

An anti-patriotic group has developed in theatrical criticism. It consists of followers of bourgeois aestheticism. They penetrate our press and operate most freely in the pages of the magazine *Theatre* and the newspaper *Soviet Art*. These critics have lost their responsibility to the people. They are bearers of a homeless cosmopolitanism which is deeply repulsive to Soviet man and hostile to him. They obstruct the development of Soviet literature; the feeling of national Soviet pride is alien to them.

Such critics attempt to discredit the progressive phenomena of our literature and art, furiously attacking precisely the patriotic and politically purposive works, under the pretext of their alleged artistic imperfection. It is worth recalling that precisely such attacks were once made by ideological opponents upon the work of the great writer Maxim Gorky, and upon such valuable works as "Summer Love" by T. Trenev, and others . . .

How did certain critics receive the statements made by the Party on the repertoire of the dramatic theatres and measures to improve it? Did the severe, just Party criticism stimulate them to reconsider their position? Did these critics engage in self-criticism?

No. They did not wish to regard themselves critically because they were afraid of discovering their own complete ideological bankruptcy. But they also failed to halt their clannish and anti-patriotic activities, now directly against the Party's instructions. Certain leaders of this group entrenched themselves in the musty commissions of the All-Union Theatrical Society. Here, having assembled their friends around them, they began to fabricate a falsified "public opinion" against the new Soviet plays, actually against the Soviet repertoire in general . . .

Hissing and maligning, attempting to form a kind of literary underground, they defamed all the best that has appeared in Soviet dramaturgy. They did not find a kind word for such plays as "The Great Force", "A Moscow Character", "Our Daily Bread", "Large Destiny". Plays which have been awarded Stalin prizes were particular targets of their malicious and slanderous thrusts.

Of course, there are still no few shortcomings in many plays of the current Soviet repertoire. Naturally they are all subject to creative, comradely criticism, ideological and artistic. But it was not to such criticism that the esthetic gossips devoted their thought and concern. They defamed these plays in wholesale fashion and precisely because these plays, with all their shortcomings, are imbued with the Soviet ideological attitude and sense of principle; raise most important political questions; help the Party and the Soviet people in the struggle against kowtowing before bourgeois things foreign; in the struggle against bureaucratism, against pilfering, against the prevailing of private motives over social ones. All these plays instill Soviet patriotism and endeavor to show on the stage, with the strength of artistic portraits, all that is new and progressive, all that is being born in Soviet society . . .

The top-priority task of Party criticism is the ideological crushing of this anti-patriotic group of theatre critics.