

The Trial, tr. Edward Rothert, *Poland* 1962:1 p. 25

As a result of tireless effort, work, endeavor and exercise, the goal was eventually achieved. All writers were given uniforms and invested with ranks and insignia. Thus once and for all an end was put to chaos, lack of criteria, unhealthy Bohemianism and the obscurity and fickleness of art. The design of the uniforms was prepared centrally; the division into districts and ranks was the fruit of prolonged preparatory work at headquarters. From then on every member of the writers' union was obliged to wear a uniform – wide purple, striped trousers, a green tunic, belt and shako. However, this uniform, for all its apparent simplicity, was extremely variegated. Members of the central executive had forage-caps with gold badges, members of local stations — forage-caps with silver badges. Presidents wore sabers, vicepresidents carried muskets. All were divided into corps according to their genre. Out of this came two regiments of poets, three divisions of prose writers and a firing squad composed of various elements. Among the critics there were sweeping transfers. Some were posted to the galleys, the others inducted into the gendarmerie.

All were graded by rank – from private to marshal. Account was taken of the number of words each writer had printed during his life-time, the angle his ideological back-bone made with the ground, the number of years lived, local and central government posts held. Colored insignia were introduced to distinguish the ranks.

The virtues of the new order were obvious. In the first place, everyone now knew what to think of a given writer. It was self-evident that a Writer-General could not write a bad novel and that the best novels were written by a Writer-Marshal. Certain mistakes might be made by a Writer-Colonel but he would always be far more capable than a Writer-Major. The job of publishers was much simplified. They could calculate to the last degree how much more suitable for publication a work sent in by a Writer-Brigadier was than one by a Writer-Subaltern. The question of fees was settled by the same token.

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By dint of effort, conviction and the will to succeed, we have at last attained our objective. All writers have been put into uniform and accorded their proper rank and distinction. Thus, once and for all, we have put an end to chaos and lack of critical standards, to an unhealthy, vague, unsure artistic climate.

The cut and pattern of the uniform was decreed after long preparatory work at the Central Administration. Every member of the Writers' Union must wear this uniform, which features a green and violet motif, with trousers of the latter color and a green jacket, belt and cap. Despite its apparent simplicity, the uniform is highly diversified. Members of the Central Administration wear hats trimmed in gold, members of local administrations hats trimmed in silver. The presidential insignia is a sabre; that of the vice presidents, cutlasses. All writers are divided into formations according to their media. In this way, two regiments of poets and three divisions of prose writers have been formed, as well as an execution platoon. Far-reaching occupational transfers have taken place among critics. Some of them were switched to the galleys and the rest were incorporated in the gendarmerie.

Everybody received his proper rank – from private to field marshal. Naturally, there were strict criteria to determine this rank; for example, the number of words published by the given writer, the number of bureaucratic posts he had held, the angle of floorward incline of his ideological spine.

The advantages of the new order were obvious. First of all, everybody knew what to think about any given writer. It was clear that a writer-general could not write a bad novel, that a writer-marshal wrote the best novels. A few errors might be committed by a writer-colonel, but, nevertheless, he was always more talented than a writer-major. Editorial offices also had their tasks simplified. They were now able to calculate the exact percentage in which a work submitted, for example, by a writer-brigadier was more suitable for publication than one written by a writer-second lieutenant. By this system of percentages, the problem of royalty payments was also simplified.