



PROGRESS QUARTERLY

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FICTION A Selection

Nikolai Gogol

Introduction to the 1980 Edition

A clerk is being tormented by his colleagues. Paper is showered over his head; his arm is jogged so that he cannot copy. And he says the only thing he says in the whole story on his own behalf:

"Leave me alone, why do you torment me?"

One of the young men laughing at him stops. Gogol follows him out of the room and into the rest of his life:

And there was something strange about his words, and about the tone of voice in which they were spoken.... And for a long time after that, in times of great merriment, he would recall this downbent clerk with a receding hairline and his penetrating words: "Leave me alone, why do you torment me?" and in these words he could hear another message: "I am your brother." At these moments the poor young man would cover his face with his hands. Many a time during his life did he shudder at the sight of man's cruelty to man, at the vicious coarseness concealed behind a refined, educated and civilized veneer and, Lord! even in those whom the world has recognized as noble and honest.

I am your brother. That paragraph, written around 1840, is the seed of a century of Russian literature. Out of it came the whole "natural school", the clerks and copyists and downtrodden petty officials of the next fifty years, and the critical tradition — Belinsky, then Chernyshevsky, then Dobrolyubov — that made literature the only available opposition in a country with no parliament and no press.

It is also why this volume exists, and why its foreword has a hole in it.

The edition

This is A Selection, issued by Progress in the Russian Classics Series in 1980, newly translated by Christopher English — with The Government Inspector done jointly by English and Gordon McDougall — and illustrations compiled by Nina

Glazunova. It is generously chosen: two tales from Mirgorod — "Old-World Landowners" and the story of the two Ivans — five of the St Petersburg stories, including "Nevsky Prospekt", "The Nose", "The Greatcoat" and "Diary of a Madman", and the whole of The Government Inspector.

English's translation is the best in this series. It is genuinely funny, which almost no Gogol translation is, and it keeps the narrator's habit of falling over his own sentences. The Mayor's tirade in the last act comes into English with its spit intact.

The play also carries a short "Note from the Translators", and it is the most engaging piece of apparatus in the volume — not least because it is about a problem rather than about Gogol's greatness. Gogol's names are jokes, and the translators have left them in Russian:

It has been thought advisable to keep the text of the published version of The Government Inspector as close as possible to the original, and thus no attempt has been made here to translate the names, with the inevitable loss of a certain amount of specifically Gogolian, but untranslatable, humour.

Then they tell you what you are missing, because this translation had another life. An adapted version was performed by the Oxford Playhouse Company in 1975, and on that stage the names were Englished. The note lists them: Judge Lyapkin-Tyapkin became Slapkin-Dashkin; the Warden of Charities Zemlyanika became Strawberry; the Inspector of Schools Khlopov became Flogov; the Postmaster Shpyokin, who reads other people's letters, became Snoopin; the locksmith's wife Poshlyopkina became Slapcheekina; and Khlestakov's literary friend Tryapichkin became Trashkin.

A Progress Publishers translation that played the Oxford Playhouse is not what one expects to find in this series, and the fact that the house printed the English stage names in a Moscow edition — knowing they were better jokes than its own text could carry — is a small piece of honesty worth recording.

The jacket assembles three witnesses. Pushkin thought highly of Gogol. Turgenev called him a man "whose name stands for

an entire epoch in the history of our literature". And, given the most space, Chernyshevsky — identified as "the leader of Russian revolutionary democracy":

"It is a long time since the world knew a writer," wrote the leader of Russian revolutionary democracy, writer and critic Nikolai Chernyshevsky, "who was of such vital importance to his nation as Gogol is to Russia... He showed us what sort of people we are, what we lack, to what we should aspire, what we should abhor and what we should love."

Inside, a foreword of just under three thousand words by Professor Sergei Mashinsky, Doctor of Philology, a real Gogol scholar. It is a decent essay. It places Gogol in the line of Russian satire "from Kantemir to Fonvizin, via Griboyedov and Gogol to Shchedrin and Chekhov", it is good on the St Petersburg stories, and it opens by quoting Belinsky on Russian writers as society's "only leaders, protectors and deliverers from Russian autocracy".

Belinsky appears three times in Mashinsky's foreword. Every appearance is praise of Gogol. He hails Gogol as "one of the great leaders" of Russia "on the path of consciousness, development, progress", and as "Russia's first writer and the leading light in modern Russian literature".

Now the count that matters. In those 2,976 words the following do not appear: Selected Passages from Correspondence with Friends; the word "religious"; the word "crisis"; the word "reactionary"; the word "letter"; and any mention of Gogol burning the second part of *Dead Souls*.

The letter that is not here

In January 1847 Gogol published *Selected Passages from Correspondence with Friends*. It is a book of religious and political instruction in which he defended serfdom, upheld autocracy and the Orthodox Church, and advised landowners on keeping their peasants illiterate, pious and obedient. It appalled almost everyone who had admired him.

On 15 July of that year, from Salzbrunn in Silesia, dying of consumption, Vissarion Belinsky wrote him a letter. It is the most famous document in nineteenth-century Russian criticism, and the sentence everyone knows is this:

"Proponent of the knout, apostle of ignorance, champion of obscurantism and Stygian darkness, panegyrist of Tartar morals — what are you about!"

The letter could not be printed in Russia. It circulated in manuscript for decades and became a founding text of the revolutionary intelligentsia. In 1849 Fyodor Dostoevsky was arrested, convicted and sentenced to death — reprieved on the scaffold, and sent to Siberia — for, among other things, reading it aloud to the Petrashevsky circle.

Gogol never recovered. He spent his last years under the direction of a confessor, burned the manuscript of the second part of *Dead Souls*, refused food, and died in 1852.

None of this is in the volume you are holding.

Why the omission is not pedantry

We are not complaining that a short foreword is incomplete. We are pointing at the specific shape of what has been left out, because it is the shape of an argument.

The Russian Classics Series rests on a claim, and it is a defensible one: that the great nineteenth-century writers, whatever their own politics, exposed the society that produced them so thoroughly that the revolution can claim them as ancestors. Engels made the case for Balzac; the preface to this series' Turgenev volume makes it explicitly. For Gogol the claim is easier than for anyone, because Belinsky and Chernyshevsky made it at the time, and because "I am your brother" is on the page.

But the Gogol case is also where the claim runs into its hardest test, and the test has a date on it. The man who wrote that paragraph went on, seven years later, to publish a defence of serfdom — and the critic the jacket calls "the leader of Russian revolutionary democracy" did not respond by explaining that the work was greater than the man. He responded by calling him a proponent of the knout.

That is the interesting thing, and it is a Marxist thing. The Engels argument says an artist's truthful eye can defeat his own politics. Belinsky's letter says that when the artist then turns round and preaches the knout, you say so, loudly, and the earlier work does not buy him an exemption. Both are true, and holding both is the whole difficulty of reading a class's literature against that class.

A foreword that quotes Belinsky three times in praise, and never once mentions that Belinsky's most famous act was a denunciation of this author, has not resolved that difficulty. It has removed it. The reader is given the continuity — Gogol to Belinsky to Chernyshevsky to the revolution — as a smooth

line, when in fact the line is a quarrel.

The work

What survives all this is that Gogol is the funniest writer in Russian and one of the strangest in any language.

"The Nose" is about a nose that leaves its owner's face, is discovered in a loaf of bread, acquires the rank of state councillor, and is seen about town in a uniform. Nothing in it is explained; the narrator ends by complaining that such things do happen, rarely, but they do. "Diary of a Madman" is the record of a clerk's disintegration through dated entries that stop being dated. "Nevsky Prospekt" opens with a prose-poem to a street and ends with two ruined lives, and then tells you the street is lying to you.

And "The Greatcoat" is the story of a man whose entire inner life is the copying of documents — who loves certain letters of the alphabet — and who, having saved for a coat, is robbed of it and dies, and returns as a ghost to take coats off the shoulders of important persons. Gogol's contemporaries read it as pity. Later readers noticed the ghost is also a joke, and that Akaky Akakievich's ambitions never rise above outerwear. Both readings are correct, which is the trouble with Gogol and the reason he does not stay put.

The volume opens with "Old-World Landowners", and it is worth saying what it does, because it is the story most often patronised.

Two elderly Ukrainian gentry, Afanasy Ivanovich and Pulcheria Ivanovna, live in a small warm house and do nothing at all except eat and love one another. Gogol spends pages on their stoves, their preserves, their pickled mushrooms. A modern reader waits for the satire on parasitism, and it does not come — or rather it comes, and then something else arrives that is much larger. Pulcheria Ivanovna dies. And Afanasy Ivanovich, years later, hears her voice calling him from the garden:

He entirely surrendered to the conviction that this was Pulcheria Ivanovna calling him; he surrendered with the submission of an obedient child, withering away, guttering and melting like a candle, and finally snuffing out like the miserable flame of a candle which has burnt itself to nothing. "Lay me to rest beside Pulcheria Ivanovna" — this was all he had to say before he passed away.

Then, in the next paragraph, the estate is looted by the bailiff

in collusion with the headman, and the house stands empty.

Both things are true and Gogol puts them side by side without a joining word: the deepest love in the book belongs to two useless people whose way of life was sustained by serfs, and it dissolves into theft within a page of their deaths. Mashinsky's foreword handles this well — it notes that Gogol "seems to be sorry for these two old dears, bound together by their patriarchal feelings, their good nature, naïveté and helplessness". That is exactly right, and it is the kind of double vision the rest of the foreword's framework cannot quite accommodate.

Two of the endings in this selection deserve to be read before anything else in it.

The story of the two Ivans is a hundred pages about a quarrel between neighbours over the word "gander" and a brown sow that eats a legal petition. It is very funny for a long time, and then Gogol returns years later to find both men grey, still litigating, each certain the case will be decided tomorrow, and he leaves on this:

"What a dreary world we live in, gentlemen!"

Mashinsky quotes that line in his foreword and reads it, rightly, as the turn from humour to "undisguised satire". What he does not say is that the sentence is not satire at all by the time you reach it. It is the author giving up on his own joke.

And then "Diary of a Madman", which ends with the clerk Poprishchin — now convinced he is the King of Spain, being beaten in an asylum he believes to be the Spanish court — breaking into the most beautiful passage Gogol ever wrote:

give me a troika with three horses as fast as the wind! Climb aboard, coachman, ring, my bells ... and bear me hence from this world! Further and further still, so that nothing more can be seen of it, not a thing! Look at the sky unfurling there before me; a star twinkles in the distance; the forest streaks by with its dark trees and silver moon; a grey mist wreathes beneath the horses' feet ... on the one side you see the sea, on the other Italy; now Russian cottages come into sight. Is that not my house I can dimly see in the distance? Is that my mother sitting by the window? Mummy, save your poor son! shed a tear on his poor battered head and look how they are tormenting him! press your orphan boy to your breast! there is no place for him on earth! he is persecuted! — Mummy! have pity on your sick little child!...

A madman in restraints cries out for his mother, and for a page and a half Gogol lends him the full lyric resources of Russian prose. Then, in the same breath, without a paragraph break, the last line of the story:

But do you know that the king of France has a wart bang under his nose?

That is Gogol entire, and no critical tradition has ever fully digested it. The pity is real; the troika is real; the wart is real. He will not let you keep the tears without the absurdity, and he will not let you laugh without the asylum. Anyone who has decided in advance what Gogol is for — whether that is exposing the tyranny of the landowning class or affirming the exalted principles of humanism — has to get past that wart, and nobody has.

The Government Inspector closes the volume, and it contains the moment where the whole of Gogol's method turns to face the audience. The Mayor, having been swindled by a nobody he mistook for an inspector, and knowing that a writer will make a comedy of it, rounds on the theatre:

"Take no notice of rank, or reputation, anything for a cheap laugh and a snigger in the stalls! What are you laughing at? You're laughing at yourselves, that's what!... I'd like to get my hands on those scribblers! Penpushers! Dirty liberals! Grass-snakes!"

A corrupt official in an 1836 comedy tells the audience they are laughing at themselves, and calls the author's allies dirty liberals. Tsar Nicholas I attended the first night and is said to have enjoyed it. Nothing in Gogol is ever quite on one side.

What is living

All of it, and the quarrel too.

Read the selection for the reason Belinsky first read it — because a clerk saying "Leave me alone, why do you torment me?" did more to make cruelty visible than any pamphlet of the period. Read The Government Inspector for the pleasure of watching a whole provincial administration exposed by its own panic.

And read Mashinsky's foreword with the missing seven years restored. He ends by saying that Gogol's works "affirm the exalted principles of humanism", that they are "a pure font of poetry", and that "drinking of it the reader absorbs noble moral ideas and in the process he too becomes a purer and better person". That is not false. It is, though, the tone of a man

writing about a saint, and Gogol was not one. He was a frightened religious reactionary who happened to possess the most subversive comic gift in Europe, and the argument about what to do with that fact has been running since 1847.

This series would rather you had the argument than the sainthood.

SOVIET SOCIETY

The Individual and the Micro Environment

How society reaches the individual through the work team, the family and the immediate group - with real survey data from a Soviet factory's own sociology unit, in the years empirical research was cautiously readmitted.

Yu. V. Sychev

Introduction to the 1978 Edition

There is a moment near the start of this book where Yu. V. Sychev states his method in a single borrowed sentence. Quoting Marx's sixth thesis on Feuerbach, he writes that "the human essence is no abstraction inherent in each single individual. In its reality it is the ensemble of the social relations." Everything that follows is an attempt to take that sentence seriously at close range — to ask how, concretely, the ensemble of social relations reaches down and shapes a particular person. Sychev's answer is the "microenvironment": the immediate social surroundings — the work team, the family, the study group, the Party or Komsomol cell — through which the great abstractions of society and the mode of production are refracted before they touch the individual. It is a real question, and for long stretches the book handles it with intelligence. But a study that opens on Marx's thesis about the ensemble of social relations, and then declines to describe one particular set of relations that its own author lived inside, has told you something before it has finished its argument. The interest of this volume lies exactly in what it can see and what it is licensed not to.

The date, and what the book was for

The spine and the catalogue say 1978, and that is the year of the English translation by Katharine Judelson for Progress Publishers. The copyright page carries a second date: the Russian original is © Izdatelstvo "Mysl" 1974. But the text that reaches us in English is not simply the 1974 book. It cites the 25th Congress of the CPSU, which met in February–March 1976; it quotes at length from Brezhnev's report to that Congress; and it speaks of "the Soviet Union's sixty years' history," a phrase that dates its final revision to 1977, the sixtieth anniversary of October. So the object in front of us is a mid-Brezhnev text, revised for export toward the end of the "developed socialist society" years, whatever the 1974 line on the copyright page suggests. That matters, because the book's

frame is the ideological campaign of exactly those years: the "moulding the new man" that Sychev names in his opening pages as "the core of the CPSU's ideological work," and which the 25th Congress had just relaunched as a coordinated programme uniting "the ideological, political, labour and ethical aspects of education."

Sychev himself is a working sociologist, not an apparatus polemicist, and the book carries the marks of genuine empirical labour. Its data come in large part from case studies he took part in at the Perm Telephone Factory, conducted by that plant's Section for Research in the Sociology and Psycho-physiology of Labour — surveys of what workers liked and disliked about their jobs, how team relations tracked with productivity and turnover, how young recruits settled into a shop. This places the book alongside two others in this series that record the same event: the cautious, post-Thaw readmission of sociology and social psychology to a Soviet academy that had spent the Stalin decades treating both as bourgeois frauds. It should be read next to G. V. Osipov's *Sociology* (Progress, 1969) and B. F. Porshnev's *Leninist Theory of Revolution and Social Psychology* (Novosti, 1970), each of which is at bottom a licensing document — an argument that the new discipline has impeccable Marxist-Leninist credentials and may therefore be permitted to look at Soviet reality. Sychev's book is the applied, factory-floor member of that family. The question it raises is the family's question: which social objects was a Soviet sociologist licensed to examine, and which was he not?

The doctrine, stated precisely

The book's theoretical spine is a strong and defensible piece of Marxism, and it deserves to be stated at full strength before it is criticised. Against the reduction of personality either to biology or to the free-floating individual of liberal psychology, Sychev holds, with most of the Soviet philosophers he surveys, that "the essence of the individual personality is social" — that personality is, in the sharpest formulation he quotes, "the

individualized embodiment of social relations." Society does not confront the individual as a distant abstraction; it reaches him through mediating links. The macroenvironment (the mode of production, classes, the state) sets the terms; the microenvironment (the small group in which one actually lives) transmits and refracts them. Between "the broad conditions of social being and the individual there exist connecting links," and the microenvironment is the chief of these. Man in isolation, Sychev writes in a nice phrase, "is no more than another Robinson Crusoe." This is not a trivial position. It is a serious attempt to give the sixth thesis on Feuerbach an empirical mechanism, and its insistence that the small group is a specific manifestation of the whole social order — not a private zone sealed off from it — is a genuine corrective to the individualism it is arguing against.

The doctrine turns political at a single hinge, and the hinge is the difference between two kinds of milieu. Under capitalism, Sychev argues, the microenvironment must be an alienated thing. Following Marx on estranged labour, and marshalling Soviet studies of the French working class, he holds that market relations poison immediate human contact, that "the idea of 'personal success'" breeds "crime and neuroses," and that "in these conditions man's microenvironment cannot help but be an alienated phenomenon." Under socialism the polarity reverses. "Public ownership and the absence of exploitation of man by man make possible the establishment of truly human relations." The socialist collective — above all the work collective — becomes the healthy microenvironment, the setting in which "the antagonism between the individual and society has for the first time been overcome." Capitalism atomises; socialism collectivises; and the whole weight of the argument rests on the reader accepting that the small groups of Soviet life were, in their essential character, the second kind and not the first.

The level of analysis that stops short of the system

Here is where the book's chosen instrument becomes an evasion, and it is worth being precise about how. Sychev has built a theory whose entire subject is the way immediate social surroundings form and deform the person — how the atmosphere of a group can warp a character, how conformism operates, how milieu produces or corrodes personality. He has, in other words, exactly the apparatus needed to examine the specific deformations that Soviet micro-environments were notorious for producing: the double life of public conformity and private dissent; careerism inside the institution; the pressure of the Party cell; the informing culture; the small

economy of blat, the personal connections that ran the shortage society. He describes the mechanisms and then applies them in only one direction.

Consider his treatment of conformism. Sychev knows precisely what it is; he defines it with care as "purely outward agreement with the group, while there exists inner disagreement" — the stance of a person who "is ready to compromise his convictions and ideals so as to avoid an unfavourable situation." This is an exact clinical description of the Soviet double life, the outward assent that everyone performed and few believed. But having named it, he rules by fiat that it is a capitalist affliction: bourgeois psychology, he says, sees all agreement as conformism, whereas "it is precisely collectivism that emerges in socialist society as the diametrical opposite of conformism." The definition is universal; the diagnosis is geographically confined. The same move governs "adaptation." When a Western sociologist describes a worker adjusting to a new workplace, Sychev reads bureaucratic conformity; when a Soviet youth adjusts to his first work team, the identical process becomes benign "familiarization ... coloured by a spirit of socialist relationships." The category is turned on capitalism and turned off at the Soviet border.

The most revealing passages are the ones where the deforming machinery of the Soviet microenvironment is described openly — and praised. Sychev is candid that the socialist collective is an instrument of control. Its public opinion, expressed "at meetings, comrades' courts, in community news bulletins," provides "social control over the behaviour of the individual"; it is "an effective moral force, that can regulate relations between individuals and forestall the emergence of antisocial phenomena." He records approvingly that "the Communist Party calls upon the production collective ... to exert its positive influence on the individual's behaviour outside the factory as well, so as to regulate domestic and family relations." He quotes Makarenko to the effect that education must run through "a large collective ... when the term collective comes to embrace the whole of Soviet society," and he describes the guidance of the collective as "a totality of economic, technical, ideological and educational pressures and influences." A reader who had lived through the comrades' courts, the collective's licence to reach into a worker's home, the pressure to conform administered by the very small groups Sychev is celebrating, would recognise all of this. What is missing is any suggestion that a milieu with this much power over the individual might deform him — that the collective's "pressures" might be the source of the conformity, the careerism, the double life, rather than their cure. The book has

the concept of the warping microenvironment and spends it entirely on the class enemy.

When Sychev does glimpse a Soviet failing, an escape hatch closes over it at once. He concedes, once, that a worker "feels oppressed by the atmosphere of cold relations and a sense of alienation" in a Soviet work team — and immediately frames it as a local matter of atmosphere, curable by better management. More systematically, he lays down the rule that governs every such admission: "Negative elements in people's behaviour can result from specific circumstances connected with violations of the principles of socialism in the context of particular collectives," from which "it is therefore wrong automatically to identify the essence of the social environment under socialism with concrete microenvironments." This is the theoretical device that makes the whole book safe. Any deformation that appears is a "violation" — a local lag, a lingering survival, a bad foreman — and never an expression of the system's essence, which remains by definition healthy. The macroenvironment that sets the terms for every Soviet micro-environment — the bureaucratic state, its hierarchy of rank and privilege, its monopoly of the Party over every collective — is precisely the one social relation Sychev's ensemble never gets round to naming. He has written a study of how the whole shapes the part while bracketing out the whole.

Even the book's own data push toward the finding it refuses. Sychev acknowledges, in his chapter on the labour collective, that "the interests of the individual and the specific collective at a certain stage need not necessarily coincide," and that when they diverge "the collective drops such individuals or the latter leave the collective." Here, for a sentence, is the collective as an engine of exclusion — expelling the person who will not align, or driving him out. In any other framework this would be the beginning of an inquiry into how a mandatory milieu disciplines its members. Sychev shuts it down in the next breath: these contradictions, he insists, "should not alter our picture of the increasingly firm-rooted collectivist consciousness of Soviet men and women," being merely "a certain disparity between unshakeable collectivist attitudes and assessments of collective relations". The collective may cast out the nonconformist, and it remains by definition healthy; the individual it expels is the problem, never the milieu that expelled him. It is the escape hatch again, and it is worth noticing that it always swings the same way.

What the book is answering, and did not read

The tradition this series speaks from had examined the

corrosion of the Soviet individual four decades before Sychev, and with the same tools he uses. Christian Rakovsky — a founder of the Soviet Ukrainian state, later broken as a Left Oppositionist — wrote in 1928 the classic analysis of what the Soviet apparatus does to the people inside it. Trotsky quotes him in *The Revolution Betrayed* (1936): "By means of demoralizing methods, which convert thinking communists into machines, destroying will, character and human dignity," Rakovsky wrote, "the ruling circles have succeeded in converting themselves into an unremovable and inviolate oligarchy." That is a description of a microenvironment deforming its members — the Party cell as Sychev never lets himself see it. It answers in advance the claim that the antagonism between individual and society had "for the first time been overcome": Trotsky's whole chapter on Soviet social relations is a demonstration that the antagonism had been recreated, in the form of a privileged stratum whose "social and moral alienation from the popular masses" was the ruling fact of Soviet life.

Trotsky also meets Sychev's central claim head-on — the claim that the socialist workplace is the healthy milieu against the alienated capitalist factory. Writing of the Stakhanovite whose privileges set him apart from his workmates, Trotsky observes that "their individual enjoyment of all kinds of material goods on a background of general scarcity surrounds them with a ring of envy and ill will, and poisons their existence. Relations of this kind," he concludes, "are farther from socialist morals than the relations of the workers of a capitalist factory, joined together as they are in a struggle against exploitation." This is the exact inversion of Sychev's thesis, argued from the same premises. Inequality of income and rank, Trotsky shows in his chapter on the collective ship whose passengers still travel first, second and third class, does not evaporate because the vessel has been declared common property. The "collective" that Sychev treats as the solvent of alienation was, for the tradition he does not cite, one of its principal sites.

And behind both stands the thesis Sychev quoted at the outset. Marx's point in the sixth thesis on Feuerbach is that if the human essence is the ensemble of social relations, then you cannot understand a person without an honest inventory of all the relations that hold him — including the ones it is uncomfortable to name. Sychev keeps the epigraph and drops the discipline. The relations he inventories are the flattering ones: comradeship, cooperation, the friendly work team. The relations that any Soviet reader could have supplied — the hierarchy of the nomenklatura, the dependence of every collective on the Party organiser, the informing, the blat

without which nothing could be obtained — are absent not because Sychev's method cannot reach them but because his method reaches them all too well, and reaching them was not permitted.

What is worth keeping

None of this makes the book worthless, and it would be a poor reading that left it there. Sychev's insistence that personality is socially formed, that the small group is a genuine and understudied level of that formation, and that it must be understood as a manifestation of the whole social order rather than a private enclave, is sound Marxism and remains a useful corrective to the individualism of much Western social psychology. His empirical instinct is real: the Perm surveys, for all that they are pressed into an edifying frame, contain honest findings — that dissatisfaction with work is driven far more by its content and conditions than by the "socio-psychological" atmosphere managers could adjust, a result Sychev reports even though it cuts against the therapeutic optimism of his own conclusion. His survey of the Soviet debate on the structure of personality — Tugarinov, Kon, Buyeva, Platonov — is a fair and informative guide to a serious body of thought that produced, in its best hands, genuine science. As with Levitin's *One Is Not Born a Personality* elsewhere in this series, the thing to say plainly is that the discipline underneath the ideology was real, and that some of its practitioners were doing first-rate work under conditions that dictated what they could conclude.

The book is best read, then, as two things at once: a competent sociology of the small group, and an unintended document of its own limits. Sychev built an instrument precisely calibrated to detect how a milieu forms and deforms the people caught in it. That the instrument was aimed only outward — that it could diagnose the loneliness of the Londoner but not the double life of the Muscovite, the alienation of the capitalist factory but not the "pressures" of the collective that could follow a Soviet worker home — is the most eloquent thing about it. The microenvironment turned out to be exactly the level of analysis at which a Soviet sociologist could work honestly and still never arrive at the system. Read with that in view, the book tells the truth twice: once in what it says about the individual and the small group, and once, against its will, in what it cannot bring itself to say.

FICTION

Palace and Prison

Olga Forsh

Introduction to this Edition

Twelve pages into this novel the narrator stops and gives an instruction to the printer.

He has been explaining how Mikhail Beideman came to spend twenty years in the Alexeyev Ravelin of the Peter and Paul Fortress. There was no trial. There was an order of 2 November 1861 that he be left in solitary confinement pending special decree, and thereafter, on the first of every month for twenty years, the Emperor was informed that such and such a person was in such and such a prison, and each time it was his will that the order be continued in force.

The printer should always italicize these words, in order that their appearance, so conspicuous beside the monotonous type of the pages, might in some way startle the complacent reader, completely absorbed in his own joys and sorrows. Attention, dear reader! The special decree was never issued!

That is Olga Forsh in 1923, breaking the frame of a historical novel to tell the compositor how to set three words, so that a reader who is not paying attention will be made to. It is the sort of thing that was possible in Russian prose in 1923 and would not be possible again for a long time, and this volume reprints it without comment thirty-odd years later.

The edition

Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow. The half-title reads LIBRARY OF SOVIET LITERATURE. The credits leaf gives two names:

TRANSLATED FROM THE RUSSIAN BY FAINNA SOLASKO DESIGNED BY A. VASIN

The Russian title page, in the scan's Latin lookalikes, is Оде́ты ка́мнем — Clad in Stone, which is what Forsh called the book and which the English title abandons. The phrase survives inside: Part One's last chapter is "Encased in Stone During the Reign of Catherine II", and the narrator says of himself at the

close of Part One, "Encased in stone as Mikhail was in 1861, I now take his place in 1923."

For the seventh Foreign Languages Publishing House volume in a row in this strand, there is no date and no copyright line. The last text leaf is followed by a "TO THE READER" card and a line saying the book was printed in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

But there are two jacket flaps, and they are the second-best apparatus in the FLPH run — better than most of the Progress forewords, because they are specific.

The front flap opens by quoting the phrase the novel is built on: "'Pending special decree'—these cold and heartless words determined the fate of Mikhail Beideman, Russian revolutionary, and one of the noblest men of his time." It names Dmitry Karakozov and Sergei Rusanin, notes that Rusanin's "soul was tortured by a feeling of guilt throughout his long life", and gives the novel's theme in the author's own words: "History has swept all into the grave, but it has not forgotten anything."

The date, and what the back flap gives away

The back flap dates the volume for us, which is more than the copyright page does.

Olga Forsh, the oldest living Soviet writer, had the honour of opening the Second All-Union Congress of Soviet Writers in December, 1954.

So the book is after December 1954, and Forsh (1873–1961) was still alive when it was printed. Our catalogue's 1958 is a library record rather than the object's own statement, but nothing in the volume contradicts it and the flap is consistent with it.

The flap also supplies the one date that matters most: "Palace and Prison (1923), which went through nearly 20 printings". This is a novel of 1923 — the year of Lenin's last illness — appearing in English in the second half of the fifties. It is the oldest Soviet text in the fiction strand apart from

Serafimovich's *Iron Flood* of 1924, and it comes from a moment of Russian prose that had been officially over for twenty years by the time this translation was made.

And then the flap does the thing this series exists to notice. It quotes Forsh on herself:

"The truth of the new way of life has helped me to perceive correctly all that was best in the culture of the old society... to determine my goal and see more clearly the problems confronting me in my work on the historical novel. In my creative searchings I have attempted to show history truthfully, to bind the interests of art with the revolutionary ideas of modern times."

And then glosses her:

"The truth of the new way of life" came to Olga Forsh when she was already a mature writer with an established world outlook. This new way of life swept her up so forcefully that she found she could not but dedicate herself to it completely.

Swept her up. Forsh was forty-four in 1917 and had been publishing since before the 1905 revolution. What the sentence covers is a decision — a woman of middle age, of gentry background, with an established manner, choosing the revolution and then writing historical novels about Russian revolutionaries for forty years. The flap turns that into weather.

The counting

Stalin: zero. Lenin: once. Marx: once. Party: five times.

Against that: Beideman seventy times, Tsar seventy-one, Karakozov thirty-five, Vrubel twenty-four, Herzen ten.

This is not an evasion; it is the book's subject. Palace and Prison is about the Russian revolutionary movement of the 1860s — the generation between the Decembrists and the Narodniki — and it uses real people. Mikhail Beideman was a real officer who was taken in 1861 and held without trial until he went mad. Dmitry Karakozov really did shoot at Alexander II in 1866 and was really hanged. Forsh's invention is Sergei Rusanin, Beideman's schoolfellow, who watches, does nothing, survives, and writes it all down in 1923 at the age of eighty-three.

Readers who have Yuri Trifonov's *The Impatient Ones* in this collection will recognise the territory: Trifonov's novel of 1972 is about *Narodnaya Volya* and Zhelyabov, and Karakozov is in

it too. The two books are fifty years apart and take the same question — what were the terrorists of the 1860s and 1870s, and what is owed to them — from opposite ends of Soviet history.

What the novel does

It is a confession, and its engine is guilt rather than heroism.

Rusanin begins on 12 March 1923, his eighty-third birthday, with something that "crased every last vestige I ever had of a nobleman's monarchist feeling" — the scan damages the verb, so the sentence is not quoted whole here — and with a seal falling from his lips, enabling him to make public a matter he had kept secret.

What he kept secret is how Mikhail died. And at the very end, having told it, he arrives at his own verdict. Vera, who loved Beideman and waited for him, is laid out with copper coins on her eyelids, and one eye will not close; an old woman says that means she has to find her enemy.

I am that enemy. I did not fulfil Vera's last wish. I did not tell anyone how Mikhail died a slow death, neither then, nor in 1905, when an historian appealed to the public to shed some light on the matter. They have found out about it from the archives without my help. But I did not want any unpleasantness and lived quietly on my estate, and was often drunk.

That is the moral centre of the book: not the martyr in the ravelin but the friend who could have spoken in 1905 and did not, because he "did not want any unpleasantness".

Forsh then does something extraordinary with the ending. Rusanin goes mad on the page — the hoopoe of Vera's story begins tapping in his brain, "No good here... no good here" — and the prose breaks into a suicide performed to music:

I'm putting down my pen, for I must hold my head and teach my arms to be wings—flap! flap! At the first sound of the music tomorrow and the words "Tis the final conflict...." One! Slit my throat! Two! Go through the window head-first!

The music is the Internationale. The last representative of the old order kills himself on the downbeat of the new one, and the book ends with him flying over the city. A novel that began with an instruction to the compositor ends with a man counting himself out of a window.

The other thing in it

Part Two is stranger than Part One and is worth being warned about.

It opens with a chapter called "Black Vrubel", and its first sentence dissolves the whole realist premise. Both scans lose the decorative capital that begins it, so it cannot be quoted from its first letter; what it says is that Sergei Rusanin and Mikhail Beideman are one and the same person. Rusanin then explains that he found out only gradually "about the permeability of bodies and the possibility of taking possession of another person's personality. It came about after I had become the son of Mikhail's mother, the lover of his mistress." Mikhail Vrubel, the painter — who really did die insane in 1910 — walks through the later chapters, and by the end the reader cannot be sure which of the narrator's twenty years of memory happened.

Whether this is a device or a symptom is exactly the question Forsh wants open. It is also, in 1923, unmistakably of its moment: the ravelin, the doubled self, the artist going mad, the occultist salon in Part One where Countess Kushina's Sunday gatherings are held in a library "that spoke of its owner's passion for occultism". None of this belongs to the socialist-realist novel that would be legislated eleven years later, and all of it survives in this reprint because nobody rewrote the book.

What the volume does not say

Two things, and they are of different orders.

The first is small and worth fixing in passing: nowhere does the book tell an English reader that Palace and Prison is *Оде́ты камне́м*, or that the phrase means clad in stone, or that Forsh's title is a metaphor which the translated one turns into a pair of buildings. The novel's own chapter titles preserve it — "Encased in Stone During the Reign of Catherine II" — but nothing connects them to the book's name.

The second is larger. This is a novel about a man imprisoned for twenty years without trial on an administrative order that was renewed, unexamined, on the first of every month, and about a witness who stayed silent for forty years because he "did not want any unpleasantness". It was published in the Soviet Union in 1923 and reprinted, the flap says, nearly twenty times. It was translated into English and sold abroad in the second half of the 1950s.

The volume offers no gloss on that at all — no foreword, no note, no editorial sentence of any kind between the flap copy and the first chapter. It does not have to. A reader in Moscow in 1956 who had just heard the Twentieth Congress speech, or a reader in London who had read about it, would supply the gloss unaided: pending special decree is a formula for indefinite detention by administrative order, and the book's horror is that the machinery does not need malice, only a monthly signature. Whether the house that chose to reissue it in those years saw what it was doing is not recorded, and cannot be recovered from the object.

What can be said is that the choice was made twice. Somebody kept Palace and Prison in print in Russian through the 1930s and 1940s; somebody else put it into English after 1954. It is the oldest Soviet novel in this fiction strand, the least assimilated to any doctrine, and the only one whose subject is a prisoner nobody remembered to release.

A note on this text

This ebook had been built with seventeen divisions. The book has twenty-two.

The printed contents gives two parts of ten chapters each. Three separate scanner faults had eaten the difference. Every chapter opens with a decorative headpiece that the scanner reads as noise, and Part One's chapter I emerged as `CHAPTER |` followed by a line consisting of a single bar — so the first two chapters of the novel fell outside the built book entirely, and it began at chapter III. The numeral II came through as `II` — capital I, lower-case L — in both of the book's chapter twos, so Part Two's chapter II had been swallowed by its chapter I, which came out at 9,408 words against a 2,500–5,000 average. And neither PART title exists as text in the scan, so nothing marked the division between them.

All three are repaired, the two part titles are inserted, and a fragment of headpiece wreckage that had been adopted as chapter VII's subtitle has been removed. The volume now divides exactly as its contents page says, at 264 to 333 words per printed page throughout.

Reading it now

Read the first twelve pages for the instruction to the printer, which tells you what kind of book this is going to be.

The other flap sentence to keep in view is the one listing what

else she wrote: the trilogy Radishchev, "about a Russian revolutionary, author of the famous Journey from Petersburg to Moscow"; Mikhailovsky Castle, "about the talented architect Rossi and his tragic fate"; and Freedom's Firstlings, "about the Decembrists". Radishchev was exiled by Catherine II for a book; the Decembrists were hanged or sent to Siberia by Nicholas I; Rossi built the centre of Petersburg and died poor. Forsh spent forty years writing about Russians destroyed by the Russian state for what they made or said, and this volume prints the list without remark, two pages after describing her as having been swept up by the truth of the new way of life.

Read Part One for the thing Forsh was best at — the salons, the Round Room, the lindens, the Italian trip — and for the slow closing of the trap on a young man who said the wrong thing once.

Read Part Two knowing that the narrator has stopped being reliable, and that Forsh knows it.

And read the back flap last, because it is where the volume states its own problem. A writer of forty-four in 1917, from the class this novel dissects, wrote in 1923 a book about a man buried alive by the state for twenty years without trial, and about the friend who stayed silent about it for forty. Thirty-odd years later the same state's export house printed it in English, described her as having been "swept up" by the new way of life, and dated the volume nowhere.

Forsh's own sentence is the better epigraph, and the flap quotes it: History has swept all into the grave, but it has not forgotten anything.

MARXISM

Selected Works Volume I

The Theses on Feuerbach through to the 1859 Preface, in the edition that carried Marx into party libraries on every continent - with an introduction on what the selection itself argues.

Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels

Publisher's Introduction

A selection is an argument. Anyone who gathers a body of writing under one cover and calls it the essential part is making a claim about what the whole was for — and, by omission, a claim about what can be spared. The three-volume Selected Works of Marx and Engels that Progress issued in Moscow is one of the most widely circulated arguments of the twentieth century, printed in the millions and carried into party libraries on every continent. This first volume is where the argument sets its terms. It does not merely collect the early and middle writings; it stages the birth of a method, and it stages it in a particular way, for a particular end. This introduction is about that staging — not a reading of the works themselves, which stand on their own and are introduced separately, but a reading of the edition: what it puts in, what it leaves out, the order it imposes, and the apparatus it wraps around the whole.

Begin with where the volume begins, because a starting line is the most silent and the most decisive editorial act of all. It opens in 1845, with the Theses on Feuerbach — "the philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point, however, is to change it" — and proceeds through the German Ideology, the Manifesto, the writings of 1848 to 1851, the journalism, and closes on the 1859 Preface to A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy, the famous few paragraphs in which the "base" of economic life is said to determine the "superstructure" of law, politics and consciousness. Read in sequence, the volume tells a clean story: a young philosopher breaks with philosophy, discovers that material production is the motor of history, and arrives at a finished doctrine. It is a story with a shape, and the shape is a straight line running to a destination.

Now notice what has to be left outside the door for the line to run straight. The volume starts in 1845; the Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts were written in 1844. They are not here. The decision to begin the Selected Works one year late is the decision to begin after the manuscripts in which Marx worked out his theory of alienated labour — the argument that

under private property the worker is estranged from the product of his hands, from the act of working, from his fellows and from his own nature as a species-being. That is not a minor omission of juvenilia. It is the removal of the most humanist, most ethically charged Marx there is, and it is done by the simple expedient of drawing the volume's opening line just past him. The effect, whether or not every editor intended it, is to make the "break" with the early Marx look like a fact of the record rather than a choice of the editors — to naturalise a beginning that was in truth selected. A generation of Western readers would later argue about an "epistemological break" between the young and the mature Marx; this edition had already legislated one, quietly, with a date.

It is not hard to see why the 1844 Marx was unwelcome in Moscow. A doctrine of alienation is a measuring-stick, and it measures any society in which labour is bought, commanded and estranged — including a society that has abolished the private owner but kept the estrangement, substituting the plan and the foreman for the market and the boss. The Marx who wrote that communism is "the positive supersession of human self-estrangement" hands the reader a standard by which the Soviet worker's daily experience could be judged and found wanting. Far safer to open with the Theses, where the accent falls on activity and on changing the world, and to close on the 1859 Preface, where the accent falls on iron necessity and the lawful succession of economic stages. Between those two poles the volume can present historical materialism as a science of inevitability rather than a theory of human liberation — and inevitability was the more useful of the two to a state that wished its own arrival to seem written into history.

The 1859 Preface, placed as the climax, is the load-bearing wall of that reading. It is a real and powerful text, and Marx meant every word of it; but in the Soviet canon it became something narrower than he intended — the skeleton key of "historical materialism," quoted to license a mechanical determinism in which economics moves and everything else obediently follows. What the apparatus around it never lingers on is the Preface's other, more awkward sentence: that "no social order is ever destroyed before all the productive forces

for which it is sufficient have been developed." Marx wrote that as a warning against declaring a system finished before its time. A state that claimed to have leapt from peasant backwardness to socialism in a single generation had every reason to quote the Preface's determinism and to pass over its caution in silence. The determinism was applied to capitalism, whose doom it guaranteed; the caution was suspended for the USSR, whose voluntarist leaps it would have questioned. The same page served as prophecy and was spared as critique.

Around all of this sits the editorial apparatus of the Institute of Marxism-Leninism — the preface, the annotation, the name index — whose steady work is to smooth. It irons the development of two restless, self-correcting minds into a single ascending curve, retrofits later Leninist categories onto earlier texts, and presents the selection as if it were not a selection at all but simply Marx and Engels, entire and self-evident. That is the deepest editorial move in the book: to make the frame invisible, so that the reader mistakes a curated and dated canon for the natural shape of the thing itself.

None of which is a reason to think less of what the volume actually contains, which is extraordinary. The materialist conception of history announced in these pages is one of the genuine intellectual events of the modern age; the Manifesto remains the most consequential pamphlet ever written; the Theses still put the case for a philosophy that acts in eleven sentences no one has bettered. The living current runs right through this book. The point of reading the edition critically is not to devalue the works but to recover the freedom the framing took away — to see that the straight line was drawn, and could have been drawn otherwise.

Which is why this expanded edition restores the text the original selection was built to exclude. Appended at the end, under its own half-title, is the Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844 — the book that lay one year on the wrong side of the volume's opening line. Put back, it lets the reader do what the canon preferred they not do: read the alienation of 1844 and the historical materialism of 1859 as one continuous labour of the same mind, and decide for themselves where, if anywhere, the break falls. A selection is an argument. The honest answer to an argument is not to burn the book that made it, but to hand back the pages it left out.

FICTION

Outside Paradise and Other Stories

Andrejs Upits

Introduction to this Edition

In the longest story in this book, the respectable ladies of Versailles come out after the Commune to look at the prisoners.

They are roped together in the dark outside four requisitioned buildings — the Stables, the Castle Hothouse, the Saint-Cyr-l'École manège, the Satory Docks. The ladies inspect them. Mme Loriot, whose husband is mayor of the sixth arrondissement, asks a woman where she tore her skirt.

A flush appeared beneath the dirt on the woman's face. "The Versailles soldiers tried to rape me." "What did you say?" cried Mme Fabre, leaning forward. "Our gallant liberators? And you have the face to say such a thing? They jumped into blazing houses to save the children!"

Two girls under a parasol push forward, wanting to know exactly where it happened. And then a voice from the end of the line: "Why don't you send those little piglets home to bed? Isn't it enough for the big ones to enjoy themselves here?" The commandant, who fears nothing so much as an incident that might suggest "he was not capable of managing his animals", goes red and swishes his whip and shouts: "Look down when decent ladies pass, all of you!"

The ladies go on searching the crowd "for interesting specimens". Their cheeks are flushed. "What amazing creatures! Their savage customs and almost unbelievable vices were so exciting to read about in the daily newspapers!"

That is from Clemence Perrier's Death, sixteen thousand words on the suppression of the Paris Commune, written by a Latvian in 1930. It is the best thing in this volume and one of the best things in this collection, and there is not a single word of Marxist vocabulary in it anywhere.

The edition

Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow. The half-title reads LIBRARY OF SOVIET LITERATURE. The credits leaf

gives three names:

*TRANSLATED FROM THE LETTISH BY T. ZALITE
EDITED BY R. DAGLISH DESIGNED BY B.
MARKEVICH*

"Lettish" for Latvian is already archaic by 1955 and worth noticing: this is a book made by a Russian-language house for an English readership, and the language it translates from is named in the form an English reader of 1900 would have recognised. Robert Daglish edits, as he does the German volume in this series and as he translates the Bondarev and the Tvardovsky preface — the same handful of people made the whole imprint's English.

And then, for the fifth Foreign Languages Publishing House volume in a row in this strand: no date, no copyright line, no colophon, and no note of any kind about the author. The last leaf carries a "TO THE READER" card inviting comments and nothing else. There is no foreword, no afterword, no biography, no editorial statement.

The contents lists twelve stories and their page numbers. That is the entire apparatus of a 362-page book.

The dates, which the book does print

Upits dates his stories, and the volume keeps the dates at the foot of each one. Set them in order:

1902, 1903, 1905, 1914, 1920, 1922, 1923, 1925, 1930, 1930.

Every story in this Library of Soviet Literature volume was written before Latvia was a Soviet republic. The earliest three are from the Russian Empire, before and during the 1905 revolution. The rest are from the independent Latvian Republic of 1920–1940. Not one was written under Soviet rule, and not one is a socialist-realist work.

Which is the more interesting once you know who was being published.

Andrejs Upits (4 December 1877 – 17 November 1970) was, at the moment this book appeared, one of the most powerful

literary officials in the Soviet Union. He was Chairman of the Union of Writers of the Latvian SSR from 1944 to 1954 — the decade of the Sovietisation of Latvia, the deportations, and the reconstruction of Latvian letters. He founded and directed the Institute of Language and Literature of the Latvian Academy of Sciences from 1946 to 1952. His 1945 novel *Zaļā zeme* took the USSR State Prize in 1946. And in 1957 he received the Latvian SSR State Prize for a book called *Sociālistiskā reālisma jautājumi literatūrā — Problems of Socialist Realism in Literature*.

None of that is in this volume. The man who wrote the Latvian handbook on socialist realism, and who ran the republic's writers for ten years, is represented for the English-speaking world by a dozen stories he wrote between the ages of twenty-five and fifty-three, under two other states, in a manner that owes far more to Maupassant and to the nineteenth-century Latvian anticlerical tradition than to anything laid down at the First Congress of Soviet Writers.

The counting

The count here is the shortest in the strand and the most startling.

Stalin: zero. Lenin: zero. Marx: zero. The word Party occurs once, and it is a hunting party — "The three others of his party stare thoughtfully". Communist occurs once, in dialogue, as an accusation: "are a socialist, perhaps even a communist. I ought to..." Bolshevik occurs three times, twice in the mouths of people who fear them.

What the book is full of instead: God, forty-five times. Baron, thirty-seven. Riga, forty-one. Priest, ten.

A collection of stories about God, priests and Baltic German barons, issued by a Soviet state publisher in a series called the Library of Soviet Literature, under the name of the president of a Soviet Writers' Union.

The Latvian stories

They are provincial, cold, and very funny in a way that hurts.

The Romantic (1902) opens on the market-place of Laicene, where the photographer Mikelis Maigais has his workshop looking out over "the muddy, unpaved square framed with garbage heaps and centred about a water-pump that was protected by a ramshackle wooden shed". Peasant carts come in from Kurzeme with curds and groats and live piglets. That

is Upīts's world: small towns, mud, and people whose romanticism has nowhere to go.

Hue and Cry (1903) begins at dawn on a Sunday: "The gentlefolk on the Apare estate are still asleep....", and ends with dogs still after their quarry in the distance. It is a hunt, and the quarry is a man.

The Flight of a Hen contains the funniest page in the book, which is also a small essay on provincial hospitality as a form of captivity. Three visiting wives — the forester's, the estate manager's, and a third who says only "Hm-m" — try to leave, and Mrs. Meyer will not let them:

"But I beg you!" cries Mrs. Meyer, not only her face, but her whole body expressing resolute protest. "We must have some tea, and then... and besides... you must wait for the men to come home. You can go back with the same horses.... They've gone for a little drive—I mean to say..."

The men are not out for a drive. Upīts's method in these stories is to give you the sentence a person says and let the gap between it and the truth do the work; he almost never explains.

Contending Passions is, of all things, a story about literary politics. Its protagonist Zile is a playwright watching his own dress rehearsal, listening to "praise and criticism", joking and arguing while his mind is elsewhere, and discovering that the company resents him: "Perhaps the actors had something against the leading lady of the play; perhaps they simply resented the idea of an author having an opinion about the respective aptitudes of actors and the casting of a play." And then the sentence that a reader who knows what Upīts became cannot pass over: "Zile could never tell where, in this world, objective judgement ended and plain subjective interests began."

That is a young writer's observation about a theatre. Thirty years later the man who wrote it would be chairing the body that decided which Latvian writers were published.

The best of the Latvian material is in *Metamorphoses*, the volume's longest story, which carries a whole province through the 1905 revolution, the war, and 1917. A pastor detests his handyman Abol, who "had had one son in Siberia since 1906, while the other had joined the Red Army and left with the Bolsheviks" — and realises "the full weight of his own folly in giving a job and a home to this atheist and rioter." Later, "Kerensky's commissar arrived from Petrograd and took up lodgings in the Brivuls' living room", and, having nobody else to talk to, pours out his heart to a young woman of the house

about the blind fanaticism of the Bolshevik agitators, and about the catastrophic state of Russia. He unfolded to her the whole programme of the Socialist-Revolutionaries, promising to the Latvians autonomous rights and liberation from the yoke of the barons, if only the Latvian riflemen stood firm, if only they did not allow themselves to be misled.

The Latvian Riflemen were the decisive armed force of October, and here they are seen from a manor house, as the subject of a lodger's persuasion. Upīts does not editorialise. He lets the commissar make his offer — autonomy, and the end of the barons, in exchange for holding firm — and lets the reader remember how it went.

The parables

Four of the twelve are religious fables, and they are the oddest thing in the book.

Outside Paradise (1922), which gives the volume its title, is the expulsion from Eden told from Adam and Eve's side. Outside, the stars are not the wan things they were in the garden: they "sparkled and glittered scintillating blue like a thousand eyes all turned upon the exiled sinners", and the fear the pair feel is mingled with "a thrill of delight they had never yet experienced". Adam's speech at the end is the volume's argument:

"And if we suffer hunger, and thirst, and weariness—what of it? We know now that there is rest and relief. We shall not fear Jehovah's ever-present eye, nor his anger. We ourselves shall conquer, and we ourselves command. My arms will support us by day, and your hair will warm us by night. "We have lost Paradise. We shall gain the earth!"

That is a Promethean humanism with a Latvian accent, written in the second year of Latvian independence, and it is about as far from Problems of Socialist Realism in Literature as a sentence can get and still be written by the same man. It is also, if you want it to be, a paraphrase of the last line of the Internationale — and the beauty of it is that Upīts never says so.

Jehovah's Transformation, The Atheist and God's Finger complete the set. The last, from 1930, ends with a priest's dinner and two boys with bowed heads on whom, the narrator observes, God's finger has smitten hard.

Why this volume exists

It is worth asking the obvious question, since the book will not.

Why does a state publisher, in about 1955, put out three hundred and sixty pages of an official's early work — none of it Soviet, none of it socialist realist, much of it anticlerical fable and provincial satire — and present it to the English-speaking world as Soviet literature?

Part of the answer is simply that it is the good work. *Zaļā zeme* won the State Prize; nobody chose to translate it here. What travels is the 1930 Commune novella and the 1902 small-town stories, because they are better.

Part of it is that the early Upīts was translatable in a way the late Upīts was not: a book of stories set in Latvian manor houses, revolutionary Paris and the Garden of Eden could be sold to a foreign reader who would have put down a novel about collectivised Latvian agriculture.

And part of it — the part this series exists to point at — is that by 1955 the category "Soviet literature" had become an administrative one. It did not mean literature written under socialism, or about it, or according to its doctrine. It meant literature by writers the Union of Soviet Writers claimed. Upīts was claimed, comprehensively; he was the man doing the claiming in Latvia. So his 1902 stories about a provincial photographer became Soviet literature retrospectively, by virtue of what their author later became, and the volume does not have to argue the point because it never states it.

Which is why the absence of a biographical note matters more here than in any other book in the strand. Without it, the English reader meets a fine, bleak, funny minor European story-writer of the early twentieth century. With it, he meets the same writer and the literary administrator of a Soviet republic during its most brutal decade, and has to decide what the relation between them is. The volume declines to raise the question by declining to date itself or describe its author.

A note on this text

The twelve story titles in this volume are set decoratively, in a display face the scanner could not read at all: the opening of *Hue and Cry*, for instance, came through as `Z / a / ADX /\ / \ / wy ` and then straight into the prose. Every title in this ebook has therefore been placed from the volume's own contents page, which gives both the title and its printed page

number, matched against the scan's page map — nothing is guessed, and the twelve landing points each fall on a leaf that begins a story. One stray character from that wreckage, the `Z` at the head of page 23, had been adopted as a subtitle and appeared in the contents of earlier builds as "Hue and Cry — Z"; it has been removed. A second bare `Z` elsewhere in the same story is a section divider — a numeral the scanner lost — and has deliberately been left where it is.

Reading it now

Read Clemence Perrier's *Death* first. It is a full-dress historical novella about the Bloody Week and its aftermath, written by a man who had never been to Paris, and it is exact about the thing that matters: not the barricades, which are over before it starts, but the disposal — the bodies at Père-Lachaise and Montparnasse, the Buttes-Chaumont ditches, the prisons at Versailles, and the ladies with parasols coming out to look. Its method is to keep the camera on the victors and let them talk.

Read *Metamorphoses* for the pastor and Abol and the commissar from Petrograd, which is the whole of the Latvian twentieth century compressed into a house.

Read *Outside Paradise* for the sentence the book is named after.

Read *Contending Passions* if you want the volume's private joke, and *The Flight of a Hen* if you want to know why Upīts was worth translating at all: he is very good on the small brutalities of politeness, on people trapped in rooms by other people's hospitality, and on the exact words in which someone lies about where the men have gone.

And read the dates at the foot of each story, because they are the only piece of evidence the volume gives you about itself. Nineteen-two to nineteen-thirty, in a *Library of Soviet Literature*, by a man who was then running the Writers' Union of the Latvian SSR and would shortly be given a state prize for a book about socialist realism. Nothing in these pages is socialist realist. Somebody in Moscow knew that, chose these twelve stories anyway, and printed no date on the result.

MARXISM

Society of the Future

The most widely read socialist book of its age, on the one subject most Marxists avoided - what the future society would actually look like. Smuggled hand to hand under the Anti-Socialist Law.

August Bebel

Publisher's Introduction

For the better part of half a century, the book this one is carved from was the most widely read work of socialism on earth. August Bebel's *Woman and Socialism*, first published in 1879, went through more than fifty German editions in his lifetime, was smuggled from hand to hand under Bismarck's Anti-Socialist Law, and did more to win ordinary workers — and, decisively, working women — to the movement than any theoretical treatise ever did. It was the German Social-Democratic Party's true catechism, more read than Capital, and its power lay in a simple, daring move: it refused to argue only about what socialism would abolish and insisted on describing what it would build. *Society of the Future*, the volume in your hands, is Progress Publishers' 1971 abridgement of that book's boldest section — Bebel's portrait of the socialist future itself.

Read it for its nerve. Where most Marxists of his day, and after, treated the future society as an embarrassment best left vague — Marx himself scorned the writing of "recipes for the cook-shops of the future" — Bebel walked straight in and set the table. Here is a future in which the state, having no more classes to hold down, "withers away" and gives place to a simple administration of things; in which religion fades not by decree but for want of the misery that fed it; in which education is universal and joyful, art and science belong to everyone, and the individual is free at last to develop every faculty. And here, in the chapter that is the living heart of the whole book, is woman in the future: not tolerated, not "protected," but wholly equal — economically independent, freed from the private household and the tyranny of the kitchen, mistress of her own body and her own life. Bebel wrote that "the woman of future society is socially and economically independent... she is no longer subject to even a trace of domination and exploitation, she is free and the equal of man, mistress of her own destiny." In 1879 this was incendiary; more than a century on, it is still ahead of most of the world.

That is the reason to keep the book, and it is a large reason. But it is also the reason the book needs an introduction and not merely a reprint, because there is a bitter joke folded into this Moscow edition of 1971, and the joke is at the publisher's expense. Consider what the Soviet state chose to reprint, and against what. It printed Bebel's vision of the withering state while presiding over one of the largest and most intrusive state machines in human history — a bureaucracy that did not wither but metastasised, and that by 1971 had shown no sign of dissolving into any "administration of things." It printed Bebel's chapter on the total emancipation of women — the abolition of the private household, the socialising of domestic labour, women's full entry into public life — a generation after it had wound up its own women's department, recriminalised abortion, rebuilt the individual family by decree, and handed out medals to mothers of large families. The state that published Bebel's demand for the end of the "domestic hearth" had spent the middle of the century lovingly restoring it. Every one of the future's promises in this book is a measure held up against the present of the country that issued it, and by every measure that present falls short.

There is a second irony, and it points the other way, at the movement Bebel himself led. He was the co-founder and beloved chairman of German Social-Democracy, the most powerful workers' party in the world, and he built it in the confidence that it was the vehicle of exactly the future he described here. He did not live to watch it fail the test. Bebel died in August 1913 — one year, almost to the month, before the party he had made voted the war credits that sent German workers to kill French and Russian ones, and six years before its leaders, in power at last, loosed the Freikorps to murder Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht and drown the German revolution in blood. The *Society of the Future* was written by a man who believed the German party would deliver it; the party delivered the opposite. So the book sits, poignantly, between two betrayals it never names: the reformist collapse of the Social-Democracy that produced it, and the bureaucratic petrification of the Communist state that reprinted it. Neither built Bebel's future. Both found his description of it useful, at

different times, for different lies.

None of which is Bebel's fault, and none of it dulls the book. The tradition from which this introduction is written has always honoured Woman and Socialism precisely because its picture of human emancipation is more radical, more concrete and more honest than anything either of its later claimants was willing to enact. Bebel's future is not a bureaucrat's plan and not a parliamentarian's promise; it is a standard, and it is exacting. The withering of the state is there to indict every state, red or otherwise, that mistakes its own permanence for socialism. The emancipation of women is there to indict every regime, capitalist or "communist," that leaves the household a private prison and calls the result equality. Read this way — as a ruler, not a relic — Bebel's little utopia is one of the sharpest critical instruments in the whole library, and it cuts, impartially, in every direction the twentieth century took.

So take *Society of the Future* for what it is: the surviving heart of the book that taught a generation of workers to want not merely bread but the whole of human freedom, including the freedom of women, reissued by a state that had abandoned most of what it describes. Bebel meant every word as a programme. Read it as one — and then look up from the page at the country that printed it, and at the party that failed to build it, and judge them both by the future they promised and did not keep.

FICTION The Hot Snow

Yuri Bondarev

Introduction to this Edition

In the middle of this novel a Soviet general is summoned to the Kremlin, and Stalin asks him a question he has not been asked before.

"You are a Communist, Comrade Bessonov, and you must answer like a Communist. Have you always had your own personal point of view on various events?" "I have tried to, Comrade Stalin. But I have not always been able to defend it to the end."

Stalin looks up from the desk. Bondarev then does something no socialist-realist novel is supposed to do: he goes inside Stalin's head. "Long accustomed to the unquestioning assent of those around him, he sometimes allowed a very few of his associates to state their own personal opinion." And then the trap closes.

"I understand, Comrade Bessonov. Presumably your doubts had to do with certain military leaders whom we punished at one time?"

Bessonov feels "as though he had moved closer to the icy wind that was blowing in his face and round his legs", realises that Stalin "had forced him to speak of something he had had no intention of mentioning", and says it anyway: "This point of view was formed from serving with certain military leaders who later became the victims of slander. Of that I am sure, Comrade Stalin. . . ."

Stalin pushes the pipe away "as if it were some intrusive object getting in his way", and answers without warmth:

"I am aware of doubts of this kind. The struggle makes harsh demands. But many of those whom we doubted at the time were people with the potential inner rottenness of a Vlasov. The excesses and mistakes were put right long ago. Rokossovsky and Tolbukhin are fighting well at Stalingrad."

And Bondarev gives his general the thought he cannot say:

What about the others? Bessonov thought.

That exchange is on pages 131 and 132 of a book Progress Publishers put into English in 1971, the year after Alexander Tvardovsky was forced out of Novy Mir. It is the reason to read this novel now.

The edition

Progress Publishers, Moscow, first printing 1971. Translated from the Russian by Robert Daglish, who also did Tvardovsky's preface and a novella in the Kazakevich volume in this series. The Russian is *Горячий снег*, "На английском языке". And there is no copyright line at all. Where the Kazakevich and Tvardovsky volumes in this series each carry a "©" — Progress claiming the compilation, the preface, the illustrations, the English — this leaf carries four statements and no claim: translated by Daglish, the Russian title, "First printing 1971", "Printed in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics". Whether that was policy in the Soviet Novels Series or an oversight, the practical effect is that the most widely reprinted Soviet war novel of the 1970s went abroad in English with nobody's name on the rights.

One correction to our own catalogue. This book is attested as a Soviet Authors Library title by an advertisement on the 1976 Ordeal jacket, and it is listed here on that basis — but the printing we have is earlier and belongs to a different series. Its half-title reads Soviet Novels Series, and so does the back cover. Nothing in this volume claims the Soviet Authors Library. Describe it as what it is: the 1971 Soviet Novels Series printing of a book the later series took up.

There is no commissioned foreword. What there is instead is four pages headed IN LIEU OF AN INTRODUCTION — Answers Given by the Author in a Press Interview, in which Bondarev answers four questions put to him by an unnamed interviewer.

That is now a pattern worth naming, because this is the fifth volume in the strand to show it. Polevoi's *A Story About a Real Man* opens with his own Author's Note (or, in the 1973 printing, with a foreword by the man the novel is about).

Paustovsky's *Selected Stories* opens with his own *Some Random Reflections*. Tvardovsky's *Vassili Tyorkin* closes with his own afterword. Kazakevich's *Selected Works* is prefaced by a friend's obituary essay of 1962. In none of them does a Soviet critic stand between the reader and the book. Whatever the reason — and it may simply have been cheaper — the effect is that the foreign reader of the fiction strand was handed the writers' own accounts of themselves, unmediated, while the same house's non-fiction was armoured in commentary.

The interview

It is the most interesting four pages Progress printed about this book, and there are four things in it.

First, a line of descent. "Even while I was still at the Literary Institute, in a study group supervised by Konstantin Paustovsky, a wonderful author and teacher, I wanted to write a book about Stalingrad." Bondarev was Paustovsky's student; Paustovsky's own volume is in this series, prefaced by his own insistence that romanticism is not a failure of political seriousness. Two generations of the same seminar, catalogued separately, with nothing in either book to connect them.

Second, a definition of courage that quietly demolishes the positive hero:

A person who experiences none of the normal feelings of fear in the face of death is a pathological case and, as such, cannot really become a central figure in realist art.

Set that beside Polevoi, in this same series, whose hero's quality is certified for him at a funeral and whose title means Bolshevik. Bondarev is saying that a man without fear is not a hero but a clinical specimen, and that realism cannot use him. He adds the positive formulation, which is better: "a person who is capable of mastering his fear can go on performing everyday acts of courage. This is what I regard as the principle of heroism."

Third, the scene that set the book going, which he dates to 1965 in Vienna, at an International Conference of Novelists. Two Germans came up to him afterwards, an ex-corporal and an Oberleutnant, both his own age, both of whom had fought on his sector in December 1942.

One of them said to me that neither the Germans nor the Russians should even attempt to remember the war now. The other gave a grim laugh and retorted, "I have a guilt

complex." To this the first replied, "Memory is a vice."

"Memory is a vice." Bondarev says that at that point he "once again had the feeling of coming up against good and evil, just as in 1942", and wanted a new novel. The whole book is an argument against that sentence — and the argument is not confined to Germans.

He then builds a theory on it. Memory, he says, "possesses enormous energy, built up through associations", and "a small push from outside is often sufficient to set off a whole train of happenings and historical scenes". It "can explain some things; it can be an instrument of research". And then the division that the two Germans in Vienna had acted out for him:

For some people memory is a scourge, a punishment; for others it stands for responsibility.

That is the book's thesis stated as a proposition, and it is not only about Germany. A Soviet reader in 1971 had his own reasons for wanting memory to be a vice.

Fourth, and this is the sentence the publisher itself chose to put on the jacket:

"The time has come in our literature," he says in an introductory interview, "for a thorough investigation of the nineteen forties and fifties. We have accumulated enormous experience of life connected with this period and our study should embrace both the heroic and the tragic, the courage and the character of the Soviet people."

In 1971, "the nineteen forties and fifties" is not a neutral span. It is the war, the postwar terror, the last years of Stalin, the Doctors' Plot, and the Twentieth Congress. Bondarev asks for a thorough investigation of it, "both the heroic and the tragic", in the year after the journal that had been conducting exactly that investigation lost its editor. And Progress put the request on the back cover.

He also names his models: "Sholokhov, Leonov, Alexei Tolstoi and Bulgakov". Bulgakov, in a Soviet state publisher's English-language book in 1971, listed among the masters of memory.

The scene in the study

The *Hot Snow* covers three days in December 1942 on the Myshkova river, where the Soviet 2nd Guards Army dug in to stop Manstein's tanks from reaching von Paulus at Stalingrad. Bondarev's structural decision, as he explains in the interview,

was to run it on two levels at once: "from the Supreme Commander to the lowest-rank in the battery". Both halves are meant seriously, and the upper one is the historically astonishing part.

Stalin's name occurs sixty-nine times in this novel as a person rather than a city, almost all of them in one long chapter. Against that: Lenin twice, Party seven times, Communist four. The commissar — in the person of Vesnin, the army's member of the Military Council — appears forty-three times. This is a book in which the Party as an institution barely exists and its General Secretary is a character with a face.

And what a face. Bondarev's Stalin is not the poster. He is "a small man, who at first sight seemed to have little resemblance to his portraits", with "narrow, yellowish eyes", a "thick moustache and heavy eyebrows" barely touched with grey, moving "with soft, slightly rolling strides in supple, squeakless boots" and holding "his left, apparently not fully flexible arm over his stomach". He greets Bessonov "without a handshake or any invitation to sit down". Standing close, Bessonov can smell "the sweetish smell of rich tobacco from his clothes", and see "the sallowness, pock-marked skin of the cheek".

Then Bondarev does the thing that makes the portrait more than physical. Late in the interview Stalin smiles, and

the harsh yellow coldness in his eyes melted and disappeared, and his whole face with all its tiny pock-marks softened, becoming homely, kindly, as Bessonov had been accustomed to see it in the portraits of him.

The cult's own image is described as an expression this man can produce at will. The kindly face in the portraits is a thing Stalin does with his features. Bondarev put that in a novel in 1970 and Progress translated it.

There are two other moments worth marking. One is a small, cold detail about how power hears: Stalin repeats back to Bessonov a word Bessonov never used — "So it's a Cannae, you say, Comrade Bessonov?" — and the narrator notes it in passing. The other is the matter of Bessonov's son, who is missing, and whom Bessonov fears is a prisoner. Stalin's ruling:

"As regards your son, Comrade Bessonov, we shall not put him down on the list of prisoners. We shall consider him to be missing. Later on we shall make detailed inquiries. And keep you informed. My elder son, Yakov, was also posted missing at the beginning of the war. So we are in the same position, Comrade Bessonov."

Then: "Stalin was about to add something else about his elder son but he hesitated." A reader in 1971 who knew what happened to Yakov Dzhughashvili, and what the Soviet state did to the families of men taken prisoner, could fill the hesitation in. The novel does not fill it, and does not have to.

None of this is dissidence. Bessonov is loyal, Stalin is competent, the army wins, and the chapter never questions the war or the state. But it does two things that the official history of 1971 would not do: it says out loud that commanders were destroyed by slander, and it declines to accept Stalin's assurance that the matter is closed. "The excesses and mistakes were put right long ago" — and immediately, in free indirect speech, "What about the others?"

The battery

The lower level is the better novel, and it is where Bondarev was writing from memory: he went to the front at seventeen as an artilleryman and, as the jacket says, went "from Stalingrad to the frontiers of Czechoslovakia".

Down at gun level there is no strategy, only seven shells left and a tank coming. Bondarev is very good on the physiology of it — the loader's hand, which "groped for the trigger with an unhurried tenderness, as though there were no battle, no tanks", the cap nudged off the head by the rubber eyepiece of the gun-sight and rolling down a sweating back, the steam rising off the nape of a man's neck in the cold. The people are Lieutenant Kuznetsov; Sergeant Ukhanov, who is funny and indestructible and does not much like officers; the battery commander Drozdovsky, who is correct, brittle and hated; and Zoya, the medical orderly, who is the only woman in the book and who dies.

Drozdovsky is the most interesting failure in the book, and the one that would have been impossible in 1949. He is everything the drill manual wants — upright, correct, tightly buttoned, brave in the formal sense — and the men cannot stand him, and he gets people killed by being what he is. Zoya loves him, and he is ashamed of it, and then she is dead and he "hasn't been quite the same" since. At the end he is seen from a distance, "slouching along with his head sunk on his chest, ignoring the gun as if there had been no one there at all", and then he "staggered away weakly down the steps, as though he were drunk". The novel does not punish him and does not forgive him; it simply stops looking at him.

The last pages are as good as anything in the strand. Bessonov comes down to the guns to decorate the four survivors, and he

cannot get the words out:

"Everything that I personally can do Everything Thank you for the tanks you knocked out. That was the main thing — to knock out their tanks. That was the main thing."

Bondarev is precise about where the medals come from: Bessonov hands them over "on behalf of the supreme authority which had given him the great and dangerous right to command and to decide the fates of tens of thousands of men" — the phrase reaches all the way back to the study with the pock-marked cheek in it. He walks off quickly along the communication trench. Kuznetsov is left "still astonished by the tears that he had seen on this commander's eyelids". And then Ukhanov organises the only ceremony the battery is capable of:

He placed the mess-tin in the middle of the tarpaulin, half filled it with vodka, picked up his medal and, holding it between two fingers, as if it were a lump of sugar, lowered it to the bottom of the tin, then did the same with the others, Rubin's, Nechayev's and Kuznetsov's.

They drink in turn, and Kuznetsov drinks last, with the medals clinking in the bottom of the tin, and hears something flap behind him "like the cape on the edge of the recess when they had laid Zoya there", and chokes, and walks away. The last sentence of the novel is a moon: "a colourless, waning moon was melting in the vast emptiness of the sky."

No victory paragraph. No summing up. The medals are in the vodka and the nurse is under the snow.

What the book was doing in 1971, and what happened after

Set the dates side by side.

In March 1966, on the eve of the 23rd Congress, World Outlook reported the letter of twenty-seven intellectuals asking that Stalin not be rehabilitated; Tvardovsky signed it. Later that year Ernest Mandel, writing as Ernest Germain in the International Socialist Review, recorded that Tvardovsky and Polevoi had been dropped from the Congress and from the Central Committee as leaders of the "moderate 'liberal' wing". In the spring of 1967 George Saunders described in World Outlook the attack on Novy Mir and the sacking of Tvardovsky's assistant editors. In February 1970 Tvardovsky was forced out. In 1971 Progress issued, in English, a novel in which Stalin is a character and a general tells him the purged

commanders were slandered, with the author's demand for "a thorough investigation of the nineteen forties and fifties" printed on the back.

That is not a contradiction to be explained away; it is what the period actually looked like. The line moved, and what fell on the permitted side of it was not always what the permitted side wanted. Kazakevich's *The Blue Notebook*, also in this series, is the same phenomenon at a further extreme — a hundred and eleven Zinovievs in a volume of 1978.

What happened to Bondarev afterwards can be watched in this collection too. By 1980 Felix Kuznetsov, First Secretary of the Moscow Writers' Organisation, was using him in *Of Human Values* — also a Progress book, also in this series — as a scoreboard: when Bondarev's fictional Soviet writer beats a West German critic in a televised argument, Kuznetsov underlines the result, "Nikitin, and with him, the Soviet writer Yuri Bondarev, win the argument." The same critic judged that Bondarev's *The Shore* falters because "the Great Patriotic War is something the author has lived through, while the modern West is something he has only seen." It is an accurate criticism, and it marks the distance travelled in nine years: from a man who could not stop remembering December 1942 to a man being deployed against Hamburg.

Reading it now

Read the interview first, and read the fourth answer twice.

Then read the novel on both its levels, and notice that they are written by different faculties. The battery is memory; the Kremlin is imagination, and Bondarev says as much when he admits that readers "may find it unusual for me to have a figure of the rank of General Bessonov as one of the characters". The battery is better. But the Kremlin chapter is the one that could not have been written ten years earlier or, quite possibly, ten years later, and it contains the sentence this whole series exists to point at: a Soviet general, in a book his state sold abroad, telling Stalin to his face that the men were slandered, and thinking — where the censor could read it and let it through — What about the others?

That question was never answered by the institution that printed it. It is still the right question, and the answer is not in this book. It is in the archives that the men who published this one spent forty years keeping shut.

FICTION The Eternal Call

Anatoly Ivanov

Introduction to the 1979 Edition

The novel opens in a police cell in 1908, and the first thing that happens is a man being rewarded for informing on his neighbours.

On a June day in 1908 two men were talking in the detention cell of the Tomsk gendarmerie. These were Inspector Lakhnovsky, a short man of about thirty-five with a stubby, obtuse nose, and Kosorotov, the chief warden, an untidy man with a large, protruding jaw.

The inspector is in his undershirt because of the heat, his tunic on the back of the chair, drinking tea; the warden waits on him with a tea towel over his arm, which "only heightened his resemblance to a tavern waiter". Kosorotov wants a transfer to the Alexandrov Central Prison — "It's my cherished dream, sir. Ever since I was a boy" — and Lakhnovsky, amused, promises to help, because "diligence and faithful service should be rewarded".

Remember the inspector's name. Lakhnovsky is a minor figure in this volume and he becomes, in the second half of the novel, the author of the most widely believed forged document in modern Russia. We return to that at the end.

The edition, and the man

The Eternal Call is the biggest book in this series — some 266,000 words in English, and this volume is only half of it. The last line on the last page reads End of Book One.

Progress issued it in 1979 in the Soviet Authors Library, translated by Fainna Glagoleva and illustrated by Peter Pinkisevich, with the English translation copyrighted 1978. Glagoleva's version is fluent, unfussy and reads at speed, which is what this book requires; it is a page-turner and was meant to be.

The jacket describes the author:

Anatoly Ivanov (b. 1928), State Prize Winner and editor-in-chief of Molodaya Gvardia magazine, has been

writing for over twenty years.

Both halves of that sentence matter, and the second is the one an English reader in 1979 could not have decoded.

Anatoly Ivanov (1928–1999) was a Siberian, a genuinely popular novelist, and — as the jacket says — editor-in-chief of Molodaya Gvardiya. That journal had been, through the late 1960s, the principal platform of the Russian nationalist tendency inside Soviet literature: the "russophile" current that set the Russian village, the Russian past and Russian spiritual continuity against the internationalist and modernising strands, and that carried on a long war with the liberal Novy Mir. In 1970 the journal's direction was examined at a session of the Politburo and its then editor was removed for being excessively "russophile".

The word is the apparatus's, not ours, and in English it pulled the other way. For Engels it meant a politician or a paper serving the Tsar's interest — writing to Lafargue, he hopes to wean the English Liberals from "Gladstone's Russophilia" and notes what even "the Russophile Daily News" has been driven to say — and in the socialist press of 1979 it still meant a friend of Moscow. In the Central Committee's usage it meant almost the reverse: a writer who preferred the Russian nation to the October Revolution. It is kept in quotation marks here for that reason, and it is theirs every time it appears.

By the time this translation appeared, Ivanov was editing the journal.

He was still editing it eight years later, and by then the journal's position needed no inference. Roy Medvedev — whose own history of Stalinism circulated in samizdat for twenty years before it could be published in the Soviet Union — surveyed the press of the glasnost period and found journal after journal turning, even Nash Sovremennik, "which previously was noted for a strongly Russian-nationalist position, close to Stalinism". One did not turn:

But only one magazine has come out openly and actively against the current criticism of Stalin: Molodaya gvardiya, led by such writers as A. Ivanov, P. Proskurin, and V. Gorbachev [no relation to Mikhail Gorbachev]. They have

taken as their slogan two lines by the pro-Stalinist poet V. Fyodorov: "Do not disturb the graves of old. They are fraught with new disasters."

That is the author of this novel, named among the writers leading the magazine, by a Soviet Marxist historian, in the revised edition of *Let History Judge* (Columbia University Press, 1989; Medvedev's note cites Molodaya gvardiya, 1987, no. 7, p. 240). Whatever the reprimand of 1970 was meant to correct, it did not take. Seventeen years on, the journal was the only one in the country still openly resisting the criticism of Stalin, and it resisted in the name of the graves.

We set this out not to convict a novelist of his job. We set it out because the foreword printed in this volume reads very differently once you know it, and because a reader who is handed a fifty-year Soviet epic is entitled to know which current inside Soviet letters produced it.

The foreword, and a word-count

The volume opens with a foreword, "A Powerful Call to Life (Anatoly Ivanov and his work)", running to about 2,450 words and signed Boris Leonov.

It is warm, competent, and mostly about Siberia. And its vocabulary is worth setting out, because in a foreword to a novel covering the years from the 1900s through revolution, civil war, collectivisation and the German invasion, the proportions are these:

- people — 20 times - Siberia — 19 - class — 6 - Russian — 6
- Lenin — 2 - Party — 2 - Marx — 1 - kulak, socialist realism,
national — none at all

People outnumbers class by more than three to one and Party by ten to one. And Leonov's closing sentences state the position plainly:

No matter what Anatoly Ivanov's subject, he remains faithful to his own outlook on life: the Russian Revolution was brought about by the anguish of the people in the past. It was born of the people's struggle for land, for freedom and happiness. This understanding of the truth of our way of life has made him the writer he is.

Read that as a proposition. The revolution was produced by the anguish of the people and born of the people's struggle for land, for freedom and happiness. There is no class in it, no party, no programme, and no Marx. It is a populist account —

closer to the Narodniks of the 1870s than to anything in Lenin — and it is offered, in 1979, as the thing that makes Ivanov the writer he is.

Set it beside the other forewords this series has examined. The 1952 Ostrovsky quotes Stalin eight times and cites the Short Course. The 1974 Turgenev runs Engels's argument about Balzac. This one manages, across two and a half thousand words about the Russian Revolution, a single mention of Marx.

That is not carelessness. It is a different politics, and it had a journal.

What the novel actually is

Having said that, we should say the other thing, because this introduction is not an indictment.

The *Eternal Call* is a serious popular novel and it does what popular novels are for. It follows the Savelyev brothers and their village across half a century, and Ivanov can handle a crowd, a fight, a courtship and a death. The book was filmed as a nineteen-part television serial and watched by tens of millions, and the reasons are on the page: strong hooks, fast scenes, characters you can tell apart in the dark.

It is also honest about things a more doctrinaire novel would have smoothed. The prologue's informer is not a monster but a careerist with a cherished dream, being poured tea. The peasants are not a chorus.

And Ivanov has an ear. Here is a boy who has volunteered in 1941, being scolded by a local official at the station as the troop trains load:

"In case you're interested, they load cattle. We're people. We board a train. Understand? Idiot!"

At which he pulls the official's cap down over his eyes.

That is a real line — a seventeen-year-old correcting an administrator's vocabulary on his way to the front, and the correction is about whether human beings are freight. It is worth more than a chapter of Leonov's people.

The brothers, and where the title comes from

The novel's spine is three Savelyev brothers from a Siberian village and what the century does to them. Ivan is named nine

hundred and sixty-two times, Fyodor eight hundred and forty-three, Anton four hundred and forty-six; Semyon, of the next generation, four hundred and eighty-two. Against them stands Kaftanov, the rich local man, named three hundred and eighty-one times, and Polipov, the slippery one, three hundred and sixteen.

It is a family saga in the strict sense: the political history arrives as something that happens to brothers who already dislike each other, and Ivanov is better on the dislike than on the history.

And the book's title comes from a toast.

It is proposed by Kruzhilin at a table, aimed at Fyodor — the brother who has gone wrong — while Ivan sits with his head lowered and his hand trembling under the tablecloth until his wife's hand covers it:

"Luckily, man has been blessed with intelligence," Kruzhilin continued, looking straight at Fyodor. "That's why he's a human being. And sooner or later he'll begin thinking about the meaning of life, the life of his fellow-men, of society and his own actions and deeds. A powerful, compelling, eternal call to life, an eternal desire to find his own place in life is what forces him to do this. And I believe that from this moment on a person, no matter what mistakes he may have made, becomes a true member of the society in which he lives, a defender of justice, human dignity and happiness. And so, my friends, let's drink to this noble, eternal call..."

That is the sentence the novel is named after, and the jacket quotes part of it as "the key to all of Anatoly Ivanov's work". It is worth reading closely, because it is a doctrine.

What forces a man to become a true member of society is an eternal call to life and an eternal desire to find his own place in life — something innate, permanent, and inside him. Not his position in production, not his class, not organisation, not anybody's programme. And the redemption is unconditional: no matter what mistakes he may have made.

This is a theory of moral awakening, of a kind that would sit comfortably in a nineteenth-century Russian novel and does not sit anywhere in Marx. A man finds his place because something eternal in him summons him to it. There is a word for the view that the decisive facts about a people are permanent and inward rather than historical and material, and the journal Ivanov edited spent twenty years elaborating it.

The scene is also, as a scene, rather good — the toast is being used to shame a man at his own table, and Ivanov keeps his eye on the wrong brother's trembling hand. He usually does. That is the difficulty with this book and the reason it cannot be dismissed: the doctrine is soft, and the craft is not.

The ending of Book One

The volume closes at the station in 1941, and it is the best writing in it.

Natasha has come to say goodbye to Semyon and cannot find him in the crowd around the freight cars — each open door "a deep, bottomless pit". When she reaches him the train is already moving, and she remembers what she came to say:

"I wanted to leave with you to where the fighting is. But I can't now, because I'm.... Because we're going to have a baby."

He has already jumped onto the step of a moving car. He jumps back down, grips her, shakes her — "What did you say? What did you say?" — and then the train is going.

Men hung in clusters from the cars as the train crawled off, curving as if to break through the solid wall of weeping, moaning voices. Semyon was running after the train, trying to catch up with the last car. "He won't make it. He won't," Natasha's hopes soared. "He won't make it, and then he'll stay here with me. It's so simple. And then we'll go home, and everything'll be just like it was." As he caught up with the last car hands reached down to him, grabbed him, lifted him and dragged him into the black, bottomless pit. Natasha swayed and fell in a dead faint into the hot dust that had been churned up by so many hundreds of feet.

End of Book One

A woman hoping her husband will miss his train to the war, and being wrong. Nobody who writes that is a hack.

Lakhnovsky, and what happened to him afterwards

Now the thing this introduction began with, and the reason the strange minor policeman of the prologue is worth remembering.

In the second book of *The Eternal Call* — not in this volume — Lakhnovsky returns. The tsarist gendarme of 1908 has become an SS officer, and he interrogates a captured Soviet

officer named Polipov. In the course of it he sets out a plan: the Soviet Union will not be destroyed by arms but from within, over generations, by corrupting its youth, substituting false values, and attacking the people's historical and spiritual foundations until national unity dissolves.

It is a villain's speech in a work of fiction, published in 1971. Ivanov rewrote it for the 1981 edition, breaking it into shorter passages scattered through the book.

And then it left the novel.

In 1993, Metropolitan John (Snychev) of St Petersburg published the speech as a discrete document and attributed it to Allen Dulles, the former director of the CIA. Under the name "the Dulles Plan" it became, and remains, the most popular conspiracy theory in Russia — quoted by politicians, clergy and television, printed as though it were a declassified American directive, and used to explain everything that has happened to Russia since 1991.

It is a forgery whose original is a Soviet adventure novel, and the man who wrote it edited the journal of the Russian nationalist tendency.

We record this without relish. Ivanov invented a Nazi to say a wicked thing, which novelists are entitled to do; he did not forge anything, and he cannot be blamed for a Metropolitan's use of his work two years before his own country's literature stopped being state business. But it is the most consequential afterlife of any book in this series, and a reader meeting Inspector Lakhnovsky on page one should know where that character ends up — not in Book Two, but in the political life of a country thirty years later.

A note on the illustrations

The volume carries thirty-nine plates by Peter Pinkisevich, and they deserve a line because they are doing something the text is not.

Pinkisevich was one of the most prolific Soviet book illustrators, and his manner here is dark, heavy-contoured, almost woodcut-like: faces in three-quarter shadow, figures against snow, groups pressed into the frame. Against Ivanov's fast, cinematic prose the pictures pull the other way — slow, monumental, closer to the graphic language of the 1930s than to a 1970s bestseller.

It is a reminder that a Soviet book was assembled by several hands with several intentions, and that the illustrations were

often the most conservative element in the package. A reader of this reissue sees them as Progress's readers did.

What is living

The station in 1941, the boy with the accordion, and the informer being poured tea in 1908.

The Eternal Call is the most-read novel in this collection and the least like the others. It has no doctrine in it, which is precisely what should be noticed: the late-Soviet blockbuster did not fail to be Marxist by accident. Its foreword tells you what replaced the doctrine — the people, the soil, Siberia, anguish, a struggle for land — and the journal its author edited was where that replacement was being worked out, in public, for two decades before the state that published this book dissolved.

One further thing is worth saying to readers of this series in particular. It is tempting, from our tradition, to treat a book like this as simply the enemy — the officially garlanded blockbuster by the editor of the nationalist journal. That would be a mistake, and not only because the novel is better than the position.

Ivanov's readers were real, in their millions, and what they were reading was a story in which ordinary Siberians endure a century and are not condescended to. The reason the populist account of the revolution could take hold inside Soviet literature was not that anyone was fooled. It was that by the 1970s the official Marxism had become a language nobody spoke at home, and the people and the soil were available, warm, and required no explanation. A tradition that wants to understand how the Soviet Union ended has more to learn from the success of this novel than from any number of dissident memoirs.

Read it as a novel; it earns that. Then read the foreword again and count the nouns.

On the Jewish Question

The two essays of 1843-44 in which a young Hegelian turned from criticising heaven to criticising the earth - including the passage on religion that is almost always quoted in half.

Karl Marx

Publisher's Introduction

When Daniel Bensaïd died in January 2010, the obituaries written for him inside the Fourth International tried to list what he had done with Marx. There is the biography, Marx l'intempestif; there is La Discordance des temps; there is the illustrated Passion Karl Marx; there is the late, charming Marx mode d'emploi, drawn by Charb, written for young people joining the NPA. And there, in the middle of the list, almost in passing: he also published studies on concrete aspects of Marx's thought, "like the complete critical edition of On the Jewish question".

That is a striking place for this essay to end up. The most embarrassing text in the Marxist canon, the one his enemies quote and his followers explain away, was given its full critical apparatus by a leader of the Fourth International, in the last decade of his life, as one job among several. It is worth asking why he bothered, and the answer is the argument of this introduction.

The two essays

The pieces in this volume were written by a man of twenty-five who had not yet become "Marx". In the winter of 1843-44, newly married and newly exiled to Paris, Karl Marx helped edit a single double-issue of a journal with a hopeful, unwieldy name, the Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher, meant to marry German philosophy to French politics. Only that one issue ever appeared. It carried these two pieces: an introduction to a longer, unpublished Criticism of the Hegelian Philosophy of Right, and a review-essay on the writings of Bruno Bauer under the title On the Jewish Question. Between them they mark the exact place where a brilliant young Hegelian stopped criticising heaven and turned to criticise the earth.

A word on the text. The major writings of Marx and Engels are long out of copyright, but the modern collected edition is a living publisher's property, and we will not dress it up as

something it is not. We have gone instead to the first English rendering of these essays, made by H. J. Stenning for the 1926 volume Selected Essays, now in the public domain. It is a translation of its period: a little stiff, fond of "man" where a later hand would write "human being", and it renders Marx's title-phrase as A Criticism of the Hegelian Philosophy of Right. We reproduce it honestly, as a public-domain text and not as a Progress edition.

Read the Criticism first, because it is the manifesto of everything that follows. In a few dense pages the young Marx sets down, almost as slogans, the ideas he will spend a lifetime working out. The criticism of religion is the basis of all criticism. Man makes religion, not religion man. Religion is the moan of the oppressed creature, the sentiment of a heartless world, the spirit of spiritless conditions, and then the line the whole world knows and almost always half-remembers: it is the opium of the people. Marx is not sneering at believers. He is saying that religion is at once a real expression of suffering and a real protest against it, so that to abolish the illusion you must abolish the conditions that need illusions. That the officially atheist USSR would read the opium line as a licence to persecute belief rather than as a diagnosis of why people cling to it is the first of several inversions we shall meet. The essay ends by naming the agent of the coming change: a class in radical chains, which can redeem itself only by redeeming all of society. The proletariat enters Marx's thought here for the first time, less as an economic fact than as a philosophical necessity.

The distinction that survived

On the Jewish Question is two things at once, and honesty requires taking them separately.

The first and larger part is one of the most valuable things Marx ever wrote. Bruno Bauer had argued that Jews could not be politically emancipated until they, and everyone else, gave up religion: the state must shed Christianity and the Jew must shed Judaism. Marx turns the question inside out. Look at the

United States, he says, a state with no established religion and the most religious society on earth. The state can free itself from religion without freeing its citizens from it. Out of that observation comes the distinction that runs through all his later work, between political emancipation — equality before the law, the rights of the citizen, the secular state — and human emancipation, the real freedom of people in their actual social lives. Political emancipation is a genuine advance and Marx never belittles it, but it is not the end of the road. The much-praised rights of man, he shows, are largely the rights of the isolated, self-interested individual of bourgeois society, not the rights of people bound together.

It was the working life of that distinction, not antiquarian interest, that kept bringing this tradition back to the essay. Bensaïd, asked late in life where the very idea of revolution now stood, went straight to it. The revolutionary aim, he answered, took on a more concrete content during the nineteenth century with the birth of the socialist movements, “as evidenced by the distinction established by Marx, from *On the Jewish Question* (1844) between ‘emancipation that is only political’ or civic (the political revolution), and ‘human emancipation’ (or social emancipation), to which the French revolutionaries of the time responded with the theme of ‘the Social Republic’ opposed to the Republic itself, which can be a Thermidorian or colonialist republic.” That is the essay doing work in an argument about Venezuela, Bolivia and the Zapatistas, a hundred and sixty years after it was printed. Every later fight over whether formal legal equality is enough, for the freed slave, the enfranchised worker, the citizen who is equal at the ballot box and unequal everywhere else, is a footnote to those pages.

The ugly part, and the debate it opened

Then there is the second part, and there is no use pretending it is not there. Answering Bauer’s claim that the Jews’ worldliness disqualified them, Marx accepts the era’s crudest stereotype and runs with it: the everyday religion of the Jew, he writes, is huckstering; its worldly god is money; and the emancipation of society from Judaism would be emancipation from huckstering and money. The passage equates Judaism with the money-getting spirit of commercial society and proposes to abolish both together.

This is a real blemish, and it should be named as one. It is not softened by the facts that surround it: that Marx was the grandson of rabbis on both sides; that his father had converted for a lawyer’s licence; that the equation of Jews with money was a commonplace of the German radical milieu, used by

writers far cruder than Marx; that his target is plainly capitalism, for which Judaism here is a borrowed and disreputable metaphor. Context explains; it does not excuse. Our own view is the plain one: the analytic core, that money and the market corrode human relations, is Marxist and true, and the language the young Marx dressed it in is a slur he should not have used, which did real harm, and which later antisemites were delighted to quote.

The serious point is what the movement did with that page afterwards, and the answer for most of the twentieth century is: not enough. The reckoning came late and it came from the margins. Enzo Traverso’s doctoral thesis, published in 1990 as *Les marxistes et la question juive. Histoire d’un débat, 1843–1943*, takes its opening date from this essay and makes the whole subsequent century of Marxist writing on the Jews a commentary on it. His verdict is severe and, we think, right. Among the majority of Marx’s followers an interpretation of Marxism established itself early as a materialist conception of history dominated by the idea of a linear, necessary and natural direction of historical development. The debate on the Jewish question, he argues, exposes this better than any other, because the tendency was to treat the whole matter as something transitory that would be resolved on the inevitable path to socialism, revealing, in his phrase, “the tragic illusions of a teleological vision of history, which so profoundly marked the thinking of the official Marxism of the Second and Third Internationals”. At the origin of the assimilationism and the failure to understand antisemitism, Traverso writes, was an idea of progress in which history was a linear evolution and the development of the productive forces under capitalism inevitably brought the socialist order nearer.

The exception in that record, and the reason this tradition has some right to speak, is a book by a young man who did not survive to see it printed. Abram Léon wrote *The Jewish Question: A Marxist Interpretation* in occupied Belgium and was murdered at Auschwitz at twenty-six. Ernest Mandel, who edited it, wrote the preface to the first edition under the name E. Germain, and returned to it all his life; the passage his comrades quoted at his own death in 1995 is the one asking why men of such gifts chose a movement that could promise them neither success nor glory nor honours. When Maspero reprinted Léon in 1969, *Quatrième Internationale* reviewed it in terms that say plainly what was at stake: at a moment when the Palestinian tragedy was flaring again and the symptoms of antisemitic degeneration were reappearing in “socialist” Poland, the reprint had, the reviewer wrote, the value of a political act, putting within reach of a new revolutionary generation a work indispensable to any Marxist approach to

the subject. That is the line this edition stands in. It runs from Léon through Mandel and Weinstock to Traverso and Bensaïd, and it is a line that took Marx's worst page seriously instead of managing it.

Was the state that owned Marx consistent with him?

Here the essays turn a hard light on the regime that made Marx its founding saint. On the Jewish Question is, in the end, a plea for human emancipation, for a freedom that reaches past the law into social life. The Soviet state offered its Jewish citizens neither the political nor the human kind. Under Stalin the trajectory is a matter of record: the Yiddish culture strangled, the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee's leaders shot in 1952, the anti-cosmopolitan campaign with its barely coded targets, the Doctors' Plot that death alone cut short, and for decades afterwards a wall against emigration and a state anti-Zionism that shaded continually into the older hatred. A country that canonised an essay on emancipation practised, against the very people named in its title, a modern version of the disability the young Marx set out to abolish.

The reflex outlived the state. The Fourth International's press was still tracking it in 1990, when the reformed East German party, trying to make amends, had its prime minister declare that the GDR recognised the responsibility of the German people in its entirety for the crimes committed against the Jews. International Viewpoint called the declaration grotesque, and gave the reason: it merely reverses the negative essence the Nazis attributed to the Jews and attributes it to the Germans instead, and it is made by a party which, far from representing the German people in its entirety, no longer even represents its own members. What the PDS leaders had never done, the paper noted, was recognise their own responsibilities. The habit of using a collective essence to avoid a particular reckoning is exactly the habit Marx was attacking when he was at his best, and exactly the one he fell into when he was at his worst.

The canon's handling of the essay told the same story more quietly. Where it was printed at all in the Soviet collections, the difficult second part was managed: read as pure anti-capitalism, filed among the early works a mature Marx supposedly outgrew, rarely dwelt on. The awkwardness was real. The honest course would have been to confront the passage, not to smooth it, and a state that had made its peace with the substance of the prejudice was in no position to reckon with its founder's worst page. It took a French Trotskyist in the 2000s, with no state and no institute behind

him, to sit down and produce the critical edition.

Why these essays still speak

Strip away both the ossification and the ugly paragraph, and what remains here is astonishingly alive. The distinction between political and human emancipation has lost none of its edge: it tells us why winning the vote, or the law, or a seat at the table is necessary and never sufficient, why a society can be scrupulously equal on paper and savagely unequal in fact, why the market's freedoms and human freedom are not the same thing. The critique of the merely formal rights of man is not an argument against rights, for which Marxists have shed blood, but an argument that rights held by isolated individuals against one another are a floor and not a ceiling. And the young Marx's wager that the class most completely stripped of humanity is the one that can win it back for everyone is the moral core of the whole tradition, older and deeper than any five-year plan.

We publish the essays whole, the achievement and the failing together, because a founder worth having is one you can read with your eyes open: crediting the man who taught us to distinguish the free citizen from the free human being, and refusing him the page where he forgot his own lesson.