

least know with whom they are dealing. Medvedev does not, because his "Stalinism with a human face" does not allow him to see reality as it is, an attribute that used to be a prerequisite for Marxist thinking.

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BODALSIA TELENOK S DUBOM: OCHERKI LITERATURNOI ZHIZNI. By A. Solzhenitsyn. Paris: YMCA-Press, 1975. 629 pp. \$12.50, paper. Distributed by Association Press, New York.

Without any great surprises, this bulky, once deeply secret document provides a valuable memoir of the writer's struggle to live and write in the USSR from 1960 to his banishment in February 1974. In related essays, Solzhenitsyn re-creates the literary-political scene and traces his difficult emergence from anonymity to international prominence. The emphasis is clearly on moral and political, not literary, development.

In counterpoint, the narrative alternates between meetings and discussions in Moscow, usually at the offices of *Novyi mir*, and solitary writing at the secluded forest dacha Rozhdestvo. Solzhenitsyn graces this harrowing account with some rare lyrical intervals, describing the Rozhdestvo surroundings, which are reminiscent of "Matrenin dvor." But predominant is the inexorable tension between writing and protest, fiction and history. Solzhenitsyn emerges from these pages as a sternly disciplined man, driven to complete *Gulag*, his monumental record of past injustice, and thereby honor a debt to his fellow prisoners and history. At the same time he is bitterly torn by the moral dilemma this debt creates: he must eschew the present struggle in order to protect *Gulag*, though his silence and inaction belie the critical lesson of that work for the present. Here, as in the reflections on his conduct during his arrest and imprisonment and on his first wife's KGB connections, Solzhenitsyn renders the harshest judgment on himself.

Throughout the work one encounters short incisive sketches of the literary guardians Demichev and Lebedev and of the dissidents Chalidze, Shafarevich, and Sakharov, among other prominent contemporaries. Solzhenitsyn remains discreetly laconic regarding close friends. Yet, the prize is his sharp critique of the journal *Novyi mir* and especially of its editors, Dement'ev and Lakshin. The unsparing, deeply moving portrait of Tvardovskii, the editor and poet, is brilliant and worth the whole book. No other friend could match the perfect anger and sorrow of Solzhenitsyn at the poet's death.

Solzhenitsyn's ultraconservatism and his irritatingly uninformed declarations on Western affairs have eroded earlier sympathy and may obstruct the fair, careful reading this book deserves and will reward. Despite the peculiar self-centeredness and the gratuitous ill-tempered remarks about "left laborites" in the account, the man's suffering, courage, and talent prevail. Not many will come away liking Solzhenitsyn more, but few indeed will fail to respect him the greater after reading this book.

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