

I scrupulously read his poems and looked at him with astonishment. I could not conceive that in his painful internment he had the courage to compose verses which were marked with so much optimism and affection toward the Party. I calmly read a few pages of his poetry aloud. When he raised his face, I noted above his chin a long, newly healed wound. I understood immediately and asked nothing of my friend.

Before me was a strong man, able to struggle against dishonor, prejudice and even calumnious charges, however brutal they may be. Now, all was trampled under his feet like a dried weed.

Before me was a man of sincere feelings, with his fainting fits, pessimistic, irascible, and even rude, leading a dissolute life but never interrupting his activities for the benefit of the glorious future of the arts.

Before me was a heroic child of the Party, faithful through all tests, who knew how to cherish his Party and how to excise all cankers which might inflict injury on the army's prestige.

Before me was Tran Dan.

Before me, while I am writing this article, there remains only a fable, trumped up by the dictatorial clique of the cultural world for the sake of a cynical calumny, an unjust literary trial by which a serene soul and a genuine talent have been trodden under foot.

Before me is utter confidence in the Party's perspicacity. This perspicacity must be spread wherever the safeguarding of human values is required.

Criticism by the Party

Nhan Dan, September 25

« Important Errors in Nhan Van and in the Fall Selections of Literary Works » by Nguyen Chuong

(Although there is some merit in his argument, Phan Khoi, by wanting to withdraw arts and letters from Party supervision, in

effect wants to take them out of the service of the masses. This is selfish and unrevolutionary.)

The Fall Selection of Literary Works and Nhan Van have recently raised a number of problems. In the article, « Criticism of Arts and Letters Leadership » by Mr. Phan Khoi, published in the Fall Selection and in many articles published in Nhan Van, a number of questions relative to leadership in the field of arts and letters have been raised, and some truth has been reflected in these criticisms. In the progress of our hard struggle to build up a new body of arts and letters, our men of letters have exerted great efforts, but have committed many shortcomings, especially in the field of leadership. This was discussed during the recent meetings held to study arts and letters, and criticized by some comrades in the Van Nghe paper.

... With respect to those shortcomings and errors, the paper Nhan Van and the Fall Selection have published severe criticism, and our comrades charged with the direction of arts and letters should sincerely and thoroughly study them to correct the shortcomings that exist. Nevertheless, it is necessary to show that in the opinions and methods of criticism of Mr. Phan Khoi and the the paper Nhan Van there exist a number of erroneous and harmful elements.

From the viewpoint of thought and literary concepts, the Fall Selection and Nhan Van have not presented any clear idea, despite some noteworthy points. Mr. Phan Khoi, while criticizing narrowmindedness in leadership, has raised again the question of relations between politics and the field of arts and letters. On one hand, Mr. Phan Khoi said, in effect : of course arts and letters do serve politics, and that is why politics should direct arts and letters. But, on the other hand, he broached nebulous ideas : I (politics) like you (arts and letters) because I want to profit from your art. And, culture belongs to arts and letters, independent of politics, and it wants to be free. In other writings, Mr. Phan Khoi has shown himself dissatisfied with the literary aim of serving the workers, farmers and soldiers, and of serving policy.

The question of cultural freedom raised by Mr. Phan Khoi is not clear in itself. It is necessary to say that, whether he has said so or not, Mr. Phan Khoi wants to set arts and letters free

from the direction of politics and in the present situation, he wants arts and letters to be free from the direction of the Vietnam Lao Dong Party and the leadership of Marx-Leninism. Mr. Phan Khoi does not want arts and letters to serve the farmers, workers and soldiers and the needs of the revolutionary struggle—although Nhan Van carried a motto reading: « Let us follow the leadership of the Lao Dong Party of Vietnam and the Marx-Lenin doctrine. » This is wrong, because, in the work of leading, if there exists narrowmindedness, and if, in the application of the literary aim of serving the farmers, workers and soldiers, there exist mechanical and formalist tendencies, then we should criticize and correct them ; we believe that this can be corrected. But it is wrong and dangerous to take such shortcomings as a basis for doubting the fundamental aim of our new culture. Indeed, if our culture does not serve the farmers, workers and soldiers, that is to say, the masses, it cannot be a revolutionary culture beloved by all the people. Moreover, if Vietnamese arts and letters do not follow the Marx-Leninist leadership, and that of the revolutionary thought of the working class, they can only fall under the influence of reactionary bourgeois thinking. Actually, this is not clear enough, because it is necessary to devote much study and discussion to the question of leadership in the field of arts and letters. It is a question requiring clear thinking, and we will only be able to criticize other shortcomings in a rational manner if we base thoughts on sound principles.

From the political point of view, the criticism of arts and letters leadership by Mr. Phan Khoi... in the Fall Selection and in several articles by others in Nhan Van, especially the article about Tran Dan's personality have shown that: Nhan Van and the Fall Selection want to profit from the criticism of the narrowmindedness of arts and letters leadership to make people wrongly believe that the whole leadership of the Lao Dong party and the political regime in the North are dictatorial, trampling on men of letters...

Of course, Nhan Van did not openly say this, but it made such analyses as to lead the readership to draw such conclusions.

We have no right to do this, and should not do so.

...From the point of view of criticism and self-criticism, everyone, after reading the Fall Selection and, more particularly, Nhan Van, will immediately see that the latter and Mr. Phan Khoi have not raised any question which may be indicative of a general situation in our culture, but they have stressed only criticism of individuals. Indeed, Nhan Van does not attack the enemy much, but directs its attacks against ourselves. Nhan Van and Mr. Phan Khoi have not depended upon the spirit of criticism and self-criticism to help us correct shortcomings and to make progress. On the contrary, they attack us severely, they exaggerate things, and use such disparaging terms as «authors of crimes», «clique», «collaborators», «this fellow», «that fellow», and so forth.

In the new social regime in the North, it is not convenient to wage this kind of criticism. We acclaim constructive criticism which stems from good will, which may bring some good to our common enterprise. At present, we should encourage criticism, but we are resolved to protest against the kind of criticism which only causes harm to the union of the people.

Yet, Nhan Van has stated: Under the leadership of the Lao Dong Party and in compliance with Marx-Leninist doctrine, with a realistic spirit let us work for strengthening the North and for national unification, preparing the way for carrying out socialism in accordance with Party aspirations, which are also of the entire people.

These are truly golden words. As a member of the Vietnam Lao Dong Party, I warmly acclaim them.

However, the words are not sufficient by themselves. We hope the comrades of Nhan Van will consider whether or not their attitude and methods of criticism comply with Marx-Leninist doctrine, and whether they are advantageous for the unification and independence of our country.

Our people and our party have serious historical missions: To fight for the strengthening of peace, the unification of the country, for the glory and prosperity of fatherland and for the betterment of living conditions of the people. Such missions are glorious but also very hard. On the way to realization of such missions, there inevitably exist difficulties and shortcomings. It is not

strange to see conflicting opinions, but the most important thing is that we should firmly hold to the policy of the Party and the government, the Marx-Leninist doctrine, sincerely and effectively apply criticism and self-criticism, distinguish good from evil, unite closely in our struggle, and every shortcoming and difficulty will be overcome, and we will be able to reach our common goal.

Hanoi Thoi Moi, September 25

« Our Opinion of the Criticism by Mr. Phan Khoi Published in the Fall Selection of Literary Works », by D.T.

(There is no need to raise the question of obedience when you are free. A man of letters is part of the historical process, and knows enough to conform with his role. If he does not, he faces destruction. There is no question of obedience).

...Mr. Phan Khoi has used the shortcomings committed by some individuals to shout that there is a conflict between the leaders and the men of arts and letters. This is because he has not thoroughly examined the problem in its entirety, for such facts can only exist in the capitalist world. One other point is that he confuses questions of politics with questions of arts and letters. This problem definitely requires long discussion, but we can say now that politics and arts and letters constitute the same question. For whom and for what are the arts and letters intended? This in itself is a political problem. Moreover, a political line of conduct should be reflected in the cultural field. This fact can be easily found in the reading of a book or a song, so there is no need to raise the question of « concessions » or « flattery », because such things cannot occur in our regime.

... There is no need to raise the question of « freedom in the arts and letters » and « obedience to the leadership, » as long as you are free. There is no question of obedience, because a man of arts and letters is intelligent enough to realize the development of our history, and the role of the vanguard party, and to be able to practice his art in conformance with the situation, if he does not want to have himself destroyed. Thus, no one is obliged to obey the leadership in such a strange manner....

Hanoi Thoi Moi, September 26

... We can say that the publication of the Fall Selection of Literary Works and Nhan Van these days, as well as the animated discussion and criticism in our dailies (although some of them are right and some are wrong) have proved that our regime has reached its maturity in the field of press freedom...

Hanoi Nhan Dan, September 26

«A Wrong Concept on Arts and Letters,» by Xuan Truong (Politics is the warfare between classes. Arts are the weapons. Then what is artistic freedom?)

An incorrect attitude has been shown in some articles published in the Fall Selection and in Nhan Van, including the article «Criticism of Leadership In the Field of Arts and Letters,» by Mr. Phan Khoi. Mr. Phan Khoi stated that Vietnam today resembles Vietnam of the time of the kings, the difference being that now its literature draws inspiration from Marx-Leninist doctrine, while the habit of avoiding use of royal names remains the same. He said he imagined himself in the yard of the royal palace, where he saw Mr. Le Mo denouncing Mr. Nguyen Mo for the crime of lese majeste before the golden throne. He then continued in a humorous manner to the effect that in arts and letters the present democratic regime is by far more liberal than the dictatorial regime of the Gia Long Empire. Concerning the reward of (literary) prizes, he also said that in the time of Ho Chi Minh, men have completely changed — all have become incorruptible.

The confusing comparison between the corrupt nature of the feudal regime and the good nature of our regime has made readers indignant. After reading the above mentioned humorous comparisons and his fine words on Nhan Van, when he published his answer to the paper Cach Mang Quoc Gia, an organ of the Ngo Dinh Diem clique... I realized that Mr. Phan Khoi cannot yet distinguish ourselves from the enemy.

To criticize means to search for shortcomings to be corrected, to advance our activities, to increase unity and to strengthen the leadership. In reading the criticism of Mr. Phan Khoi, I was unable to find such characteristics.

... With respect to a number of individuals criticized by Mr. Phan Khoi, the latter's criticisms actually constitute attacks. Indeed, Mr. Phan Khoi considers the kind of criticism advanced by Mr. Nguyen Dinh Thi as the kind of criticism used by the capitalists; moreover, he made a comparison between Hoai Thanh and the Vietnamese reactionary Pham Quynh. I think, with respect to the nature of our regime, as with respect to comrades fighting on the same front, we cannot resort to such an attack. Such an attack constitutes a deadly blow used to fight the enemy.

The way Mr. Phan Khoi has of looking at the activities of others comes from a one-way, subjective attitude... He confuses the fact and its nature, the individual and the group, and an organ with the whole regime. He judges an organization and a regime by one man. Such judgement is quite contrary to dialectical materialism. Mr. Phan Khoi pretends to be a follower of Marx, but here he is contrary to Marxist thought, and he sides with idealism, for reasoning in accordance with one's feelings is the simplest and most rudimentary form of idealistic reasoning.

... Here I beg to present my point of view: There are classes in society, and politics is the sign of the struggle among the classes. «All kinds of culture and arts and letters in the present world belong to a particular social class, a particular political party, that is, to a particular political line of conduct» (Mao Tse-Tung, «The Question of Literature and Art.») In this society, every man of arts and letters, whether he wants it or not, and whether he is clear-sighted or not, must automatically represent the opinion of a class, and arts and letters must of course be the weapons of the struggle between the classes. Thus, art and politics are different, but art cannot separate itself from politics; art must serve a determined political purpose. Whether he wants it or not, Mr. Phan Khoi should admit that arts and letters should serve politics and politics must lead arts and letters. But he forgets that between politics and arts and letters there are no profiteers, and that they cooperate because of the interests of the people and the classes.

... I think that no one can divide himself into two parts, one part submitting itself to the leadership of the party, while the

other part searches for freedom. The artists and men of letters who agree to submit themselves to the leadership of the party are not people who know beforehand that they have gone astray and who obediently accept this leadership — as Mr. Phan Khoi believes, but people who are for the revolution and who willingly submit themselves to the leadership of the party to struggle for the revolution.

... Lenin struggled stubbornly against bourgeois men of letters who demanded freedom of criticism and freedom in writing, in an uncontrolled manner. In the well-known article, «Organization of the Party and the Party's Literature,» Lenin wrote: «Literature must become the Party's literature.» This principle is not exclusively applied to the proletarian classes of socialism; literature can never be used as an instrument to collect money by any individual or group, in other words it cannot be... independent from the common property of the proletarian classes. In the process of struggle for new arts and letters in China, the Marxist writers have stubbornly struggled against the bourgeois writers who camouflaged themselves under the labels, «Human Nature,» «Free Arts and Letters,» «Literature of the Third Person»... Writer Lo Shin stubbornly struggled against such uncontrolled and deceitful arguments. He stated: «People want to become supra class writers, people who are part of a society composed of classes and who want to escape from the struggle to become free during the period of struggle—Such men are only dream men, existing in the imagination». In the present world, there exists no man of this kind. This can be compared with the mentality of the man who wants to leave the surface of the earth by pulling his hair... The Marxist men of arts and letters are resolved to defend the freedom of arts and letters, but at the same time, to struggle against the proposals of escape from the classes and from politics.

... In a word, from the Marxist standpoint, we should admit that there cannot be free arts and letters independent of politics. Arts and letters can have freedom as a result of correctness in political conduct. The arts and letters should serve politics and accede to politics' leadership. By its nature, arts and letters reflect the characteristics of a class of society. There exists the people's democratic regime, led by the Party, and it is only within this regime that freedom exists...

ISSUE NUMBER TWO

Hanoi Nhan Van, September 30

«Let Us Struggle for the One Hundred Flowers Blooming Policy»
by Tran Dan.

We do not object to being the weapons of the proletariat. What we do oppose is the sterility conceived for us, the reduction of aesthetics to elementary studies in socialism, the transformation of arts and letters into psychological instruments. A successful work of art can never emerge from a recapitulation of the economic situation—for where are feelings then? You will be acting like imperialists if you force us. We have the precedents to indite you.

The One Hundred Flowers Blooming Policy...comes to us like a new dawn. We artists and writers welcome it as the salvation of our spirit and feelings. Some people consider it as a miracle. In reality, this policy is not strange at all in the light of Marx-Leninist doctrine.

Speaking of personality in literature, Marx stated: «What belongs to me is the form of my spiritual personality. The style is the man...You admire the endless richness and splendor of nature. You do not force a rose to smell like a violet. Then, how can the greatest treasure in the world, intelligence, exist in one single way?»—his subject was censorship.

This text was used by Marx to fight the regime of censorship in Prussia in his day. However, on the spiritual plane, this can be used to fight all tendencies toward restricting the intellectual treasure of literature and molding it into a single form.

The One Hundred Flower Blooming policy, aimed at developing the inner thoughts of writers, is one of the principles of the arts and letters theory of Marx-Leninist doctrine. So it is not strange to us. What is strange, is that it is not correctly applied, or is modified, in the application of the Party arts and letters policy in our country.

Vietnamese artists and writers, struggling under the flag of the proletariat for the independence and unification of the country, are not foolish enough to wish for the separation of arts and letters from politics; however, they protest against the acts of the leadership of burdening the spirit of artists and writers with superficial arts and letters lines of conduct, serving the Party in an arid manner and mechanically and practically depending on politics.

Marx and Engels stated that it is a great mistake to give the workers something which is not yet perfect. Here, imperfection aims at the application of an arid propaganda style which demeans arts and letters, and at the use of slogans to replace the description of human life.

Marx and Engels believed that political thought could not replace the utility of arts and letters. Marx believed that literary competence does not necessarily enable one to write good books, because a literary work can only last if its literary value is approved by the masses.

In the present situation of Vietnam, the revolutionary artists and writers and the Party arts and letters are united in the struggle against the idea of separating arts and letters from social and historical realities, and against backward, bourgeois culture. However, the writers and artists disagree with the arts and letters leadership in that they reject all tendencies toward simplification of Marxist doctrine.

Engles stated: « The materialist method will give results contrary to expectation if it is used as a prefabricated mold to shape historical fact, instead of being used as a line of conduct for the study of history. »

The mechanical and practical application of politics to arts and letters, the reduction of aesthetics to an elementary study of socialism, the transformation of arts and

letters into psychological instruments, and all proposals aimed at abandoning or reducing the personality and strong points of men of arts and letters in their work, can only distort Marxist doctrine.

It is impossible to prefabricate formulæ to judge literary work, and it is impossible to solve an arts and letters problem by a simple equation. A successful work of art can never be...a recapitulation of the economic situation, or a social phenomenon. A superficial work can say nothing, nor can a work which goes deeply into the social phenomena by relying exclusively on documents create any effect on the feelings—the purpose of art and literature is to introduce political subjects by means of feeling... Everywhere formalism and approximatism (Ed.— approximatism is a form of « formalism » in which much is done cursorily for the shake of volume and quality, little or nothing being well done) are applied. It is here that the weakness in arts and letters lies, when literary works are produced in accordance with the orders of the leadership.

To know whether they have correctly or not applied the Marxist-Leninist literary line of conduct, the people of the leadership should reexamine whether they have asked the men of arts and letters to produce work under orders.

A literary work can only be conceived in the mind, and it can only be born from an emotion in the spirit of the writer. It only obeys the demands of the inner heart, and only becomes concrete when a fire breaks out in this inner heart.

«The communist writer produces his work, not in accordance with the instructions and orders of a harsh party, hut in accordance with the orders of his heart, which beats in the same rhythm with the heart of the people.» (Maurice Thorez).

«Marx and Engels always avoided giving orders on aesthetics, and shunned making themselves fathers of the men of arts and letters. They always supported and encouraged the revolutionary writers, and never oppressed their inspirations and talents» (Jean Freville).

...Marx, Engels and Lenin condemned the fact of avoiding the truth, the «superpolitical and nonpolitical doctrines,» the formalist lackey of «art for art's sake,» and the naturalist doctrine which, pretending to be faithful to reality but actually distorting the realities. Moreover, Marx, Engels and Lenin were against

fixed mechanical concepts, and partisanship in the arts and letters field.

In reality, the partisan thoughts of those who purport to be the honest defenders of doctrinal principles have killed the principles as well as the doctrine in their refrigerators. Partisanship has directed sentiment, restricted inspiration, issued regulations and forced human hearts to beat in accordance with circulars and instructions. This is the shortcoming of our young arts and letters, and also the shortcoming of the workers' arts and letters theory.

In the article, «Let Us Examine the History of Soviet Literature,» A. Ninov wrote: «Commandism in relations with the writers, narrowmindedness which refuses to admit freedom of thought, and the use of administrative power to put an end to literary discussion are only hateful aspects of the so-called Communist people in the arts and letters field. All these aspects begin to appear in the atmosphere of the cult of personality.»

Lenin condemned this kind of mechanical levelling work, and this kind of pressure in arts and letters. The partisanship spirit often includes the above mentioned thoughts, and has often discredited the history of literature, as in the cases of Corneille, Moliere, Stendhal, Shakespeare, Delacroix... and so forth, and the case of the Spring Collection of Literary Work in our country.

A literary work is a production of intelligence and thought—whether we admit it or not... and not a work of instinct. In arts and letters, vague and hasty criticism demonstrates a regrettable and careless attitude. In arts and letters, narrowminded opportunism is considered to have complied with the realities, with the historical facts, but in reality it only scores some small advantage, while in substance it is far from the fundamental principles of Marx-Leninist doctrine.

It is believed that this kind of criticism has fought against idealist and bourgeois thinking, but, in reality, it is nearsighted, «the temporarily interesting illusion» (term by Ninord) of the idealist and bourgeois clans. It has suffocated arts and letters in pragmatism. A correct leadership, to realize the One Hundred Flowers Blooming policy, should more closely acquaint writers and artists with the facts, in order to help them find subjects for

their writing and help them develop the essential points and the spirit of life. After having accomplished this mission, the leadership should stop right there.

« And we should assure our artists and writers of the full means of employing their individual initiatives, their imagination, their tastes. We cannot force them to follow any fixed form » (Maurice Thorez).

Only in this way will we be able to correctly apply the One Hundred Flowers Blooming policy. The leadership should have confidence in the creative imagination of the men of arts and letters.

Here, imagination does not mean the invention of vague stories, but rather a reliance on the realities of life, a realization of the significance of the facts, with which to understand and develop the typical characters of men and to discover the main facts without going into too much detail, in order to assemble them and create a new world in which everything is derived from true existence, but is more beautiful than existence itself.

The people will not, as a result, want to idealize human existence, or fall into naturalism. Arts and letters demand imagination, as science demands analysis. Anyone who does not pay respect to arts and letters, who does not recognize them as products of thought and who wants to mold them in accordance with the administrative machinery and the party organization, has unthinkingly walked into the path which the imperialists have always followed to distort the literary line of conduct of the Marx-Leninist doctrine.

« Lenin has clearly shown this. Our enemy believes that one of the characteristics of our party is the relation between command and negative obedience » (Maurice Thorez).

Those who go against the spiritual interests of the men of arts and letters in the struggle for the One Hundred Flowers Blooming movement will cause harm to the arts and letters enterprise of the party.

In our society, the question of realization of the One Hundred Flowers Blooming policy is not so simple and easy. A simple slogan cannot clear all feudal and conservative minds, ac-

customed to the acts of a backward leadership, acts which always try to tie arts and letters to arid slogans and to mechanical economic and social policies, and principles, and so forth.

To effectively realize the One Hundred Flowers Blooming policy, we need the government and Party's help to carry out the education of the masses and cadres. We should clearly realize the role of the masses in educational work, and the role of the instructors and students in arts and letters.

Moreover, we should remember the government and the Party, because on the practical plane, initiative, study and the One Hundred Flowers Blooming policy will meet insurmountable obstacles if they have no adequate and concrete support from the government and party, such as the supply of newsprint, the means of printing and distributing, and so forth.

The realization of the One Hundred Flowers Blooming policy will begin with a hard struggle of ideas, after which will come more complicated questions, those of theory, study, material existence, and the private thoughts of men of arts and letters, will be raised.

At this time, men of arts and letters will attain their maturity from the material, spritual, and intellectual points of view.

The Marx-Leninist doctrine can only bring us a correct vision of life; it cannot transform a painter into a Rembrandt or da Vinci, a quarryman into a Prexilites or Phidias, a simple joker into an Aristophanes, an ordinary wandering minstrel into a Beethoven.

These subjective demands on the part of the producer will be the fundamental, decisive factor for the achievement of the One Hundred Flowers Blooming policy.

Nhan Van, September 30

«The Salary Principle», by Y Du

A fifth grade cadre went to a hospital to ask for a tapeworm cure. He had divers kind of worms in his intestines, ranging from taenia to osyuris.

As everyone knows, a disease like that can only be cured at a hospital. But hospitals unfortunately admit only cadres who have attained the third grade and higher.

So, the cadre was merely handed some medicine to fight ordinary worms. As for the rest of his naughty worms, he will have to wait until the day he receives his grade three salary. Then, these worms will be dispatched without mercy. There is not another case in which the salary principle can be so helpful and rational in fighting tapeworms than in this case.

Nhan Van, September 30

« We Are Not Afraid That the Enemy Will Profit From Our Mistakes », by Tran Le Van.

(People have been silent for ten years. The leadership is isolated from the masses, the worst possible condition for a communist state. If the leaders would listen to criticism, things would not be in the state they are in. The Party justifies its obstruction of the revolutionary principle of public criticism by saying that the enemy can turn it against us. But if Russia could apply criticism at the Twentieth Party Congress, why should we balk? It is the only thing that will save us).

...Today we will deal only with a question which has attracted the attention of a number of our readers and the people of the leading circle: « The enemy may profit from our mistakes. »

...A thorough examination of the activities of the leadership has shown us that one of the sources of our most serious shortcomings lies in overestimating the enemy. In their work, the cadres, due to their fear of the enemy, become extremely suspicious, and lost their temper and perspective in the work of uncovering the truth. This fact certainly brings regrettable consequences. Friends cannot be distinguished from enemies, and in some cases, our friends are forced to side with the enemy.

..If the people and the press had been permitted to openly criticize, if everybody could speak the truth so that the leadership could realize its strong and weak points in the application of its policies, many serious consequences could have been avoided. The lack of public criticism — which never existed except in theory — was due to the fear that the enemy might create confusion among the people. The intermediary organizations, while res-

tricting public criticism, cut off the masses from the party central committee and have prevented the higher echelons from realizing the true situation of the lower echelons, and thus from correcting shortcomings in time. When errors cannot be corrected in time, people become confused, freedom and democracy are restricted, and the enemy profits from it to malign our regime. Thus, the fear of the enemy has thrown us into passiveness and into a vicious circle.

... Here we do not want to speak of corrupt elements which pretend to avoid exploitation by the enemy in order to camouflage their errors, and to maintain their position. In arts and letters, the artists and writers have had to keep their uneasiness in the bottom of their hearts for ten years, without being able to freely express it. Some people think of their feelings as a piece of coagulated blood, which cannot be dissolved. This state of affairs results from the fact that there has been no development of democracy, no development of criticism to channel the opinions of the masses into developing a proper policy on arts and letters. If the arts and letters circles had had the right to freely express their thoughts, there never would have been those annoying cases, which from time to time have exploded like bombs.

Every time discussion and criticism become animated, the leadership immediately tries to put an end to it: «Do not do that; it can be harmful to our union, a fact which the enemy may profit from to distort the truth.» And thus discussion dies, and artists and writers have to keep their uneasiness fast in the bottom of their hearts. Unable to see the truth, and cut off from the people, the leadership goes deeper into serious error, due to its subjective methods.

During the recent theoretical study meetings, artist and writer comrades could not study anything, but could only find occasion to raise facts to criticize the leadership. In the beginning, the leadership tried to beat about the bush in reply, but finally had to admit the truth.

During the recapitulative session, Comrade Nguyen Dinh Thi admitted the shortcomings of the leadership and then Comrade To Huu went to the tribune to apply a mild self-criticism.

Although not perfectly satisfied, the artist and writer com-

rades still thought that this was a good sign. Then Nhan Van was born, to continue this public criticism spirit of theoretical study classes. It bravely inaugurated a movement against the old habits.

It openly criticizes all that people wish to be criticized within the organization. There are many ways to criticize. Some people used to a serious style of criticism, while some others resorted to a satirical style, and even to outright attacks, if they deal with grave vices. Of course, in such criticism, distortions and misunderstandings are inevitable. However, we think that if people want to properly evaluate a movement, it is necessary for them to see its fundamental significance and its nature: What is the origin of this movement? Its process? Its present situation? How can it be solved?

Instead of doing so, a number of cadres, pretending to fear enemy exploitation, criticize questions of minor importance and keep silent about the main subjects. Of course, it is impossible to prevent the enemy from taking advantage of our mistakes, because, up to now, the enemy has never stopped distorting our acts and has even invented things to malign us.

Not long ago, the enemy succeeded in seizing a very good opportunity to wage their counter propaganda against us. This was the Twentieth Congress of the Soviet Communist Party, during which the errors of Comrade Stalin were publicly criticized. Not only in our country, but in all imperialist countries in the world the enemy took advantage of this occasion to slander our side. Yet, how can they prevent the strengthening and development of the Soviet Communist Party and the world forces of peace and democracy, once the latter are free of their past errors, and begin to enter a new phase?

... Some people say: In the U.S.S.R. there is no struggle for the unification of the country, so the people can do this. In our country, the situation is still confused, and we have no right to make it more confused.

Those people want to say that open criticism can only cause more difficulty for our struggle for the unification of the country. We think this is wrong. If the criticism of Stalin is exploited by the enemy—and indeed the enemy has profited from it — the whole revolutionary enterprise of the world is

affected. Did not the U.S.S.R. think this over? Of course, the U.S.S.R. thought it over, and it made its decision, because it had weighed the good and the bad, finding criticism to be a great advantage and the enemy exploitation only a small disadvantage.

Concerning our cultural movement, we should admit that our arts and letters, after about twelve years of the democratic republic regime, that is, nine years of resistance and more than two years of peace, have developed considerably. The new movements of the U.S.S.R. and China have favorably influenced our arts and letters. The old leadership can no longer cope with this development. The relations between the leadership and the arts and letters circles now include contradictions. These contradictions are only signs of what people call «crises of maturity.» The sensational discussions during the study meetings, and the daring articles recently published in some papers have reflected this crisis. The movement can commit errors of the leadership in order to build up a new line of conduct complying with the new situation. Of course, the enemy may take advantage of this open criticism and the exposure of our errors, as in the case of the criticism of Stalin, but the advantage will be great and disadvantage will be small.

If we do not see it this way, if we only see the top and not the roots of the tree, and continue to devote all our attention to some errors of the masses and to enemy exploitation, we will certainly incur disadvantages. This narrowminded concept will bring about narrowminded acts. Here, we beg to say frankly that these days the leadership exhibits a tendency toward isolation and has aligned itself against Nhan Van. If this tendency continues, the consequences will be: Restriction of democratic freedoms; restriction of public criticism; friends and enemies will not be distinguishable; isolation of the leadership from the masses. Thus, we will fall into the clever traps of the enemy; thus, we will be exploited by the enemy.

Public criticism is a revolutionary task. It is an indispensable means of educating the masses. At the same time, it profits from the pressure of the masses toward correcting shortcomings which the internal struggle of the Party and governmental organizations cannot resolve. Superficial observations and incorrect attitudes

of the critics will be gradually corrected. People should not make such a great noise about this matter of minor importance that they ignore questions of great importance.

To conclude, I beg to borrow the statement of Comrade Dang Tieu Binh: In the struggle to realize fully the party policy with respect to the people, to struggle against the feudalist disease, close cooperation with notable people outside the party and the participation of these people in our struggle are of great significance. Our mission is to truly strengthen the relations between the leadership and the masses, and to have the democratic principles and line of conduct of the party fully carried out from every point of view.

Nhan Van, September 30

« Question of Principle », by Y Du.

A comrade had his leg horribly burned by boiling water. He was immediately taken to Bach Mai hospital. The hospital refused to admit him because of a question of principle.

The cadre was then sent to the Phu Doan hospital, which also ruled it impossible to admit him, because of a question of principle.

Therefore, we can now see that there exists a new disease which can quickly kill people like the plague. It is the « principle » disease. And, it seems that there is so far no hospital thinking of curing this disease.

Nhan Van, September 30

« Answer to Comrade Nguyen Chuong and Nhan Dan », by Hoang Cam, Huu Loan and Tran Duy.

(The major part of this article is a point for point refutation of Nguyen Chuong's attack, and tends to be merely technical. Only the last part contains new controversial material).

...To conclude, we beg to note our uneasiness with respect to the attitude of Comrade Nguyen Chuong and Nhan Dan:

One—Comrade Nguyen Chuong is a high propaganda training cadre, and Nhan Dan is the organ of the Party Central Committee.

During the past few years, the arts and letters leadership committed many mistakes. Comrade Nguyen Chuong and Nhan Dan either do not know of them or, if they do, they are not prepared to make any criticism to correct them.

Today, we are obliged to bring them before the public, because people persist in refusing to listen to our opinions, and Comrade Nguyen Chuong and Nhan Dan try to accuse and threaten us.

Do Comrade Nguyen Chuong and Nhan Dan realize their shortcomings with respect to the confidence of the Party and the masses?

Two—The case of the Spring Selection of Literary Works was criticized long ago by the Party Central Committee, and still the arts and letters leadership clique maintains silence and refuses to restore honor to Tran Dan.

By keeping silent about this inadmissible state of affairs, do Comrade Nguyen Chuong and Nhan Dan realize their shortcomings with respect to the confidence of the Party and the masses?

Three—The study meetings of the arts and letters circles last August were truly stiff fights by more than three hundred writers and artists. Of course, Comrade Nguyen Chuong and Nhan Dan were well aware of the development of the situation, the criticism of the arts and letters leadership clique, the in-trenchment of the Party Central Committee, the roundabout recapitulative report of Nguyen Dinh Thi, the energetic discussion of Nguyen Huu Dang, the slight self-criticism of To Huu, the proposals of artist and writer comrades and so on. And still the arts and letters leadership clique stubbornly continues to keep silent, and does not publish any news about these study meetings and the recapitulative meeting on its paper Van Nghe. The arts and letters leadership does not want any petition from the artist and writer comrades and does not even deign to answer them. (Issue number one of Nhan Van was published only one month after the recapitulative meeting.)

Do Comrade Nguyen Chuong and Nhan Dan realize their shortcomings with respect to the confidence of the Party and the masses by sharing in maintaining this unforgivable silence?

Four—In its first issue, Nhan Van stated that it submits itself to Party leadership. These are sincere words, issuing from the revolutionary spirit and the confidence in the Party of hundreds of artists and writers and intellectuals who have followed the revolution for tens of years or who have at least participated in the resistance for nine years. When they open their mouths, they address themselves to the Party Central Committee, to the people of the North and the South and to the world.

Are Comrade Nguyen Chuong and the paper Nhan Dan authorized by the Party Central Committee to attack our statement of union and of subordination to the Party, to threaten us and to despise us by considering our forward as a libel? Is it true that Comrade Nguyen Chuong and Nhan Dan intend to create a situation of synthetic opposition in preparation for another case like that of the Spring Selection?

By creating a large gulf between the Party Central Committee and the majority of artists and writers and intellectuals, do Comrade Nguyen Chuong and Nhan Dan realize their shortcomings with respect to the confidence of the Party and the masses?

Five — From the agrarian reform activities and the census operations, and from the case of the Spring Selection itself, we have learned a bitter lesson, for which we paid in tears and blood: Political slanderous arguments only create tense situations, destroy freedom and democracy, separate the Party from the masses, undermine all good policies and soil our regime.

All classes of the people unanimously condemned such dangerous contentiousness long ago.

Yet, today, Comrade Nguyen Chuong and Nhan Dan continue to use such tactics, so do they realize shortcomings with respect to the Party and the masses?

« Partisanship In Arts and Letters, » by Tran Cong

(We are growing apart with peace. Solidarity is disappearing. We don't have much to hold us together. We lack a solid theoretical base for unity. The masses tend to be subjective, avoiding dialecticians. People are breaking up under the lack of a unifying ideology. Oppression is no remedy. Furthermore we are all partisan, and partisanship is a real evil. It accounts for the cult of the individual, bland subservience to authority, favoritism, corruption, log-rolling.)

Speaking of arts and letters, one often thinks of the various schools, of the polemic controversies which aim at enriching the cultural treasure of mankind.

It is truly painful when we have to deal with the question of partisanship. It is not a simple question, which can be solved within the organization as stated by Thuc Dai a few days ago. The truth is that it is not as easy as he believes. This is a serious phenomenon in arts and letters, because it concerns a large number of people in the leadership.

During the resistance, people were close to one another. Wearing the same kind of maroon shirt, sitting by the side of the road and smoking the same pipe, the man of arts and letters mutually shared their hardships. During the recent recapitulative session, Comrade To Huu himself admitted that during the past two years he has not had close contact with the artists and writers. This is a sign that the leadership is far apart from the arts and letters circle. So, how can the leadership understand their mental inclinations? Instructions issuing from the higher echelons are only vague and do not comply with the situation. Moreover, at his side, Comrade To Huu has narrow-minded collaborators, so the complaints of the arts and letters circle are considered as complaints of discontented people.

One cause of partisanship is the lack of theory. The people of the arts and letters leadership have had to unite into a solid bloc to strengthen their position, to face the masses of artists and writers, because the latter have no legitimate theoretical background to operate from. Thus, the leaders have not « restored to

the masses all that belongs to the masses.» They often judge things... with a kind of idealist subjectivism. This kind of Subjective thinking is very dangerous, because it relies on vague feelings instead of dialectics.

... Comrade Hoai Thanh said that after he had read «Victory is Certain» he first thought that it reflected only a vague state of mind, but afterwards he decided that it was truly slanderous.

It is possible that there exist non-partisan leaders, but they have no ability to solve the problems raised by the arts and letters masses, and must side with the partisan bloc in opposing the plain comrades. This was the case in the army cultural office... when the artist and writer comrades presented a proposal on arts and letters policy—which included points on the relations between arts and letters and politics, the development of the One Hundred Flowers Blooming movement, and necessary conditions for living standards of artists and writers—a number of the leadership in the army (including some artists and writers) became confused, because they did not appreciate the normal advance of events and did not know where this proposal led. Later on, after reexamining his errors, one of those leaders sincerely said : « When you presented the proposal, I thought you were right. But when the higher echelons told me you were wrong, I thought the higher echelons were right ».

Then, oppression and division were applied to solve the matter, as in the case of Hoai Thanh, who said : « In the work of directing the meeting, I wanted to isolate Tran Dan and win to my side the other writers who contributed to the Spring Collection ». The policy aimed at getting a large number of people to put pressure on one man.

The second cause of partisanship is the cult of the individual. When people have insufficiently sound arguments and when their thinking is idealistic and subjective, they have to accept the opinions of the higher echelons. Thus, a vague statement of a high cadre may be treated as an order by people practicing the cult of the individual. Indeed, a leader of the army arts and letters office said : « In cases when my opinions and the opinions of the higher echelons contradict each other, I always listen to the opinions of the higher echelons ».

Here we do not want to cite the cases of some artists and writers of the army who seek to profit from the leadership by practicing partisanship, making false reports and trying to undermine the development of the cultural movement in the army. Why do we not see the two important books, «The Human Tide» by Tran Dan and «Escape from Poulo Condore» by Phung Quan among the books sent to friendly countries to inform them about the heroic Vietnamese armed forces, instead of a number of books by partisan members, books disliked by all the troops?

Another noteworthy fact: Tu Nam profited from his position to order the army publishing house to print tens of thousands of copies of the book, «We Have Lost Our Children and Grandchildren,» written by himself. Is this an abuse? Indeed, some time before, the same book was rejected by a publisher because it was worthless.

Although in the article, «Some Shortcomings in the Leadership,» printed in Van Nghe, N° 140, Nguyen Dinh Thi did not say that there is partisanship in the arts and letters field till he had to admit that «A small number of leaders have permitted themselves to become self-satisfied and dictatorial,» and that «the leadership is becoming an isolated faction in which members look out only for one another.» If one commits an error, the rest easily forgive him, instead of trying to correct it, or performing a self-criticism before the public. We admit that this partisanship in arts and letters was not, in the beginning, born of abuses. However, because of the facts recognized by Comrade Thi and others revealed by hundreds of artist and writer comrades during the study sessions last August, everyone is aware now of this partisanship. It is now time to find out how to cure the disease. We must not prolong this sorry state of affairs.

Our party has complete experience in the struggle, our Central Committee includes prominent children of the people, so how can such a confused situation arise? We think the main cause of this state of affairs is that partisanship in the intermediate ranks separated the central committee from the masses. We also admit that our Party has no settled arts and letters policy. If the intermediary people had done their duty in a broadminded and revol-

utionary spirit, and if they had known how to support others instead of trying to camouflage their own shortcomings, this confused situation could never have arisen.

In past years, if they had been faithful to the masses, and had received support from the masses, and had they not rejected constructive ideas of the masses and not listened to flatterers, we all could have produced better work for the people and helped the central committee devise an arts and letters policy.

Because of this state of affairs, our arts and letters movement made no progress, friendship among the artists and writers declined, many young writers were forgotten, the dignity of artists and writers was not respected, and the living conditions of the artists and writers was abnormal. Arts and letters, which belong to the masses, must be restored to the masses. The party should give them initiative, and help them develop arts and letters. The people responsible for arts and letters must listen to the opinion of the masses, to correctly carry out the policy of the Party and cause it to comply with the requirements of the masses.

The artist and writer comrades do not expect anything more than a faithful attitude on the part of the leadership, to build together a prosperous culture for our people. The present storm must subside, so that we will be able to speak of production of more work and preparation for the forthcoming arts and letters national congress. The leadership should have a positive policy, partisanship should be eliminated, and thus, the central committee will be able to contact arts and letters people and direct them with justice.

Nhan Van, September 30

Letters to the Editor.

« Nhan Dan has published bitter criticism of the Fall Selection of Literary Works and Nhan Van. I think this is premature, because in the One Hundred Flowers Blooming movement, the voice of the party constitutes the most representative voice, which attracts the confidence of the masses. To publish this criticism is just like allowing people to speak, and at the same time closing

their mouths » (Nguyen Tuan, student of the Faculty of Letters.)

« In this situation, I want to repeat for Nhan Van a sentence of Pushkin: « The scientists, and writers' army must always stand against all attacks on civilization. They should not quake with fear at the thought that they will be the first to endure blows, adversity and danger » ... (Quang Phong, painter)

Nhan Van, September 30

«To Fortify the Lungs Or the Kindeys — There's No Difference» by Y DU

Returning from a mission, a cadre received a purchasing coupon. As he had chronically weak lungs, we went to the state owned drugstore.

Regulations require that people must buy goods which exactly correspond in price to the amount specified on the coupon. After some shopping, he noticed that the balance of his coupon was sufficient to buy a bottle of lung tonic, and that the coupon would expire soon.

He asked the woman clerk: « Please give me a bottle of tonic for lungs. »

« We no longer have tonic for lungs, only for kidneys », the clerk said, and she grinned. The cadre himself grinned back.

After some hesitation, he agreed to buy a bottle of tonic for kidneys, to use up the amount on his coupon.

Outside the store, he said to himself: « Who knows? Maybe my kidneys are also weak. It is better to fortify my kidneys than to let my coupon expire. Then, neither my lungs nor my kidneys would be fortified. Anyway, it's better than nothing ».

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(Substantiation by the Arts and Letters Association)

Hanoi Thoi Moi, October 5

(In which the permanent committee of the Vietnamese Association of Arts and Letters acknowledges that shortcomings exist

in its activities, and indicates that a worth-while job has been found for the poet, Tran Dan).

The permanent committee of the Vietnamese Association of Arts and Letters just sent to the press a communique, the text of which is as follows:

Since the beginning of the preparations for the second National Cultural Congress, artist and writer comrades have offered many opinions and criticisms of the leadership in the matter of arts and letters. These opinions have caused the permanent committee of the Vietnamese Association of Arts and Letters to become conscious of a number of serious shortcomings.

The Association has not yet studied them carefully enough to submit to the government for consideration practical suggestions on arts and letters. Therefore, the potentialities of the suggestions of the artist and writer comrades have not yet fully developed. This slows the progress of the cultural movement.

In writing and criticism of literature, there have existed signs of narrow-mindedness, mechanical style, over-simplification, lack of attention to cultural characteristics, and to the different branches of art and culture. There is no democratic collectivity in the leadership, which harbors tendencies toward narrow-mindedness, carelessness and individual dictatorship.

The permanent committee sincerely acknowledges the criticism of the comrades, and all those who are interested in arts and letters. It is regrettable that among this criticism there are some misguided attacks, which require re-examination. Two matters which have attracted the attention of the public are the criticism of the poem «Victory Is Certain» by Tran Dan and the literary awards for 1954-1955. The permanent committee, in its meeting of October 2, 1956, arrived at the following conclusions:

One— Concerning the problem of the criticism of «Victory Is Certain,» this poem was published in the 1956 Spring Selection of Literary Works. The permanent committee found that the poem contained tendencies toward wrong thinking which needed to be criticized. In February, 1956, it organized criticism of the poem. It considered the author, Tran Dan—who was having some trouble with the army at the time—an anti-regime writer. Indeed,

this criticism was superficial, and lacked a sound, detailed analysis of the poem itself, which is contrary to the spirit of our ideological struggle. After that, the literary review Van Nghe, published a full report on this criticism, and also on the careless criticism of Hoai Thanh, who had attacked the reactionary character of the poem. All this not only harmed the honor of Tran Dan, but also aroused many fears in other authors.

The Premier's office commented on the poem immediately after the incident, but the permanent committee members delayed their self-criticism, and instead published in Van Nghe an abstruse poem, «Life Is Very Beautiful», by Tran Dan, which completely confused the masses.

The permanent committee admitted its mistakes in the organization and leadership of the criticism of «Victory Is Certain». However, Tran Dan actually continues to be a member of the Vietnamese Association of Arts and Letters, and is writing poetry about land reform under the sponsorship of the association.

Two—The problem of literary awards for the years 1954-55 — after four months work by the examination board, from December 1955 to April, 1956, the winners were announced. A number of valuable works received top prizes, and these were considered deserving by the public. But... other prize works have been subject to the public's criticism — such as those which praised the working spirit of the examining board. On August 21, 1956, despite having finished its work, the board met to recapitulate its activities, and it found the following shortcomings :

One— In examining the books the board paid too much attention to ideology, and because of this awarded a lot of wrong prizes.

Two— Work methods were disorderly, anti-democratic, and they disregarded the board's relationship with the masses. For example, in examining the book, «The Star», many opinions were received, but most of the examiners failed to listen attentively.

Three— Signs of favoritism appeared in considering a number of books. After having extended several times the examination period in order to find more books that would repre-

sent various opinions, there were signs of fatigue and nervous strain, which caused carelessness in the awarding of prizes. These errors were due to a lack of responsibility toward the national literary movement.

In one meeting of the examining board, some said that the collection of poems, «The Star,» by Xuan Dieu, should have been given the third instead of the second prize.

The permanent committee completely agreed with the examining board. Besides, as far as its responsibility is concerned, the committee finds that it has committed the mistakes of not yet having established concrete principles and methods for awarding prizes. The nomination of persons by the examining board was not carried out in a satisfactory manner, and the examination of books was out of the control of the permanent committee.

...It is hoped that, with respect to the reexamination of all the accomplishments of the permanent committee, the artist and writer comrades will give us more opinions, so that together, we can advance toward the coming National Cultural Congress in a successful manner.



ISSUE NUMBER THREE

Hanoi Nhan Van, October 15

«Development of Democratic Freedoms,» by Tran Duc Thao.

(In which it is disclosed that «freedom» is the absence of colonialism and feudalism, that the development of the content of freedom is high in North Vietnam, but the forms, freedom of speech, the press, etc. are lacking, that under the former regime freedom was an idealist dream that the bourgeois used as a weapon, but under the Communist system, its nature has been changed, and «the ideal of individual freedom is the ideal of the future». It is also discovered that the bourgeoisie in the North have no complaints, although the intellectuals do.)

To begin, we must explain the meaning and content of the movement of development of democratic freedoms among the people. Basically, it is an international movement, which was initiated by the Twentieth Congress of the Soviet Communist Party, and which is being quickly spread throughout the world. It was born of the great victories of Socialism in Soviet Russia, and in the world, victories which have exposed the bigoted leadership and the Stalin-styled cult of personality as a serious obstacle to the development of Soviet society and that of the peaceful, democratic and socialist movement in the world. This obstacle must be quickly eliminated if Soviet Russia is to progress toward Communism, and if the world is to consolidate and enlarge its socialist system. Led by the Party and the government, the Vietnamese people, in energetically struggling against bureaucratic attitudes, partisan spirit and the cult of personality, now understand

the revolutionary policies of the Twentieth Congress of the Soviet Communist Party, policies which were communicated to them by the Lao Dong Party.

In the internal field, the democratic freedoms drive has also an important meaning. With the defeat of the imperialists and the completion of land reform in the North, the bureaucratic attitudes, the partisan spirit and the cult of personality are vestiges bequeathed by the old regime to the new organization. The struggle against these vestiges is a responsibility of the people, a policy of the party and an important task to be fulfilled to complete the economic and cultural reconstruction work and to quickly progress toward socialism. It is natural that, in this movement, there should be some personal mistakes and some deviation. Under the leadership of the party, these weak points will undoubtedly be corrected. But these are only details. Taken as a whole, the present movement of struggle against bureaucratism, partisan spirit and the cult of personality is the whole people's revolutionary movement, led by the working class and the workers' party. It aims at liberating productive forces, readjusting organizations advancing Vietnamese society quickly toward socialism, and closely linking the Vietnamese people with the socialist system in the world.

Being a revolutionary responsibility, it is naturally liable to mistakes which will be exploited by enemies. Nothing has been more exploited by our enemies than our land reform, and no task has been spoiled by so many mistakes as our land reform. We know from the very beginning that we will commit mistakes, and that our enemies will exploit these mistakes, but we must still continue to pursue it because it is a revolutionary mission.

In the present democratic freedoms movement, no serious mistake will be committed, because it is carried out through words and writings, and it does not injure human bodies. And if our enemies exploit some details, they will be hit by a heavy blow — a blow which may be decisive to them, because their propaganda is fundamentally based on the statement that we do not enjoy democracy — and we have just proved by facts that we are living under a democratic regime. We must not pay too much attention to the details, at the expense of

fundamentals. We must not overlook the forest because of the trees.

A number of comrades have feared that, with the application of democratic freedoms, the bourgeois will «raise their heads». They have misunderstood the question. Since the re-establishment of peace, we have widened the scope of the bourgeois' business. We have encouraged them to invest more money in their business, so their aspirations have been partly satisfied and they have had no time to busy themselves with other matters.

Those who have something to criticize are the manual and intellectual workers, who have served the people and have been faithful to the party, but who have not been able to fully develop their abilities and to fruitfully serve the people and who are still restrained and oppressed by the bureaucrats, by those who have a partisan spirit and by the partisans of the cult of personality.

The freedoms they wish to see developed are surely not the bourgeois freedoms of former society, the freedoms of a minority which exploited the majority. The freedoms they wish to see developed are the freedoms for the whole people to criticize the leadership, because this leadership is their leadership, and it is thanks to these criticisms that they can build up a reasonable organization, that they can insure the success of their tasks and that each of them can actively participate in a common mission. These freedoms are their rights, and they are recognized and guaranteed by our regime.

The party and the government have continually appealed to the people to improve the leadership. But, as we are too timid, and we lack confidence, so criticisms are not daily and thoroughly carried out. We have not undertaken discussions on all problems with the masses. This is a vestige of the old working method which reveals their breaking with the masses. We must do our best to develop democracy and to popularize criticism among the people. The party has shown the way, but it cannot replace us: Freedom is not something which can be granted.

Executing the resolutions of the Twentieth Congress of the Soviet Communist Party, answering the appeal of the Lao-

Dong Party and endorsing the movement of development of Democratic freedom in the friendly people's democratic countries, the Vietnamese intellectuals have an important mission to fulfill. In the field of cultural activities, they need freedom as they need air to live. Without freedom, they cannot create artistic or literary works, carry on scientific experiments or improve their techniques. The development of freedom is a necessary requirement, and, at the same time, the primary responsibility of the intellectuals as well as of the whole people.

Now, we have to differentiate the content of freedom from its form. In the aspect of content, our regime is fundamentally and truly free. In the North, the imperialists and feudalists were overthrown, and although some bourgeois methods of exploitation still survive, with the people's administration and under the leadership of the working class and the workers' party, the foundation is laid to guarantee the future. Undoubtedly we will progress toward socialism and communism, and will enjoy all freedoms.

But, in the aspect of form, there have been some shortcomings, and this point is more important because it is in fact the forms of freedom which insure a complete contribution by each citizen to the common mission. Without these forms of freedom, we cannot apply the principles of collective leadership, we cannot fully liberate the creative forces of the masses, and we cannot develop the initiatives of the economic and cultural organizations.

The Twentieth Congress of the Soviet Communist party revealed the disastrous consequences of a leadership which violates the forms of freedom. Though the cult of personality could not eliminate the truly democratic substances and the good qualities of Soviet society, in which there is no exploitation of men, because for a certain period the forms of freedom were not guaranteed the development of organization of study and creation, such as the organization of social science, according to Comrade Mikoyan's report, were almost paralyzed. The forms of freedom are not purely formal. They have exerted a great influence on the reality of society, though they have not changed its fundamental substance.

Land reform has been completed in the Northern part of our country. Now it is time to progress toward socialism. There is only one way. Either you advance, or you retreat. The main condition for progressing forward consists in quickly building up the economic and cultural organizations necessary for collective production. Since the re-establishment of peace, reconstruction work has been seriously hindered, in almost all branches, by the bureaucrats, by those who have the partisan spirit, and by the partisans of the cult of personality. The development of forms of freedom (freedom of press, of speech, of assembly and so on), is the main task aimed at liberating the people's creative forces and at exploiting and throwing into relief the rich and democratic substance we have acquired. In the struggle for national unification through peaceful means, this is also an important element in the widening of the fatherland front and the winning of a wide approval of the compatriots in the South and the people throughout the world.

A form of freedom is individual freedom. Under the old regime, its basis was an idealist dream which the bourgeois used as an intellectual instrument to exploit the working class. But under our regime, its nature has been changed, and it has a true value. Individuals must obey the community, but the community is formed of individuals and individual freedom under the people's legal principles in a condition enabling each individual to contribute actually to the building up of the community. According to the recent situation in the world, the ideal of individual freedom is the ideal of the future, and the communist ideal is becoming a historic reality in Soviet Russia. The full development of individual freedom is a goal which becomes more and more concrete. With the building up of a genuine communist society in Soviet Russia, in which there will be no distinction of classes, the government will dissolve itself, and each individual will freely develop his strong points, will work according to his abilities, and will receive according to his needs.

The victory of socialism in Soviet Russia has liberated individuals in the productive collectivity. In a communist society, each individual will be liberated according to his character.

Our society has not reached this state. But our revolution

is a part of the world movement, and the common revolution is a part of the world movement and the common characteristics of this movement are determined by its most advanced parts. Revolutionary thoughts, though they exist in a backward country, are basically the most progressive thoughts in the world. We have carried out a bourgeois revolution with the socialist revolutionary thoughts of the working class, the most progressive thoughts of our epoch. But these thoughts were spoiled by the defects of the Stalinist era: Bureaucratism, commandism, partisan spirit, the cult of the personality.

Prompted by the requirements of the production development and the building up of communism in Soviet Russia, the Twentieth Congress of the Soviet communist party, strongly condemned the cult of personality, worked out policies for the liberation of thought, for the guaranteeing of socialist legislation, and for a complete democratization of organizations.

The historic resolutions of this congress have exerted a great influence on the friendly people's democratic countries, and on the workers' and people's movement in the world. Our country cannot stand aside. We will progress toward socialism guided by the light of Marx-Leninism which has corrected Stalin's mistakes, with the firm intention of building up socialism throughout the world in which under one form or another, the responsibility of the proletarian dictatorship will consist in developing individual freedom.

Hanoi Nhan Van, October 15

« Doctor Dao Van Ngu's Interview »

(Which reveals that the Vietnamese people have longed for freedom through the ages and now have it in the North, but have yet to realize it, and have to be taught to exercise it by the intellectuals who, in turn, must rid themselves of any tendency toward complacency or timidity and give up doubting the genuinely democratic and free nature of the government and really criticize it in the free, democratic manner for its mistakes, particularly in the area of democratic freedoms. In addition, everybody

ought to pay more attention to what the people think.)

Question: In your opinion, what must the intellectual in general and the arts and letters circles in particular do now to contribute to the development of freedom and democracy?

Answer: Our government has longed for freedom and democracy. Nobody can deny this fact. Our people have longed for freedom and democracy. This fact has been proved by history. Nevertheless, recently, while assessing the results of the execution of government policies, we found that many grave mistakes were committed pertaining to freedom and democracy. This was a natural phenomenon: As our party and our government are determined to build up a freer and freer, more and more democratic regime, so they are trying to expose all weak points and surmount them.

Q. Under a dictatorial regime, since nobody dares criticize the government, how can weak points on freedoms and democracy be exposed?

A. Under a democratic regime, the people have absolute confidence in the regime, so they courageously criticize it. If they still suspect the government, or are afraid that it may take revenge on those who denounce its mistakes, then nothing can lure them into criticizing the government mistakes.

We must not forget that the party and the government were born of the people. The raising of the political level of the party and the government is directly proportional to the raising of the people's political level.

If any citizen can commit mistakes, so can any party member or civil servant. Thus, there is nothing surprising in the fact that the party and the government discovered their mistakes while assessing the results of their recent task. What is the origin of these democratic freedoms. Longing for freedom and democracy; we sacrificed everything to have freedom and democracy; but when we have them, we are unable to employ them. This is not strange either. For thousands of years the Vietnamese people were ignorant of freedom and democracy! And freedom and democracy are not easy things to employ!

The Vietnamese people courageously fought against the

reactionary and exploiting ruling class; but toward their people's administration, they have been too submissive. They have lost their fighting spirit and especially, they have not been able to use their democratic freedom to struggle; therefore, the weaknesses have accumulated and today we find that they are very serious.

In the common struggle which led to many serious mistakes, intellectuals must recognize their share of responsibility.

In the eight or nine years of gallant resistance and two years of peacetime reconstruction, the intellectuals were proud of their important role; and now, that mistakes are obvious, they must also courageously recognize their share of the responsibility for them.

If the responsibility for building our army belongs to our soldiers, and if the responsibility of building our economy belongs chiefly to our workers and farmers, then the responsibility for building freedom and democracy belongs chiefly to our intellectuals. Thanks to their special position and their knowledge, the latter have realized that our leaders have committed some mistakes; actually, they long ago discovered a number of mistakes in leadership.

But as they lacked freedom of thought and courage, so they dared not express any constructive criticisms. Many of our intellectuals did not criticize because they were afraid of being misunderstood, and of being suspected of having no firm viewpoint. A number of others expressed some criticism, but as the mistakes were not corrected, they were disappointed and did not criticize any more. Both attitudes are wrong, because they revealed a lack of confidence in the democratic nature of our regime and a lack of consciousness that they are the true masters of their country.

I can sum up my answer to this question as follows: The government is now determined to correct its weak points and the people are determined to constructively criticize the government; these are two basically good things. In order that these criticisms be more fruitful, it is necessary for the government to set up an organ in charge of collecting the people's opinions, and it is also necessary to make the people understand what freedom of

thought is and what our regime is. Naturally, in this education it is necessary to use many means, and art and literature are a very effective means.

Question: In your opinion, what problems must be more widely discussed, given the present development of the health branch?

Answer: In order to develop any branch, the problem which must be discussed is that of democratic freedoms. This point is stated in the preceding answer.

Hanoi Nhan Van, October 15

Letter to the Editor.

«I always like Nhan Dan and Tien Phong (Vanguard) because both are serious. But I regret very much that Nguyen Chuong in Nhan Dan hastily accused the Fall Selection and Nhan Van of making people believe that the regime in the North is dictatorial and absolutist, oppresses the compatriots and so on, and that Tran Viet in Tien Phong also accused Hoang Hue of intentionally making his readers doubt the educational leadership by the communist youth group of Soviet Russia over our youth and so on.

«... A new wind is blowing through our arts and literature. This is my first impression after reading Nhan Van.

«... We have grown up and our whole people has grown up. As our eyes can clearly see in two directions, our heart needs to listen to many sounds and needs excited moments. Arts and literature have the responsibility of satisfying these needs. On reading Nhan Van we also feel this satisfaction; but this is only the beginning.

«We hope that the new wind, Nhan Van, will blow wilder to contribute to the building up of true art and literature. Our responsibility consists in helping this wind blow wilder and wilder and not tramelling it.»

Signed: Phung Bao Kim, student from the Faculty of Letters.

Hanoi Nhan Van, October 15

«Some Ideas About Hoai Thanh's Self-Criticism», by Thanh Binh.

(It is revealed that Hoai Thanh's self-criticism, in which he purported to admit that his attack on Tran Dan's «Victory Is Certain» was misguided, was only a hypocritical device designed to put a good face on his activities, which are heartless, «objective» rather than sincere, irrelevant, unsubstantial, clumsily humorous, scornful, toadying, obdurate in the face of the cultural aspiration of the masses, and typical of the arts and letters leadership. Because of the spitefulness of Hoai Thanh and people like him, the poet Tran Dan is about to be reduced to dust, his political existence destroyed, his talent trampled underfoot. Nevertheless, everybody loves the regime, trusts the party, and hates all mistakes.)

In its issue Number 139, Van Nghe published an article in which Hoai Thanh made his self-criticism. I had anxiously waited for the publication of this article, but after reading it, I was disappointed. I had the impression that the affair of Spring Selection of Literary Works could not be settled soon. The weak points of this article are not only the weak points of one literary critic, but they are the weak points of the leadership of the Arts and Letters Association, of which Hoai Thanh is a representative. Such is the truth. Hoai Thanh's article on self criticism has not improved the situation, because it has not satisfied the demands of the artists and writers and the masses. I do not want to speak again of the poem «Victory Is Certain» I want only to discuss Hoai Thanh's attitude.

He began his self-criticism by mentioning the argument for spiritual struggle. The argument he cited is correct, but it is beside the point. I do not know whether he wanted to make a self-criticism, or whether he wanted to use this argument to prove that his criticism of the poem was correct. He wrote:

«On the one hand are the revolutionary thoughts of the proletarians, who inherit the best traditions of the people and mankind, and on the other are the oppressing, exploiting and decaying thoughts of colonialist and feudal society that are

attacking our regime.»

I think that the bureaucratic spirit, commanding attitude and oppression are vestiges inherited by a number of our leading cadres from the old colonialist and feudal society. I also think that Tran Dan did not exploit and oppress anybody and I put to myself this question: Why did Hoai Thanh write this?

Hoai Thanh organized and led a meeting, and let a number of people unjustly criticize Tran Dan, and he himself wrote an article to libel Tran Dan. The body of Tran Dan was on the point of being reduced to dust; the political existence of Tran Dan destroyed; the sacred right of creation of the writer Tran Dan had been trampled underfoot. Were these misfortunes not enough? Yet, in his self-criticism, he still attacked Tran Dan with wicked expressions, such as «oppression», «insubordination», «obscure and insane state of mind».

He still maintained that «The struggle against the bad effects of this poem is correct.» But, in fact, this struggle against the «bad effects» of the poem was not in accordance with the rehabilitation principle of «hatred for weak points and love for comrades». It aimed at destroying the author of the poem, in accordance with the partisanship spirit of libelling friends as foes

But, however rotten may be the affair of The Spring Collection, the masses are very generous, as also are those who are directly struck by this misfortune. What do the artists and writers and the masses want? They want Hoai Thanh, representing the Arts and Letters Association, to admit his mistakes, sincerely make his self-criticism and correct his mistakes concretely. Nothing more! Why? Because everybody loves the regime, trusts in the party and hates mistakes.

How did Hoai Thanh make his self-criticism? After reading a long portion of his article, in which he enumerated the circumstances which led to his mistakes, and after studying and analyzing these mistakes, I find that his self-criticism is too objective. «Objective» here means that he considers these mistakes as naturally created by external circumstances and his friends, and that he was «influenced» by them.

Hoai Thanh resorted to sophistry to clear himself, rather than

severely criticizing himself. One finds in him no trace of repentance or sorrow for such a great and cruel mistake, and he has not (nor did he wish to) discovered the origin of his mistakes.

He also stated: «Not actually looking for truth, not being calm and perspicacious are very dangerous; and this is much more dangerous when one occupies a position of leadership.»

The word «dangerous» was used by him in a very dangerous manner. One does not know to whom this is dangerous, to Tran Dan or to Hoai Thanh? Or to the masses?

I am not playing on words. Hoai Thanh in his self-criticism did suffer from a dearth of correct terms, which obliged him to use vague ones. He seemed to speak jokingly: «Why are they so hurried, when struggling against other's mistakes? And when it is a question of fighting their own mistakes, why are they so slow?»

Because of this «clever» self-criticism, I realize that Hoai Thanh has not sincerely admitted his mistakes, and was not grieved by them, as many unconcerned people were. Another point which I want to stress is that Hoai Thanh, in his self-criticism, scorned the masses and flattered his superiors shamefully.

During recent months, in many meetings, the press and the public have spiritedly discussed this question, the whole capital was upset, and Hoai Thanh remained «hard as steel, firm as copper». Nothing could move him. He said: «Until recently, when President Ho, after recalling before hundreds of thousands of patriots at Ba Dinh Square on Independence Day, spoke of the problem which had been previously published by papers, I suddenly realized that we had also committed grave mistakes».

The second cause of his being «penetrated» with his mistakes is that a comrade from the central committee of the party had opened his eyes to the disastrous effects of his works.

In fact, only «thanks to God's light,» could Hoai Thanh realize the truth; he paid only slight attention to the sufferings of his victims, and the anger of the artists and writers and the masses. Was it intentional, or unintentional, that he saw or heard nothing?

I wonder if, on Independence Day, Hoai Thanh, for some reason, had not come to Ba Dinh Square or if President Ho, too busy, could not go there, and if, on a certain day, he had not met the comrade from the central committee of the party, what would become of this problem? Would he have made his self-criticism?

I think it is really incredible that, after studying Stalin's mistakes, Hoai Thanh's cult of personality is still so strong. If, on the one hand, he flatters his superiors and the members of the central committee of the party, and on the other he scorns the artists and writers, then how can he see clearly his personality and works?

Hoai Thanh said: «Then I could realize the full scope of my mistakes.»

On the contrary, I find that he has still not realized the full extent of his mistakes, because he has been only «penetrated» with the opinions of his superiors, and not with those of the artists and writers. To conclude his article, he wrote: «Friends, help me!» He was obliged to include this formula to show his readiness to listen to the people's opinions; but one finds also that he wrote it to praise himself.

What is worse, is that Hoai Thanh took advantage of this self-criticism to praise himself. After firing more criticism at Tran Dan—he argued that he did it to exonerate himself—and lauding his superiors, he praised himself. What do we feel after reading over his self-criticism? We find that Hoai Thanh has been «rehabilitated,» and that he has «participated in the struggle in the countryside.» He has matured, like his superiors. President Ho's statement, and the opinion of the comrade from the Central Committee of the Party had helped him to find the «new direction,» to follow and to «wash away old vestiges.» He made no reference to the disastrous effects of his attitude on Tran Dan and the arts and letters movement. I have the impression that he had «progressed» by trampling on many people and literary works.

His age-old talent is a literary critic, the obligation of a leading cadre to sincerely make his self-criticism, and collective responsibility of the executive committee of arts and letters asso-

ciation, the party member's role as exemplary vanguard and, above all the claims of the masses, do not allow Hoai Thanh to write such a «routine» self-criticism on a serious mistake which has been condemned by the central committee of the party, the arts and letters circles, and the masses, and which is still exerting disastrous effects.

Nhan Van, October 15

«Attention Is Directed To The Ideas And The Person Of The Artist», by Tran Phuong.

(Which concerns the deplorable condition of Vietnamese opera, attributed to the stifling effect of an oppressive and Philistine leadership, exemplified in the failure of the Central Artistic Troops' production «Fire Camp». The joys of the performer comrade's life in China is compared with his uncertain and seedy existence in North Vietnam.)

Late in 1954, a number of comrades of the Central Artistic Troop cooperated to produce the opera «Fire Camp» («Lua Rung») as their contribution to preparations for a National Congress of Artists. They also hoped to be able to add one small brick to the building of a new opera in the country.

The writing of this opera required about two months of work (not including the time spent on research). The rehearsals lasted one month, during which the constructive opinions of the arts and letters leadership, that is to say, the present artistic office, were made. Everyone hoped that the «Fire Camp» opera would be viewed by the National Assembly. It was rehearsed once at the Hanoi Grand Theater, but time passed, and this opera was not performed. I asked Mr. Le Yen, the man in charge of the opera's music, who told me that this piece «had not hit concrete targets.» By this we, the performers, only understood that the higher echelons did not want it, because it included mistakes. As for us, the performers, we did not see any mistakes.

After investigating, we learned that during the rehearsal of this opera at the Grand Theater, a high cadre of the arts and letters leadership shook his head and said: «Pretty bourgeois».

So the cadres of the lower echelons decided to put an end to this performance, disregarding the efforts and tears of the people working on it.

I still remember the words of Hoai Thanh, Luu Trong Lu during the rehearsal: «The opinions of the performers working for their own art are valuable contributions to the success of the opera.»

I also remember that, after seeing the performances of the operas of our friendly country China, the «White Haired Woman», «Luu Ho Lan», «The Song in the Plain», and so forth, we artists could not help feeling that our opera is practically worthless, or thinking of our own responsibilities, and of the shortcomings of the leadership which have restricted the creative force of the opera writers and performers.

Here we only cite the opera «Fire Camp» as an example, to urge our arts and letters comrades to pay greater attention to, and encourage the development of opinions of the artists. The suppression of a dance, a song, or a performance cannot be decided on by some individuals of the leadership, but by the people working on them.

The second question I want to deal with is the material existence of the performers. I have had opportunities to meet the comrades of the Soviet and Chinese artistic troupes. Their lives are easy, they have no worries whatever. Then I have also met the circus performers of the artistic office. These performers have participated in the circus group for nine months, and have performed in Hanoi, in the Viet Bac interzone, in the left bank zone, in the Delta, and they are still not considered as permanent employees of the circus group. So they wonder what will happen to them, if an accident occurs, before they are permanent employees of the group.

Are not nine months sufficient to study their police records, and permanently admit them into the group? Of course, their worries seriously influence their performances. Circus performance is most painful and dangerous work, so it is necessary to have just treatment and insurance for the performers. After six or seven months of study, no definite status for circus performers has yet been decided, so the temporary 30,000 «dong»

salary has been maintained forever. This is a real problem, which causes worry to the performer comrades. Is this because our financial situation cannot yet permit us to do otherwise? Or because our leader comrades have not yet paid attention to the fate of performer comrades? Indeed, during the performances, many people had to cry out: «What a pity, our performers are too thin». Even General Chu Van Tan had to say: «It is necessary to improve their health».

Moreover, their daily life also causes many worries for our comrades. After each night's tiring performance, our comrades wonder how they can get up the next morning at the sound of the bugle. The orchestra members have to observe the military terms: «At ease!», and «Attention!» The comrade charged with playing the bugle has to take care of the poultry and pigs of the group, and other comrades have to busy themselves with their beds, their meals, their bowls and chopsticks and so forth.

The leader and political commissar comrades have not effectively encouraged and helped the performer comrades to improve their art. It is necessary to hire more people to take care of these small things, so our performer comrades may concentrate on their art. Here I have bravely raised this question, and hope our performer comrades will contribute their opinions to our work to give better status to our performers, who have so far been forgotten and oppressed.

Nhan Van, October 15

«Open letter to Readers»

(Our editions are late, our administration careless, our distribution spotty, our staff preoccupied, and our service dissatisfactory and we have been officially harassed. Nevertheless, we will never allow our enemies (the imperialists — Ed.) to get us down and also certain others.

You have encouraged the publication of Nhan Van, and energetically commented on it. Issues number one (two thousand copies) and number two (six thousand copies) were sold out in

one day. This shows that you are very concerned with the development of democratic freedoms of our regime, and the mobilization for renovation of artistic and literary works, or spiritual works.

Nevertheless, in the publication of this review, we have committed many mistakes which we want to explain to you today, and for which we hope that you will forgive us.

One—Our review has not appeared on the exact date and distribution was not announced in advance, so you had to wait and were worried.

Two—Our administration was carelessly organized. Many of our readers who had bought long term subscriptions have not received our paper, or have received it too late. Others who wanted to subscribe did not know to whom to apply for it. Our distribution centers were not rationally set up; thus, in some regions, there were too many centers, while in some others there were none, so our readers had trouble in procuring our review.

Three—Except for the struggle for arts and letters, we have not discussed concrete cultural and social problems which are attracting our compatriots' attention, such as education, health, people's livelihood, and so on.

These mistakes originated in the fact that we did not have enough money, that we lacked experience, and that, while facing difficulties in publication, newsprint purchase and operating premises, we were embarrassed by the problems concerning the organization of our editorial and administration departments. Most of our staff can devote only a part of their time to our review, because they are at the same time civil servants, or cadres of some mass organization. We are trying to correct these mistakes, and weak points.

We take this opportunity to ask you to pay attention to two important points relating to the appearance of Nhan Van:

One—The opinion of the people, the cadres and the press has been greatly stirred by our review since its first issue. Many people have approved it; some others have opposed it to the point of belittling and attacking it, and a number of its contributors. We have paid no attention to this belittling and considered this opposition attitude as a hasty and erroneous attitude adopted

by friends toward friends. This opposition has sprung from differences in our conceptions of democratic freedoms ; but, as we are brothers of the same family, we are convinced that eventually this opposition will be wiped out. We hope that our readers will agree with us, and will avoid any attitude unfavorable to union.

Two — We have been surrounded by the agents of the imperialists who seized this opportunity to endeavour to sow disunion among our revolutionary ranks. They were wrong ; Nhan Van, as well as you, will not let ourselves be fooled by them. All their plots of disunion and sabotage will be frustrated. We hope that you will always be on the alert to struggle with us against all plots and distorted propaganda of our enemies.

But there also have been a number of reactionary people whose heads have been full of colonialist and feudal vestiges, and who, because of their personal interests and situation, have slandered democratic freedoms by word and deed, and threatened to smother them, either secretly or openly, though they stand among the revolutionary ranks. We hope that you will collaborate with us to openly struggle against these bad elements in order to protect freedom of thought, freedom of speech and freedom of study and creation, and to make our regime more beautiful. In a word, Nhan Van has always let itself be led by the Lao Dong and the government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, resolutely struggled for national unification and true democracy — a long and arduous struggle — and resolutely frustrated all sabotaging maneuvers of the imperialists' agents, as well as the bad elements in our own ranks.

This review is yours. Actively support it, so that it may live for ever and be developed day after day.

Hanoi Nhan Van, October 15

« Dissatisfaction, » by Sy Ngoc.

(They say our dissatisfaction is a class reaction. But what class isn't dissatisfied as things are now ? The guilty are those who are satisfied with mistakes.)

Currently, an erroneous opinion prevails about the criticism movement launched by Nhan Van, according to which, the staff of this review are a group of dissatisfied writers. In a word, a number of competent persons in the leading circles feel it necessary to circulate a rumor aimed at isolating Nhan Van and its collaborators. They have gone to the point of dubbing this criticism movement «a class reaction» (no class being specified).

... Dissatisfied! Why should we not be dissatisfied?

Who is satisfied with the present mistakes in land reform? Who is satisfied with other mistakes, such as the mistakes in arts and letters policy, or the the policy toward intellectuals?

I am sure it is not we, who have participated in the revolution, who have lived and died with the revolution, and who are the sons of the revolution. We who have dedicated ourselves to the people and the society, who are afflicted by the mistakes prejudicial to the building up of the North and the revolution cannot be satisfied with these mistakes or the authors of these mistakes.

We, the artists and writers who have served the revolution and who have demanded constant progress of our society, must be naturally dissatisfied with the counter-progressive forces which have hindered our society's progress. We, the artists and writers who wish to see our specialities developed to better serve the revolution, must be naturally dissatisfied with the mistakes which hinder the development of our culture, our arts and letters. Dissatisfaction with mistakes is proper, the guilty are those who are satisfied with mistakes.

If these dissatisfied men are called «class reactionaries» then what class has not reacted against the mistakes prejudicial to the revolution? What class is satisfied with the mistakes prejudicial to the interests of the peasants, the workers, the intellectuals and the revolution?

Who has not reacted against the mistakes which have exerted a bad influence on land reform? Who has not reacted against the serious mistakes injuring our North when it is necessary to consolidate and build up the people's democratic regime so that it may quickly progress toward socialism?

...Who is afraid of criticism? I beg to state frankly that they

are those who have bureaucratic manners, who are fond of high position and who are puffed up with pride, the sons of the feudalists and imperialists. Thus, they continue to resort to their old, undemocratic methods, by calling «dissatisfied» and «reactionary» those who dare criticize them. The party and the government are taking measures to correct mistakes, such as measures to correct bureaucratic, dictatorial and undemocratic attitudes, in order to make our society really revolutionary.

We are dissatisfied because we are not satisfied with the present situation, and because we do not like to see private interests run counter to the masses' interests. We are dissatisfied with mistakes, and those who have committed mistakes, which are prejudicial to the interests of the revolution.

As for the people who maintain that we are dissatisfied because we are envious of high position or material interest, we think that it is unnecessary to answer these vile persons.

