

CHOU YANG

THE PATH OF
SOCIALIST
LITERATURE AND ART
IN CHINA



FOREIGN LANGUAGES PRESS
PEKING

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*Report Delivered
To the Third Congress of
Chinese Literary and Art Workers
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The Third Congress of Chinese Literary and Art Workers has opened today.

Nearly seven years have passed since the Second Congress was held in September 1953. And it is eleven years since the First Congress, held in July 1949. Although ten years or so are no more than a brief moment in the whole course of the history of mankind, yet in this brief space drastic changes have taken place in our country and in the world.

Having successively won great victories in the democratic revolution and in the socialist revolution, our people today, guided and inspired by the Party's general line for building socialism, are scoring great successes in industrial and agricultural production and on all other fronts. In this vast land of ours a series of new phenomena have appeared. Socialist economic construction is leaping forward continuously at unprecedented speed; the rural and urban people's communes are like the morning sun rising in the east; millions of people are drawn into the movements for the technical revolution and cultural revolution which are being carried forward with tremendous fervour. An incomparably profound change has taken place in the spiritual outlook of the masses. Comrade Mao Tse-tung has most aptly used the phrase "so high in spirit, so strong in morale and so firm in determination" to describe the Chinese people during the big leap forward. The heroism displayed by our people in the revolutionary struggle and in productive labour, their

lofty ideals and moral qualities, have won the praise of progressive mankind all over the world. China is step by step changing its state of poverty, weakness and backwardness and stands in the world in a magnificent revolutionary manner and in all the glory of youth.

The broad masses of people of the various countries in the socialist camp headed by the Soviet Union are successfully carrying out socialist construction, advancing with giant strides. The mighty strength of the socialist camp, and the political consciousness, unity and struggles of the peoples of the world constitute a powerful bulwark against imperialism and in defence of world peace. The imperialist camp headed by the United States is declining further. The policies of war and aggression pursued by U.S. imperialism are encountering opposition from more and more people throughout the world. A Cuban revolutionary poet has written:

People of Cuba!
Learn to shout
This sentence in English:
Yankees, get out!

These wrathful lines represent the voice of all the peoples trampled upon by U.S. imperialism. In Asia, Africa and Latin America the movements for national liberation and democratic revolution are surging ahead. The victory of the Cuban people's revolution, the courageous patriotic struggle of the Japanese people against U.S. imperialism, the Algerian people's war of resistance for national independence, the rising of the Congolese people against colonialism, the overthrow of traitorous dictators by the peoples of south Korea and Turkey — these have greatly

stirred the hearts of the people throughout the world, freed many of their fear of imperialism and inspired the people of the world in the struggle against imperialism. In the imperialist countries, there has been a further development of the just struggle of the broad masses of the people against monopoly capital and against fascism, and to win and safeguard democratic freedoms, and for social progress. A new high tide has appeared in the struggle embracing the broadest sections of the people against the war forces of imperialism and in defence of world peace. The time has now come for the people of the oppressed nations of the world to shatter completely the chains of imperialism and colonialism. The day is not distant when imperialism will finally be wiped off the face of the earth. The superior system of socialism and the beautiful ideal of communism are attracting more and more people in the world.

Literature and art are a form of ideology belonging to the superstructure; they are a reflection of the economic basis and are the nerve centre of the class struggle. In the imperialist countries people observe a scene of fearful spiritual collapse and moral degeneration. This is also reflected in the works of literature and art of these countries. The films shown by the chief capitalist countries at the 13th International Film Festival held in Cannes, France, last May were, virtually without exception, an agglomeration of sex, obscenity and crime. Even bourgeois critics could not but admit with regret that this was "the most scandalously shameless film festival of all time." This was just a projection of the decay and decline of the capitalist world. The monopoly capitalists not only have turned the literature, films and art pro-

duced under their control into drugs corrupting and poisoning the hearts of men, but through the writers in their employ, have created a considerable body of blood-thirsty writings which blatantly advocates aggressive war, colonial rule and racial discrimination, and directly serves the war forces of imperialism. In West Germany and Japan, following the revival of fascism and militarism, a considerable body of writing extolling Nazi war criminals and trumpeting the "soul of the Yamato race" has been let loose. Many bourgeois writers and artists in the so-called "free world" are irretrievably sunk in mental despair; some of them regard the end of capitalism as the end of the world and are thus full of fear and apprehension, unable to see any hope for the future of mankind; some vacillate between capitalism and socialism; some gradually manage to break through the barriers of a bourgeois world outlook and various kinds of prejudices to turn to the side of the people, the side of socialism.

Progressive, revolutionary writers and artists are subjected to all kinds of discrimination and persecution in the capitalist countries; yet they are stubbornly persisting in the struggle, and have produced many fine works reflecting the people's progressive aspirations. Many peace-loving writers and artists in various countries of the world have been taking an active part in the movement to defend world peace. In some places where the storm of the national and democratic revolutions has arisen, revolutionary writers and artists stand in the forefront of the struggle, sharing the destiny of their people, faithfully expressing the people's longing for liberation. Let us here express our greatest respect for all those writ-

ers and artists who are fighting heart and soul for peace, democracy, national independence and human progress.

Our socialist literature and art are utterly opposed to that literature and art which serve imperialism and the reactionaries. In contrast to the moribund, decadent literature and art of capitalism, our literature and art are revolutionary and full of vitality, a literature and art which inspire the labouring people to rise up to transform the world, to wage a revolutionary struggle. Literature and art of this kind describe the wide world of the people, depict the great struggles of the labouring masses, reflect the rise and prosperity of the new socialist world, the birth and development of the new men and women of communism.

The modern revisionists represented by Tito's clique in Yugoslavia distort the correct principle of peaceful coexistence between countries with different social systems and loudly advocate so-called "active coexistence"; they deny the antagonism between the socialist camp and the imperialist camp and advocate the interweaving and merging of the socialist and bourgeois ideological systems. They attempt by various ways and means to disrupt the socialist camp ideologically and politically and liquidate the just struggle of the peoples of the world against imperialism. To this end, the revisionists, acting in co-ordination with the propaganda machine of the imperialists, are everywhere peddling the rotten capitalist culture and way of life, and doing their best to encourage all kinds of ideological trends hostile to Marxism, socialism and the people among the intellectuals, writers and artists of the socialist countries. On the front of litera-

ture and art, the struggle between the socialist and the imperialist countries, between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, between the forces of progress and those of reaction is extremely sharp.

Revolutionary literature and art are subordinate to revolutionary politics, while reactionary literature and art are subordinate to reactionary politics. And once a revolutionary writer or artist departs from the people's revolutionary cause, no matter under what flag, he loses his bearings, strays on to the wrong track, and becomes degenerate or even reactionary.

Our people's present political task is to build our country at the quickest possible rate warranted by objective conditions, into a strong socialist state with a modern industry, modern agriculture, modern science and culture, and to prepare the conditions for the future advance to communism. At the same time, together with the peoples of the various socialist countries, together with all revolutionary and peace-loving peoples of the world, we must exert our utmost efforts to oppose imperialism and to win lasting world peace. On the ideological front, we must raise still higher the revolutionary banner of Marxism-Leninism and oppose the reactionary ideological trends of modern revisionism; we must, by means of a protracted and unremitting struggle, make a clean sweep of the political and ideological influences of the bourgeoisie among the masses, and greatly enhance the communist consciousness and moral qualities of our people. Our literature and art should become keen instruments for educating the people in the spirit of socialism and communism, in the spirit of proletarian internationalism.

Revolutionary writers and artists should take their stand in the frontline of the people's revolutionary struggle, in the forefront of the times.

Since the First and Second Congress, and especially since the big leap forward, extremely great successes have been won in our literary and art work; a great wealth of experience has been gained. Under the leadership of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party and Comrade Mao Tse-tung, we have found the correct path for the development of socialist literature and art. At this Congress, we should make a good summing-up of our experience and elucidate how literature and art in our country have developed; we should expound what is the correct direction and path of advance which our literature and art should take, and which benefits the cause of socialism and communism as well as the development of socialist literature and art themselves; we should explain how sharp struggles have been waged in the literary and art circles of our country between the proletarian line and the bourgeois line, between the communist world outlook and the bourgeois world outlook. These are the questions which are to be discussed with special emphasis at this Congress.

SERVE THE WORKERS, PEASANTS AND SOLDIERS, SERVE THE CAUSE OF SOCIALISM

Our literature and art serve the workers, peasants and soldiers, serve the cause of socialism. Since 1942 when Comrade Mao Tse-tung's celebrated *Talks at the Yenan Forum on Art and Literature* was published, that litera-

ture and art must serve the workers, peasants and soldiers, has always been the firm and unswerving line that has been supported, followed and fought for by our revolutionary literary and art workers. Our achievements in literature and art are the victory of the line on literature and art laid down by Comrade Mao Tse-tung, the victory of Marxist-Leninist principles in literature and art.

In our country, the labouring masses of workers and peasants have become the masters of the country; they have overthrown the oppressors and exploiters and done away with the system of private ownership of the means of production; members of the parasitic classes who formerly lived by exploitation are now being remoulded into working people who earn their living by their own labour. By taking the path of co-operation and people's communes, the former individual peasants and individual handicraftsmen have become collective peasants and collective craftsmen. Whom should literature and art serve if not the labouring masses of workers and peasants, and their intellectuals? Should we serve the landlord class and bourgeoisie instead? I would like to ask who, today, is more worthy of being depicted than the labouring people? The line that literature and art serve the workers, peasants and soldiers has opened up a new world for literature and art; it provides writers and artists with new themes, new subjects to depict and new audiences to serve. This is the direction for the development of the literature and art of mankind; this is a great revolution in literature and art.

Today, serving the workers, peasants and soldiers means serving the cause of socialist construction in which

millions of people are so vigorously engaged, serving the Party's general line, serving the great communist tomorrow. It means serving the noble cause of opposing imperialism and winning lasting world peace. It means portraying the great deeds and achievements of our people in the revolution and in construction, portraying their spirit of arduous struggle and lofty communist qualities. It means working in co-ordination with the technical revolution and cultural revolution of the masses, thoroughly smashing the monopolizing of literature and art by a few, so that literature and art can be accepted and made use of by the broadest masses of workers and peasants.

That literature and art should serve the workers, peasants and soldiers is the proletarian line in literature and art. It is sharply opposed to the bourgeois line in literature and art. This is why it is looked upon with hostility and is hated by all reactionaries and revisionists both inside and outside the country. Hu Feng called this line "a dagger"; the Yugoslav revisionists revile it as a "persecution" of writers. This is not in the least surprising. For they hate the working class, they hate the revolution. And in the eyes of bourgeois men of letters, literature and art are the monopoly of a small number of the "upper class," their private property; from their point of view literature and art should praise none but the bourgeoisie and bourgeois intellectuals, should prettify the corrupt way of life of the bourgeoisie and propagate bourgeois individualist ideas and low tastes. How can they, these "literary aristocrats," be willing to portray or serve the masses of workers and peasants? Therefore, to develop socialist literature and art we cannot but wage an unremitting struggle against bourgeois ideas. This struggle started

with the criticism of the film *The Life of Wu Hsun* in 1951, proceeded to the criticism of the *Studies on the "Dream of the Red Chamber"* and the repudiation of the ideas of Hu Shih and Hu Feng and the exposure of Hu Feng's counter-revolutionary clique, down to the struggle against Ting Ling and Chen Chi-hsia's anti-Party clique and other rightists in 1957, and following these, the repudiation of revisionist trends in literature and art. This series of struggles on the front of literature and art is a reflection in the realm of ideology of the class struggle in our country during the period of the socialist revolution and socialist construction. If we take the criticism of *The Life of Wu Hsun* as the first shot fired at bourgeois ideas in literature and art since the founding of our People's Republic, then the struggle against the rightists in this field was a decisive battle on the literary and art front between two roads, two kinds of world outlooks.

The bourgeois rightists and the revisionists are always trying to change our literature and art in accordance with their world outlook and aesthetic theory, and they are always trying to drag our literature and art on to the capitalist road. In order to clear the path for the advance of socialist literature and art, a protracted and repeated struggle against bourgeois thought is inevitable. This is the law of development of socialist literature and art. As a result of these struggles, our literature and art have not "withered," as some reactionary men of letters insist, but have grown stronger and healthier. Now, we can all see, the literature and art of our country are advancing by leaps and bounds along the socialist track.

In our country, literature and art are no longer monopolized by a few, but have become the common under-

taking of the broad masses of people of the various nationalities in our land. Revolutionary literature, drama, films and other forms of art have taken a deep hold on our people's hearts. Many new works of literature run into editions of hundreds of thousands or even more than a million copies. Film audiences in 1959 reached a total of 4,100 million. The new repertoire of traditional operas, modern dramas, new operas, music, dancing, *chuyi*¹ and acrobatics are attracting increasingly broad audiences. Works of fine art are enjoyed by the broad masses of people; every year tens of millions of picture-story books are printed. The labouring masses have found that literature and art are indeed serving them, truthfully reflecting their thoughts, feelings and wishes, and are "textbooks of life" which encourage them in their work and struggles, and enhance their moral qualities. Workers and peasants are taking a keen part themselves in literary and art creation; spare-time art activities and the movement for spare-time writing in factories, villages and the armed forces are unfolding on a scale that is unprecedented. The talented creations of many unknown worker and peasant authors shine brilliantly side by side with the best works of professional writers and artists. Never before have literature and art occupied such an important position in the people's life as today, never before have they played such an important role or received such serious attention from the people. The relationship between literature and art and the labouring people has changed and the character of literature and art

¹ Traditional performances including different kinds of ballad singing, story-telling and comic dialogues. — *Ed.*

has also changed. By degrees our literature and art are becoming the labouring people's own literature and art.

The most outstanding features of our literature and art are their vigorous and clear-cut revolutionary character and militancy. Literary and art workers, in their role as drummers of the times, are using every form of literature and art to give a sharp and prompt reflection of our people's struggle against imperialism, and in defence of our motherland and world peace, and the new people and new things which are constantly appearing on all the fronts of construction in our motherland, enthusiastically depicting the growth of the new in the midst of struggles, showing the positive role played by literature and art in close co-ordination with politics. There is a considerable body of good writing which gives a comprehensive picture and artistic generalization of the revolutionary history of our people and of the struggles they are now engaged in. Every stage in the history of the stirring people's revolutionary struggle in our country from the time of the Opium War to that of socialist revolution is presented in such novels and stories as *Keep the Red Flag Flying*, *The Song of Youth*, *Three Families' Lane*, *Sacred Fountain Cavern*, *Sow-Thistle*, *Railway Guerrillas*, *Red Sun*, *Tracks in the Snowy Forest*, *San-liwan Village*, *Great Changes in a Mountain Village*, *The Builders*, *Beacon on the Steppes*, *Dawn on the River*, and *The Joy of Battle*; in such long narrative poems as *The Story of Yang Kao*, *The Carter and Tumultuous Years*; in such plays as *The Long March*, *The Red Storm*, *Long Live Our Heroes!*, *Prelude to the Eastward March* and *Locust Tree Village*; and in such films as *The Battle of Sangkumryung*, *Commissioner Lin*, *The Storm*, *Nieh Erh*,

The Song of Youth, *Tung Tsun-jui* and *Youth in the Flames of War*. Pictures of the stirring life on every front in industrial and agricultural construction and the big leap forward are given in such novels and stories as *Steeled and Tempered*, *In Time of Peace*, *Riding on the Wind*, *Dawn in Wind and Rain*, *A Stormy Night* and *My First Superior*; in such plays as *Taming the Dragon and the Tiger*, *A Happy Reunion* and *In Praise of Communism*; and in the films *New Story of an Old Soldier*, *The Yellow River Flows Up*, *Spring Warmth Among the People*, *Everywhere Is Spring* and *Five Golden Flowers*.

Advanced figures among the masses of workers and peasants have become the major heroes and heroines in our literature and art. Heroic images of workers, peasants, soldiers, revolutionary cadres and revolutionary intellectuals have been created in many good novels, stories, films, plays, paintings and other art forms. Writers and artists have embodied their own ideals in the creation of these heroic figures, presenting a new world, new people and new ideas in their works of art. In the works of recent years one can perceive a clear trend that writers are giving a more vivid, more profound portrayal of the world-transforming revolutionary enthusiasm of the masses and their magnificent spirit, while their characterization is fuller and much finer than before. In *Keep the Red Flag Flying* we see the heroic history of the older generation of revolutionary peasants in attacking the forces of reaction during the long years of dark rule. Chu Chung personifies in full the age-old class hatred of generations of peasants against the landlords, and the demand for revolution of the peasants aroused and inspired by the Party. *Sow-Thistle* written against the background of all

the complex and bitter struggles in the bases established behind the enemy lines during the War of Resistance to Japanese Aggression, depicts a kindly, brave revolutionary mother. Li Yu-kuo, the Red Army instructor in *The Long March*, devotes his whole life to the Party and the revolution; at the very point of death, he cries confidently: "Let the revolution gallop forward!" His profile makes an impression on our minds not easily forgotten. *Red Sun* depicts a high-ranking officer, Shen Chen-hsin, who shoulders a heavy responsibility in directing a decisive battle, but gives his commands calmly and with confidence. The soldier Yang Tzu-jung in *Tracks in the Snowy Forest* epitomizes the intelligence and the daring spirit of revolutionary scouts. *The Builders* gives a trenchant description of the fierce class struggle in the villages in the course of agricultural co-operation and the different characteristics of villagers of different classes and strata; Liang Sheng-pao is a true portrayal of a young revolutionary peasant determined to take the socialist road. Chin Teh-kuei in *Steeled and Tempered*, Teng Hsiu-mei in *Great Changes in a Mountain Village* and the heroines in *New Friends* and *The Story of Li Shuang-shuang* are all lively and vivid pictures of young workers and peasants.

The creation of these characters has answered the question: Who are the heroes of our time? It shows that the working class and labouring people have been given the position in our works of literature and art which they deserve.

The masses of labouring people are always the creators of human civilization and society's wealth, but owing to the fact that for centuries they were oppressed and ex-

exploited politically and economically they were often either ignored or distorted in the literature and art of the past. With its entry onto the stage of history, the working class demands that literature and art correctly portray the labouring people and that they become fighting weapons of the working class.

Back in the forties of the last century, Engels was loud in his praise of the descriptions of "the poor and the despised class" which he found in the works of Dickens, George Sand and Eugene Sue, considering this phenomenon as "a thoroughgoing revolution" in the field of novel writing in Europe. ("The Movement on the Continent.") Later, in the eighties, he formally laid down before revolutionary writers the task of describing the revolutionary struggle of the working class. Descriptions of this revolutionary struggle should, he said, "lay claim to a place in the domain of realism." ("Letter to Margaret Harkness.") By the time of Lenin, the centre of the proletarian revolutionary storm had shifted to Russia, and Lenin in his famous "Party Organization and Party Literature" further put forward the Party's slogan for literature, pointing out: "Literature must become *part* of the common cause of the proletariat," socialist literature should "serve the millions and tens of millions of working people." Lenin, indeed, was the first to formulate the fighting programme of proletarian literature and art.

The new revolutionary literature and art of our country came into being under the impact of the great October Revolution, and are a part of the socialist literature and art of the world proletariat. To meet the needs of the revolutionary struggle, the Chinese Communist Party, soon after its birth, put forward the idea of the creation