

It seemed a pity, however, that this new edition, welcome as it is, was published without any preface that would place the essays in their historical context or recall the circumstances of their composition. I therefore wrote to Professor Jakobson, asking if he would be willing to share his recollections of these events, and he has most kindly permitted me to quote his reply, dated October 1, 1976, which I present here in my translation from the Russian original.

"Thanks for your appreciation of my pages of long ago, about which Mandelstam once said 'Biblical words' and Lilia Brik, 'You perceived what no one noticed.' Mayakovsky's death shook me to my bones with its unexpected realization of something long foreseen. In letters that followed from Elsa Triolet (with the opening words 'They bungled') and from Ehrenburg, there was talk of the frenzied hounding and unendurable spiritual isolation of Mayakovsky in the last phase of his life. I felt it my duty to say something about the wasted generation; and completely shutting myself away for several days, I wrote without interruption. When I had finished, I called together some Russian friends who either lived in Prague or were passing through, and read them what I had written. Bem and Hessen and Savitskii and Čiževsky were speechless, and the first to break the general silence was Bogatyrev, who shouted: 'You will never write anything more powerful or more profound!' Il'ia Ehrenburg, who received a typewritten copy, responded similarly. The abbreviated German translation was made by a Ukrainian named Hekter, who worked for *Prager Presse* and *Slavische Rundschau*, and it was printed in that magazine. My idea was to publish a collection of articles and reminiscences about Mayakovsky by Russians living in the West, and I wrote to Ehrenburg, Elsa Triolet, Pougny, Al'tman, Larionov, and, I think, David Burluk, and Mirsky; but for various reasons no one except Mirsky ultimately sent anything; and, having with some difficulty come to an agreement with Kaplan, the Russian publisher in Berlin, I had no alternative but to publish a mini-collection of only two articles, a booklet that later, through the efforts of the Hitlerites and the Stalinist censorship became an extreme rarity."

*Habent sua fata libelli.*

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IN STALIN'S TIME: MIDDLECLASS VALUES IN SOVIET FICTION. By Vera S. Dunham. Introduction by Jerry F. Hough. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976. xvi, 283 pp. \$16.95.

Vera Dunham has achieved a rare distinction: she has written a literary study which one greatly prefers to the works themselves. True, Stalinist "middlebrow" fiction is not known for its aesthetic or intellectual value, but it is a measure of her accomplishment that she has drawn so much of interest from such tedious material. In the preface she states: "If lasting poetry and prose had been examined, the source material would have lain altogether outside the regime's set of values." This sentence defines the book's methodology as well as its theme—to examine Stalinist social values as reflected in a literature devoted to their propagation.

The topic is a complex one since no writer, not even Iu. Kapusto, can produce in total conformity to a political tendency that is inconsistent with revolutionary rhetoric and subject to frequent change. Nevertheless, in some one hundred works of fiction, poetry, and drama, Dunham reveals a pattern of relationships—the "Big Deal"—between the regime and the class of bureaucrats and technicians which supports the regime. She chooses to concentrate on works written after the war, during a

period in which the Big Deal seemed most firmly established and the regime most generous in its rewards to those who moved to responsible administrative positions.

This system of privilege in the Soviet Union has been well known for some time. What is less well known is the manner in which the regime justified these privileges, and it is here that Dunham documents the role played by literature (and other art forms, one might add). At one point in Kochetov's novel *Zhurbin* (*The Zhurbin Family*, 1952, p. 109) a trade union official browbeats a young worker, born into the New Class, for rejecting the material rewards which are his due: "What a generous fellow you are! Why, to give you a room today, we had to make a revolution, sleeping on the bare ground and holding our rifles tight. And you, you wave it all aside! Some gentleman you are!" This passage bears a curious resemblance to an exchange between the mechanic and the barefoot youth in scene two of Mayakovsky's *The Bedbug*, where the roles are reversed—the older worker preaches revolutionary asceticism. In Stalin's time this raw youth is told that his rejection of material benefits is a harmful manifestation of revolutionary romanticism (or, even worse, of individualism). The New Class, however limited and insecure, must accept its privilege with gratitude, not with undue soul-searching; and, as a result, *meshchanstvo*—the traditional target of Russian satire—is established as the basis of a new social order properly glorified in middlebrow fiction.

In her final chapter Dunham warns against the condescension with which intellectuals are likely to view this development; and although one may disagree with her qualified defense of *meshchanstvo* as a bulwark against Stalinist terror, her point seems well-taken. She concludes with an observation familiar to any recent visitor to the Soviet Union: that all classes of Soviet citizenry expect their "deal," not in a political, but in a material sense; and recent middlebrow literature continues to support Dunham's contention.

The book contains the usual misprints as well as certain mistakes in the notes (on p. 260, n. 11, Ezhov's dates should be "1895–1938?"; on p. 266 the 1913 census figure is incomprehensible). And on page 278 in the bibliography Rufus Mathewson's *The Positive Hero in Russian Literature* is identified by the first edition (1958). The second, expanded version appeared in 1975 and should be noted, particularly because Mathewson's material and approach make his book an ideal complement to Dunham's work.

*In Stalin's Time* not only provides a valuable assessment of the relation between literature and social values in the Soviet Union, it also offers another perspective of the milieu that Solzhenitsyn portrays so effectively in *The First Circle*. After reading the book I am convinced that Vera Dunham deserves a Hero of Labor award for the great amount of patience and work her topic obviously demanded.

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HOPE ABANDONED. By *Nadezhda Mandelstam*. Translated from the Russian by *Max Hayward*. New York: Atheneum, 1974. xii, 687 pp. \$13.95.

Nadezhda Mandelstam's second book of memoirs has provoked many negative reactions. Critics who praised her first book accept the second with reservations, some are disappointed or shocked, and others reject this book altogether. *Hope Abandoned* is different from *Hope against Hope*, but only in the degree of the author's merciless treatment of Soviet society and many well-known literary figures. Where she was general and vague in the first book, she is specific and precise in the second. The author is just as merciless to herself as she is to others; she does not claim infallibility