Proletarian art will translate itself into the art of the classless age not as a result of a revolution, but organically. Therefore, there is no "closed circle" in this case, and consequently not all the laws of bourgeois art are applicable to the art of the proletariat. Khvylovy idealizes art, raises it above the class struggle. . . .

He has forgotten about . . . the materialist world-view and has substituted the latter with "vitaism."

Well, then, let us call upon healthy logic as our expert and explain what the above tirade is essentially all about.

We shall not dwell on the "labouring" class. Indeed, to whom can this be a reference? We know various kinds of labourer: the proletariat labours, but so do many other kinds of people. For a peasant newspaper this word

might be appropriate, but for a theory of art, hardly.

Nor shall we dwell upon the interesting formula: "the labouring class will never die." Because, really, from the theoretical point of view this is complete nonsense.

We are not concerned with these insignificant, though characteristic lapses, but with another side of the question.

Comrade Pylypenko obviously spent a long time trying to "wrap his brain" around our "Romantic vitaism." Obviously he spent more than one hour scrutinizing it for idealism and a deviation from the materialist world-view. What, however, was he able to come up with?

Nothing more than the same demagoguery he has been force-feeding us with for several months now.

Having cited a passage from our book of pamphlets, which reads: "Proletarian art will pass through the stages of romanticism, realism, etc. This is a closed circle of the laws of artistic development," he immediately presents the following commentary: "This contains truth mixed with lies. Every class passes through a cycle of development: birth, flowering decline and death. The 'circle.' But the labouring class will never die."

We ask the reader to think about these two quotations and then be honest with us: is the kind of behaviour toward one's opponent that Comrade Pylypenko exhibits permissible; and does he not treat his audience superciliously, suggesting: "They won't understand what's going on, anyway?"

*We are speaking of the laws of creative development, and Pylypenko—of the laws of existence of art in the narrow sense.*

*We are speaking of romanticism, realism, and Pylypenko of birth, flowering, decline and death.*

As you see, our "closed circle" has nothing to do with his "closed circle." As you see, this is simply improper treatment of the materials at hand. As you see, it is simply putting one's stakes on the fool.

Therefore, inasmuch as we never mentioned either "birth" or "death" anywhere, we never could have stated that "proletarian art will translate itself into the art of the classless age as the result of a revolution." All this is the product of Comrade Pylypenko's inflamed imagination.

*What will happen to art after some thousand years—we do not know, and we are not in the least bit interested in this.*

We are talking about the transitional epoch and are saying that the art of this period is subject to the same laws of development as bourgeois art. What these laws are—we have already stated above.

The same article by Trotsky that our opponent quotes from states:

Artistic creativity is always a complex reworking of old forms under the influence of new impulses.

What does this mean? Is it not the same thing we are saying? Our romanticism, realism, etc., is just such a "complex reworking." Therefore, instead of indulging in demagoguery and imputing "flowering, decline and death" to us, Comrade Pylypenko ought to have read the author whom he cites a little more attentively. By attempting to accuse us of a deviation from the materialist world-view, our opponent has only succeeded in revealing his own weaknesses. It is interesting to observe how the head of Pluh flounders about in materialism. One could hardly imagine a more rewarding role than that of deflator of the "pompous" Khvylovy, who constantly conceals the poverty of his ideas behind high-flown phrases and calendar aphorisms. But—the devil with it—even this role proves too difficult.

Just take a look; how did we present "Romantic vitalism?" As the antithesis to the liquidation of art. Is it really necessary to attach so much importance to the fact that "vitalism" sounds like "biological vitalism?" We deliberately made this grammatical mistake and left the "l" out, so as not to lead our opponents into temptation. Consider this analogy: not so long ago the "notorious" Spengler wrote a refutation; something completely different from what he had in mind was being attributed to his concept of "relativism." Our contemporary realism, according to Voronsky, can almost be equated with materialism. But was not Saint Augustine, this typical idealist, also called a realist in his day? The important thing is not the name, but what lies behind the name. Of course Kant was a formalist, of course Shklovsky preaches idealism. But what does this have to do with us? Where in all this is there a connection between our theory and biological vitalism? How is it obvious that our theory "fetishizes particular aspects of the process?" How on earth do you reach the conclusion that we, like John the Evangelist, say: "In the beginning was the word?"

*The single fact that we do not conceive of a classless art in a class society confounds all the unjust accusations that we are formalists.* Still, we must answer for our words, even when they are expressed by a "massist" critic. With all the more reason Pylypenko, as the ideologist of massism, should answer for his. No sooner had he uttered two or three phrases than his talentless pupils picked up the theme:

The new association [Comrade Shchupak writes of us]—if it is ever created—[it has been created!! M.Kh.] will stress the primacy of form over ideology, which is grist to the mill of his *oplichnyky* [henchmen—Eds.]. Although our friend is very pretentious, as you can tell, we are firmly convinced that he is about as qualified to discuss formalism as we are to discuss penpushing. Perhaps the reading of Trotsky confused him? If this is the case, then let him study this author more closely:



it is quite correct that the principles of Marxism alone are never enough to judge, reject or accept a work of art. The products of artistic creativity should in the first place be judged by their own laws, which is to say by the laws of art. Only Marxism, however, can explain the "why," the "whence," etc.

Did we not say the same thing? An artistic work must "be judged in the first place by the laws of art." And this certainly does not signify that we put forward the "primacy of form" over that of "ideology," or that we wish to "do the bidding of our *oplichnyky*." (And what a word, by the way! A hair's breadth away from *oprichniki*.<sup>55</sup> Only Comrade Shchupak could have thought this one up.) In order to come to a proper understanding of what Trotsky was saying in the above quotation, one, of course, has to be something more than a vulgar Marxist; one has to have some understanding of dialectics.

When an adherent of Pluh, even one from Kiev at that, composes some work, we must first of all take a look and ask ourselves: what has he written—a brief journalistic note or a creative work?

"Do we have the right (as a Marxist) to do this?"

Of course, we do; otherwise we would have no idea whose acquaintance we had the pleasure of, whose thoughts we had the honour of attending.

What, then, is the point? What does formalism and "primacy" have to do with all this? When we look at the matter a little more closely, we see this picture: Khvylovy "provokes" with his calendar aphorisms; his opponents accept this as good coin and then try to force a few "scholarly precepts" out of themselves.

*Neither Shklovsky, nor Jakobson, nor Kruchenykh<sup>56</sup> are our travelling-companions, nor are the vulgar Marxists.*

We consider formalism to be an idealist current in the arts, which has its own social roots. These roots lie in a bourgeois world-view. Formalism, as a technical apparatus, has every right to exist and we ourselves utilize it. But, in encouraging perfection in form, we never lose sight of the fundamental principle of Marxist aesthetics:

to follow in Michaelangelo's footsteps successfully, one has to know how to conceive and feel in the manner of the great Florentine.

Plekhanov expressed this idea on the occasion of an artistic exhibition in Venice. We also subscribe to this opinion. But is not this where the "formalist bones" are buried? Because, really, what do the incompetent efforts we observe in contemporary works amount to? What does the "young life" of Pluh amount to? Is it not a wretched parody on creative work and the creative artist?

The heart of the matter lies not in "assonance and alliteration," but once again in the need to "conceive and feel" (even on a miniature scale) the way the great Florentine did. The point is that we approach our tasks in an *amateurish* fashion. The only writer who deserves to exist is one who is capable of cognizing life, who does not point to his "platform" every other minute. This does not mean that he has no need to reassess periodically the ideology of his work, but it does mean that *art cannot be created by circulars*. No "assonance and alliteration"—that which constitutes genuine formalism—will bring him salvation if he does not take a look at the world through the independent gaze of his class world-view. This is why we say: we deeply respect all of you, the 1,200 writers, Khvylovy included, who over a period of eight years have not produced a single longer work, a single novel. But let us stop deceiving ourselves; in an atmosphere of savage opinions toward art we will continue bringing up the rear, far behind other countries, for another eight years, if not another eighty.

This is our "formalism," and if it has nothing in common with the real one, we are not to blame, because we never called it formalism.

As far as *opoiazism* is concerned, we have this to add:

Having accepted a given timely idea as the basis of a work, one cannot fail to consider how best to communicate it. Here the formalists can to a certain extent help us as a school of technique. And, if some contemporary writers who are enthusiastic about "great" themes fail to pay attention to the "readability" of their works, then this is a sad thing, for they also lack the ability to "conceive" the way the aforementioned Florentine could.

We have put forward all these elementary principles only because we are constantly being baited with formalism. Indeed, even the writing of this chapter has been an embarrassment: everything is so "simple and clear" . . . there is no need for any "primacies."

*As you can see, our fundamental demand is the ability to think and feel.* In our epoch of great upheavals, great audacity, and great flights, we cannot conceive of the creative artist any differently. That is why we are drawing him to the psychological Europe, and why we challenge him to kill the age-old epigonism within himself.

Hence, only a prejudiced person will search for the ideology of formalism in our programme.

#### THE NEW ORGANIZATIONAL PATH: A SUMMARY

Some busybody has already told Comrade Shchupak how we conceive of the new organizational path: "This association which is emerging under the sign of hostility to organizational and community work is being proclaimed as an organization of local significance," but, nevertheless, it "aspires to a pan-Ukrainian scale."

We would like to begin by informing the head of Pluh in Kiev that this busybody, who was not well informed about the ins and outs of Kharkiv literature, told him a garbled story: none of the "olympians" ever put forward a point such as this. However, if by organizational and community work we understand the fashion it assumes in Hart and Pluh, then Shchupak is justified in informing society that we are, indeed, enemies of this kind of work. Because the truth is:

The tasks of a writer are *broader and more far-reaching* than those portrayed at Pluh evenings and those book-keepers' meetings that take place in sundry Hart-Pluh offices.

A writer's organizational and community work lies primarily in his writings; secondly, in his trade-union activity; thirdly, *in his living relationship with the masses*. If a writer spends his time lounging around with a couple of dozen hacks who have been dragged into literature artificially and—more importantly—fail to share his concerns, this cannot be defined as community work by a long chalk. On the contrary, he is divorced from it.

If, however, he in one form or another engages in civic life of his own free initiative, this is exactly what we would like to see.

Therefore we say: we have to put an end to this moribund group-mania, because it is an anti-social phenomenon.

As for seeing things on "a local or a pan-Ukrainian scale," our attitude is quite straightforward: enough of imitating "daddy"! The writer has no need for any of these pan-Ukrainian CC's. *The core of the matter lies not in the literary CC, but in literature.*

Therefore "this association" is both of a "local significance" and of a "pan-Ukrainian scale." It all depends on how "this association" will be able to influence society and what works it can produce. If its productions are read by the entire population of Ukraine, then it will be an "association on a 'pan-Ukrainian scale'"; if, let us say, only Kharkiv enjoys its works, then it will enjoy merely a "local significance."

As you see, this business of "sympathizers" is much more straightforward.

We further inform Comrade Shchupak: the members of our "club" *are bound together by an ideological principle*, and he should not believe "the woman who is pleasant in every regard."

However, to return to the point, allow us to provide some more accurate information about the new organizational path.

Here we would like, in particular, to make use of those theses that were elaborated and proposed by a group of Hart members at one of the meetings of this organization's central bureau and which were passed by the same bureau.

So, returning once more to the ABC of Communism: "the dialectic is the revolutionary nerve of Marxism." Accordingly, if we are not to be "red" reactionaries, we must examine all life's phenomena through the prism of dialectical thought. Since we are "struggling" not for Hart and Pluh, but for the worker-peasant art, for the art (particularly the literature) of the transitional period, let us see whether this art and this literature have not outlived the organizational forms in which they have existed and continue to exist in the present day.

The great social revolution put the question of organizing such literary groupings as Hart and Pluh on the order of the day. They were to be not so much a literary as a revolutionary factor; it was necessary to counterpose something to the old, whole-heartedly bourgeois art. Thus, since the creation of these groupings was, so to speak, an "urgent order" of a young class which as yet lacked its own artists and cultural traditions, all the writers in Hart and Pluh can only be regarded as being *on probation*. This very "probationary" status explains the tremendous influx into these organizations, which can still be observed today. Hart and Pluh took upon themselves not so much the role of a constructive factor as a destructive one. They were fated to play the following historical role: they were not to create the art of a young class as much as they were to demoralize the bourgeois artistic camp, in this way drawing the masses away from the old art's ideological influence. In short these worker-peasant groupings of ours played the same role as did similar organizations during the great French Revolution and later at the time of the Paris Commune.

Analyzing the work of Hart and Pluh after several years of their existence, it must be said that essentially they did accomplish this task. Moreover, they accelerated the differentiation taking place among the so-called fellow-travellers. Finally, the following recent, pertinent and—for our present situation—most important fact should be underlined:

*A certain cadre of no longer probationary but genuine, albeit writers—let us say—has been assimilated and partially developed within these organizations (although not Hart and Pluh but the laws of life are responsible for this).*

The initial stage, has, however, been passed. The Revolution has entered the realm of peaceful construction, the realm of the NEP. The struggle has not died down, but merely assumed new forms not immediately evident to the naked eye. The fierce struggle on the ideological front continues unabated. Obviously, in creative literature, as in the ideological superstructure as a whole, there must be a rule that denies peace and order.

Who, though, is to lead the struggle in this *sophisticated ideological superstructure* which we call art? Clearly, the artists and those who are well-versed in art.

Bourgeois literature will, through its conscious or subconscious agents, throw its very best forces into this struggle. The worker-peasant art has to do the same.

Here we return to the cadre of genuine—not “probationary”—writers whom we have in Hart and Pluh.

Are they, however, capable of withstanding, in art, the avalanche of the old, conservative ideology which the *nepman* and kulak today profess?

Yes, without a doubt. *But only on condition that they become to a certain extent a clear-cut, crystallized kernel.*

Beginning from the general position that they ought to influence the masses, Hart and Pluh set out to attract a wide range of people. At the time such a mass orientation had its justification; gradually, however, the absorption of new, unformed elements hindered the formation of ideologically well-defined creative individuals. Accordingly, at the present time these organizations have not simply evolved into cultural-educational ones, but threaten to make an ideological-artistic mess, an obscure, amorphous “mass,” out of the core of writers. “Existence determines consciousness,” as the Marxist formula goes.

This fact alone clearly tells us that worker-peasant literature should seek a new organizational path.

Let us go on, however. Carried away by internal organizational strife—in other words by ideological strife, because organizational struggles emerge when there is some ideological conflict—Hart and Pluh have continually held back the normal creative development of their writers, *and done so because of a tremendous obfuscation. Why should Pluh, which is not an SR organization, “in utilizing only images of the peasantry,” lead an organizational—i.e., ideological—struggle against Hart?*

As you can see, our second thesis is essentially a conclusion drawn from the first. Ensuing theses also flow from it, *because the cutting edge of the question remains the problem of a mass orientation, or massism.* One has to be very determined to empty the cauldron containing the Hart-Pluh mess produced in the NEP period. We shall not make so bold as to attempt this task, but we shall add another section to our theses:

An orientation toward the production of so-called “Komsomol,” “women’s,” “children’s” and other such literatures by these organizations emphasizes yet again that we are dealing with cultural-educational organizations, because from an artistic point of view, from the point of view of the tasks facing us, such an orientation does not pass the test of criticism. Worker-peasant literature is one and same for both workers and peasants, regardless of their party affiliation or gender. Hart and Pluh, like “Pharaoh’s ill-favoured kine,” have absorbed writers, artists, and composers (creating corresponding sectors and sections, becoming, in brief,

a new Department of Political Education). Have they, however, given these individuals anything at all? No! Have they received anything from the latter? Again, no, because . . . they are a mess; because a composer, for example, lacking the required environment, would dissipate his talent and would spend all his time thinking not about his compositions but about what he was going to say at the book-keepers' meeting.

The widespread absorption and acceptance into the ranks of new members ("May I sign up with your Pluh?"—"Where are you from?"—"From Mykytivka. A farmer."—"Why not, be my guest, put in an application!") led to the end result that most, as soon as they received membership cards immediately considered themselves full-fledged writers. This encouraged the growth of pompousness, political intrigues, and indolence.

So-called mass work consisted of organizing parties, tours and visits to one club or another and led finally to an exclusive group loyalty (the Kharkiv Pluh and Hart).

Therefore we consider it expedient for the development of art, in particular of literature, in Ukraine to create such forms of artistic, literary organization as would encourage:

The concentration of creative individuals (critics, publicistic critics, creative writers) who would on the one hand satisfy the now rising demands of the worker-peasant masses, and whose distinct and clearly visible ranks would on the other hand be capable of counterposing the new world-view of a young class to the old ideology in art.

There is no need to fear for the young creative artists from the worker-peasant masses under the conditions of proletarian statehood. *The young forces have, in spite of Hart and Pluh, been able to express themselves through the life that goes on around journals, newspapers and other publications. The young forces have wide vistas before them.*

While we do consider the organizational struggle between Hart and Pluh inexpedient, we at the same time insist: the young art can be tempered only in the fire of battles for artistic positions (based, of course, on one proletarian ideology).

Hence, not only various schools and tendencies will meet on the new organizational path, but the new forces will also find their way toward it through individual contacts.

While deeply respecting our comrades who are worker-peasant correspondents, while attaching even greater significance to their work than to our own, we simultaneously state:

The practice of a mass absorption of worker-peasant correspondents into Hart and Pluh has spoiled and continues to spoil the pioneers of cultural revolution; has turned and continues to turn many of their heads; has prevented and continues to prevent them from developing a true understanding of their tasks as worker-peasant correspondents.

Briefly, from now on one of our active slogans will be not "Let's go for quantity—who can produce more," but "*Let's go for quality.*" We must recreate the shattered artistic criterion.

Thus you can see that we face tasks which neither Hart nor Pluh can undertake under present conditions and within the old organizational forms. Having accomplished their historically positive role, by clinging to their former orientation they have become a negative phenomenon. Hence, there remains one avenue for them:

*To proclaim themselves associations for artistic self-education.* This is their only salvation, if they wish to survive. Only then will their route coincide with the new organizational path.

These are our fundamental ideas, and the new organization will be built upon them. The *writers* from both Pluh and Hart must enter this new grouping. We understand proletarian literature in the narrow sense (i.e., that literature which consciously adopts the principles of the Communist Party as the basis of its content) to be the ideological and artistic avant-garde of the literature of the transitional period. *Therefore we cannot conceive of our organization as one which would not include writers from poor- and middle-peasant backgrounds, those who accept proletarian ideology, but "utilize images of the peasantry."* In such a fashion, we wish to dot this "i" also; we do not suffer from "leftism."

What, however, does this new organizational path signify?

*Nothing else but the transference of our artistic work onto another plane.* Life itself demands this of us, so do the masses, especially that class which we wish to serve. Life does not wait for us, and, most importantly, neither does the ideology of the Stolypin peasantry. *Therefore let us make haste to the institute of Marxism.* Let us stop the illiterate "criticism" of Zerov. Let us learn to approach the phenomena of our complex reality seriously.

In ending our article, we cannot avoid once again asking the indulgence of those comrades and friends whose egos we have offended in these chapters. This is not an attempt to avoid an opponent's blow; we shall enjoy meeting it. We wish merely to state that one of our tasks was to agitate the dead quagmire into which even the "good and noble" had sunk. (It will take many, many a year to dry out this quagmire.) Our good opponents, without having taken the complexity of the situation into account, rushed into art with great pretensions but with very poor artistic and Marxist credentials. It is thus in their own interests:

Before responding to us, to become more familiar with Ukraine's and the world's cultural heritage; there are very many fine sources. If need be we can provide them with references.

Does this, then, mean that we are indeed showing off that we suffer from a megalomania? "Lord forbid," we all consider ourselves to be

average individuals (including Khvylovy! Do you hear? Even this unrecognized "genius" Khvylovy!) What, however, can one do, when one has to deal with such an Asiatica?

Therefore, we shall cease beating the tocsin when we observe that thoughtful people have arrived to take our place.

Therefore... we are not in error concerning the fundamentals. As for the details, well... the only person who never makes mistakes is one who never acts. Even if we are in error concerning fundamentals, we, nevertheless, console ourselves with the following thought:

Our work will finally be taken up not by illiterate demagogues, but by those comrades who with every word, on the one hand, will correct us, and, on the other, will support our conviction that the young class places greater artistic tasks before itself than those set for themselves by massist ideologists. Only with these comrades shall we walk shoulder to shoulder, because only together with them shall we defeat the irrationality that has fallen across our historical path.



**Addendum**  
**The “Authormobile” of the**  
**Present Day**  
**or**  
**Valerian Polishchuk in the Role**  
**of Lecturer at the**  
**Communist University**

## A Lyrical Introduction

A beetle—even one sitting on a rose—is still a beetle.

Saadi

And suddenly October dealt them all a blow. How marvellous life was then! The columns of the revolutionary army pass by my post. The civil service has run off in all directions, but someone has to supply the revolutionary army with food. And it was then that a few of us... took over all the warehouses of the "Herring Rough-neck" (... "The Petrograd Special Section Dealing with Food supplies"). We were provided with about twenty soldiers for guard-duty, and we spent above five days and nights working round the clock, distributing food, fish and meat on the orders of some revolutionary organization, whose name I no longer recall... To be sure we received material rewards for this, payment for a little over ninety hours' work—more than the task demanded. ... I remember how one night after changing the guards we and the rest of the soldiers cooked up some groats with cod-fish and read the passionate appeals of the Petrosoviet,<sup>1</sup> trying to make sense of the situation.

How did you enjoy this most revolutionary extract from Valeriian Polishchuk's autobiography? We enjoyed it thoroughly, because we sensed such a disarming directness in it, such an honesty and frankness, which one can only describe as enviable. Our only regret is that the author of this happy fragment, when he introduced himself to *L'Humanité*<sup>2</sup> (through a translator, naturally) as an ardent (or fiery) warrior and active participant in the revolutionary battles of October (this is literally what was printed: "Militant ardent, il prend une part active aux batailles révolutionnaires d'Octobre"), failed to add the following under the rubric "in what manner was your activity demonstrated:"

I was commander-in-chief of the warehouse of the "Herring Rough-neck," where I ordered around the counter-revolutionary "food, fish and meat," for which I was rewarded with an order—"for more than the task demanded"—"for a little over ninety hours' work." However, a great deal of water has flowed under the bridge since the time of the "Herring." Our supreme commander (there was a time when, on account of our own illiteracy and not out of "spitefulness," we called him a grafter)—our supreme commander became a dynamic practitioner of *vers libre*. And here is a sizzling example of his poetry, on the occasion of the *eighth* anniversary of October:

How am I to curse you, cold-blooded landlords I do not know. May the earth part under your feet; may the flaming lava of hell cover your skulls and firmly closed eyes.... Our consciences are ready to invoke all manner of impossible tortures upon you in the heat of battle. We remember you with contempt, you loathsome puke of humanity, parasitic lords; *and the spittle of repulsion flies from our tongue and mouth.*

Our emphasis.... Well, how did you enjoy this excerpt? The verslibrist, as you will have noticed, has recalled that he is a former supreme commander and "in the heat of the battle" is now straining at the leash to get at the gentry. No one has, to the best of our knowledge, even tried to restrain him, but he is already crying in advance, as it were: "It's no use, I'm burning inside," let me at those "founders of the eternal cabal" and let's have it over with! My nerves are all shot! Hold me back, boy, or—I swear—I'll tear myself away.... NEP, you say? Rubbish! Are you capable of feeling anything? Well, tell me, are you?... Aha! But I can hear the columns of the revolutionary army marching past "The Petrograd Special Section Dealing with Food Supplies," and it turns me inside out! ... And that's not all. You think I'm writing in imitation of Kosynka's "Questionnaire"?<sup>3</sup> Not at all! They're calling me to the food supplies.... Yes, sir! ... I'll be right there!... (But, please, don't forget about that reward, the order... the one for "more than the task demanded").... I'll be right there! I'm shaking with anger... and... and... I'm drooling spittle.... Oh, "Herring Rough-neck," when shall I finally strangle this "groats with cod" cooked-up by Doroshkevych-Iefremov<sup>4</sup>... or is it Zerov-Khvylovy?

So goes the jeremiad, the (entirely justified) lamenting and clamouring of our former *oplichnyk* and "now S. Pylypenko's best friend" (See the famed autobiography, and also the obscure history of his "published by the author"). These are the kinds of "works" "released" by "this here" nice little juvenile delinquent.

However, we wrote this lyrical introduction only so that our readers would be left in absolutely no doubt that the "Homer of the Revolution" still has not given up his drooling and spitting even to this day. Therefore,

if we call him a drivelling grafter (don't be offended, Valeriian, "we do not wish to suspect you of this"), please do not consider such familiarity to be vulgarity and a desire on our part to vex our *oplichnyk*. We especially request that attention not be paid to the fact that our characterization of this sweet, even though semi-literate (more later on semi-literacy) "Homer" might bear a resemblance to some similar characterization by an émigré supporter of the blue-and-yellow.<sup>5</sup> The issue here is much simpler, you see Polishchuk's spittle is equally disagreeable to everyone. This is quite simply a physiological reaction.

## I

Therefore, the issue at hand is that another person has thrown himself into the struggle of two forces: the dynamic practitioner of *vers libre*, the author of a scandalous autobiography (Shame!) and an equally boring, foul-mouthed *Evropa na vulkane* (*Europe on the Volcano*),<sup>6</sup> the "authormobile" of today, as he introduces himself.

In short, V. Polishchuk has published another booklet and is awaiting the reviews.<sup>7</sup>

Therefore we ought to begin by stating that it is definitely a booklet. It consists of two chapters and will enjoy some success... particularly among fools, insofar as this kind of success goes by the name of *succès du scandale*. If, however, we approach it objectively, we shall soon realize that the new "work" of the motorized verslibrist is extremely reminiscent of the one before last. We are referring to his penultimate production in which Polishchuk spends two signatures of printed paper eating "revolutionary" eggplant and an equally "red" broth spiced with a few dumplings. We are, in a word, discussing the work rejected by literally everyone with any self-respect and one that probably contains a large dose of the same, aforementioned "Shame!"

Of course, we should really ignore this new "circulation of cultural blood" too. But enough is enough! It is about time the "authormobile" of today was dispatched to the garage where he belongs. Indeed, how long can he pull the wool over the eyes of naive students in the "Kharkiv Chair for Scientific Research into the History of Ukrainian Culture" and somehow even succeed in worming his way into... a Communist university. We find it all the more easy to do this dispatching since the drooling grafter (do not take offence, Valeriian, "we do not wish to suspect you of this") has with his spittle reached as far as our honourable pamphleteer Mykola Khvylovy, who incidentally, has long awaited the opportunity to put an end to this sore on the body of proletarian literature.

Well, in the first place, a couple of words concerning the *ad hominem* attacks. We shall not dwell on them (this would be to lack self-respect). However, bearing in mind that Polishchuk's work could find its way into the hands of some half-educated reader, we consider it necessary at the present moment—and for our own amusement—to devote a few lines to this matter.

And therefore: the simulated boldness of our "rough-necked herring" is very transparent. We offer the following as an example:

Polishchuk, like his *papasha* Pylypenko, first seized hold of vitaism, claiming that it was an appalling display of ignorance to drop the "I" from it, *even if this was done consciously, as was said*.

There you have it! And what did you think it was, a sign of sophistication? Ignorance, friend! Plain ignorance! That's why we have to go around searching for a Zerov.

Now dynamism, on the other hand, this is something to our liking! Knowing full well that one day or another we would get around to presenting him with the "order" of semi-literacy, Polishchuk moves into a counter-attack, announcing:

It is a sign of vulgarity to use so many foreign words: "opponents," "classical aphorism," "solidarity," etc.

Well, there you have it again! And what did you think it was, a sign of culturedness?

He's right. Absolutely right.

Vulgarity quite frequently masquerades behind fancy, high-flown language (this we shall prove further on, when we analyze the "work" of the "authormobile" of today), but neither "opponents" nor "classical aphorism" have ever belonged to this category when they were used against "groats with cod." There are, of course, different ways of expressing oneself. One could say:

The philosophical works of V. Polishchuk are a collection of hackneyed ideas which ought to be expressed in short, laconic form and which, unfortunately, have stretched themselves out into poems four yards long.

And there again one could also put it another way:

V. Polishchuk is simply a classical aphorism taken from the State Publishing House's *Practical Calendar*.

We consider the latter to be superior definition, by virtue of its dynamism, among other things . . . and in spite of its foreign origins.

Let us, however, drop this sparring with our polemical rapier. If anyone is curious as to how we intend parrying one *ad hominem* attack or another, they are welcome to arrange a tournament; we shall be more than happy to participate. For the moment let us determine whether the visage of the "military field marshal" can be observed on the pages of our "author's"

last "work" and . . . and . . . In short, let us continue.

We shall begin with the first article, which is called "The Tasks of the Day." These tasks are as follows: "1) into the international arena! 2) mechanization, 3) dynamism, 4) materialist language, 5) art for the workers." As you can tell, "'proper serious' tasks they are." Therefore, let us inquire how the "ardent warrior and participant in October's battles" ("militant ardent, etc.") solves them.

Briefly, this is his scheme: there were three periods and now the fourth has arrived. In the first period we had Kotliarevsky and others; in the second—Drahomanov and Franko;<sup>8</sup> in the third—Lesia Ukrainka and Kotsiubynsky together with the Modernists.<sup>9</sup> The first period "did not renounce its own"; the second is characterized by the idea that "we ought to be cultured and nationally conscious"; and the third is defined by the idea that "we can be like Western Europe." As for the fourth, we shall come to it in a moment.

Well, how do you like this division? It's "real clever" in our opinion. Really, did not the writers in Polishchuk's second period take upon themselves the tasks assigned those of the third? Did Drahomanov and Franko not make use of "European subjects"? And, conversely, did Lesia Ukrainka not appeal for *culturedness* and national consciousness? Of course, there were some nuances between the attitude of the "manful woman" and that of the "wise Galician," inasmuch as the former belonged to the younger generation; but these nuances were not destined to catch the eye of our verslibrist. His divisions are nothing but secondary-school writing exercises.

However, immediately following the October Revolution [writes our "rough-necked herring"] the fourth period begins. We are not only capable of taking from Europe, but *we have* [his emphasis] and can give something original of our own that would contribute to the world's treasury.

Do we really? So much so that the fact warrants underlining? Well, here's a tale! Is he, perhaps, referring to *Europe on the Volcano*? No, answers Polishchuk: "the idea of the proletarian revolution, embodied in cultural and literary forms!" So this is it! And we never even thought of it! In short, the grafter is proposing that a "competition" be organized against the headquarters of the world revolution—the Communist Party. Not a bad proposition, after all.

But who is going to contribute this "idea" to the aforementioned "treasury"? The booklet makes it clear that not all contemporary Ukrainian writers are capable of this, because although several of them do have this "idea," they all are formally either Nadsons, or Pilniaks,<sup>10</sup> or neoclassicists. This leaves us with the avant-garde verslibrist Polishchuk . . . and to a lesser degree Pylypenko . . . or, more correctly, the

Pluh writers. Obviously, it is they who are supposed to create a din in the "world's treasury." An idea that is, as you see, worthy of consideration. In a word: Up with Comrade Petnikov<sup>11</sup> and that's it! This is why Polishchuk studied foreign languages, in order to do translations . . . or rather to make money. Furthermore, have you not heard that "Scandinavian literature has conquered itself a place in the world arena." Polishchuk is ready to back this up, because he has heard a little about Hamsun.<sup>12</sup>

However, no matter how much our "author" wishes to "put on a show" on a "big scale," we must warn him:

Do not rush too hard, friend, lest you run out of breath! The Scandinavians conquered Europe when they produced *Victoria*, *Pan*, and *Sult (Hunger)*,<sup>13</sup> etc. A mere cry to take Europe by storm will not be enough, brother! This kind of diffusion is like the one that way-laid the frog who wanted to be an ox. Do you remember this fable?

Of course, one could always "form an international society of friends of Ukrainian culture," but then the "fourth period" would be characterized by the translation into European languages of writers belonging to previous "periods" . . . and also, perhaps, by translations of secondary works. This is the heart of the matter!

In short, the first task of gaining the "international arena" and "storming Europe" is identical with the task that several *khatians* of average intellectual abilities had set themselves. It is quite symptomatic, therefore, that Polishchuk, as a true vulgarized "neo-*khatian*," brought back from Europe a bowler hat and a pair of Jemmies.

We have already explained in earlier articles how we view Europe. In comparison, how pathetic this illiterate treatment of Europe sounds. If, in fact, the "authormobile" of today is correct in saying that we are living through the "fourth period," then, in spite of what various Khlestakovs say, it will be characterized by *study, the creation and strengthening of particular ties with the revolutionary cultural traditions of the Ukrainian and European past*. The preceding generation of Ukrainian writers almost broke into Europe. Our own generation, for many reasons, will hardly succeed in accomplishing this task. The next generation has to do this, carrying the ideas of the proletarian revolution. But to do so, they must *immediately* finish with the Khlestakovs, who are in fact an element of a modernized *prosvita*.

In a word, if the "ardent warrior of October's revolutionary battles" (militant ardent, etc.), instead of composing poems four yards long and throwing "revolutionary" cod-fish around, was to read a little Lenin, for example, he might discover quite a few useful ideas therein.

## II

So what, then, is the second task?—The second? . . . “Mechanization,” of course. Here Polishchuk plays the part of a mechanic, so to speak. Here the “rough-necked herring” attempts to prove that “the second foundation-stone of our existence is the power supply of Ukraine and the mechanization of our life.”

Not a bad idea, to be sure. We have come across it more than once—in *Ukrainskyi ekonomist* (*Ukrainian Economist*), among other places. But what does Polishchuk have to do with this?

“What do you mean, what does he have to do with it? Isn’t it true that most people think Ukrainian culture is the village, while Russian culture is the town? When we dispose of this idea, then we shall be able to ‘mechanize life.’”

Good Lord, how absurd! What triple-layered balderdash! Only an “ardent warrior” could come up with an idea like this. Inasmuch as the Ukrainian town was always the homestead of Russification, the population knew the town as such. Now, however, that the town has assumed the role of leading Ukrainization, the population itself has begun to take a closer look at our culture.

“But when will people say that the ‘Ukrainian town is Ukrainian culture?’” clamours Polishchuk.

Obviously, friend, when we succeed in building this Ukrainian culture in the town. The appearance in Kharkiv, let us say, of such cultural focal points as the State Drama or State Opera has gradually begun to convince the population that the town no longer represents Russian culture.

The transfer of such notable actors as Petipa<sup>14</sup> from the Russian state to the Ukrainian is one of the most convincing testimonies to this.

The “authormobile” of today is, nevertheless, terribly agitated and continues to argue with windmills. “Our workers,” he says, “are not Russians.” In order to emphasize this article of his Talmud, he even dragged Dontsov<sup>15</sup> into the debate, gingerly putting one foot . . . across the border.

What is the issue? Dontsov believes that the Ukrainian intelligentsia “would be able to construct its ideology on the peasantry alone”? Then let him think so! Some of our own Soviet citizens think the same? Good luck to them! We, on the other hand, are concerned with how to impart Ukrainian culture to the working class, and we think that we shall succeed in doing this in a few years, because this is what our party demands of us. Clearly, when this is accomplished, no one will even dare to say that “our working class is Russian.”



Therefore such superficial talk appears to us to be empty prattle (do not take, offence, Valeriian, "we do not wish to suspect you of this"), and in practical everyday life is aimed at making the chickens laugh...and keeping the émigrés entertained. And, if this balderdash receives the attention of youth from the Communist university, we can only raise our eyebrows in astonishment.

To put it briefly, "Ukraine's energy supply"—a subject one can learn about in popular brochures—cannot be connected with Spanish windmills. And if anyone still has his doubts about the political illiteracy of our "author," let him listen to this twaddle:

Ukrainian culture *can and ought* [his italics] to rest even now upon the workers of heavy and light industry.

How is this? What is this "rest" business about? What does our "rough-necked herring" have in mind? Proletarian ideology? If that is so, why the intimidating language? Why this special section devoted to mechanization? Why does he have to announce so loudly that "Ukrainian culture of the new times" must be a culture not of the countryside but of industry?

Why does he say this, you ask?... Because he feels the need to display his neo-*khatian*,... or rather *prosvitian* wisdom. He feels the need to "let fly" with a little high-flown verbiage, the better to hide his political and poetic incompetence. Further on, in fact, the following "story" comes to light: all this hullabaloo about "industry, mechanization and energetics" comes down to the need... "to devote a part of one's creative skills to the miner" and "to depict sugar-refineries." Why, he argues, should we not set about this task? After all, "Cherniavsky, Vynnychenko and Cherkasenko"<sup>16</sup> wrote about the worker, didn't they?"

In a word, the titmouse wanted to set the sea afire, but the whole thing turned out to be a flop... squared (flop = A; thus A<sup>2</sup>).

And if later the ardent warrior cries out that "the cornflower poets will soon disappear," we "maliciously Oh, really? Are you not, perhaps, speaking of "Kosynka, Osmachka and even Tychyna"<sup>17</sup> who are blocking your path? To be fair, Polishchuk does later mention that he also sins (precisely sins, and does not create) "with the cornflowers" (see his "Duma about Barmachykha" and various "Fields of Rye"), but this, you must understand, was written "consciously, infrequently and for the current moment." In short: Up with New Ascania and "May-day rain from the heavens!"<sup>18</sup>

Ai-ai-ai-ai-ai-ai! And this is written by a person who once gave promise of becoming a *fairly* good poet—certainly not one of the worst? Look at what lack of a sense of proportion and of self-criticism can lead to! Ai-ai-ai-ai-ai-ai!

These, therefore, are the first two tasks. We shall finish our review of his introductory article at this point, because the third "task" we shall deal with last, in order not to repeat ourselves; the fourth and fifth are not worth dwelling on: the fifth is not explained by the author (it is merely a "fine phrase," so to speak), and the fourth is a weak paraphrasing of Dolengo's<sup>19</sup> scholarly article.

### III

There follows a "polemical" digression on the contemporary situation. Here the verslibrist "goes after" Khvylovy, Zerov and Doroshkevych. He "goes after" them tenaciously—one has to give him his due. He would make quite a good hackwriter for the yellow press. It is a pity, though, that he fails to explain "who this Zerov is, who is leading the way," because his remaining attempts to make use of provincial hearsay are very unconvincing. The provincial *naif* thinks that "it is not the neoclassicists who stand at the head of Europe, but the verslibrists." We shall later speak of V. Polishchuk's verslibrism; for the moment allow us to state:

*The vanguard of contemporary European poetry currently faces uncharted poetical (versificatory) terrain. As for vers libre, without even having bloomed it is fading, living out its last days.* Therefore to yearn for it (even in the neo-khatian sense) is to suffer from epigonism...or, perhaps, "authormobilism." Our "rough-necked herring", who does not know any foreign languages (do not take offence, Valerian, "we do not wish to suspect you of this"), is still today reading the old Russian sources.

So, "dear friend," drop your pretensions! You cannot talk this way in Kharkiv, still less in Kiev. Pull the wool over their eyes in the backwaters, but not here. The Asiatic renaissance does not appeal to you? Fine! But do not display your uncouthness. The People's Commissariat for Education sent you to Europe? Wonderful! But, having glanced at it with one eye, don't be like the "Petersburg Secretary" from the well-known play who thought that "there ain't no educated people at all" in the provinces.

If Zerov refuses to recognize your "poetics" (more about this later), he obviously knows what he is talking about. You ought to ask yourself why this is so. And you should also consider why it is that Khvylovy, who understands Europe (as you yourself admit), does not "despise" the neoclassicists. And when you say that "the Egyptians did not copy, but organized nature," we find it difficult to believe you, because you know about as much about Egyptian culture as your *vers libre* resembles poetry. If we express this in the manner of your pretentious formulas, it would appear thus:

Egyptian culture—A; Polishchuk—B; poetical work—C; Polishchuk's *vers libre*—D. Therefore, we get:

$$A : B = C : D$$

In any case it ought to be said that the "philosopher with the head of a child"<sup>20</sup> is not consciously being bombastic; he just does not understand. After all, his entire "erudition" does not stretch beyond that of the "Petrograd Secretary."

However much I might love the Corinthian order in architecture [writes Polishchuk], I would not propose that the All-Ukrainian 'Palace of Labour,' which contains examples of modern technology, be built in any style other than that of contemporary reinforced-concrete and glass constructions.

First of all, Polishchuk manages to misspell the word: it should be 'orden' (i.e., style) in Ukrainian. Perhaps our "ardent warrior of October's revolutionary battles" (militant ardent, etc.) recalled his order "for a little over ninety hours' work" and became over-excited? Anything is possible! However, what is this style of contemporary constructions? If Polishchuk is under the impression that it is a style stripped of all unnecessary embellishments, we must inform him that the *columns* (*these same orders—ordens, in Ukrainian—he mentions*), whether Corinthian, or Assyrian, etc., were not invariably built for the purpose of embellishment. Before holding forth on some new architectural style, he should have a word with a few architects and then inform us more concretely, "in materialist language," otherwise we might think the "rough-necked herring" was not overly burdened with architectural knowledge. Indeed, no matter how our "learned" author insists on this point, we still remain displeased with the reinforced concrete "constructions" of the Kharkiv City Council, because they only bear witness to our architectural impoverishment.

And therefore when Polishchuk rants and raves about the "Red Pluh," we consider this to be nothing more than the desire to find himself some supporters. Perhaps in Denmark they really do need one writer for every 200 people. But in that case why bother waging war with the "cornflowers?" In short, "we need second-rate works, because there are not enough first-class works to cover all aspects of life." It is a shame, though, that there is no Kuzma Prutkov<sup>21</sup> for this "first class" category. In any case, if Polishchuk considers his poems to be "first class," then why not; we would be willing to see the "second-rate works."

\* \* \*

How do you like this? Ha? But excuse us, there still remains a *post-scriptum*—"Iefremov's self-advertising." It is a *post scriptum* because...forgive us!...we couldn't bring ourselves to devote an entire chapter to it: here you have a non-party man doing the criticizing, and a Communist...how should we put it...er, how should we put it... "defending"...oh!...ah!...the academic. Therefore, the "rough-necked herring" is launching an attack on...on...(oh, "The Petrograd Food Supplies Section!") on...the S. Iefremov of 1923.

Firstly, let us deal with "self-advertising." To be sure "there are those who have the right to speak, and there are those who ought to keep quiet." Of course, it is a praiseworthy thing that Polishchuk does not express solidarity with the ideas of the Ukrainian intellectual of years gone by. The only problem is that he is a bit late. He should have come out publicly against the academic at approximately the same time as the appearance of *Vyr revoliutsii* (Maelstrom of Revolution),<sup>14</sup> which contained a complimentary article by the same academic's brother devoted to the same Polishchuk.

Today this "public attack" sounds a little amusing, to say the least. Therefore do not doubt it, Valerko, the academic now lives on the eve of 1926 and...obviously will not repeat what he has written in the past.

Naturally, a person like S. Iefremov, who belongs to the old generation and to a world-view we find alien, will not come over to our side. *That is why he must be placed within the confines of our careful ideological control.* But it will obviously not be Polishchuk who exercises this control. Indeed, if one is to expose a hostile ideology, still more political sympathies, one has to have at least a limited understanding of the contemporary political situation, and secondly one should not confuse these sympathies with sound ideas. However alien to us S. Iefremov may be, cannot he still express ideas that are useful to us?

In our opinion his indignation against the "vociferous Homers of the Revolution" is completely justified. Because he has in mind none other than the "rough-necked herring." In our opinion he was quite right in directing Tychyna to think again about the ending of the "Cosmic Orchestra;" the ending is indeed incongruous, *although as a separate poem it is very powerful (in spite of what the academic says concerning this point).*

And to add to our criticism of the academic (who, nevertheless, is an intelligent man!), we consider that S. Iefremov is mistaken in his assessment of several contemporary writers. If we say so without "fuming," it is because we realize that the aforementioned academic was educated for many years in an ideological atmosphere that is alien to us. Our party is

well aware of the ideological values of all the old Ukrainian intelligentsia, but it is patiently awaiting not a profound rupture in this intelligentsia's world-view *as much as an honest, and not merely a formal but an internal and irrevocable acceptance of the Soviet order.*

This does not signify that we can do without this (old) intelligentsia, but that the Communist Party shows *a wise statesmanship* and knows what demands to set. It also does not signify that we shall allow Iefremov's history of 1923 to be widely disseminated, but it does mean that in the period of peaceful construction we are not going to be hysterical and put anybody on the rack. Perhaps S. Iefremov did once think of Comrade Koriak as "a man who could not stand firmly on his own two feet." *Today he has to think differently, because an objective historian of the young writing will note Koriak's name as that of a founder of proletarian literature, as that of a man who laid the basis for our young poetry.*

Briefly, then, we have entered the realm of practical daily work, and no matter how loudly our "rough-necked herring" clamours, life will continue along its prescribed course. Besides, we are not simply dealing with this one academic; Polishchuk's "enmity" encompasses Doroshkevych, and the journal, the *Red Path*—edited by the Communist, Shumsky—and *Life and Revolution*, and many more names and periodicals. What is at issue? The fact that they all refuse to recognize trashy *vers libre*. This is all there is to Iefremov's "self-advertising."

#### IV

If therefore we now throw into the account a further article entitled "The Hollow Idol", in which the "ardent warrior of October's revolutionary battles" (militant ardent, etc.) takes aim at P. Tychyna, we can approach it with a prescience of what the issue is going to be about.

Naturally, a poet (and V. Polishchuk considers himself such) has every right to write about another poet. Naturally, each of us can view Tychyna's work as he or she sees fit. However, only a practitioner of yellow journalism could have penned such an account as "The Hollow Idol" (do not take offence, Valerian, "we do not wish to suspect you of this"). In civilized countries such accounts are greeted with a surprise: a unanimous boycott.

They, however, are civilized countries, and we, all in all, are Khokhlandia, a rich soil for Khlestakovs and Smerdiakovs.<sup>23</sup> Therefore let us take a closer look at our author's analysis of P. Tychyna.

It all boils down to "primacy!" V. Polishchuk, as a result of his own semi-literacy in matters poetical, is convinced that for the position of the "discredited" Tychyna there is a legitimate candidate—himself, the

"orden," ... or should that be the "Corinthian order," the champion of pulp and *succès du scandale*. This, and only this, is why Tychyna merits the description of being a Nadson, and a Chuprynka, and an Igor Severianin.<sup>24</sup> Nevertheless... *oleum et operam perdidit*, as the Latin saying goes. A labour in vain!

*Pavlo Tychyna is one of the greatest poets of contemporary Europe*. If we are discussing our contemporary literature's entry into the Western arena, only the author of *Soniachni klarnety (Clarinetts of the Sun)* can be permitted such a luxury.

"But wait a moment! You yourself said that we have nothing to show Europe!"

Exactly. This is why we said: "can be permitted." The whole tragedy lies in the fact that P. Tychyna is a national poet *par excellence*, and his works resist all attempts at hack translation. Therefore we have to come across people of considerable sophistication before P. Tychyna can be permitted to enter the "international domain."

Pavlo Tychyna succeeded in fusing profound reflections with a brilliant form of expression. Our provincial formalist supposes that there is nothing more than "melodiousness" and "sonorousness" at stake. But there is more at stake, and there's the rub, dear fellow! Otherwise you would not have made such desperate attempts to assure "the Ukrainian reader that he has been duped." Otherwise, dear fellow, you would not have said that Tychyna "for some unknown reason" is considered to be one of the greatest masters.

Pavlo Tychyna stands before us as a poet of several periods. As far as his *Clarinetts of the Sun* are concerned, we consider that Tychyna in his first period is a poet of a pantheistic world-view, a poet with a profound understanding of nature who identifies it with the very origins of existence.

Of course, our bowler-hatted trend-setters, the "Petrograd Secretaries" of formalism, consider this collection to be regressive, because they can detect nothing but "sonorousness" in it. We, however, say that *it is an example of art*. Chuprynka's "clinking and tinkling" has the same relationship to it as Polishchuk's intellectual baggage has to real erudition. Since our friend delights in formulas so much, in the given instance the formula would read as follows:

7 . (65 . 119) :  $\sqrt{19/47}$  = ordinary trousers: those of Pythagoras. It is characteristic of Polishchuk that he should make the following assessment:

And only in those places where Tychyna gives us nature sketches can one admire the profundity of nature itself, and not, of course, the poet's "wisdom."

This is typical of Polishchuk's logic. If the "rough-necked herring," in the process of reading Tychyna's works, "admires the profundity of nature

itself," then clearly it must be the above-mentioned poet's wisdom that has imparted this profundity. This is so evident that even a child would not doubt it. Whoever doubts it only reveals his own impotence.

However, to continue: let us take Polishchuk's genuinely "*formalist*" digression into Tychyna's poetry. He reaches the conclusion that everything is archaic: the epithets, idioms and iambs. But because the formalist learning of our "Corinthian order" is of the most recent acquisition (not in the least archaic), because it is only a product of yesterday's "cramming," so to speak, we get "masterpieces" of neo-*khatian opoiazism* such as the following: "Here are some of these epithets in all their poverty: fragrant spring, grey-winged doves, warm glimmering, red wine," and so on.

Honourable "warrior," what do you mean by an "epithetic poverty?" If our Comrade "authormobile" were to read the same *opoiazovtsy* a little more carefully, he would learn from them that this term is a *convention*. In the first place, not every poet accentuates imagism; secondly, although every word retreats from the poetic horizon during certain periods (according to the law of "self-repulsion" [*samoodshtovkhuvannia*]), this does not mean that it cannot be revived. "Fragrant" and "red" figure at one time as poetic elements, at another as commonplaces and stereotypes. Let us speak in a "materialist language." When, in the republic's time of peaceful construction, Polishchuk clamours about the "gentry," *retrospectively* calling it "loathsome puke," this is a commonplace and outdated stereotype. "Pukish" should, obviously, have been used eight years ago. And, conversely, Tychyna's epithets "fragrant" and "red" were in their own time *poetry and an enrichment, which is what they remain to this day* (compare the cases of Byron, Pushkin, etc.). Therefore, one cannot "paint things red" retrospectively. And one ought not to make a long list of Tychyna's "churchisms" ("dove-spirit," "herald of good," etc.). Naturally, "this here" occupation is very rewarding. However, inasmuch as it has absolutely no relationship to poetics (it belongs to the realm of sociology), we advise our "ardent warrior" (militant ardent, etc.) to add to his list all the "churchisms" in Taras Shevchenko, Lesia Ukrainka and Ivan Franko.

Unfortunately, we are unable (through lack of space) to delve into more detail concerning neo-*khatian* formalism; we are unable to discuss the depth and consummate formal artistry of such pieces as the "Cosmic Orchestra" or the "Psalm to Iron." We are, however, obliged to quote the strongest parts of Polishchuk:

Even as far as the sound is concerned, we crave Wagner and we are given Mendelssohn. Take, for example, the poem: "A wind—not a wind—a storm." It is, of course, the Revolution and, of course, it "demolishes, breaks" (how

trite!—V.P.) and then comes the posterish “a million million muscular arms.”

This juvenile, who knows as much about Mendelssohn as he does about architecture (incidentally, he is tone-deaf, like the well-known hero from Andreev's work), certainly knows how to bluff his way through things. He, at least, is not “posterish.” Don't overdo the oratory, friend, we shall not believe you anyway! Your attack on “The Wind” is useless, since this is one of the most masterfully wrought poems of the contemporary age. But, to continue, let us take a second example of his “criticism:”

In Knop's shop  
There is on exhibit  
A yellow mit. . . .

This is supposed to be a parody of Tychyna's “On the clouds the frowning sun again /the autumnal vi.” How did you enjoy that? Do you not smell a yellow Smerdiakov here? A-ai-ai-ai-ai-ai-ai!

Therefore it is not the “dynamic verslibrist” who “discredits” the great poet. Tychyna, who is confidently climbing toward the heights of his poetic creativity, who is even at present enjoying a period of great canvases, is no match for “our friend.” Let the “Homer of the Revolution” grumble under his nose—it signifies nothing; his grumbling (we agree wholeheartedly with the academic S. Iefremov) in retrospect “will seem an insignificant, inconspicuous episode.”

## V

We have now come to the last chapter of Polishchuk's booklet, which probably no one will bother to read, but which in our scheme of things plays more of less the leading role. Inasmuch as Marxism has been thrown into this balderdash, inasmuch as it is being preached among the student body of a Communist university, we have no right to remain silent.

In fact it is the most delicious chapter in the entire booklet. Its title is “Toward a Marxist Poetics.” It is the very chapter in which the “Petersburg Secretary,” generously sharing his erudition with us, manages finally to convince us that the misspelling of “Corinthian order” was not simply a typographical error, but was indeed the work of our “authormobile.” If the editors of the *News* were to give us their entire cultural supplement in which to express our ideas, there would be nothing but a smoking ruin left of this “work.” As it is, however, we have to limit ourselves, and will therefore attempt to prove the simple truth that such “theoreticians” must not be allowed to touch our youth with a ten-foot pole.



We begin with the chapter's title: "Toward a Marxist Poetics." How do you like that? Eh? "A Marxist poetics!" Here the "dynamic verslibrist" takes off at full gallop, wearing his two-fold illiteracy for all to see: both poetic and Marxist. The "Petersburg Secretary" was evidently bewildered by our "Marxist aesthetics." But these are two "completely different Odessas." *Aesthetics is a branch of philosophy, while poetics, poesy, is all in all a theory of the poetic word. Just as there cannot be a Marxist shoe-making or tailoring, there cannot be a Marxist poetics.* When Russian formalism makes a deviation into idealism, it does so *not in the sphere of poetics, but in the sphere of aesthetics.* This is precisely why we always emphasize the fact that we are not against the poetics of *Opoiiaz*, but against their aesthetics.

Of course, not every citizen is able to understand such nuances. But if a lecturer at a Communist university fails to understand them, then a mere "Shame!" is insufficient; he should be thrown out on his ear (do not take offence, Valeriian, "we do not wish to suspect you of this.")

As you see, the very title of the chapter defines its content. What, however, does V. Polishchuk intend to contribute "to" this "Marxist poetics" . . . or should that be the "Corinthian order?"

He made use of the following books to create his theory: Tynianov's *Problema stikhotvornogo iazyka* (*The Problem of a Poetic Language*) and Tomashevsky's *Nauka o Literature* (*Science of Literature*). Perhaps he also used Briusov and Shengeli.<sup>25</sup> As for Vildrac and Duhamel,<sup>26</sup> even though our "rough-necked herring" calls their work a "theory of free verse," he is in fact referring to the phrase *teoriia volnogo stikha* which he found in Shershenevich's Russian translation. We mention all this so that the reader may be left in no doubt that the "theory" was created on the basis of well-known Russian sources. This "theory" is from top to bottom . . . a mistranslation of a cultivated Russian formalism and bears no relation at all to "the front-line thought" of Europe, because—among other things—the "author" is "not very strong in foreign languages." Moreover, it is clear that V. Polishchuk has never read either Sergei Bobrov or Bely's *Simvolizm* (*Symbolism*).<sup>27</sup> Therefore, if after reading our pamphlet he does not burn his "theory" or commit it to one of a number of "narrowly utilitarian" places, let him turn to us; we shall inform him as to what is written in these books. Because, to be sure, they are not now to be found on the market.

A careful reading of this chapter reveals that the entire "theory" has been created in order to prove that Polishchuk is a verslibrist, and that *vers libre* is the alpha and omega of all living things. Which is to say that if the author was a little more literate one could comment: "Oh, friend, you are fetishizing particular elements of the process," i.e., you are falling into idealism. But, in view of the fact that we are dealing with "Marxist

poetics," it all boils down to the "green herring." This is how the Armenian riddle goes: "What hangs, squeals and is green?" "What is it, then?" "A herring!" "But why is it green?" "Because I painted it." "But, why does it squeal?" "So you wouldn't guess."

A really universal concept [writes Polishchuk] is rhythm, that is the repetition of certain groups of sounds, and if the lengths of these groups relate to one another in the proportion 1 : 1 : 1, etc., this becomes a metre, whereas the rhythm is composed of rhythmical groupings whose length is not generally measurable, as for instance in 1(3) : 1 : 1, (23 45) : 4 7/16 :  $\sqrt{\quad}$  ... [etc.]

Didn't this "formula" frighten you? This is what you call higher mathematics, isn't it? Forget the members of Pluh—even an "olympian" would take fright! Wouldn't he? It is a pity, however, that Polishchuk does not live in the backwaters of Zadrypanka, because here we call this "formula" a "green herring." Really, what is a metre? "A verse measurement," replies a pupil of the third grade, "a foot, as Graeco-Roman studies of verse inform us." "Well, give us an example?" "Iambic, trochaic, dactylic, etc." "What, then, is rhythm?" "This is the beat, the regular alternation of accented and unaccented sounds." "Therefore metre is not the same thing as rhythm?" "Of course not," answers the third-grade pupil, smiling.

"Why, then, does our "author" try to break down an open door?" Don't you know? In order to dazzle us with his arithmetic and elementary algebra. "Why, then, does he make a 'green herring' out of the self-evident?" Don't you know? He wants to bamboozle our youth. [Incidentally, let our Pluh comrades not take fright! Figures such as 1(2345...) or  $\sqrt{\quad}$ , etc., are there "to give a more imposing impression." You could with equal success substitute the following (couldn't you, Valerian?): 19, (0817...) and  $\sqrt{\frac{1}{2} + 0.(0000001\dots)}$ ].

So there you have it, an example of higher mathematics from our honourable "Petersburg Secretary." The same could be said of the algebra in the first article, to which we promised to return. In particular:  $(e + a)/2$ . This is supposed to prove that "assonance is psychologically more pleasurable than rhyme."

"Dear friend!" You have to learn to do a little more than flip, flop, from the "green herring" to a "hairstylist's" interpretation of the laws of art! The existence of assonance and rhyme is defined by the same basic principle of "self-repulsion." Five years ago assonance was pleasing to the ear; today rhyme seems more pleasant. A time will come when assonance will reconquer its positions.

The dynamism of a work [continues Polishchuk] lies in the fact that in order to transfer feelings from the creator to the receivers, through artistic methods of spiritual intensification in the expressive forms of rhythm, euphony, image, *plot* and ideas—whose task it is to provide a harmonious synthesis of all creative devices, technical achievements and scientific knowledge—and bearing in mind Plekhanov and Belinsky,—it becomes clear that art is the contemplation of ideas in images.

Oh, Good Lord! What a fruit salad! What scholasticism! What a “hairdresser!” We shall ignore the awkwardness of the phrase concerning Belinsky and Plekhanov, who were quite impertinently dragged into this “groats with cod.” We simply wish to ask the reader: is it really only the “dynamists” whose “task it is to provide a harmonious synthesis of all creative devices?” *This, surely, is the task of every poet* “from Romulus to our day.” The “rough-necked herring” has heard something about German Expressionism; hence the storm in a teacup. As for the “technical achievements and scientific knowledge,” well...you can see for yourselves—the same Polishchuk.

Our next point should now be “shiftology,” [*zdvyholohiia*] which he read about in Kruchenykh,<sup>28</sup> but owing to lack of space we shall merely point out the following:

It is indeed true that the poetic vocabulary is created in a variety of ways, but it is most doubtful whether our lecturer would understand it, ...and it is doubtful whether a word like “*uhrobylo*” [entombed] will become poetic in Ukrainian poetry. This is a question of Polishchuk’s semi-literacy; a foreign word (and “*uhrobylo*” is such) will never become a poetic implement.

## VI

Now let us pass on to the last point. This concerns *vers libre*. Of course, *vers libre* is not a bad form of verse (take Tychyna’s “Wind—not a wind—a storm” as an example), but what is the connection to the “Corinthian order?” *We would like to bring to general attention the fact that Polishchuk does not write in vers libre but in ordinary prose—and bad prose to boot.* Take a glance at the following phenomenon: no one, anywhere, wants to read V. Polishchuk. Why? Is it because he is published by S. Pylypenko? Is it because he writes in *vers libre*? God forbid: Verhaeren,<sup>29</sup> for example, a genuine verslibrist (incidentally, our “author” for some unknown reason completely fails to mention him) has been translated into every language. Evidently, this is not the issue. The crux of the matter is that *Verhaeren came to vers libre* after thoroughly assimilating classical verse, while V. Polishchuk, if asked to compose a

sonnet, would only bat his eyelids at you. Zerov also is not against *vers libre* (see his translation of Duhamel), *but, like ourselves, he is against ignorance*. Verhaeren, the genuine verslibrist, had no need for the scholastic "theory of pulses," which even the "rough-necked herring" himself hardly understands. Instead of writing a special "hairstylist's theory" for the justification of your own poor prose, if, friend, you had written a fine sonnet, you would have convinced us all that you too had come to *vers libre* after gaining a deep knowledge of the classics of poetry. Then there would be no necessity for self-contradiction: at one point you cry that "iambic pentameter—all are fine and necessary; the main thing is ideology;" and then run around and complain loudly that *vers libre* alone will save the Revolution.

To cut a long story short, the "authormobile" of today hooks up with industry:

This new rhythm in poetry, which at present goes by the name of *vers libre*, made its earliest appearance in America—with Whitman." Thus, it transpires that the legislator of literary forms—France—gave up its leadership in poetic sensibility, together with its industry, to America. This is very symptomatic.

Of course, it might well be symptomatic; it might be that something "transpires," although it will only be seen to be a... "Marxist poetics"... or perhaps we should say a "Corinthian order." The point is that V. Polishchuk, this pretentious "military field marshal" still does not realize where *vers libre* made its earliest appearance. It did so *in ancient Hebrew and Eastern poetry in general, which bears no relationship either to America, or to industry, or to the contemporary revolution*.

Besides, is Whitman really characteristic of American poetry? Have you never heard, friend, of Jack London and his "cornflowers?" And furthermore, is there no industry outside New York? Does England, which produced the first steam-engine (and not in 1875, as you mistakenly assure us several times, but in 1825), lack this grandiose industry? *Then why do the English poets neglect vers libre?* And besides, if we are going to speak of modern times, was not Verlaine the first poet to break down verse? Ha? So much for your "contemporary economic structure"!... (Do not take offence, Valerian, "we do not wish to suspect you of this.") And besides, friend, your clamouring is all in vain! Even if we were to agree with you that "the best representatives of contemporary poetry are the verslibrists," you, for a start, do not have any connection with them; secondly, these "best" representatives still have not produced a strong poet; thirdly, several of them (take Becher,<sup>30</sup> for instance) have turned their backs on *vers libre* and gone over to... writing straightforward short stories.

And therefore, however hard "our lecturer" howls that *vers libre* "goes arm-in-arm with the greatest revolutionariness, and comprehends and loves the significance of industry," we continue to think: *militant ardent*, etc. And we also think: this is another "peculiar" conjunction of artificial fetishization and ignorance. Indeed, there were moments in the history of poetry when not only rhymes or iambs were rejected, but *verse as a whole disintegrated*. This happened, for example, in the fourth century A.D. in Rome. And it disintegrated not because the fourth century saw the development of large-scale industry, but because a definite cycle of development had been completed by poetry in one particular aspect (social or national). *The European vers libre of the last years is also symptomatic of a certain disintegration of verse*. And should not be made too much of. If this *vers libre* still continues to give off a faint light in France, *this is only because it is nourished by the degeneration of the old society, the destructive period of social growth*. We, on the contrary, are witnessing a period of constructive growth, and *vers libre will disappear from our horizon for a while (perhaps even for a long time)*. Because, if we take a closer look at the essence of *vers libre*, we shall observe that it is really a child of Impressionism, and as such it is destined to suffer from certain hereditary diseases associated with the latter. We know what Impressionism suffered from—up to and including verbal masturbation.

So much for *vers libre*. As for the "theory of pulses," this forced scholasticism fabricated in a tasteless and "Corinthian" manner on the basis of the aforementioned titles, we must once again express our regrets that in our rebuttal we cannot take advantage of the entire supplement to the *News*. However, we shall say that all these bold-faced "mathematical means" . . . are nothing more than another of Polishchuk's "orders." Ostap Vyshnia,<sup>31</sup> incidentally, would find fertile ground here. Here is an instance:

The Marseillaise and the Internationale, uplifting songs of an offensive drive, which are characteristic of uplifting periods—are both iambic.

In short, the poor boy is agitating for iambicity as a revolutionary metre. If, however, a little later on he forgets all about this statement, the fault can hardly be laid at our door:

V. Polishchuk, in order to produce the rhythms of an offensive drive [perhaps directed at S. Iefremov? M. Kh.] began to write in *vers libre*. At exactly the same time the neoclassicist Rytsky transplanted the iambs of the Poles and Pushkin; and Zerov those of Latin writers.

As you see, the iamb has here suddenly lost its "uplifting and offensive" significance. In short: "cut off a piece, Ivan, there is no God!" Is the wall white? Yes, it's white! Is the wall black? Yes, it's black! This is what you might call Marxist dialectics . . . or should that be "poetics"?

Or look at these further "observations" of mine: "the sounds "и and "ы" are in the same category, just as are "r" and "h". The "observation" of a genius, isn't it? Well, let's face it, Polishchuk has every right to consider himself a Columbus! Or how about these "pearls:" "if the pulses in the first line read: A for the first, B for the second; and in the second line read: C for the first, D for the second, we get the following formula:  $A : B = C : D$ . Of course, we could also make the following equation:  $A : C = B : D$ ."

How do you like this? ... but, honourable lecturer, pray tell, could one also produce the question:  $B : D = A : C$ ? "Yes." says our friend. Could we produce further equations? "Yes!" he answers again. Well, thank God for that, we say. But what on earth "Vildrac and Duhamel pages 22 and 26" of some unnamed text and clearly (without a doubt!) Vadim Shershenevich have to do with all this, the devil only knows! Hah? Or take one more "pearl." Having quoted a passage from *Europe on the Volcano*: "Hey, you salivators [Oh, Lord, how he loves this saliva business! M. Kh.], whose ugly mugs crawl over the sands to our present time, do you not see today's giants of history?" (i.e., Polishchuk), he then proceeds to give this "formalistic" commentary:

The pulses of the fourth line are decelerated (the Russian word is *zamedleny*). It is precisely through this more placid, slower tempo that we get a sense of solemnity and reverence, with which the author wanted to endow the "giants of history." Here we also observe the case of a trope which simultaneously combines various concepts: "whose mugs crawl" (pejorative—faces) and "over the sands"—over sandy, dirty terrain

And what do you have to say about this commentary? Has V. Polishchuk convinced you that his drooling verse "reveres the giants of history?" (Ah, *militant ardent*, etc.!) Us he failed to convince, *because sandy terrain is never dirty*.

His entire "Marxist poetics"... or Corinthian order is written in this spirit. The whole horror of the thing is that such balderdash is being preached among our youth (the booklet says as much: "Lectures by Valeriian Polishchuk Presented at a Communist University.") Therefore, we say: an end has to be put to this misunderstanding and to this Khlestakov. *A beetle—even one sitting on a rose—is still a beetle!* Otherwise we shall produce illiterate "rough-necked herrings," who will cook up a *vers libre* "spiced with cod-fish" for us.

"Now for a few comradely words." Comrade Valeriian, you once wrote quite tolerable, *average* verse, but Filipchenko<sup>32</sup> and... megalomania turned your head. Forget them, friend! If Comrade Leites<sup>33</sup> once compared you to this Russian poet, he did so "spitefully"; as far as Leites is concerned, Filipchenko is a "mediocrity." Do not think that having spent

two months in Europe you have acquired an education. This is a delusion, dear boy! Take a grip on yourself, friend, the way we did, *and go study technique from Zerov*. Maybe then something *mediocre* will indeed come of you, but only if you listen to our advice. And give up writing your illiterate "theories;" you would do better to pick up a book and start studying seriously. This is our advice.

If you refuse to heed this advice (believe us!) life (and it is dangerous to take life lightly) will very resolutely cast you out of even your last refuge, which goes by the name of "published by the author."

Amen.

P.S. This pamphlet was written for *Culture and Daily Life*, the supplement to the *News*, and was accepted by the *Red Path*, if we are not mistaken, the day after Polishchuk's brochure appeared, which is to say a month ago. In a private conversation not long ago I was asked two "spiteful" questions, which obviously also interest the general reader. Therefore there follows a short dialogue.

"Your criticisms of the 'rough-necked herring' are justified. But, Comrade Khvylovy, pray tell, how did it happen that yesterday (meaning a few years ago) you wrote a panegyric for the Polishchuk we are today burying? Concretely, did you not write a favourable review of the poem 'Lenin' and an article entitled 'The First Explosions of Sunshine'?"

O-ho-ho! I did, dear reader. I did, indeed! The first note appeared under my name; the second under a pseudonym, which was deciphered by a "young scholar" who "has it in for" Polishchuk. Moreover, at the time when others wanted to "bury" the "rough-necked herring" (they say some people today want to bury the always very correctly behaved neoclassicists), sinner that I am, I was his first and most diligent intercessor . . . Oh-ho-ho!

"Why do you sigh so deeply? Did this comment sting you? Eh?"

Indeed, it did, though . . . not in the way you think. Having read through my articles of the year before last, I thought: Oh Lord, only a distance of four or five years—and such an abyss! That was a time when someone ought to have given me a talking to . . . But I am referring to my style, to the awkwardness of my pathetic phrase—and this alone! As for the rest, the assessment of V. Polishchuk's work, it only affirms the correctness of the path on which I stand. Did I realize whom I was dealing with? I did! Firstly, I knew that the "rough-necked herring" had a weakness for being a ham (this is what I wrote at the time: "poems like 'Graduation' we think should not be included in his collection"). Secondly, I knew that the dynamic verslibrist was capable of publishing someone else's poems under his own name (this is what I wrote at the time: "it is improper and indecent to make such unpardonable use of Ehrenburg, in particular his

"Shakse-vaksei.") Thirdly, I knew that our "Corinthian order" lacked a "crystallized ideology," which was also taken up in the same article. Why, then, did I praise him after all? Ah, my dear friends! I would have been terribly naive to do otherwise. In the first place, Polishchuk was a good, middling poet who showed some promise just at the time that Ukrainian proletarian art was being born and a fierce struggle was being waged for it. And in the kingdom of the blind even the one-eyed man can become king, as you know. Secondly, and more importantly, whether he wanted this or not, he was a small cog in the struggle for this art—and not so much a poetic one as a political one—that needed protection and support. When Petliura's camp cursed him for treason or the Russophile "Pupishkins" did the same, what was I to do? I was compelled to cry out, recommending this cog as a grandiose machine. Even if this did Polishchuk no good, our art (I am deeply convinced!) has not suffered in any case.

In another fifty—sixty years I shall recall this heroic time in my memoirs, but in the meantime let the holy Apollo, son of Zeus and Leda, forgive me; at that time I could not have acted otherwise, because I was not only a *littérateur*, but also understood a thing or two about politics. If my tactics displease you, then be my guest—come and take my place. There is plenty of work to be done even now: firstly, militant ardentism has to be finished off; secondly, it will take a great deal of persuading to convince the *khokhols* that the great proletarian revolution did not hand us the fires of culture so that we could dance the hopak around them.

"Well, alright! Obviously, the lyricism comes next. Let us suppose that you made some tactical moves. (What tactics!) In that case here is a second 'spiteful' question. You have had a pretty good giggle over our 'ardent warrior's' Khelestakovism, but you have not even glanced at yourself! Are you still working at the steam-engine factory?—which is how Plevako's<sup>34</sup> anthology introduces you. Well? How about that for a bit of 'economic structure of the present!'"

"Spiteful" question!... Unfortunately, however, it should be addressed to the honourable Professor Plevako. To be sure, it would not do the literary historian any harm to make a public refutation (the more so since I have already mentioned this to him) and publicly admit that his entire entry concerning myself is the product of an anthologizing fantasy (except for the year and place of birth). Otherwise the chickens will indeed laugh at me, and at the professor. I did, indeed, work on the shop-floor, but this was in 1923 and before the Revolution. It has been said that my biography is a very interesting one (Oh, if only the "rough-necked herring" could get his hands on it!), but, as far as we can tell, it does not suffer from militant ardentism.

"Very clever! You wriggled your way out of that one! Well, be so good as to accept our order!... or rather our "Corinthian order" and the title of



polemical champion. Now I can see that not every "avant-garde" is an avant-garde; and I can further see that the "rough-necked herring," who has just leapt out of the sisal-field, is destined in the struggle of two forces to play the role of Punch and to be exploited not only by the "organons" but also by the most real forces of darkness. In brief, everything is clear. Now for the dessert. Could you say a few words about the young "scholars" who "have it in for" Polishchuk?"

You, perhaps, have Ivan Kapustiansky<sup>35</sup> in mind... A wonderful scholar! It is pity, however, that he still does not know what sort of bird a pseudonym is and how it ought to be treated. In short, he is a good scholar and shows great promise. I entertain the hope that we shall go very, very far with this kind of scholarship. Briefly, *credo, quia absurdum est*.

P.P.S. Phew! Correcting those "proofs" has completely exhausted me. It is such a messy business with these articles, a real dilemma: my pen strains toward lyricism, while life demands publicism. Even now the temptation to say a couple *more* words is irresistible (forgive me, Mykola Hryhorovych!).<sup>36</sup> The point is that we wish to state a very pleasant fact: *our pamphlet has already done its work*.

Several days after the appearance of the twelfth issue of the *Red Path*, which contained the "Authormobile" of today, V. Polishchuk printed a poem entitled "The Eiffel Tower" in which he attempted to write a sonnet. The attempt, to be sure, was not a complete success, but, nevertheless, this is progress! "From a single spark shall grow a flame!" Perhaps this attempt will lead our verslibrist through the study of classical verse to *geniune vers libre*... Grant us this, oh Lord! And help him, oh Lord, to overcome the vanity within himself; and, oh Lord, place a porcelain spitting-bowl before him, so that he might spit into it to his heart's content. Indeed, how can Zerov and Rylysky be to blame for the fact that his mouth is so full of spittle?

With great contentment we also ascertain the following: the "ardent warrior" no longer shuns even Tychyna's "churchism." It is of no consequence that alongside his "sonnet" he also printed (obviously in an attempt at self-justification) a defiant [*napiiuvatelskii*] poem by Maiakovsky; it is of no consequence that he overdid things a bit with the "great fans" [*opakhal*]<sup>37</sup>—all this is of no consequence! Eventually our verslibrist will discover the measure of "churchism" appropriate to himself. As for Maiakovsky, our verslibrist will see that this poet does more than bid defiance; he is already yearning for the "Cloud in Trousers" ("I ought to finish my life in the trousers in which I began.").

Here are a few examples of the "churchism" that Polishchuk is moving toward: "one must bear it all the way home, like *the sacred flame*,... like a dark *omophorium* cover me,... like a young *Mother of God*,... for the

evening sacrifice, . . . like the *madonna's* grace, . . . they are already swaying their great *fans* [opakhaly], . . . *I pray* for everyone, . . . *I resurrect* you" and so on and so forth.

A nice little bouquet, isn't it? That's the sign of a good pamphlet: hardly off the press and it is already producing results! These quotations, incidentally, were taken from *Radio in the Rye*, the collection that was written "consciously," quite recently . . . a few days ago. That's the "Corinthian order" for you!

"You say 'Corinthian order'? . . . But, honestly now, what's so outrageous about a slip in spelling? Look, you ought to stop this "spitefulness," Mykola Hryhorovych! Lord above, how much malice there is in you toward those people! A-ai-ai-ai-ai-ai!"

Oh, dear reader, I can't help it; the malice toward those people is there, I'm afraid. As soon as one of those more-than-the-task-demanded-types jumps up, I begin to boil "inside." Even now, you know, it was old "militant" who put me up to it! If it wasn't for him, the entire effect would have been lost. The Latin word *orden* became the French *ordre*, of course, but in our country the spelling is *orden*—anything else is a misspelling. What do you show the cashier when you wish to receive "a more-than-the-task-demanded payment for over ninety hours' work?" An *orden* or an *order*? Obviously, an *order*, a requisition. Now imagine that a "reinforced concrete" column is also called an "order." You pick it up and take it to the cashier. The cashier is astonished and proposes that it be called an *orden*. Then in despair you drink a bottle of whisky and attempt to hang this "reinforced concrete" *orden* on your chest. This you fail to do, and you cry: "To hell with *ordens* and *orders*! Let's call it a 'Corinthian column'!"

This, of course, is a conundrum, but I, as an apologist of purism, am decidedly opposed to all . . . pretentiousness.

**Apologists of Scribbling  
(On the Problem of Cultural  
Revolution)**

## I

It was, we believe, Hindenburg,<sup>1</sup> who said, "Strategy is a great thing, but he who has the stronger nerves will win." This is true; it's the rule. And we are well aware of it. Therefore, now, when our stronghold is under attack from several directions, when we hardly have time enough to answer all those brochures and articles—both fair and foul—aimed against us, now we take ourselves in hand, as they say, and, unruffled, continue our offensive.

Firstly, let us not repeat ourselves; secondly, let us not bother with details. *Let us go to the core of the matter.* We have reached that crucial juncture when the struggle on the literary front is entering a new phase of its development and is assuming an essentially political character. At a time when in Russia the analogous discussion is merely beginning (see the last issues of *Zhurnalist (Journalist)* and *Red Virgin Soil*, in Ukraine, for a large number of reasons, it is completing one of its logical phases. And so, let us summarize some conclusions.

We will begin with Mr. Dontsov, with the same Dontsov, who, as is well known, is the most intelligent and consistent of the Ukrainian fascists. We ask him how he looks at today's perturbations in Ukraine proper:

"Our eyes are turned toward the East. Unfortunately, however, our press pays attention only to official expressions of life there. . . . This is a great pity! For what is now *hidden* [our italics] on that shore [i.e., on the Soviet one] is a hundred times more interesting than any Ukrainization. *We are witnessing a major change in Ukrainian consciousness, a profound change, pregnant with incalculable consequences.*" (Author's emphasis).

This is what Dontsov wrote in his last article "Ukraino-Soviet Pseudomorphoses,"<sup>2</sup> from which our honourable and fine chief of the Kievan Pluh quotes so aptly that we are give to tears. (More about this later.)

Perhaps, however, we are making a mistake after all? Could Dontsov, following our course from the beautiful distance, have exaggerated somewhat? Perhaps we still have not reached that logical phase already mentioned?

All these questions are answered in Comrade Pylypenko's "second piece of a debatable reply," contained in three issues of *Culture and Daily Life*.<sup>3</sup> If the "first piece" could have been called a piece of rotten sausage (to use a strident expression), the second bears the character of a precise memorandum presented by an able (considering our limited cultural level) and determined hand. From it we discover that neither of us are wrong: not we, nor Dontsov. The danger is growing and assuming its logical dimensions. That undisguised kulak cynicism which peeps out cunningly from Comrade Pylypenko's last article affirms that the leader of peasant massism ought to take a short cure and leave the literary arena at least for a while. Otherwise he will completely confound our youth and lead them to an abyss. There are two deviations: one toward Makhavskism,<sup>4</sup> the other to kulakism. In Ukrainian conditions there is scarcely any basis for the former deviation. The second, however, can spread at any time and rapidly. And . . . is already blossoming.

Every active citizen of our republic, as the elementary rules of politics inform us, reflects the attitudes of certain social classes or strata. However, under the dictatorship of the proletariat, only the proletariat is able to engage in wide-ranging political activity, while other classes and strata seek to express themselves politically through representatives of this proletariat. One fine morning any one of us Communists may find himself or herself in the role of representative of a class entirely different from the one he or she wants to represent. There is nothing in the least strange about this; we are all ordinary people, while our epoch is an extraordinarily complex one. It is necessary, however, to make a timely diagnosis and to stop the activity of the vibrios devouring the body before the last moment. In the given instance we understand the last moment to be today, when Comrade Pylypenko, unconsciously reflecting the influences of Stolypin's land parcel,<sup>5</sup> manifests how much the kulak has already grown during the NEP and how we are compelled to react to his demands.

Our discussion has, therefore, travelled the correct path. It began by elucidating the hidden social processes produced by the NEP in Ukraine, forcing each side to follow its argument to its logical conclusion. In vain some people cried, and continue to cry: "stop the abusive language." That is the point: this is not abuse! This is the conflict of the two social forces about which we have already spoken. One cannot, of course, avoid bringing some people down off their high horses, but—what can one do!—it always has been and always will be so. Differences of principle have never been able to avoid petty vanity and this, if you like, is quite natural. Discussions

are between people, and "people are people," to use the words of a character in "The Sanatorium Zone"<sup>6</sup> which is dedicated to Pylypenko.

As you are aware, our struggle began with an attack by some "enko" on the *poema* "I."<sup>7</sup> Our friend Khvylovy "took offence" and made a counter-attack. The battle flared. No one yet knows how it will end. But, in summing up, it has to be said that from the first vigorous skirmish we have emerged the victors. This is attested by two happy facts. The first is that our personal honour has compelled our opponents to expose their, so to speak, subconscious and, hence, hidden thoughts (more on these thoughts later); the second is that this same honour has thrown some "warriors" of the alarmed *prosvita* into a state of complete consternation. One piece of evidence which may confirm this is the criminal affair concerning the writer Mykola Khvylovy, a shadowy and mysterious personage. We will speak of this "criminal affair" in the second chapter.

Here, however, "I ask the reader's forgiveness (Pylypenko's refrain) for this poetical digression and return to the theme."

In our very first article in *Quo Vadis?*, we underlined the class character of our disagreements, putting forward the thesis about Europe and *prosvita* and declaring in that same article that it was high time we considered the consequences of Ukrainization and the ideological influence of the kulaks. Such a formulation of the question displeased Comrade Pylypenko immensely, *because it compelled him to take his argument to its conclusion*. He, naturally, did not want to do this, and not at all "because that was a time of extraordinary chasteness" (as he writes in his "second piece")—these times were alike for all of us—but because he understood that he lacked the powder to say something about art, and that to say something definite about the ideological content of our arguments was dangerous. He instinctively sensed that logical consistency could bring him here to unexpected conclusions. This is why on the eve of the release of his well-known memorandum he wrote:

Here I would like to conclude; I sense an unavoidable defeat. Perhaps next time things will sort themselves out better. This piece misses the mark; all these classes and classes. I am sick of it. . . .

The "next time" things did "sort themselves out," although, as we shall see later, a particular political programme sorted itself out, a development we have expected for a very long time. This is exactly the way it had to happen. "Literature is the looking-glass in which trembles the rhythm of the national soul," says Dontsov and with complete justification. Thus, if we introduce to this formula our own correction, that this soul is no longer a monolith, then we obtain that each part, divided up, trembles in its own way. And our task is to observe all these vibrations closely and to mistrust them. . . . even when they are of one derivation, even a Communist one.

Here we would like to reply in duplicate to both Shchupak and Pylypenko who chafe that Khvylovy rails against them. (Of course, you have earned it, friends!) And, if he does not rail against the very same Dontsov in the same way, then it is probably not at all because the latter has paid him a few compliments. This "characteristic" is very straightforward: when it becomes necessary and the possibilities are there, rest assured, we will dispatch not only Mr. Dontsov to "Dukhonin's General Staff";<sup>8</sup> but we also know how to respect intelligent foes.

To the point then. Today we have devoted all our energy to three figures: S. Pylypenko, S. Shchupak and K. Burevii.<sup>9</sup> Since as Comrade Pylypenko is after all the centre of this entire movement, the first word will be to and about him.

## II

### *What is Art?*

On questions concerning the development of ideology the best scholars of the economic structure of society will at once be reduced to helplessness if they do not possess a certain particular gift, namely the artistic sense.

G. Plekhanov

The title of the article is "The Problem of Organizing Literary Forces: the Second Piece [why not scrap or dumpling—M. Kh.] of a Debatable Answer." The author is the well-known ideologist of Pluh, Comrade S. Pylypenko. From the standpoint of composition, the article is disorganized and not a complete success (its author himself admits this); it is divided into three parts. In the first our leader elucidates his ideas on art; in the second he raises the problem of organizing literary forces; the third contains political considerations and appropriate conclusions concerning the "crisis." All this, we repeat, is not presented systematically, and so the less experienced reader will be thrown into confusion *ad infinitum*.

Let us, then, examine what is written there and see whether we are not misguided in posing the question so sharply. Perhaps Comrade Pylypenko is indeed "slowly renouncing his opinions" ("I am slowly and in part," he writes in his second "piece," "renouncing some of my views under the fire of my antagonists.")

As our readers will remember, massism's chief begins his historic article with the promise of "moving life forward," of "being its, life's, active

factor," of "examining its perspectives," "summoning us on to a somewhere the author considers higher" (quite to "unseen horizons"), summoning us even... "to the new." In a word, this is romanticism "of the first class." Moreover, he agrees that "organizational changes are unavoidable."

Here speaks the revolutionary in him, that person who still keeps his head and feels upon himself the directives of the proletariat.

Yet at the same time the nucleus (the same one that defines consciousness) whispers like Mephistopheles into his ear: "Look, friend, this is not quite the thing!" And Pylypenko writes: "here I must forewarn readers: *I am not proposing anything new.*"

The logic, as you can see, does not hold up to criticism, but the philosophy of the epoch is all here. And the author of the article "Give Me A Word"<sup>10</sup> is not at all "incorrect in surmising that even the steadfast *papasha*, the man-of-rock, has thrown up his arms in despair and has no idea what to do." Naturally, "one should always respect and pay attention to the words of a comrade;" naturally "history will later be the judge and will indicate what each person's mistakes were," *but now, today, we are compelled to assert that Comrade Pylypenko under pressure from the powerful kulak has lost his head completely, has lost the revolutionary perspectives and shows no desire to realign himself in the new situation.* The choice must be made: either the old or the new. Either-or; no other possibility exists, nor can exist. In the "first piece" of (quite rotten) sausage our friend calls us "brothers" (a bit on the presumptuous side, too, as though we were his parish congregation), considers both us and himself "builders of a single culture." It would seem that a realignment *within* this culture at a certain time would be not only possible, but necessary (as he says, "organizational changes are unavoidable." Why, then does he show such alarm: "the business is too serious to allow oneself to seize upon a slogan (literary academies, groups for cultural self-education, and so on)."

Does our literary academy not stand on the postulates of the Communist Party? Surely he does not think that we are preparing to hand over the artistic self-education groups to some outside element? Are we not already "brothers" today? Where is the logic in this, dear Serhii Volodymyrovych?

But there is a logic in this. And the affair is "indeed serious," *because our differences are ideological* (you are quite right), and we will not be "brothers" until you understand that you have fallen into the clutches of the kulak. We find within ourselves the courage to say this, as we will further find the ability to "prove" this simple and obvious truth.

Therefore let us cease all the insinuating "winks and nods" at the unusual compliments of the fellow-travellers (such compliments are also expressed by Pylypenko toward the writing of the "puffers and panters"); let us drop all talk of "disdain for Communists" (Pylypenko also exhibits



such disdain, although only for the Communists from VAPLITE), of "Malaniuks<sup>11</sup> and Dontsovs who are joyfully rubbing their hands over our squabbles" (inasmuch as this is not a squabble, let them rub them), of complaints that Khvylovy uses too much abusive language while he, Pylypenko, "avoided using quite the same language" (how about: "literary priest," "unconscious fool," "conscious provocateur" and so on; not quite the same indeed); let us put aside the "obscure theory of vitaism" and the Asiatic renaissance, which "could die an early death" (not for nothing did we request the discussants not to tackle this idea as being foreign to them); let us not speak of those "circumstances" which prevented our friend from expressing himself on the pages of *Culture and Daily Life*, because these "circumstances" are clear; politics is a slippery business and art is a delicate affair which demands a measure of knowledge. Let us also drop the question of a crisis, which is out of place in this chapter (apropos: the hotchpotch construction of the article prevents one from gathering one's thoughts, so that the comrades in Pluh ought to be grateful to us for bringing some order to the memorandum).

However, let us not speak of this. We will turn to the essence of the first chapter, the one that, as we know, deals with art, that ought to have been the preface to further conclusions and, given the author's lack of appropriate knowledge, plays the role of fog-diffuser (from the words "diffuse" and "fog"), making it impossible to tell what the author wants but making him appear terribly "learned."

Comrade Pylypenko so far has not informed us of what "Khvylovy refuses to say," but he has said: "I have been unjustifiably accused of adhering to the formula "art is the construction of life," instead of to the clear, Plekhanovite, Marxist "cognition for the purpose of construction." (See my article in *Ploughman*, No. 4, "From Agitation to Propaganda.")"

As you see, our friend is already trying to wriggle out of the problem. He has obviously been told that the only Marxist theoretician of art is none other than Plekhanov. He has finally grasped that you cannot approach the organizational problem without first defining art. Having understood all this, however, he falls into a scandalous *lapsus*, of which he is completely unaware. "One example of S. Pylypenko's conceit is the tone of his pamphlets. (Be so good as to read this; I will instruct and teach you all.)"

And so, according to the words of the ideologist of Pluh, art by the definition of the Marxist Plekhanov is "cognition for the purpose of construction." (See my, Pylypenko's, article in No. 4 of *Ploughman*.) Short and sweet. However, things do not turn out so well when we open the relevant volume of this same Marxist Plekhanov; from it we learn that the great philosopher never spoke any such nonsense, nor could he have spoken it. And issue No. 4 of *Ploughman* troubles itself in vain; Plekhanov will still

remain Plekhanov. Indeed, when we say "cognition for the purpose of construction," we have to admit logically of the opposite possibility, "cognition for the purpose of destruction." In other words, cognition has two natures: one destructive, the other constructive. Consequently, we have to reach the following sophistry: inasmuch as cognition has two natures, does the artist, then, cognize only to construct? Does he not also cognize to destroy? In concrete terms: does a proletarian artist in a bourgeois country cognize to build this bourgeois country? Such questions must come from all sides and they have to be answered. Yet they cannot be answered *because they flow from a faulty premise*.

What is cognition? Cognition is a social category, with the aid of which humanity, through its revolutionary classes, moves forward, into the future. Inasmuch as this is so, *cognition is the most real kind of construction*. And that is all. To add "for the purpose of construction" here means either not to comprehend what cognition is (we remind you of the opposite *logical* conclusion: cognition for the purpose of destruction), or to say, "art is the most real kind of construction in order to construct." Both are absurd.

Where does the problem lie here? Why can Comrade Pylypenko not let go of this "construction?" The answer can be found in our second article in *Quo Vadis?* and in this very same Plekhanov.

Like all utilitarians and enlighteners, the ideologist of Pluh thinks that art, on the one hand, embodies the idea of the beautiful and, on the other and with greater force, expresses our strivings toward truth, goodness, toward better living conditions and so on. In other words he expresses and emphasizes the practical side of the affair and, hence, divides the indivisible. From here stems the "formula": "art is cognition *for the purpose of construction*." He attempts to narrow the role of cognition, and hence of art also, to the role of day-to-day practical tasks, to the role of a subordinate factor in one or another bureaucratic apparatus that seeks "truth and virtue" mainly in circulars.

Plekhanov understood this and called it "a theoretical error." He said that "when a work of art *alongside* the idea of beauty, that is independently of it, also expresses certain moral or practical aspirations, then the critic has the right to concentrate his attention on precisely these aspirations, leaving aside the artistry."

"Then criticism takes on a moralizing character." He stated that "our understanding of beauty is 'permeated' by the above-mentioned aspirations and itself expresses them and therefore we cannot divide into separate parts that which is organically indivisible."

Comrade Pylypenko writes: "our age is one of enlightenment." Whether or not this is so remains to be seen, but today we have to state that the definition of our age as one of "enlightenment" is an empty phrase. Plekhanov said as much: "similar theoretical mistakes (concerning the

definition of art) occur among critics during periods of 'enlightenment'."

As you see, the formula "art is cognition for the purpose of construction" is a formula of "enlighteners." What the "enlightenment" of our age is, we will explain in due course. From this explanation it will become clear that it takes its roots from Stolypin's land parcel. Inasmuch as this is the case, one can say that this, Serhii Volodymyrovych, is a little scandal which Mr. Dontsov will not be the only one to ridicule. "Ai-ai-ai-ai! (We could repeat M. Khylovy's refrain: "We do not wish to suspect you of this.") The galosh you are climbing into is so gigantic that you will never be able to get out of it. You should have looked into the dictionary before polemicizing and boasting of your learning.

Thus, we are left with our Plekhanovite "art is the cognition of life." And that is all. There can be no concessions here! Let Comrade Pylypenko thrash around in the thickets, searching for some other "formula." We already have it. Whoever introduces corrections to it, consciously or unconsciously is doing a reactionary thing. This is the tiny "detail" which in its time split social democracy into Bolsheviks and Mensheviks. Comrade Pylypenko will not succeed in splitting us, because we believe that he will find his way out of the thickets. To construct without cognition—this is today's formula of the petty bourgeois of the peasant NEP, as we wrote and proved in *Quo Vadis?*. Therefore *we will not permit* the obscuring of the role of cognition in favour of the "pernicious" "construction," *especially now, in our complex, transitional age*, because the causes of this obfuscation lie deep and have a social character.

Of course there would be nothing simpler than quoting some complete balderdash from some Zhurakovsky<sup>12</sup> or other, who happened to be lying on the table at the time, and then saying: "this balderdash is an example of what our young idealist 'contemplators' are writing."

But does this save the situation? It only underlines once more the fact that having expressed the formula—illiterate in Marxist terms but in "enlightenment" terms quite consistent—"art is cognition for the purpose of construction," Pylypenko reveals his *organic and unconscious opposition to cognition*. He is unable in any way to link himself to Plekhanov, who tried to convince us that cognition of life was gained through the faculty of contemplation. No, there is unquestionably some disorder here.

The disorder stems from the fact that it is not possible to study art from a single brochure written by the confused and completely un-Marxist F. Schmidt,<sup>13</sup> read, we might add, in a hurry. The history of this erudition is roughly and quite evidently as follows. In the previous issue of *Culture and Daily Life*, Horbenko's<sup>14</sup> review of the book *Art* appeared. Comrade Pylypenko, having read it, came upon the information that Schmidt had put forward his own cyclical theory. Inasmuch as Khylovy also was "floundering" in cycles, the time had come for Pylypenko to acquaint

himself with his work. And he did so. This is where the enormous quotation came from, so enormous it is embarrassing.

For all that, what did our friend find in this brochure that was "valuable"? First of all he immediately discovered two definitions, foggy and confused, like Zhurakovsky himself, who, in Comrade Pylypenko's own words provides us with "idealistic balderdash." And why his "biosociological point of view actually approaches a Marxist understanding" is known to our ideologist alone. Here is his first "formula": "art is an activity which reveals the images of the artist (his "microcosms") in forms present for the perception of others and which attempts to elicit in these others experiences connected with the given images" (page 39).

Behold the "formula" which is one more example of the definition of art (as though there were millions of them and each person had to be familiar with entire millions). What a blunder-head Comrade Pylypenko is! This is the formula put forward by our ardent compiler. As you see, it is extremely hazy, a typical example of idealism, which has the ability to speak in a manner simple mortals can never understand. Nevertheless, since we are not simple mortals, but "academics" after all, it is "our professional obligation" to understand it.

When Plekhanov says that art is cognition or a method of cognizing life, he is at once telling us that *within art is contained a certain social dynamic* that disturbs the unquiet spirit of a human being, and in so doing propels this human being and humanity forward, further, to those "unseen horizons of the commune beyond the hills," which our ideologist detests so much.

According to Schmidt, we get the opposite. In his view (and, therefore, also Comrade Pylypenko's, as much as the latter agrees with him), art is all in all "an activity that reveals the 'microcosms' of the artist," his limited world, in order to "elicit experiences." And is that all? That is all! Lord above, this is unpardonable idealism, dictated by the petty bourgeois. What, after all, does "eliciting experiences" mean? Did not the famous Vertinsky<sup>15</sup> elicit them? Surely you do not walk unmoved past the images of graffiti "poetry"? Cognition of life means doing something of importance to the community, while floundering in "experiences" alone means . . . propagating art for art's sake, means obscuring the social role of the artist.

Comrade Pylypenko did not realize himself that he had fallen into the clutches of a peculiar Ukrainian formalism which throws itself firstly into *l'art pour l'art* and then into total liquidationism.

Such is Schmidt (or, if you like, Comrade Pylypenko) in his first definition. The second definition, as we know, is dependent on the first, because you cannot walk taller than you are. Later, when our friend attempts to prop up his accidental and not-very-well-thought-out Schmidt with

Polonsky and Lelevich,<sup>16</sup> the results are quite humorous, because in the first place neither of them is an authority for us, and in the second place neither Polonsky nor Lelevich have ever had anything in common with the fog-diffusor Schmidt. To make things even clearer: in the realm of aesthetics we recognize only one authority—Plekhanov. Even Comrade Bukharin (here's an ace for you, Serhii Volodymyrovych!), who, having given his own relatively successful definition of art, suddenly agrees with L. Tolstoi's definition—we even place a question mark after him. This is not presumptuousness, but clarity of thought. And there you have it, dear Comrade! All that remains is for you to add your "voice from the crowd: and where did this plague on our Poltava come from!" These are the ironic words of the romantic Semenko, but in this irony we sense a belief that our country will finally find its definition and that this definition will once and for all put an end to illiterate "Little-Russianness."

That time, however, is far in the future (it will come, *it has to come*, we believe!), while today Comrade Pylypenko gives to art yet another definition. But more of that in the next chapter.

### III

So what then is art, after all?

"There was an old man called Michael  
Finnegan... begin again...."

Thus, to solve the problem of organizing literature, one has to really answer the question: what is art? Comrade Pylypenko finally grasped this, but having done so, as we see, failed to do his homework, and, not having prepared himself properly, soon found himself sowing idealist wild oats. As we know, every social group has its view of art, and therefore our task should also be to provide a definition which represents the proletariat's *historic* task. You certainly need not beat around Schmidt's bushes in order to do this. You need to devote some thought to the matter, to spend some time working on the problem. Our task would then be simpler too: it is one thing to shoot down some "enko" or other, but quite another when it comes to old *papasha* himself... (it's undignified, you know).

Comrade Pylypenko quite obviously feels that everyone understands him perfectly and that the thoughtful reader sees everything clearly from the very first line. Considering the matter in this fashion, he makes the following *beau pas*:

Marxists, none the less, reduce all the formulas to a general one that they all agree upon: "with the aid of art a class cognizes itself, thereby systematizing its emotions and feelings, organizing and pouring them into a definite class psychology." *In short, art is primarily ideology.*

Having stated, this, Comrade Pylypenko adds with tremendous satisfaction and evidently grooming his whiskers: "and let anyone tell me that this is vulgar Marxism!" Well, on one point we have already done so; we will try to do the same here.

The very fact that this "formula" is used to prop up the clerical idealism of Schmidt—this alone is vulgar Marxism. However, what are these new philosophical considerations? In the first place, that which our theoretician took from Polonsky and gives us with an "all Marxists agree upon" *is not a formula, but something that derives from a formula.* It begins with a "with the aid of" . . . and ends with . . . "psychology." Tagged on to the end we have Pylypenko's own little touch, namely: "art is primarily ideology."

Let us examine the logic here. Polonsky was talking about class psychology, Pylypenko is discussing ideology. Are psychology and ideology the same thing? Simple political literacy tells us that ideology is a process of conscious thought, perhaps even with the aid of false consciousness (Engels' letters to Mehring), while psychology is primarily a subconscious process. Clearly Comrade Pylypenko corrects "all Marxists" by ascribing to them assertions they did not make. To say that "art is primarily ideology" is to mistake its psychological nature. However, we will not be sticklers and will suppose that Polonsky did say "with the aid of art" . . . etc., "pouring them into a definite class *ideology.*" We will assume that *feelings* can be "poured into ideology." . . . A barber can organize and trim whiskers "with the aid" of a razor, fashioning them à la Wilhelm. Does this mean that the razor is above all the fashion à la Wilhelm? What do you think, Serhii Volodymyrovych? Yes, answers the brilliant theoretician. But what do "all Marxists" have to do with this? We laughed long and hard when we reached this unexpected conclusion.

Let us, nevertheless, assume that the "formula," "art is primarily ideology," is provided *without any connection* to the quotation from Polonsky. Let us suppose we are talking about "art as ideological clothing" (Plekhanov's theory). What is left? Simply an empty phrase. Really, is this a definition? Are not law, politics, etc., ideology? Every social category is also ideology, but art is not the same thing as politics, law is not the same thing as medical practice, and so on. Each of these categories requires a definition particular to itself alone.

So much for the first point. On the second point there can be no disagreement, namely, that art is an ideological category [why is this "the second point": we've been through that once already—M. Kh.] and we should approach the systematics of superstructures as systematics of ideologies, which is what we intend to do now.

This is what Comrade Pylypenko proceeds to do. What kind of systematics is in question here? It is intolerable that such nonsense be thrown around in the name of baffling the heads of Pluh members. What is systematics? A science of systems, a method of constructing systems. And so we get the following: we should approach methods of constructing systems of art as methods of constructing systems of ideology. Have we got it right? Yes! Well, and what does it mean? Absolutely nothing. What, after all, is a "system of art"? The devil himself knows! What's a "method of constructing a system of art"? For the life of me, I don't know. To be sure, there is a "method of constructing a system of ideology," but we had better forget that, because, in the first place, everyone interprets it differently and, in the second place, why are we discussing it at all? If the latter is to be the yardstick for "a method of constructing a system of art" (incidentally, we do not suspect Comrade Pylypenko of confusing "a system of art" with a system of organization), the whole thing will be doomed from the beginning. What's the point of all this "erudition"? What does this have to do with our disagreements? But let us suppose it does. Then we obtain roughly the following: inasmuch as a cow is a domestic category, one has to approach the systematics of cows in the same fashion as the systematics of buildings. Correct? Quite so! But what does Alexander of Macedonia have to do with it?

Our acerbic pen offends Comrade Pylypenko. Yet what can we do, dear Serhii Volodymyrovych, since we have taken upon ourselves such a mission and will follow it to the end, namely to that moment when the "systematic" finally floors us with a "tour de bras." You know this yourself, for you recommend Khvylovy (in the manner of Mr. Przystrejski<sup>17</sup>) as a "fiery apostle of nonsense and a martyr of a senseless affair."

In a word, the whole business of the "ideological" definition of art has gotten completely bogged down. And so, to clear things up a little: elements of a certain subjectivism do, indeed, enter into art (you evidently had this in mind?). At one point or another class subjectivism can even devour the artistic equivalent of a given work, make it a topical piece, a butterfly that lives but a day. This happens in times similar to the ones we have lived through: the years '17, '18, '19, '20 and their like. This happens when society outgrows certain social forms and through a given class explodes in order to discover other forms, when art has played out its role in preparing this explosion, when the sense of this explosion is clear and

there is obviously nothing more for art to accomplish. The artist then also appears not to be a creator, but an *apprentice*, because his will is paralyzed by the will of his class, to whom the meaning of the conflict is clear and which seeks physical support. This is the reason why the poets and artists of this time seemed ridiculous and unnecessary.

The explosion, however, has subsided. Old social forms have been destroyed and a new society is arising in new forms. The revolutionary class is searching for the path toward the future in the name of all humanity (we stress "humanity," because class egoism is only justified to the extent that it is a revolutionary, progressive factor). It is at this point that art surfaces again. It has to serve the revolutionary class; not, however, as a "class for itself," but as a "class for humanity." This is its historic mission within a class society. In this sense it is an "ideological category," and only in this sense.

We could, actually, complete our definition of art here, were it not for the fact that Comrade Pylypenko touched upon the artist. Whom does our ideologist follow this time? Schmidt again, and once again with the aid of an enormous quotation. He drags the very same Schmidt in on the basis that he, Pylypenko, "almost agrees with him" and that it's not what we had in mind but it's clever anyway. (Italians, when they wish to display their "erudition" in similar cases, have a saying: *se non è vero, è ben trovato*.)

Take the following:

They [says Schmidt] who are able to master art best and who consequently can serve others through the products of their creativity, providing them with ready formulas for the expression of their experiences—are called artists.

Such a definition appeals immeasurably to Comrade Pylypenko, the more so because it is not very wise and because, having uttered it, one can hide behind the "authority" of Schmidt. The authority, though, is a quack because we obtain: a priest is one who has been able to master priestliness and who consequently can serve others through the products of his creativity, providing them with ready formulas for the expression of their experiences. A musician is one who has been able to master music, etc. In a word, the difference between a priest and an artist is in the fact that the former mastered priestliness and the latter art. What an artist is and what a priest is remain a mystery, the more so when we consider that we lack a definition of both priestliness and art.

Therefore we ought to bear in mind that the art of professional artists differs from that of non-artists only in quantity not in quality.



Schmidt, in a word, here assures Comrade Pylypenko that the latter's pamphlet differs from one by some Voltaire "only in quantity, not in quality," and our friend is prepared to sing dithyrambs to Schmidt. No, dear Comrade, "'tis a lion, not a cow"; don't believe it! He's bluffing, I swear it.

However strange it may appear, the artist has to be without fail and at the very least a person of talent or even genius. At the very least. Not even a million Schmidts could do anything with a duffer. This is an axiom, it is not "conceit," Comrade Pylypenko, but *clear thinking*.

It is quite another thing when you quote Lenin's words that "art belongs to the people and ought to enter into the very midst of the working masses." This is quite right. But Khvylovy is not mistaken either when he says that "art is for developed intellects." What does a "developed intellect" mean? It does not mean one recognized by St. Vladimir's University, nor one that spends its time in taverns or strolling along boulevards (whether we are talking about peasants, workers, Soviet high society ladies or educated fops). It is an intellect striving to raise itself to the level of the social possibilities of its age. *It is first and foremost an active intellect*. It is to it that art belongs. Comrade Pylypenko takes the role of "popular" advocate in vain. We know who the people are. Once the great satirist and lover of humanity Saltykov-Shchedrin<sup>18</sup> was accused of contempt for "the people." He replied in this way:

the misunderstanding concerning my mockery of the people seems to me to stem from my reviewers' inability to distinguish the historical people, namely the ones active in the historical arena, from the people in whom the idea of democratism is embodied. The first are evaluated and sympathized with in measure of their achievements. When they give birth to Bordavkins and Ugrium-Burcheevs, there can be no question of sympathy; when they show a striving to break out of the condition of backwardness, then sympathy is quite in order, although the extent of this sympathy depends on the extent of the efforts made by the people on the road to consciousness. As for the people in the second sense, one cannot fail to "sympathize" with them.

With this long quotation we hope to put an end to "popular" advocates and, even if Comrade Pylypenko introduces further citations from Zinoviev and the resolutions of party congresses, we will still continue to distinguish between the people and "the people." This is because one people will accept art, the other will use it for . . . rolling cigarettes. We will serve the latter . . . through the programme to liquidate illiteracy.

"All this, indeed, has to be borne in mind when solving the problem of how to organize literary forces."

\* \* \*

Forgive us, we promised in the second chapter to explain the criminal affair concerning the literary figure M. Khvylovy, and here we have completed the third already and no affair has been mentioned. Well, here you have it: the *prosvita* public is greatly agitated, crying: how can some *parvenu* "shake the foundations of proletarian literature?" There is something the matter here, they say. We need . . . Well, in short, you will discover what we need in the next chapters.

## IV

*Enlightenment as prosvita-work*

Put out the fires of days gone by,  
Throw the smoked cigarette of life into the  
ashes.

Iulian Shpol

All organizational considerations are ever closely tied to definite ideological premises. Even Comrade Pylypenko himself recognizes this, referring in the given instance to Lenin's authority. Therefore, the elucidation of ideological premises should be the first task of each "hostile" party. Only through such clarification can we finally hope to grasp which of us stands on the correct path, which of us has *objectively* divorced himself from the proletariat.

The definition of art is one such premise and in this Comrade Pylypenko has presented himself as a complete idealist, namely a person who *objectively* has to play the pipe of the petty bourgeoisie. This ideological view of his is, however, terribly misty and convinces us that the ideologist of Pluh does not feel very sure of his ground. We detect a similar insecurity in this second premise.

Khvylovy [writes Pylypenko] confuses two concepts in his pamphlets: "enlightenment and *prosvita-work*," forgetting that our age is one of "enlightenment" in the best sense of this word.

Yes, "in the best sense of this word." Let us note this. This careful addition, of course, serves a purpose.

In our *Thoughts Against the Current* we explained what *prosvita-work* was. We defined *prosvita* as a psychological category of a regressive type, as the antithesis to psychological Europe, one that nourished the kulak.

What is "enlightenment"?

Whereas we can consider *prosvita* a constant category of the backward psyche of class society, "enlightenment" is a social phenomenon of a changeable type. This allows us to state: "enlightenment" is not *prosvita*, but neither is it that which Comrade Pylypenko thinks it to be. "Enlightenment" cannot be considered outside time and place, as can *prosvita*, although it takes its definition from and has its roots in the same soil as *prosvita*.

*When we say "enlightenment" we have in mind a certain complex of ideas which define this concept.* Therefore, to call our age one of "enlightenment" means to give it an essential idea, to give it a certain *political* physiognomy as we will see further.

As an example we shall take the "enlightenment" of the eighteenth century; on the basis of such "enlightenment," as we know, arose the so-called "enlightened absolutism," namely a certain direction in the *politics* of the European monarchs (in their *politics*, we emphasize). At that time it was a question of liquidating the remainder of the old order, the Middle Ages (!). We do not wish to say by using this example that "enlightened absolutism" was a reactionary phenomenon for the time; we wish to underline that on the foundation of "enlightenment" there could arise a *politics* of European monarchs.

Let us take a second example—the "enlightenment" of the sixties here and in Russia. From such an "enlightenment" grew no longer absolutism, but populism—a factor, incidentally, in the social life of the time that had a revolutionary character. Moreover, from it came the forerunner of Russian Marxism, Chernyshevsky. Therefore, we see from this example that the "enlightenment" of the sixties was already the foundation for the *politics* of a potential social-revolutionary tradition. To put it another way, in the sixties it found its apologist in the petty bourgeoisie.

In such a fashion from both these examples we see that "enlightenment" is used at one time by absolutism, at another by the petty bourgeoisie. Naturally, this leads us to the question: can the proletariat also make use of it? Comrade Pylypenko surmises that it can. Our view is the opposite.

"Enlightenment" is not only learning, but in addition a certain *politics*. Really? Yes! What, then, are the distinguishing features of this *politics*. As our elementary grammar of political economy tells us, its features are: a terrible short-sightedness and a leaning toward reforms in the economic or educational field. Above everything, however, "enlightenment" is characterized by an atmosphere of mistrust toward the active society which always envelops it. All these features obviously cannot characterize our age. Let us, however, assume that "enlightenment" has the potential to become the point of departure from which we shall observe our Soviet reality. Having made such an assumption, we must look to the root of the

matter. To put it another way, we must discover the socio-economic ground from which "enlightenment" grew. Here, when we begin to search for this ground, we unexpectedly stumble upon...the land parcels of Stolypin.

If the "enlightenment" of the sixties quite clearly adapted itself to the activity of the petty bourgeoisie and especially of the peasantry, which was searching for a way out of the constraining framework of the feudal order, of arbitrary Russian absolutism, then the Western-European "enlightenment" of the eighteenth century developed out of the same petty bourgeoisie, which had found its solution in "enlightened absolutism." The socio-economic basis of the "enlightenment" of both periods is one and the same. The essence is not, however, in these two periods—*"enlightenment" always defines the politics of the petty bourgeoisie, especially the peasantry*; we learn this from the history of our mass movement. Therefore, "enlightenment" always has a petty-bourgeois character. Since this is so, *potentially it can serve only Stolypin's peasantry*. In its own time, in the time of struggle against feudalism, as a changeable phenomenon, it played a progressive role. In our time, in the period of the dictatorship of the proletariat, "enlightenment" as a petty-bourgeois policy is a reactionary phenomenon.

In this way we have once again approached our former question: can we really call our age "an age of enlightenment," even in "the best sense of the term"? Have we been unable to come up with anything better than a return to the eighteenth century or to the sixties? We see that Comrade Pylypenko vacillates, saying: we cannot tell. He will not avoid the problem, however, *because we are not just talking about the impermissibility of using a term one does not understand, but also of the fact that in calling our age one of "enlightenment" Comrade Pylypenko has thereby unparadonably erased its class content*. We are living through an age of peaceful construction; this is true. *But this age, is called one of "taking a breather"; not one of "enlightenment," but of the dictatorship of the proletariat*. We must always emphasize this. That our age is one of *proletarian* concern with study, yes, we agree; yet proletarian study is separated from the obscurities of "enlightenment" by an enormous chasm. Our definition keeps society in a state of concentration, yours produces liquidationist attitudes, erases revolutionary perspectives, downplays the class content of our age and does this, incidentally, very fervently. Therefore the first ideological premise (the idealistic definition of art) has found itself support in the second premise ("enlightenment"). So we are moving along famously, like a well-oiled machine, as you can see; and dear Serhii Volodymyrovych has no cause for being angry with us.

The late Blakytyn<sup>19</sup> was fond of saying about Comrade Pylypenko: "He's a sly fox, but he's going to outfox himself." This is precisely what

has occurred; he has outfoxed himself! Ignoring the advice of the younger proletarian intelligentsia, our friend did not himself realize the contradictions he had fallen into. His peasant environment defined "steadfast *papasha*, the man of rock," against his own strong will.

This is one of the first and significant warnings to be made. Comrade Shchupak will have to devote some thought to this too. (We are curious: will he subscribe to *Quo Vadis?*... or will he recognize "enlightenment" and Schmidt?)

Thus "enlightenment" is a postulate of Stolypin's land parcel. The peasant NEP itself demands just such a definition of our age. It demands the misty term which corresponds to "construction for the purpose of construction," which clouds cognition—the same cognition in which burns the restless spirit of the autumn revolution. "Enlightenment" is "don't rock the boat;" it is the NEP "seriously, for a long time" and "forever"; it is "the kulak is a potential proletarian"; it is the absence of class antagonism!

As you see, we understand what "enlightenment" is. Of course it is not *prosvita!* And yet today it is a component part of *prosvita*. This second ideological premise suffers from limiting short-sightedness and has to lead logically to the liquidation of art. Inasmuch as its socio-economic basis is to be found in Stolypin's land parcel, this premise is incompatible with a truly revolutionary, and not reformist role for art and therefore with art itself. If, then, both premises bear such a reactionary character, obviously the organizational ideas must be just as confused and must suffer from the same petty-bourgeois limitations.

We shall now examine this assumption.

## V

### *Cheerful "Criteria"*

Ques à co? (What is this?)

A Provençal saying with which Beaumarchais followed Marin.

The following are the "criteria" Comrade Pylypenko fixes upon in establishing a "system for the division of literary forces:" professional, artistic-formal, group-journalistic and ... "Let artists drift freely." We will begin with the last:

"Perhaps no organization of literary forces is needed at all? Some favour this view. They take the well-known quotation from Bukharin about anarchic competition (Khvylovy also refers to it) and draw conclusions from it. ...

Posing the question in such a manner, according to our opponent, is transparently wrong, because "in the process of struggle, consonant elements cannot fail to join forces for common action." Comrade Pylypenko defends Bukharin from his "loose" treatment at the hands of Zerov and Khvylovy and appropriates the role of defence counsel, so to speak. He insists that the content of Bukharin's quotation refers to what he calls "proletarian writers in general." What this "in general" means, our friend himself does not understand, because he finally adds: his, Bukharin's thoughts were simply "a reaction" and should not be treated seriously. The author "who holds this view" admitted his mistakes at the last party congress, why should he not admit this mistake also!

The question is much simpler, however, and Bukharin has no need of "defence counsels": his views on art are clear to everyone who wishes to examine the question objectively. A few lines later, Comrade Pylypenko says that "individual competition can only exist in chaotic bourgeois production" and adds: "in bourgeois society, we had and have such milieus as the *Rada (Council)*<sup>20</sup> group, the *Khata (Home)*<sup>21</sup> group, *Dzvin (Bell)*,<sup>22</sup> *Rusaskaia mysl (Russian Thought)*,<sup>23</sup> "literary independents" and so forth. In other words he immediately falls into the vicious circle of contradictions. On the one hand he frightens us with the prospect of anarchic competition between "individuals" as characteristic of "bourgeois production," while on the other hand, having mentioned several bourgeois groupings, he assures us that bourgeois art could not do without organizations (*Bell*, the *Home* group, etc.). Are we therefore to understand that there was no anarchic competition in bourgeois society either? What, Serhii Volodymyrovych, is the problem? The problem, Mykola Hryhorovych, is that I, Pylypenko, approach art as an exemplary vulgar Marxist, because, following the clerical idealist Schmidt, I treat it as "production." This does you no credit, Serhii Volodymyrovych, because it is high time you grasped dialectics. Bourgeois ideologists were far more clever than you, they knew how to combine anarchic competition and ideological alliances in art. Comrade Bukharin also knew this when he put forward his slogan.

Once upon a time Comrade Pylypenko published his state plan for literature in which each artist and each branch of the art were placed within a definite framework. Even today he makes no attempts to renounce this plan. He is absolutely incapable of comprehending that art by its nature cannot tolerate any framework and that if it has to be called "production" then all the same it stands far removed from any machine trust. Therefore, since it steers clear of frameworks, it must be subject to anarchic competition. This in the first place. In the second place the growth of art always bears a spontaneous character and *to try to impose it from above is to destroy it.*

Does this, however, mean that all organization is foreign to art? Nothing of the sort! Art organizes itself, and does so along ideological lines (in the broad sense), but this organization takes place not in such apparatuses as Pluh's but *in initiative groupings which arise spontaneously taking the criterion of intellectual selection as their principle*. Only such groupings are vital; they alone have a capacity to create art. All literature under "bourgeois production" was organized in this fashion and this is exactly what we mean by anarchic competition in the arts. This is how *Bell, Russkoe bogatstvo (Russian Wealth)*<sup>24</sup> and other "literary independents" came about. Precisely because they arose in this fashion and not in another, they became a social factor of considerable weight. Therefore, in dealing with proletarian art, and not with some totally ideological centre, rest assured, Serhii Volodymyrovych, our young literature allows above everything just such an "anarchic competition." We accept this "criterion."

But surely you are going to ally yourselves along the lines of journals, professions, qualifications?—asks Comrade Pylypenko.

Whichever way the honourable comrade prefers: we can do so by journal, by profession or by qualification. Actually, it is not really possible to be grouped around a journal, although when some literary forces group themselves in this way—that is fine. Today's journal, *Red Path*, for example, will not produce an ideologically well-defined grouping tomorrow, but the day after tomorrow it well might. It will only happen when collaborators of one ideological position (in the broad sense) get together. Naturally, the Vaplitians will not exist because of the journal *Vaplite*,<sup>25</sup> but the reverse. This, however, tells us absolutely nothing. This, excuse us, is the empty sophistry of intellectually abject people.

In short, Comrade Pylypenko wishes to group writers around something, but he is unable to do so. And he will remain unable to do so until he takes upon himself the organization of ordinary cultural centres—although even there he will find that his work consists not so much of grouping as of repairing and correcting. *Because a social organization can exist only if it comes into existence spontaneously*. As for art, there cannot be any question about this. An excellent sample in our own time of an exemplary artistic organization can be furnished by the neoclassicists. They congregate, if I am not mistaken, over a cup of tea two or three times every six months. They do not have their own journal, stamp, or other attributes of Pylypenko's apparatus. Nonetheless, the spirit of the neoclassicists, like the Holy Ghost, has spread its wings over Ukraine. What does this signify? That the neoclassicists have been able to unite the principle of anarchic competition with a distinct ideological formation. Consequently, even if we were to view them as our enemies, we could certainly learn something valuable from them.

As you see therefore we do not oppose "the organization of literary forces," *but we do oppose the kind of organization that Comrade Pylypenko proposes for us.*

Take the third "criterion"—that of qualifications. In order to demonstrate that this criterion has no place, our friend spins a very naive tale for several pages. He draws upon the theatre. To be sure, he admits that *comparaison n'est pas raison*, that "every comparison is a lame one," and yet his own bad angel has persuaded him that if he befuddles the minds of the illiterate, everything will turn out fine.

So, back to the theatre. We have in it "amateur groups, and real artists, and theatrical geniuses." But do we have a collision "between the upper and the lower ranks"? No, replies Comrade Pylypenko to his own question, because "between them [i.e., the upper and lower ranks] we have the technical colleges which teach theatre." In short, the question has been resolved with one wave of the magic wand. Unfortunately, this is not enough to solve the problem.

Why is "the collision between the upper and lower ranks" not in evidence in the theatre? Not, of course, because "between them we have the technical colleges." Such technical schools exist also in literature (the secondary school system teaches literature, and the higher schools even have special departments for this), but because within the theatre there is a genuine concern for, a genuine view of art. We do not wish to repeat Pylypenko here concerning everything being fine in the theatre (on the contrary, there they also await the cultural revolution), we merely wish to say that no state theatre would retain an actor two days if that actor lacked the necessary talent. Just imagine that one fine morning Comrade Pylypenko were to burst into the Kharkiv State Drama Company<sup>26</sup> and begin grouping workers and peasants there on the grounds that they alone are able to create their own art. This does not mean in the least that there are no workers and peasants in the Kharkiv State Drama Company, it means that the theatre collective is composed of artists who have the required talent. Theatre groups are scattered over the entire Ukraine, and in this plethora of groups there are, of course, talented artists. But imagine that the Ivan Franko Theatre<sup>27</sup> was to unite these groups around itself and take upon itself pedagogical functions. What would we get? Nothing, you may be certain.

*There is no massism in the theatre, Comrade Pylypenko.* And your compromising little word "around" will not save you. D'Neoro<sup>28</sup> mocks your "drama-writing" quite justifiably, because an initiative group of playwrights based on an intellectual principle of selection is one thing, while it is quite another to collect in a "drama-writing" technical school everyone who wants to write dramas. We have thousands of dramas in various editorial offices, we have "drama-writing" technical schools, and yet



the theatres are still searching for plays. Where does the difficulty lie? It lies in the lack of the required cultural atmosphere, in the cultural environment. Our writer is still pining away in an Asiatic wasteland; he is still being dragged off constantly into pedagogy . . . or massism.

"The criterion of qualification" is, hence, really not a genuine criterion. If, nevertheless, it attracts someone, we have no objection; we wish him or her the best.

In our opinion the best criterion is "the artistic-formal one": schools, currents, etc. When Comrade Pylypenko asks us, "Perhaps we could divide writers along such lines?" we reply, "No, even such a division is improper. Writers, my dear Serhii Volodymyrovych, are not dumplings; they cannot be divided. If they themselves begin from such a "criterion," then good luck to them! It is not in the least the fault of proletarian art that the Pluh platform was written by idealists and metaphysicians, who inserted into it the point of "categorically denying the method of division along formal lines." Really, how Philistine all this sounds, of what hopeless narrow-mindedness does this point reek! What an arrogant, unpardonable formalism shows through this thesis!

"From age unto age until the end of time," as the cantor in our seminary used to say in the days of Pomialovsky.<sup>29</sup> The result is that Communism can only be built according to Pluh's recipe; all others are "categorically forbidden." This reminds us of a certain "tiller of the soil" who decided to construct the commune. He "functioned energetically" near "a certain furnace" and categorically decided that one should eat "with these" spoons and not "with those."

And so, finally, we are left with the "professional criterion." Here even Comrade Pylypenko was not very forthcoming. Nor shall we be, because the professional one stands completely apart and does not prevent division according to other "criteria", . . . otherwise our friend would not have joined with us in creating a writers' town committee.

As you see, our metaphysician Pylypenko reaches the conclusion that all these cheerful "criteria" are not worth a fig. In our opinion, they are and they are not. They are when they are vital; they are not when they are dead. They are when they give birth to some initiative group; they are not when someone uses them to "make divisions." When the Pluh ideologist continues that he "has been talking twaddle," we sympathize with him: he defines quite accurately his little sortie among the "criteria." Thus he obviously will not become a "literary *papasha*." The more so "Khvylovy's *papasha*."

"Allow me to observe [he writes], that I am also Khvylovy's *papasha*, having published his *Thoughts Against the Current*."

Unfortunately, we must disillusion the reader: Comrade Pylypenko is not our *papasha* even "on this level," because as editor of the State

Publishing House of Ukraine he refused to sign the form granting permission to publish *Thoughts Against the Current* and such permission was granted by another member of the board of directors. It may, of course, be that our friend refused to sign because he was at the time looking for the "Corinthian order," saying: "Is the "order" used or not?" It is a pity, however, that he referred his readers to the dictionary, because they are still searching for it there. There is still another pity: the crux of the matter is not so much in "orders" as in pretentiousness, in "criteria." We therefore make it known that the "Corinthian order" in publicistic writing sounds just like the "authormobile," because purity of language negates this kind of "erudition" and demands . . . a Latin root.

Be that as it may, however, "I ask the reader's indulgence for this new polemical digression and return to the theme."

## VI

### *A "criterion" most cheerful and our own.*

You ought to and do understand that once a member of the party reaches the conviction that a certain advocacy is intrinsically wrong and harmful, he has the duty of opposing it.

V.I. Lenin

What "criterion" did our brilliant publicist discover? The very criterion that logically flows from an obscure definition of art and from "enlightenment." This "criterion" (incidentally) is no accidental phenomenon in his confused consciousness.

"There remains one sure method, which we now propose—the *class* approach, whose criterion is the *ideology* of the artists."

Here, you see, Comrade Pylypenko raises the subject of the class approach. Here, for some reason, he is not "sick" of talking about classes. When it is a question of defining our age we see some sort of pacifist "enlightenment"; when, however, Pluh is touched, class appears in the arena. Play the enlightener, he says, as long as you have the omnipotent ideological peasant centre. But do not forget about the class approach (do you hear, the class approach!) when someone attempts to bring down this organization.

We have no intention of destroying Pluh. We merely propose that it transform itself into a group for artistic self-education. Moreover, we propose that the qualified members of Pluh quit the organization and form

a narrow grouping according to their formal-artistic sympathies. Why did Comrade Pylypenko become so anxious upon hearing this? His memorandum was written immediately after Comrade Ialovy's article "Long Live Hart and Pluh!"<sup>30</sup> Why did Comrade Pylypenko at once fire off a salvo, two articles, to the *Ploughman* and *Culture and Daily Life*?<sup>31</sup>

At the basis of every literary organization, as is known, lie ideological class criteria. Only a hopeless idiot could really deny this truth. *The point is not that we deny the existence of this criterion, therefore, but that in our petty-bourgeois country during the time of the dictatorship of the proletariat we have no right to propose this "criterion" for the "division of literary forces."* This is the crux of the matter and the rub. Comrade Pylypenko says we "ignore the class principle." Quite right. But in what sense? Not in the sense that we deny it, that we refuse to give writers the opportunity "to make use of images of the peasantry," *but in the sense that we understand "Lenin's wedge" differently from our friend, in the sense that we "maintain a stubborn silence on the necessity for the existence of a mass peasant organization with an 'autonomous' ideological centre."*

Comrade Pylypenko in the course of his memorandum underlines this: "in our transitional epoch a revolutionary-peasant organization of writers has to exist"—one that is wise, has a mass character and is independent.

Pluh, which is after all a *peasant* organization *in its lower ranks*, has to exist as an *autonomous* entity.

What does this mean? What kind of "autonomy" are we discussing? An ideological one? Lord forbid, says Comrade Pylypenko in brackets (quite characteristic too: in brackets!), "because we have no reason to expound a peasant ideology, *or, therefore, to unite according to such a criterion.*" There you have it! And only a moment ago you proposed that in "dividing literary forces" one ought to begin from the "simple sure criterion—the ideological one." Where is the logic? In one place you propose a division according to ideologies and classes, in another you say that "grouping according to such a criterion is not possible." What is the problem? The problem is that our friend has once again fallen into the circle of great contradictions and is completely unable to find his way out of it, because the Mephistopheles of Stolypin's land parcel will simply not leave him alone. Therefore an internal struggle is in progress, is in progress and . . . has ended.

Well, and to whom did the victory fall? To our great sadness we have to acknowledge that the petty-bourgeois Satan was victorious. The revolutionary only shone for an instant in the brackets! . . . and even then he only made a mess, giving cause for a mockery of Pylypenko's logic. From then on Mephistopheles spoke. This is how he envisaged the "division of literary forces":

Every literary union or group is a *socio-literary* [Comrade Pylypenko's emphasis] organization and a class-based, militant one that defends the interests of its social collective with its own weapon—art. The proletarian group among them must struggle for its hegemony.

Thus Comrade Pylypenko once again returns to the ideological criterion. He does so, moreover, pompously, so to speak; he demands for various social groupings organizations that are class-based, communitarian, militant, mass and literary. It is no longer a question here of "utilizing images of the peasantry," but of *ideologically autonomous centres among which a proletarian organization must struggle*. Here indeed (were we not afraid of offending our friend) we could repeat Comrade Pylypenko's words: "What is this, conscious obstinacy or unconscious illiteracy?"

One would have to admit that a nice collar is being proposed for us. Not so much a collar, in fact, as much as a noose. Dear Serhii Volodymyrovych, do you really not understand that in a petty-bourgeois country in which the proletariat does not even know its own language, in which the kulak has always been master of the situation, in which during the post-revolutionary period his activity reached a peak of intensity—do you really not understand that to legalize the ideologically autonomous centres of various social groupings in the period of the dictatorship of the proletariat means bidding this dictatorship farewell? Surely this is not what the CC RCP resolution you love to cite says? Read it closely, my friend! It concerns itself only with "literary-artistic images" and nothing more. You will not find a single word about autonomous ideological centres. We understand fully that each existing literary organization (both here and in Russia) has a social base. Nevertheless, we would never propose that these organizations be legalized as autonomous ideological centres—the more so mass, militant ones.

What malicious irony, what undisguised cynicism resounds in this proposition addressed to the proletarian writers: "struggle for your hegemony" . . . in the midst of this legalized petty-bourgeois element. No, Serhii Volodymyrovych, even without legalization we find it difficult to tread a correct path and we will not go for this "bait" that you yourself have already fallen for. It is, we say, the Satan of Stolypin's land parcel that has set it. True, Comrade Pylypenko promises to aid in this struggle with his peasant organization which must some day become a proletarian-peasant one. Inasmuch as such aid resembles that of "the *komnezam* to the industrial proletariat," we thank you kindly for it. We can do without it! We have no stomach for a fight so let's call it quits! We are poor scrappers. We can manage without this . . . and we can manage without legalized ideological centres. Let there be one centre—a proletarian, which is to say a worker-peasant centre. We will utilize both

"images of the peasants and workers" there. Agreed?

Whom are you mocking?—cries Comrade Pylypenko—are you making fun of the CC RCP resolution? "This is how they support peasant writers! They would prefer to do without them entirely, of course; maybe because they cannot enter the proletarian academy? (Unless, perhaps, the academy changes its name to the worker-peasant academy?)"

Well, and why not? Perhaps we should rename it the "Worker-Peasant Academy." This is what we understand when we say proletarian. Proletarian because it appeared in the epoch of the proletariat and wishes to serve the proletariat. Does your peasant organization not wish to serve it also? In short, we have no intention of separating ourselves from you; let us work together, the more the merrier! What do you need an "autonomous, militant, class-based, communitarian centre" for? Just stop and think for a minute; ideology is a very slippery thing and you have only one person, Pylypenko, with a consistent world-view. You surely cannot consider him a greater genius than Lenin? The great revolutionary himself forged his ideological centre of ideologically highly accomplished people. Why do you neglect this lesson?

We agree that peasant writers, that is those who come from the villages, can potentially become propagandists of Communism. But under what conditions? Only when they find themselves in an atmosphere created by people who have a well-defined proletarian ideology. No one can at present really guarantee that our Academy can create such an atmosphere. Yet the very fact that it is composed of a group of relatively mature artists and Marxists, that it is the literary base of proletarian ideology—this alone suggests to peasant writers that they ought to take their bearings not from the individual genius Pylypenko, but from the collective, ideologically proletarian centre, VAPLITE. Today only this centre can educate the young writer (no matter where he comes from, the village or the city). It alone can convince him that *only the proletariat, as a historical class, can lead humanity into the future, that only the proletariat is capable of creating the conditions necessary for a cultural renaissance, that only the proletariat will create also the conditions necessary for the renaissance of a young nation.*

Comrade Pylypenko proposes that we "make circles secure with a proletarian core." How ridiculous! He knows very well himself that this core is a drop in the ocean. Besides, how does he expect us to redirect these mass circles "onto the path of proletarian ideology" in conditions where an autonomous peasant centre exists? How can VAPLITE win "ideological hegemony" given the existence of legalized petty-bourgeois ideology in several petty-bourgeois centres?

Comrade Pylypenko writes: "That's the way, child, listen to *papasha*: learn to swim and maybe you won't drown."

To swim indeed! An irony indeed! But whom are you mocking, Serhii Volodymyrovych? Us or yourself? Yourself?

And so here follows our "criterion"! Our "criterion" is organize in whichever way you see fit, according to whatever "criteria" you like. The ideological one, however, we retain for ourselves. There is one legalized *ideological, literary centre and its name is VAPLITE*. There can be no more ideological, legalized centres in our literature, as there can be no legalized parties under the dictatorship of the proletariat. Here we agree with Mr. Dontsov: we will not hand the country over to petty-bourgeois fools and egoists.

VAPLITE<sup>32</sup> is the organization that has taken upon itself the mission of imparting a sharp turn to the waggon of proletarian art, which has lost its way, to put this waggon on the high road and to harness to it not the wretched nags of massism but good thoroughbreds. *If it succeeds in accomplishing this historical role, honour and glory to it; if it does not, a spot will fall on the blockheads, the khokhols, "Little Russia."* We are not partisans of an organization, we are partisans of a proletarian art, the flower of which (if this art exists) is gathered in the Free Academy. VAPLITE demands that the corruption of worker-peasant youth should cease. Today proletarian literature should "assume a new formation" in the name of "the unseen horizons of the commune beyond the hills." It should quit "malicious" massism and take up firm ground. It will today continue toward its former goal, but will travel along a new route. Its organizer along this route is the Free Academy.

Thus there are two propositions, two "criteria." The first is dictated by the petty bourgeoisie; this is the decline of art. The second is dictated by the young historical class, the proletariat; this is the cultural renaissance.

How did it occur, nevertheless, that Comrade Pylypenko entered the first proposition? We shall speak about this in an ensuing chapter.

## VII

### *A post scriptum that disillusion*

"Do not tempt me needlessly."

And so we must now explain "the ultimate cause." Before doing so, however, allow me to disillusion the reader. Here is the issue: our "most cheerful criterion" has provoked our "incomparable maestro," the Don Quixote of "unseen horizons of the commune beyond the hills." Until this moment, in explaining the question of literary-ideological centres, he has emphasized, with an eccentricity peculiar to himself, that VAPLITE could

be the only legalized ideological organization. With this categorical announcement he gave our partner another trump card. Allow us to force this trump card also out of his hand.

We therefore have VAPLITE—the salt of the earth. VAPLITE—the historical factor. So writes VAPLITE. In a word, VAPLITE is not only an imposing factor in the impassable literary waste, but some kind of ugly-face, scarecrow, devil. This is the manner after which our Don Quixote has thus far presented the Free Academy. We therefore must calm our readers: have no fear. *We were only trying to demonstrate what this "most cheerful criterion" could do to a sensitive person. We found it necessary to stress how posing the question in such a fashion inflames "militant, class" passions.* VAPLITE must take upon itself a historical role in the development of proletarian art. But in what circumstances will the Free Academy pretend to a decreed ideological hegemony in literature? In circumstances where on Comrade Pylypenko's request the required organs deem it necessary to pass a decree describing existing literary groups as "communitarian, mass, class-based, militant organizations, which defend the interests of their communities with the weapon at their disposal—art." In such a case we cannot imagine that a proletarian organization (and even Comrade Pylypenko considers us one) would not be decreed as holding ideological hegemony in literature. Hegemony not over literary style, but over the artistic ideologies of various petty-bourgeois groupings.

The point is, however, that we are not VAPP, but "VAP" with a "LITE," and we well understand that literary affairs are not in the hands of vulgar Marxists but of the tested Leninist party and therefore no one is going to impose legalized militant organizations, that is no one will apply class criteria to the organizational division of literary forces. If this is the case, then the only ideological centre (in politics, in art, in whatever you will) *is none other than the Communist Party and its avant-garde.* This we are very mindful of and that is why we named our organization the "Free Academy of Proletarian Literature." What does this mean? It means that during the NEP period we, as tacticians, find it harmful to divide art into militant, class-based organizations. We did not choose the name "Proletarian Academy," but instead "Academy of Proletarian Literature." A proletarian one, insofar as it was proletarian, would substitute itself for the party, pretending to infallibility. this was a first consideration. A second was that by its very existence it would give cause for other social groupings to demand their own artistic-ideological centres. As for our "Academy of Proletarian Literature," the question appears entirely differently. This is not a proletarian academy, in other words an infallible one, but one *that wishes to become proletarian. It is a place where revolutionary writers in the period of "respite" can further their studies*

and investigations. It is an institute of Marxist aesthetics. In this sense our Academy must play a historical role. This explains why those literary figures who came out of the village can also find a place here.

Do you hear, Serhii Volodymyrovych? Do you understand what this is? *This is a strategy for the transitional period in art.* So, please, renounce your "most cheerful criterion." Do not upset our Don Quixote, do not inflame "militant, class passions." Believe us when we say that we shall erect that "everlasting monument" to you, the one we promised in *Quo Vadis?*

### VIII

#### *Massism—Muscovite and yours.*

"Both of you are fair,  
One Lord there is above.  
Be as you were 'til now,  
To both belongs my love.

D. Zahul (worker-peasant poet, member of Pluh).

What is this "ultimate cause?," asks an agitated Comrade Pylypenko. The "ultimate cause" is nothing other than literary massism, or massisms—Muscovite and yours. And the reason why this is the ultimate cause is because massism, although a hazy notion, is an attractive slogan. Our "massists," suffering from dull-wittedness, are incapable of grasping this slogan as a slogan (and as an active factor) similar to "enlightenment," as a factor of a changeable nature. They have accepted it as an *absolute* rule of the revolutionary order, as one that does not in the least measure depend on the strategy of the transitional period. Herein lies their mistake. This is why they are unable to fathom that massism in this former representation, in 1919 or thereabouts, was a positive phenomenon, while today it is a completely negative one. Many of them quite sincerely feel that not they, but we, have inhaled reactionary vapours. *They are not dialecticians.*

What is "massism"? Massism, like "enlightenment," is a method of educating the mass psyche; it is, above all, a policy. If this is the case, it must also be a vital and flexible apparatus. We accept massism as a slogan outside time and place, because this term does not have the traditions of "enlightenment." Having accepted it, we, nevertheless, *concretize* this slogan in the way demanded by a given socio-economic situation. *To put it*



*another way, we do not forget that massism is a policy.* The question is not even how we evaluate "writers and collaborators of the artistic section of wall-newspapers and manuscript journals." *The question is: in which direction are we taking them?* We believe that these "collaborators" should be shown the way to groups for artistic self-education. Comrade Pylypenko demands that they be given "autonomous" class-ideological, "militant" centres. We have already demonstrated the impossibility and the perniciousness of the existence during the dictatorship of the proletariat of several legalized, class-ideological literary organizations. Allow us now, therefore, to take for granted the existence of one mass-ideological centre in sympathy with the proletariat.

However tired you may be of listening to all these hackneyed truths, we wish to leave no doubt concerning our convictions. You may be sure that we, romantics, find it even harder to maintain ourselves on such a mundane level for several months.

We therefore take massism in its old concretization, as it is expounded by either Comrade Pylypenko or Comrade Lelevich.

Firstly, where do we place art within a given cultural system? It is nothing other than the highest reflection of culture. In order therefore to display this highest reflection one has to have—contrary to what Schmidt and Pylypenko say—a great amount of "qualitative" data, one has to recognize this highest reflection either through the flame of one's own exceptional intuition, or, having the required talent, through great culturedness. In short, we are once more compelled to state: not everyone, not even every cultured person, is able to create that which is called art. If this is so, then can one justify the leading astray of hundreds and thousands of half-educated workers and peasants, convincing them that by the Revolution's will they should leave their machines and ploughs and create a new art? Vladimir Illich never had this in mind. The clearest evidence of it are his notes to the article by the Proletcultist Pletnev, "to which we direct our readers." Moreover, he ordered a special article for Comrade Ia. Iakovlev on the question of massism.<sup>33</sup> This is what appeared in this article edited by Comrade Lenin:

Is it really going to benefit the Revolution if we transform thousands of the better worker-revolutionaries who stand high above the average worker into artists whose class position puts them among the masses somewhere between a pauper and a petty bourgeois and who are increasingly being caught up by the elemental force of the NEP?

This was the view of massism in art held by our teacher. Comrade Lenin did not want to make of the "better workers" bad artists, something "between a pauper and a petty bourgeois." But, of course, we ought not to confuse, as does Comrade Pylypenko, artistic organizations with the

liquidation of illiteracy. Having, with the aid of Schmidt's "theory," made all "collaborators of wall-newspapers" into artists, our ideologist poses this pathetic question: "Who can say which is the more important and useful for the development of art, the work of tens of thousands of liquidators of illiteracy, or the work of an academy of sciences?"

This is, of course, metaphysics, and any self-respecting person does not make such comparisons. Indeed, "what is more important and useful": the Central Committee of the Party, or the thousands of Communist groups. Can we really put the question in such a fashion? (No, no! "Enlighteners" always divide the indivisible!—M. Kh.) Anyway, let us suppose that the liquidators of illiteracy are the "more important and useful." Does this prove anything? You have to be a complete idiot to deny the existence and "importance" of the liquidation of illiteracy. *We are not, however, discussing the liquidation of illiteracy; we are discussing art. The point is that we would indeed like to make of Hart and Pluh simple liquidators of illiteracy, with a deviation toward art, while you, Serhii Volodymyrovych, do not want this. And you do not want it because you yourself do not know what you want. How will your liquidators of illiteracy liquidate this illiteracy when their director and leader himself admits he is completely at sea when it comes to art (we sincerely endorse this view!—M. Kh.)? Furthermore, we, "academics" by your definition, will never assume such a responsible function as the liquidation of artistic illiteracy, because we respect ourselves. What we need is the raising of the general cultural level of the masses, and you are proposing that we play kindergarten. You are not very practical, Comrade Pylypenko, and entirely fail to understand what the masses need. You have no capacity for being our leader during the cultural revolution.*

This is one side of massism, both ours and Moscow's. It is, incidentally, the better side. The second is nothing but a sugar-coated pill. It was precisely this pill which elicited the "most cheerful criterion."

All roads lead to Rome. They do here also: back to art. Once more therefore we say that, art, like every other social category, is an ideological superstructure. In other words, art is one of those ideological centres which in one manner or another influence society's consciousness, educate society, and, having sprung from a certain social base, influence the latter. *The point is, however, that this ideological centre is of all centres the least subject to control. Therefore to drag the broad, ideologically unformed masses into it is to set up barriers on the path to Socialism not only for this (forcibly drawn-in) mass, but also for that mass which the first is to influence. . . .*

This can always be confirmed by healthy logic. When the masses exhibit one form of activity or another, it is the task of the leaders of these masses to find an outlet for this activity. *But this outlet has to be*

*appropriate to the cultural level of the given masses.* Otherwise the existence of leaders loses any social meaning. We must remember all this especially during the time of the NEP, when the petty-bourgeois environment is using all its powers to define the consciousness of every member of society, when even cultured people are surrendering to this process of definition. One would have thought this was such a truism that it was hardly worth mentioning. Unfortunately, however, fine truths are for some reason rapidly forgotten, and this is why, during the ninth year of the Revolution, we have surprises similar to Comrade Pylypenko's memorandum.

When we say that one cannot drag the broad masses into art, we have in mind primarily the peasantry, that mass which was educated in the petty-bourgeois, proprietary atmosphere. This does not at all mean that this mass should be denied an avenue to art, but that it should not be decreed an ideological centre. Children (in the best case) should not be expected to educate children. One should not consciously try to trip oneself up.

Muscovite massism in the person of VAPP has a more comfortable position than Ukrainian. There, after all, this "mass" has a certain percentage of the genuinely industrial proletariat. However, since this is still a mass with little culture, drawing it into art would give the same unexpected results we have here in Ukraine. The "massist" writer, lacking a real ideology (ideology is an encompassing view and sense of the world), in the best case attaches a miserable addendum to his work, which he calls a moral. In other cases, he either succumbs to the influences of petty-bourgeois writers or manufactures formalistic tinsel. You can well imagine how this massist educates the masses. A particularly depressing picture would emerge were we to agree that a moral without ideology at once demoralizes the reader and allows itself to be exploited by the petty bourgeoisie which through this empty moral suppresses the critical instinct of living society. In this way, the "massist" against his will falls into the embrace of the economically strong kulak, thereby fulfilling the will of Stolypin's land parcel.

"The *On Guardists* were accused of underestimating the role of the peasantry in the Revolution," writes Comrade Pylypenko.

Quite correct. However, in what a paradoxical situation Comrade Vardin,<sup>34</sup> the ideologist of *On Guardism*, finds himself, when he is accused of nothing less than a peasant deviation. In what a paradoxical situation Comrade Pylypenko finds himself when, without suffering from an "underestimation of the role of the peasantry," he suddenly accepts (at the Moscow parade of proletarian writers), contrary to Hart's wishes, the theses of Comrade Vardin. We do not wish to make a lame comparison by this and have no intention of yoking the Pluh ideologist to the "Leningrad

organization," as he does with us—we wish merely to say that both massisms in their contemporary concretization originate from the same soil. The difference between them is relatively small: Ukrainian massism is more cynical and therefore reveals more clearly the nature of this attractive slogan:

It is also clear [writes Comrade Pylypenko], that the link with lower literary groupings—working-class, peasant and mixed ones in schools and the Red Army—I consider to be an indispensable obligation for *every civic-minded literary organization*.

The emphasis belongs to our brilliant publicist, and it is an absolutely delicious one. As our readers will recall, Serhii Volodymyrovych earlier proposed that we proceed from an ideological criterion when separating literary forces, in other words he proposed giving each social grouping its class-ideological, militant centre. Now he *considers it the indispensable duty* of "every civic-minded literary organization" to *link itself with the working-class, peasant and Red Army masses*. He has outfoxed himself indeed. It would be difficult to think of anything more absurd. Yet what can one do; massism in its Pluh-On Guardist representation always leads every Communist into a circle of contradictions, be he Lelevich or Pylypenko.

The similar nature of contemporary massists is confirmed in addition by that amicable union established between Moscow's Vappists and Pluh. Only yesterday Comrade Pylypenko pronounced that "the Vappists underestimate the role of the peasantry"; today, after the defeat of his ally, more accurately Comrade Vardin, the Pluh ideologist is prepared to accuse the *On Guardists* of Tazaevism.<sup>35</sup>

What does this show? Only that Comrade Pylypenko is a fickle ally. A *de facto* union exists all the same, as much as the formal one existed...three weeks ago. Comrade Pylypenko justifies this pungent symbiosis (an archproletarian organization allied to an archpeasant one) with the statement: "the position of Pluh was considered by competent people to be more consistent and clear."

Who these "competent people" are we do not know; as for "consistency, clarity and faithfulness," this position indeed had these qualities. This, however, explains nothing...except the fact that, logically, the *On Guardists* must eventually reach the "most cheerful criterion." Comrade Pylypenko reached it sooner because the Ukrainian reality is more complex than the Russian. Ukrainian massism took its root (unconsciously, of course) directly from Stolypin's land parcel, the Russian nourishes itself from the same source although several removes from it. *Ergo*, under the conditions of the NEP, in its given concretization, every massism is, nevertheless, massism.

Therefore, whereas the definition of art and "enlightenment" were simply ideological premises to the "most cheerful criterion," all these together have their premise in massism. The idea of Vappist-Pluh massism in art and the entire memorandum itself emerged under the pressure of the petty-bourgeois element and are the result of the confusion and capitulation of a certain section of revolutionary activists. The best confirmation of this are Comrade Pylypenko's views concerning the notorious crisis.

## IX

### *Well, then, where's the crisis?*

"It does not matter where he began; it is where he finished that matters."

V. Hugo

Everyone agrees that our literature, our art, are undergoing some kind of crisis today. Even Comrade Pylypenko admits this.

Not everyone, however, regards this crisis in the same way, not everyone defines it in the same manner. Some conjecture that it is a crisis of creativity, others deny this statement, insisting that it is neither more nor less than . . . an ideological crisis.

When we argued about what kind of crisis exists [writes Comrade Pylypenko], I held the opinion, and continue to do so, that revolutionary artists in their overall mass are not suffering a crisis of creativity. We have an *ideological* [the memorandum's emphasis] crisis among several comrades.

First of all, we must explain what is being discussed here: is it only a question of several comrades suffering an ideological crisis, or is it a question of the ideological crisis not being a crisis of creativity? As we learn from the following considerations it is a matter of both. The ideological crisis, in other words "the ideological deviations of several comrades," to use our opponent's words, can be observed in contemporary literature, as he goes on to explain. However, from his words (and from the emphasis in the above quotation) we learn that this "does not at all signify a crisis of creativity, because it is possible to create many beautiful works while deviating from the correct path."

Let us, then, examine this logic more closely. "To deviate from the correct path" does indeed not necessarily mean to suffer a creative crisis. When would this be the case, however? *If this deviation were to find a new ideological "point of support," if, in other words, this deviation were to lead the creator into the camp of a social grouping hitherto foreign to*

him. But when the revolutionary writer experiences a crisis in his world-view, in his ideological positions, does not this ideological crisis also bring with it a crisis of creativity?

Hence, an ideological crisis is always a crisis of creativity. Only the perplexed Comrade Pylypenko does not understand this. To be sure, later he himself, as we shall observe, speaks of a crisis of creativity. But this not only fails to save the situation, on the contrary, it compromises his fundamental principles all the more.

And now for the crisis. Who is experiencing this crisis? "Several comrades." and who are these "several comrades"? To take Comrade Pylypenko's words, these are all "proletarian writers" who are searching for "perspectives" that go "beyond" those of the village co-operative. True, he asserts that the creativity of these writers "is growing ever more profound, broader," but neither does this, in his opinion, save the situation: in the first place, this "creativity lags behind the cultural consciousness and needs of the reading masses"; secondly, it brings with it "certain ideological deviations." One would expect that such a state of affairs would demand of us some sort of extraordinary measures; one would expect it to be our direct obligation to help our writer to survive the crisis of creativity in a manner that enabled him still to retain our ideological positions. And yet it transpires from Comrade Pylypenko's words that we ought not to concern ourselves with it, because the writer, even after "deviating ideologically, can still create many beautiful works." *In other words, let the revolutionary writer look for new class-ideological points of "support," let him "create many beautiful works" for a social stratum foreign to us.*

It would be impossible to reach a more absurd conclusion. We are witnessing a serious moment—the moment at which, to use Mr. Dontsov's words, "the October psyche is beginning to break down," when, also in his words, "a demobilization of the revolutionary spirit is commencing along the entire front." We are living through the NEP, that period when the poorly-tempered elements of society can easily lose their revolutionary perspectives. Are we really going to keep silent at such a serious juncture, are we not going to help the writer who is losing these revolutionary perspectives? Should we not, finally, inform you, Serhii Volodymyrovych, that it is not for the author of Pluh's memorandum to speak of our lack of "Communist perspectives"? Who is it that sees the "distant" horizons, who is attempting to prevent young writers from reaching new class-ideological "points of support"? Well? The organizational plans are not the consequence of the ideological crisis of some isolated individual, as you cynically attempt to prove, but the consequence of a contemporary crisis in our literature which—as you put it—at best occasionally makes "ideological deviations." And if you refuse to accept this, you are by your actions pushing our young literature into the arms of the petty bourgeoisie.

Do we conclude that our friend fails to understand the seriousness of the moment? Nothing of the kind!

All is not well with creativity [you see, a crisis of creativity has appeared!—M. Kh.] not because the organization is bad; the reasons . . . are to be found in the lost perspectives of the revolutionary movement

Moreover, Comrade Pylypenko goes on to explain why these perspectives have been lost, naming the NEP, the social circumstances and so on. In short, he paints quite an unappetizing picture. Mr. Dontsov paints his with the same bold strokes (could all this have been borrowed from Dontsov?). And what is offered the writer “in return”? How does our friend support him? “How is one to avoid ideological deviations”? To this last question Comrade Pylypenko replies firmly: “They are almost unavoidable, because it is rather difficult to expose these deviations.”

In a word, then, to the revolutionary writer’s question, “What is to be done?” we receive the reply: whatever you like, “deviations are unavoidable,” so therefore you may search for a new class-ideological position. One could hardly imagine a greater helplessness. You would have to look hard to discover a better example of liquidationism. This is indeed the absence of all revolutionary perspectives. This is a perfect example of ideological panic. Does, perhaps, Comrade Pylypenko nonetheless provide some kind of solution?

My personal opinion [he writes] is that we shall continue to muddle along among these formulas for a long time yet, until we receive some aid from reflexology; I appeal for an acquaintance with it.

So, you see, this is the answer—reflexology! What an irony of fate: the revolutionary Marxist, having ascertained that contemporary writing has lost its revolutionary perspectives, proposes that the sickness be cured . . . with reflexology! Were it not Comrade Pylypenko writing this but “some grey figure,” we would quickly find the required definition for this proposition. Since it is our friend who utters this, however, we will simply advise him to take a short cure. Reflexology is not a bad thing, but, unfortunately, it has about the same relationship to revolutionary perspectives as Comrade Pylypenko does to the spirit of our epoch.

Who, however, suggested “reflexology”? None other than . . . (give Stolypin’s land parcel a rest!—S.P.) . . . the Satan from Stolypin’s land parcel. By the Queen of Heaven, I swear it! The last accord of the Pluh memorandum confirms this, our assumption, in the most convincing way.

There was once a time, during the struggle with “Trotskyism,” that Comrade Pylypenko accused us of “Trotskyism.” Today he is trying to pin us to the “Leningrad organization.” A little uncomradely this, but what can one do—that is his way. A pity, though, that things just do not work

out for Comrade Pylypenko in the end. They do not work out, because he can never, so to speak, hit upon the right tone, because he does not understand any of these oppositions, and because . . . "the truth will always come out in the end."

Therefore he makes the following analogy: the "Free Academy of Proletarian Literature" and the "Leningrad Organization." What, however, is the "Leningrad Organization"?

Out of the Leningrad Organization, which by virtue of its territorial position is cut off from the peasant regions, does not feel their pressure, and is not linked to the suburban peasantry through family ties . . . came the position condemned by the Fourteenth Congress; here originate the lost perspectives of further revolutionary construction.

Pooh-pooh! You have really missed the mark! Eat your heart out, Dennis, you will never write any better. Where on earth, dear Serhii Volodymyrovych, did you ever get such a definition of the "Leningrad Organization"? Was it, maybe, Schmidt's provocation that led to it? Have you really not read the reports of the last party congress? What a definition! Believe us, Comrade Stalin will not pat you on the head for such a formula. Or perhaps reflexology will help you muddle out of it? And so you see, if you behaved in a comradely fashion, if you had not tried to pin us to Leningrad, you never would have had to blush in front of your Pluh comrades.

Anyway, "I ask the readers' forgiveness for this new polemical digression and return to the issue." Indeed the "enormous galosh" has no place here at all.\*

\* \* \*

How then, did the Fourteenth Party Congress treat the position of the "Leningrad Organization"? First of all, it treated this organization not as an organization but as the leadership of an organization. Where did the position of this leadership condemned by this congress originate? The average party member who followed the congress carefully recounts that *the position of the Leningrad Organization, namely the underestimation of the role of the middle peasant, originated not in an isolation from the peasant regions, Comrade Pylypenko thinks, but in a host of completely different reasons, among them the strong influence on this organization of the peasant regions.* We make the following supposition, Comrade Pylypenko: the Leningrad plants and factories, deprived during the War and

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\*Incidentally, let Savcenko and Zahul<sup>36</sup> continue their activities; their time will come.—M.Kh.



Revolution of a skilled proletariat, began during the NEP to assimilate the peasantry from "suburban regions," and this to a certain extent defined not only the ideological condition of these plants but also the positions of the "Leningrad Organization" itself. Perhaps this is where you should have looked for your "condemnation." In other words, if we wished to speculate on this organization we would be quite correct in stating: since Comrade Pylypenko's understanding of the "position of the 'Leningrad Organisation'" is such, he clearly supports this same "leadership." To this we could also add that "Leningrad" suffered from a massism similar to Pluh's.

However, "every comparison is lame," and this "position" is not the point at all.

Comrade Pylypenko simply needed to put us in an embarrassing position before the party. If he has been unsuccessful in this, then we are not in the least to blame. *The point is simply that such an interpretation of the "Leningrad position" corresponded to our friend's organizational plans.* It corresponded to that gentle spring breeze that blows from Stolypin's land parcel. He required such an interpretation in order once again to underline the "necessity for the existence" of a mass, autonomous union of peasant writers. He required it, finally, to boast before his "share holders," the peasant writers, and to make fun of... the revolutionary ones, who "are unable to see the more distant perspectives."

Steadiness, not nervousness, firmness [writes Comrade Pylypenko], we have firmness when the goal and perspectives are clear [indeed!—M.Kh.]. All this, of course, exists when the construction stands on firm socio-economic ground [indeed!—M. Kh.], on a broad community basis, all this exists in Pluh [indeed!—M. Kh.] but is lacking in proletarian Ukrainian writers.

It is lacking, you say? What, may we ask, is lacking: the land parcel? Well, yes, the land parcel is indeed lacking, but we take as our social base the ideology of the proletariat and the requisite Communist environment, and as our economic one—elements of socialist construction. We do not distress ourselves over the lack of the requisite base, but over Comrade Pylypenko, who, instead of encouraging revolutionary writers, makes fun of them saying they lack a socio-economic base, thus pushing them into the enemy camp. We are distressed because Comrade Pylypenko, although he did promise to aid the proletarian artist "as the *komnezamy* do the industrial proletariat," instead of giving such aid offers them a combination of three fingers. We are distressed, finally, because Comrade Pylypenko is leading the revolutionary youth to the kulak, to the "*firm ground*" toward which "NEP is headed," and a very dubious "collar" is placed around the neck of this "clear goal. And what kind of a collar are we talking about?

It is the co-operative [writes our friend] in all its variegated forms. It is the basis and the theme of peasant literature and is displacing the theme of armed civil war. This is why we have fewer ideological deviations among Pluh writers: the nearest perspectives of revolutionary construction are clear. It would be quite another matter were we to question them about *more distant* perspectives [the memorandum's emphasis].

This therefore constitutes the "collar"—the co-operative. Naturally, the co-operative is not a bad thing, but, says Comrade Stalin, only when it is taken together with the Soviet system as a whole, when it is connected to the more distant perspectives, when it is an inseparable element of Socialist construction. When the co-operative, however, lacks "further perspectives," when it "displaces [please note the intolerance toward themes!—M.Kh.] the civil war," allow us not only to cast doubt on it, but to ask: why are you so pleased, honourable Serhii Volodymyrovych, at the fact that the kulak is standing on "firm socio-economic ground," at the fact that he enjoys "clear perspectives," or that he wishes to tear the co-operative away from Socialist construction? Well?

This, then, is your "autonomy"! We apologize, but we will not allow your Pluh youth to enter into such "autonomy." You write, "it is worse for the proletarian writer." We agree. But when you write, "alongside the co-operative arises the enormous problem of Socialist state industry," we once again are convinced that you do not understand the content of our co-operatives and do not know their place. You are referring not to our co-operatives, which cannot stand "*alongside*" Socialist construction, but only within it, you have in mind the kulak's "co-ops." Otherwise your co-operatives would also find the "more distant perspectives" obscure.

Such are the spicy interpretations of the ideological and creative crisis. What do they themselves constitute, these interpretations? *Nothing but the pretext for an ideological and creative crisis.* Comrade Pylypenko says that the "problem of organizing" literary forces "will be resolved when we resolve the ideological arguments." This is quite correct. We spoke of this several years ago, at the time when the Pluh ideologist was determinedly autonomizing his mass peasant organization. *The point is that autonomized creative forces with "clear," co-operative perspectives, independent of Socialist construction, are a threat not merely to Comrade Pylypenko, but also to revolutionary writers. They give birth to doubts concerning the revolutionary perspectives and transfer the wavering youth to new ideological "points of support" which are foreign to us.*

"Unseen horizons of the commune beyond the hills" are today called "misty prophecies" by Comrade Pylypenko, unworthy of our present, while "in their place" he proposes "reflexology" and the peasant co-operative without any "more distant perspectives," without, in other words, links to Socialist construction.

We, therefore, cannot suppose that our friend would not wish to transform Pluh into a group for artistic self-education. In any case he fails to understand that the link between the creativity of peasant writers and not only the co-operative but also Socialist construction will only be achieved if there is no such autonomous centre. It is therefore not a question of "the head being irritated by the tail," but of liquidating "Robespierre's tail." This liquidation is warmly desired by Satan from Stolypin's land parcel and it is to this Satan, unconsciously and objectively, that our dear Serhii Volodymyrovych makes curtsies.

So much for the Pluh memorandum. This, if it can be called a philosophy, is the most reactionary philosophy in the young art. The kulak dresses up in red and asks through such a tested Marxist as Comrade Pylypenko for an "autonomous" co-operative, or an "autonomous," "ideological" centre. Dear Serhii Volodymyrovych, gives him on our behalf a "well-researched" combination of three fingers.

*There is but one ideological centre, and its name is the Communist Party.*

None the less, how will the Communist Party ideologically organize literary forces? The answer to this question can be found in our critique of the fundamental principles of the second supporter of massism, Comrade Shchupak.

## X

### *Up with the proletariat!*

In hoc signo vinces! (under this sign you will conquer).

The memorandum said almost everything. Only two or three questions remain, and Comrade Pylypenko's pupils—the noted Marxists from Kiev and Moscow—have to answer them.

How, after all, will the Communist Party *ideologically* organize literary forces? It is practically impossible to give an answer so simple that it would be grasped even by the idiot from Uman. Whoever doubts this understands nothing, fails to perceive in ideology elements of a most complex process. At the same time, however, it ought to be said, that, by unravelling this question, we also unravel 80 per cent of one of the most important problems. The question of our ideological influence through literature is not a question of a "hot-house art"—it is the problem of the ideological development of an entire nation's culture. In other words, on the proportion of our attention devoted toward this question, on our ability

to solve it, depends in large part the class-ideological content of the cultural revolution which is commencing in Ukraine.

Ah, cultural revolution! What an attractive slogan you are! . . . The problem is, however, that everyone interprets you differently. Is the Autocephalous Church against you? God forbid! Does the emigration not sympathize with you? Does the reactionary not place great hopes in you? Don't they, don't they, don't they? Ah, cultural revolution!

We are not, of course, attempting here to shake the hand of the "obscurantists" who search for the hand of the devil in everything. We wish to underline two points. Firstly, the petty bourgeois is even today our ally in the struggle with the remnants of feudalism, which are called the forces of "eternal darkness." Secondly, as in 1917 it is attempting to seize the commanding heights in this struggle. Our task is therefore at all costs to maintain our hold on this attractive spot of turf. In other words, we really must organize the ideology of our press, of our literary forces in such a way that the proletariat will still in fact retain ideological hegemony.

How will the proletariat play first violin, however, when Ukrainian culture is still *terra incognita* for it? When we say that the proletarian artist has the social ground for "more distant" perspectives, this in no way signifies that this ground in its given condition suffices as the basis for a concrete, firm ideology for the culture of a great people.

In such fashion we have now reached the same conclusion that the Communist Party has already demonstrated several times: until the proletariat masters Ukrainian culture there can be no certainty that the cultural revolution in Ukraine will give the desired results. Therefore, in resolving the problem of the ideological organization of literary forces, we must again and again put forward the militant slogan: "Up with the proletariat!"

Unfortunately, not everyone understands this slogan in the same way. Comrade Pylypenko, for example, advises us (why not himself, Allah only knows!) to "link ourselves with the working masses, to go to them, to go, so to speak, to the people." Comrade Shchupak, having credited someone's statement that his "speeches are a sign of the broad scale of Shchupak's thinking," gestures in the journal *Life and Revolution* (1925, No. 12) toward Brodsky's chimney<sup>37</sup> with an "Up with the proletariat!" The Academy of Sciences advises us to correspond with some real worker from the real Donbas, who has long whiskers and wears the sincerest Ukrainian ribbon. In a word, everyone understands this militant slogan in their own way.

Well, and how about us? Oh, we understand quite well where the dog is buried, as the Germans say. All your propositions, honourable gentlemen, are nothing but palliatives. Using these methods you will still be drawing

the proletariat into Ukrainian culture up to the Second Coming itself. Posing the question in this way is quite evidently wrong and in fact must, with the aid of Pluh's memorandum, transfer our literature to ideological "points of support" foreign to the Communist Party. This would be a fatal compromise on our part. And we are uncompromising on this question. *We demand that the authorities take a serious attitude to the Ukrainisation of the proletariat.* We are not going to point toward Brodsky's chimney.

What is it, however, that prevents us from de-Russifying the working class? The required party resolution, after all, exists. Allow us here to pummel the Russian Philistine "over the noggin" because he is (immortal and) the chief obstacle. Did you not hear how he chuckled "the *khokhols* are at each other's throats" during the course of our discussion. Comrade Pylypenko is of the opinion that the Malaniuks and Dontsovs are delighted over this. Quite correct. However, it is not only the Ukrainian fascists who are delighted by this (incidentally, in Khvylovy's opinion, Malaniuk gets carried away and bends the stick too far); our internal "well-wishers" also express delight over this, rubbing their hands on the sly. We are speaking of him, the Russian Philistine, who is thoroughly sick of Ukrainization, who dreams of "the free city of Odessa" and learns this "dog's tongue" with a grinding of teeth, who cries to Moscow, "Help, save us, whoever believes in God!," who feels the ground beneath his feet giving way, who is in fact no less of an internal enemy of the Revolution (perhaps even a greater one) than the Autocephalous-Stolypinist "element." This Satan comes from the same barrel as our kulak. He is in fact the chief obstacle to the de-Russification of the working class.

Therefore our second task (if we consider the first to be passing on a three-fingered combination to the land parcel) is to smash the Russian Philistine "on the noggin." Comrade Shchupak in his well-written article mentions the "artist-proletarians" in nearly every line. This, of course, is a laudable habit, but where he found these people our "long-time" Marxist does not tell. "See, and you have none!" he seems to be saying. We shall suppose that Comrade Shchupak has won this argument, as we bow reverently in the direction of Brodsky's chimney. Is this, however, the point? Are we really going to resolve the question by dragging some half-dozen workers into Hart or Pluh? It has nothing to do with Hart-Pluh "artists" (Lenin's terminology), *what matters is which social basis that culture has soaked up, what matters is whether the proletariat controls it and whether it does so directly through its mass and through its avant-garde.* Comrade Shchupak does not understand this, neither does his Kharkiv patron, and does not understand it precisely because of his—forgive the phrase—"Marxist short-sightedness." Otherwise he would drop his "babblings" about some "pleiad of artist-proletarians" and "cultural renaissance." Instead of wasting energy on organizing a Brodsky

chimney in Kiev, Comrade Shchupak ought to go to some workers' trade union and Ukrainize its leadership. It's about time our slogan "Up with the Proletariat!" was understood in the way demanded by the given political situation.

Ukrainization, on one side, is the result of the indefatigable will of a nation of 30 million; on the other, *it is the only way for the proletariat to master the cultural movement*. And if the Russian Philistine who sits in workers' clubs, in appropriate cultural-legal institutions does not understand this, then the very first militant task for Comrade Shchupak is to aid him to do so. It is high time this Philistine was convinced that sooner or later he will have to surrender the "reins of power" to surer hands, that all the same he will soon be left without a base and be compelled to finally capitulate. His swan song has been sung.

Therefore, dissolve Pluh, Comrade Shchupak, and hurry to climb some commanding height in a workers' trade union, because the de-Russification of the working class is the first and the major premise for the resolution of the problem of the ideological organization of literary forces. Enough "discussants!" Up with the proletariat!

## XI

### *And Up With The Intelligentsia!*

"Who will serve us in monastery  
When all the people leave us?"

I think it was Monk Jeremiah.

As you can see, in the eighteenth century people knew how to think wisely and Monk Jeremiah is a shining example. Let us now glance at how they think in the twentieth. All right? . . . But wait: what is the intelligentsia?

One would have thought that here, where the concept has penetrated the flesh and blood of every person in the least measure literate, where we have mountains of histories of "social thought," where and so on and so forth—one would have thought that our question must sound like a hopeless archaism. This, however, . . . is only what "one would have thought." Objectively we have such a concurrence of circumstances that one should not be surprised by anything. On the one hand, we observe the great sweep of the epoch; on the other, in the broad masses, the "new social forces which have been summoned to liquidate the old order" are, so to speak, not proportional to their age and its demands, do not correspond to its sweep. Moreover, in the masses these forces stand intellectually at an incomparably lower level than those which were pushed out of the

historical arena by the will of the Revolution. This is why the explanation of the concept of the "intelligentsia" acquires the character... almost of a political sensation.

What, then, is the intelligentsia? Comrade Shchupak gives us an answer to this question in the above-mentioned article:

Khvylovy in general overestimates the role of the intelligentsia; he imputes to it a significance of the first rank, forgetting that the avant-garde of the whole revolution and therefore of the cultural revolution is the proletariat.

Whether Khvylovy overestimates or underestimates the role of the intelligentsia will be seen in due course. Here allow us to demonstrate that Comrade Shchupak does not understand what the intelligentsia is. According to the Pluh ideologist (Oh, horror: ideologist!), according to the "long-time Marxist" ("we have studied Marxism for a long time now," writes Comrade Shchupak, "perhaps even longer than has Khvylovy himself") *the intelligentsia can be counterposed to the proletariat. In other words, he views it as some completely independent social group, as perhaps, a separate class.* This he emphasizes throughout the article, varying his statement in a variety of ways: "Khvylovy's Europe signifies an art *not of the proletariat, but of the intelligentsia,*" and so on and so forth.

Nevertheless, in affirming this "truism," our "long-time Marxist" exhibits a certain petulance and complains (as does his Kharkiv patron) that Khvylovy is, as he puts it, "arrogant" and calls Comrade Shchupak "illiterate," that he "polemicizes not only against what his antagonist has written, but also against what, in Khvylovy's opinion, this antagonist [Shchupak] might have written."

This is really a pity! Our opponent should not take offence. He ought, on the contrary, to thank Khvylovy for the just qualification of his, Shchupak's abilities and to wonder at the intuition of our Don Quixote: what an excellent sense! Because it is not in vain that he polemicizes against what Shchupak might have written; Shchupak actually wrote it!

Oh, Lord, what melancholy, what anguish dear Comrade Shchupak, to be the instructor of a preparatory group and to teach you that the intelligentsia is nothing else than the educated sector of *some class*. There. A wise formula, is it not? Well, of course, this is a brilliant definition you have given, Mykola Hryhorovych. Now I, Shchupak, will never make the intelligentsia into an independent social group.

It is true that the intelligentsia in its mass still serves the petty, middle or big bourgeoisie, but to counterpose it to the proletariat—forgive the strong language!—is to expose one's archilliteracy which never came anywhere near Marxism. This must be stressed forcefully especially now in the age of the proletariat's deeper education. Great benefits will come of this. And if Comrade Shchupak does not see these benefits, allow us to

“monopolize the key to unlocking these problems in our own hands.” Allow us to “deny the right” to our “long-term Marxist” to “argue” with us until after he passes an elementary course in political literacy. If you do not know that  $2 \times 2 = 4$ , do not take up algebra. *It is precisely this lack of an elementary knowledge of sociology that leads Comrade Shchupak into the briars out of which he will never find his way.* It is precisely this lack that pushes him into publishing at *Globus (Globe)*<sup>38</sup> such unsaleable and also not entirely literate brochures as the studies by Zahul and Savchenko which we will discuss in due turn. Although Comrade Shchupak is “prepared to argue with us,” although he has puffed out his feathers like a cock of the roost, we are polemicizing with him only because all around lies the taiga of the Asiatic Khokhlandia and the dark “Little Russian” night. “When will the true day arrive?”—for the time being we cannot say. (Oh, Lord, “when will the true day arrive?” we cry out in the darkness one more time along with Dobroliubov.)

*Per aspera ad astra.* It is a difficult path that leads to the stars. However . . . what the intelligentsia is we have nevertheless, and finally, explained: it is a *sector* of some class. Therefore to counterpose it to the proletariat means not to allow one, revolutionary part of the intelligentsia to come into contact with the working class, and to push a second, younger one that often comes out of this proletariat into the embrace of the petty bourgeoisie, to transfer them to an ideological “point of support” which is foreign to us.

“Who will serve us in the monastery, when all the people are taken away from us?” Well?

We view this matter quite differently. Firstly, we wish to conquer one part of the intelligentsia; secondly, we wish to provide the other with out ideological “point of support.” The first is that part we call the young Ukrainian intelligentsia; the second—that part we call proletarian (worker-peasant). *Both must become part of the young historical class, the proletariat. Taking as their social base the de-Russified working class, they will solve the great problem. It is precisely through them that the Communist Party is ideologically organizing literary forces and literature itself. It is precisely through this intelligentsia that we will provide the cultural revolution with the required ideological content.*

*So the masses are not the point, then? Correct, the masses are not the point; the point is in the immediate de-Russification of the proletariat, the correct definition of the concept of the intelligentsia.* The point is to set our intelligentsia alight with the fire of the immortal idea of humanity’s liberation, to kill the petty-bourgeois scepticism within it, the point is to give it our ideological “point of support” and thus to convince it that there still remains powder in our powder-horns and that the proletariat is ready to accomplish its historical mission. The point is to



develop in it an iron will and to give back to it the fanatical faith it has lost over the centuries, the fanatical faith in a marvellous distant future.

Therefore, we attach to the intelligentsia a great and exceptional significance, *but to that intelligentsia which will constitute a portion of the proletariat*. The ideologically unformed mass will not set the ideological tone in the cultural renaissance; it will be the intelligentsia of this mass that does so. Whoever thinks that this is "culture for culture's sake, renaissance for renaissance's sake, art for art's sake," whoever thinks that this is indifference to the problems of the proletarian renaissance in Ukraine, that this is a "nationalist infatuation of Khvylovy," is at least... a Comrade Shchupak. Briefly, we support our first slogan, "Up with the proletariat," with a second, "Up with the intelligentsia."

## XII

### *The Penultimate Chapter*

"You are right, reader!

My stories lack epic objectivity."

A. Krymsky

Thus it is only through *our own* intelligentsia that we ideologically organize literary forces. All our attention, therefore, *ought to be concentrated not upon the amorphous mass, but upon the young cadres of the intelligentsia who leave institutions of higher educational establishments and walk past us to... Comrade Doroshkevych (in the best case)*. We have played kindergarten long enough! If Pylypenko or Shchupak do not understand how one can on the one hand defend Doroshkevych from Communist hecklers and on the other, while defending him, cast doubt upon his ideological positions, they will simply have to stand aside.

Comrade Shchupak cannot understand why we "have shown preference for Zerov over Savchenko." For him our tactic is a "process" beyond consciousness' grasp. Since, however, our article is aimed at an objective audience, permit us to return once more to this point.

I think it was in *Crime and Punishment* that Dostoevsky calls himself a poet of the proletariat. Georg Brandes<sup>39</sup> not only did not doubt this, but supported it with an entire study of this writer of genius. We are not preparing here to adapt Dostoevsky to our present day, we wish merely to point out that such a statement did not prevent Gorky in his time from coming out against Dostoevsky's works as reactionary. We wish to say by this that the mere desire to be a poet of the proletariat is insufficient.

Secondly, permit us to recall a proverb: "All that glitters is not gold."

Why are we against Zahul, Savchenko, etc.? Of course it is not because they are Zahul and Savchenko, but because, having accepted "massism," they objectively are forced to play the tune of the petty bourgeoisie. If these people had more right to a Communist Party card than does Comrade Shchupak, we would still come out against them with equal determination. The point is that their subjective desire to become red objectively makes them yellow and blue, since they are travelling under the slogans of "autonomous co-operatives" and "an autonomous ideologically militant centre." (See the theses of the chief ideologist of massism.)

Is [writes Shchupak] every village intellectual, then, without exception a reactionary force, and every urban one a leader of progress? Was it not the village intelligentsia who came to the Revolution first, while the town was dragged along in its wake?

Quite right, Comrade Shchupak. But what does this mean? What conclusions should we draw from this? *Why after all is it that the village intelligentsia absolutely must be the representative of the toiling peasantry?*

When we speak of the urbanized intelligentsia, *we have in mind today's concrete political situation.* Comrade Shchupak, however, tends to forget this. Of course, the village "supplied" the revolutionaries "who were linked to the proletariat." But when did this happen? *It was at the time that the petty bourgeoisie was tearing asunder the continuing framework of feudalism.* This lasted to the end of the Civil War. Now, however, that the village has found its feet on firm socio-economic ground, can the activity of the village *intelligentsia* not become a reactionary force? You will say that our ideological control ought to be joined to this activity. Yes, control is needed. Nevertheless, how are we to exercise control when in the masses we are illiterate in Marxist terms, when we ourselves put forward slogans like the legalization of autonomous ideological centres? *The fact that we group under our banner the "red" masses and the "red" intelligentsia and encourage their ideological activity is no solution.* Since these masses and this intelligentsia are as yet uncrystallized in Communist terms, since the latter is quite often intellectually stronger than us, we are digging our own grave. In these masses and in this intelligentsia we will play the role of the fool. History is repeating itself. The storming of Perekop brought us the final victory. *But this victory could objectively become a great defeat of the proletariat.* From Asia came great and powerful nations, but after physically conquering the cultured European population, they were compelled to capitulate intellectually to it. As a result this reduced them to the Crimean-Tatar territorial scraps. History is repeating itself and we are sounding the tocsin.

The order of the day is to group the cadres of the young intelligentsia around the Communist Party. What do we mean by this? We mean to say that for art, for literature, in place of the obscure and dangerous slogan, "Group the masses," the Communist Party ought to put out a new slogan, "Don't miss your chance! Grab the talented student youth." This means that only in such a fashion will we create our own ideological atmosphere in literature.

This means that we have to lift ourselves up by our own bootstraps, that we must not lose sight of our ideological positions, that we must where necessary educate the mass. Until we do so, beware, Comrade Shchupak, of possibly good and fine but objectively dangerous Zahuls.

Why, nonetheless, do we not feel such a horror of Zerov? Firstly, because we have no intention of fusing organizationally with him, nor he with us. Secondly, because *the ideals of the historical class are dearer to and better understood by* the neoclassicists, who are the more cultured section of the intelligentsia and the one more divorced from the kulak. If Comrade Shchupak does not understand this we suggest he enrol in a political literacy course. Our "long-time" Marxist cites Mr. Dontsov at great length and assiduously in characterising the neo-classicists. But in citing him, he completely fails to notice that these quotations compromise his own statements. According to Mr. Dontsov the neoclassicists are an impotent grouping, "the putrid remains of our age," who "do not subordinate their 'ego' to the community's motifs."

We agree that this is hyperbole. Moreover, it is an incorrect characterization. But in any case, if it were as Mr. Dontsov puts it, then this characterization would be of no credit to the "long-time Marxist." The neoclassicists, who do not exhibit any great political activity today, by this very fact untie Comrade Shchupak's hands and do not hinder him from taking shots at their clearly defined ideological centre. But if that is the case, would it still not be better to orientate ourselves to the politically impotent Ukrainian intelligentsia than to the active, dubiously red one, which, sensing no ideological control, dispatches the youth to "autonomous co-operatives."

Comrade Shchupak, terrified of Zerov, insists that "Ukrainian revolutionary art will not follow the fellow-travellers." Quite right! But in what circumstances? When it is no longer fellow-travelling itself (is not Zahul nowadays called a revolutionary writer?). And when this art, having freed itself from the "masses", does not surrender the commanding heights as happened in Russia. This will happen if we distance from our literature without delay our illiterates who do not understand that under the NEP we can struggle against an alien ideology only with ideological shock-troops who have not been sullied by various populist-kulak slogans and postulates. The "village of the poor peasant and hired hand" must develop spiritual

links with the proletarian town, however, not through "clear co-operative perspectives," not through Brodsky's chimney, but through an intelligentsia crystallized in artistic and Marxist terms. The petty-bourgeois intelligentsia has "fused in its creative work with the most progressive collective of our state." *But the question is into what mould will this alloy be poured?* Who will gain from this "fusion"? At a time when Comrade Shchupak is "fusing" and delightedly stamping his feet at it, the petty bourgeoisie is raking in the young higher-education graduates and creating cadres of its own intelligentsia who in turn are educating the masses outside the "fusion." Is our "long-time" Marxist capable of writing a Marxist essay on Drahomanov? At a time when we are devoting all our energies to babbling "mass" twaddle, the ideological "blades" are indeed being sharpened in the enemy camp.

Thus, we are witnessing a most serious moment. We do not wish to assert that we are on the eve of the Ninth of Thermidor, we wish by this to underline that Frérons<sup>40</sup> will not always bear the same appearance they did during the time of the French Revolution, that the *jeunesse dorée* does not everywhere and always behave in exactly the same way, that whether you like it or not we have those people whom Hugo described as "drowning in their too enormous collars," that we too had our "society of the destitute." Therefore, let us be vigilant! We should not forget the basic point: *the proletariat both today, day by day, and in fact the whole day, bends under the weight of "iron and concrete pillars."* *It does not require "rhymes," it demands of us that through these "rhymes" we educate and prepare our youth for new battles in the name of "the unseen horizons of the commune beyond the hills."* *To hell with "going to the people"!* *Up with a real understanding of Marxism!* *Let whoever gets in the way go to the devil!* *Make way for his majesty the restless spirit of the proletariat.*

Therefore by de-Russifying the working class, by making the turn toward the proletarian intelligentsia, we simultaneously organize the ideological and literary forces. It is of no importance to us which "criteria" writers have united around—"Roll on however you like!" *For us the important thing is how many Marxist intellectuals we have among these writers and how well qualified they are. For us, finally, the important thing is under which banner the higher-school youth will congregate.* If an ideologically crystallized Communist suddenly appeared in the neoclassicists' organization (we are not referring to Khvylovy, calm yourself, Comrade Shchupak!), this would be not a minus but a plus! But when yesterday's Symbolists appear in Pluh, in which (let's be honest) there is not a single consistent Marxist, then this is an enormous minus and a great defeat for us. Do you understand what this is? Do you know what such considerations are called? This, Comrade Shchupak, is dialectics. If Comrade Doroshkevych prepares five of his advanced pupils

for work in the journals then believe us that these five will have a thousand times more influence on the masses than Hart and Pluh together. Do you understand what this is? This is a pretext for Doroshkevych to consider us fools. There you have it, honourable "long-time" Marxist! A clever thing this ideology. Have you understood how we are going to ideologically organize literary forces? No? Well, then just forget it!

We should really have finished our article at this point. Because now the social nature of massism has been exposed, and the basic aims of artistic policy have very hastily been sketched. What more is there to say? We did not take upon ourselves any loftier goals. Since, however, one more "massist" has cut into our discussion, permit us to say a couple of words about him too, the more so that he has touched upon an interesting question. We have in mind the Muscophile K. Burevii and his brochure *Evropa chy Rosiia? (Europe or Russia?)*.

And so, to the last chapter, which incidentally we treat as supplement in the scheme of our article.

### XIII

#### *Moscow's Zadrypanky*

If the Russians can boast a few poetical talents, they owe this above all to the proximity of their history to the history of Europe and to those elements of life assimilated from Europe. As for the Little Russians, it is ridiculous even to think that something might develop from their poetry. One could set it (Little Russian poetry) in motion only if the best, noblest sector of the Little Russian population gave up the French quadrille and began dancing the *trepak* and *hopak* once again.

V.G. Belinsky

With his eloquent and piquant quotation we do not at all intend to accuse Belinsky of chauvinism; we wish to underline the extent to which hatred of Ukrainian poetry saturates that literature which our Muscophiles advise us to learn from. This does not at all mean that we dislike this literature; it means that we are organically incapable of educating ourselves on it. Besides, we are joking; we did not cite this passage for this reason either. We wanted only to say that Comrade Burevii was wrong: Belinsky "made

a mistake" not merely "concerning Shevchenko." He made it "concerning the whole of Ukrainian literature." Therefore before advising "our critics" in his pretentious brochure to "read Belinsky," it would not be such a bad thing if he were to drop in on some Moscow bookstore himself when the opportunity presented itself.

This will serve as an introduction whose purpose is to spur our Muscophile "Europenko" into an immediate fast gallop.

Therefore, once again: in the given brochure it is not those theses which play a variation on Pylypenko's memorandum that interest us, it is the "Europenko's" advice to our youth to learn from the Russians.

Allow us first of all to introduce you to the "views" of this Muscophile who "has his place of residence in the town of Moscow." In his opinion "the life of contemporary Ukraine lags behind Moscow's by about two or three years." He never doubts this because in examining any phenomenon he is above all else concerned with finding a parallel. Where is the identical fact or factor in "the life of Moscow"? Khvylovy has come out with a challenge? Aha—Voronsky!<sup>41</sup> It does not fit? Well, alright then, let Voronsky be Kost Burevii. This is exactly what is written in the information sent from Russia: "Kost Burevii—the Ukrainian Voronsky." Pilniak?<sup>42</sup> Aha, we have a Khvylovy here. Doesn't fit? You don't say, how strange! Well, in that case, let Kopylenko be Vsevolod Ivanov. *Amerykantsi* (*Americans*) by Dosvitnii? No problem, we have a Sinclair here in Moscow. . . . Well, actually, it's only a translation into Russian, but essentially it's one and the same thing; you wouldn't be able to read the English anyway. *On Guardism*? Oh, yes, we have a Pluh here. Voronskyism? Fine, we'll find you a Hart as well.

We are not trying to deny by this that Khvylovy is a "Ukrainized Little Pilniak"—God forbid, on the contrary even—or that one set of phenomena or another in "the life of Moscow" have their corresponding reflection in the contemporary life of Ukraine. We wish to thus emphasize how our Muscophiles have simplified and vulgarized this method, to what absurdities they are reduced when they sing the praises of Russian wares, the Russian school, saying, you should go, "we have wonderful translations of the works of world writers there" (we quote from the brochure), as though this was the first we had heard of it, as though we were incapable of "creating" such a literature of genius at home. Just think, what a claim to wisdom: they translate a foreign work and then go around bragging!

You're barking up the wrong tree, Comrade Burevii! You will not tempt us with translations. You will not even tempt us with original literature, because *today, when Ukrainian poetry is carving out a completely independent path for itself*, you will not tempt it to Moscow for love or money. You will not find parallels in "the life of Moscow" for our discussion. And this is not in the least because one participant or another

in the Ukrainian dispute is more talented than one or another in the Russian (God forbid!), but because Ukrainian realities are more complex than the Russian, because we are faced with different tasks, because we are the young class of a young nation, because we are a young literature which still has not had its Lev Tolstois and which must have them, which is not in "decline," but in the ascendant.

Of course, the development of culture is "dictated by economic relations." But the point is precisely that these relations are not at all "the same in both countries." They are the same insofar as they are the same in the world economy and insofar as a common front is required against the bourgeoisie. The Ukrainian economy is not the same thing as the Russian economy, and cannot be the same thing, because for one thing, Ukrainian culture, which grows out of its own economy, has a reciprocal influence on the latter, hence our economy acquires a specific form and character. In a word, the Union nevertheless remains a Union and Ukraine is an independent entity. We advise Comrade Burevii to come here and take a closer look. We fear only that he will cry "Wolf!" For, indeed, Little Russia long ago disappeared "into the realm of legend." Under the influence of our economy, we are applying to our literature not "the Slavophile theory of originality," but the theory of Communist independence. True, this theory might alarm our Muscophile "Europenkos," but we communards will not take fright at all; on the contrary. Is Russia an independent state? It is! Well, in that case we too are independent.

Since our literature can at last follow its own path of development, we are faced with the following question: by which of the world's literatures should we set our course?

*On no account by the Russian.* This is definite and unconditional. Our political union must not be confused with literature. Ukrainian poetry must flee as quickly as possible from Russian literature and its styles. The Poles would never have produced Mickiewicz had they not stopped orientating themselves toward the art of Moscow. The point is that Russian literature has weighed down upon us for centuries as master of the situation, as one that has conditioned our psyche to play the slavish imitator. And so, to nourish our young art on it would be to impede its development. The proletariat's ideas did not reach us through Muscovite art; on the contrary, we, as representatives of a young nation, can better apprehend these ideas, better cast them in the appropriate images. Our orientation is to Western European art, its style, its techniques. Comrade Burevii imagines, as does every Muscophile "Europenko," that "from the perspective of the achievements of Russian post-Revolutionary literature we are still trudging along far behind." We would not have said so, because it is not the trash of Gladkovs<sup>43</sup> and other half-baked Lev Tolstois that must compete against

our youth. This, however, is beside the point. What does this prove, the fact that we have not yet created works of genius? It proves that we have not yet succeeded in taking the right course; if the younger among us are now being compared to the "old" Russians, then obviously we have nothing to learn from them. Obviously, "in the final reckoning" they are the ones bringing up the rear. We know what Europe is; so do our readers. If Comrade Burevii still does not know, let him pay a trip to Shchupak or Pylypenko—they will inform him.

Burevii sent us a very valuable piece of advice: learn European languages, he said, because only then will you be a valuable "enko." His indignation with Zerov is also quite justified: why, he says, does the latter still not know the Kirghiz language? It is a shame, however, that he neglected to ask how many languages his Muscovite God-the-Father V. Belinsky knew. We will tell you how many—none! Very piquant, isn't it, dear Comrade "Europenko"? But what does this mean? It means that according to your criterion, Belinsky "is not to be counted among those who will lead us to Europe." Who isn't? Belinsky? But you have just given us instructions to study him! Where is the logic in this?

This, however, is not the point either. Comrade Burevii is terribly indignant at us, accusing us of refusing to admit "the significance of Russian literature." We quote: "I shall not stifle my indignation" and so on. He indignantly informs us with hindsight's wisdom from his Muscovite backwaters, that "Dostoevsky conquered the mind of all Germany, and that etc.,". In the name of Russian literature he is ready to push our youth toward Dostoevskyism.

Quite the "Europenko"! Where in Moscow he detects "the process of literary renaissance" we have no idea. Nevertheless, he is completely unable to grasp why Muscovite art today cannot experience "a process of renaissance" and why we cannot imitate Dostoevsky. It is true that Russian literature is one of the most accomplished. *However, our path is not through it.* If today Muscovite literature is the source from which "Europenkos" draw, tomorrow they will realize that M. Zerov's translations are incomparably superior to various Russian Zhukovskys (see Prof. Biletsky's review). Finally, they will realize that the end has arrived not only for "Little Russianness, Ukrainophilism and Prosvitainism," but also for slum-dwelling Muscophilism.

Enough of "philisms"; up with your own good judgment! When we steer our course toward Western European literature, it is not with the goal of yoking our art to some other waggon bringing up the rear, but with the aim of reviving it after the asphyxiating atmosphere of backwardness. We will travel to Europe to study, but with a secret idea—after several years to burn with an extraordinary flame. Do you hear, Muscophiles from the backwoods of Moscow, what it is we want? Therefore death to



Dostoevskyism! Up with the cultural renaissance!

Our article is *finis*. The apologists of scribbling have once more passed before our eyes. But what is scribbling? Scribbling is the name we give to that phenomenon in our life that is nourished by art's scribblers. This original institution takes upon itself the mission of paralyzing the will of the active society. Scribbling is an offshoot of massism, it is the petty bourgeoisie's own brother.

Full stop.

P.S. Excuse us, we forgot all about the criminal affair concerning the literary figure Mykola Khvylovy. Well, the *prosvita* public is terribly agitated: a *parvenu*, they say, and that's all; he is "shaking the foundations of proletarian literature." Therefore we must finally decipher this mysterious individual. Are we, then, at last to hear him sing his real song? In short, the respected citizens of our republic will soon read the following poster:

Attention! Attention! Attention! The "black mask" of the all-Ukrainian polemical champion, Mykola Khvylovy, is about to be removed (admission free) ... although, to be sure, not exactly according to the rules of circus fights, because as you know the mask is removed when the opponent has been pinned to the deck, while here the opposite will happen: first we shall take off the mask, and then we shall pin him.

*A note in Khvylovy's handwriting on the poster:*

"You are wasting your time, you won't pin me even after taking off the mask!... But anyway you may be right: that's why I'm thinking of escaping across the border.

# **Ukraine or Little Russia?**

It should not be forgotten that we are living in extremely complex circumstances, when, alongside elements of Socialism, we are also witnessing the growth of elements of capitalism and, in addition, of the young bourgeoisie. Our superstructures are not able to keep pace with the proportional development of the superstructures belonging to the third estate. The youth that comes out of the institutes of higher education easily succumbs to propaganda in dark corners. Is Ukraine a colony or isn't it? We have heard these kinds of discussions for a long time now. Under the present conditions these are dangerous questions. The social processes called into existence by the NEP are inevitably leading to the conflict of two cultures. The Ukrainian society, having grown in strength, will not make peace with its actual—if not decreed *de jure*—hegemonist, the Russian competitor. Therefore hollow words will not get you very far in this issue. Our task is to forestall this conflict. In other words, we have immediately to take the side of the active, young Ukrainian society, which now represents not only the peasant but also the worker, and in such a manner we have to put an end to the counter-revolutionary idea of building Russian culture in Ukraine. Because all those discussions about the equal rights of languages are nothing but the concealed desire to cultivate something that cannot be resurrected. In short, we are ourselves creating obstacles for Socialist construction. It is imperative that we renounce such a policy as soon as possible. Then we shall accelerate a new ideological break-away to our side within Ukrainian society. Only such a formulation of the question can be called serious. [Ie., F. Hirschak, *On Two Fronts*, 59.]

We are indeed an independent state whose republican organism is a part of the Soviet Union. And Ukraine is independent not because we, Communists, desire this, but because the iron and irresistible will of the laws of history demands it, because only in this way shall we hasten class differentiation in Ukraine. If any nation (as has already been stated a long time ago and repeated on more than one occasion) over the centuries demonstrates the will to manifest itself, its organism as a state entity, then all attempts in one way or another to hold back such a natural process block the formation of class forces on the one hand, and, on the other, introduce an element of chaos into the general historical process at work in the world. To gloss over independence with a hollow pseudo-Marxism is to fail to understand that Ukraine will continue to be an arena for counter-revolution as long as it does not pass through the natural stage that Western Europe went through during the formation of nation-states. . . . [A. Khvyliia, *From a Deviation into the Chasm*, 62].

*The Ukrainian Renaissance and the Communist Party*

Therefore it is once more a question of the organic growing into and fusion of our party with the national movement in the Soviet Union. . . . The crux of the issue lies in the fact that the Ukrainian national reawakening has logically reached the second stage of its development. The young national society, on the one hand, has undergone a definite process of class differentiation; on the other hand, one can observe an increase in jostling and frenetic but futile activity. The explanation for the latter lies in the tight framework confining cultural development. The young forces are unable to see any further perspectives beyond this framework and cannot throw their energies into something of greater consequence in order to reveal their creative potential. The point is that while in Russia the Communist Party has always intervened morally and materially in all corners of national cultural construction, in Ukraine, the divorce of leading circles from the national reawakening has left us, apart from a chimerical situation in cultural construction, with a few morally impotent and materially feeble "khokholian apparatuses." This is one side of the coin. The second stems from the class differentiation in the national organism. The social processes are continuously extending this differentiation, and in such a situation the atmosphere that surrounds our bunglers, the revolutionary cadres who are directly responsible for constructing Ukrainian Soviet culture, is becoming simply intolerable. Every upstart Philistine from Russian circles considers it his duty to give the Ukrainian a patronizing glance and when the occasion arises to slap him on the back with a "Keep up the good work, national minority, maybe in another hundred years you'll be a Communist too." [Ie., F. Hirschak, 71-2.]

In his article on Fonvizin,<sup>1</sup> Belinsky wrote that "the Russians are the inheritors—the legitimate inheritors—of the whole world and not simply of European life," that they "should not and cannot be either Frenchmen, or Germans, or Englishmen, because they ought to be Russians." So think the contemporary members of the Russian imperialist intelligentsia, no matter how loudly we cry that such a view is outdated and does not correspond to the demands of our time. Muscovite messianism will continue to live in the heads of the Moscow intelligentsia, because it is still educated today on the self-same Belinsky.

. . . . The destruction of Russian messianism would not merely signify giving the "Go" signal to the express-train of joyous creativity whose rushing wind would initiate a real spring of nations, but it would also liberate Moscow's youth from the prejudices of great-power-mongering. [Ie., F. Hirschak, 55.]

Existence determines consciousness—from which flows our first reason. Today the centre of all-Union Philistinism is Moscow, in which the

proletarian factories, the Comintern and the All-Union Communist Party figure as an oasis on the world scale. Whereas in Ukraine, particularly in the centre, one can only hear the term "Comrade," over there they have long ago moved from "Citizen" to "Mr." Moscow itself (and even Russia as a whole, if we discount Siberia) essentially never saw the October Revolution and its heroic struggle. [A. Khvyliya, *From a Deviation into the Chasm*, 45-6; also *The Construction of Soviet Ukraine, an Anthology*, I (1928), 195.]

### *The Problem of an Orientation and the Struggle of Two Cultures*

The great Russian literature is above all a literature of pessimism, more accurately of passive pessimism. . . . Russian passive pessimism educated the cadre of "superfluous people," or to put it more simply, parasites, "dreamers," people "without any given responsibilities," "whimperers," "grey little people" of the "twentieth rank." . . . In contemporary Russian ethnographic romanticism such an idealization of past Razins and Pugachevs fuses with a sense of Russian "imperial" patriotism and obscures dreams concerning the future. It is incapable of going beyond this. The great Russian literature has reached its limit and has halted at the crossroads. . . . And the illiterate advice to found our orientation upon Muscovite art sounds like a malicious irony directed at the same Russian literature. By the will of history entirely the opposite will come to pass: Russian literature can only find the magical balm for its revival beneath the luxuriant, vital tree of the renaissance of young national republics, in the atmosphere of the springtime of once oppressed nations. [Ie., F. Hirchak, 55-6.]

If Soviet Ukrainian culture is gaining hegemony at home in Ukraine, this does not mean that it cannot be a Communist culture; but if in its struggle with the Russian competitor (whether this competitor assumes the form of the proletarian writers or the *smenovekhovtsy*) it sees a refusal to understand this culture, then this constitutes a menacing phenomenon, as a direct consequence of which we shall observe this culture's retreat into the camp of the petty bourgeoisie. We have to behave logically: either we recognize the national reawakening or we do not. If we do, we have to draw the relevant conclusions. . . . Therefore this element in the new slogan is, so to speak, a bread-and-butter issue: in the first place you should "get the show on the road," and, in the second, stop preventing me from fighting my competitor, because you yourself were the one who, as it were, put the stamp of approval on this competition (in fact if not *de jure*) by recognizing the reawakening. Thirdly, stop viewing this as counter-revolution. [A. Khvyliya, 40.]

Putting it crudely, but at the same time more clearly, the struggle for the market in books, for hegemony on the cultural front between the two sister cultures—Russian and Ukrainian—is a fact of life, one that is far removed from sentimental romanticism and one that is becoming more evident with every passing day. We have to draw from this a simple conclusion: if we recognize that the Ukrainian renaissance is an indispensable, unavoidable stage, then we should not only widen the material base for the expression of the cultural potential of the young nation, but should also take a look at the new slogan in Marxist terms. Why is the Ukrainian intelligentsia unwilling to orientate itself toward Russian art? Because it comes up against Russian wares on the book market. If it orientates itself toward Russian art it will be unable to defeat its competitor, because its own wares will always be seen as second, third, and even fourth rate, even though they may be of the first quality. This has been a psychological law of our reader, at least in the first decade. On the other hand, the Ukrainian intelligentsia senses that by and large it is unable to defeat within itself the servile nature which has always held the northern culture sacred and, by doing so, denied Ukraine the possibilities of expressing its national genius. . . . We conceive of the new slogan directed against Russian literature as a call for healthy rivalry (“competition”) between two nations—not, however, as nations, but as revolutionary factors. [I.e., F. Hirchak, 58.]

### *The Vision of the Asiatic Renaissance in Ukraine*

Lenin carried the light from Asia, but he always advised of the need to learn from Europe. He evidently thought that the psychological Europe could be fused with the East. . . .

It cannot fail to strike an observer that almost all cultures of the patriarchal period were created by those nations that were situated on the territory of Asia, and by those which bordered on it. Accordingly, the human material of Europe played a relatively minor role in the formation of the first cultural-historical type, regardless of the fact that the territory of Europe was probably not uninhabited at the time. (This hypothesis is supported by, among other things, the scientific assumptions that place the existence of the Slavs on this side of the Urals some time around 1,000 B.C.) Therefore, it was the human material of Asia that had to solve the problems of the patriarchal period. . . . However, in doing so, it exhausted its creative forces to the point where the subsequent feudal type had, naturally, to express himself on the territory of Europe, where the human material had over the centuries built up a fund of as yet unrevealed

energy. With this energy Europe solved not only the second, but also the third period—the bourgeois one. [Ie., F. Hirschak, 77.]

It is not within the powers of Europe to produce the fourth, proletarian cultural-historical type. This is, once more, merely a hypothesis, but for a more or less perceptive person it becomes axiomatic. Today we are witnessing the “decline of Europe,” not, however, as the Faustian culture but as the bourgeois type. But we are simultaneously the contemporaries and witnesses also of the decline of creative energy in the human material on European territory. The Western community is in the nature of things moving toward a condition of spiritual impotence. Its creative energy is exhausted; there sufficed only enough for two periods. Many ages will pass before Europe once more initiates a brilliant history.... [Ie., F. Hirschak, 78.]

This does not mean that Europe will not continue to lead other countries for a long time to come; it does not mean that even in the age of its temporary eclipse it will not create marvels in the same realm of technique, for example. It means that the creative initiative of a universal significance, on a world scale, can no longer appear on the same territory that witnessed the discharging, unleashing, of human energy over a period of several millennia. Greece still exists today, but it is no longer the Greece of a distant and beautiful culture. Rome still glows today, but no Mussolini will ever raise it to the grandiose heights it once enjoyed. The Communist revolutions of Europe, the prologue to the proletarian period, like the bourgeois before them, cannot do without accessory initiative. And this is natural, because the initiative has to come from the area where the fourth cultural-historical type will be created. Only the inspirers of the cultural period can put an end to capitalism.... [Ie., F. Hirschak, 78.]

The “yellow peril” of which the bourgeoisie was so afraid, in fact always symbolized the real force which will solve the problem of a Communist society by beginning actively to produce the new cultural-national type. [Ie., F. Hirschak, 79.]

The Asiatic renaissance is closely linked to the epoch of civil conflicts, to the deadly struggle between two forces: on the one side—capitalism, and on the other—the Eastern *conquistadores*. The Western European proletariat is weighed down by heavy traditions and without the aroused, universally significant Asiatic energy, it is not only incapable of initiating a new cultural-historical type, but also of ridding itself of the dead weight of the third estate.

.... The proletariat is not an absolute category, but merely a concrete class organism. Therefore the age-long domination in Western Europe of the spiritual culture of the third cultural-historical type could not fail to make an impression on its psyche.... An elementary knowledge of Darwinism is enough to confirm this. The Western European proletariat is

sufficiently prepared to take possession of material treasures. However, one ought not to forget that Prussianism in one form or another has educated the best European proletariat (the German) not just since the time of defeat and not just since the time of dreams about revenge, but over the course of many, many years.

.... Of course, the "world proletariat" should become the leader of liberation movements among the nationalities of the East. Unfortunately, the Western European proletariat is led by the MacDonaldis and the Vandervelds, who will not be deposed tomorrow by the Western European proletariat, and in any case not before the great conflagration in the East.

.... But where is the mysterious country that will solve the great world problem? It is there in the East. Asia is once more stepping out onto the wide path of history. The rest period of the Eastern human material, lasting a thousand years and spanning many ages, has been a period for the accumulation of energy for universal tasks of world significance. And this energy alone is capable of leading Europe out of that period during its civilization that has been marked by the decline of the third type of culture. There can be no doubt about this. The social pathos with which Asia is today burning is not only the first sign of the rebirth of new and grandiose forces, but also a sign that these latter correspond to the fourth type of culture. [Ie., F. Hirchak, 80.]

.... The Asiatic renaissance is defined not only by classical education, but also by the rebirth of a strong, whole human being, the rebirth of a new type of courageous *conquistadores* for whom the European community is longing.

The Asiatic renaissance still remains the wonderful poetry of our days. We still believe and are convinced that only the *conquistadores* of the *Great East* will create the fourth cultural-historical type, that only they will lead humanity out onto the path of Communist revolutions. [Ie., F. Hirchak, 80.]

.... And what is Ukraine's role in all this? In the fact that the spiritual culture of Bolshevism can only express itself clearly in the young Soviet republics and in the first place under the azure skies of the South-Eastern republic of the Communes, which has always been an arena of civil strife and which has raised on its luxuriant steppes the type of the revolutionary *conquistador*. In the first place, our Eurasia always stood far from the third culture, and the arousal of Asiatic energy is also the arousal of its energy. Moreover, inasmuch as Eurasia stands on the boundary of two great territories, of two energies, the avant-garde of the fourth cultural-historical type is constituted by us. [Ie., F. Hirchak, 81.]

The marvellous sun of the renaissance is rising, and we shake your hand, unknown Comrade! [Ie., F. Hirchak, 61.]



# Notes

## Notes to Quo Vadis?

1. Hart (Tempering) and Pluh (Plough) were, respectively associations of worker and peasant writers in Ukraine. They were not only interested in providing literature for the workers and peasants but in actually helping workers and peasants to become writers. Ideologically, Hart remained closer to the tradition of the Borotbists, which represented an indigenous Ukrainian Communist trend, while Pluh was more inclined to follow the leadership of literary currents in Moscow. Artistically, Hart was primarily concerned with producing work which would be of a high standard, yet inculcate in the readers "proletarian" values; Pluh was so eager to produce works written by peasants that it cared little for the maintenance of artistic standards and believed that almost anyone who wanted to be a writer, regardless of talent, could become one.

Hart, which came into existence in January 1923 and lasted until the autumn of 1925, counted the following among its founding members: O. Dosvitnii, O. Dovzhenko, M. Iohansen, O. Kopylenko, V. Koriak, H. Kotsiuba, I. Kulyk, M. Maisky, V. Polishchuk, I. Senchenko, Iu. Smolych, V. Sosiura, P. Tychyna, M. Khvylovy and M. Khrystovy.

Pluh was founded in 1922 with the following as early members: D. Bedzyk, M. Bykovets, S. Bozhko, V. Gzhytsky, A. Holovko, H. Epik, N. Zabyla, I. Kyrylenko, Ia. Kachura, D. Humenna, V. Mynko, A. Paniv, P. Panch, S. Pylypenko, I. Senchenko, V. Tal, P. Usenko, V. Cherednychenko and I. Shevchenko. The organization was dissolved in April 1932 when the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik) decreed that all writers must belong to a single writers' union.

2. The First All-Union Conference of Proletarian Writers was held in Moscow on 6-12 January 1925, and was dominated by the Russian *October* and *On Guard* groups.

The *On Guardists* took their name from their journal *Na postu* (*On Guard*), which appeared under the editorship of B. Volin, G. Lelevich and S. Rodov from 1923 to 1925. They favoured a militantly proletarian art, and exhibited an uncompromising hostility to "fellow-travellers" and other competing groups, rejecting the cultural heritage of past ages, and ignoring the non-Russian national cultures within the USSR.

3. *Visty VUTsVK*—*Visty Vseukrainskoho tseentralnoho vykonavchoho komitety* (*News of the All-Ukrainian Central Executive Committee*) was a daily newspaper and the official organ of the Soviet Ukrainian government, published in the capital, Kharkiv. On 1 January 1929, in accordance with the new orthography, its name was changed to *Visti VUTsVK*.
4. *Prosvita* was the Ukrainian self-education society which sprung up in Ukraine after the 1905 and 1917 revolutions and was liquidated by the Bolsheviks in the twenties.

Khvylovy uses it to describe a certain provincial state of mind: semi-literate, dull and pretentious.

5. Serhii Pylypenko (1891–1943?) was the head of Pluh. During the Revolution he was a member of the Ukrainian Party of Socialist-Revolutionaries, and left this group for the official Communist Party (Bolshevik) of Ukraine in 1919. A writer of fables, he was ordered by the party to form a union of peasant writers in 1922, and this became Pluh. Pylypenko is best known as the leading advocate of massism, the idea that the new art would come from the masses themselves, and was quite willing to lower artistic standards in order to accomplish this. He was arrested by the NKVD, Stalin's political police, in 1934 and died or was executed in unknown circumstances.
6. "Satan in a Barrel" was a vaudeville farce often performed by amateur theatrical companies.
7. Oswald Spengler (1880–1936). Best known for his book *Der Untergang des Abendlandes* (1918–22; trans. C.H. Atkinson, *The Decline of the West*, 1926–8) which was widely discussed at the time. He argued that European culture had exhausted its potential and that the next great cultural flowering would come from elsewhere.
8. Vasyl Chumak (1900–19) and Hnat Mykhailychenko (1892–1919), along with Vasyl Ellan-Blakytny (1891–1925) composed the trio of Ukrainian Borotbist writers who were the first to organize and produce a literature favourable to the October Revolution. Chumak and Mykhailychenko were captured and shot by the White forces of General Denikin in 1919.
9. Volodymyr Sosiura (1895–1965). One of the most popular Ukrainian poets in the 1920s and one of the few survivors of the Ukrainian literary renaissance of that decade. Sosiura first began to publish verse in Russian in 1917, but later switched to Ukrainian. At various times he belonged to Hart, Pluh and Khvylovy's VAPLITE.  
 Mykhailo (Mike) Iohansen (1895–1937). One of the most talented poets of the period. He also began to write in Russian, then switched to Ukrainian, and went over to the Marxist camp in 1919. As an active member of Khvylovy's VAPLITE group, he was executed, undoubtedly for "bourgeois nationalism," in 1937.
10. Pavlo Usenko (1902- ). Also one of the few talented Ukrainian writers to survive the 1930s. He joined the Communist Youth League (Komsomol) in 1920 and began to publish verse in 1922. From 1923 to 1926 he was a member of Pluh, then joined *Molodniak (Youth)*, and finally the Union of Soviet Writers in Ukraine. The critic Volodymyr Koriak called him the first Komsomol poet.  
 Pavlo Ivaniv. A minor poet of the period and a member of VAPLITE.
11. Mykola Zerov (1890–1941). The leading neo classicist poet and a prominent literary historian of the period. Zerov was a "fellow-traveller," a man of great culture and erudition who insisted that the best way for aspiring writers to learn their craft was by studying classical models. Khvylovy scandalized his more militant peers by maintaining that despite the fact that Zerov was not a Marxist, the kind of knowledge he offered was useful to "proletarian" writers. Zerov, for his part, soon after the publication of this pamphlet made common cause with Khvylovy, maintaining that, in juxtaposing Europe and *prosvita*, Khvylovy had indicated the need to choose

- between literature of artistic merit and hackwork. Zerov was arrested in 1935, and in 1936 a secret trial was conducted of the alleged "terrorist group of Professor Zerov." He was last reported seen in the Solevetskye Islands' camp, and was probably executed in 1941.
12. Harkun-Zadunaisky. A character from one of Volodymyr Vynnychenko's stories: "Antreprenor Harkun-Zadunaisky," in his *Tvory*, (Kiev, 1919), 1: 188-235. A conceited and pretentious loud-mouth who runs a pathetic theatre troupe.
  13. A cryptic reference to P. Kyianytsia and H. Iakovenko, insignificant Pluh writers. Articles in which they attacked Khvylovy's style of writing, complained of his snobbish attitude toward peasant authors or praised Pluh were then appearing in the press. They provoked the first polemical pamphlet from the pen of Khvylovy.
  14. Pavlo Tychyna (1891-1967). One of the outstanding lyric poets in the Ukrainian language and a survivor of the Stalinist terror. Tychyna began to publish in 1919, later joined Hart, then Khvylovy's VAPLITE, and finally the Union of Soviet Writers. Tychyna was able to adapt to the Stalinist regime and was rewarded with high posts, serving in the 1940s as Soviet Ukrainian Commissar of Education. Broken in the thirties, he was never again able to produce the kind of poetry that made him famous during the years of national independence (1917-19) and in the early twenties.
  15. Khvylovy refers here to H. Iakovenko's "Pro krytykiv i krytyku v literaturi," *Kultura i pobut*, 30 April 1925.
  16. The "olympians" were a group led by Khvylovy, Oles Dosvitnii and Mykola Ialovy, originally formed as an opposition within Hart to combat the tendency toward "massism." The "olympians" argued that such a literature would only be produced by brilliant individuals who know the craft of literature and through whom the masses speak.
  17. Molot (Hammer). A splinter group of writers close to Pluh.
  18. Komnezamy. An acronym for *Komitety nezamozhnykh selian* (committees of non-wealthy peasants) which functioned like the kombidy of the Civil War period. They held political power and dominated the village until mid-1925.
  19. VAPP and Zaboï. VAPP, the All-Union Association of Proletarian Writers was the main organization of the *On Guardist* trend in literature. Zaboï (Coal-Face) was a VAPP satellite composed mainly of Russian writers from the Donbas area.
  20. Komsomol. The Communist Youth League.
  21. The worker-peasant correspondent (*robseïkor*) movement was a programme which encouraged workers and peasants to contribute short articles on worker and peasant life to Soviet newspapers. Both Hart and Pluh aided the development of this movement.
  22. Aleksandr Ostrovsky (1886-1923). A Russian playwright of the nineteenth century. "Temnoe tsarstvo" ("Dark Kingdom") was the title of a programmatic article dealing with Ostrovsky's work by N.A. Dobroliubov which appeared in *Sovremennik* in 1859.
  23. Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729-81), German writer and critic. Georg Brandes (1842-1927), Danish literary critic.

24. Volodymyr Koriak (1889–1939). The party's leading literary critic in Ukraine during the twenties. Found guilty in 1937 of being a "nationalist Trotskyite and enemy of the people," he perished in the Gulag.
25. Illia Ehrenburg's first novel was entitled *Neobychainye pokhohzheniia Khulio Khurenito* (1919; trans. A. Bostock and Y. Kapp, *Julio Jurenito* 1958).
26. S. Rodov (1893– ). A leading Proletcultist.
27. Oleksander Doroshkevych (1899–1946). A Ukrainian historian of literature, critic and teacher, remembered less for his sociological criticism than for having edited the collected works of other writers.
28. Upton Sinclair (1878–1968). An American leftist writer whose work was much in vogue in the Soviet Union for its social criticism. A stage adaptation of his novel *Jimmy Higgins* (1919) was presented by the Ukrainian Berezil theatre with sensational success in the twenties.
29. Iakiv Savchenko (1890–1937) began to publish Ukrainian verse in Galicia in 1913, went through a Symbolist period, and then became a leading Ukrainian advocate of "proletarian literature." Probably executed in 1937.
30. The reference is to the pre-revolutionary journal *Ukrainska khata* (*Ukrainian Home*) (1909–14) whose leading critic Mykyta Sribliansky-Shapoval chastized the intelligentsia for its pusillanimity and venality.
31. Proletcult. An acronym for the Proletarian Cultural and Educational Association, founded in 1917 and sponsored by A. Bogdanov (pen name of Aleksandr Malinovsky, 1873–1928) and Anatolii Lunacharsky (1875–1933). The movement wanted to create a proletarian literature for and by the proletariat and to set up workshops which would turn workers into writers. Proletcult was notorious for its lack of sensitivity to non-Russian national aspiration, produced very little literature, and its effect was widely conceded to be a purely negative one. The Proletcult movement collapsed around 1922 after being severely criticized within the party, notably by Lenin, but its leaders continued to exert an influence through the journal *On Guard* and played an important role when the "class line" approach was reintroduced in 1928.
32. LEF (Left Front of Art). The main literary organization of the Russian Futurists, founded in 1923. It published an organ of the same name (1923–5) and later *Novyi LEF* (*New LEF*). Fascinated by the achievements of engineering and technology, contemptuous of bourgeois art and impatient for radical changes in culture, it asserted an unsuccessful claim to dominance over revolutionary art in the early twenties.
33. Oktiabr (October). Formed in late 1922, it was the main organizational successor to Proletcult. The October Group published the journal *On Guard* (1923) and *Oktiabr* (*October*) (1924). G. Lelevich (real name Laborii Kalmanson) and later I. Vardin (real name Mgeladze) were the most prominent theoreticians of the extreme wing of *On Guardism*. They were joined by Valeriian Poliansky (real name Pavel Lebedev) and V. Pletnev, both former leaders of the Proletcult movement.
34. *Hopak*. A Ukrainian folk dance.

35. The Comet Encke is named after its discoverer, the German astronomer, Johann Franz Encke (1791–1865).
36. A. Bogdanov (real name A. Malinovsky, 1873–1928) was the chief theoretician of Proletcult.
37. Characters from some of Khvylovy's best known short stories.
38. Panfuturists. An avant-garde literary current in Ukraine grouped around Mykhail Semenko which was extremely active in the early twenties. The group proclaimed the death of Romantic notions of art, to which they counterposed scientific analysis, technical expertise and building the future society.
39. Nikolai Chuzhak (real name Nasimovich, 1876–1927). A Russian literary critic and major theoretician of the LEF group. He was later "purged" and disappeared.
40. *Oblako v shtanakh* (1915) was the poem that brought Vladimir Maiakovsky real recognition.
41. *Nepman*. A private trader under the New Economic Policy. (see note 41)
42. NEP. The New Economic Policy (1921–8) replaced War Communism and permitted limited private trade. It was primarily a concession to the peasantry.
43. Reflexology. The science of reflexes, which many of the more vulgar materialists expected to replace psychology, was founded by Pavlov.
44. Hryhorii Maifet (1903– ). A well-known Ukrainian literary critic of the period who published "Sut literaturno-khudozhnoi tvorchosty ta ii vplyvu na liudynu v osvittleni refleksolohii," *Chervonyi shliak*, no. 3 (1925): 168–88.
45. KHAPP, LAPP, MAPP. Respectively the Kharkiv, Leningrad and Moscow Associations of Proletarian Writers.
46. Ostap Vyshnia (1889–1956). A talented humorist with an ear for the peasant idiom and one of the most popular Ukrainian writers. Although he was exiled in 1934 and unable to publish from 1932 until 1945, he did manage to survive Stalin's terror.  
Kost Bohuslavsky (1895–1937). A writer of popular songs, exiled in the 1930s.
47. The Higher Literary Artistic Institute was founded by the Russian poet Valerii Briusov in 1921 and renamed in his honour after his death. It was recognized as the best place for young poets, prose writers, literary critics and translators to perfect their skills.
48. G. Lelevich (real name L. Kalmanson). Editor of the Octobrist organ, *On Guard*.
49. Les Kurbas (1885–1942). Organizer and head of the Berezil theatre company, the most important force in twentieth-century Ukrainian drama. Kurbas called for the adoption of European cultural models as early as 1917 in a way that foreshadowed Khvylovy and was exiled for "bourgeois nationalism" during the Postyshev terror of 1933.
50. The reference is to the collection *Zhovten* (*October*) (1921), which contained an article by Koriak entitled "Etapy" (Stages) and a manifesto "Nash universal" (Our Universal) signed by Khvylovy, Sosiura and Iohansen.
51. "Kurylka Lives!" A popular expression of the day taken from some

- contemporary Russian writer, presumably meaning: "You can't keep a good man down!"
52. Trotsky's ideas on art described below were systematically presented in his *Literatura i revoliutsia* (Moscow 1923).
  53. *Ramayana*. A Hindu epic in which the god Rama is the central character.
  54. Théophile Gautier (1811–72) and Leconte de Lille (1818–94) were Parnassians; their opponent, Emile Augier (1820–89), was a French dramatist and satirist.
  55. Alexandre Dumas fils (1824–95). Known primarily as the author of *La dame aux Camélias* (1852; trans. E. Gosse, *Camille* 1934).
  56. Iohansen's "Komuna (utopychna poema)" appeared in *Hart-Almanakh pershyi* (Kharkiv 1924), 5–10. The opening lines of Tychyna's *Pluh* (1920) are: "A wind. Not a wind—a storm."
  57. Pierre Joseph Proudhon (1809–65) and Christina Wilhelm Weitling (1808–71) were both pre-Marxian Socialists.
  58. H.G. Wells (1866–1946), the English novelist.
  59. Workers' clubs and village halls were the main institutions established by the regime to which the workers and peasants could go for recreation and a little cultural improvement.
  60. Panteleimon Kulish (1819–97). A Ukrainian writer, historian, ethnographer and literary critic. One of the most important figures in Ukrainian intellectual history. (See *Thoughts Against the Current*, note 46)
  61. Voronskyism refers to Aleksandr Voronsky (1884–1937?), a leading Russian Marxist critic of the 1920s and editor of the party's leading literary journal *Krasnaia nov* (*Red Virgin Soil*) (1921–7). He was arrested in 1927 after running afoul of VAPP, allowed to return in 1930, and disappeared for good after being arrested in 1937. "Free competition" refers to the 1924–5 party decrees on literature which called for the free competition of different literary trends. VUAN, (Vseukrainska akademiia nauk—The All-Ukrainian Academy of Sciences) was the ancestor of both the Academy of Sciences of the Ukrainian SSR and the Free Ukrainian Academy of Sciences in exile. Long a haven for traditional scholarship, it was "Sovietized" in 1929–30, packed with loyal Stalinists, and many of its older members were arrested for their alleged participation in an imaginary conspiracy called the Union for the Liberation of Ukraine (SVU).
  62. S. Pylypenko, "Kudy Lizesh sopolyve," *Kultura i pobut*, 14 June 1925
  63. Dmitrii Merezhkovsky (1865–1941) was a leading Russian Symbolist writer. Aleksandr Kuprin (1870–1938) and Ivan Bunin (1870–1953) were also prominent Russian writers of the early twentieth century. All three were living in exile at the time of Khvylovy's writing.
  64. Zinaida Gippius (1867–1945) was a Symbolist poet and the wife of Merezhkovsky. Spyrydon Cherkasenko (1876–1939), one of the outstanding representatives of pre-revolutionary Ukrainian literature, cultivated the traditional romantic song and social motifs.
  65. *Cadet—Kadet*. An acronym for the Constitutional Democrats, the leading pre-revolutionary Russian liberal political party led by Pavel Miliukov (1859–1943).

66. Khvylovy's satire of Proletcult, "Liliuli", portrayed local Protetcultists as able to mouth a few Marxist phrases but completely ignorant about art. It first appeared in *Chervonyi shliakh*, no. 6-7 (1923); 4-23.
67. A. Voronsky, "Iskusstvo, kak poznanie zhizni, i sovremennost, (K voprosu o nashikh literaturnykh raznoglasiakh)," *Krasnaia nov*, no. 5 (1923): 347-84. The article was a first attempt by Voronsky to sketch out a guiding theory for his journal.
68. Anatole France (1844-1924), French writer awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1921.
69. Emile Vandervelde (1866-1938), Belgium's leading Socialist who at the outbreak of the First World War joined his country's ministry of defence.
70. Giovanni Battista Vico (1668-1744), Italian philosopher, jurist, historian, critic, poet and founder of the study of aesthetics. Robert Vipper (1859-?), historian who wrote widely on ancient Greece, Rome and the Renaissance. His book *Kommunizm i kultura* appeared in Riga in 1925.
71. Khokhol and Little Russian are pejoratives for Ukrainian. "Khokhol" is an ethnic slur, with connotations of "ignorant" and "peasant-like." "Little-Russian" did not originally have negative connotations but came to sound to Ukrainians rather as though they were "little brothers" of their more numerous neighbours and was therefore rejected by them and used as a term of abuse against Ukrainians trying to become assimilated Russians or against those who had a very weak sense of national identity.
72. A. Voronsky, "Na perevale", *Krasnaia nov*, no. 6 (1923): 312-22. The article outlined a new programme for literature.
73. Kasimir Edschmid (1890-1966), German novelist and essayist. Famous as a spokesman for Expressionism.
74. Liubov Akselrod (1868-1946), leading Soviet Russian philosopher and literary scholar.
75. Konstantin Leontev (1831-91), Russian writer, critic and thinker sometimes referred to as the Russian Nietzsche.
76. A reference to "Sovetskaia Rossiia v osveshchenii belogo obozrevatelii," in which he takes Pluh's "quantity over quality" approach. Published in A. Voronsky, *Na styke. Sbornik statei* (Moscow-Petrograd 1923), 297-310.



## Notes to Thoughts Against the Current

1. *Kultura i pobut* (*Culture and Daily Life*) was the literary supplement to *Visty VUTsVK* (*Visti* from 1 January 1929, *News of the All-Ukrainian Central Executive Committee of Soviets*) the daily newspaper published by the Soviet Ukrainian state in Kharkiv. *Chervonyi shliakh* (*Red Path*) began publication in 1923 as a Soviet Ukrainian counterpart to the “thick journals” so important to Russian literary life. This journal fulfilled its mission brilliantly, becoming for a time the centre around which the most creative currents of Ukrainian literary life in the 1920s revolved.
2. Valeriiian Polishchuk (1897–1942), Ukrainian writer and critic who began to publish in 1918, joined Hart in 1923, and in 1925 organized the literary group Avangard, which propagated a literary doctrine of “constructive dynamism.” Arrested in the mid-1930s, Polishchuk died in internal exile, but was rehabilitated posthumously in the 1950s.
3. Khokhlandia. Land of the khokhols, a sardonic reference to Ukrainian provincialism.
4. Henryk Sienkewicz’s novel of early Christianity, *Quo vadis?* (*Whither goest?*), won its author the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1905.
5. Mykola Zerov (1890–1941). A critic and leader of the neoclassicist group of Ukrainian poets. (See note 11 to *Quo vadis?*) Pavlo Fylypovych (1891–1937), also a neoclassicist poet and professor of the history of literature in Kiev, suffered a similar fate to Zerov’s. Mykhailo Mohyliansky (1873–1944), a publicist and member of the Constitutional Democratic Party before the Revolution, was in the 1920s and early 1930s chairman of the VUAN commission to compile and publish a bibliographical dictionary of Ukrainian figures. As a literary critic, he was close to the neoclassicists. In the 1930s he was forced to leave Kiev and forbidden to publish.
6. Maksym Rylsky (1895–1964). One of the outstanding poets of the 1920s, he was of Polish gentry background. Although he was briefly arrested in 1931, he managed to survive and ultimately became President of the Union of Soviet Writers in Ukraine, a member of the Academy of Sciences of the Ukrainian SSR, and the Academy of Sciences of the USSR. Rylsky’s first poems were published in 1907, and in the 1920s he was close to the neoclassicists. In the late 1960s he actively participated in the de-Stalinization campaign. He thus represents a link spanning almost all of twentieth-century Ukrainian literature.
7. Dmytro Zahul (1890–1938). A native of Bukovina, he was a Ukrainian Symbolist poet during the Revolution. Mykola Tereshchenko (1898–1966), also a Ukrainian Symbolist poet, managed to adapt and survive the Stalinist period. From its founding in 1925 until 1934, he edited *Zhyttia i revoliutsiia* (*Life and Revolution*), a literary monthly of the day and an unofficial organ of the Lanka (Link) group of Ukrainian fellow-traveler writers. Volodymyr Iaroshenko (1898–1941) was a promising Symbolist poet of the period who had taken part in the Revolution as a member of UKP (Ukrainian

Communist Party—an indigenous Communist grouping). Iakiv Savchenko (1890–1937), a Ukrainian Symbolist of peasant origin, later joined the Zhovten (October) and VUSPP groups and became a strong opponent of Khvylovy and Zerov.

8. The 1924 resolution of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party on literature specifically repudiated the attempts of the Proletcultists to claim a monopoly of literary expression. It called for the free competition of various currents in literature.
9. Mykola Zerov's *Nove ukrainske pysmenstvo* (1924), became the standard work of the period on the history of modern Ukrainian literature. An erudite and conscientious scholar, in this book Zerov demonstrated that he was a better sociological critic than his "Marxist" rivals.
10. August Bebel (1840–1913) was one of the founders of the Social-Democratic Party of Germany, the model for all pre-Leninist Marxian Socialist parties, and was one of its leaders until his death. Pierre Hamp's stories had just appeared in Ukrainian: P. Amp, *Opovidannia* (Kharkiv, 1925). Hamp was a French novelist and essayist of working-class background and Socialist sympathies.
11. Petro Kyianytsia (?–1933), a historian of literature and critic, was an Ukapist (member of UKP-Ukrainian Communist Party) during the Revolution, later a CP(B)U member, and worked in the historical sections of the All-Ukrainian Academy of Sciences and the All-Ukrainian Association of Marxist-Leninist Institutes. In 1933 he was arrested for alleged participation in the illegal Ukrainian Military Organization (UVO) and was shot. (See note 13 to *Quo vadis?*)
12. A reference to M. Zerov's "Volodymyr Sosiura—liryk i epyk (Z pryvody romanu "Taras Triasylo")," *Zhyttia i revoliutsiia*, no. 9 (1925): 30–7; and Ia. Savchenko's "Volodymyr Sosiura," *Zhyttia i revoliutsiia*, no. 8 (1925): 19–26.
13. Alexander Ivanovich Kuprin (1870–1938). *Poedinok* (*Duel*, 1905), a novel of army life which was extremely popular with the liberal Russian intelligentsia, brought its author his first big success.
14. This is a reference to V. Iaroshenko's "Tsarynnyk myna z Ukrainy" (The Field-Watcher Has Quit Ukraine), *Zhyttia i revoliutsiia*, no. 6–7 (1925): 26–3 and no. 8, 13–18.
15. "Tsen-tsan" is the title of a poem in Mykola Tereshchenko's *Laboratoriia* (Kharkiv 1924).
16. Iurii Mezhenko (1892–1969) was a bibliographer and literary critic of the fellow-traveller orientation. In the 1920s he edited *Bibliohrafychni visti* (*Bibliographic News*). In the 1930s he escaped the fate of most of his colleagues by working in Leningrad, but returned to become director of the library of the Academy of Sciences of the Ukrainian SSR (1945–8). He is best known for his multivolume *Shevchenkiana* (1911–62), a labour of love spanning over half a century.
17. Muzagete was a Ukrainian Symbolist group of 1919. It published three issues of a journal of the same name, containing poems by Pavlo Tychyna and articles by Zahul and Mezhenko.

18. The 1925 resolution of the Central Committee of the Communist Party (Bolshevik) of Ukraine on literature was roughly analogous to the above-mentioned Russian Central Committee resolution of the previous year. It sought to protect different Ukrainian literary currents, especially those among fellow-travellers that were generally sympathetic to the Revolution but did not conform strictly to party or Marxist views.
19. From Stolypin's "land parcel" here means from the richer peasantry who were created or began to thrive after Stolypin's agrarian reforms. (See also note 5 to "Apologists of Scribbling.")
20. The forty hectares mentioned here refers to an unpopular proposed land reform discussed in the Ukrainian Central Rada which would have allowed one individual to retain ownership of as much as forty hectares of arable land.
21. Wu Pei-Fu was a Northern Chinese warlord and a leader of the Chihli clique which dominated the Peking government from 1920 to 1924. Wu initially made a deal with the Communists and was favoured by the Comintern, but his massacre of sixty Communist Chinese railroad workers in 1923 ended this alliance and prompted the Chinese Communists to enter the Kuomintang of Chiang Kai-Shek.
22. O. Doroshkevych, "Literaturnyi rukh na Ukraini v 1924-25 rr.," *Zhyttia i revoliutsiia*, no. 3 (1925): 61-8.
23. A follower of Nestor Makhno who led a powerful anarchist army in Ukraine during the Revolution.
24. Ievhen Petrushevych (1863-1940) was head of the government of the West Ukrainian People's Republic during the later stages of its existence and in emigration until 1923, when he proclaimed it dissolved.
25. Lanka (Link) was a group of Ukrainian fellow-traveller writers including B. Antonenko-Davydovych, M. Ivchenko, Ia. Kachura, H. Kosynka, T. Osmachka, V. Pidmohylny, Ie. Pluzhnyk, Ia. Savchenko, etc., and grouped around the journal *Zhyttia i revoliutsiia* (*Life and Revolution*). In 1926 the group renamed itself MARS (Maisternia Revoliutsiinoho slova—Workshop of the Revolutionary word).
26. Upton Sinclair (1878-1968) and Johannes R. Becher (1891-1958)—Western European writers with Communist sympathies.
27. *Proletarska pravda* (*Proletarian Truth*) was the daily newspaper published by the Central Committee of the Communist Party (Bolshevik) of Ukraine in Kharkiv.
28. Probably an article by A. Lunacharskaia (1883-1959), the wife of Anatolii Lunacharsky, Commissar for Education, 1917-1929.
29. *Lopan* is the name of the river running through Kharkiv.
30. Oleksander Kopylenko (1900-58) began to publish in Ukrainian in 1921, mainly on themes taken from the Civil War. A member of Khvylov's VAPLITE group in the 1920s.
31. Antin Shmyhelsky (1901- ) was secretary of the Kiev section of Pluh. He was a member of Pluh from 1923 to 1927, when he joined VUSPP. Of Galician origin, he also belonged to the group Zakhidna Ukraina (Western Ukraine). He adapted to Stalinist Socialist Realism, joined the Communist

- Party, the Union of Soviet Writers, and survived.
32. Stefan Żeromski (1864–1925) was a Polish author best known for his *Popioły* (*Ashes*, 1904), a novel of the Napoleonic period, and *Wierna rzeka* (*Faithful River*, 1912), a story of the 1863 Polish Uprising.
  33. Felix Lope de Vega (1562–1635), the Spanish dramatic poet and one of the chief figures of the Golden Age of Spanish literature, is known for having written over 1500 plays.
  34. The period of accumulation of wealth by the state in order to pay for industrial development.
  35. O. Doroshkevych, "Shche slovo pro Evropu (Do novoi dyskusii na staru temu)," *Zhyttia i revoliutsiia*, no. 6–7 (1925): 62–8.
  36. N. Bukharin and E. Preobrazhensky, *Azbuka kommunizma* (*The ABC of Communism*, 1919) was the most basic of readings for all Communists during the period.
  37. Franz Mehring (1846–1919) was a left-wing German Social-Democrat and, along with Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, one of the founders and leaders of the Spartacist League which sought unsuccessfully to overthrow the Weimar Republic and establish a Soviet Germany in 1919.
  38. Andriian Kashchenko (1858–1919) wrote numerous Ukrainian books for young people. His works were not noted for high literary quality.
  39. *Krasnaia nov* (*Red Virgin Soil*, 1921–7). The leading Russian literary journal of the day. Edited in the 1920s by Voronsky, it was a show case of the new state's literary talent.
  40. A *smenovekhovets* was a member of the *Smena Vekh* (Changing Landmarks) group led by N.V. Ustrialov which accepted Russian Communism because it felt the latter continued the traditions of Russian nationalism. It published a journal of the same name in 1921–2. Iu. Kliuchnikov was a member of the group and contributor to the journal.
  41. N.V. Ustrialov (1890– ) was leader of the *Smena Vekh* group.
  42. Ivan Kotliarevsky (1769–1838) is best known for his *Eneida* (*Aeneid*) (1798) which is the first work of modern Ukrainian literature. Petro Hulak-Artemovsky (1790–1865) continued the work begun by Kotliarevsky in literature, writing travesties of classical authors and using models from Western European writers. Amvrosii Metlynsky (1814–70) was a Ukrainian Romantic poet, an ethnographer, and professor at Kiev and Kharkiv universities. An important representative of the Kharkiv School of Romantics.

The Cyrillo-Methodian Brotherhood (1845–1847) was a secret society of prominent Ukrainian intellectuals—which included T. Shevchenko, P. Kulish, M. Kostomarov and M. Hulak—that set as its goals the liberation of the peasantry, political recognition for the Ukraine and the enlightenment of the masses.

43. Mykola Ievshan (1889–1919) was a Ukrainian literary critic who chastized the literature of his day for the populist tendency to idealize the simple folk and to dwell upon civic motifs. He called for a new artistic individualism.

Mykhail Semenko (1892–1937) was in his youth a Ukrainian Symbolist poet and later became the chief founder and theoretician of Ukrainian

- Futurism. Mykola Vorony (1871–1942) was a prominent Ukrainian poet and author of the famous manifesto which appeared in *Literaturno-naukovyi vistykyk* (*Literary-Scientific Herald*) in 1901 and which is generally considered the beginning of Ukrainian Modernism.
44. Ludovico Ariosto (1474–1533) is best remembered as author of *Orlando Furioso* (1532), considered by many to be the greatest epic poem of the Italian Renaissance.
  45. Olha Kobylianska (1863–1942). A noted Ukrainian writer and feminist from Bukovina in Western Ukraine.
  46. Panteleimon Kulish (1819–1897). Renowned Ukrainian writer, historian, ethnographer, literary critic, publicist and political activist who was among the founders of the Cyrillo-Methodian Brotherhood of the 1840s and remained one of the dominant figures of Ukrainian intellectual history for four decades. Although his reputation was in decline by the time of his death, it was revived thanks to the efforts of writers who were gathered around the journal *Ukrainska Khata* (*Ukrainian Home*) during the years immediately preceding the First World War. Among his many achievements are the translations of the Bible, Shakespeare and the English Romantics into Ukrainian.
  47. Nikolai Zlatovratsky (1845–1911) was a Russian radical populist writer of the late nineteenth century whose work is known for its sentimentalized and idealized portrayal of the peasantry. Gleb Uspensky (1843–1902) was a Russian Realist whose writings describe the backwardness and provincialism of Russian rural life.
  48. A reference to Vissarion Belinsky, a leading nineteenth century Russian literary critic.
  49. Fedor Dostoevsky, *Zapiski iz podpolia* (*Notes From the Underground*, 1864).
  50. Elizaveta (Lisa) Kalitina was the elder daughter of Mariia in Ivan Turgenev's *Dvorianskoe gnezdo* (*A Nest of Gentlefolk*, 1859). She entered a nunnery to avoid the consequences of her love for a married man, Lavretsky.
  51. Borys Hrinchenko (1863–1910). A Ukrainian writer, publicist and linguist of the pre-revolutionary period; one of the founders of the Brotherhood of Taras (1891–3), a secret society of "conscious Ukrainians" which worked for cultural improvement and political independence from Russia.
  52. Volodymyr Vynnychenko (1880–1951). A Ukrainian Socialist and writer who headed the government of the Ukrainian People's Republic until 1919 and unsuccessfully attempted to reach an understanding with the Bolsheviks. Perhaps the most popular of all pre-revolutionary authors, his works were also very widely read in the Soviet Ukraine during the 1920s, in spite of the fact that he was in exile. They often portrayed townfolk, vagrants and the déclassé. Officially condemned as a "bourgeois nationalist," his works are banned in the Soviet Union today.
  53. Iakov Tugenhold (1872–1928) was a prominent art critic.
  54. Members of OPOIAZ (abbreviated name of the Society for Study of Poetic Language). The group, out of which grew the so-called formalist school of Russian literary criticism, existed from about 1916 to 1923, and counted

among its members: V. Shklovsky, Iu. Tynianov, B. Eikhenbaum and R. Jakobson.

55. *Oprichniki* were members of the corps of bodyguards and political police, which was established by Ivan the Terrible early in 1565 to fight the alleged treason of the boyars and which committed many atrocities against the Muscovite boyar nobility.
56. Viktor Shklovsky (1893– ) and Roman Jakobson (1896– ) were both OPOIAZ members and theoreticians of Russian formalism. Aleksei Kruchenykh(1886–1968) was a Russian poet and Cubo-Futurist.

## Notes to Addendum. The "Authormobile" of the Present

1. The Petrograd Soviet (Council) of Workers and Soldiers Deputies after a period of "dual power" with the Russian Provisional government was won over by the Bolsheviks and took power, thereby establishing the Soviet Russian state.
2. *L'humanité*. Organ of the French Communist Party.
3. Hryhorii Kosynka (1899–1934). One of the best prose writers of the post-revolutionary years, with a distinct impressionistic manner, he was executed on trumped-up charges during the terror. His "Anketa" (Questionnaire) appeared in *Chervonyi shliakh*, no. 6 (1924): 62–72.
4. Serhii Iefremov (1876–1939?). A Ukrainian political figure, publicist, critic and historian of literature. During the Revolution Iefremov was leader of the Ukrainian Party of Socialists-Federalists, and later he was a full member of VUAN and a prominent, albeit non-Marxist, literary historian. Because of his outspoken criticism of the political situation, he was arrested in 1929 by the secret police, on trumped-up charges of leading a "bourgeois nationalist conspiracy" called the Union for the Liberation of Ukraine (SVU). Convicted in a widely publicized show-trial, Iefremov was sent to the Gulag where he was last seen in 1939.
5. The colours of the Ukrainian People's Republic, the independent Ukrainian Socialist state suppressed by the Bolsheviks during the Civil War. The blue and yellow flag is still the one recognized by supporters of Ukrainian independence in emigration.
6. V. Polishchuk, *Evropa na vulkane. Nadzvychaina poema* (Kharkiv 1925).
7. V. Polishchuk, *Rozkol Evropy* (Kiev, 1925) was a 112-page contribution to the Literary Discussion. It was to be followed by his *Literaturnyi avangard. Perspektyvy rozvytku ukrainskoi kultury, polemmamika i teoriia poezii* (Kharkiv 1926) and *Puls epokhy. Konstruktyvnyi dynamizm chy voiovnyche nazadnytstvo?* (Kharkiv 1927). The autobiography referred to is contained in Ivan Kapustiansky's *Valeriiian Polishchuk. Sproba kharakterystyky tvorchosty z portretom, avtohrafiom i avtobiohrafiieiu poeta ta bibliohrafichnym pokazhchykom* (Kharkiv 1925).
8. Mykhailo Drahomanov (1841–95). A political activist, scholar and publicist, he was the founder of modern Ukrainian Socialism, and remains a towering figure in Ukrainian intellectual history.  
Ivan Franko (1856–1916). A Galician, he was one of the greatest Ukrainian writers and an immense influence on Ukrainian life and letters.
9. Lesia Ukrainka (real name Larysa Kosach, 1871–1913) and Mykhailo Kotsiubynsky (1864–1919) were perhaps the most outstanding Ukrainian writers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Modernism is a general name for the various artistic and literary challenges made to the conventions of the nineteenth century. Ukrainian Modernism was most closely associated with the journal *Ukrainian Home*.

10. Semen Nadson (1862–87). A Russian poet who belonged to the twilight of the long “civic” trend in Russian poetry. Boris Pilniak (1894–1937). A Russian novelist and short-story writer of the 1920s and 1930s.
11. Grigorii Petnikov (1894– ). A minor poet of Russian Futurism.
12. Knut Hamsun (1859–1952). A Norwegian novelist, awarded the 1920 Nobel Prize for Literature.
13. The reference is to three of Hamsun’s most popular novels
14. Viktor Petipa (1869–1932). A famous actor born in St. Petersburg, appeared first in Russian silent films and later in the theatres of Kharkiv, Tiflis, Kiev and Odessa. In the mid-twenties, Petipa’s greatest dramatic triumphs were won as a member of M. Synelnikov’s company and in the Ivan Franko Theatre in Kharkiv.
15. Dmytro Dontsov (1883–1973). A leading ideologist of Ukrainian integral nationalism.
16. Mykola Cherniavsky (1867–1937). A prose writer who considered himself a Modernist renovator of traditional Realist resources. Spyrydon Cherkasenko (1876–1940) introduced pictures of the life of the Donetsk coal basin region in his story *Vony peremohly* (*They Conquered*) (1917).
17. Hryhorii Kosynka (1899–1934). (See note 3). Todos Osmachka (1895–1962). A Ukrainian poet and prose writer who also belonged to Lanka and MARS, ceased publishing after 1929 and managed to survive until the war by simulating madness. After the war he emigrated to America where he once again began to publish his poems and short stories; Pavlo Tychyna (1891–1967), perhaps the most talented Ukrainian poet of the 1920s, was a member of Khvylovy’s group but later adapted to the requirements of Stalinist Socialist Realism.
18. These are references to two poems by Polishchuk: “Doshch ide, spiva i rydaie” (1919) and “Askaniia nova” (1925).
19. Mykhailo Dolengo (1896– ). A Ukrainian poet and critic, began his literary activity in 1915, published his first volume of verse in 1920, and became one of the leading figures in VUSPP. The reference is probably to his “Zhovtneva liryka (Notatky do istorii ukrainskoi revoliutsiinoi liryky,” *Chervonyi shliakh*, no. 10 (1924): 163–73.
20. Polishchuk signed several works under this pseudonym.
21. Kuzma Prutkov was a fictitious Russian writer under whose name Aleksei Tolstoi (1817–75) and his two cousins, Aleksei and Vladimir Zhemchuzhnikov published satirical verse and witty parodies from 1851 until Prutkov’s “Collected Works” appeared in 1884. This fictitious poet was given a biography, a portrait of him was painted, and he was described as a self-satisfied and platitudinous government clerk.
22. *Vyr revoliutsii* was put out by Polishchuk’s literary grouping in 1921.
23. Khlestakov is the pretentious fool in Nikolai Gogol’s *Revizor* (1836; trans. O.J. Campbell, *The Inspector*, 1933) and Smerdiakov the bastard half-brother who actually commits the murder for which Dmitrii is blamed in Dostoevsky’s *Brothers Karamazov* (1879–80).
24. Hryhorii Chuprynka (1879–1921). A Ukrainian poet shot in 1919 for participation in an anti-Soviet uprising. Igor Severianin (1887–1941). A



- Russian poet and member of the Ego-Futurists known for combining the opulent style of Symbolism with new words derived from technology and the modern city.
25. Valerii Briusov (1863–1924). Russian Symbolist poet, critic and novelist. Georgii Shengeli (1894–1956). Russian poet, critic and translator. He wrote a series of textbooks for aspiring writers.
  26. Charles Vildrac (1882–?). A French writer and critic. Georges Duhamel (1884–1966). A French poet, novelist and playwright.
  27. Sergei Bobrov (1899– ) was a Russian Futurist. Andrei Bely's *Simvolizm* was published in Moscow in 1910.
  28. Aleksei Kruchenykh (1886–1968) inaugurated the most extreme of all Futurist achievements, *zaum*, the so-called transrational language. His *Sdvigologiiia russkoho stikha* (*Shiftology of Russian Verse*, 1923) presented in detail his ideas on "shift."
  29. Emile Verhaeren (1855–1916). A Belgian poet whose *vers libres* showed great power and has been much admired.
  30. Johannes R. Becher (1891–1958). A German poet, novelist and critic. A pacifist, member of the *Spartacus League* and then the Communist Party (1918–19), who later escaped to Prague (1933) and went into exile in the USSR (1935–45). He was the leading political Expressionist poet.
  31. Ostap Vyshnia (1889–1956). The best Soviet Ukrainian humourist and the most widely-read Soviet Ukrainian writer in the 1920s. Briefly a member of Prolitfront, Khvylovy's last literary organization. Vyshnia was silenced from 1932 until the last stages of the Second World War, when he once again was allowed to return to literary life.
  32. Vadim Shershenevich (real name Filipchenko) (1893– ). An early twentieth-century Russian Futurist and Imagist poet who later became a dramatist, adapting novels by Upton Sinclair for the stage.
  33. Abram Leites (1901– ). A Ukrainian literary critic who sympathized with Khvylovy's group.
  34. Mykola Plevako (1890–1941) edited *Khrestomatiia po ukrainskii literaturi* (1918) and *Khrestomatiia po istorii novoi ukrainskoi literatury*, 2 vols. (1923–6), the most useful anthologies of Ukrainian prose produced in the period.
  35. Ivan Kapustiansky (1894–?). A Ukrainian scholar and theoretician of literature, sent into internal exile in 1934 never to return. The reference is to his *Valerian Polishchuk* (Kharkiv, 1925) in which he praised the poet lavishly.
  36. Khvylovy's first name and patronymic.

## Notes to Apologists of Scribbling

1. Paul von Hindenburg (1847–1934). German general, hero of the First World War, president of the German Republic from 1925 to 1931.
2. D. Dontsov, "Ukrainsko-sovietski psevdomorfozy," *Literaturno-naukovi vistnyk*, no. 12 (1925): 321–36.
3. S. Pylypenko, "Problema orhanizatsii literaturnykh syl (Shmatok druhyi dyskusiinoi vidpovidi "akademikam")," *Kultura i pobut*, 11, 21 and 28 February 1926.
4. Makhaiskism. A hostile or contemptuous attitude toward the intelligentsia. This political current appeared in Russia at the turn of the century under the influence of the Polish Social-Democrat Jan Waclaw Machajski (1867–1926), who developed the idea that the intelligentsia, as a class distinct from and hostile to the proletariat, had to be conquered by the latter. Published *Pracownik umystowy* (1900) and *Bankructwo socjalizmu XIX stulecia* (1903). From 1917 he lived in the USSR.
5. P. Stolypin's agrarian reforms from 1906 to 1911 were aimed at a redistribution of land and an increase in the productivity of agriculture. The peasant was allowed to leave the *obshchyna* or village commune and to demand that land be given him in one piece or "parcel." He could then build upon it and create a private homestead. Many peasants, especially in the Ukrainian steppes, took advantage of these reforms, and polarization of the village into richer and poorer farmers proceeded rapidly as the middle-peasantry tended to sell its land to the wealthier and to emigrate to the Urals or move to the towns. Thus "the influence of Stolypin's land parcel" means the influence of the kulaks.
6. "Sanatoriina zona" is a story by Khvylovy that was first published in *Chervonyi shliakh*, no. 3 (1924): 3–77.
7. The "Literary Discussion" began with an attack on M. Khvylovy by H. Iakovenko in an article entitled "Pro krytykiv i krytyku v literaturi," which appeared in *Kultura i pobut*, 30 April 1925.
8. Nikolai Dukhonin (1876–1917) was a general and commander-in-chief of the Russian army in November 1917. After the October Revolution he refused to recognize Lenin's authority. Therefore on 3 December 1917, on the orders of the Bolshevik commander-in-chief, N. Krylenko, his headquarters at Mohyliv were surrounded and captured. General Dukhonin was shot on the spot. The expression "to dispatch someone to Dukhonin's headquarters" means to shoot or to execute someone.
9. Kost Burevii (1888–1934). A poet, satirist, playwright and political activist. Until 1917 he was a member of the Russian Party of Socialist-Revolutionaries, suffering imprisonment and exile at the hands of the tsarist regime. In 1926 he contributed a pamphlet entitled *Evropa chy Rosiia? (Europe or Russia?)* Soon afterward he became a strong supporter of Khvylovy's positions and was liquidated in the thirties.
10. K. Polonnyk, a member of Pluh, published "Daite slova" in *Kultura i pobut*, 11 February 1926.

11. Ievhen Malaniuk (1897–1968). A nationalist poet and critic, a leading light among the Prague school of Ukrainian poets and an important émigré intellectual.
12. Probably G. Zhurakovsky (1894–1955) who at the time was a student of art history and also the history of pedagogy at Kiev University.
13. F.I. Schmidt (1877–1942). A Ukrainian historian of art, professor of Kharkiv University, and member of the Academy of Sciences of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic from 1921. He published *Iskusstvo drevnei Rusi-Ukrainy (History of Ancient Rus-Ukraine)* (1919) and *Iskusstvo. Osnovnye problemy teorii i istorii (Art: Basic Problems of Theory and History)* (1925).
14. P. Horbenko was an art critic and theorist of ARMU (Asotsiatsiia revoliutsiinykh mystsiv Ukrainy—Association of Revolutionary Artists of Ukraine) which in the twenties took similar positions on artistic issues to those espoused by Khyvlovy in literature.
15. A.K. Vertinsky (1889–1957). A Russian actor, singer and poet who at the time was appearing in a number of Western European cities after leaving the USSR in 1919.
16. V. Polonsky (1886–1932) and G. Lelevich (1901–45). Contemporary Russian party critics. Lelevich was a spokesman for the extreme wing of the *On Guard* group.
17. Mr. Przestrelski is a character from a short story by Ivan Franko entitled “Hryts i panych,” *Literaturno-naukovyi vistnyk*, no. 6 (1898): 245–322.
18. N. Saltykov-Shchedrin (1826–89). A prominent Russian prose writer and satirist. The preface to one of his best known works *Istoriia odnogo goroda (The History of a City)* lists Borodavkin and Ugrium-Burcheev among the list of governors of the fictitious town of Glupov, a backwater symbolic of Russia itself.
19. V. Ellan-Blakytyn (real name: V. Ellansky 1891–1925). A former Borotbist leader and a driving force in the early literary life of Soviet Ukraine. He was the organizer and leader of Hart, and in 1920 he published a collection of poems, *Udary molota i sertsia (Blows of The Hammer and Heart)*, under the pseudonym V. Ellan. His works were confiscated in the thirties and his monument in Kharkiv destroyed (See also *Quo Vadis?*, note 8).
20. *Rada (Counsel)*. The only daily newspaper in Ukrainian in the Russian Empire from 1906 to 1914. Edited and financed by Ie. Chykalenko, it was published in Kiev.
21. *Khata (Home)* Short for *Ukrainska khata (Ukrainian Home)*, a major pre-revolutionary literary journal and a showcase for the writing of Ukrainian Modernists
22. *Dzvin (Bell)*. A monthly that appeared in Kiev, 1913–14. It had a Social-Democratic profile, was financed by L. Iurkevych and edited by D. Antonovych and V. Levynsky. Among its contributors were some of the best writers and political commentators of the time, including V. Vynnychenko, Lesia Ukrainka, M. Vorony, H. Chuprynka, S. Cherkasenko, D. Dontsov, D. Antonovych and L. Iurkevych (Rybalka).

23. *Russkaia mysl (Russian Thought)*. A monthly published in Moscow, 1880–1918. After 1905 it was run by P. Struve with the participation of the Russian Symbolists. The journal took a hostile position toward the October Revolution, was closed down by the Bolsheviks, then revived by Struve in Sofia and Prague (1921–4) and again in Paris (1927).
24. *Russkoe bogatstvo (Russian Wealth)*. A monthly published in St. Petersburg (1880–1918). Edited from 1892 by N. Mikhailovsky and V. Korolenko, it supported a liberal, anti-Marxist populism. Closed down more than once by the censor, it reappeared under different names: *Sovremennye zapiski*, *Sovremennost* and *Russkie zapiski*.
25. *Vaplite. Zoshyt Pershyi (Vaplite. First Notebook)* appeared in 1926 containing a number of articles devoted to the Literary Discussion. It was soon followed by the first issue of the journal, *Vaplite*.
26. The Kharkiv State Ukrainian Theatre was originally the famed Berezhil Company run by the brilliant director Les Kurbas. Kharkiv was the theatre's home from 1926 to 1933 and scene of many of its triumphs.
27. The Ivan Franko Theatre is now the Kiev State Ukrainian Theatre.
28. D'Neoro is a pseudonym of O. Skrypala, better known as O. Dosvitnii. The reference is to his "Kulturno-pobutovi skalky," *Kultura i pobut*, 17 and 24 January, and 7 February 1926.
29. N. Pomialovsky (1835–63). A Russian writer who portrayed the lives of civil servants in the large cities.
30. M. Ialovy, "Khay zhyve Hart i Pluh," *Kultura i pobut*, 30 January 1926.
31. S. Pylypenko, "Iak na pravdyvomy shliakhu spotykaiutsia," *Kultura i pobut*, 30 January 1926; "Svidoma provokatsiia chy nesvidoma durist," *Pluzhany*, no. 1 (1926): 1–2.
32. VAPLITE (Vilna Akademiia Proletarskoi Literatury—Free Academy of Proletarian Literature) existed in Kharkiv from 1926 to 1928. Khylyovy was the spiritual mentor of the group. M. Ialovy and M. Kulish were the presidents; A. Liubchenko—secretary. Among the members were. M. Bazhan, V. Vrazhlyvy, I. Dniprovsky, O. Dosvitnii, H. Epik, P. Ivaniv, M. Iohansen, O. Kopylenko, H. Kotsiuba, M. Maisky, P. Panch, I. Senchenko, O. Slisarenko, Iu. Smolych, P. Tychyna, Iu. Ianovsky.
33. V. Pletnev (1886–1942) became the leader of Proletcult in December 1920. On 27 September 1922 his article "Na ideologisheskom fronte" appeared in *Pravda*. N. Krupskaiia attacked the article and Pletnev replied with two more articles in the following month. Ia. Iakovlev (real name Epshtein, 1896–1938) was a Russian Communist of Jewish descent active in Katerynoslav and Kharkiv during the Revolution and a member of the CP(B)U in 1918–1920. He published "O proletarskoi kulture i Proletkulte" in *Pravda*, 24 and 25 October. This article was based on Lenin's views. Pletnev's article, Lenin's notes on it, and Iakovlev's response are included in the collection of Lenin's writings, *O Literature i isskustve (On Literature and Art)*, 4th ed. (Moscow 1969), 457–66, 598–612. The participants in the Literary Discussion are quoting from *Voprosy kulture pri diktature proletariata* (Moscow 1925) which includes these writings.

34. Iliia Vardin (real name Mgeladze) was a journalist, party activist and a leader of the October group.
35. Tazaeivism. The probable meaning of this term is "tailism," following the masses, pandering to the most backward attitudes in the general populace.
36. Iakiv Savchenko (1890–1937) and Dmytro Zahul (1890–1938) were both accomplished Symbolist poets who had gone over to ultra-Communist positions and were publishing scurrilous attacks on VAPLITE, the neoclassicists and on all past achievements in art and literature.
37. S. Shchupak in his "Pseudomarksyzm Khvylovoho," *Zhyttia i revoliutsiia*, no. 12(1925): 61–9, argues that proletarian art will be created by proletarians who are also artists. Khvylovy calls this a vulgar and simplistic definition of proletarian art. The urbanism of much of the literature being produced was forced. Kiev, the largest Ukrainian city, was not highly industrialized and did not possess any such sky-scrapers. During the twenties the solitary chimney belonging to Brodsky's steam mill dominated the skyline of Kiev's Podol district.
38. *Globus (Globe)*. An illustrated journal published every second week in Kiev, 1923–35.
39. Georg Brandes (1842–1927). A Danish literary critic and leader of the Danish radical intelligentsia. Later in life, under the influence of Nietzsche, he became increasingly anti-democratic and developed a philosophy of "aristocratic radicalism." His conception of the "great man" is reflected in his still valuable studies of Shakespeare, Voltaire, Goethe, Michaelangelo and Julius Ceasar.
40. Elie-Catherine Fréron (1718–76). A French journalist and critic. He launched his first independent periodical in 1745. In 1754 he founded his most influential journal, *L'Année Littéraire*, and devoted the rest of his life to it. Conservative in his views and literary tastes, but also a shrewd judge, he made enemies by his outspoken criticisms, especially among the *philosophes*, and became a major spokesman for established orthodoxy, enjoying court patronage. Voltaire's detestation of him is reflected in numerous attacks.
41. A. Voronsky (1884–1943) was a Russian critic and editor of *Krasnaia nov (Red Virgin Soil)* (1921–7), the most prestigious Soviet Russian journal of the period. Like Khvylovy, he used his authority to combat *Onguardist* tendencies in literature and art. (See also *Quo Vadis?*, note 60).
42. Boris Pilniak (1894–1937). A Russian writer of the twenties whose fragmented, ornamental style had been compared to that of Khvylovy.
43. F. Gladkov (1883–1958). A Russian writer best known for his descriptions of inspired labour and the working class in *Tsement (Cement)* (1925)

## *Notes to Ukraine or Little Russia?*

1. V. Belinsky's unsigned article on D.I. Fonvizin's work was a theoretical essay in which the critic lays out his understanding of the nature of artistic creativity and of criticism. It appeared in *Moskovskii nabliudatel* 18, no. 2 (July 1838): 194–219.

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