

ZINAIDA HIPPIUS: AN INTELLECTUAL PROFILE. By *Temira Pachmuss*. Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press. London and Amsterdam: Feffer & Simons, 1971. xiv, 491 pp. \$12.50.

This monograph on Zinaida Gippius (I find the simple transliteration of the Russianized rendition of the name preferable to its original German form) is the first comprehensive study of her ideological and literary development and the impact she made on Russian intellectual life. A major figure of the twentieth-century Russian religious renaissance, she is seen by Professor Pachmuss as "one of the most stimulating minds of her time, a sophisticated poet, an original religious thinker and an inimitable literary critic" (p. 410), undeservedly neglected and misrepresented by literary critics and historians.

The author's well-founded conclusion that Gippius's work embodies "the four chief aspects of the Russian cultural tradition—art, religion, metaphysical philosophy, and socio-political thought" (p. 410) is reflected in the arrangement and distribution of the chapters. Chapter 2, entitled "Beginnings," is devoted to a description of the essential characteristics of Gippius's poetry, illustrated with a number of well-chosen and thoroughly analyzed examples in Russian and English translation. It is curious, however, that in chapter 8, on Gippius's long *poema* "The Last Circle," the excerpts are given only in translation. Unfortunate also are the rather frequent imprecise quotations of Gippius's poems—for example, "Privetstvuiu smert' ia / S bezumnoi otradoi" (p. 28), instead of ". . . bezumnoi otradoi" ("Osen"); "Ona razrushila svoi stradan'ia" (p. 78), instead of ". . . svoi zhelan'ia" ("Liubov"); "I vse ravno: pozhary, znoi" (p. 250), instead of "I vse proshlo: pozhary, znoi" ("Dozhd"). The poet's concern with art is further described in "Zinaida Hippius as a Literary Critic" (chap. 9), her pre-eminence in this field being somewhat exaggerated by the author.

Chapters 3 and 4 present Gippius's metaphysical philosophy and religious activities. The sections on the Merezhkovskys' secret religious services and rites finally unshroud an aspect of their life discussed only in hushed tones up to now. Their political views and involvements from 1905 till 1920 are depicted in chapters 5 and 6. "The Parisian Period" (chap. 7) deals with Gippius's personal, literary, and intellectual life in emigration.

"The Metaphysics of Hippius' Concepts" (chap. 3) is the central chapter of this study, for it reveals the poet's preoccupation with the metaphysical basis of love and the transcendental mystery of sex, of freedom and equality, and of death and the underlying philosophic concept of time. The meaning Gippius attributed to these philosophic notions is effectively analyzed by the author. However, she does not explicitly discuss the central paradox of Gippius's ideology which is basic to her metaphysics—her attraction both to timelessness and empirical movement in time. In general, paradox rather than duality or antinomy is the underlying principle of her *Weltanschauung*.

The attempt by the author to combine a thematic or topical arrangement of materials with a chronological exposition results in occasional redundancy and the incongruous placement of the chapter "Zinaida Hippius as a Literary Critic," which appears after the sections dealing with the last period of her life. The topical arrangement in this case destroys the chronological sequence of exposition. The division of "The Metaphysics of Hippius' Religious Concepts" and "The 'Cause': Hippius' Religious Views and Activities" into two autonomous chapters leads to an unavoidable redundancy. Gippius's metaphysics is discussed at length in both.

The emphasis is on its intrinsic meaning in the former and a depiction of its application in a historical context in the latter.

The book has been extensively researched and is well documented. Especially valuable is the information taken from Gippius's numerous diaries, letters, and other archival materials, some of which have been published recently by Professor Pachmuss in the Russian émigré journal *Vozrozhdenie*. Perhaps the study is somewhat overburdened with lengthy quotations, but as a major source work about Gippius it is a valuable contribution to literary scholarship, my few critical remarks notwithstanding. The author has also succeeded in finally refuting Gippius's unfounded "decadent" reputation by revealing the poet's intense and multifaceted religiosity as reflected in her literary, philosophical, and even political activities.

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RUSSIAN LITERATURE UNDER LENIN AND STALIN, 1917–1953. By  
*Gleb Struve*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1971. xvi, 454 pp. \$9.95.

The present volume—revised, enriched, and expanded—grew out of the classic *Soviet Russian Literature, 1917–1950* (1951). It is an important event. Moreover, it forecasts a sequel dealing with the literary scene after Stalin's death. The promised undertaking will require all of Struve's formidable erudition, clarity, and objectivity which mark the present volume. The connection of this volume with the planned sequel is not unproblematic, as the author is fully aware. For example, he speaks in the foreword of a "submerged" literature, of works kept in drawers, such as Akhmatova's and Mandelshtam's poetry and a large portion of Bulgakov's oeuvre: "Chronologically speaking, they belong to the period covered in this book. But in another and more real sense they are part of the post-Stalin literary scene. This fact has presented a difficult problem. To discuss them out of the context of the period during which they were *published* seemed to me unjustifiable" (p. vii). The merits of the method adopted can be best judged when the sequel appears.

The bibliography is excellent and streamlined. (It is to be hoped that the publisher plans a paperback edition forthwith.) The footnotes, honed and updated throughout, make fascinating reading all by themselves, though one may have preferred the inclusion of Mirsky's, Gukovsky's, or Belinkov's destinies in the text.

Several revisions turn poignantly eloquent. The altered language of the dedication to Mandelshtam, Babel, Pilniak, and other victims of Stalinism reflects a clearer knowledge than that of 1951 of their martyrdom. In his 1951 book Struve said this in reference to Akhmatova's "Slava miru" poems: "Their poetic quality is very low, and one hesitates to believe that they were written by Akhmatova" (p. 333). In the present volume: "Those who knew Akhmatova well realized at the time that by this abject capitulation before her detractors she was buying not so much the right to re-enter literature as her son's freedom" (p. 354). The hiatus here, shatteringly relevant to Nadezhda Mandelshtam's memoirs, makes me question a point the author raises in regard to nonresistance to Zhdanovism: "An impartial observer of the Soviet literary scene cannot help reflecting with dismay on the fact that not a single voice of dissent, let alone protest, was raised against this total subjection of literature to the line dictated from the party heights" (p. 367). Doesn't the author's own exhaustive account of literature under dictatorship show that such dismay is unwarranted? Dissent had bifurcated between death and the desk drawer.