

BIBLIOGRAFICHESKIE RAZYSKANIIA PO RUSSKOI LITERATURE
XIX VEKA. By *B. Ia. Bukhshtab*. Moscow: "Kniga," 1966. 174 pp. 56 kopeks.

RUSSKIE POETY: TIUTCHEV, FET, KOZ'MA PRUTKOV, DOBROLIUBOV. By *B. Bukhshtab*. Leningrad: "Khudozhestvennaia literatura," 1970. 247 pp. 77 kopeks.

Boris Iakovlevich Bukhshtab is one of the last surviving critics and scholars of a generation (actually two) which dominated literary studies in Russia for over fifty years and made the university and literary institutes of Leningrad a mecca for anyone seriously interested in the study of Russian literature. Without the likes of Gippius, Slonimsky, Tynianov, Tomashevsky, Eikhenbaum, Zhirmunsky, Eremin, Vinogradov, Oksman, Gukovsky, Berkov, Ginzburg, Maksimov, Alekseev, and numerous lesser figures, the history of Russian literary criticism in this century would be poor indeed. To be sure, the star of Moscow is now in fashionable ascendancy; but a rich tradition carries on in Leningrad, and it does so because of the works and students produced by this brilliant assemblage of literary men and women.

Trained at the university in Leningrad like most of the critics in this group, Bukhshtab is unlike them in that no one book is indelibly associated with his name. He has instead devoted himself to articles, introductions, and brief notes on the major nineteenth-century Russian poets and novelists. As a result, he is less well known than some others of his generation, but no less respected for that by students of Russian literature in the Soviet Union and abroad. Unfortunately many of his finest works are scattered in journals and scholarly publications which are often unavailable in any but the best libraries. Thus these books of his collected essays are particularly welcome. The first, *Bibliograficheskie razyskaniia po russkoi literature XIX veka*, appeared in 1966. The formidable title should not put anyone off. These elegantly informative pieces of literary detective work are as fascinating as only the finest literary scholarship can be. More's the pity, then, that only three thousand copies of the book were printed and that it is little known in the West.

Russkie poety contains better-known works—the introductions for the "Biblioteka poeta" volumes of Tiutchev, Fet, Kozma Prutkov, and N. A. Dobroliubov—and is aimed at a more general audience. It is good to have them available in this accessible form (the books in which they first appeared are long out of print). The four pieces were commented on at length when they were first published. Suffice it to say that it is hard to imagine better introductions to the poetry of these writers in any language or better models for critics setting themselves a similar task. Here Bukhshtab's training in literary scholarship and his impressive knowledge of the full range of nineteenth-century Russian literature blend perfectly with an acute critical sensibility to produce "monographic sketches" (the author's description) which place each poet in the context and tradition of his time and isolate his unique qualities. Beginners will find ample guidance for future work; scholars may disagree with certain points or emphases but will be surprised and engaged by many observations. The essay on Fet is particularly fine, and it is exciting to hear that Bukhshtab is now finishing his first monograph on this poet whose works he has made his specialty.

JOHN E. MALMSTAD
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