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# FROM THE OTHER SHORE

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## The Intellectual Mafia, or "Moral Terrorism"

POLISH writers are continuing to resist Party pressures. The "ideological offensive" against them has so far been singularly unsuccessful.

At the Twelfth Party Plenum, held in October 1958, the three literary members of the Central Committee—the philosopher, Adam Schaff; the Stalinist ex-boss of the Writers' Union, Leon Kruczkowski; and the former Ambassador to France, Jerzy Putrament—have all complained about writers' resistance and put forward proposals to deal with it.

Adam Schaff remarked:

In the present situation we shall not achieve much simply by argumentation, and comrades who work in our intellectual environment know very well why. . . . There is a kind of moral terrorism operating there, very small but quite influential *vis-à-vis* its members. These comrades who do not have to deal with this cannot realise the force that is represented by the "Left" snobbery of the intellectuals. They are often influenced by a few friends at a café table, friends whom an individual meets, and whose opinions will often be more important to him than many of our appeals and attempts to convince. . . .

Kruczkowski charged the intellectuals with being particularly susceptible to the influence of "obscurantist forces":

They have not the courage to oppose strongly that special terror which still exists in that milieu, a terror of the Mafia type. . . .

Putrament pointed out that "the question of the Party's interest in matters of culture is of primary importance." But there were disagreements as to the method of reimposing the Party tutelage on the writers. Gomulka himself warned that "to give up persuasion and use only administrative methods would be the worst possible error."

On the eve of the annual Writers' Congress, the chief theoretician in the Politbureau and secretary of the Central Committee, Jerzy Morawski, explained the Party line to editors and writers:

The successes achieved by the Party during the last two years were won without proper help, and often against the opposition of many comrades from the ideological front. . . . The participation of our intellectuals in the solution of these problems is still too small. There are many people in these circles who were regarded as Marxists, but who are (at least temporarily) lost to our cause. They have lost themselves. They capitulated before the bourgeois ideology. They persist

in their obsession and are gradually passing to the enemy positions. They must be eliminated from our ranks, and prevented from misguiding public opinion.

Putrament attacked the present, democratically elected, Presidium of the Writers' Union in *Trybuna Literacka* (December 14th, 1958) asserting that some of its actions "show conclusively the political direction of the Union which, unfortunately, cannot be considered correct." However, in an interview published in *Zycie Literackie* (December 14th, 1958) a day before the Writers' Congress, Antoni Slonimski, the head of the Union, pointed out that "the election of the Warsaw delegates to the Wroclaw Congress is undoubted proof of the confidence of the literary milieu in the present Presidium of the Union." This was no idle remark—for Kruczkowski and Putrament failed to be elected delegates to the Congress.

The solidarity was remarkable. A resolution was passed calling for "a defence of the freedom of expression," and protesting against the mounting censorship which recently prevented some thirty books from appearing.

During the debates, the essayist, Pawel Hertz, claimed that censorship was actually illegal (since it has no place in the Polish constitution). A poet, Mieczyslaw Jastrun, complained that the censors were "confiscating not only the thunder but even the clouds. . . ." Another poet, Jerzy Zagorski, disclosed that a poem of his had been banned because it contained the expression "the dove of hypocrisy"; the censor had argued that it might be understood as an allusion to the Communist "dove of peace." Antoni Slonimski remarked, with his customary irony, that the writers were being called on "to strengthen the hearts of . . . the administrative apparatus."

In this tug-o'-war the odds are, of course, heavily weighted against the writers. Manuscripts remain unpublished, assignments become vague, fees become few and far between. But there is apparently no spirit of capitulation. Wiktor Woroszylski, the young revisionist writer who some time ago was deprived of the editorship of *Nowa Kultura*, made the following comment on "revisionism in literature" in an interview published by *Zycie Literackie* (No. 39, 1958):

The term "revisionism in literature" presupposes the existence of a permanent and unchanging model of literature, a deviation from which is something reprehensible. To accept this is to abolish from the start the possibility of creating literature. That should be obvious. I do not take such reproaches too tragically. Things change, and there is a chronic tendency for such threatening assessments to become obsolete. After all, it is not so long ago that the authors who were previously regarded as revisionists and deviationists were rehabilitated and their works saw daylight again. . . .

John Kenneth Galbraith reported in these pages a few months ago that pessimists in Poland were saying: "How terrible is the past that awaits us." The optimists have their own formula: "The pre-

## Anthology

**T**HE ATTITUDES of poets on the other shore in 1958 may be gauged from the following (possibly non-representative) sample:

**Soviet Russia:** Alexander Twardowskii, who as the chief editor of the literary magazine, *Novyi Mir*, signed a letter of the editorial board condemning Pasternak (No. 11, 1958) had published some four months before (No. 7, 1958) the following poem:

### TO MY CRITICS

*You all try to give me  
This one piece of advice—  
Sing, by all means, but don't hear, don't  
see!*

*Only what's permitted is nice.*

*I haven't listened to you in vain.  
Yet I fear that when these times  
Are forgotten, you'll speak once again:  
Did you hear, see nothing, in your  
rhymes?*

**Poland:** Antoni Slonimski, the head of the Writers' Union, reflects sadly (*Nowa Kultura*, August 17th, 1958):

### LYING

*Lying—the fifth element  
(the phrase is Leonardo's)—  
Taking the form of printer's ink  
Oozes from the daily columns  
Onto roofs of houses, tar of streets.  
Apparently nothing has changed,  
Only that the official's face has gained a  
grimace,  
Only that I am sitting alone at the table  
Looking at staircases without banisters,  
Which lead nowhere.  
Plucked strings remain mute.*

**Hungary:** In the official *Elet es Irodalom* (February 14th, 1958), there is this poem by Ferenc Jankovics:

*Why? If the leaders are bad,  
is the idea false?*

*Why? If the shepherd is bad,  
must I leave the flock?*

*Why? If they throw me on a bonfire,  
must I at once jump in a pond?*

*Why? If they beat me,  
must I beat the innocent?*

*Why? If there is no wheat,  
must the Muse be silent?*

*If there were wheat,  
would the Muse sing better?*

*Why? If villainy rules,  
should justice die?*

*If barbarism bellows,  
will there be freedom nevermore?*

*My God, strengthen me,  
let me remain a compass,*

*Until my strength is consumed,  
purified, still fighting.*

*Since I have pen in hand,  
let it not fall amiss.*

*But nail words with my writing  
for the people who call. Thus... my  
faith.*

**Czechoslovakia:** Even the "most loyal" satellite produces some highly ambiguous verse, e.g., the poem by the late Vitezslav Nezval in *Literarni Noviny* (May 31st, 1958):

### I SEE CITIES

*I believe this dream will come true one  
day:*

*My works will be rehabilitated!  
There will be a world without wars  
Just round the corner of time.*

*And a city enclosed in a garden,  
A city planned by the people for them-  
selves*

*Just as Goethe planned his sunny  
Weimar.*

*A city without offices and rumbling  
boulevards,*

*Houses close to wells and ponds.*

*A house where a man dwells who does  
not*

*Leave his wife for a younger woman.*

*A city in which there are no thieves who  
steal*

*Gold, silver, and human feelings...*

**East Germany:** How far from his brilliant early Expressionism is this lyric by the recently deceased Minister of Culture, Johannes R. Becher (who during the last years of his life wrote only in a "socialist realist" style):

*Great songs were sung*

*By poets of old*

*On the destiny of Man.*

*The greatest of all*

*Is sung in our time.*

*We sing*

*Of the Five Year Plan.*

**China:** From *Jen Min Jih Pao* (April 21st, 1958) an example of the verse which Chinese poets have been asked to write:

*My sweetheart is at Hungmeichuang  
south of the mountain,*

*I am at Hsinghuatsun north of the  
mountain.*

*I want to sing a song for him,*

*But the mountain stops my voice.*

*I want to send him a flower,*

*But the mountain people embarrass me.*

*This year the co-op unites both sides as  
one family,*

*And I can meet him all day and talk to  
his heart.*

sent is what in the past has been described as Our Glorious Future, and what in the future will be called The Era of Errors and Distortions."

### True Colours

THE efforts of the post-revolutionary Hungarian régime to obtain "intellectual co-operation" have not been quite successful, but the "writers' strike" is no longer the method of resistance. Well-known writers, many of whom played a rôle in the revolution, still maintain an aloof attitude, but they no longer refuse to publish. Many of them are still in prison. Only three (Zoltan Zelk, Domokos Varga, and Bela Nemeth) of the imprisoned intellectuals were recently released.

The Director of Hungarian State Publishing, Bela Kopecki, has announced in his report that the situation is "satisfactory":

Eighteen months after the counter-revolution we can state that our literature shows a development which even the most ardent optimists did not believe possible in November 1956. At that time they talked of a Writers' Strike, of the opposition to the People's régime, and of the rejection of socialist realism. It was a difficult situation in our literary life. Time, patience, tact, and particularly a sound general policy was needed for our writers to find their way out of the crisis. . . . (*Nepszabadsag*, June 29th, 1958.)

But the Hungarian writers are apparently prepared to pay only the most modest "price of compromise." Erno Urban, himself a writer and member of parliament, charged them with failing to express political attitudes:

It is true that the writers are active. Yet they hardly publish anything in the daily press and periodicals. . . . They should take up the most burning and topical questions, and show their true colours. (*Magyar Nemzet*, June 22nd, 1958.)

Similarly, Gyorgy Bolonyi, who is the chairman of the Literary Council (and of the Hungarian PEN Club), complained:

There are many writers, and there are as many conceptions, hesitant attitudes, different judgments of the past, and interpretations of the present. . . . There are nearly defunct volcanoes waiting for a world-political event to break forth again. . . . There are people who only feel at home in the magic circle of certain fading literary personalities." (*Elet Es Irodalom*, March 21st, 1958.)

The literary subjects are not quite satisfactory:

With regard to subjects and the means used to describe them, most of our writers are lagging behind and have got stuck in the mud. . . . Generally speaking, what are the stories which some of our writers tell? Well, it happens that we have to read about a murder for pleasure and its careful preparation, to which Freudian analyses are attached; in another story a sadist exploits all the possibilities given to him by a

sick writer's mind; a third novel is a veritable assembly of homosexuals. . . . (Jozsef Fodor, *Nepszava*, August 31st, 1958.)

As the attempt to break the resistance of the old well-known writers has proved so difficult, Bolonyi advises (in one of the most unusual uses of the word "October" since 1917) "to rush and meet the new, untouched generation, left undisturbed by the propaganda of October and the times preceding October. . . ."

Alongside this policy of promoting the young, the unknown, and the provincial writers, efforts to induce the literary stars to collaborate went undiminished. These have met only with partial success. The Party seems to be ready to accept (for the time being) writers who have refrained from abject self-criticism or critique of revisionism—provided only that they do write and publish. Many writers, for their part, are willing to go along—if the Party demands on their literary conscience are not too excessive. This is clearly reflected in an interview given by Aron Tamasi in *Magyar Nemzet* (November 23rd, 1958), wherein he declares himself in favour "of the building of socialism, the people's power and the protection of peace," but emphasises the writer's right of free criticism and argues that current difficulties are due to the fact that the government and the writers disagree on what is "useful and artistic" in literature.

What the "difficulties" are was frankly taken up by the Party literary spokesman, Lajos Mesterhazy (*Nepszabadsag*, March 15th, 1958):

In this year's list of Kossuth Prize winners, the names of writers were lacking. Does this fact indicate an underestimation of literature? It is certain that our literature, recovering and re-awakening after grave ordeals, will soon create new works excellent both from the ideological and artistic point of view, and worthy of the Kossuth Prize. But would it have been more correct to overlook the fact that at present there are no such works, by awarding writers who, though loyal servants of progress, did not produce works deserving the Kossuth Prize? Or should prizes have been awarded to works which, although artistically good, do not advance the cause? . . .

The recent editorials in *Elet es Irodalom* underline the cruel dilemma of the régime. The Party must re-impose political controls over literature with one hand—and demand masterpieces from the writers with the other. This has become a slightly absurd stance in all Communist countries, and more than that in Hungary, with its "Petöfi revolution" of 1956 on the subjects of art, sincerity, truth, and freedom. As Zoltan Zelk (who is a Kossuth Prize winner, and who was recently released from prison) put it in his speech to the Petöfi circle in Budapest before the October days:

I know now that I gave up my principles, the pure faith of my youth, when I believed that a true cause may be served without honesty, without morals, and without regard for national tradition. I know now that this is impossible. . . .

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## LETTERS

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### Antiseptic Hansaviertel ?

DEBUNKING is almost always fun, but it becomes especially distressing when it is wildly wide of the mark. "Rotterdam, Roehampton, the Moscow suburbs, the *Hansaviertel* at Berlin," Ian Nairn writes ["The Antiseptic City," ENCOUNTER, February] "all share a fundamental lifelessness which makes the surface differences of architectural style seem unimportant and often a bit ludicrous." Nairn's idea is that "use-zoning is a disaster for the vitality of a city, which makes its impact from the multiplicity of things all thrown together" and which should be "a place for everyone—tarts as well as good girls, spivs as well as model husbands..." Well, I don't know much about the Moscow suburbs, or about Roehampton. But as a Berliner I would like to register an objection on behalf of the *Hansaviertel*. First of all, I simply cannot find the differences of architectural style in this exciting international experiment to be merely of "surface" character. There are 15-storey towers, there are long-stretched rows of houses, as well as one-floor family-structures—in a ceaselessly changing pattern, created by some two dozen architects from all over the world. If the *Hansaviertel* does not come alive with a sense of variety and dynamism, then Ian Nairn must be the only observer so far who thinks so. "Sterile"? On the contrary, if anything were to be said against the architecture of the *Hansaviertel* it would be on the grounds that it is a bit *too* full of colour and movement. As for Nairn's worry about girls good and bad, I suppose his attention should be drawn to the fact that a *Hansaviertel*-heartache could be appeased by a brief ten-minute stroll to the south—which is Berlin's traditional "entertainment centre," around the Kurfürstendamm. He would, I presume, find the tarts there, but also Italian opera, Chinese restaurants, and German gambling *kasinos*. The *Hansaviertel*, I am afraid, scarcely needs a Piccadilly Circus of its own.

Berlin

ALFRED KELLNER

### Mind and World

IN "My Present View of the World" (ENCOUNTER, January), Bertrand Russell writes that "there is supposed to be a gulf between mind and matter, and a mystery which it is held in some degree impious to try to dissipate. I believe, for my part, that there is no greater mystery than there is in the transformation by the radio of electro-magnetic waves into sounds."

Surely this is either a verbal slip or a false analogy? The radio does not transform electro-magnetic waves into sounds, but into sound-waves in the air. The process can be followed through

in mathematical terms: in this sense it is fully understood. This is not true of the process whereby the impact of sound-waves on the ear, causing volleys of nerve-impulses to flow up into the brain, is followed by the conscious experience of hearing sounds. We are not justified in saying that the nerve-and-brain activities are "transformed" into sounds: the two sets of events, the volleys of nerve-signals and the hearing of a sound, *appear* to have nothing in common. There must be some intimate relation between them, for if the signals are distorted, the heard sound will be distorted. But *how* they are related—well, we need not call it a "mystery," a word disliked with some reason by most scientists, but we are bound to say we do not know; and Russell's analogy of a radio set (if he really intends it) is not only not helpful in this connection, but positively misleading.

Again, Russell's definition of a "mind" as "a collection of events connected with each other by memory-chains backwards and forwards," though it may be useful for certain special purposes, is a very thin one, a ghostly abstraction from experience. It seems not to recognise the rôle actually played by mind in perception of the outer world. For this is not a merely passive, receiving rôle, nor is it confined to linking up precepts with memories. If we were not always bringing concepts to meet our percepts, the world would make no sense—it would remain for us the "great blooming buzzing confusion" which William James thought it must be for the new-born infant. And this conceptual activity, which brings order into the confusion and profusion of percepts, does not exhaust the rôle of mind.

Consider the hearing of sounds. They are not normally pure tones and nothing else. Even a single sound generally has some expressive quality—harsh, sweet, etc., or it may indicate pain or joy. It communicates to the mind, through the pattern of its overtones, something that is not itself sound, but a kind of rudimentary meaning.

When sounds are heard in combination, their capacity for communicating meaning is of course immeasurably enhanced. In speech, they communicate a definable meaning; in poetry, the meaning may be less precisely definable; in music, the meaning is generally indefinable, but nevertheless real, or we should not think it worth while to spend much time listening to music. Sounds therefore act as carriers of meaning; and the mind is equipped both to hear the sounds and—by looking as it were through their pattern of relationships—to perceive their meaning. These are distinct activities: one can hear perfectly the sounds of a foreign language without deriving any meaning from them. The patterns of oriental music carry little meaning to unversed Western ears.

Possibly a rather similar process may apply to the hearing of sounds itself. It is not very easy to believe that the volleys of impulses which pass up the auditory nerve (no different in kind, but only in pattern, from those which pass up the optic nerve) can carry all the information which is embodied in the hearing of sounds, for the experience of hearing sounds, with their varying qualities, is so much richer than the kind of experience to be