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MODERNISM UNDER THE MICROSCOPE:
THE RECEPTION AND TRANSLATION OF MARCEL PROUST, JOHN DOS PASSOS AND JAMES JOYCE IN SOVIET RUSSIA, 1922-1942

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For Ezgi, for Robert

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Editorial Note

All translations of Russian, French and German quotations are mine, unless indicated in the footnotes. Russian terms, names and some original quotations are rendered in Library of Congress transliteration. An exception in favor of reader-friendliness is made for geographical designations and names common in English. The characters used for Russian letters which have no phonetic equivalent in the Latin alphabet have roughly the following pronunciation:

ts	Russ. 'ц', pronunciation as in 'cats'.
ch	Russ. 'ч', pronunciation as in 'child'.
sh	Russ. 'ш', pronunciation as in 'shot'.
shch	Russ. 'щ', pronunciation of 'sh' before soft vowels, e.g. 'sheen'.
zh	Russ. 'ж', pronunciation like the French 'j' in 'Jean' or the 's' in 'illusion'.
'	Russ. 'ь', the 'soft sign', making the pronunciation of the preceding consonant end with an implied 'i' or 'y.'
"	Russian 'ъ', the 'hard sign', sets off the preceding consonant from what follows, for example from a vowel which would otherwise make the consonant 'soft.'

When referring to archival documents, I do not only list the file numbers, but also indicate the type and date of the document. If documents have their own title, it is given in quotation marks.

Introduction

An Obligatory Chain of Names

"Joyce, Dos Passos, and Marcel Proust," noted *Znamia* editor Anatolii Tarasenkov during a public debate on Dos Passos in 1933, "such is the chain of names that has become obligatory, just like the combination of the names Minin and Pozharsky."[1] In his presentation, Tarasenkov may have simply meant that the sequence of names had been linked by repetition, and indeed, in his opinion, incorrectly linked. But the invocation of Minin and Pozharsky, figures famous and almost mythical for helping to free Moscow in the Time of Troubles, also indicates the extent to which the three foreign authors were being treated as something foundational. But for what?

Readers today— especially in any of the former Soviet countries—would likely never combine in one breath the names Marcel Proust, John Dos Passos and James Joyce. That they would mention these names as relevant to the direction of a project of national literature is rightfully impossible. And yet there was a period in the early Soviet Union when the translation and reading of these three writers was not only a question of aesthetics but of political import as well in defining the canon of Soviet literature. Several moments in this history illustrate this strange elevation of modernism in the Soviet state: the former Commissar of Enlightenment Anatoly Lunacharsky writing the preface to Proust's collected works in Russian; Dos Passos, a Soviet best-seller, becoming the subject of public debates and open letters from Soviet writers to change his literary method; Sergei Eisenstein proposing a cinematic adaptation of Marx's *Capital*, using Joycean techniques, to Stalin; Karl Radek declaring that all three writers were incompatible with the official Soviet literary method of socialist realism. Where did these writers stand politically? What political and social effect might their work potentially have on Soviet readers and writers? Did the content of their fiction justify their experimental writing styles?

[1] Anatolii Tarasenkov, presentation at the symposium "Vecher discussii o tvorchestve Dos-Passosa," typed transcript, RGALI holding f. 618, op. 4, ed. khr. 1, l. 33, [1933].

These were some of the questions posed during an intense and lively debate in newspaper and journal articles, in forewords and commentaries to translations, public discussions, lectures and congresses. This moment has often been framed in terms of a conservative Communist party leadership that, ramping up control and repression in the Great Terror in 1937, de facto if not de jure banned the translation and even mention of undesirable writers, which notably included the chain of these three names. The severity of the repressions are unquestionable. Several of the subjects of this dissertation, including two of Soviet Russia's best translators, would be arrested and die in camps, in some accounts specifically for their translations. In this dissertation, however, I hope to contribute to shifting this frame and this retrospective teleology. The role of the party and the security apparatus was of course inescapable, but not all-powerful. I focus, instead, on the understudied translations and criticism which developed and responded idiosyncratically within an official climate increasingly hostile to "formalism," or modernist experimentation, whether home-grown or foreign. Through close readings of the Russian translations alongside Soviet criticism, public speeches and unpublished archival materials, this study re-evaluates the vitality of these debates and the agency of translators and critics in using "bourgeois" modernism for "socialist" artistic ends.

The stakes of the debate should appear similarly foreign to the contemporary reader of literature or the politically engaged citizen alike: literary and political figures agree on the significance of literature for the political future of states and political movements.[2] To use a phrase from the time that has become a cliché of studies of Soviet literature, writers were the "engineers of human souls." The fact that there has been persistent confusion in attributing the phrase to the writer Yury Olesha or to leading Bolsheviks like Stalin and Zhdanov is itself perhaps testament to the unusual perception

[2] With the growth of restrictions and even bans in contemporary Russia on litereature and cinema thematically tied to LGBTQ rights or even the positive mention of "non-traditional" relationships, and placed in opposition to so-called "traditional values," such controversies are unfortunately becoming less foreign at the time of writing of this dissertation.

of their relative influence in this moment.[3] Both critics and advocates of foreign "formalist" authors saw in their work the use of "microscopes" and "scalpels," subjecting the human psyche to unprecedented inspection and dissection. The modernist work of these authors, however, was also put under the microscope by the Soviets, examined for traces of the bourgeois ideology it might threaten to reproduce in readers, or mined for techniques that might be extracted and used to extend the struggle for revolutionary consciousness. Ultimately, I argue that early Soviet translation culture and criticism, despite and even thanks to the discourse around socialist realism, constitute a substantive engagement with the novels, producing fascinating early interpretations and translations of these works, their literary technologies and the potential of art in the utopian project of engineering the human soul.

Although this dissertation covers the reception of these authors from the early 1920s until the end of the 1930s, its main focus is on the latter decade, one of rapid and dynamic changes in Soviet society broadly, and in cultural matters specifically. Following the first anti-"formalist" campaign of 1930-1931, home-grown Soviet experimentalism had been sharply rebuked. That translations of European and American modernist writers began to appear at this time was, I argue, part of a double cultural movement. On the one hand, translation offered the relative safety of speaking not in one's own words, removing partial responsibility for what a work said. On the other hand, intellectuals sympathetic to "formalism," be they translators, writers, directors or critics, sought to frame the achievements of their Western, bourgeois coevals in terms of techniques that could be learned and appropriated for socialist use, like the Western, capitalist technologies then being imported for the massive construction projects in the Soviet Union. Though many of my protagonists would be victims of the Great Purge, I do not see this history in terms of authoritarians versus dissidents. Every figure

[3] On the origin of the phrase with Stalin see Kornelii Zelinskii, "Vecher u Gor'kogo" (26 oktiabria 1932 goda)" in *Minuvshee. Istoricheskii al'manakh* no. 10 (Paris: Atheneum, 1990), 88-117, esp. 111.

engaged in translating or advocating for Western authors saw this as part of a Soviet revolutionary cultural project, even if, in several cases, this decision proved to have brutal consequences. In this study I rely partially on the framework of Katerina Clark's 2011 book *Moscow, the Fourth Rome: Stalinism, Cosmopolitanism, and the Evolution of Soviet Culture, 1931-1941*, which similarly argues that this period cannot be defined by a single narrative, and that the entangled cultural trends of internationalism, nationalism, world culture and parochialism produced some small flowerings and victories of internationalist, cosmopolitan culture amid a repressive authoritarian atmosphere: in my case, victories of translation.

What I hope to add to this with this dissertation is to provide, in contrast to landscape depictions of Soviet critical debates and schools of translation, a series of carefully selected portraits, allowing for a more lingering examination of particular details and arguments. The subjects of focus are not always well-known: more than half of them are relatively or completely obscure in Russia. Others, like Lunacharsky, Radek and Stenich, are known figures, but whose roles have not been examined closely. In all of them I have tried to read their work with a careful deliberation of the context in which it appeared, to reconstruct their thinking and to examine the subtleties of their remarks, which are immediately lost when reduced to a summary of a few sentences. This dissertation therefore focuses on the major themes in the reception of these authors, what methods and themes provoked responses, directly or by omission, and analyzes the translations while providing as much context as possible on the backgrounds, working methods and views of the translators themselves.

Microscopic Principles

The thematic scope of the idea of the "microscope" in this dissertation is four-fold. First, it conveys the intense scrutiny of the works of the three authors, and, at a further remove, of modernism itself in this moment of Soviet history. More specifically the use of a metaphorical "microscope" became a

staple of the critique made against the methods of Proust, Joyce, and Dos Passos in their writing, and symbolic of the "problem" with the writing, foreign and domestic, which their work represented. When we focus our own lenses on the way that this work is described, it becomes apparent that the problem with these novels was preoccupation with the inessential or the decadent, and their focus on states and experiences that could no longer fit into the project of Soviet literature: pleasure, introspection, aimlessness, wasting time. It appeared at the very beginning of their reception and occurred with increasing frequency as the debates heat up in the 1930s.

The identification of the "microscopic principle" in their work was partially a result of the conscious choices of the authors themselves, who connected their writing with scientific ideas and lenses of different magnifications and purposes (microscopes, camera lenses, telescopes) in conceiving their attempts to capture reality in their fiction by looking closer at the everyday and memory. Proust, writing some of the last pages of his novel at the end of his life, bitterly noted this complaint from his first readers, claiming they had misunderstood the level of magnification: he had used a metaphorical *telescope* for his observations, not a microscope.[4] In Joyce, this was no metaphor, as the few Soviet cultural figures who did meet Joyce in Paris—the director Sergei Eisenstein, the novelist Ilya Ehrenburg and the playwright Vsevolod Vishnevsky—knew well. Eisenstein wrote of his 1928 meeting with Joyce: "[*Work in Progress*, the working title of *Finnegans Wake*] is in the image of the author. It is in the mode of the magnifying glass with which he traverses the microscopic windings of the mysteries of literary writing."[5] In the "Proteus" episode of *Ulysses*, the section of the novel where modes of vision and experience become thematic, Joyce introduces threads tracing their way back to early modern philosophers responding to innovations in the science of optics. Stephen, walking along the beach in Dublin bay, recalls Samuel Johnson's refutation of Bishop Berkeley's idealist theory of

[4] Discussed in Chapter Two.
[5] S.M. Eizenshtein, *Izbrannye proizvedeniia v shesti tomakh*, t. 1 (Moskva: Iskusstvo, 1964), 486.

vision: kicking a large stone to assert the primacy of sense-impressions over ideal Platonic objects. But Berkeley, in his *New Theory of Vision*, also rejected the search for causes through the lenses of the microscope, writing that at best, such mechanically enhanced vision could only give us the "empty amusement of seeing."[6]

The Soviet responses to modernism considered here rediscover this anxiety of an empty amusement of vision, a self-indulgence symptomatic of a microscopic bourgeois perspective, while the Soviets sought to capture the "whole picture." Coleridge, writing in 1797, complained of those too steeped in sense-impressions to be "*habituated to the Vast*": those who have been trained in truths gradually, through the "constant testimony of their senses" are capable of contemplating "nothing but *parts*… And the universe to them is but a mass of *little things*… They were marked by a microscopic acuteness, but when they looked at great things, all become a blank and they saw nothing…"[7]

This would not be the first time that one would find in the paths of the Russian Communist Party the parallels to a religious rejection of modern methods of inquiry, though this is not a relationship investigated here. What is important is that critics and advocates of modernist techniques agreed that "microscopic acuteness," by itself, threatened the ability to see the "great thing" in the goal of human social reorganization. This was the core of Karl Radek's critique when he accused Marcel Proust of spending hundreds of pages on "trifles," when he said Dos Passos failed to take in the "whole picture of capitalist reality," when he argued that Joyce's conviction is that "there is nothing big in life," and that his work amounted to "a heap of dung, crawling with worms, photographed by a cinema apparatus through a microscope." Advocates saw it as possible to overcome the acuteness, but only with a consciousness free of bourgeois blinders: "Bourgeois perception, bourgeois

[6] As quoted in Catherine Wilson, *The Invisible World: Early Modern Philosophy and the Invention of the Microscope* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 248.
[7] Thomas Taylor Coleridge, letter to Thomas Poole, 16 October 1797.

presentation of phenomena, events, character, can go no further," as Eisenstein stated in a lecture to his students defending Joyce.[8]

Terms

Modernism, though used already several times in the preceding pages, was not a term in Soviet criticism. What in English is usually called modernism, Russian Soviet critics usually called "formalism" (*formalizm*), or, with slightly different meanings, "decadence" (*upadochnichestvo* or *dekadans*) or "innovationism" (*novatorstvo*).

By the time these four Russian terms began to be applied to Proust, Dos Passos and Joyce, they were no longer only terms of literary criticism but also of abuse. "Formalism" especially, in Katerina Clark's words, became a "cipher" for modernism and Western trends at the beginning of the 1930s.[9] The original meaning, of course, was not Western at all, but referred to the group of literary historians and theorists, close to the Russian Futurists, that grew from the Society for the Study of Poetic Language (Opoyaz) formed in Petrograd in 1916. Summarizing why Formalism appealed to the first revolutionary decade, Caryl Emerson writes that it offered a "scientific (or at least a systematic) methodology to replace the mysticism of fin-de-siècle thought."[10] Formalist theorists emphasized the autonomy of the poetic word and the structural workings of literary texts. The most well-known idea of the group, and the most relevant to this dissertation, comes from Viktor Shklovsky's 1917 essay "Art as Device" focused on ever-changing artistic devices or techniques (*priëm*) of "defamiliarization"

[8] Emily Tall, 'Eisenstein on Joyce: Sergei Eisenstein's Lecture on James Joyce at the State Institute of Cinematography, November 1, 1934', *James Joyce Quarterly* 24, no. 2, Winter 1987, 138.
[9] Katerina Clark, *Moscow, the Fourth Rome: Stalinism, Cosmopolitanism, and the Evolution of Soviet Culture, 1931-1941* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2011), 138.
[10] Caryl Emerson, "Literary Theory in the 1920s: Four Options and a Practicum," in Evgeny Dobrenko and Galin Tihanov, *A History of Russian Literary Theory and Criticism: The Soviet Age and Beyond* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2011), 64–89, here 64–65.

or (in a neologism that tries to imitate the Russian term) "enstrangement" (*ostranenie*). Art works by "making strange" the familiar, the habitual, so that the reader or viewer experiences it anew, requiring the artist to always innovate. Though they were not advocates of art-for-art's-sake, Formalists were attacked on Marxist grounds (perhaps most compellingly by Pavel Medvedev in 1928, associated with Bakhtin's circle) for their lack of attention to the language of the everyday and their resulting blindness to the political and social significance of art. Formalists acknowledged that writers belonged to life, but their *writing*, and what determined that writing's development, belonged more to the history of literature, to the avoidance of cliché. The history of literature was the evolution of technique. The scientific aura of the endeavor was extremely appealing even to its critics. The separation of literature from the economic and social forces of society, however, was difficult to defend in a state where Marxism-Leninism was the official state ideology.

The attacks brought the formalist study of literature to an end by the late 1920s. Pressure from above emphasized the importance of the deed: Leon Trotsky rejected their closed system of signs: "They are followers of John: for them, 'in the beginning was the Word'. But for us in the beginning was the deed."[11] Critics like Medvedev, and the sociological critic Valerian Pereverzev, attacked it within the academy. The standard criticism—though by no means the most compelling or honest—became that the formalists were too concerned with form, and not with content. Formalists gave up their original positions (with Shklovsky renouncing the method in "Monument to a Scientific Mistake," in 1929) or, like Roman Jakobson, emigrated.

Formalism, already dead, was resurrected repeatedly by its enemies to attack stylistic deviation from the neutral style being pushed on the basis of Russian classics.[12] This included interventions

[11] Lev Trotskii, *Literatura i revoliutsiia* (Leningrad: Komintern, 1923), 139.
[12] Hans Günther, "Soviet Literary Criticism and the Formulation of the Aesthetics of Socialist Realism, 1932-1940," in Dobrenko and Tihanov, *A History of Russian Literary Theory and Criticism: The Soviet Age and Beyond*, 93.

against some of the most innovative art of the 1920s, like the films of Dziga Vertov, which employed techniques that grew out of a propagandistic practice and saw itself as both artistically and politically revolutionary. Vertov claimed his concept of the "Cinema-Eye" (*kino-glaz*) was the organic outgrowth of the film camera as a technology which made traditional film production, with actors and all other aspects of artificial preparation, obsolete: "the organization of factual material as an extract of visual observations."[13] Real life provided all the material the agitational artist needed, and the artist became the editor. It placed the multiplicity of perspectives, angles and magnifications of the camera lens in the service of the big picture, the "great things." Constructivism (in the visual arts) and factography (in literature), two movements with which he was closely aligned, placed the "uninvented literature of fact higher than invented belles lettres," as writer Sergei Tretyakov declared in 1928.[14] All of these avant-garde ideas about art, however, would soon be lumped together as "formalist" in the first anti-formalist campaign of 1930-31.

In some of the most famous formulations of the formalists, however, there had already been an ambivalence about political and social purpose in art. Shklovsky defined enstrangement in 1917 as an almost banal material sensuousness: in order to "return the sensation to life, to feel objects, in order to make the stone stony, exists that which is called art." The formulation retreats almost immediately from the moral core of the question revealed a moment earlier in the list of "objects" devoured by automatization (or, to insert the Proustian term, habit): "things, clothes, furniture, wives and the fear of war." The changing of perspective and magnification made it possible to recover the priorities that should govern human relationships. In this Shklovsky was also echoing, intentionally or not, Marx's claim that the point of philosophy is not to analysis the world, but to change it. This moral aspect was

[13] Dziga Vertov, "Kino-Glaz," *Kino*, 1924, 7 oktiabria.
[14] S. Tret'iakov, "S Novym godom! S 'Novym lefom'!" *Novyi Lef* I, 1928, 2; as cited in Dobrenko and Tihanov, *A History of Russian Literary Theory and Criticism: The Soviet Age and Beyond*, 56.

largely abandoned by the formalists in their work over the next decade, but it expressed an impulse common to the Russian avant-garde and the modernism of Proust, Joyce and Dos Passos, even with the significant differences in their respective aesthetic credos and goals.

T.J. Clark defines modernism by "two great wishes": "It wanted its audience to be led towards a recognition of the social reality of the sign (away from the comforts of narrative and illusionism, was the claim); but equally it dreamed of turning the sign back to a bedrock of World/Nature/Sensation/Subjectivity which the to and fro of capitalism had all but destroyed."[15] The October revolution necessarily changed the perception of the "to and fro," the booms and busts of capitalism. "Comfort" and "capitalism" nicely indicate the geographical and temporal limit. Such utopian aesthetic projects existed in the Western capitalist countries with failed or ambivalent political analogues—the failed socialist revolutions of the late teens and early twenties, the national revolution in Ireland or the rise of fascism with its appeal to Ezra Pound and others.

Many Russian intellectuals supportive of the October revolution saw it as a fundamental break in history, and this meant a different relationship to the "to and fro" of capitalism, now considered overcome, and the representation of modernity's ennui and alienation. The critic Dmitry Sviatopolk-Mirsky lived in London in the 1920s before moving back to Russia in the 1930s (and dropping the aristocratic "Sviatopolk" from his name). He began to find English poetry disappointing in comparison to contemporary Russian verse: "Today it is an autumn poetry, decadent, its spirits still held aloft in the warmth of its Indian summer, but in actuality deeply exhausted… For us, readers of Blok and Mayakovsky, we must slightly alter our critical standards… we have to forget about the

[15] T.J. Clark, *Farewell to an Idea: Episodes from a History of Modernism*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999) 9.

active, lively, revolutionary creative force."[16] Aleksandr Leites, a Soviet critic, spent his early career in Soviet Ukraine writing on Ukrainian poetry, and was close to futurist poet Velimer Khlebnikov. In one of his first books, *October and Western Literature*, he argued that the esteem reserved for many contemporary authors in the West comes out of a bourgeois nostalgia for pre-war capitalism, citing Joyce's *Ulysses*, set in Dublin in 1904, and Proust's *In Search of Lost Time*, whose "very name" was characteristic of this nostalgia.[17]

Clark's claims are sufficiently broad that we can certainly apply the first (recognition of the social reality of the sign) and second (turning the sign back to a bedrock of World/Nature/Sensation/Subjectivity) to Proust, Joyce and Dos Passos. For Proust, it is the false comfort of habit one must escape, and the bedrock of sensation that one recovers in finding lost time again through memory. For Joyce, it is the comfort of habitual language he is always reaching beyond, and the bedrock of, to borrow the crucial pun from *Ulysses*, the Wor(l)d his writing tries to recover. We do not need to dwell on defining this: for Proust and Joyce in the Soviet Union, the question is not what constitutes their modernism, but what components of their modernism were perceived there and how. For Dos Passos, whose work and own biography became personally entwined with developments in Soviet literature, any account of his modernism would be incomplete without addressing his Soviet interlocutors, as I argue below.

What is clear is that in the Soviet context, no separation between aesthetic terms and political ones will hold. Formalism almost immediately comes to signify not only an aesthetic commitment to experimentation, but also political *mis*commitments or non-commitments, blind spots and indifference. In a number of authors and works of this period the distinctions between these words

[16] Dmitrii Sviatopolk-Mirskii, "O sovremennoi angliiskoi literature (Pis'mo iz Londona)," in *Stat'i i retsenzii 1922-1937* (Moskva: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2014), 38-50. Originally published in *Sovremennyi Zapad* 1923 no. 2, 139-50.
[17] Aleksandr Leites, *Oktiabr' i zapadnaia literatura*, (Kharkov': Chervonyy shliakh, 1924), 15.

are attended to with subtlety, especially in the debates taking place in the journal *Literaturnyi kritik*.[18] In the texts analyzed for this dissertation, such terms are often used as cudgels without distinction or clarification. And yet, in their concern with the subject and stylistic means in the works of foreign authors, even these vituperative statements are fundamentally concerned with innovations in style and narrative structure that supposedly distract from, or make secondary, socio-political and historical storytelling, the big picture.

Opposite this, in the period of greatest focus of this dissertation, the end of the 1920s and the first half of the 1930s, stands socialist realism. As a literary method it would be defined at the First All-Union Congress of Soviet Writers in 1934, and became the official method of Soviet art until glasnost:

> socialist realism, being the fundamental method of Soviet (artistic) literature and literary criticism, demands the artist's truthful, historical-concrete portrayal of reality in its revolutionary development. Moreover, the truthfulness and historical concreteness of artistic portrayal of reality should go along with the task of ideological alteration and education in the spirit of socialism.[19]

Notably, even here it is a rather loose formulation, and makes no clear reference to style or technique, one of the main objections to formalist authors, domestic or foreign. Evgeny Dobrenko notes it was a term which Stalin invented to bring a diverse and uncooperative cultural sphere under control, as the party leadership had already done in the Soviet political sphere. Even if we accept Dobrenko's account, it by no means follows that the project of socialist realism was "wholly constructed," as he

[18] See Katerina Clark and Galin Tihanov, "Soviet Literary Theory in the 1930s: Battles of Genre and the Boundaries of Modernity" in Dobrenko and Tihanov, *A History of Russian Literary Theory and Criticism*, 109-43.

[19] "Ustav soiuza sovetskikh pisatelei SSSR," in *Pervyi vsesoiuznyi s"ezd sovetskikh pisatelei 1934: stenograficheskii otchet* (Moscow, 1990), 712–14, here 712.

writes.[20] This projects an absolutely powerful Stalinism and Stalin back onto a period when that power and its consequences were conceivable to neither its future beneficiaries nor its victims. As Clark writes, "To claim that Soviet culture of the 1930s originated with Stalin is to overpersonalize the forces that drove it."[21]While socialist realism would in the post-war years become a fixed method and canon, a dogma, and contained aspects of this as early as the 1934 Congress, in the first period of the term's introduction in the 1930s it remained an even more vague and undefined concept, and many of the novels that would be set in the canon had not even appeared yet. Indeed, in practice, both socialist realism and modernism would largely be defined by their respective canons. Definitions, whether official, in the case of socialist realism, or one of many retrospective formulations like T.J. Clark's, only approximately capture the bundle of quite diverse works which found their way, through long and contentious debates, into the canon.

Could something be borrowed from what one found in Proust, Joyce or Dos Passos and used for the purposes of socialist realism? Even if we know that, ultimately, the answer of party leaders and functionaries was negative, and that the chosen path for "revolutionary" literature was defined almost as the negation of the modernist ethos to "make it new," it was not true for many of the writers and critics who read and responded to their work in the years leading up to 1937. Due to the internationalist legacy of the social democratic movement and the Russian revolution, such questions *had* to and were considered quite seriously. That legacy and the remnants of pre-revolutionary education and culture expressed themselves in a host of ways that were not predetermined by the authoritarian tendencies of mature Stalinism. Western writers and critics could choose to attend to or ignore literary developments at home, or abroad, in the Soviet Union or only in the wealthy Western

[20] Evgeny Dobrenko, "Socialist Realism" in *The Cambridge Companion to Twentieth-Century Russian Literature*, eds. Evgeny Dobrenko and Marina Balina (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 103.
[21] Clark, *Moscow, the Fourth Rome*, 6.

countries. But since the Soviet Union modeled itself as the "homeland" of working people and the international labor movement, and aimed to build a literary culture reflective of this image, the place of any author with world renown and Western popularity needed to be evaluated. Katerina Clark, calling 1930s the "Great Appropriation," writes: "But such Western culture was not just appropriated. In the process it was reworked, reinflected for the specifics of Marxism-Leninism and the Stalinist epoch."[22] The primary means of this appropriation in literature, of course, was through translation.

An International Literature

The idea of "world literature" was a key part of the international social democratic movement from which the (Russian Social Democratic Party of the) Bolsheviks emerged. Although "world literature" was first formulated by Goethe in 1835, it arrived in Russia with the October revolution via Marx and Engels, who wrote in the *Communist Manifesto*: "National one-sidedness and narrow-mindedness become more and more impossible, and from the numerous national and local literatures, there arises world literature."[23] This idea was embodied institutionally soon after the October Revolution in Maxim Gorky's publishing house Vsemirnaia literatura ("World literature"). The publishing project partially functioned as a kind of emergency welfare support for writers and translators in the first difficult years after the revolution, saving many of them from abject poverty and even death. This was itself a humanitarian achievement, but in publications the results were also impressive. Supported by the young Bolshevik state, it published almost 200 new translations of European and American literature between its founding in 1918 until its closure in 1924, hiring many of Russia's most famous and respected authors and translators. With its focus predominantly on classics of realism, such as Marx'

[22] Clark, *Moscow, the Fourth Rome*, 8.
[23] Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *On Literature and Art*, Lee Baxandal and Stefan Morawski, eds (St. Louis: Telos Press, 1973), 14.

and Engels' beloved Balzac, it should be seen as a part of efforts of culturally important but politically marginal Bolsheviks—Gorky, Lunacharsky—oriented towards cultivating a mass reading Soviet public, shaping the reading tastes and cultural atmosphere throughout this period. The size of the public that was being introduced to literacy made this a massive undertaking. The Vsemirnaia literatura publishing house provided the foundation for a mass reading public raised on the classics of world literature. After its closing in 1924, translations and funding for them ebbed, but the 1930s again saw huge print runs under the newly formed state publishing houses and many new translations as foreign works, precisely at the time that the cultural horizon narrowed discursively. By this time, Soviet "world literature" also included translations from Chinese, Turkish, and other languages outside the centers of capitalism. "World literature" was again institutionally embodied, perhaps most notably for my project in the monthly journal *International Literature*. The journal, headed by the cosmopolitan writer and playwright by Sergei Tretyakov from 1932, promoted a world literature that was not only for Soviet domestic use, but which aimed to bring Soviet literature into the wider world as well. It was published in six languages: at first in Russian, English, French, and German, and later in Spanish and Chinese. Katerina Clark writes, "Under Tretyakov *Internatsional'naia literatura* published an impressive array of titles from Western European literature, but also provided detailed information about the literary worlds of Western countries and reviewed many of the new translations that appeared elsewhere."[24] *International literature* came half-way towards a complete translation of *Ulysses*, and also published the most varied selection of world literature in translation. Even the "infamous years of 1937 and 1938," as Clark notes, "produced a harvest of translated works by major western European and American writers."[25] The Soviet canon of foreign writers which was worked out over the course

[24] Clark, *Moscow, the Fourth Rome,* 160.
[25] Ibid., 16.

of the 1930s became part of a large catalogue of world literature. This Soviet legacy can still be felt today in the reading tastes of people, young and old, from countries of the former USSR.

Theories of Translation

A need for translation theory soon emerged in response to the scope of Soviet translation projects. Translation was recognized as a crucial component to the cultural values of the Soviet Union as a multi-lingual community, as well as part of the goals of enlightenment of the Soviet state. "All the peoples of the USSR want to have Pushkin, Gorky, Fadeev and Sholokhov, classics and contemporary writers, in their languages," wrote children's author and critic Kornei Chukovsky in 1936.[26] But, at least in theory, this was not supposed to be only a question of forcing Russian literature on the other nations in the Soviet orbit—as Chukovsky, a Jew from Odessa, knew well. In listing the authors writing in other languages that were then regularly appearing in Russian translation, he lists authors writing in, respectively, Yiddish, Armenian, Persian, Ukrainian and Georgian: "The criminal indifference that dominated in pre-revolutionary literature towards those who were then called foreigners [*inorodtsy* often referring to subjects of the Russian Empire from the central Asian periphery, but applicable to anyone not ethnically Russian], has now been replaced by such an interest towards their literary work, that we cannot imagine an issue of *Literaturnaia gazeta* or a magazine issue without translations of Peretz Markish, or [Yeghishe] Charents, or [Abolqasem] Lahouti, or Yanka Kupala, or Titsian Tabidze."[27] Though none of the western or central European languages are included in this "family" of Soviet literary languages, the large and prestigious 1930s publications of Romain Rolland, Goethe, Dante, Shakespeare and Proust point to their unspoken presence. One can argue that translations from languages within the Soviet Union were framed as part the "friendship of the

[26] K. I. Chukovskii, *Iskusstvo perevoda* (Moskva-Leningrad: Academia, 1936), 6.
[27] Ibid.

peoples," while translations from "masters" outside the Soviet world were more marked as acquisitions of great culture, though this would be far too simplistic. The former could also be "acquisitions" of great culture, as in Boris Pasternak's translations of Nikoloz Baratashvili from Georgian, and many translations in the 1930s were framed in relation to the "friendship" of specific non-Soviet writers with the Soviet Union or solidarity with non-Soviet peoples.

Despite the importance of translation in Soviet literature, no leading theory of translation emerged for several years. Possibly, this was due to the fact that publishing houses were most concerned with the practical task of training competent translators.[28] Andrei Azov, in his monograph on the history of translation in the USSR, divides approaches in the first two decades of the Soviet Union broadly in two. The first can be generously called "exact" (*tochnyi*) translation, later disparagingly termed "literal" translation (*bukval'nyi*) by its opponents. This was not a school of translation but a group of translators, mostly academics who had been educated prior to the revolution, who favored a more literal approach to translation, retaining more of the structure and formal qualities of the original text. This included those, like Adrian Frankovsky and Adrian Fedorov, who would translate Proust, among others. Opposed to "literalist" was "realistic" translation, which would not be definitely formulated until the 1950s, but whose principles were already beginning to figure in the 1930s. It was championed by Ivan Kashkin—or Kashkeen, as he wrote his name in English—a charismatic translator who taught English and translation and formed a group of translators around him, which became a working group which translated several Anglophone writers into Russian: Hemingway, Steinbeck, and Joyce, among others.[29] He and his protégés tended to emphasize "reading into" (*vchitvanie*) the foreign text, orienting the translation more towards the reader in the target language

[28] Andrei Azov, *Poverzhennye bukvalisty. Iz istorii khudozhestvennogo perevoda v SSSR v 1920-1960-e gody* (Moskva: Izdatel'skii dom Vysshei shkoly ekonomiki, 2013), 25–26.
[29] Ibid., 95.

and what they might be expected to understand. Others, like Valentin Stenich (born Smetanich), who translated Dos Passos and Joyce, among others, cannot be grouped in with either tendency: he was not an academic, at times even a clumsy translator, and not a member of a translation group.

Although these distinctions are useful and noted when relevant, it is not always possible to match theoretical differences with translation decisions. The nature of translation complicates and frustrates analysis in two ways. First, the translation emerges in a dialectic of fidelity and invention. The translator must choose or reject at each step a degree or aspect of faithfulness to an interpretation of the original. But this goal of fidelity requires the invention of new formulations in the target language. The resulting subordinate and simultaneously original quality of the translation then strongly encourages comparative readings that see only the fluency or mistakes of translations, and not larger patterns of hermeneutic strategy on the part of the translator.

In the Anglophone context this phenomenon has been described by Lawrence Venuti, where the translator's work is rendered invisible through the cultural preference for textual transparency and the assumption that there is a stable semantic core to the original text, resulting in the "invisibility of the translator."[30] Venuti's argument is focused on the situation of the Anglophone translator, which differs somewhat from the Russian and Soviet situation examined in this dissertation. For one, translation was more visible due to its massive scale in Soviet literary culture, itself a result of the outward-looking internationalism of the early post-revolutionary period, which was never entirely eliminated from Soviet culture. Translators, even before the October revolution, enjoyed much greater visibility and recognition for their contributions to Russian culture. After the revolution, however, their visibility increased, as Soviet publishing began to prominently feature translator's names and organizations were created to train and support new cadres of translators and large catalogues of

[30] Lawrence Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation* (London: Routledge, 2004).

translated literature. Nonetheless, it tended to be authors known also for their own works who were most publicly acknowledged for their translations, and biographical information about professional translators who were not prominent for other cultural work is almost nonexistent.

This is a second invisibility: Professional translators receive far less attention, and their biographies are much more difficult to uncover than those of other cultural figures. A reader who then tries to find the larger hermeneutic patterns in translation encounters a double difficulty: to interpret word choices always referring to another set of words, usually without the aid of secondary materials—diaries, letters, other records of an author's intentions and hopes for a work—which are more often preserved for authors of original texts. Translations certainly speak, but we often lack the tools to disentangle the translator from the translated.

Given the incomplete and abortive nature of the various projects to translate these authors' major works into Russian in this period, this dissertation also asks what counts as a "successful" translation in these cases. If modernist literature discloses new methods of writing and with it new modes of seeing the world, how much of a given work, and in what manner, must be translated in order to make this available in the new language? The completeness of a translation of Proust, Dos Passos or Joyce is perhaps not so crucial, especially when the first and last are authors whose profound influence coexists with often openly partial knowledge of their work.

The impulse to translate or advocate for "modernist" authors was pursued by those who still nurtured some of the revolutionary hopes of the first decade following the October Revolution. During this time the horizon of political possibility narrowed quickly on both the domestic and international fronts in setback after setback. The political "vanguard" of the party, however, still did not define the aesthetic avant-garde, and it was possible for many leading writers to imagine and create art in which both could cohabitate. The following quote from Boris Pasternak's 1924 short story "Aerial Tracks" illustrates the international scope of those hopes.

> These were the aerial tracks upon which the direct thoughts of Liebknecht, Lenin and a few others of their feather departed daily, like trains. These tracks had been laid high enough to pass through all borders, whatever they might be named. One of these lines, laid during the war, maintained its former strategic height, imposed on its builders by the nature of the war fronts on which the line was built. This old military track—which at some point and at some hours crossed the Polish and then the German border—here, at its origin, before everyone's eyes, departed the limits of comprehension... It passed above the grounds, which were frightened by the line's remoteness and its oppressive bulk, as the surroundings, running away in all directions, are always frightened of railway tracks. This was the sky of the Third International.[31]

Even in 1923, however, the achievements and future of the Third International were uncertain. The Russian revolution was predicated on the understanding that it would be followed by others in Western Europe, but this did not take place and the Third Communist International (or Comintern) founded to support this expected series of revolutions, experienced instead a series of failures. First in 1918 with the German Revolution, then again in 1923 during France's occupation of the Ruhr, and then again in the 1926 British General Strike, Soviet hopes for socialist revolutions in western European countries were disappointed.[32] Karl Radek, part of the leadership of the Comintern at the time, already drew quite pessimistic conclusions about the prospects for European revolution, announcing that the struggle for world revolution would last "well into a lifetime."[33] As the work of

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[31] Boris Pasternak, "Vozdushnye puti," in *Vozdushnye puti. Proza raznykh let* (Moskva: Sovetskii pisatel', 1983), 123-135, here 130-31; originally published in *Russkii sovremennik* 1924 no. 2, 85-96.
[32] On history of internationalism among Soviet activists and workers, see Gleb Albert, *The Charisma of World Revolution: Revolutionary Internationalism in Early Soviet Society, 1917-1927*, trans. Zachary Murphy King (Leiden: Brill, 2023).
[33] Written under a pseudonym: Arnold Struthahn, *Die Entwicklung der deutschen Revolution und die Aufgaben der Kommunistischen Partei* (Stuttgart-Degerloch: Spartakus,1919) 56; as cited in Albert, *The Charisma of World Revolution*, 73.

the Third International failed at three major points, the surroundings actually did run away from the line's "remoteness" and "oppressive bulk." One direction was into culture, and there, into more familiar and traditional forms of narration. Mikhail Sholokhov, one of the writers brought early into the socialist realist canon, was a great practitioner of the Tolstoyan realist mode of *War and Peace*, extending the complicated orchestration of human fates to the recent Soviet past of southern Russia. The vast majority of canonical socialist realist texts, including Sholokhov's best-known *And Quiet Flows the Don* (1928-1932), relate not to the building of socialism but to the Russian civil war, and none are focused on the (absent) world revolution or the developments of contemporary international history. The first volume of Sholokhov's novel on collectivization, *Virgin Soil Upturned* (1932), however, gives us a brief glimpse of the gloom that had covered Pasternak's former "sky of the Third International." Unnamed figures from abroad exist in the novel only as the shadowy financiers and arms suppliers to a nefarious and ultimately incompetent former White Army officer. But briefly, one character thinks of the workers in western European countries:

> Kondrat thinks about the misery endured by his country fulfilling the five-year-plan, and squeezes his fists under his rough sackcloth, and speaks with hatred in his thoughts to those workers in the West who do not support the communists: "You sold us for a good salary from your masters! You sold us out, brothers, for the fat life!...Why don't you have Soviet power over there yet?[34]

Sholokhov reminds us of two points often forgotten when we look at the hyperbolic prose of the Stalinist press touting the achievements of Soviet workers or the dark moments of political repression. First, that the five-year-plan was also a period of deprivation and difficulty. Second, that the exaggerated optimism and hysterical witch hunts for traitors was also connected to the disappointment

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Mikhail Sholokhov, *Podniataia tselina* (Sankt-Peterburg: Azbuka, 2015), 152.

and ressentiment towards workers and intellectuals in the West who had failed to extend and complete the aerial tracks laid by Liebknecht and Lenin.

Sources

The primary sources for this dissertation are in Russian, English and French: in the first place, original publications by Marcel Proust in French, John Dos Passos and James Joyce in English and the translations of these authors into Russian which appeared before 1941, along with published and unpublished documents discussing these authors and their translations in Russian, English and French. I am grateful to the late professor Robert Bird for seeking out and providing me with several early translations of Proust into Russian, as well as the four published volumes of the incomplete collected works of Proust in Russian brought out by Vremia and then the state publishing house (GIKhL) in the 1930s. Dos Passos subjected the *USA* trilogy to a few significant edits when it was finally published in a combined edition in 1938 and all subsequent editions reproduce these edits, while the Soviet response to his work was strongly focused on some of the material he removed. For this reason, it was important to work with editions of the original Dos Passos publications and Soviet translations. Early translations of Joyce were available in microform in US libraries and in the original journal publications in Russian libraries.

Research into archival sources and library holdings was undertaken in Russia in 2022 under a delayed 2021 ASEEES Dissertation Research Grant at the Institute for Russian Literature (Pushkinskii dom), the Manuscript Department of the National Library of Russia, the Central State Archive for Literature and the Arts (TsGALI) in St. Petersburg and, in Moscow, the Gorky Institute for World Literature (IMLI RAN), the Russian State Archive for Literature and the Arts (RGALI) and the Russian State Archive for Social and Political History (RGASPI). Thanks to this grant, as well as a Dissertation Research Travel Grant from the University of Chicago, I was able to examine drafts of

articles and translations and other records which have received little or no scholarly attention and which illuminated important aspects of these authors' Soviet reception.

Although the focus of this dissertation is the 1920s and 30s, the body of scholarship it relates to is almost exclusively post-Soviet. Very little research on these authors could be undertaken in Russia during the Soviet period—at least, what little could be done remained bound to the same premises and positions as those to be described here. Meanwhile, scholars outside the USSR with a few exceptions only took up these topics after the collapse of the USSR. This was appropriate, as translations from the 1930s which had lain in drawers for 60 years were finally being brought to press, while other aborted projects were begun again and completed—a time when it became possible to tell stories of those who translated or wrote about these literary works. An era now safely dead could (or so it seemed) could finally be discussed, with a new interest in an era of cultural and ethical reckoning.

The reception of each of these authors in the Soviet Union has been the subject of monographs and studies in post-Soviet Russia and outside it. Most studies, however, have taken the Soviet reception of each author individually. Andrei Mikhailov covered Proust's reception in Russian in a chapter of his posthumously published *Poetika Prusta*.[35] An article by W. Jane Bancroft from 1973 provides an excellent overview of main points in the debates and major translations, including some fascinating comparative statistics, but many details of the story are understandably left out due to the brevity of the article, and no consideration is given to the translations and their legacy.[36] Neil Cornwell's book *James Joyce and the Russians* is an extensive overview of Joyce's reception in Russia,

[35] A.D. Mikhailov, *Poetika Prusta* (Moscow: Iaziki slavianskoi kul'tury, 2012).

[36] Thus we learn, for example, that Proust (incidentally, like Joyce and Dos Passos) were only ever translated into Russian, while Hugo had been translated into 34 "Soviet languages," Maupassant—into 13. The 11 editions of Proust's work in the U.S.S.R. published by 1973 added up to a mere 89,600 copies, compared to nearly four million copies of Maupassant's work: "Realist or Decadent? Proust in the U.S.S.R.," in *Mosaic: An Interdisciplinary Critical Journal*, winter, 1973, vol. 6, no. 2, 1-18, here 4.

translations and the main points of Russian criticism, statements about Joyce by well-known Russian cultural figures, as well as an examination of Russian culture in Joyce's work.[37] Because of the breadth of Cornwell's work, however, there are aspects of the debate and translations that do not get considered. The first Russian translator of *Ulysses,* the philosopher and mathematician Sergei Horujy, also published a book on Joyce's "Russian Odyssey," covering Joyce's reception in Soviet and post-Soviet Russia and his experience as a translator of Joyce.[38] Finally, Ekaterina Salmanova considered the Russian reception of Dos Passos and Dos Passos' experience of Soviet Russia in her dissertation, "Dzhon Dos Passos i Rossiia."[39]

Each of these works covers the reception of these authors over a much longer period of time than the present study, and do not consider how Proust, Dos Passos and Joyce's work was used in the broader debate over literary method. This study has drawn from them extensively, but the goal of this work diverges in the task of examining the moment when Proust, Dos Passos and Joyce became a "chain of names," and how their translations—only passingly examined in all of the above works—participated in this debate over modernism with unusually severe consequences. Evgeny Dobrenko observed that socialist realism gathered together a number of separate projects of 1920s revolutionary culture in synthesis.[40] Similarly the debate about Proust, Dos Passos and Joyce was about limit tests of what could, or could not be synthesized or assimilated.

Lauren Leighton's *Two Worlds, One Art: Literary Translation in Russia and America* compares the practice of translation in the USA and USSR from 1917 until the present. Maurice Friedberg's *Literary*

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[37] Neil Cornwell, *James Joyce and the Russians* (Basingstoke: The Macmillan Press, 1992).
[38] S. S. Khoruzhii, *'Uliss' v russkom zerkale* (St. Petersburg: Azbuka, 2015).
[39] Ekaterina Mikhailovna Salmanova, 'Dzhon Dos Passos i Rossiia' (Moscow, Literaturnyi institut im. A.M. Gor'kogo, 1997).
[40] Evgeny Dobrenko, "Socialst Realism: The Petrified Utopia," in *Aesthetics of Alienation: Reassessment of Early Soviet Cultural Theories*, translated by Jesse M. Savage (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2005), 109-127.

Translation in Russia: A Cultural History provides a broad history of translation, which partially covers the period to be addressed by this dissertation. Although I was only able to consult published article versions of the dissertation chapters, Nailya Safiullina's dissertation, "The Translation of Western Literature and the Politics of Culture Under Stalin," provides an invaluable study of cultural dynamics, the efforts and programs of various schools of translation and the role of government institutions, though she does not provide an account of the translations themselves. Indeed, what discussion there is of translation per se is limited to that of the debates over "literal" and "free" translation (in Russian *bukval'nyi* vs. *vol'nyi*), a distinction that was important in contemporary discussion of translation but which requires more scrutiny. While my dissertation draws on the work of these scholars I focus, by means of select close readings, on the concrete practice of translation, the choices made by the translators and the effect of these choices on the reception of the text. Finally, I aim to show how this analysis illuminates the relationship between the methods and canons of modernism and socialist realism.

Structure

This dissertation is divided into six parts, including the introduction and conclusion. While Proust was the eldest of the three writers and Dos Passos the youngest, the order has been chosen according to the chronology and intensity of their reception during this period in Soviet Russia: Proust's reception began years earlier than the others in 1922, though translations only appeared several years later. The first translation of Dos Passos' work appeared in 1927, but it was not until after his 1928 visit and the second Russian printing of *Manhattan Transfer* in 1930 that his works received attention in the press. Though Joyce's reception begins as early as 1925 with the first translation of excerpts from *Ulysses*, I chose to focus mainly on the period following the 1934 Writers' Union Congress, reaching into the previous reception only when relevant.

Chapter One, "Socialist Realism Rewrites Modernism: 'The Body of an American' among Soviet Shock Workers," examines an unusual episode in the Soviet translation of modernism. In 1932, the popular magazine *Prozhektor* published the closing section of *1919*, the second novel in Dos Passos' *USA* trilogy. "The Body of an American" uses a range of modernist stylistic effects to mock the official US government glorification of the Unknown Soldier and to show the careless and inhuman way an American, coming from a number of possible paths, would be treated on his way to an ultimately pointless death in World War One. The translation in *Prozhektor* radically "normalizes" Dos Passos' language, transposing a modernist text into a more traditional style appropriate to the nascent (but still undefined) method of socialist realism. But the jubilant articles which surround and accompany the excerpt, covering shock workers, shock soldiers and triumphant socialist construction under the first Five Year Plan, demand an examination of the purpose and effect of situating such a text amid paradigmatic Stalinist material. This also leads to a consideration of the developing camps of Soviet translation.

My second chapter, "Time Not Found: A Commissar, a Translator and a Critic Do Not Finish Proust" examines Soviet criticism and early translations of Marcel Proust, whose reception was the earliest, spurred by Proust's death in 1922. The key figure in his Soviet reception is Anatoly Lunacharsky, former Commissar of Enlightenment and Bolshevik advocate of the arts, who was the first to write about Proust in the Soviet press, oversaw an attempted Soviet collected works in the 1930s, and also died suddenly while at work on his preface to the first volume of Proust's novel. The first Soviet critic to use the "microscope" metaphor for the work of a modernist author, Lunacharsky had a conflicted reading of Proust, in which the "*intelligent* among Bolsheviks" recognizes and savors the hypnotic, narcotic power of Proust's writing, while the "Bolshevik among the intelligentsia" must identify the "honeyed" prose as dangerous, even while facilitating Proust's Soviet translation. The Soviet translations of Proust by Adrian Frankovsky and others, meanwhile, undertaken mostly in the

period of relative artistic freedom of the 1920s, challenged ideas about acceptable Russian syntax with their exact following of Proust's meandering French. However, due perhaps to the formal subtlety of Proust's modernism, perhaps simply to the length of the novel, *À la recherche du temps perdu* did not receive as close a Soviet examination as Dos Passos' and Joyce's work. Instead, it was in Proust's biography and letters that hostile critics, like the critic Aleksandr Leites, turned to during the debates of the 1930s. I find Proust's reception to be the least substantial in the critical engagement with his work, yet thanks to the excellent Soviet editions of the unfinished collected works, the novel left a much greater trace in Soviet reading, traveling far beyond the libraries of the center, appearing in the memoirs of survivors of camps and jails on the western and eastern peripheries.

Chapter Three, "Djoys Passos: Joycean Readings of a Soviet-American Novel" follows critical approaches to Dos Passos' work. Likely the most discussed and translated of any of the three authors, Dos Passos' reception was also the briefest, and presents a significant case of artistic influence of Soviet art on American literature. His visit to the Soviet Union in 1928, his public support of the Soviets and translations by his flamboyant tour guide in Leningrad, Valentin Stenich, led to a huge interest in his work in the early 1930s. The work which found such success among Soviet readers and writers, the first two volumes of the *USA* trilogy, *The 42nd Parallel* and *1919*, was itself significantly inspired by the avant-garde, politically "revolutionary" Soviet theater and cinema Dos Passos had imbibed during his visit. The Soviet origin of much of his "formalism," however, was largely ignored. Instead, the source of his modernist techniques was seen in Proust and, above all, Joyce, making the debate into a question of whether such techniques had been safely appropriated from "masters" of bourgeois literature for revolutionary aims, and whether Soviet writers could do the same. Soviet critics, whether supportive or critical of Dos Passos, however, initially had difficulty separating his work from the shadow of Joyce. Soviet critics hardly understood the American writer, but the

provocative translations by Stenich changed the course of the debate over literary method, and indirectly led to Soviet translations of Joyce.

In the fourth chapter, "Framing Joyce: Karl Radek Opens a Window to *Ulysses*," I revise the usual story of Joyce's reception in Russia. Anglophone and Russian Joyceans have largely followed Sergei Eisenstein who said, after Karl Radek's speech at the First Soviet Writers' Union Congress of 1934, that "Joyce was completely done for." Laying out more thoroughly the context and larger significance of Radek's speech vis-à-vis his relationship to Stalin and the Bolshevik conception of culture and literature, I argue, instead, that the result of the Congress was a partial victory for those who wanted to translate and make Joyce's technology of writing available to Soviet readers and writers. Most clearly this was seen in the two separate translations of *Ulysses* that began to appear in Soviet journals, along with critical commentary and articles. These two projects, by Stenich in Leningrad and several protégés of Ivan Kashkin in Moscow, used various strategies to render the complexities of Joyce's novel in the uncertain political climate of the mid-30s, resulting in the translation of about half the novel and original critical commentaries. Even the critical articles, with their hyperbolic exaggerations about the meaning and effects of Joyce's work, take on a different light when read as part of the effort to extract specific technologies and ideas from his works as sufficiently "safe" for Soviet readers in an atmosphere of growing paranoia and hostility.

Chapter One

Socialist Realism Rewrites Modernism

"The Body of an American" among Soviet Shock Workers

In the proposal for this dissertation, I set out to show how the practices of modernism survived in the Soviet Russian translations of Western modernist writers. Even then I strongly suspected this was difficult, perhaps even impossible to show, and misunderstood the nature of translation's relationship to modernism. Let us say the main characteristics of "modernism" writ large is in a number of different complementary strategies of enstrangement: of (above all the empirico-realistic) tradition in the arts, of the artistic object and the means (linguistic, graphic, sonic) by which image and narrative are conveyed, in a utopian orientation toward the potential of artistic representation. If that is the standard, then the semi-professionalized practice of translation in the first half of the twentieth century in the (broadly conceived) "West" would hardly produce even the rare example of a translation which would meet these criteria, and the Soviet Union even less so. While translation practices in the Soviet Union were quite progressive for their time—translators were credited prominently and received relatively generous compensation for translations, and organizations for the expert training in translation were part of the literary establishment—translators still depended on character counts for payment, and pressures of social conformity and even fear of legal repression constrained the possibility of free experimental translation. If the latter did occur, they would have been difficult to publish. In sum, the formal hallmarks of modernism are not applied, because success is defined by all camps of Soviet translation in terms of differing degrees of textual fidelity and the economic and social limitations do not encourage any departure from those norms.

What if, however, we consider the estrangement of the original text and a repurposing of narrative and stylistic elements as "modernist translation"? In more contemporary English translation, Coleman Barks' popular versions of poetry by Jalal al-Din Muhammad Rumi have been termed "modernist" for their radical departures from the original and erasure of its cultural markers. Simultaneously, Barks' translations produce texts in a more "readable" English, replacing images from a foreign context with images and ideas more accessible to a contemporary reader. Stylistically, Barks' translations often ignore the rhymes, homonyms and alliterations used abundantly by Rumi, replacing them with straightforward English in vers libre. Paradoxically, then, a "modernist translation" may very well be a text that is more conservative and traditional in its use of linguistic materials than its original, and, shorn of its cultural context, more "universal"—as in the case of translations of Rumi, whose religious, mystical poetry has become a voice of free-thinking, new-age spirituality in Barks' American translation—a stance more comprehensible to a broad swath of a secular, culturally Christian reading public not readily able or eager to understand the original, medieval Islamic context. Translation of this latter sort, into language accessible to and useful for the Soviet reader, did occur in the USSR.

In the twentieth century, poetry has been the most fertile ground for this kind of translation, perhaps nowhere produced in such abundance as the Soviet Union and Soviet block countries. Barks, like a number of translators before him, including Boris Pasternak, Anna Akhmatova, and Osip Mandelstam, produces his translations not by directly reading and interpreting the original, as he lacks the language skills to read the original, but by drawing on direct translations from the original made by other translators. This practice was known in the Soviet Union as translation by "podstrochnik," or line translation, where the "artistic" translator receives a literal, line-by-line translation from a translator with working competency in both the original and target languages. The "translator" then produces, from this "raw" linguistic material, a more refined poem that conforms to the poetic norms

of the target language. In Russian this meant, more often than not, rhymes and meter. Such were the poems produced by Pasternak from Georgian poetry, for example. Most often, the authors translated in this way were national poets from the smaller Soviet republics or other well known, classic authors. Poets associated with modernism were, for the most part, not translated or published at all, and this practice did not apply to them. All the more so for prose, which was usually the domain of professional translators, and, as a rule, did not contain prosodic elements.

And yet one excerpt from John Dos Passos was subjected to such a radical simplification of its language and cultural markers. The modernist forms of Dos Passos were controversial in the Soviet Union of the 30s, but his content held Rumi-like value for Soviet readers. This translation appeared in the popular satirical magazine *Prozhektor* in 1932 by an anonymous translator.[1] An excerpt from the novel *1919*, where it serves as the novel's closing chapter, "The Body of an American" summarizes in a few pages the book's attitude toward WWI with a caustic mockery of the burial of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington Cemetery in 1921. Quotes from the official congressional declaration, President Harding's speech at the burial and newspaper coverage of the event are set in montage against the many possible hard paths of John Doe's life, considering the likely state of his corpse, the racial criteria potentially used in selecting the unidentifiable remains, and the varieties of tribulations an American of his time might experience before a pointless death in the war.

It was the most-translated individual section from any of his novels, and at least four Russian versions were published in the early 1930s. *Prozhektor*, the popular magazine which published this translation, was published in large runs of 60,000, thereby making this single page of Dos Passos his largest single Soviet publication.

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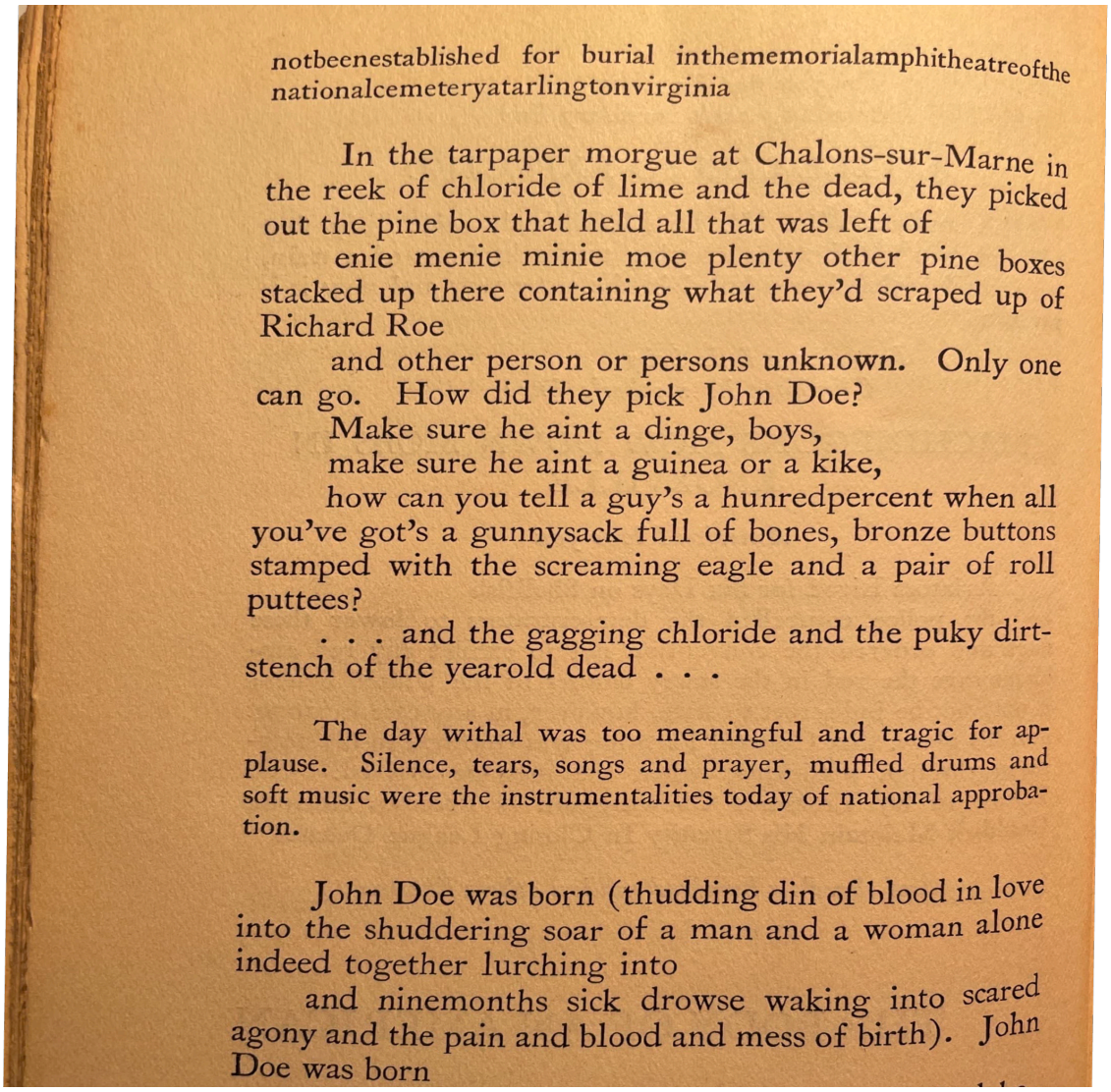
[1] Dzhon Dos Passos, "Telo neizvestnogo amerikantsa," *Prozhektor* no. 4 (298), 29.02.1932, 24. Judging from an unpublished comparative study of Dos Passos by translator Igor Romanovich, the name of the translator of this version of "Body of the Unknown Soldier," was unknown even to contemporary colleagues.



notbeenestablished for burial inthememorialamphitheatreofthe nationalcemeteryatarlingtonvirginia

In the tarpaper morgue at Chalons-sur-Marne in the reek of chloride of lime and the dead, they picked out the pine box that held all that was left of

enie menie minie moe plenty other pine boxes stacked up there containing what they'd scraped up of Richard Roe

and other person or persons unknown. Only one can go. How did they pick John Doe?

Make sure he aint a dinge, boys,

make sure he aint a guinea or a kike,

how can you tell a guy's a hunredpercent when all you've got's a gunnysack full of bones, bronze buttons stamped with the screaming eagle and a pair of roll puttees?

. . . and the gagging chloride and the puky dirt-stench of the yearold dead . . .

The day withal was too meaningful and tragic for applause. Silence, tears, songs and prayer, muffled drums and soft music were the instrumentalities today of national approbation.

John Doe was born (thudding din of blood in love into the shuddering soar of a man and a woman alone indeed together lurching into

and ninemonths sick drowse waking into scared agony and the pain and blood and mess of birth). John Doe was born

Fig. 1.1: Typographic experimentation in Dos Passos' "Body of an American" from *1919* (1932)

Prozhektor was published as a supplement to *Pravda* between 1923 and 1935, and boasted of being the "only richly illustrated periodical artistic publication in the USSR, printed in two colors on the best paper." Printed in black and red, the publication consisted of short reports, typically focused on the triumphs of Soviet military, industry, and society. It was indeed richly illustrated with cartoons and photographs, some of which suggest at least a hint of constructivism à-la Rodchenko, and featured narratives of toiling enthusiasm in which workers were evolving into shock workers (*udarniki*) in the everyday struggle to meet and exceed quotas. The representation of untiring labor is accompanied by

vignettes of the many ways these shock workers relax and the benefits they receive as members of the workers' state. Rather than merely consider the isolated original and translation from Dos Passos, it will be instructive to review and reflect on the dead American soldier's cohabitants in the other articles in this issue.

Therefore I briefly present below the titles, photo descriptions and some translated excerpts from the articles which proceed Dzhon Dos Passos' "TELO NEIZVESTNOGO AMERIKANTSA" in the second February issue of *Prozhektor*, with its cover featuring a portrait of a seemingly bronzed People's Commissar for Military and Navy Affairs, Kliment Voroshilov. The issue is, indeed, filled with positive images and representations of Soviet military and civilian labor, its benefits, its community and comradery, and, especially, a broad spectrum of the "shock" workers diligently fulfilling the five year plan. In contrast to Dos Passos' treatment of the soldier in *1919*, the soldiers in *Prozhektor* are individuated, given a meaningful place in history as builders of socialism and defenders of their country. They are also depicted as comrades, working in collectives, acquiring and being taught new skills, not merely cannon fodder in the trenches of imperialist wars.

RED ARMY MASTERS COMBAT TECHNOLOGY

In photos: above left — *shock students* [*kursanty-udarniki*] comrades Vladimirov and Golubevsky of the regiment academy cleaning their weapons; right — comrades Verbitskii and Drozdov, *shock Red Army soldiers* [*krasnoarmeitsy-udarniki*] at work bringing the instrument into working order; center left — comrades Kiper and Nikolaev, *the greatest shock workers* of tank regiment N, who graduated from their regiment academy ahead of schedule; right — *shock commander* comrade Shparenko, who prepared the platoon of tank driver mechanics for self-sufficient work ahead of schedule; below left — comrade Strel'tsov, *shock worker* and the best sharp-shooter of the regiment academy; nearby — […] Red Army Soldiers are qualified as locksmiths; right — comrade Klimenko, *shock commander*, the best sharp-shooter with a pistol of the regiment academy.

Пролетарии всех стран, соединяйтесь!

ПРОЖЕКТОР

№ 4 (298) 29 февраля 1932 г. № 4 (298)

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КРАСНАЯ АРМИЯ ОВЛАДЕВАЕТ БОЕВОЙ ТЕХНИКОЙ.

Фот И. Хана.

На снимках: наверху, слева — курсанты-ударники полковой школы тт. Владимиров и Голубевский за чисткой орудия; справа — тт. Вербицкий и Дроздов — красноармейцы-ударники, за работой по приведению инструмента в порядок; в середине, слева — тт. Кипер и Николаев — лучшие ударники Н-ского танкового полка, досрочно окончившие полковую школу; справа — командир-ударник т. Шпаренко, досрочно подготовивший взвод к самостоятельной работе механиков — водителей танка; внизу, слева — т. Стрельцов, ударник — лучший стрелок полковой школы; рядом — ЦИТовский кабинет; механическая мастерская Н-ского полка: красноармейцы получают квалификацию слесарей; справа — т. Каменко, командир-ударник, лучший стрелок из пагань полковой школы

Fig. 1.2: Red Army soldiers learning to use new military technology in *Prozhektor* (1932)

In the following excerpted article, a new soldier from a village has not only found a home within the Red Army, but has been raised in it with revolutionary consciousness and given the chance to "master complex technology" and contribute to a "living praxis." In contrast to the list of cliches in Dos Passos' "Body of an American" that summarizes and satirizes the entirety of the education available to a young man in pre-WWI America, the Soviet experience is presented here as one in which even a boy from a village can find a path to a modern, prosperous, educated life. In "Red Army Soldier

Aleksanian," another provincial boy has been transformed by the Red Army into a blossoming technician and lover of knowledge.

> BATTLESHIP "PARIS COMMUNE"
>
> An evening of amateur entertainment [*samodeiatel'nosti*] on the battleship
>
> …This village lad, who had not heard anything about the Red Navy before being drafted, has been raised and made by the Red Navy, he is the Red Navy's new kind of fighter, having grown up in the conditions of a socialist organization of social relations shipside—socialist contests [*sotssorevnovanie*] and shock working [*udarnichestvo*] in the Navy are not just slogans, but a living praxis—joining the party in the Navy and mastering the complex technology of difficult mechanisms of the tower, Kovalev reenlisted. A deep love for machines and mechanisms rebounds in his words: "You know, it is such a simple thing—just a little shift, two inches of copper, and what results!"…
>
> RED ARMY SOLDIER ALEKSANIAN
> Essay-Portrait
>
> Perhaps in the future Aleksanian will turn out to be a technical genius, something like Edison. For now his comrades call him "head technician" for laughs. For him the greatest need, to which everything else is subordinate, is the need to create. To this end he eats, drinks, rests, and studies. He is 22 years old and a communist…

A series of articles about socialist construction describes the achievements in building massive blast furnaces for metal production. In the first, an entire city is built from nothing. Statistics impress the reader regarding the magnitude and scope of the project and its productive capacities. An array of leisure, cultural and ideological institutions promise to provide new shock workers with a life not only productive, but also comfortable and stimulating.

Fig. 1.3: On the Soviet Cruiser 'Aurora.' Clockwise from top left: in the cruiser's Lenin corner; work in gas masks for a chemical alarm [*khimtrevoge*]; delicious naval borscht for lunch; during a "merry moment"; young pioneers on the cruiser.

FIRST CAST-IRON OF MAGNITOGORSK

GIFT OF THE XVII CONFERENCE OF THE VKP(b)[2]

FIRST BLAST FURNACE OF MAGNITOSTROI READY!

[2] *Vsesoiuznaia Kommunisticheskaia Partiia (bol'shevikov)*, or the All-Union Communist Party (of the Bolsheviks).

> …The short telegram spoke about the greatest new victory in the fight for socialism, the launch of the first blast furnace of the juggernaut of Magnitogorsk. The historic resolution of the XVI party congress on the creation of a new coal and metallurgic depot is being realized… The entire Soviet nation was busy with this construction together with the Magnitogorians. The workers of 153 factories of the USSR built and are building machines and equipment for Magnitogorstroi, railroad workers from the whole Union are laying shock routes [*udarnye marshruty*] with materials for Magnitogorsk. Alongside the factory a socialist city is growing whose living space is for now calculated at 400 thousand sq. meters. To serve the workers and employees, they have already built 35 cafeterias, 2 kitchen factories and 2 bread factories. 13 schools have been built, more than 20 kindergartens, a theater, a circus, 3 clubs and approximately 150 red corners. After just a few more months, 8 gigantic blast furnaces will provide the Soviet Union with a level of production equal to one half of the entire English output of cast iron. By the will of the party and the working class of the USSR the second coal and metallurgic depot of the Soviet Union is coming to life.

The next article shows how Soviet construction is not only learning from American ingenuity, but, at times, surpassing it in speed and bravery. An American engineer advising the project insists on doing things too slowly, to the mind of the Soviet foreman. In another article (not excerpted) on the building of the Kuznetskstroy aluminum plant, workers also outcompete the Americans, overfulfilling construction (*udarno okonchivskaia*) by completing the plan in 40 days rather than the 70 days "suggested by the Americans." In the blast furnace article below, like in stories by Andrei Platonov, men are mechanized and machines anthropomorphized. And despite the heavy toil celebrated in the article, it also notes the human needs that will be met at the end of this shock labor, when the foreman thinks, "Tonight I can sleep at home."

> I. Eksler
> ORIGINATORS
> A montage of construction
> [An essay on the construction of a blast furnace in Kuznetsk]

[…]The translator repeats after the American:

—This bridge is big. In America we raise a bridge of this size by dividing it in two sections. In any case, you can't raise it this way: First you have to put in rivets. And then build two supports, from them you can raise it….

—Mister Towe [*Tau*], let's get going! Time's awasting!

The foreman leafs through his notebook again: "In America they don't do it that way." But why? The numbers are right. The wooden scaffold will hold. […]"

…The cold starry night approaches. Floodlights blaze. Observers, standing at a respectful distance, leave, waving their hands.

The hoisting continues.

The bridge is raised carefully, by the centimeter.

Time crawls by slowly, by the centimeter.

The drone of cranes and tired cries resound all night till dawn.

Time crawls along with the bridge, slowly, by the centimeter. The silver morning arrives in the frost, the sun dawns on the bridge, already hoisted up on the steel cables quivering from tension.

A day hard enough to make your temples ache, a day with an iron bridge suspended in the air goes by in an unforgettable whirr. By evening the bridge is already bowing towards the furnace shafts. And, finally, it comes to rest like a neck craned against the head of the blast furnace.

In this embrace the builders have accomplished their feat.

The builders gather up their tools. People walk up to the foreman and congratulate him silently, shaking his hand. The corners of the foreman's lips bloom into an ironic smile. He thinks: "It's up. Tonight I can sleep at home."

Women too are shown to be answering the call to work and finding the state-provided resources that make it possible to raise children and work for socialist construction at the same time. But this spotlight on "how simple everything is for us!" does not come without prompting, however, as the author admits—a point we will return to later. For now, it is perhaps only worth noting that the

statistics which accompanied the construction articles are absent in this defense of women's working conditions in the USSR.

Fig. 1.4: Comrade Klimova, in her kitchen and with her son at home.

KLIMOVA THE SWITCHBOARD OPERATOR

From an answer to Berlin operators

Essay by N. I. Tuzov, photos by I. Cherepkov

…The photos included in this issue showing several moments in the working day of the switchboard operator of the Moscow telephone station [comrade] Klimova are part of the series of snapshots sent by the group of the international labor association for the journal "Proletarians in Connection" [*Proletarii sviazi*] to Berlin switchboard operators in answer to their request to refute the lies of an article in the newspaper of the Social Democrats about the position of women in the USSR.

Switchboard operator Klimova is not yet a switchboard operator, she is an apprentice, since she has only been working at the switchboard a short while. Com. Klimova did not work at all until recently, but knowing the great need we have at the moment for workers, she decided to go to work, having placed her daughter at the kindergarten available in her building. How

simple everything is for us! She felt the desire and went to work, having placed her daughter at the kindergarten, where she will be well-supervised and she will be looked after by pedagogues. In capitalist countries they do not have this.

The journal seems to describe the creation of a new world in which the worker is the integral element, situated happily and robustly as the primary agent of progress, able to receive according to their needs, able to give according to their abilities—all of which is missing in the life of the unknown soldier.

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— Цепляйте их, товарищи, за небо...

Были слухи на строительстве—свернуть монтажные работы из-за неподготовленности корпусов. Главный руковод монтажников инженер Иван Петрович Максимов забеспокоился. Свернуть монтажные работы — это значит отодвинуть пуск Алюминиевого комбината и оказаться последним в ударной шеренге. Кто строит, тот знает, что последнюю гайку пускового механизма завода крепят монтажники.

Иван Петрович—черный, живой, по делу бранчливый. Он завертывает пружину натуго своему производителю работ т. Васильеву.

— Надо, Алексей Васильевич, применять комбинированный способ монтажа, надо поднажать!

Эти огромные агрегаты обжитовых печей, вместо положенных по немецкому плану 60 дней, сдали в 40 дней. Монтажники наступали строителям на ноги. Их работа приходит к концу.

В январе на слете ударники Алюминьстроя сказали:

— В феврале этого года пустим гигант и дадим нашей стране первый советский алюминий.

Джон Дос Пассос*).

ТЕЛО НЕИЗВЕСТНОГО АМЕРИКАНЦА.

«На основании постановления, принятого совместно обеими палатами конгресса Соединенных штатов 14-го марта прошлого года и уполномачивающего военного министра распорядиться о доставлении в Соединенные штаты тела американца (который находился в числе американских экспедиционных войск в Европе и личность которого не была установлена), погибшего во время мировой войны, для погребения его в мемориальном амфитеатре национальной усыпальницы под Арлингтоном, в штате Вэрджиния...».

В обитом толью морге (в городе Шалон-на-Марне) в сарае с хлористой извести и трупного разложения была взят наугад сосновый ящик, содержавший в себе все то, что оставалось от «дорогусенького солдатика». Там было нагромождено сколько угодно других сосновых ящиков, содержавших в себе то, что удалось наскрести от тела, скажем, Ричарда Роу [1]) или другого лица или других лиц. Но сейчас требовался лишь один... Как могли они выудить именно Джона Доу?

Как могли они удостовериться в том, что это не один из черномазых?

Как могли они быть уверенными в том, что это не итальяшка, не еврейчик?

Как можно утверждать что такой-то парень, из все сто процентов американец, когда имеешь под руками лишь грубый мешок с костями, медные пуговицы, на которых выштампован орел с разверстой пастью, и пару свернутых обмоток? А тут еще удушливый запах хлористой извести и тошнотворная вонища от трупов, год пролежавших в земле.

День этот в общей сложности был слишком полон значимости, был слишком трагичен, а потому никому не приходило в голову аплодировать. Сегодня нацией одобрялись лишь слезы, безмолвие, исступления и молитвы, заглушенный барабанный бой и сентиментальная музыка.

Джон Доу родился
(сердце колотится, в ушах шумит от любовной страсти, в трепетном упоении мужчина и женщина, совершенно одни, устремляются в вечность... Затем девятимесячная болезненная сонливость, пробуждение в испуге, муки, кровь и хаос родов).

Джон Доу родился
и воспитывался в Бруклине или в Мемфисе, или в Кливленде, штат Огайо, у побережья озера, или в Чикаго среди зловония боен, или в Александрии, штат Вэрджиния, в старом кирпичном доме на Холме-Маяке, или в Портленде, городе роз, в полубревенчатом коттедже—стиль Тюдоров—на Телеграфном Холме,
в родильном приюте, основанном старым Морганом,
на окраине города, за железнодорожным полотном, либо близ загородного клуба, в сколоченной из досок хибарке, либо в большом, густо населенном бедлотою доме, либо в пригородном районе изысканных особняков.

Потомок одной из лучших фамилий, согласно общественному барометру, он получил первый приз на параде крошек на пляже Коронадо, был чемпионом игры в мяч в начальной школе в Литтл-Рокс, лучшим баскетболистом в средней школе в Бунвилле, беком в футбольной команде в исправительном доме для несовершеннолетних.

Но так как он вытащил из Литтл-Мишури утопавшего ребенка местного шерифа, то был вызван в Вашингтон и там снят в момент, когда ему пожимал руку президент на ступенях Белого дома...

Правда, момент был трагичный, но все же собрание таких людей неизбежно бывает подернуто дымкой ярких красок. В ложах красовались придворные мундиры иностранных дипломатов, золотые позументы наших и иностранных флотских и армейских чинов, черные сюртуки американских государственных мужей, разноцветные меха матерей и сестер. Серый и синий цвета солдат и моряков. Сверкание музыкальных инструментов. В белом и черном церковный хор.

Мальчик на побегушках в ресторане. Батрак на время жатвы. Чернорабочий при свинарнике. Молотильщик кукурузы в Западном Канзасе. Грум в «Американском отеле» в Сараторе [1]). Посыльный. Продавец фруктов. Рабочий на прокладке телефонной линии. Портовый грузчик. Подмастерье водопроводчика...

Он работал в конторе, брался подряды на уничтожение грызунов и насекомых, наполнял опиумом трубки в одном вертепе в штате Нью-Джерси, был секретарем Ассоциации молодых христиан, агентом транспортной компании, шофером на грузовике, механиком у Форда, продавцом книг в Денвере, штат Колорадо — мадам, вы, может быть, не откажетесь помочь человеку, который, работая, прокладывает себе путь через университет?..

Президент Гардинг заканчивал свою речь, он казался особенно преисполненным достоинства благодаря своему высокому положению.

— Мы собрались сегодня, чтобы отдать безличную дань...

Имя того, чье тело лежит перед нами, утрачено для нас вместе с его бессмертной душою...

Как подобает истинному воину нашей демократической республики, дрался он и умер, веруя в непреложную справедливость дела своей родины...

Затем президент поднял правую руку, приглашая те тысячи людей, до которых доносились звуки его голоса, присоединиться к молитве:

Отче наш, иже еси на небесех, да святится имя твое...

Голым пошел он в армию.

Тебя взвесили, тебя смерили, осмотрели, нет ли у тебя плоской ступни, пересчитывали твои зубы, заставляли откашливаться, выслушивали сердце и легкие, принуждали читать буквы на табличках, исследовали твою мочу и умственный уровень.

Твое имя занесли в послужной список на будущее время (бессмертная душа!).

Джон Доу
и Ричард Роу и другие неизвестные лица
учились владеть винтовкой, маршировали, изучали устав, ели всякую дрянь, учились отдавать честь, быть солдатами, без дела околачиваться в уборной. Им возбранялось курить на палубе во время переправы через океан. Они стояли на часах. Сорок человек и восемь лошадей. Осмотр оружия. Вши вшивелей, свист пуль, целыми ульями носившихся в воздухе. Пулеметы, точно упрямые дятлы. Грязь. Противогазы. Вши. Чесотка.

Послушай, дружище, ты не скажешь мне, как разыскать тут своих?

У Джона Доу была такая же голова на плечах, как у всякого другого в двадцать лет, у него интенсивно реагировали нервы глаз, ушей, неба, языка, пальцев и подмышек, нервы, вызывавшие ощущение тепла, заряжавшие извилины мозга ощущениями боли, удовольствия, холода, понятиями «мое», «должен», «нельзя»...

Заповедь... Таблица умножения... Деление... Теперь пора всем порядочным людям... [2]). Стучится лишь однажды в двери молодого человека... Чудесная жизнь... Первые годы самые... Безопасность на первом месте... Вообразите, что «гунн» [3]) покушается на честь вашей... Права она иль не права, все же это родина моя... Воспитывай их смолоду... То, чего я не знаю, мне... Тряси ее, как грушу... Молчок!.. Получил по заслугам... Это страна белого человека... Пей, сколько влезет... Отправился на Запад искать счастья... Если вам тут не нравится, можете... Бей его...

Послушай, земляк, ты не скажешь мне, как мне разыскать тут своих?

Ничего не могу с собою поделать, подскакиваю каждый раз, когда эти штуки взрываются. Меня так и трясет от них. Да, от них затрясет. Потеряв свой номерной жетон, плавал в Марне. Шлялся по непотребным домам с приятелем... В кровати с девчонкой по имени Жанна (любовь, кино, отсыревшая почтовая карточка, мечты, начал с селитры в кофе, кончил венерологическим пунктом).

Послушай, служба, скажи ты мне, ради всех чертей, как мне попасть обратно к своим?

Сердце Джона Доу
разносило кровь по всему телу...

Жив... Безмолвный шум крови в ушах... Там, на опушке леса в Орегоне, где растут тыквы, настоящие золотистые тыквы... Образы вливаются в кровь... через... глаза... Деревья в осеннем одеянии, бронзовые кузнечики скачут в сухой траве, где крохотные, полосатые улиточки висят под былинками, мухи жужжат, осы и шмели гудят, лес пахнет вином, грибами и яблоками... Знакомый, родной запах осени вливается в кровь...

Я уронил стальной шлем и потный вещевой мешок и растянулся на земле, а солнце ласкало мою шею и кадык и туго натянутую кожу на груди...

Этот снаряд предназначался для него.

Кровь потекла в землю.

Послужной список выпал из рук квартирмейстера, когда он вдруг свихнулся. В тот день пришлось наспех укладываться и убираться.

А номерной жетон лежал на дне Марны.

Кровь лилась в землю, мозги вытекли, и их начисто вылизали траншейные крысы. Живот вздулся и служил кормом полчищам синих мух.

Что же до истленного скелета
и нескольких лоскутков кожи и высохших внутренностей,
то все это отправили в Шалон-на-Марне,
положили в красивый сосновый гроб,
увезли на крейсере домой в страну господа-бога
и погребли в саркофаге в мемориальном амфитеатре национальной усыпальницы под Арлингтоном,
а сверху положили звездный флаг.

Горнист сыграл зорю,
мистер Гардинг вознес молитву богу, дипломаты, и генералы, и адмиралы, и полицейские, и политиканы, и разряженные дамы, которым «Вашингтонская почта» уделяет целые столбцы в отделе «Общество», — все торжественно поднялись и думали о том, как все это красиво, какой скорбью вест от звездного флага, что Америка — страна самого господа-бога, что горнист очень красиво играет. И в ушах у них долго еще звенело от трех залпов.

На том месте, где должна была быть грудь, присутствующие

Медаль Конгресса, Крест за отличную службу, Военную медаль, бельгийский Военный крест, итальянскую Золотую медаль, орден Витутва Милитара, присланный румынской королевой, чехословацкий Военный крест, польский орден. Виртути Милитари,

на гроб был возложен венок от одного нью-йоркского миллионера и маленький поиск, преподнесенный депутацией аризонских краснокожих, прибывших в боевом оперении и по-военному размалеванных.

Все вашингтонцы принесли цветы.

Вудроу Вильсон принес букетик алых маков.

*) Из выходящего в скором времени романа известного американского писателя-революционера под названием «1919». — Прим. перев.

1) Парицательным именем англичанина (вроде нашего Иван Иваныч Иванов) является Ричард Роу, американца — Джон Доу. — Прим. перев.

1) Курорт, где происходят знаменитые бега. — Прим. перев.

2) Целый ряд неоконченных типичных американских избитых поговорок, довузовских, шаблонных мотивов без которых не обходится ни одна газета, ни один оратор, ни один политик. — Прим. перев.

3) Прозвище немцев, данное им американцами во время войны. — Прим. перев.

Fig. 1.5: "Body of an Unknown American" in *Prozhektor*

Dzhon Dos Passos*
BODY OF UNKNOWN AMERICAN

In the context of the joyous Stalinism of the February 1932 *Prozhektor*, celebrating the achievements of shock workers of all kinds, rationalization and expanding worker benefits under the five year plan, Dos Passos' darkly pessimistic view of American military heroism and the hypocrisy of US officialdom stands out as a critique of militaristic capitalism, as a stark contrast to the bright presentation of Soviet everyday life, including the heavily emphasized communal aspects of service in the Soviet military. At the same time, the translator's methods themselves turn the text into something much closer to the socialist realism which would come to reflect this moment of Stalinism in literature. It becomes a stylistically subdued "shock essay" for striking at the contradictions of the "West."

Dos Passos' "Body of an American" presents an imagined prehistory of the "unknown soldier" killed in WWI and interred at Arlington Cemetery on March 4, 1921. A more immediate inspiration for Dos Passos' section, however, was likely the construction and installation of a massive marble "superstructure," which took place over two years from 1930 until the beginning of 1932. The project, which required extensive materials and labor, was covered widely in newspapers at the time, and President Harding delivered a speech at the inauguration of the embellished monument quoted by Dos Passos in his text, using Harding's words as a foil for the collective story of the unknown American. Turning the abstraction of the unknown soldier, so crucial to the post-war US nationalism, inside out, Dos Passos writes the passage with caustic and furious irony. This begins even in the title, in which Dos Passos shifts the identity of the man from "unknown" and "soldier," to an American body. To the empty vessel of the unknown soldier—as Benedict Anderson noted, so easily filled in with the desired attributes of many nationalist projects, the "secular transformation of fatality into continuity"—Dos Passos returns the physical body and potential biography of the American it once

belonged to.[3] Further, by removing "unknown" from the title (an epithet returned in the *Prozhektor* translation title) Dos Passos suggests that the unknown can actually be recovered and known again through a kind of statistical storytelling: if we tell enough statistically accurate, but also humanly real and (also crucial) heart-rending stories of possible American lives, we can reach the "known" that has been withheld from the "Unknown Soldier" for the sake of a poetic, patriotic gesture vague and fuzzy on the facts. The Soviet Union, of course, would later erect its own monument to the Unknown Soldier in 1967 along the wall of the Kremlin, a monument to an unknown soldier of WWII rather than WWI. In this we see a telling contrast to the first wave of monuments (in Athens, Arlington, Bucharest, London, Paris, Warsaw, etc) which were built in the first decade following WWI. If Anderson found the cultural roots of nationalism strangely intertwined with an unprecedented reverence for anonymous deaths (certainly no less the case with the Soviet cult of WWII, spurred now to malignant growth in late post-Soviet Russia), then perhaps the legacy of internationalism in the early Soviet Union succeeded, at times, in producing more reverential recognition of the little man and woman.

Conventionally, the problem of the unknown soldier is seen as a crisis of identification stemming from the brutality of modern warfare. But Dos Passos suggests that this crisis begins long before the effacing death, as the whole life of the citizen cum soldier is rendered meaningless and anonymous under capitalism. The individual in Dos Passos' telling remains unknown, but where President Harding noted, in the speech Dos Passos quotes, that "We do not know his station in life, because from every station came the patriotic response of the five millions," Dos Passos fills his descriptions of each possible station with a wealth of details that contradict our own "patriotic response."

[3] On nationalism and tombs of the unknown soldier see Benedict Anderson, "Cultural Roots," in *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983), 9-37.

Dos Passos uses two registers in the section. First, he uses the official language of legal pronouncements, newspaper coverage and Harding's presidential speech that spoke for the Unknown Soldier, these parts of the section being printed in the original publication and most subsequent editions in a smaller font. Stylistically, placed within the context of social and physical degradation that the soldier likely experienced in life, the quotations emphasize the hypocrisy of mainstream US political discourse. In the beginning, the delivery of the speech is satirized by absurdly joining together a number of words at once: "Whereasthe Congressoftheunitedstates byaconcurrentresolutionadoptedon the4thdayofmarch…" This register, however, comprises a much smaller portion of the text. Most of the section is written in an informal register with a sing-songy, staccato intonation, but with a kind of omniscient narrator who knows, if not the actual origin and biography of the soldier, then at least the collective range possibilities which all detract from the grand framing of the Unknown Soldier. The modernist mixture and clash of styles in the short section also allows Dos Passos to adopt a subversive position of rhetorical abjection.

While it is one of the more notably poetic and experimental sections in *1919*, the translation in *Prozhektor* radically remakes it as almost typical prose. The short text is recast in simplified form, without its rhymes or rhythms, its regionalisms, colloquialisms and deliberate ambiguities. Fragmented, unclear phrases in the original are smoothed into multiple, straightforward sentences in the translation, slang is refined to standard speech, and Dos Passos' experimental formatting, less reminiscent of *Ulysses* than it is of Mayakovsky's futurist poetry, is brought into line as uniform block text. The translation narrows the message of the text, ignoring many of its stylistic particularities. Dos Passos' different fonts and the long chains of unspaced words are simply not included. However, officialese remains officialese, and sometimes the translation even "translates" the tone of the original, or unstated suggestion of the text, into a direct statement. Thus the original, for example, includes the following passage:

In the tarpaper morgue at Chalons-sur-Marne in the reek of chloride of lime and the dead, they picked out the pine box that held all that was left of

enie menie minie moe plenty other pine boxes stacked up there containing what they'd scraped up of Richard Roe

The translation, however, replaces the entire beginning of the third line with "a pine box was chosen at random" (*byl vziat naugad sosnovyi iashchik*), conveying the sense of the phrase while dropping its stylized delivery. Dos Passos draws attention to the unspoken but assumed racial identity of the soldier, returned to later in the list of clichés taught to John Doe ("This is a white man's country") and the underlying racism of the officialdom which would single out such a soldier. In doing this, however, Dos Passos relays this racism as free indirect speech, using racial slurs as one of the rough colloquialisms which stand out within the text as the character's own, as he does elsewhere in the novel. The translator, however, moderates the offensive language.

Only one can go. How did they pick John Doe?

Make sure he aint a dinge, boys,

make sure he aint a guinea or a kike,

how can you tell a guy's a hundredpercent when all you've got's a gunnysack full of bones stamped with a screaming eagle and pair of roll puttees?

…and the gagging chloride and the puky dirtstench of the yearold dead…

The translation eliminates racial slurs and replaces them with colloquialisms—familiar or condescending, depending on context, but not so clearly insulting as the terms used by Dos Passos:

How could they ascertain that he wasn't one of the swarthy ones?

How could they be certain that he wasn't some little Italian, a little Jew?

How could they confirm that some guy was all one hundred percent American, when all you have in your hands is a rough bag with bones, copper buttons with the stamp of the eagle with its gaping mouth, and a pair of rolled puttees? Along with that there's the gagging smell of chloride powder and the nausea-inducing stench of corpses lain in the earth for a year.[4]

[4] Как могли они удостовериться в том, что это не один из черномазых?
Как могли они быть уверенными в том, что это не итальяшка, не еврейчик?

The lumpen speech of so many dialects and regions which Dos Passos places throughout his novel and this section becomes, in the "homeland of the proletariat," a bureaucratic, inoffensive language, exemplified here by the replacement of not only Dos Passos' clearly offensive slurs with less unambiguously insulting Russian synonyms but also in the replacement of Dos Passos' deliberately repetitive and inarticulate "make sures" with elegant "literary" variations.

The sovietization of "Telo neizvestnogo amerikantsa" makes it a text fit for (ideally chaste) Soviet ears, removing rude realities cemented in the American diction of Dos Passos. In addition to the clean-up of the racial vocabulary, too-frank descriptions of sexual organs are also rewritten: the indignities of John Doe's army medical exam are reduced by two—in Russian they do not "[squeeze] your penis to see if you had clap" nor do they "[look] up your anus to see if you had piles": phrases that would have been unprintable in Russian at the time, but which could also have been translated euphemistically. Meanwhile, in relating John Doe's various excuses for losing his dogtag, which include a fling with a French woman named Jeane, the summary of *Dzhon Do*'s escapade becomes noticeably more chaste, as Dos Passos' summary loses the soldier's sexual fantasy and gains a more explicit mention of the treatment for venereal disease which followed:

> (Love moving picture *wet French postcard dream* began with saltpeter in the coffee and ended at the *propho station*)
>
> (love, cinema, *a dampened post card, dreams,* began with saltpeter in the coffee, ended at the *venereological station*)[5]

Как можно утверждать что такой-то парень, из все сто процентов американец, когда имеешь под руками лишь грубый мешок с костями, медные пуговицы, на которых выштампован орел с разверстой пастью, и пару свернутых обмоток? А тут еще и удушливый запах хлористой извести и тошнотворная вонища от трупов, год пролежавших в земле.

[5] "(любовь, кино, *отсыревшая почтовая карточка, мечты*, начал с селитры в кофе, кончил *венерологическим пунктом*)"

Here, "wet French postcard dream," certainly suggestive of a soldier's romantic vision for a French affair, with "wet" almost certainly bound to "dream," is rendered literally and perhaps incomprehensibly as "dampened post card." The translator may have added, however, a sexual innuendo not as available in the original, as the Russian word for "ended" here (*konchil*) has a second meaning of reaching sexual climax—a meaning easily suggested by the context. As in many cases of outwardly "sterilized" Soviet texts, suggestively tongue-in-cheek language appears. Perhaps *Prozhektor*'s Dos Passos translator intended to bring in less obvious equivalents of the original's obviously indecent language that did not make the cut.

In selecting such stylistic devices for his novel, Dos Passos was not motivated merely by shock value, but also by hopes to act upon his readers' political and social conscience. In letters to Soviet acquaintances Dos Passos defended his method of writing from the demand that he more clearly address political questions and promote (Communist) political solutions in his work, saying that he felt any ready slogans would be automatically rejected by the American reader.[6] For his imagined American reader, the "shock" elements of this text were intended, alongside the effect of the bulk of the content which preceded it, to have an agitational effect, and convince (or secure) his readers in knowledge of the woefully corrupt state of American society and politics. As Dos Passos responded to Béla Illés over criticisms of insufficient positive political content in his novels:

> "…the ears of Soviet newspaper readers would be effective over here, and the problem is to find a formula that will move masses of Americans. You must remember that we haven't had our 1905 yet. After all if I believed in the effectiveness of Communist phraseology among American workers I'd be applying for membership in the party. […] I think I can be most

[6] E. Salmanova, "Neskol'ko pisem iz serediny 30-x (neizvestnaia perepiska Dzhona Dos Passosa, Sergeia Dinamova i Uolta Karmona," *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie* 1993 no 4, 243-55, 251-52; E.M. Salmanova, "Iz istorii neosushchestvennykh publikatsii zhurnala 'Internatsional'naia literatura': Neizvestnoe pis'mo Dzhona Dos Passosa," *Russkaia literatura* 1994 no. 3, 159-164.

useful in trying to reach a formula that will appeal to the average American worker and farmer and small businessman (confused, disoriented and suffering)."[7]

Dos Passos repeated this comparison of the American situation to a pre-1905 Russia in several letters to his Soviet correspondents, but his interlocutors evinced no desire to engage in the discussion on these terms. The task of "trying to reach a formula" for the "average American worker and farmer and small businessman," of course, was superfluous for Soviet editors, who had different goals and difficulties in addressing questions of the US political and economic system to their readership. While Dos Passos' techniques did not turn out to be such a formula, he believed his use of common speech, including rough and offensive language, was one necessary part of it. The translator and editors of *Prozhektor*, however, had no need to reproduce stylistic measures so far outside the bounds of the orderly, hard-working and joyful society they were engaged to represent.

If, however, we also take into account the representation of reality printed alongside Dos Passos' excerpt, with battleship orchestras, tasty cruiser borschts and free kindergartens for the children of untrained switchboard operators, then the rude reality of this American soldier's treatment in life and in death perhaps requires a less graphic or rough linguistic portrayal. Does the satisfaction of working-class needs, or at least the represented satisfaction thereof, liberate the text from the need or allure of distinguishing between a false "official" and a "true" untutored speech? Has register been eliminated because—in politically and socially acceptable print, if not in social and political reality—class has been eliminated?

The article on comrade Klimova the telephone operator, with snapshots taken "to refute the lies of an article in the newspaper of the [German] Social Democrats about the position of women in

[7] John Dos Passos, letter to Béla Illés, in V.G. Bazanov et al., eds. *Literaturnoe nasledstvo. Tom 81. Iz istorii mezhdunarodnoe ob"edineniia revoliutsionnykh pisatelei (MORP)* (Moskva: Izdatel'stvo "Nauka," 1969), 474-75.

the USSR" indicates something of how the editors and contributors *may* have wanted that article and much of the issue to be read: not only as "truthful" stories about "real" people implicit in all journalistic reporting, but as responses to *other* perspectives on the state of life in the USSR—in the case of the article in a German SPD newspaper, quite distant and, to the vast majority of the Soviet reading public, inaccessible and illegible, but re-presented in what became a familiar Soviet (and now, unfortunately, post-Soviet) technique, the rebuttal to foreign "lies." And through this anxiety of how a distant other sees (or fails to see) the truth of Soviet life, one might suspect the rest of the issue—indeed much of the Soviet press of the mid-30s in particular—to be similarly inflected with an anxiety of misreading by both distant and near readers. Though the excerpt from Dos Passos is noted to be from the novel *1919*, there can be little doubt about the mode in which the editors of the magazine hoped it would be read. A cartoon by Leonid Soifertis which follows soon after the excerpt shows a shivering, starving capitalist curled up in a fetal position against a wall, clutching a massive key before a series of crumbling, padlocked factories. The cartoon evokes the economic suffering following the Great Depression, a context crucial to Dos Passos' novels and also, most likely, the hale portrait of Soviet working life that fills most of the magazine.

Titled "Thoughts 'at the Entryway,'" it includes a quote "from the newspapers" which reads: "Every day new factories and plants in the West lock up their gates…" Below, the capitalist says to himself: "Even if it's dead property, it's still MINE." The Sovietized "Body of an Unknown American," proposes a similar reading, in which the body of an American, in life and in death, belongs to a host of other entities before it belongs to its occupant, and can be claimed not only by organizations—by the military, by the government—but also, regardless of his skin color and ancestry before lying in the earth for a year, by racist and nationalist categories. A series of contrasts to the epithets are constructed in the issue to "Body of an Unknown American": Where the American's *body* is exploited and thrown away in an imperialist war and in capitalist exploitation, subjected to

humiliating racialization, denied leisure, weakened, undernourished, perverted, Soviet bodies are nourished, clothed, and engaged in rewarding communal labor, regardless of national origin. The American is *unknown*, anonymous, all his accomplishments, characteristics and suffering forgotten besides the ultimate one supposedly for the sake of the state, while the Soviet project as presented in the preceding pages glorifies workers' achievements, individuates them within the group, promotes expanding knowledge and education, names and gives celebrity to common men and women. The American *soldier* is lost even within the war, calling out as a mantra within the section, "how do I get to my outfit?"—emphasized even more strongly in the Russian as "how do I find my own [people]?" (*kak razyskat' tut svoikh?*), while Soviet military life overfulfills its targets with joy, solidarity, vigor.

Fig. 1.6: Caricature of American capitalist misery by Leonid Soifertis in *Prozhektor*

Though the significant departures from the original might meet our initial, hypothetical definition of "modernist" translation, it is certain that *Prozhektor*'s text would not have been interpreted as modernist (or as any of its Soviet sister terms—formalist, innovationist, decadent) by the translator, his or her editors, or readers. By all the standards of Soviet translation, and by one account responding directly to this translation, it would have been seen as a travesty. According to Kornei Chukovsky's

half of the first Soviet book on translation, one might have classified *Prozhektor*'s changes to the text as reflective of the class position of the translator—the main criterion he used.[8] Chukovsky praised those translators who captured the spirit of the original, rather than edit them to suit new purposes or to reduce translation's "high art"—such was the revised title of the book several years later—to mere literal translation. However, Chukovsky's book, as readers noted even at the time, offered no theory of how such a "spirit" could be captured.[9] Chukovsky also discussed translations of non-Soviet foreign authors. Indeed, translations of Dos Passos by Valentin Stenich are among the first examples he uses to point out how a translation can contain sometimes rather embarrassing errors in the details while being "faithful" on the whole. An unpublished study by another translator, Igor Romanovich, shows one quite negative review of the excerpt in *Prozhektor*: "An attempt to interpret the text while totally ignoring its form." The translation here fell into no one "camp": it was criticized by those who, like Chukovsky and Romanovich, leaned toward the idea of "realistic" translation championed by Ivan Kashkin. Nor did *Prozhektor*'s translation meet the more academic qualifications of proponents of "exact" translation. The anonymity of the translator suggests an implicit acknowledgement of the translation's likely professional reception among Soviet colleagues, but the freedom with which Dos Passos' text is treated shows the extent to which his "formalist" devices were seen as something that did not fit into a Soviet literary world. The tales of heroic construction which accompanied "Body of an American" in *Prozhektor* acutely represent that world in its official presentation in 1933.

Prozhektor's translation was an anomaly within Soviet prose translations, rewriting a controversial style to fit better within an emerging orthodoxy that would soon be defined as socialist realism. Most professional translators would likely have agreed with Romanovich, and yet the anonymous translator may have seen the task differently, as a stylistic simplification that made reading

[8] K. I. Chukovskii, *Iskusstvo perevoda* (Moskva-Leningrad: Academia, 1930).
[9] T.M. Levit, "O perevode," *Vestnik inostrannoi literatury* no. 1, 1930, 122-30.

Dos Passos possible in a Soviet context. The surrounding articles on life in the Red Army and in the massive construction projects of Kuznetskstroy and Magnitostroy perhaps added to this excerpt the horizon Dos Passos was seen to lack—what Karl Radek later, criticizing interest in Joyce, would describe as an attitude of "don't come near me with your Kuznetskstroys and Magnitostroys, your Red Army men and shock brigaders. My specialty is little things, but done very subtly, originally, cleverly."[10] Dos Passos' "The Body of an American" brilliantly mocked capitalist state hypocrisy, but did not contrast it to the positive struggle that might result in such "socialist construction." The changes made in *Prozhektor* give a glimpse of the distance in literary priorities that existed by the 30s, separating a writer who, in Dos Passos' case, saw his goals not only as broadly consistent with those of Soviet writers, but also who, as we shall see later, saw his own work in many ways as the extension or continuation of Soviet artistic achievements. To trace how such a gulf could form, why such an intervention might have been deemed necessary in the first place, and consider a more literalist method of translation as a possible candidate for "modernist translation," we turn now to the Soviet reception of Marcel Proust.

[10] Karl Radek, "Zakliuchitel'noe slovo," in *Pervyi vsesoiuznyi s"ezd sovetskikh pisatelei 1934. Stenograficheskii otchet*, ed. S.M. Tret'iakov et al. (Moskva: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo "Khudozhestvennaia literatura," 1934), 373.

Chapter Two

Time Not Found: A Commissar, a Translator, and a Critic Do Not Finish Proust

The Commissar

Anatoly Lunacharsky's writing on Proust ends with his own death, but it begins with Proust's. On both sides of that writing, as also in all Soviet attempts to find their way to *À la recherche du temps perdu* in criticism and translation, the work was left unfinished. Soon after Marcel Proust died on November 18, 1922, the Soviet People's Commissar of Culture penned a short article on the French author for *Izvestiia* which was not published.[1] Less than a decade later, in mid-July 1931, Anatoly Lunacharsky dictated a short note to the publishing house Vremia:

> "Despite the fact that I am quite seriously ill, I will still send you, no later than 5 days from now, a short introduction to the collected works of Proust."[2]

But "seriously ill" prevailed over "I will." Lunacharsky lived two more years, but still didn't finish his introduction.[3] En route to Spain to take a post as Soviet ambassador, Lunacharsky stayed briefly in Menton, France, and continued work on the article as late as December 24, 1933.[4] Two days later, he was dead. The unfinished introduction, shorter than planned, but by how much we cannot know, was in due time delivered to Vremia, which in 1934 published it as a preface in the first volume of Proust's *V poiskakh za utrachennym vremenem*—an inauspicious publication for the private cooperative publisher,

[1] It would eventually be published posthumously in the sixth volume of his collected works: A. V. Lunacharskii, *Sobranie sochineii v 8-i t.* (Moscow: Izd. "Khudozh. lit-ra," 1963-67), t. 6, 570.
[2] RGASPI, F. 142, op. 1, d. 592, l. 13.
[3] This also leads one to wonder whether the publication of the first volumes of the Vremia edition, whose translations had already been published and were not obviously edited for the new edition, were delayed precisely due to Lunacharsky.
[4] Iurii Borisovich Borev, *Lunacharskii* (Moskva: Molodaia gvardiia, 2010), 274-75.

as Vremia—or "Time"—would be lost in the centralization of Soviet publishing—as part of a projected Soviet *Sobranie sochinenii Marselia Prusta*, a Soviet collected works of Marcel Proust.[5]

Thus the story of Proust in the Soviet Union in the first twenty years of its existence consists of spurts of exceptional interest and efforts to grasp the *recherche*, in criticism or translation, precipitously ending short of the goal, and oddly enough often with the death of the seeker. To our wonder and morbid amusement this reminds us in each successive cycle of Proust's original search interrupted by (and begun in the anticipation of approaching) death, describing for us a vivid series of partial circles, an illustration of the reading ahead, even if hardly a handy thesis to measure its meaning in this world.

While these coincidental deaths are a curiously persistent thread in the Soviet story of Proust, a more significant set of ideas in the reception of modernism on the whole appears early on in his Soviet reading. In Lunacharsky's first, unpublished writing on Proust in 1922, the Soviet critic introduces the idea of the "microscopic" approach to literature, and, closely tied to this, the view of the experimental writer and master of style as studious hermit, sealed off from the burning issues of humanity in a (cork-lined) ivory tower.[6] Despite such attempts to portray Proust's work as irrelevant to Soviet readers and writers, he is consistently treated as a first-rate writer whose work holds a significant, even if illusory, appeal. A few years later, Soviet authors will seriously debate the question of whether Joyce or Dos Passos, also taken as emblematic of new developments in contemporary

[5] Marsel' Prust, *Sobranie sochinenii*, tom pervyi: V poiskakh za utrachennym vremenem. V storonu Svana. Perevod A. A. Frankovskogo, Leningrad: Cooperativnoe izdatel'stvo "Vremia," 1934. A note from the editor on page XII relates the story of Lunacharsky's last work and death. For more on the Vremia edition and its translations, see the section below, "In Search of Lost Vremia."

[6] In "Soviet Literary Criticism and the Formulation of the Aesthetics of Socialist Realism, 1932-1940," Hans Günther attributes the first use of this term to Viktor Pertsov's (positive) appraisal of Mayakovsky's devices in 1933 ("O lupe vremeni i pravdivom izobrazhenii deistvitel'nosti," *Znamia* no. 3, 1933, 185), but it is, fittingly, in Lunacharsky's 1922 article that it seems to appear for the first time.

Western writing, have something to offer Soviet literature. Such potential is much less seriously discussed in Proust's case. The translations of Proust undertaken in the 1920s and 1930s, meanwhile, pursued a literalism that faithfully represented Proust's straining of language to his innovations in form. Critics could only see in this, however, the slight "spoiling" of language, and ignored the intellectual project from which it emerged. Instead, Lunacharsky and others recognize in Proust's methods and thinking a dangerous pleasure which appears as anathema to the fast-paced, utilitarian, Taylorist industrial society emerging in the Soviet project. Yet due to the Soviet commitment to world literature, Proust can neither be fully rejected, nor seamlessly integrated into the Soviet canon of world literature. This chapter undertakes to examine these formulations more closely than the only extant studies of Proust's Russian reception.[7]

The last work Lunacharsky would commit to paper, his foreword to Proust's collected works, represented the culmination of more than a decade of thinking about Proust. His repeated writing about Proust is intriguing, especially when one considers the breadth of subjects on which the old Bolshevik wrote and the extent of his responsibilities.[8] As Sheila Fitzpatrick wrote in her book on Lunacharsky's Commissariat of Enlightenment, he was a "'poet of Revolution' and a lover of philosophy and the arts, [and] described himself as 'an intellectual [*intelligent*] among Bolsheviks and a

[7] Bancroft's 1973 essay in English, and Mikhailov's 2012 book in Russian continue beyond the death of Proust's chief Soviet translator Adrian Frankovsky in 1942. W. Jane Bancroft, "Realist or Decadent? Proust in the U.S.S.R." *Mosaic*, Jan. 1, 1973, vol. 6 no. 2, 1-18; A.D. Mikhailov, *Poetika Prusta* (Moscow: Iaziki slavianskoi kul'tury, 2012). Though remarks about the translations can be found in Mikhailov and elsewhere, no analytical comparisons of Frankovsky's and Griftsov's translations have been published, while the unpublished translation by Zhurakovsky and the curious publication of the first section of *Sodom i Gomorra* do not seem to have been commented on previously.

[8] Besides his extensive writing on French authors like Maupassant, Hugo, Baudelaire, Verlaine, Stendhal, and Goethe, he also devoted himself to the antireligious campaign, to the development of Soviet print culture, Chinese revolutionary literature, and international politics.

Bolshevik among intellectuals.'"[9] Never a fanatic, he saw no contradiction, as other Bolsheviks with an intellectual streak sometimes did, between a love of the arts and his "role as a professional revolutionary." He sought through his book *Religion and Socialism* and other writing to emphasize the potential spiritual and moral aspects of Marxism and its relationship to what he saw as the more primitive religious impulse of mainstream religion—an impulse which, however, he believed Marxists could cultivate and raise to a higher level. In his writing on the arts he was much more open to the possibilities of artistic experiment than many other Bolsheviks, but remained, like many of his comrades, understandably inclined towards socially engaged realism. In his unfinished *Izvestiia* article of 1922, Lunacharsky first includes an idea which he would develop later: that the success of Proust owed something to the success of Romain Rolland's massive ten-volume *Jean Christophe*. Rolland, having brought the long novel back from the dead in Europe, blazed the path which Proust's non-novel followed, claims Lunacharsky. Romain Rolland, after all, was not only the author of the once tremendously popular *Christophe* and a Nobel-Prize winner, but also one of the first prominent cultural figures to support the Soviet Union, and one who continued to do so publicly until his death in 1944. Lunacharsky presents Proust, as would other critics, as a kind of unnecessary, if pleasurable distraction from more relevant and more useful writers and works, while he (Lunacharsky) remained deeply impressed by the literary power of his work. (Not all Soviet critics were similarly impressed.) As outlined in the introduction vis-à-vis Gorky's World Literature publishing project, an immense catalogue of translations of European classics into Soviet languages grew by the day for a growing Soviet readership. But as part of the legacy of the international social-democratic project which produced the conditions for these translations, the engagement with foreign authors demanded a utilitarian justification which was not easy to extract from the *recherche*.

[9] Sheila Fitzpatrick, *The Commissariat of Enlightenment: The Soviet Organization of Education and the Arts under Lunacharsky, October 1917-1921* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 1.

Lunacharsky praised *Poiski poteriannogo vremeni* (as he called it) for many of its outstanding qualities and noted how quickly—during a single train journey and nearly without a break—he had devoured the five volumes already published in French before Proust's death.[10] Though the "memoirs" lack any "social significance," and are limited by Proust's personal apolitical stance, the *recherche* nonetheless contains valuable satire and mockery of both the aristocracy and the bourgeoisie, alongside Proust's unvarnished admiration for the culture and individuals of the old ruling classes (respectively, the aristocracy in the Guermantes, and the bourgeoisie in the Verdurins), even while "a certain whiff [*dushok*] of antisemitism" makes it "in the highest degree alien to us."[11] Thus Lunacharsky's first observations establish Proust as an author useful to Soviet readers, critical of the ancien regime, but also such a pleasure to read that the reader can simply swallow the massive texts in a single sitting. Lunacharsky was unable to see Proust's handling of antisemitism in the *recherche* as itself an element of "social significance," treating the inclusion of antisemitic remarks and beliefs in the novel as unmediated expressions of the author's own prejudice. This too was symptomatic of the Soviet reception of the treatment of antisemitism in Proust, Dos Passos and Joyce: Where these authors included the question of antisemitism (and other racisms and prejudices according to other attributes) in their work most often as a means of mocking and exposing the small-mindedness and evil of prejudice, Soviet critics and editors either saw the inclusion of the subject as itself evidence of the author's prejudice or, did not trust their reader's to perceive the foreign author's irony. Likewise, Lunacharsky did not draw any connection between valuable satire and the broader significance of Proust's investigation of social behavior and individual psychology. This was a third aspect of Soviet readings of Proust and modernism, which often acknowledged the impressive results of innovative writers in particular details and effects, but denied achievements in the overall project.

[10] RGASPI, f. 142, op. 1, d. 286, l. 1-2.
[11] Ibid., l. 1.

Lunacharsky further invokes the image of Proust working "with a microscope and a scalpel," a metaphor for the supposed isolated and laboratory-like nature of bourgeois modernism which would become a central part of the Soviet criticism of modernism a decade later, most memorably in Karl Radek's statements on Joyce.[12] It was a response to his writings that Proust had been long familiar with, noting nearly at the end of *Le Temps retrouvé* (the section written *before* he began all the intermediate volumes) the reaction of his friends to the first pages of his text: "No one understood anything of them. Even those who commended [me] […] congratulated me on having discovered them with a 'microscope,' when it was rather a telescope I had used…"[13] Anticipating his critics who saw him looking too long and too closely at microscopic phenomena—spending interminable pages on "trifles" as Karl Radek will call it in 1934—Proust reverses the image, suggesting that what he is *actually* doing is looking at phenomena impossibly distant from us, and, through his analyses, bringing them back into the range of human vision. Whether microscope or telescope, however, it is one of many instances of Proust underlining the quasi-scientific nature of his "*recherche*," or at least, his pretense to be investigating *universal laws* of memory, psychology and human behavior. This received attention almost immediately in France,[14] and became, at least in the cliché of the madeleine and tea, a mainstay of Anglophone common-knowledge of Proust. In Soviet criticism, however, this aspect was largely ignored. Perhaps it was too problematic, and even unthinkable, to treat the material of his analysis—aristocratic and bourgeois society in the French Third Republic—as comparable and relevant to Soviet society.[15]

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[12] Discussed in chapter 4.
[13] Marcel Proust, *Le Temps retrouvé*, (Paris: Gallimard, 1961 [1927]), 1041.
[14] See, for example, an article in published in a commemorative issue soon after his death in *La Nouvelle Revue Française*: Andre Maurois, "Attitude scientifique de Proust," in *La Nouvelle Revue Française. Hommage à Marcel Proust, 1871-1922*, no. 112, 1 Janvier 1923.
[15] This contrasts significantly to the way Soviet critics read the opening note of Dos Passos' *42nd Parallel*: see chapter 3.

Here, however, Lunacharsky does not employ the metaphor of the microscope in an entirely pejorative manner, since he simultaneously admits that the reclusive Frenchman had produced descriptions that worked "with such exactitude and hypnotic power, that I, for example, have never read comparable analyses in all of literature, and did not even suspect that it was possible to express the inapprehensible experiences [*neulovimye perezhivaniia*] of our organism in a human language with such fullness."[16] But he was skeptical that Proust would remain long on the literary horizon, suggesting that, despite the brilliance with which the novel had shone in the French literary scene over several months and the tendency to speak of Proust as the most fashionable author and a newly-discovered genius, the novel would "hardly" maintain a voluminous readership for long.

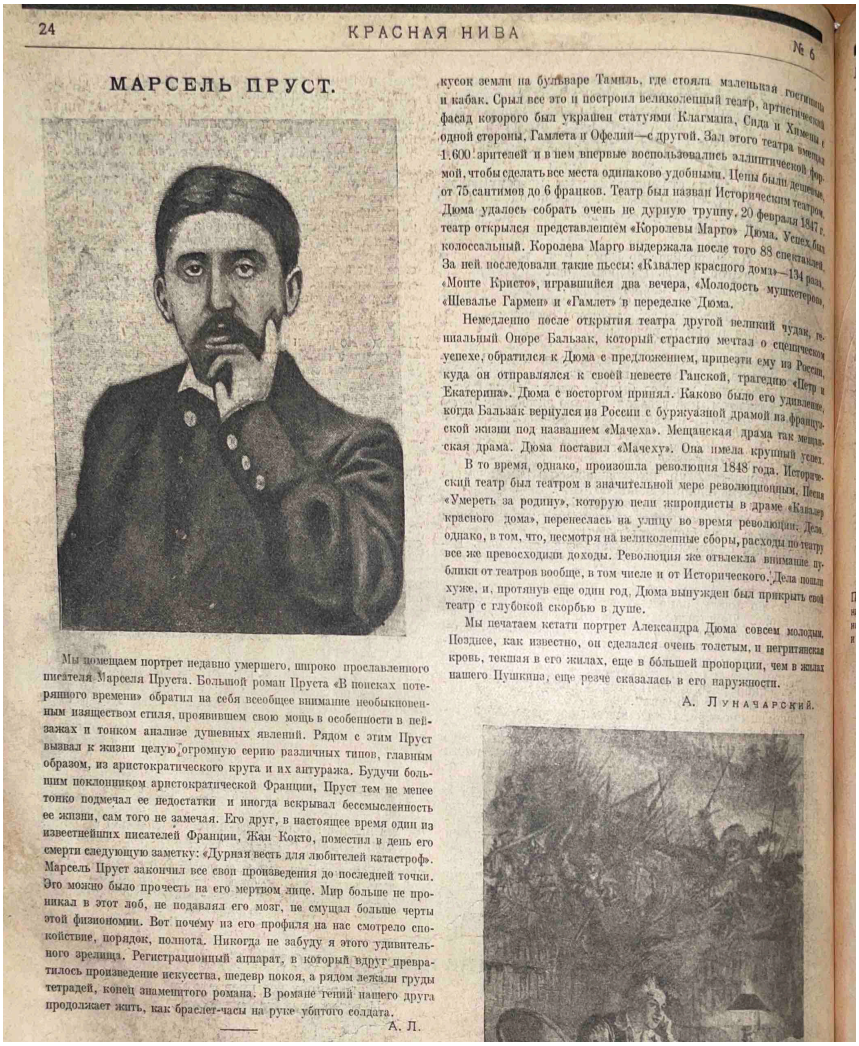
This idea is perhaps the central conflict in the Soviet reception of this new form of literary popularity that appears with Proust and Joyce, and perhaps one of its most relevant first formulations. The Soviet perspective takes for granted that, in the new world that began with the revolution, mass readership, mass appeal and content equal to the political and historical moment were necessary to justify literary success. Proust and Joyce, who make no attempt to be programmatically topical—indeed, who deliberately ignore contemporary life and set their work in a pre-war past at the height of early imperialism and the fin-de-siècle glory of the European bourgeoisie—could not be seen as anything but transient. The hope for world revolution, in the 20s still a matter of genuine belief for Soviet activists, functionaries and even cultural figures, demanded a literature that would produce, or at least sustain, the socially and politically conscious subjectivity that would make that revolution possible. In contrast to previous generations of acclaimed writers in the age of modernity—Goethe, Balzac, Tolstoy, for example—Joyce owed his initial fame certainly in part to the publicity which *Ulysses* generated (and which Joyce stoked at times with mischievous pleasure) while the public's

[16] Ibid., l. 2.

appetite was rather small.[17] They contradicted the previous generations of authors popular with the bourgeois public on which the old generation of social democrats and Bolsheviks were raised. Even if most senior party activists often related to high culture with indifference or hostility, they had all been raised on the great realist novels of the 19th century, and many loved them. In the Soviet perspective, Proust and Joyce began *and remained* as literary figures despite the fact that very few people, relative to their fame and their place in the hierarchy of literature, actually read them, or were even able to. Here the caveat must be added that Proust was actually quite popular in France in the 20s and 30s and some Soviet critics must have known this—Lunacharsky above all, who lived for a period in France at this time and, we will see, quotes extensively from a French book which addresses this popularity. Nonetheless, the consistent strategy of Soviet critics is to portray Joyce and Proust as authors whose literary reputation was secured not on the basis of a mass readership, whose texts made demands of plowing through unacceptable amounts of text to absorb trivial content by means of an unwholesomely seductive, even lascivious style. The Soviets eventually established 19th century classics of Russian literature as models for study and imitation, their appeal to the public measured according to the answers they proposed to the question of What Is To Be Done. Proust's and Joyce's work fell short of achieving the place of the Russian 19th century canon: they could not be seen as literary models worthy of study or imitation, being too digressive, individually demanding, esoteric. The Soviet insistence that artistic works must be models, deeply prevalent in Soviet film and literature at this time, made the novel-experiments of Joyce, Proust and others architecturally anathema to Soviet art.

[17] As, for example, his skill in creatively quoting from negative reviews so they appeared to be full of praise. Brought to my attention by Dipanjan Maitra in his talk, "The Author as Promoter: Joyce's Utilization of the Early Reviews of *Ulysses*," paper delivered at the XXVIII International James Joyce Symposium on June 14, 2022.

But Lunacharsky did publish a short deferential obituary for Proust in February 1923.[18] A poor sketch of the famous photo portrait accompanies it, showing Proust staring at the viewer, his eyes oddly more sunken and dull than in the original photo, his gaze full more of sleep than of thoughtful intensity, his lower lip protruding almost as if ready to drool—the French author apparently worthy and important enough to be illustrated, but not well. Lunacharsky's short evaluation of Proust here as an inadvertent satirist of the aristocracy and bourgeoisie is perhaps more clearly favorable than in the unpublished *Izvestia* article.



24 КРАСНАЯ НИВА № 6

МАРСЕЛЬ ПРУСТ.

Мы помещаем портрет недавно умершего, широко прославленного писателя Марселя Пруста. Большой роман Пруста «В поисках потерянного времени» обратил на себя всеобщее внимание необыкновенным изяществом стиля, проявившем свою мощь в особенности в пейзажах и тонком анализе душевных явлений. Рядом с этим Пруст вызвал к жизни целую огромную серию различных типов, главным образом, из аристократического круга и их антуража. Будучи большим поклонником аристократической Франции, Пруст тем не менее тонко подмечал ее недостатки и иногда вскрывал бессмысленность ее жизни, сам того не замечая. Его друг, в настоящее время один из известнейших писателей Франции, Жан Кокто, поместил в день его смерти следующую заметку: «Дурная весть для любителей катастроф». Марсель Пруст закончил все свои произведения до последней точки. Это можно было прочесть на его мертвом лице. Мир больше не проникал в этот лоб, не подавлял его мозг, не смущал больше черты этой физиономии. Вот почему из его профиля на нас смотрело спокойствие, порядок, полнота. Никогда не забуду я этого удивительного зрелища. Регистрационный аппарат, в который вдруг превратилось произведение искусства, шедевр покоя, а рядом лежали груды тетрадей, конец знаменитого романа. В романе течий нашего друга продолжает жить, как браслет-часы на руке убитого солдата.

А. Л.

кусок земли на бульваре Тампль, где стояла маленькая гостиница и кабак. Срыл все это и построил великолепный театр, архитектурный фасад которого был украшен статуями Клагмана, Сида и Химены с одной стороны, Гамлета и Офелии—с другой. Зал этого театра вмещал 1.600 зрителей и в нем впервые воспользовались эллиптической формой, чтобы сделать все места одинаково удобными. Цены были дешевые, от 75 сантимов до 6 франков. Театр был назван Историческим театром. Дюма удалось собрать очень не дурную труппу, 20 февраля 1847 г. театр открылся представлением «Королевы Марго» Дюма. Успех был колоссальный. Королева Марго выдержала после того 88 спектаклей. За ней последовали такие пьесы: «Кавалер красного дома»—134 раза, «Монте Кристо», игравшийся два вечера, «Молодость мушкетеров», «Шевалье Гармен» и «Гамлет» в переделке Дюма.

Немедленно после открытия театра другой великий чудак, гениальный Оноре Бальзак, который страстно мечтал о сценическом успехе, обратился к Дюма с предложением, привезти ему из России, куда он отправлялся к своей невесте Ганской, трагедию «Петр и Екатерина». Дюма с восторгом принял. Каково было его удивление, когда Бальзак вернулся из России с буржуазной драмой из французской жизни под названием «Мачеха». Мещанская драма так мещанская драма. Дюма поставил «Мачеху». Она имела крупный успех.

В то время, однако, произошла революция 1848 года. Исторический театр был театром в значительной мере революционным. Песня «Умереть за родину», которую пели жирондисты в драме «Кавалер красного дома», перенеслась на улицу во время революции. Дело, однако, в том, что, несмотря на великолепные сборы, расходы по театру все же превосходили доходы. Революция же отвлекла внимание публики от театров вообще, в том числе и от Исторического. Дела пошли хуже, и, протянув еще один год, Дюма вынужден был прикрыть свой театр с глубокой скорбью в душе.

Мы печатаем кстати портрет Александра Дюма совсем молодым. Позднее, как известно, он сделался очень толстым, и негритянская кровь, текшая в его жилах, еще в большей пропорции, чем в жилах нашего Пушкина, еще резче сказалась в его наружности.

А. Луначарский.

Fig. 2.1: Marcel Proust's obituary in *Krasnaia niva* (1923)

[18] A. L. "Marcel' Proust," *Krasnaia niva* no. 6, 11 February 1923, 24.

"Being a great admirer of aristocratic France, Proust nonetheless subtly observed its shortcomings and sometimes revealed its meaningless life, without noticing this himself."[19] He remarks on the power of Proust's verbal landscapes and strength in the "subtle analysis of matters of the soul" (*v…tonkom analize dushevnykh iavlenii*). Clearly following the French literary press closely, Lunacharsky quotes at length from Jean Cocteau's comment on Proust's death. Cocteau, entering the room to see his dead friend amid the mountains of notebooks, determined from the calm expression on Proust's face that the unending novel had also, finally, been completed. Cocteau describes the "astonishing sight" of Proust's corpse, the human "recording device," (*registratsionnyi apparat*) with his brow in life eternally furrowed in concentration over the *recherche*, now in death transformed into a "work of art, a masterpiece of tranquility," lying by the notebooks in which the finished writing was set down, and in which, now, the recording device, "the genius of our friend" continued to perform its work, "like a wrist-watch on a dead soldier."[20]

This remarkable comparison is left without comment by Lunacharsky. Proust, like Joyce or Dos Passos, usually depicted as the agent of obscure if not perverse experiments, is here made by Cocteau into a mere carrier of an indifferent machine. Suggesting both superhuman obsession and bravery, it accords with a common recognition that the work of the *recherche* both impresses and intimidates, not least due to the deformations it forced on the life of its creator, who made himself something less than human so he might reach the end of his investigations.

This was the first mention of Proust in the Soviet press, and it came in a new Soviet journal intended to establish the place of foreign literature within the Soviet intellectual reader's many interests. *Krasnaia niva* had launched only a few weeks earlier in January 1923. With Lunacharsky and

[19] Ibid.
[20] A.L., "Marsel' Prust," 24. For Cocteau's note on Proust's death see "Le masque de Proust" in *Les Nouvelles littéraires*, 25 November, 1922, 1.

Iurii M. Steklov as editors-in-chief, the thin weekly journal was an ambitious attempt to shape a Soviet reader attentive to the fine points of contemporary culture and the classics, well-informed of developments in all the arts and sciences, while still properly discerning of their proper socialist import in a revolutionary perspective. *Krasnaia niva* included translations of foreign prose—the first issues prominently featured H.G. Well's *Men Like Gods* (*Iaki bogi*) and then, in parallel, Romain Rolland's *L'âme enchantée* (*Ocharovannaia dusha*)—along with Soviet fiction and poetry in Russian, illustrated articles on Soviet and international news and figures, reviews of recent publications, scientific developments and even chess problems. Lunacharsky often provided one substantial article on cultural topics for each issue. For example, "The Indian Tolstoy" introduced Soviet readers to Gandhi as a political and philosophical/religious leader, favorably comparing his teachings and strategies to those of Tolstoy, the contradictions of whose ethical philosophy came in for harsher criticism; an overview of the Hungarian national revolutionary poet Sander Petöfi ended with a translation of the latter (and original poetry) by Osip Mandelstam; "Excursions into Shakespeare's World in the Steps of Gustav Landauer" paid lengthy tribute to the recently deceased German theorist of anarchism by way of his final lecture on the English playwright.[21] In Proust's case, this meant presenting him critically as a deep admirer of the aristocracy and upper bourgeoisie while also positively portraying him as an artist whose talents nevertheless overcame that admiration, producing an inadvertent satire of the ruling classes, somewhat justifying reading his work from a Soviet perspective. Crucially, this portrayal ignored the possibility that Proust's satire was intentional and part of his larger project. In this way, Lunacharsky was creating a new Soviet literary category: a contemporary foreign author who was neither a comrade nor a fellow-traveler, who was even an ideological opponent, but in whose work could still be found a hidden criticism of capitalism useful to the Soviet reader.

[21] Lunacharsky, articles in *Krasnaia niva,* no. 1-6, 1923.

Soon the division of literature into "proletarian," "bourgeois," "fellow-traveler," etc., was fully integrated into the Soviet critical vocabulary.[22] As Proust was beginning to be published in Soviet Russian translation, Lunacharsky did publish an article locating him in this constellation. "K kharakteristike noveishei frantsuzskoi literatury" (Towards an Evaluation of Contemporary French Literature) was first published in 1926 and republished as a book section in 1927.[23] It is a long article that only initially touches on Proust before moving on to other contemporary French authors and Proust's (negative) influence on them. In this thesis, in the authors reviewed, in everything, it is almost entirely a summary and paraphrase of French critic André Germain's 1924 book, *De Proust à Dada*.[24] However, in his parroting of this low appraisal of Proust, Lunacharsky finds full agreement with the French critic, suggesting an unexpected convergence of Soviet and bourgeois criticism. Lunacharsky continued to see Proust's place on the horizon of relevant writers as temporary. In his foreword to the 1927 book, Lunacharsky speaks of Proust as of a passing feature of the literary heavens, and attributes much greater significance to accompanying articles of his on Georg Grosz and Romain Rolland's play *Le Jeu de l'amour et de la mort*. "Towards a Characterization of Contemporary French Literature," written in Paris, though nearly a word-for-word (or word-for-every-five-words) of Germain, offers a few points of interest in the first real wave of his Soviet reception and developing attitudes to Western 'bourgeois' writing.[25]

As in his earlier articles, here Lunacharsky admits that Proust's writing has a kind of hypnotic power and beauty, but follows this with jabs at the fundamental quality at the heart of that writing.

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[22] Evgeny Dobrenko, "Socialist Realism," in Dobrenko and Marina Balina, eds., *The Cambridge Companion to Russian Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 97-113, here 98.
[23] First in the journal *Pechat' i revoliutsiia*, kn. 2, March, 17-26, and then in Anatolii Lunacharskii, *Na zapade: Literatura i iskusstvo* (Moscow, Leningrad: Gos. izd-vo, 1927).
[24] André Germain, *De Proust à Dada* (Paris: Éditions du Sagittaire chez Simon Kra, 1924).
[25] Evgeny Dobrenko, "Socialist Realism," in Dobrenko and Marina Balina, eds., *The Cambridge Companion to Russian Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 97-113, here 98.

One of these jabs is both borrowed and unexpectedly embellished. He quotes the entirety of Germaine's musing that, had he not known Proust to be the author of the *Search*, he would have guessed the writer was an "old maid" (*staraia deva/vieille demoiselle*) from an honorable petit bourgeois family who had a brief social rise with the aristocracy, followed by a precipitous fall—perhaps, due to a liaison with a servant. Lunacharsky, making the caveat that he loves much in Proust, acknowledges the dig as right on the mark.[26] The caveat is all the more interesting when one discovers, reviewing Germain's book, that the French critic only wrote of a possible "sentimental" reason for her banishment from the royal salons, while Lunacharsky turns this into a "liaison" in what he presents as a direct translation, imagining an alternative female Proust with a romantic escapade resembling the affairs analyzed at such length in Proust's novel, and indeed somewhat similar to Proust's actual affair with his chauffeur. Such musings on Proust were not uncommon—young Samuel Beckett, in his 1931 master's thesis on Proust, also disavows making any reference in his book to "the garrulous old dowager of the Letters."[27] It is difficult to discern here whether the original or embellished gag were homophobic in nature or plain jealousy in misogynist guise.

Germain and Lunacharsky list three categories as dominant factors in Proust's work, simultaneously his greatest weaknesses and strengths: sexuality, snobbery, and illness. These, they claim, are the aspects of life which he describes with greatest power, and for that reason remains a firmly decadent writer, capable of many incredible, original observations, but never leading the reader to what is "essential." "In any case," Lunacharsky quotes Germain, "god is absent, and the soul is far."[28] Uncertain that Germain uses the words "god" and "soul" in anything but the most "trivial idealist" sense, Lunacharsky proposes a more acceptable Soviet reading of his words: the lack of God

[26] Lunacharskii, *Na zapade*, 74-75; Germain, *De Proust à Dada*, 13.
[27] Samuel Beckett, foreword to *Proust* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1931).
[28] Lunacharskii, *Na zapade*, 75; Germain, *De Proust à Dada*, 28.

in Proust as the lack of something, as "Chekhov wrote to Suvorin," that would be worthy of worship, admiration, devotion. To be "soulless" (*bezdushnyi*, corresponding to Germaine's "l'âme est loin"), Lunacharsky remarks, is clear to anyone without explanation. "Germain's thorns cut still deeper," continues Lunacharsky, quoting a final time from the French critic on Proust, "'None of the roads to hope can be found in his work.'"[29]

Lunacharsky easily translates the absence of god, the separation of the soul, lack of a road to hope into atheist and Soviet terms. Is there not a gesture of embryonic socialist realism—the prescription of humanism, realism, optimism—in this translation of a bourgeois critique, so easily appropriated to a nominally Marxist, Soviet Russian view? Lunacharsky admits Proust may have written some of the most powerful analyses of the psyche in literature, but the specificity of their focus on sexuality, on snobbery and on disease diminishes their possible nourishment to the soul. Proust may make a case for the naturalness and universality of his observations, but the context and atmosphere in which these observations are made proves too distant and too decadent for a reception. In Lunacharsky's second rejection of Proust we see the conflict in the compatibility of the conception of literature, a Soviet inclination, shared with a bourgeois conservatism, to find in literature a medium for the delivery of what is "essential" and wholesome; on the other hand, the literary exploration of the mechanisms of human psychology and self-deception, into all their nooks and crannies—laboratory work with a microscope. On the one hand—production, on the other—research.

The Translator: Academic *Remembrances* and Proust's First Soviet Translators

As mentioned already, by the time Lunacharsky published his only complete, not-very-original article dealing with Proust, several translations of Proust had begun to appear in Russian, and Soviet readers

[29] Lunacharskii, *Na zapade*, 75; Germain, *De Proust à Dada*, 28.

could now judge this perhaps inessential, hope-less author, obsessed with sex, snobs and sickness, for themselves. These first editions closely resembled those which were selling in France at the time like hotcakes—or rather, in the words of Germain, sandwiches. "Before discussing the spiritual value of the work of Mr. Proust," he reminds the reader that the *practical* merit which the new formula has brought them: "the sandwich book": his French publisher Nouvelle Revue Française's convenient installments of two-hundred-fifty page sections spread over sixteen volumes, in the perhaps unhealthy form comparable to the American culinary staple, both being apparently consumed in great quantities in Paris at the time.[30] Though Proust's Russian translations were not devoured as greedily by Soviet readers, they closely imitated these handy little French editions, suggesting they at least hoped to provide similarly practical and pleasurable "sandwich" volumes for the Soviet Russian reader, a light incentive to undertaking the daunting task of reading Proust's massive novel.

The series brought out by the publishing house Academia in 1927 promised an eventual nineteen volumes, going through to *Obretennoe vremia* (*Le Temps retrouvê*), though they only made it through one and a half of the novels: *V storonu Svana* (sic!–*Du côté de chez Swann*) in three volumes, translated by Adrian Frankovsky, and a first volume of *Pod sen'iu devushek v tsvetu* (*À l'ombre des jeunes filles en fleurs*), translated by Boris Griftsov and edited together with Frankovsky. Though Frankovsky would only publish two volumes of Proust in his own translation, he is largely the one credited with the creation of a "Russian Proust" in the 1920s and 30s. The compact little pocket books of around three hundred pages featured, on their covers and inside pages, reproductions of the artworks discussed by Proust in his descriptions and some helpful footnotes by the translators.

The first volume in this series contained an erudite preface by Frankovsky written in 1926, informing the reader of the main points of Proust's life and work, the most important themes and

[30] Germain, *De Proust à Dada*, 11.

origins of the *recherche*, even indicating where the reader can find some of the most crucial and characteristic passages.[31] His discussion of Proust's characteristic style and the structure of *À la recherche* as a novel show that he was quite attentive in his analysis and well-informed in contemporary French criticism. He also offers a few hints of push-back against Proust's method and conception of the world: "Isn't the character of experience itself determined by a certain deep foundation of the self, one that is perhaps not the same among all people and in all epochs?"[32] His criticisms of Proust's thinking are offered in good-faith, with no hint of the sociological criticism or socialist-realist concerns that will occupy the criticism to come. The window for such academic and non-partisan criticism would soon close in Soviet publishing. Frankovsky's preface would not be included in later editions.

Frankovsky is widely regarded as an excellent translator, and it is difficult to find differences which merit discussion in his and Griftsov's translations. Those who favor Nikolai Liubimov's Brezhnev-era translations of Proust sometimes accuse Frankovsky of literalism. It is true his translations are rather literal, and hold on to Proust's long sentences and difficult syntax to the point often held to be beyond normal for Russian, but this was also a criticism made quite often of Proust's French, as Lunacharsky would note more than once. Such accusations seem to become common as the conservative constructions of Soviet Russian fossilized during the Brezhnev "Stagnation," but they appeared quite often in the 20s and 30s, especially with the development of opposing camps within Soviet translation practice. As the acceptable parameters of artistic and cinematic language narrowed with the anti-formalist campaign of 1930-31, so too did any conception of language as a fundamentally plastic instrument in the service of artistic writing.

[31] A. Frankovskii, "Predislovie" in *V poiskakh za utrachennym vremenem. V storonu Svana*, v. 1 (Leningrad: Academia, 1927), 5-10.
[32] Ibid., 15.

In 1971 an internal review of Frankovsky's (then-still-unpublished) translation of Proust's fifth volume *Plennitsa* (*La Prisonnière*) by Ivan Alekseevich Likhachev held in St. Petersburg's TsGALI recommended against publication partially because of its proximity to the French original.[33] While allowing that the resulting translation did not violate rules of Russian grammar, Likhachev insists that Frankovsky's "immoderate predilection" for "verbal nouns" and "quite high quantity of errors" have an adverse effect on the impression of the novel.[34] Examining pages from the manuscript every fifty pages, Likhachev presents a not-very convincing dossier of errors to recommend against the translation's publication—errors which, with the editing he recommends, could easily be remedied—while also noting a number of other more compelling reasons not to publish the stand-alone volume some forty years after the last publication of Proust in the Soviet Union. The Academia translations were by this point long out of print and had become collector's items. Incidentally Likhachev, like several of Proust's Russian commentators and translators, died soon after his Proust review, in 1972.

Many of these same complaints about Proust's awkward syntax and "nearly" ungrammatical language were made in France as well, a point which Lunacharsky will refer to in his later foreword. They suggest that critics, both Soviet and French, were unreceptive to linguistic experiment. The Russian translation is of course aided by the relative similarity between French parfait and imparfait tenses and Russian perfective and imperfective verb forms. In the *overture* Frankovsky even manages to retain a prosody almost French in its accentuation, especially in the opening sentences:

> Давно уже я стал ложиться рано. Иногда, едва только свеча была потушена, глаза мои закрывались так быстро, что я не успевал сказать тебе: «Я засыпаю». И полчаса спустя мысль, что пора уже заснуть, пробуждала меня: я хотел положить книгу, которую, казалось мне, я все еще держу в руках, и задуть огонь; я не переставал во время сна размышлять о только что мною прочитанном, но эти размышления принимали

[33] RGALI, f. 444, op. 1, ed. khr. 85, "Otzyv o perevode romana Marselia Prusta, 'Plennitsa'", vypolnennom A. A. Frankovskim" Avtorskaia mashinopis', [1971].
[34] Ibid., l. 1.

несколько своеобразный оборот; мне казалось, что я сам являюсь тем, о чем говорила книга…[35]

Longtemps, je me suis couché de bonne heure. Parfois, à peine ma bougie éteinte, mes yeux se fermaient si vite que je n'avais pas le temps de me dire : « Je m'endors. » Et, une demi-heure après, la pensée qu'il était temps de chercher le sommeil m'éveillait ; je voulais poser le volume que je croyais avoir encore dans les mains et souffler ma lumière ; je n'avais pas cessé en dormant de faire des réflexions sur ce que je venais de lire, mais ces réflexions avaient pris un tour un peu particulier ; il me semblait que j'étais moi-même ce dont parlait l'ouvrage…[36]

The regular iambs in the opening Russian sentences give it a poetic resemblance not to Proust's prose but to Russian classical poetry, and only the occasional break in this rhythm represses the tendency towards pentameter.[37] The first sentence, the most remarkable prosodically, is also perhaps the least literal and the most questionable. It obscures the two thematic invocations of time in "long*temps*" and "bonne heure," invoking time in "davno" and "rano" without providing the explicit terms of time. Grammatically, the Russian is less complex than the French, perhaps even a little wrong, suggesting here that Marcel *has been* going to bed early for a long time, and continues to, while the French indicates a period of time distinct from the present, a supposition confirmed only much later in the novel when we learn of the author's mid-life insomnia. This failure to emphasize the split in time of a before and after of Marcel's awareness of memory repeats as the section comes to a close: "И вот давно уже,

[35] Quoted here from the identical Academica edition of 1934: Marsel' Prust, *Sobranie sochinenii. V poiskakh za utrachennym vremenem. V storonu Svana*, perevod A.A. Frankovskogo, predislovie A.V. Lunacharskogo (Leningrad: Kooperativnoe izd-stvo 'Vremia,' 1934), 1.
[36] Marcel Proust, *À la recherche du temps perdu*, vol. 1, eds. Jean-Yves Tadié et al. (Paris: Gallimard, 1987), 3.
[37] Davnó uzhé ia stal lozhít'sia ráno.
Inogdá, yedvá tól'ko svechá bylá
potushená, glazá moí zakryvális'
tak b´ystro, shto ia ne uspevál skazát'
sebé: "ia zasypáiu". I polchasá
spustiá mysl', chto porá uzhé zasnút',
probuzhdála meniá…

просыпаясь ночью и вспоминая Комбре, я никогда не видел ничего, кроме…" (cf. "C'est ainsi que, pendant longtemps, quand, réveillé la nuit, je me ressouvenais de Combray, je n'en revis jamais que…").[38] While of course the subtlety of the phrasing makes significant demands for translation, the failure suggests a reading that did not take account of the novel's consistent emphasis on this break in the perception of time.

In the occasional convergence of the translated text with native poetic diction, Frankovsky somewhat recalls C. K. Scott Moncrieff with the latter's interweaving of Shakespearian phrases into the titles and some phrasings of the English Proust. But Frankovsky, in contrast, remains quite close to the source text here and elsewhere. Only a few words and phrasings depart from the original in a mostly insignificant manner: *ouvrage* might be better translated as произведение, though книга sounds much more natural here, and in perfect conformity with minimalist Russian possessives, the *ma* is dropped from *lumiére*. Proust's phrasing itself here is not particularly unusual, but in one more poetic word choice—which plays its small part in emphasizing the languorous absurdity of the narrator's state between sleep and waking, setting the tone and certain themes of searching, metempsychosis between states of social being and the transformation of perception for the massive novel which follows—Frankovsky has dropped Proust's *la pensée qu'il était temps de chercher le sommeil m'éveillait* (literally "the thought that it was time *to seek out sleep*" or "find my way to sleep") becomes instead a repetition of the verb "to fall asleep" used in the previous sentence: *мысль, что пора уже заснуть* ("the thought that it was now time to fall asleep").

In general, however, one is at pains to find differences worth remarking on in Frankovsky's and Griftsov's translations, so exactly do they follow the original. Frankovsky's later collaborator, Andrei Fedorov, would write that they "considered it impossible to simplify Proust's style, make it more

[38] Proust, *À la recherche du temps perdu*, vol. 1, 43.

'pleasant' than it is… [His sentences] are often unusual for French."[39] Fedorov highlighted their reluctance to smooth over those aspects of the text that violated stylistic or grammatical prescriptions in the original, making the literalness of their translation into an attempt to retain its specific literary character by bringing those violations of normative language into Russian as well. Moncrieff's admired English translation often takes liberties with the French, sometimes rephrasing Proust's relatively simple word choices in more poetic and striking, even contrived diction, or breaking up the endless paragraphs into more manageable chunks. Thus unlike the English translation of the same period, which adapted, simplified and made Proust's original "more pleasant" than it actually was, Frankovsky and his collaborators were able to work in a way that challenged and pushed the stylistic norms of Russian. This may have owed something to the atmosphere of the 1920s, in which Soviet writers, spurred by the tumultuous social changes following the October revolution, experimented with various stylistic and formal innovations to capture the new reality, but could just as much reflect Frankovsky's and Fedorov's academic training, their pre-revolutionary education and cultural milieu, and distance from the emerging Soviet mass reader. The Soviet translation norms that would develop in the 30s, first under Ivan Kashkin, and which are reflected in the later Proust translator (Liubimov), would, adapting to new ideas which favored supposed "naturalness" and "organicity" in language, instead smooth over any perceived difficulties in the original.

However, Proust's text neither demands nor invites obviously radical solutions on the part of his translators to adapt the text to its target language. Ivan Likhachev noted in his review of Frankovsky's *Plennitsa* that the "linguistic fabric" of Proust's novel is a "rather homogenous phenomenon."[40] Proust's literary achievements have little in common with the stylistic fireworks of his Anglophone

[39] Fedorov, A.V. "O perevodchike" in Marsel' Prust, *V poiskakh utrachennogo vremeni. V storonu Svana* (Leningrad: Sovetskii pisatel', 1992), 477.
[40] Likhachev, "Otzyv o perevode romana Marselia Prusta, 'Plennitsa,'" l. 3.

contemporaries, and likewise lack the austere exactitude of the Flaubertian paradigm. The remarkable aspect of his prose was, in the words of Lunacharsky, the shocking fullness with which he expressed the inapprehensible, ungraspable experiences, sensations, thoughts and, of course, modes of memory. This "fullness' could be captured and understood best in the sheer quantity of text.

This "rather homogenous" linguistic fabric is perhaps one reason why Proust stands apart in the debates over him, Joyce and Dos Passos. Even a relatively poor translation is bound to get across the sense of the text, which performs its work precisely through the repeated embellishment of an ever-expanding series of observations on the tricks of memory, perception, and psychology. Frankovsky's and Griftsov's first translations (1926-1927) of the first two volumes in the septet, however, excellently prepared the ground for the first Russian encounter with Proust's world.

A Wayward *Albertine*, Lost and Found

Tracing the path of Lunacharsky and Frankovsky as they followed in Proust's footsteps, we unexpectedly find another footpath branching off, but ending in the weeds: A corrected typescript held in RGALI by a seemingly unknown translator. The holding consists of a draft translation of most of *La Prisonnière* and the beginning of *Albertine disparue*, in a translation of one Nikolai Zhurakovsky, according to an archivist's nearly indecipherable handwriting.[41] As a translation it leaves much to be desired, and as a path not taken in the Russian translation of Proust, much to be grateful for.

The holding begins *in media res*, seemingly missing the first 7 pages of the translation. Corrections in pencil over the entirety of the manuscript in an unknown hand suggest the work of an editor attempting to smooth out the text but not checking or correcting the many errors of translation. The translator does not seem to have had sufficient French or attention to the original text. Small and

[41] RGALI, f. 613, op. 1, ed. khr. 7469, 'Prust M. "Plennitsy". Roman,' [1930].

more significant errors are noticeable on every page. Proust's long paragraphs with dialogues set within them are broken up into traditional stand-alone lines. Long, complex sentences—those in particular in which Proust takes the reader on an excursion over the geography of a thought or face—are shortened to unrecognizability, while Proust's generalizations become flat and often lose a major dimension of the original statement, or become different points altogether. At the point where Zhurakovsky's manuscript begins, Proust is describing Albertine in her daily entrances into his bedroom, and how:

> …chaque matin, le crespelage de ses cheveux me causa longtemps la même surprise comme une chose nouvelle, que je n'aurais jamais vue. Et pourtant, au-dessus du regard souriant d'une jeune fille, qu'y a-t-il de plus beau que cette couronne bouclée de violettes noires ? Le sourire propose plus d'amitié ; mais les petits crochets vernis des cheveux en fleurs, plus parents de la chair dont ils semblent la transposition en vaguelettes, attrapent davantage le désir.

In Zhurakovsky's translation:

> …каждое утро меня поражало, как новость, прелесть ее волнистых волос. И правда, что может быть прекраснее, кроме разве улыбки молодой девушки, чем это пышная корона локонов, напоминающих черные фиалки. Улыбка предполагает дружбу, но маленькие блестящие завитушки черных волос более родственны телу и поэтому более возбуждает желание.

Besides the strange translation of "chose de nouvelle" as "новость," the translation drops the important and characteristically Proustian emphasis of "que je n'aurais jamais vue"—so many of the variety of experiences Proust experiences as memory, or describes as repetition, involve means of seeing the old as "for the first time," or that all things are only truly seen or heard "as if for the first time." Proust's "en fleurs," which sustains the floral comparison, is also lost. Importantly, it is by means of these small textual reminders that Proust builds parallel images in his descriptions, and which

Zhurakovsky fails to bring into his translation. Further missing the "plus" of "d'amitié," Zhurakovsky drops almost the entirety of the second relative clause, translating "chair" as "тело" rather than "плоть." Elsewhere, characteristic scenes that describe actions repeated over many months using verbs in the imperfait ("je lui demandais") alongside sample dialogues from specific instances confuse Proust's (admittedly confusing) tendency by translating the verbs of repetition with "once" (однажды) and the Russian perfective form. Generalizations, translated sloppily, change their meaning: "Car la verité change tellement pour nous que les autres ont peine à s'y reconnaître" (truth is changeable and difficult to recognize from one person to another) becomes a deformed "Ведь мы так искажаем истину, что другие едва могут ее узнавать" (We disfigure the truth so much that others can hardly recognize it). Elsewhere Proust, generalizing from the observation that he was already no longer in love with Albertine by the time of her "imprisonment," states that love is perhaps no more than the "eddies" which, "à la suite" of an emotion, stir the soul. In Zhurakovsky, the causal indication of "in the wake" or "following" the emotion is lost, and love instead becomes the "расходящие круги" (dissipating circles) of an emotion which take up the "entire soul" like a vortex (водоворот).

Zhurakovsky's translation, though he captures the thematic material and the bulk of the descriptions, turns Proust into a slightly different writer, who observes slightly different facts, writes less flowery descriptions, organizes his text in a much more "friendly," approachable manner, and makes somewhat different observations about the human psyche. At times, he seems even to have tried to turn Proust, in his translation of the beginning of *Albertine disparue*, into a more conventional writer: Although much of Marcel's excruciating vexation and self-examination after Albertine's departure remain, whole paragraphs are removed, as if to move us along more quickly to the action. Similar cuts were apparently made to a later translation of *Albertine disparue* by an aging Nikolai Liubimov, Proust's second major Russian translator, sick and unable to complete his series of

translations before his death in 1992.[42] Zhurakovsky's Proust still spends pages on trivial details, but a few pages less than usual, cutting slightly faster to the chase—perhaps an attempt to provide a somewhat shorter course through the fifth and sixth Proustian novels.

Zhurakovsky does not seem to have gotten any other translations printed, and the entirety of his published output is limited to two forgotten adventure novels published just a couple years before, if indeed these Nikolai Zhurakovskys are even the same person (no patronymic or other more precisely identifying details emerged during research).[43] Further investigation of archival material did not reveal why the manuscript was rejected. However, in an internal review of an unpublished novel by Zhurakovsky ("Svet bagrianyi") for the state publishing house—dated 1929, one year after his last published novel and one year before the manuscript of his Proust translation—a reader finds that it is "slightly above average" artistically and that the "doubtful" ideological moments in the text could be fixed, but nevertheless recommends against publishing the novel due to its volume and the paper shortage at the time of review. The paper shortage could be the same reason Zhurakovsky's translation of Proust was not published—likewise the reason for the abrupt stop in Frankovsky's and Griftsov's ambitious Academia publications of Proust's novel. And yet, in Zhurakovsky's case, is not difficult to imagine what problems an editor might have found: its inaccuracy and clumsiness, combined with the fact that the third and fourth novels in the series had also not yet been published, though their translations by Frankovsky, Andrei Fedorov and Natalya Surina were perhaps already underway and known to Zhurakovsky or at least the publishers who would have read it. All this would have made

[42] Mikhailov, *Poetika Prusta,* 74.
[43] Nikolai Zhurakovskii, *Lovtsy novykh zemel'. O puteshestviakh na severnyi polius* (Khar'kov, Moscow: Proletarii, 1927, on Amundsen's polar expedition); *Kryl'ia ognia: Roman iz zhizni kitaiskoi molodezhi* (Moscow, Leningrad: Krasnyi proletarii, 1928). RGALI, f. 611, op. 1, ed. khr. 386, l. 3. The cover of Zhurakovsky's Proust translation includes the date 1930, although the file is listed without a date.

Zhurakovsky's translation a poor candidate in the eyes of any intelligent reader to build on the foundation of the Russian Proust.

In Search of Lost Vremia: A Second Soviet Attempt at Proust

A new ambitious effort to create a complete works of Proust in Russian began in the first half of the 30s, initially under the publishing cooperative Vremia (Time). Then, as indeed throughout the remainder of the twentieth century, foreign literature occupied a significant place in Soviet publishing, with massive editions of classics and of contemporary "friendly" authors. Proust partially fit this mold, as a new classic of contemporary literature whose publication joined other prestige projects like the collected works of Goethe, Dante, Romain Rolland and others—all of these organized by Vremia. Using previously published and new translations by Adrian Frankovsky, Andrei Fedorov, and Natalya Surina, only the first, 1934 volume would be published by the publishing cooperative, while the rest would be published by the state publishing house Khudozhestvennaia literatura (Belles Lettres), which absorbed it. This change meant the end of the practice used in the first volume to illustrate Proust's many detailed references to the paintings of Giotto, Botticelli and others with transparented reproductions, though it did not affect the overall quality of the publication or translations. Although this project would also end before finishing, it would make more headway than the first translation efforts of the 1920s, publishing the next two novels (*Le Côté de Guermantes* and *Sodome et Gomorrhe*) in translations by Frankovsky, and Fedorov and Surina, respectively, thereby completing the last portion of Proust's work to see the light before his death.

The beautiful first volume, with its marbled cover and endpapers and reproductions, brings us back to Lunacharsky's Proustian last words. As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, this unfinished foreword was dictated in the final working moments of the author's life at the end of December 1933 and opened the first of this Soviet *Sobranie sochinenii Marselia Prusta*. Lunacharsky had

championed a more liberal attitude toward the arts and fellow travelers over the previous decade, but by this time Soviet arts were being hemmed in by an increasingly narrow view of what was permissible domestically and what was useful from abroad. His foreword attempts to negotiate Proust through the changes already underway.

Fig. 2.2-2.3: Facsimiles of Bellini's Portrait of Mehmet II and Botticelli's Sephora in the first volume of Proust's collected works in Russian Soviet translation (1934)

Сепфора

Деталь фрески Боттичелли „Жизнь Моисея" в Сикстинской капелле

Lunacharsky's foreword begins with an old idea from his unpublished *Izvestiia* article, which he develops here in a new direction, one perhaps more in line with the mood of the moment, as "socialist realist" and "Soviet" literature began to be increasingly distinguished from "formalist," "decadent" or "bourgeois" literature. Again he repeats the idea that Proust follows in the path blazed by Romain Rolland's massive *Jean Christophe*, but Lunacharsky recognizes French critics for seeing in

both a contribution to literature of a new kind of writer and even a new kind of reader. He praises Proust's ability to weave a "tapestry of memories" that spread out before us, while he also folds this tapestry weaving safely into the moral metaphor of Pushkin's *Covetous Knight*, hoarding his wealth uselessly to himself. "Proustians," described by Lunacharsky as those who would deny that the work teaches something, leads somewhere or that Proust cared a fig about either question, are dismissed: "We say to them in reply: 'Not only does he teach, not only does he lead us [to something], but at times even consciously. Ach, these trickster formalists!'"[44] At the end of the opening section of the foreword, it proposes to carve out a space for a Soviet reading of Proust that removes him from the clutches of his supposedly formalist admirers.

In outlining a critically positive appraisal of Proust, however, Lunacharsky's foreword at times contradicts itself. Lunacharsky had only recently completed a large foreword to the new Soviet *Sobranie sochinenii* of Goethe. Likening Proust to Goethe, who began from close observation of reality and graduated from this to higher-order generalizations about life, the French author is called a "realist" in Goethe's fashion. And yet only a page later, remarking on the similarly fuzzy nature of Goethe's memoirs in *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, Lunacharsky calls Proust an "impressionist," whose work cannot hold a candle to the German poet. This discrepancy could simply be a result of the unfinished nature of Lunacharsky's foreword, but it is consistent with his tendency to portray Proust's work as just under some sufficient level of "genius."

Although Lunacharsky was apparently in France while dictating the article, he seems to have been several years behind on the state of Proust's published work, claiming that the "memoirs" were finished, but not yet fully printed—as a purely factually matter, this was true, and it would take several decades before new editions would attempt to complete Proust's project according to all indications

[44] Anatolii Lunacharskii, "Marsel' Prust," in Prust, *Sobranie sochinenii. V Poiskakh za utrachennym vremenem. V storonu Svana* (Moscow: Kooperativnoe izdatel'stvo Vremia, 1934), VIII.

in the manuscripts (indeed, this work may never end). However, it was still fundamentally wrong, as the last volume of the novel, however "abominable" the editions might be, had already been published in 1927. It appears that Lunacharsky had never read beyond the five volumes he once read in one go, without stop, with such pleasure, at least a decade before. He was certain that there could be no grand conclusion to the work, only a new batch of astonishingly rich, detailed observations like those of the previous volumes.

What is perhaps most striking about Lunacharsky's essay is that the subject—or, equally, object—of Proust's novel, as announced in the title, almost does not exist. Lunacharsky almost does not mention the concept, indeed the very word "time," and it's "study" or "search" not at all. Instead, "memory" and "memoirs" are the subject at hand, but emptied of their Proustian content. There is no mention of "voluntary" or "involuntary" memory, and in Lunacharsky's telling, for Proust it seems to be entirely the former: "Here he is god, limited only by the very wealth of the magic river of his memory." Samuel Beckett, in his short 1929 book on Proust, had argued, counterintuitively, that Proust actually had a "bad memory," since he was only able with difficulty to recall and articulate his memories and their various connections.[45] Lunacharsky, meanwhile, makes Proust's memory perfect, in Beckett's words, "uniform…like an instrument of reference instead of discovery." There is no discovery in Lunacharsky's Proust. Absent is the idea, proclaimed repeatedly over the novel by Marcel, of seeking general laws of the human soul, of the nature of time. Lunacharsky instead sees Proust's primary goal in "reliv[ing] his life…together with the reader" "with particular depth and taste." In a comparison hardly imaginable in his 1920s writing on Proust, Lunacharsky calls this Proust's "cinema" (*kinomatograf*), an indication of how much the successes of Soviet and western cinema of the 20s had occupied even the imagination of the old Bolshevik, such that he could now apply its techniques to

[45] Beckett, *Proust*, 17.

Proust, an intensely uncinematic novelist. But it is also the addition of a new lens to the perception of Proust, previously seen as working with a "microscope and scalpel," who now, perhaps too like Dziga Vertov and Yelizaveta Svilova in their *Man with the Movie Camera*, is being recast as a montage novelist. In both cases, it emphasizes the visuality of the writing while leaving aside the insights which the lenses are supposed to make visible. Lunacharsky sees a secondary goal of Proust in attempting to restore (*vosstanovit'*) the lost epoch of his youth. And thus it emerges as a work fundamentally concerned with individuality, with personality, and above all with Proust's own self, even his vanity. The restoration of the past is "secondary"; the pleasure taken in his "new slow-motion [*zamedlennogo*] artistically-processed second experience of life" is primary.

Proust's experience and enjoyment of his work and the process of writing is, indeed, the main subject of Lunacharsky's account, as if pleasure taken in artistic creation were itself an ethically suspect activity. Subdued, as well, is Lunacharsky's own pleasure in the text—at least, any direct admission of pleasure. There are likewise few indications to anticipate what the reader might, or should, or *should not* enjoy in the text that follows. One begins to wonder why Proust's work has been given such a lavish presentation, and by such an eminent Bolshevik of letters as Lunacharsky.

The impression the reader is left with, ultimately, is that Proust is a decadent writer, though the word has not been deployed here, and, simultaneously, he is not a formalist (and must be saved from those tricksters!). We have been assured that Proust teaches something, at times "even consciously," and yet, as we near the end of the preface, it is difficult to say what that might be: perhaps the weaving of memory, the ability to restore the past, the construction of the cinema of experience? Is this lesson beneficial or baneful for Soviet readers and writers? Surely, had he lived just a little longer, Lunacharsky would have made all this clearer. But it seems to me that the impression left by the article nonetheless accurately conveys Lunacharsky's difficulties in placing Proust, as a critic of refined taste and a Bolshevik, writing at the end of 1933, a very bad year for both. His difficulties were

the Soviet difficulties. The pleasure of Proust and of us, reading Proust, for Lunacharsky, is a guilty pleasure, not quite the hearty literature we should consume, nor a delicacy to be denied. Again borrowing from Germain on Proust's influence on post-war French writers, Lunacharsky concludes his writing, his life (though not, unfortunately, this foreword) with a reminder that Proust had "truly somewhat ruined the French language." This ruinous style was an inevitable and necessary result of his literary task, but in Proust's students it led to a disregard of "compression, vividness, logic": perhaps qualities that Soviet writers and readers could not afford to overlook. He ends (his speech in this life) with an appraisal that, reluctantly, acknowledges the narcotic power of Proust's style, embellished in terms that transform the neurotic and convalescent author into a manufacturer of potent drugs:

> Proust's somewhat turbid, colloidally honeyed, abnormally ambrosial and fragrant style is the only thing that could help to coerce tens of thousands of readers to ecstatically join you in reliving your not especially significant life, while acknowledging it with some special significance and indulging this drawn-out pleasure with manifest ecstasy.[46]

It is here the preface ends and the footnote is appended which informs the reader Lunacharsky dictated these last lines two days before his death. It clearly denies Proust any meaningful achievements in the world of ideas, but it would be difficult to surpass such a compliment to his style here, in which Proust is granted simply magical powers of literary seduction. One could see this compliment as backhanded, as Lunacharsky may have been walking a tightrope between a genuine appreciation and an (equally genuine) felt need to speak deprecatingly. And it is quite intriguing to contemplate

[46] "Несколько мутноватый, медово-коллоидальный, необычайно сладостный и ароматный стиль Пруста—единственный, при помощи которого можно принудить десятки тысяч читателей восторженно переживать с вами вашу не так уж особенно значительную жизнь, признавая за ней какую-то особенную значительность и предаваясь этому растянутому наслаждению с явным восторгом." Anatolii Lunacharskii, "Marsel' Prust," XI.

Lunacharsky, seriously ill, breaking off his dictation and presented suddenly with the final limits of his organism, of his own powers of language, in the midst of this rapturous, sensually brimming description of readerly delight in a meaningless life, told with such striking style. Death, eavesdropping on Lunacharky's dictation in Menton, deprived him of speech as he affirmed the "manifest ecstasy" of indulging in Proust's "unmatched," "cinematic" prose.

Lunacharsky must have been thinking of his legacy as he wrote this preface, as he must have as he wrote, not long before, on Goethe and on Rolland. He was likely himself receiving medications of some narcotic power, and perhaps delving into his own memories of past time, and trying to recover lost time with the urgency of one who knows there is little time left. Returning to this preface, promised to Vremia already two years previous in 1931, surely was part of what he hoped to recapture. How should he finally respond to Proust, and how to do so in a way that maintains something of his dual legacies in politics and culture, and what might that legacy offer the reader in a Soviet Union so massively changed from its beginning? His preface speaks to the contradictions of trying to reconcile the openness of the hopeful 20s with the guarded suspicion of the 30s, the ambition for Soviet culture to contain world culture and the pressure to divide culture, as politics, into friends and enemies. At least in defending Proust from the charge of formalism, Lunacharsky seems to have left open the Soviet reading of the *recherche*.

This was the end of Lunacharsky, but not the end of the Soviet Proust, nor the end of Lunacharsky's work, both of which continued to appear for several years, ticking on itself like a dead soldier's wristwatch. In the meantime, however, other tendencies had appeared in Soviet criticism that would signal a new turn.

The Critic: Proust at War

Eleven months before Lunacharsky failed to finish writing his article, a different, more hostile attitude towards Proust appeared elsewhere in Soviet criticism—or, rather, a criticism that saw Proust and other writers as ideological belligerents in a future war with Europe. A special role in this new turn was taken by *Znamia* (The Banner), a monthly "literary and "socio-political defensive journal." Founded in 1931 as *Lokaf* (*Литературное объединение писателей Красной Армии и флота*, or Literary Association of Writers of the Red Army and Fleet), it focused on literature related to war and the military, though it printed Soviet and foreign writers and criticism that reached beyond military matters and was overseen by the Union of Soviet Writers. 1933 saw the publication of articles on Proust amid discussions of the hidden meaning of pacifism (as an unwitting boon to militarism), and two issues dedicated to a public discussion of Dos Passos organized by the journal. It was chiefly here that the critical attitude towards Proust and Joyce, crystallized later in Radek's 1934 Writers' Congress speech, was formed.

This shift characterized all the participants in the literary debates of the 30s, including those who defended the artist's "right to experiment" and those who defended reading western experimentalists out of a need to "know thy enemy." Even Lunacharsky wrote three pamphlets on questions of war and peace in the years before his death, criticizing the efforts of the League of Nations to achieve European disarmament and establish a lasting peace: "How the League of Nations Makes Peace" (it did not, 1929); "How They are Disarming" (they were not, 1931); "Disarmament: Transcript of a Presentation on the Geneva Conference at the Party Section of the Red Stream [factory]" (the conference achieved no meaningful guarantee of peace).[47] Here Lunacharsky also emphasizes the Communist critique of the unorganized, naïve hopes of post-war European and American pacifists—

[47] A.V. Lunacharksii, *Kak Liga natsii delaet mir* (Leningrad: Gos. izdat., 1929); *Kak oni razoruzhaiutsia* (Leningrad: Priboi, 1931); *"Razoruzhenie". Stenogramma doklada o zhenevskoi konferentsii na partaktive Krasnoi Presni 31 marta 1932* (Moscow: Partiinoe izdat., 1932).

a point that figures most of all in discussions of Dos Passos, but also in those of Joyce and other Western writers. The sense that a new war was imminent begins to emerge regularly in the Soviet press, and colors literary reading with its accompanying concepts of enemy and ally, offense and defense.

One critic who anticipated the second world war was Aleksander Leites, who saw Proust as part of the secret arsenal being prepared against the USSR by the West. Leites specialized in Ukrainian poetry, but took a keen interest in Western literature, especially its relationship to the Soviet Union. Already in 1924, in his book *Oktiabr' i zapadnaia literatura*, he turned his attention to Joyce and Proust, among others. He argued that they demonstrated the obsession of the Western bourgeois intelligentsia and class with the pre-war past, that they were indifferent, when not actively hostile, to the demands of the present and to the October revolution, basing this on such outward manifestations as titles and public statements.[48] Yet in 1933, he debuted a different view of the significance of recent Western literature.[49] In the "creep toward a new world war," he argued it was essential that Soviet critics better illustrate the "devices and methods of the preparation of a second round of imperialist clashes." Repurposing a question from Ibsen, he asks "Can you hear the silence?" It is not, he claims, to the sound of drums or winds that the "most dangerous and significant forms" of the war's preparation are being created, not in the obvious hammering of fascist writers, but, rather, in "almost absolute silence," in recent Western "civilian" (his scare quotes) literature. To this phenomenon he applies the term "military capability." He explains the term, which he attributes to US military specialists, not as official ability to wage war measured in military equipment and personnel (more familiar today), but as the ability to turn civilian material and populations to military use: "Glycerine can be made into soap and… dynamite; cellulose into artificial silk and… smokeless gunpowder; chlorine into

[48] Leites, *Oktiabr' i zapadnaia literatura.*
[49] Aleksandr Leites, "'Voennyi potentsial' zapadnykh literatur," in *Znamia* no. 1, 1933, 179-93.

chlorinated water for housewives and… the most terrible gas, phosgene […]."[50] He claims these products of "dual use" were counted at 3,876 by the secretary of the US Department of Defense. By analogy, writes Leites, literature can also serve dual civilian and military uses. Looking at literature through this lens, the "glycerine literature" that critics had failed to notice can be shown to be the "functioning literary army of imperialism," where the "unexpectedly 'innocent and pure' 'art for art's sake' turns out to be a factory of suffocating gases."

These "dual use" literary works are not war novels of the "pure" kind. Instead, it is through adventure or sports novels—especially those focused on automobiles or airplanes—and biographical novels that "dual use" military propaganda appears. Here Leites' analogy, as interesting and perhaps even promising as it is—surely the weaponization of cultural artifacts and figures is a significant phenomenon in modern warfare—unravels almost immediately, as it turns out that most of the adventure or sports novels he has in mind are those written by ideologically committed partisans of imperial and aristocratic France, fascists in Italy, and biographical novels about retired military men.[51] Nothing of this corresponds to the ambitious thesis of finding literary glycerine: all of it relates quite clearly to war, and does not make any attempt to hide it, nor does Leites bring forth any evidence that this literature is especially popular or effective, making his way through his list quickly, noting only by way of evaluation that it is all written quite "by the numbers" (*shablonno*). He moves on to the third part of his essay, "On Marcel Proust…"

Here the subject becomes the "more subtle devices" of propagandizing war, quoting German general Erich Ludendorff, "Our propaganda should not give the appearance of propagandizing." Proust, acknowledges Leites, would seem to be a writer who could not be more distant from questions

[50] Ibid., 180.
[51] Authors and subjects he mentions here include Henri de Montherlant, Jacques Joffre, Ferdinand Foch, Louis Lyautey, Lord Nelson, Joseph Cantini (aka "Yusuf"), and a life of Italo Balbo by Curzio Malaparte and Enrico Falqui.

of war, that his Goncourt prize in 1918 and general popularity are signs of the "bourgeois intelligentsia's" intense longing for the calm of the pre-war years. But in the recently released *Le Temps retrouvé*, what was most astonishing was the "staunch, almost fanatical militant patriotism *bulging out from between his lines*" (*vypiravshim mezhdu ego strok*, my emphasis). How is the reader, who cannot read French and for whom no Russian translation will exist for another sixty years, to read between those lines? The between-the-lines, it turns out, lies not in Proust's novel at all, but in his letters, in his biography. Leites quotes from one letter, shorn of context and poorly translated, "We live in war, like believers live in God." Leites does not provide the context and origin of this quote: it comes from a letter to Princesse Soutzo from 9 April 1918, in which Proust despairs of having lost all his hopes and beliefs. Proust writes that the war has occupied everything, that it has ceased to be an "object," and become like the metaphysical projection of God as a "substance interposed between myself and objects": "Comme on aimait en Dieu, je vis dans la guerre." This admission makes God into the inescapable condition and ether of existence, rather than an object of positive contemplation. Leites, however, seems to want us to understand "living in God" here as a purely positive condition—and Proust's attitude to war, correspondingly, as equally, and therefore monstrously, affirmative. Leites also finds this "staunch, almost fanatical patriotism" in Proust's biography—in his bizarre attempt to enlist, (I would add: probably while under the influence of several narcotic medications), "hurrying slowly" to the draft office at 3 in the morning. Although Leites places great symbolic significance on this episode, he shies away from saying what exactly it is, besides that Proust preferred to express his "patriotic roaring" "gradually, slowly and under the cover of night…" A hypocrite, a confused man, a less-than-convincing patriot? Any of these might be compelling explanations he could offer here. Yet the war propaganda in this incident takes such cleverly subtle form that even Leites seems unable to articulate its meaning more exactly. Proust, indeed, tries to paint himself (not entirely convincingly) as a patriot in *Le Temps retrouvé*, while presenting views of other characters (especially in Robert de

Saint-Loup, Baron de Charlus and Mme. Verdurin) that, like his treatment of aristocratic and bourgeois salons in the earlier volumes, could easily have been read as satirizing clichés of "patriotic" behavior. Leites does not consider this possibility, however. He provides no more information on the "subtle devices" of Proust's novel, moving on to review the patriotic responses of other French writers at the start of WWI, and closes by describing Proust as "having shut himself up in an 'ivory tower,' sitting out individual imperialist problems to bless the whole epoch of imperialism 'from the point of view of eternity'…"[52] Conveniently for Leites, Proust is at once a fanatical, militant patriot, inciting others to war, and a coward, a hypocrite who isn't really interested in it, and who certainly wouldn't risk his own skin. Proust's work as an author was less important than the place of his work within bourgeois literature.

Leites' "dual use" literature is less a philological observation than it is, itself, the transformation of literature into a gas or poison, the weaponization of literature according to ideas originating in Soviet foreign policy and the Comintern of the late 1920s. In placing bourgeois writing alongside fascist writing, even claiming that the former was more dangerous than the latter, Leites's idea resembles the theory of "social fascism"—the idea, propagated by Grigory Zinoviev in the Comintern from 1928, that social-democratic politics was allied with fascism and fundamentally bound up with it as a social and political movement. Although Leites is not concerned with "social democracy" in this article, and the argument he makes is only weakly supported by the evidence he cites, the effect is to blur the edges between fascist and non-fascist writing, and to argue that even apparently pacifist writing can contain hidden war propaganda. This attitude to pacifist writing of the 20s and 30s is hardly relevant to Proust, but it will be crucial to Soviet readings of Dos Passos, mentioned here by

[52] Leites, "'Voennyi potensial'…," 184.

Leites as one of the writers focused on "war themes" to turn "towards the ideas of the land of socialism."

Scalpel, microscope, drawn-out pleasure, ivory tower. Zooming back out from our samples of the Soviet examination of Proust, these are the crucial terms. From Lunacharsky, whose reading of Proust was marked by both superficial enjoyment and superficial dismissal, a new reading appears in Leites, who, using a kind of microscopic approach himself, identifies small details which supposedly compromise the whole. He even announces it as new moment in Soviet criticism. "Until now we have studied the growing antimilitarist mood among the 'masters of culture' only in the material of their declarations, their public and journalistic (*publitsisticheskikh*) statements." Proust, of course, was not in any way connected to antimilitarism or pacifism, though Leites implicitly groups him in with other writers—Remarque and Dos Passos were some of the more prominently discussed at this time—who had built their career on novels critical of WWI. But whether writers were vocally anti-war or simply had not been open supporters of it, Leites point was clear: It was the time to dig into and examine the implications of writers' work. In Leites' examination, the analysis actually remained largely on the surface level, relying on public information about writers with fascist or nationalist views and an engagement with Proust that ignored and even distorted context and nuances implicit in both his literary writing and his correspondence. But the idea to examine the content of bourgeois writers' work for its ideological implications was already also being applied to Dos Passos and Joyce as well.

What, however, did Leites mean by public statements? Beyond purely voluntary declarations from writers on their stance towards the Soviet Union, Leites also means the responses acquired by the International Organization of Revolutionary Writers (*Mezhdunarodnoe ob"edinenie revoliutsionnykh pisatelei*, or MORP) from foreign writers through a series of questionnaires. These questionnaires (*ankety*) would ask straightforward questions about the writer's attitude toward the October revolution, to the Soviet Union, to proletarian and revolutionary writing, as well as what their response would be

if the Soviet Union were attacked, among other questions. Many writers responded to these questionnaires, including Dos Passos, at the time still counting himself among the ranks of "revolutionary" writers and an editor at the radical US journal *The New Masses*. James Joyce also responded to one such questionnaire, which asked "What significance has the October Revolution had on you as a writer, and what is its significance to you as a man of letters?" The answer, written for Joyce by Paul Léon, who had served with the Whites in the Civil War, cannot have improved his standing among its recipients and in the Soviet Union. As Richard Ellmann related in his biography of Joyce, Léon responded to the letter, signed by an "H. Romanova" with the following:

> Dear Sirs, Mr Joyce wishes me to thank you for your favor of the 17th instant from which he has learned with interest that there has been a revolution in Russia, in October 1917. On closer investigation, however, he finds that the October Revolution happened in November of that year. From the knowledge he has collected up to now it is difficult for him to judge the importance of this event and he wishes only to say that judging from the signature of your secretary the changes cannot amount to much. Yours sincerely Paul Léon."[53]

Even though the reply could have won Joyce no friends in MORP, it does not seem to have left a trace on the receiving, Soviet end. Proust, however, had no more public statements to make, and could hardly be recruited posthumously to the defense of Soviet culture or statehood.

By this point the debate around Proust reached a standstill. The Proust collected works which began under Lunacharsky in Vremia continued under GosIzdat, releasing volume three in 1936 (*Le côté de Guermantes*, trans. Frankovsky) and volume four in 1938 (*Sodome et Gomorre II*, trans. Surina).[54]

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[53] Richard Ellmann, *James Joyce*, New and Revised Ed. (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 630. Ellmann, unfortunately, gives us no source for this anecdote, which is also cited by Neil Cornwell and Sergei Horujy.

[54] Marsel' Prust, *Sobranie sochinenii*, pred. A. Lunacharskogo, tom. 3, *V poiskakh za utrachennym vremenem. Germant*, perevod A. V. Frankovskogo, vstupit. stat'ia N. Rykovoi (Leningrad: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo "Khudozhestvennaia literatura," 1936); Marsel' Prust, *Sobranie*

The "lengthy" introduction to Proust's work promised in the editorial footnote at the end of Lunacharsky's unfinished foreword finally appeared in volume three, written by Nadezhda Rykova, who also published a textbook on French literature discussing Proust in 1939.[55] Both of these abandon the more strident criticisms of Proust's writing and turn him instead into the last word in French bourgeois realism. On the one hand, Rykova actually considers how Proust's novel works, the way he moves between idealization, observation, disillusionment, how this is reflected in the style—a much more systematic approach that takes his world of ideas much more seriously than Lunacharsky or Leites had. On the other, it is also full of the kind of Soviet stamp epithets used to brand undesirable ideas, and which became clichés in relation to Proust: "ideologist of the parasitic bourgeoisie," "artist of bourgeois decadence." Rykova even withdraws part of Lunacharsky's defense of Proust from the formalists, saying he had "nothing to teach" and that he was "interesting and important as an heir—although perhaps a very sui generis heir—of classic bourgeois realism."[56]And of course, Proust also appeared, as a kind of third wheel, in Radek's infamous speech at the writer's congress, the subject of another chapter.

The series might have continued to the end, if not for WWII, though Mikhailov writes of "information" that the first manuscript of the translation and the galley proofs were destroyed "for ideological reasons." Frankovsky's translation of *Albertine disparue*, already prepared for print before the war, would survive it only by freakish luck: a typescript of it been taken for safekeeping from the publisher's offices by a friend of Frankovsky in the first days of the war.[57] Frankovsky died of

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sochinenii, pred. A. V. Lunacharskogo, tom. 4, *V poiskakh za utrachennym vremenem. Sodom i gomorra*, perevod. A. V. Fedorov i N. P. Surinoi (Leningrad: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo "Khudozhestvennaia literatura," 1938).

[55] N. Rykova, "Na poslednem etape burzhuaznogo realizma (Tvorchestvo Marselia Prusta)" in Prust, *Sobranie sochinenii*, tom. 4, 5-34.

[56] Ibid., 34.

[57] Mikhailov, *Poetika Prusta*, 66.

starvation along with almost a million others during the Blockade of Leningrad in 1942. The collected works was not, and probably could not, be continued, and there was certainly little priority to such a project in the immediate post-war years.

Several writers have hypothesized that Lunacharsky's "patronage" of Proust in these editions was the reason for the lack of an informal ban on his work or repressions against translators.[58] Like so many exceptions to the trajectory of the terror, there is little to support this idea besides circumstantial evidence. As we see in the translations of Dos Passos and Joyce, the last of which are contemporaneous with the publication of the series, the middle of the 1930s seems to have been a time in which such publications were still possible and the repressions that affected so many of the participants still beyond the visible horizon. The publication of Proust's collected works ended at the same time as work on Joyce and Dos Passos.

Some peculiarities of the last two original publications in the Vremia/GosIzdat *Sobranie sochinenii* bear mention. Both novels, *Le Côté de Guermantes* and *Sodome et Gomorrhe* consist of two parts, although the latter novel's part I is rather short, at around forty pages. The Soviet publication appears to match closely the original French publication, where *Sodome et Gomorrhe I* was published at the end of II of *Le Côté de Guermantes*. However, a closer look at the Russian volume reveals some additional curiosities. The first part of *Sodome et Gomorrhe* focuses chiefly on M. de Charlus' homosexuality, drawing an analogy between the sexuality of plants and insects (orchids and specialized pollinators) and human (homo-)sexuality—a discussion of the "abnormal ambrosia" of orchids and inverts, to use Proust's term, that perhaps comprises the dangerous seductions of Proust decried by Lunacharsky but left vaguely described. While Proust's novel and this section of it never provoked obscenity trials and bans like *Ulysses* did, it nevertheless is more frank and accepting of non-heterosexual desire and sex

[58] Mikhailov, *Poetika Prusta*, 40-41.

than was common for the time. While the Bolsheviks had initially decriminalized homosexuality following the revolution, "muzhelozhstvo" or "lying with men" had been recriminalized in 1933. It appears that Frankovsky and his colleagues might have hidden the first, potentially scandalous section. It is not listed in the table of contents of the Russian *Germant*, even while all the various subsections of the first novel are, and the opening of the stand-alone publication of *Sodom i Gomorra*, although in actuality the second part, no such "part two" is included in the title. Thus, the only way to discover the section is either to know the original or to diligently read through most of the volume. Perhaps this was a successful strategy to conceal the section, or perhaps the section simply did not raise the wrong eyebrow.

Frankovsky and his co-translators did not finish the Proust project, but before his death he published three more translations that left their mark on culture in the Soviet Union: Swift's *Gulliver's Travels,* Fielding's *Tom Jones*, and Sterne's *Tristram Shandy*. The shift to the translation of earlier writers temps one to speculate on an artistic retreat from the present in response to the terror. It was Frankovsky's translation of Swift that became enormously popular, inspiring both novelistic and cinematic adaptations and spin-offs.[59] There is something fitting in Frankovsky's translation of *Tristram Shandy* as his last work, the novel so beloved by the Russian formalists and seen at the time as a prefiguration of modernist prose experiments, finally made available to Russian readers.

Time After

What this account of translations and criticism lacks most is a reflection of how the works under discussion were read at the time, how the first public readers of Proust in the Soviet Union were themselves understood, how their attempts to shape his reception were met. Unfortunately, here as

[59] For a look at Soviet Swiftomania, see Robert Bird, "Scale," unpublished chapter draft, *Soul Machine*.

with the reception of Joyce and Dos Passos, the traces of this reading are few and far between. Reviews of translations from the 1920s treat Proust as a significant writer, most of them without the caveats made by Lunacharsky or Leites. All of them agreed that Proust was a major writer, no comrade politically but offering pleasures and insights to the reader—of which there were, in the Soviet context, not a great number. As the Russian Proust scholar Andrei Mikhailov wrote, "for both readers and for critics Proust remained a writer for the select few."[60] But perhaps because his work had actually been published in moderate print runs, his books seem to have had a relatively larger reach and legacy than the Soviet translation projects of Joyce or Dos Passos.

Incredible accounts of the relevance and remembrance of Proust in Soviet camps have survived and, more recently, been published in English.[61] While all of them post-date the period of this dissertation, they provide lucid illustrations of how Proust's work, and indeed Soviet translations and even criticism, touched Soviet prison life and that rare editions of the Russian Proust reached as far as the camps of Kolyma in the far east. Polish painter Józef Czapski's remarkable feat of lecturing on Proust in French and, at times, repeating the original almost word for word, would stand almost completely outside this history if he had not performed this remarkable series of lectures in a Soviet camp, as one of a few hundred Polish officers to be mysteriously spared the fate of thousands of others in the Katyn massacre. In Varlam Shalamov's short story, "Marcel Proust," he finds himself briefly in the possession of a copy of the Russian translation of *Le côté de Guermantes* (whose curiously evasive printing is described above), sacrificing a week of sleep for the chance to savor its pages, before it, like any other possession in the camp, is stolen—and given, as a present, to a scummy duplicitous

[60] Mikhailov, *Poetika Prusta*, 46.
[61] Józef Czapski, *Lost Time: Lectures on Proust in a Soviet Prison Camp*, trans. Eric Karpeles (New York: New York Review of Books, 2018); Varlam Shalamov, 'Marcel Proust', in *Sketches of the Criminal World: Further Kolyma Stories*, trans. Donald Rayfield (New York: New York Review of Books, 2020), 248–54; Aleksander Wat, *My Century*, trans. Richard Lourie (New York: New York Review of Books, 1988).

camp supervisor looking for something to read. Finally, in Wat's narrative of reading *V storonu Svana* in Soviet prison in Lviv, even Lunacharsky's final foreword makes an appearance, read through the increasing disgust felt by Wat, a former Polish Futurist poet, with the staid conservatism of Soviet aesthetics. For Czapski, Shalamov and Wat—and perhaps even for Shalamov's camp supervisor—Proust's cultivation of memory becomes a model for holding on to the sensuousness of a former, freer life, and an anchor in the remaining worth of their present, deprived one.

We have examined the Soviet Proust here largely through Lunacharsky's reading, which can hardly be compared seriously with the reading of Soviet prisoners of the Gulag. Still, his reading would become a prison for the Soviet attitude to Proust, one that seems to emerge by necessity from the political conditions of Soviet culture, in which unstructured pleasure in literature with little utilitarian value cannot be justified. As Katerina Clark wrote in her book on canonical socialist realist novels, the dynamic of the Soviet novel as it emerged in socialist realism is one in which the anarchic revolutionary energy of "spontaneity" is harnessed and hardened into "conscious" directed revolutionary action, all aimed at the shaping of the present and the future into a coming-to-being of a socialist or communist history.[62] Proust's entire project, meanwhile, revolves around a similar dialectic of "spontaneity" (involuntary) and "consciousness" (voluntary), but directed entirely towards a resurrection of the past in the voluntary study of involuntary memory. Proust's modernism, too, was hardly the objection of Lunacharsky and other Soviet critics. Those aspects of his work that overlap with other projects of high modernism—the discontinuity and multiplicity of selves, the constant shifting of perspectives and temporalities, all of this becoming not only content but also form—was mostly ignored. The literalism of Frankovsky and his colleagues, which the translators recognized as the stylistic choice

[62] Katerina Clark, "Introduction," in *The Soviet Novel: History as Ritual* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 22-25.

that made Proust's discontinuities possible, was seen either as a failure of translation or as a failure of the original, the author "somewhat ruining" the French language.

One could argue that the failure of the world revolution, predicted and expected by the international social democratic movement, ensured that in the homeland of the failed revolution the intense interiority characteristic of Proust and Joyce had to be excluded as an artistic possibility. Moreover, in Proust's case, no dialogue with his Soviet reception was possible. By the time his work was more or less published, he was long dead. No writers in the Soviet Union had known Proust, none of the French literary luminaries who visited the Soviet Union in the 30s spoke up for the Proustian project—to the contrary, Romain Rolland endorsed Radek's dismissal. Lunacharsky had seen Proust as a significant writer whose examination of the human soul was at a magnification too high to be of use, losing sight of the international socialist horizon, a writer whose style was too dulcet, too filled with microscopic particles lulling the Soviet reader into an unjustifiable pleasure in a biography of no social, political or historical significance. Leites, maintaining suspicions of foreign bourgeois writers for a decade, used Proust only as a tool to advance a superficial argument, engaging just as cursorily in Proust's work.

Chapter Three

"Djoys Passos": Joycean Misreadings of a Soviet-American Novel

Where the innovations of content and form of Proust's work were almost completely neglected or ignored by Soviet criticism, only a few writers received as close of an examination in the Soviet press as did John Dos Passos. Indeed, as a non-party, left-wing author who visited the Soviet Union in 1928, took inspiration from Soviet film and theater and who not only interacted with official Soviet organizations like MORP but also maintained nearly a decade of correspondence with cultural figures, Dos Passos was a case of modernist Soviet-Western interaction and mutual influence. Far from being seen as a recluse or man of the ivory tower, as Proust had been described, Dos Passos was perceived, in the words of his main Soviet translator, "as a Soviet writer," as one of their own, and thus a writer who could be given guidance towards the right path. In the first two novels of the USA trilogy, Soviet critics saw an author capable of painting vast canvases, an author so appealing to Soviet writers that literary figures close to the party intervened to correct the discussions already simmering unofficially between writers. The journal *Znamia* organized two public discussions of Dos Passos in 1933, and in the introduction to published transcripts, boasted that all of Soviet literary society had expressed great interest in them.[1]

This discussion might be seen as a kind of dress rehearsal for the First Congress of Soviet Writers which would be held in 1934, which, in turn, would serve as the model of constructing a Communist public sphere, allowing for the expression of a variety of opinions while simultaneously organizing them hierarchically and subordinating them to the party's idea: Socialist realism as the official method for artistic representation. Karl Radek would say of Dos Passos, in 1934, that he was

[1] "Sovetskaia literatura i Dos Passos," *Znamia* no 5, 1933, 147.

coming closer "to us" in his last works but that, "[h]e cannot yet take in the whole picture of capitalist reality, reflect the significance of the struggle of the proletariat."[2] In 1935, the first Congress of American Writers was organized by writers active in the American Communist Party, in which Dos Passos would also participate. But what had brought Dos Passos so close to Soviet writers that he attracted such great interest in the first place?

First, he was a famous foreign writer who was openly supportive of the Soviet Union, and visited at a time when foreign tourists, let alone celebrities of any kind, were rare. But more important is what he took from this visit. Dos Passos was already making notes on what would become the *USA* trilogy before the trip, but was strongly influenced by the Soviet film and theater he saw there. In the novels, he uses a montage of different styles and story-telling modes partially adapted from Soviet constructivism. Though it is simplistic to reduce the story to a political trajectory or message, it is impossible to miss the importance within the novels of the labor movement, of revolutionary political developments in the background of his characters' striving to find the good life and the contingency of their individual wills as they are moved through life, often across the continent or world, by forces beyond their control. Soviet readers and critics correctly recognized Dos Passos' left-wing aspirations, even as they interpreted aspects of his work as Joycean.

The Joyce-like qualities of his work did, however, interfere with the proper appreciation of other affinities of Dos Passos to his Soviet audience. His first Soviet translator, a veteran of the revolution and a poet in his own right, emphasized and perhaps even exaggerated the "formalism" of Dos Passos' work and created a style in his translations that conflicted with a developing sensibility of "correct," neutral Soviet literary Russian. Critics would often first begin by clearing the hurdle of Dos Passos' relationship with Joyce—or would turn this touchstone into the finishing line of interpretation.

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[2] Karl Radek, "Sovremennaia mirovaia literatura i zadachi proletarskogo iskusstva," in *Pervyi vsesoiuznyi s"ezd sovetskikh pisatelei*, 311.

Dos Passos had certainly read Joyce and *Ulysses* certainly had a degree of influence on *Manhattan Transfer* and the *USA* trilogy, though it was a book Dos Passos did not put on a pedestal: "I read the book at one gulp while laid up with a bout of flu… parts I found boring and parts I found magnificent."[3] Yet in the USSR Dos Passos was read through the prism of Joyce, while other, Soviet names were passed over in silence.

USA and the USSR: Import/Export

It was the Soviet Russian theater and cinema of the 20s that Dos Passos most consciously sought to learn from and emulate in *USA* trilogy, as well as in his theatrical and unrealized film projects in the years that followed.[4] But most Soviet critics, with the exception of his first Russian translator, seem to have either not noticed or intentionally ignored this link to native Soviet art. This could be because the greatest influence was one which Dos Passos drew little attention to and who was himself controversial in the Soviet Union: Dziga Vertov, whose "formalistic" montage techniques and lack of narrative cohesion provoked harsh criticism when his *The Man with the Movie Camera* was released during Dos Passos' visit to the Soviet Union in 1928. It was certainly more rhetorically convenient to tie undesirable aspects of his work to another foreign influence in Joyce. In most respects the level of engagement with his work, or, at least, his name and significance, exceeded that of Joyce, Proust and other writers—the sheer number of publications, the variety and print runs of those publications, and the range of the authors simply dwarfs almost any discussion of a living author, except perhaps Gorky and Sholokhov, in the Soviet press in the first two decades of its existence.

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[3] John Dos Passos, *The Best Times: An Informal Memoir* (New York: New American Library, 1966), 247.

[4] Lisa Nanney, *John Dos Passos and Cinema* (Liverpool: Clemson University Press, 2019); Carol Shloss, 'John Dos Passos and the Soviet Cinema', in *In Visible Light: Photography and the American Writer, 1840-1940* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 143–79.

The first two novels in the *USA* trilogy, *The 42nd Parallel* and *1919*, were the subject of focused attention from Soviet critics in the first half of the 1930s. Since the succès de scandale of *Three Soldiers*, Dos Passos had remained one of the most highly regarded young American writers. His open political sympathies with the left also attracted attention from critics in America and abroad. But his appeal was certainly not a matter of purely left-wing or avant-garde interest. Where Joyce was discussed much more widely than he was read, with most of his books produced in very modest numbers and, to boot, his most famous book banned in most of the Anglophone world until 1934, all of Dos Passos' books until the middle of the 30s were both critical *and* commercial successes. This was also true in the Soviet Union, where excerpts appeared in newspapers and journals, critical articles and public debates were held on his work, and translations of his novels and plays appeared rapidly after the first US publications. As Deming Brown wrote of Dos Passos' Soviet publications in 1953:

> Dos Passos became recognized as certainly the most significant among the postwar generation of American writers, and for a time many critics considered him the most important contemporary writer of the non-Soviet world. From 1930 to 1936 there were three Russian editions of *The 42d Parallel*, two editions of *Manhattan Transfer*, two editions of *1919*, and one collection of Dos Passos' plays, one of which, *Fortune Heights*, was successfully produced on the Russian stage. He was repeatedly represented in Soviet periodicals, parts of *The 42d Parallel* and *1919* were excerpted and circulated book form. Altogether, over 117,000 copies of his various works circulated during these years.[5]

Whereas the experimentalism of Joyce had taken shape, first, in isolation from publishing, funded by his own labor as an English teacher abroad and the support of his partner Nora Barnacle, personal loans, and then through small print runs and little magazines like *The Little Review* and financial support

[5] Deming Brown, "Dos Passos in Soviet Criticism," *Comparative Literature*, Autumn, 1953, vol. 5, no. 4, 332-50, here 333-34.

from patrons like Harriet Shaw Weaver, Dos Passos' experiments in form developed in the context of his increasingly popular success as a writer and his encounters with politically engaged avant-garde art in his travels, especially in the Soviet Union. He had the benefit of a modest inheritance from his parents, and spent his childhood traveling in Europe with his mother, and his adulthood traveling all over the world.[6] He was able to parlay his success as a writer to secure the inclusion of experimental narrative elements and offensive language (curse words, slang and racial slurs), and grounded these not in his right as an artist to experiment but in the realism he hoped to achieve in his portraits of American life.

The *USA* novels are divided into four repeating sections. First the "Newsreel," a collage or montage of newspaper headlines, popular songs and famous quotes from the period covered in a given section; "The Camera Eye" consists of short, lyrical, impressionistic first-person narratives, whose content is not always easily decipherable, and which most critics have seen as semi-autobiographical; longer third-person narratives follow a changing cast of 12 characters, men and women, some of whom appear in more than one volume, some of whom have direct or indirect connections or interactions with other characters, and who we follow as they try to find their way, in Bildungsroman-fashion, through the modern American world, amid all the various social movements and forces of the early twentieth-century; the fourth repeating section consists of biographies of important figures of the era, including John Reed, J.P. Morgan, and Thomas Edison.

The title "Camera Eye" is likely a nod to Vertov, who had created a film (1924) and penned a manifesto under a remarkably similar title of "Cinema Eye" or "Cine-Eye" (*Kino-Glaz*).[7] (Incidentally, "Kinoglaz" was later the translation used by his first Russian translator, who was conscious of the link

[6] On financial squabbles between Dos Passos and his relatives, see John Dos Passos, *U. S. A.: The 42nd Parallel, 1919, The Big Money* (New York, N.Y.: Library of America, 1996), 1245, 1254-55.
[7] D. Vertov, "Kino-Glaz," *Kino*, 7 October 1924.

even while most critics elided it.) It was in the film and in the manifesto that Vertov demonstrated and justified his cinematic experiments with montage, arguing that only "thing films" produced in his manner—the organization of "factual material" without actors, as an "extract of visual observations"—could produce truly agitational, revolutionary films. Dos Passos never acknowledged a debt to Vertov, indeed, he never mentioned him at all. Carol Shloss, however, has argued compellingly that the shift in Dos Passos' writing from *Manhattan Transfer* to *USA* is thanks to his assimilation of Vertov's ideas about montage: "By the time he wrote *USA*, Dos Passos had understood his own artistic role in a much fuller sense and had begun to use Vertov's interval theory to make fragmentation a virtue—both as a continued mimetic device and as a principle that made disparity into an active contribution to a larger coherence."[8] This fragmentation and its content situate Dos Passos as a student of the Soviet cinema of the 20s, of Vertov most of all: rapid shifts from the broadest horizon of social life in newspaper headlines and songs, famous biographies, down to level of the individual navigating the events of the century and to the "microscopic" level of the sense impressions of an anonymous narrator, and the reader is left to sort out the meaning of these fragments. And yet, the "Camera-Eye" sections, lyrical prose-poems written in a breathless, style of interior monologue with minimal or zero punctuation, comparable to Joyce or to other American writers, like Gertrude Stein or Dos Passos' friend E. E. Cummings, was hardly evocative of Vertov. Soviet critics were far more likely to identify in them the traces of Joyce and Freud. In sum: a novel set in the USA, filled with news headlines about revolutions and conversations about socialism, structured in the rapid-fire montage of *Man with a Movie Camera*, with a section named for a Soviet manifesto on artistic propaganda, written in a style that could easily evoke Joyce to those unfamiliar with other recent experimental writing in English. A project, in sum, impossible for Soviet writers or

[8] Shloss, 'John Dos Passos and the Soviet Cinema', 156–57.

cultural figures to ignore. Moreover, the opening of *The 42nd Parallel* announced the scope of the work in terms eminently attractive from a Soviet perspective.

A Change of Climatology

After the final book in the trilogy, *The Big Money*, appeared in 1936, Dos Passos made changes to the first novel which became standard for all subsequent editions. Most of the changes were rather minor, but the excision of the brief paragraph at the beginning of *The 42nd Parallel* signaled a major shift in how the author saw his work—and away from a significant source of Soviet interest in the novel. Offering an explanation of the novel's title (the only place which references the title's words), the paragraph describes an intense pattern of storms that passed along the "42nd parallel of latitude."

> These general storms have been a subject of inexhaustible interest in all American meteorological research and great labor has been expended on the various hypotheses in regard to their laws. Some of these laws, and particularly those relating to exterior features in general movements, may be regarded as very well determined; their general phenomena have been so conspicuous and so frequent of occurrence that some conclusions of this sort could not fail to result from the most imperfect observation…
>
> In short, these storms follow three paths or tracks from the Rocky Mountains to the Atlantic Ocean of which the central tracing roughly corresponds with the 42nd parallel of latitude; all phenomena travel eastward in all cases at a rate not less than twenty miles an hour and usually at thirty or forty in the season of high west winds or in winter.
>
> —AMERICAN CLIMATOLOGY

Its relationship to what comes in the novel suggests we are to understand this meteorological introduction as a simile for the social. "American Climatology," differs starkly from the other sections of the novel in its dry academic tone and its hint towards an interpretive stance. Dos Passos thus sets "Climatology" as *the* point from which to begin any attempt to understand the whole. All later editions of the novel carry, instead, a prologue which follows an abstract "young man," much more concretely,

and without metaphor or simile, touching on the wide social scope of the novel—connecting it to the final section of *The Big Money*, which likewise follows an anonymous "young man."

In the original edition, we are encouraged to read what follows as human "general storms," the subject of "inexhaustible interest" and whose laws we, as readers, are tacitly invited to seek out as part of a "great labor." It suggests a puzzle in the spirit of scientific and sociological inquiry. But it also, as we will quickly understand once the tone of the novel establishes itself, takes up the question of the common good, and common evils, for the common man and woman—as the trilogy, quite unusually for successful or experimental books of the period, includes near parity of male and female characters and voices. Less obviously but no less implicitly, "American Climatology" sets the questions of these American social storms in a context of the globe, as one region among others, one latitude among many.

How this section drew the interest of Soviet critics, who referred repeatedly to the metaphor of the 42nd parallel, is easy to understand. This framing aligned Dos Passos' project with any of several disparate attempts to create compelling agitational art in service of revolutionary politics, from factography to socialist realism. Indeed, like Vertov's films, the many fragments which make up the novel, lacking authorial comment, invite the reader's engaged analysis of how this jumble of headlines, private and public histories interact and may be joined in common coherence. In contrast, the prologue added to the 1937 edition immediately limits the scope of the novel to a young man, the jobs and experiences he experiences essentially male ones; it confines it thematically to the USA, without even the suggestion of relations to a wider world or of parallels between the patterns of nature and the patterns of human sociality; it frames it as a set of stories whose appeal lies in the breadth of humanity it includes, perhaps, but also in a bare interest in a "slice of a continent," difficult to distinguish from a mere "slice of life," and the atomized definition given in the new prologue's final paragraph:

> U. S. A. is a group of holding companies, some aggregations of trade unions, a set of laws bound in calf, a radio network, a chain of moving picture theatres, a column of stockquotations rubbed out and written in by a Western Union boy on a blackboard, a public library full of old newspapers and dogeared historybooks with protests scrawled on the margins in pencil. U. S. A. is the world's greatest rivervalley fringed with mountains and hills, U. S. A. is a set of bigmouthed officials with too many bankaccounts. U. S. A. is a lot of men buried in their uniforms in Arlington Cemetery. U. S. A. is the letters at the end of an address when you are away from home. But mostly U. S. A. is the speech of the people.[9]

Rather than the (possibly participatory) investigation suggested by the original opening to the book, the updated opening provides us immediately with a definition of what we are about to read. Where the dynamism of unusual storms promised to lead us through a turbulent society where the outcome of these weather patterns is still unknown, here "protests" are limited to the "margins" of history books and politics is statically defined through the reference to corrupt and long-winded officials, the holding companies taking precedence over unions and laws, the human subject reduced to the producer of a largely impotent logos.

In 1932 however, this eventual pessimism, a reaction to the actions of the Communist party and its political and military representatives in the Spanish Civil War, was still far off. The Russian translation of *The 42nd Parallel* appeared, eagerly awaited after the translation of *Manhattan Transfer* had become a bestseller in its second printing. That Joyce and Dos Passos became intertwined in the imaginations and lips of so many critics and, one might presume, readers, may have also owed something to the fact that the author of some of the most widely published and well-known Russian versions was Stenich, with his particular voice, skills and translation choices. Most critics, however, believed that there were competing influences in Dos Passos pulling him in the two mutually exclusive (for them) directions of revolutionary realism and bourgeois formalism.

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[9] John Dos Passos, *U. S. A.: The 42nd Parallel, 1919, The Big Money* (New York: Library of America, 1996), 2-3.

Could the "Greatest Work of Contemporary Revolutionary Literature" Come out of the "Black Emptiness of Nonbeing"?

One of the first articles on Dos Passos was written by a critic who spent much of the 1930s writing about Joyce, likely more than any other Soviet critic, and one of the very few to be translated into English at the time. Fittingly, the article engages in a lengthy comparison of the styles of Dos Passos and Joyce. Rashel' Miller-Budnitskaya was only 26 when she began and quickly established herself as a critic, publishing several articles in quick succession in prestigious Soviet literary journals with often (and almost exclusively) harsh criticism of Western and Soviet writers.[10] Her article on Dos Passos and Joyce, and its earlier draft, also suggests it should be read as a partial defense of Dos Passos in the face of contemporary Soviet criticism, a defense which used Joyce as a foil, the epitome of an unconscionable nihilism. Nonetheless, in her reading even Joyce's techniques could be salvaged for use in what she called, referring to the unfinished *USA* trilogy, the "greatest work of contemporary revolutionary literature."

Miller-Budnitskaya's 1932 article on Dos Passos and Joyce appeared in a new journal named *Literaturnaia ucheba* ("Literary Study") edited by Maxim Gorky, directed towards beginning writers.[11] Alongside taking leadership of the Writers' Union, founded in the same year, this was one of the first projects Gorky became involved with upon his return to Russia from fascist Italy in 1931. The 1930 proposal for the journal conceived it as a flagship pedagogical organ to help form new proletarian writers and give them the tools to write literature that would equal the "true rebuilding of the world"

[10] R. Miller-Budnitskaia, 'Epigon formalizma', *Zvezda*, no. 2, 1932, 151–60; R. Miller-Budnitskaia, 'O "filosofii iskusstva" B. Pasternaka i R. M. Ril'ke', *Zvezda*, no. 5, 1932, 160–68; R. Miller-Budnitskaia, '"Uliss" Dzhemsa Dzhoisa', *Internatsional'naia literatura*, no. 4, 1935, 106–16; R. Miller-Budnitskaia, 'Filosofia kul'tury Dzhemsa Dzhoisa', *Internatsional'naia literatura*, no. 2, 1937, 188–209.

[11] R. Miller-Budnitskaia, "Tvorcheskii put' Dos-Passosa," *Literaturnaia ucheba*, zhurnal pod red. M. Gor'kogo, no. 9-10, 1932, 76-88.

taking place in the construction of new factories, dams and electrical plants, a phenomenon that had yet to receive proper artistic illumination.[12]

> Through unheard hurdles and difficulties, overcoming both exhaustion after work and limitations on his time, he takes up the pen to tell about everything he has experienced and felt. Beginning writers from the workers and peasants more and more often and in ever greater numbers are knocking on the doors of our journal and newspaper offices.[13]

Although editorial offices were receiving manuscripts by the "hundreds and thousands," written on "interesting themes," they were "ungrammatically and inartistically" presented. The journal therefore aimed, and consistently succeeded in printing, articles that addressed a number of aspects of writing relevant to the Soviet context: a section in which readers' manuscripts would be analyzed in the pages of the journal, a section called "The Writer's Laboratory" in which the writing habits of well-known authors would be described—by specialists for the classics, by living authors when available; various literary techniques, works and schools would be discussed (with the opportunity for various factions to participate, including "RAPP, the Constructivists, LEF and others").[14] It was a journal for the new, "inclusive" era of the Writers' Union, one that would move beyond the theoretical battles of the 1920s by being a school and laboratory for the creation of proletarian (and peasant) writers, a manual for the production of Soviet literature, at least in theory. What kind of literature would that be?

The journal was one of the first to promulgate the idea of socialist realism, although in formulations completely inconsistent with its eventual definition.[15] Maxim Gorky's 1933 article by that

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[12] "Zhurnal 'Literaturnaia ucheba' (v pomoshch' nachinaiushchemu rabochemu i krest'ianskomu pisateliu)." Plan–prospect. 1930 g.? Arkhiv zh-la "Literaturnaia ucheba," Pushkinskii dom, f. 453, op. 1, n. 21, l. 1.
[13] Ibid.
[14] Ibid.
[15] Maksim Gor'kii, "O sotsialisticheskom realizme," in *Literaturnaia ucheba, zhurnal pod redaktsiei M. Gor'kogo*, no. 1, 1933, 3-8.

title focuses almost entirely on "belles lettres," emphasizing the literal meaning of the phrase, the importance of the "beautiful word," the necessity of creating this beauty while destroying all that which is "hostile to people," including the "idolaters of material well-being" (*idolopokloniki material'nogo blagopoluchiia*). Only once, at the very end, does he name socialist realism and attempt to define it: Such a "lofty" point of view will allow authors to create "new forms" and a "new direction—socialist realism which—it goes without saying—can only be built on the facts of socialist experience." The canonical 1934 definition of socialist realism would define it as a method of portraying reality in its "revolutionary development," a portrayal that "should go along with" educating readers in the "spirit of socialism." Gorky, instead, presents socialist realism as something that will emerge naturally out of "the facts of socialist experience," in which the uprooting of materialist idolatry and cultivation of an appreciation of the beautiful have become the ends to which writers focus their abilities. At once practical and idealistic, the definition has little in common with the romantic striving *towards* socialism which would come to define official socialist realism, and even the use of the word "facts" suggests the possibility of a nod to Soviet factography. But the differences highlight the term's fluid meaning in these years. "Socialist realism" had already been suggested as a term in 1932, but had no definite content. The articles on contemporary Soviet and foreign writers are then best seen not only as criticism to sharpen the literary discernment of the Soviet reading public (which they certainly also are) but as practical guides: for developing methods of writing, including possible models for imitation, and for a proletarian and peasant audience in the first generation of literacy.

Miller-Budnitskaya's article on Dos Passos, like all of her later criticism, is written with a puzzling combination of critical rigor and party-oriented tendentiousness. She presents a thorough overview in "The Creative Path of Dos Passos," reviewing not only his recent and early prose but even his lesser-known poetry and travel writing. She develops the thesis that the influence of Joyce

has influenced and marred Dos Passos' work in his most recent novels (*Manhattan Transfer*, *The 42nd Parallel*, *1919*) and retarded his revolutionary development.

In her comparisons of Joyce and Dos Passos' work one often gets the impression she is deliberately exaggerating the differences between the two writers. Thus, for example, she writes, "If the 'Newsreel' was created by Joyce to glorify the 'average man,' it is employed by Dos Passos for the sake of exposé, sharp satire, and the creation of broad socio-historical background." She is referring here, of course, to the seventh episode of *Ulysses* ("Aeolus"), which takes place in the offices of the newspaper *Freeman's Journal* and parodies newspaper writing by commenting on the events and conversations in sardonic headlines. Readers of Joyce would be surprised to learn that Joyce apparently only uses the format to "glorify the average man" (*vospevat' srednego cheloveka*) without, at least, any "sharp" satire. Of course, Joyce's "Aeolus" and Dos Passos' "Newsreel" are also distinguished by the fact that Joyce's headlines are fictional, while the material of Dos Passos' section is taken entirely from various popular print sources mashed together in a pastiche, a montage. From Miller-Budnitskaya's later articles on Joyce it is clear she read much of the Anglophone criticism of Joyce and must have read at least sections of *Ulysses* as well, but the satirical and comedic aspects of Joyce escape her. It is in Joyce's and Dos Passos' portrayals of the "average man" that she finds the point of mutual intersection and departing points of difference in their work.

Miller-Budnitskaya here formulates for the first time her contention that Joyce's work represents not only a development in literary style but, in its core, a philosophical worldview in the service of philistine ordinariness:

> Despite all the exterior chaos and fragmentation, this work, colossal in its proportions, represents a system of symbols and images worked out in perfect detail, whole, closed, philosophically saturated… In the name of the glorification and the affirmation by the only master of the world of this "common man," a human "Yahoo" in all aspects of his being, the

> most petty, filthy and obscene—all conventions were tossed out, all canons were broken, "insulting greatness" and "blasphemy" were allowed… His every chance, pointless, often absurd thought, association, feeling and reflex—all had to be registered and brought into the system immortalized by Joyce. For the sake of this a special style was created (or rather, as many different styles as there are episodes in the novel) of rigid, almost mathematical exactitude and, simultaneously, absolute freedom, where the connection between individual words and images would be built with the interlinking planned capacity of parts of a mechanism or parts of a mathematical formula.[16]

It is this "glorifying" attitude to the "average man," the "philistine" (in the particular intonation of the Soviet *obyvatel'*) that draws Miller-Budnitskaya's negative appraisal of the novel—in everything else, it would seem that Joyce has produced a truly impressive literary masterpiece. Although she does not point out the distinction herself, it is implied that this common or average man, this philistine, is a negative version of the class-conscious proletarian: the former lives as an isolated individual, oblivious to the social, economic and political realities that determine their life, the latter is aware of them and joins together with others to fight against those realities.

Dos Passos, on the other hand, portrays the "average man" so as to "expose" him (*razoblachit'*), as if is against him. She seems to take the "average man" as a class enemy. *Manhattan Transfer* showed Dos Passos using Joycean techniques, the microanalysis of the psyche and the fragmentation of action and images to create a "huge social canvas," damning of capitalism and imperialism. However, it remained a "deeply pessimistic book" stuck on the surface of events, in which "blind chance" rules and no social patterns come into play.[17] With the still-unfinished trilogy, however, Dos Passos has made

[16] Miller-Budnitskaia, "Tvorcheskii put' Dos-Passosa," 80.
[17] Ibid., 82.

> an attempt to grasp and reveal the driving social forces of contemporary American capitalism, a merciless hatred towards the exploiting classes and the constant exposure of their hypocritical politics, […] a militant tenacity in class-mindedness that penetrates the pages dedicated to the history of the revolutionary movement in America, [and] finally, the striving to communicate the very beating pulse of a huge historical epoch, to capture and inscribe the rhythm of social storms with meteorological exactitude […]. This, without question, is the greatest [*krupneishee*] contemporary work of international revolutionary literature."[18]

For her, "American Climatology" signifies the larger attempt of Dos Passos to convey the "pulse" of the epoch and "inscribe" its laws. In this, Dos Passos' novel was partially in accord with the cultural pulse of first Five Year Plan. And yet, in making his parallel between natural laws and some implicit social laws, in which unrest or revolution might pass through human geography like storms, it showed incompatibility with the Soviet vision of man's relation to nature and to history, which sought not only to "inscribe" natural social laws, but to remake nature according to human needs, in projects like the Belomor canal and the many massive construction projects throughout the country like Kuznetsstroy and Magnitostroy. As Gorky would later define socialist realism, "…development of…the individual abilities of man for the sake of victory over the powers of nature…"

In the same year as Miller-Budnitskaya's article appeared, the critic Kornelii Zelinskii published a book of articles on literature, including one on Dos Passos.[19] He similarly hones in on the novel's central image of storms along the 42nd parallel, its place within a network of global lines, its continuation along the curve of the earth to Transcaucasia, where it meets a country "leading a cyclopedic labor of the construction of socialism."[20] Thus it would only take Dos Passos extending

[18] Ibid., 83.
[19] Kornelii Zelinskii, *Kriticheskie pis'ma* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo "Federatsiia," 1932).
[20] Ibid., 166.

his metaphor and his perspective along the same parallel to find a fundamentally different weather pattern—and one which, at least from Zelinskii's perspective, human beings are actively shaping its vectors and outcomes.

But Miller-Budnitskaya found a deeper problem in the influence of Joyce and his Weltanschauung (*mirovospriiatiia*). The repeating "Camera Eye" section, she claims, has been entirely inherited from Joyce, who, she continues, wrote the "Proteus" and "Penelope" episodes entirely in this style:

> The philosophical foundation of this form is the view of the subconscious as the fundamental core, the principle force [*stikhii*] of the human psyche. But, in Joyce's mind, the very same force is built into the fundament of all of creation and all forms of the material world are but modifications of this initial substance, changeable and many-faced, like Proteus, the same in all his manifestations, "the masks of being." In "Proteus" the symbol of this substance is the tide, beyond which the black emptiness of nonbeing yawns. The wide sandy beach, littered with seaweed and shell shards, appears to Stephen as the "colored signs of being," pushed forward by the "hammer of the demiurge," "hieroglyphic inscriptions of things which he must read."

The danger of Joyce to Dos Passos, but also to "beginning writers" and the Soviet reader generally, in Miller-Budnitskaya's view, is metaphysical. It is not just that his writing is difficult or naturalistic. Joyce's presentation of a "protean" reality turns the material world into "hieroglyphic inscriptions" to be deciphered and seduce the reader into a nihilistic solipsism in which there are neither social storms nor laws to govern them. The interior monologue she quotes from the third episode of *Ulysses*, where Stephen walks on the beach, is littered not only with the seaweed and shells he sees there, but also with the shards of ideas about the relation of vision to reality: formulations from Aristotle, German mystic Jakob Boehme, George Berkeley, Lessing, William Blake, Milton—and part of the novel's

construction of an expansive present in which consciousness, whether pretentious Stephen's or curious everyman Bloom's, is filled by thought's playful protean creativity. In this, it have been more accurate to see the tide as the constant to-and-fro of human thought beyond which "nonbeing" and its emptiness might yawn, but which cannot ever be apprehended. But from this fragmented jumble through which Stephen confusedly and half-seriously progresses, posing questions to himself as much as he provisionally attempts answers, Miller-Budnitskaya creates a single, "Joycean" view.[21] The view is not as important as the implication that Joycean techniques could be used, by a properly revolutionary writer, to create something as remarkable as the "greatest contemporary work of revolutionary literature." Cuts to an earlier draft of the article suggest that Miller-Budnitskaya intended it as a response to attacks on Dos Passos by other Soviet critics, indeed, a partial defense against those attacks.[22] "These novels represent a vivid example of the divergence in the writer's work between worldview and artistic method," she wrote.[23] In the total environment of Soviet criticism at the time, her argument, in both the published and draft versions, is remarkable both for the extent of praise for Dos Passos, and for the suggestion that Joycean techniques could not only be decoupled from a malignant solipsistic worldview, but could be used to produce powerful revolutionary literature. She does not mention socialist realism, but leaves it open for the reader to decide to borrow, with great

[21] She constructs this protean nihilism through mild embellishment and selective quotation: Not "colored signs of being," but "colored signs"; the "mallet of *Los Demiurgos*" (from Blake's "The Book of Los,") lies half a page down from the "Signatures of all things I am here to read" (rather than "hieroglyphic inscriptions"). The sources of Stephen's monologue were not apparent to her, nor, of course, were they apparent to many of Joyce's first readers available to her or even to native speakers.

[22] R. Z. Miller-Budnitskaia, ""Tvorcheskii put' Dos-Passosa" Stat'ia. Nabornaia mashinopis', granki,' Archive of the Institute for Russian Literature, f. 453 op. 2 no. 198. A group of changes made to the text is the total elimination of references to other Soviet critics. Especially noteworthy is the cut of a quote from an open letter to Dos Passos written by Ilya Selvinsky (here incorrectly named as K. Zelinskii, who in his turn was *correctly* cited earlier in the draft, and likewise removed from the published version) and P. Pavlenko published the Russian and English editions of *International Literature* in October 1932.

[23] Ibid., l. 10.

caution, from this American model. This would be the polar opposite of the "dual use" literature theorized by Alexander Leites in regards to Proust. Joyce's Protean "colored signs" could be harnessed to make the many-faced army of Dos Passos' petty-bourgeois Americans struggling under capitalism. Theoretically, Bloom's lemony soap could become Dos Passos' revolutionary glycerine—at least, if Dos Passos can fully overcome the negative aspects of Joyce's psychologism and interior monologue.

Miller-Budnitskaya wrote several more articles about Joyce, some of which I will return to in the following chapter. What is curious about her writing is not only that it is so often ambiguous, full of an invective in describing "formalist" writing that is itself sensuously descriptive, and focused on its "philosophy," a term others criticized her for using, and thereby elevating the thinking of "formalists," as we will see later. What is also curious is that her critical pieces, later, often appeared together with the translations of Anglophone authors by a man who clearly advocated for modernist writing in Russian translation.

Translator Provocateur

In contrast to Proust, who Soviet critics read initially in the original, articles on Dos Passos began to appear only once he had been translated into Russian. Here it was not only the movement of his words into a new language, but also his tour of the Soviet Union in 1928 that made this mixed reception possible. The first translations of Dos Passos' work to be widely read and sold in the Soviet Union were by the man who had shown him around Leningrad. Valentin Stenich (aka Smetanich) had already translated *Manhattan Transfer* (in Russian simply *Mankhetten*) in 1927, but it wasn't until after Dos Passos' visit that Soviet readers became interested in the work, with the second edition of *Mankhetten*, published in 1930, selling out in three days.[24] Stenich became one of the most well-known of all Soviet

[24] This according to an unpublished article by M. P. Popov in Ivan Kashkin's archive at RGALI: "'Metod romana". Stat'ia o tvorchestve Dzh. Dos-Passosa,' f. 2854 op. 1 ed. khr. 322, [1930s].

translators, even now relatively well-known among educated Russians. His translation of *The 42nd Parallel* appeared in 1931 and *1919* in 1933. His translations drove the sudden, intense interest in Dos Passos that appeared at the beginning of the 30s.

Stenich, who would also in time publish translations of Joyce, was a prominent personality in Soviet publishing, a friend to many of Soviet Russia's most innovative writers (including Yury Olesha, Valentin Kataev and Osip Mandelstam), as well as a staunch, idiosyncratic and outspoken supporter of the revolution. He evinced this combination of qualities and views consistently from the beginning of his literary career after the revolution to just a short time before his arrest and execution in the Great Terror. His biography is therefore an especially instructive case study for the questions of this dissertation.

Valentin Stenich was respected in his own lifetime for his translations, wit and knowledge of literature, and celebrated after his death as one of the victims of the great terror, but what we know of his life, as his only biographer notes, consists almost entirely of blank space.[25] This is due not only to the personal and historic catastrophes he lived through, but also to his apparent penchant for mixing fact and fiction both in his biography in his own (sparse, as far as we know) publications. An illustrative example of this is a poem attributed to Stenich from 1919.[26] The poem is preserved in a newspaper clipping held in a file at the Russian State Archive for Literature and the Arts. I have been unable to determine where it was originally printed and what is the basis for Stenich's authorship beyond his

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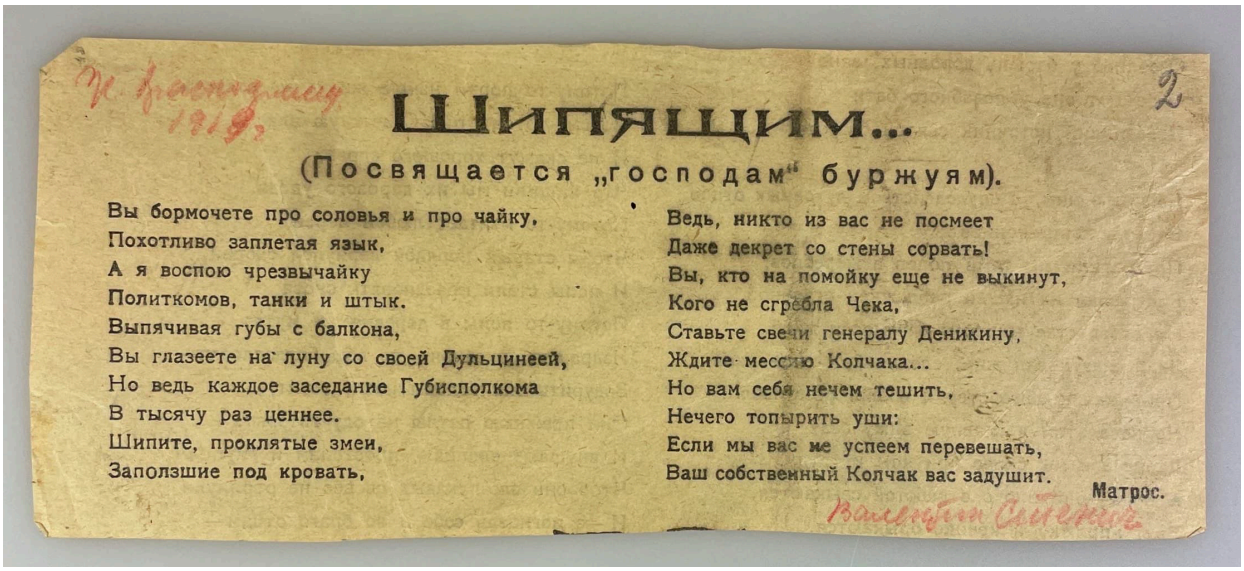
Dzhon Dos Passos, *Mankhetten: Roman*, per. s angl. pod. red. V. I. Smetanicha (Leningrad: Mysl', 1927); Dzhon Dos Passos, *42-aia parallel'*, per. s angl. Valentina Stenicha (Leningrad, Moskva: Gos. izd-vo khud. Lit., 1931)

[25] Pavel Uspenskii, "Glava I," in *V. O. Stenich: biografiia, dendizm, teksty*, available at nasledie-rus.ru; also see T. M Vakhitova, "'Russkii dendi" v epokhu sotsializma: Valentin Stenich,' *Russkaia literatura* no. 4, 1998.

[26] Held in: RGALI, f. 1874, op. 1, ed. khr. 650a, "Sergei Aleksandrovich Obradovich, Stat'i o perevodakh s iazykov narodov SSSR, nekrologi V. A. Kuz'mina, E.E. Nechaeva id r., stat'i i zametki. Vyrezki iz gazet," l. 2.

name written in red pencil at the bottom of the clipping. Nonetheless, I believe there is good circumstantial evidence to believe it is his. The author is listed simply as a "sailor," the poem's title: "To the Lispers (Dedicated to 'Messrs.' the Bourgeoisie)":



Шипящим...

(Посвящается „господам" буржуям).

Вы бормочете про соловья и про чайку,
Похотливо заплетая язык,
А я воспою чрезвычайку
Политкомов, танки и штык.
Выпячивая губы с балкона,
Вы глазеете на луну со своей Дульцинеей,
Но ведь каждое заседание Губисполкома
В тысячу раз ценнее.
Шипите, проклятые змеи,
Заползшие под кровать,

Ведь, никто из вас не посмеет
Даже декрет со стены сорвать!
Вы, кто на помойку еще не выкинут,
Кого не сгребла Чека,
Ставьте свечи генералу Деникину,
Ждите мессию Колчака...
Но вам себя нечем тешить,
Нечего топырить уши:
Если мы вас не успеем перевешать,
Ваш собственный Колчак вас задушит.

Матрос.

Fig. 3.1: A poem on a newspaper clipping attributed to Valentin Stenich, held in RGALI (1919?)

You mumble about nightingales and seagulls,
Tongue-tied with lust,
While I sing of the Cheka
Politcommissars, tanks and bayonets.
Pouting your lips from the balcony,
You ogle the moon and her Dulcinea,
But every meeting of the Gubispolkom
Is a thousand times dearer.
Lisp, you cursed serpents,
Slithering under the bed,

After all, none of you would dare
Even to tear a decree from the wall!
You, not yet tossed in the dump,
Not yet raked in by the Cheka,
Go light a candle to Denikin,
Await your messiah in Kolchak…
But there's nothing to comfort you,
Don't bother raising your hackles:
If we don't manage to string you up,
Your own Kolchak will throttle you.

Here—if the attribution is correct—Stenich takes up the persona of a revolutionary sailor, insolently threatening a caricature of bourgeois romantic poets with revolutionary, and even counter-revolutionary, violence. Although formally not very innovative, sounding much like a popular *chastushka*, with some quite awkward lines, he brandishes Soviet neologisms like Cheka (nickname for the early secret police) and Gubispolkom (typically early Soviet contraction for Governorate Executive

Committee), and defines aesthetic positions as political ones: romantics who praise nightingales and seagulls (the latter recalling Treplev from Chekhov's *The Seagull*) are painted as enemies of the revolutionary government and admirers of White Army generals like Alexander Kolchak and Anton Denikin. But Stenich's sailor assures them that even if the Bolsheviks' Cheka doesn't sweep them up, their own White Army generals will. The enthusiasm for revolutionary violence against people who, even in the imaginary of the poem, wouldn't "dare/Even to tear a decree from the wall!" is a bit disconcerting, but fits well with the morbid sense of humor attributed to Stenich even when he lived with the constant expectation of being "raked in" by the Cheka's later iteration, the NKVD, in the latter half of the 1930s. In this, one finds the hint of a conflict with his own past and class position. Even if Stenich didn't write the poem, it would still serve as a handy encapsulation of the themes of this literary ventriloquist, loudly proclaiming a new political and aesthetic order in someone else's voice.

Fig. 3.2: Photo of Stenich held in (RGALI, f. 1822, op. 1, ed. khr. 720, 1930s)

Although he made an impression on Alexander Blok and others with his prodigious memory and knowledge of contemporary poetry and foreign languages, Stenich never established himself as a poet, and published very little under his own name.[27] In print, it seems he preferred to impersonate the voices of others—an authorial invisibility that stands in stark contrast to his marked visibility in the literary world: as a dandy, always appearing at the state publishing house on Nevsky dressed to the nines, even during the great flood of 1924, when he helped save books from the flooded basement, and as a wit, making jokes remembered both for their sharp political content and their vulgarity.

Stenich combined outspoken Bolshevism with a dedication to the avantgarde. One is tempted to say that he was perhaps one of the few people who made no compromise in either, although he, like anyone who stayed active in Soviet culture after 1930, certainly did make them. Although it is uncertain on what authority the poem is attributed to Stenich, there is nothing in it we cannot find in recorded comments to contemporaries right up to his very arrest: His sense of humor, often morbid or deliberately shocking; his mockery, his hatred of cliché; his outspoken, frank (and often irony-tinged) discussion of political topics.

That one of the best sources on Stenich's family and upbringing come not from his countrymen but from Dos Passos says something of the unique relationship between them. It was through translating Dos Passos that Stenich became well-known, and through Stenich's translations that Dos Passos was most read. Stenich had taken Dos Passos to see the theatrical performances that may have inspired his use of newspaper clippings in *USA*, and Stenich's fate in 1937 seems to have been one of several incidents to strongly influence Dos Passos' changing attitude to the Soviet Union and communism. While Stenich produced little literary and lyrical fiction in his own words, self-fiction

[27] See Blok's essay in which Stenich appears as the unnamed young man who walks Blok home: Aleksandr Blok, "Russkie dendi," *Sobranie sochinenii v 8-mi tt.*, t. 6 (Moskva, Leningrad: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo khudozhestvennoi literatury, 1962), 54-57. Originally published in *Zhizn',* 21 iunia, 1918.

was a favorite activity: according to his only biographer, he created "constant mystifications," so much so that his contemporaries often did not know how to separate "reality from invention."[28]

According to Dos Passos, Stenich was the son of a "rich businessman of Czech origins," spoke excellent English (he was also fluent in German and French), and asked for the latest news of "Joyce and Eliot and Pound."[29] But Stenich also claimed to have been in the Red Guards and to have commanded a division during the civil war, but to have been tried and sentenced to execution (according to Kornei Chukovsky, for the "premeditated wrecking of a school of military camouflage," according to Uspenskii, for intended armed theft), but instead jailed and ejected from the party.[30] "Jokingly," writes Dos Passos, "he called himself a counterrevolutionary."[31] Others claim he merely cosplayed as a leather-clad, gun-toting Bolshevik officer when spending time in the Kiev literary café KHLAM in 1918.[32] In Stenich, self-parody appears as an inseparable part of his personality. Both his poetry and his reported statements about politics are filled with mockery, as often self-directed as against others, but always with a witty polish—Chukovsky, describing his friend much later, called it "nihilistic dandyism."[33] Behind that, however, was a fierce dedication to both art and politics, pride in his actions in revolutionary Petrograd and the civil war. It looks like a miracle that Stenich survived as long as he did. But it was apparently not until 1924 that he actually gave up on political activity and

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[28] Pavel Uspensky, *V.O. Stenich: Biografiia, dendizm, teksty*…, 1. http://www.nasledie-rus.ru/red_port/Sten01.php
Pavel F. Uspenskii, "Valentin Osipovich Stenich – 'russkii dendi'. K tipologii form avangardnogo povedeniia" in *Svetlost sa istoka: japanska kultur i mi*, ed. K. Ichin (Belgrade: Faculty of Philology of the University of Belgrade, 2014), 310-59.
[29] Dos Passos, *The Best Times: An Informal Memoir*, 330.
[30] Iutkevich, S. *Shumit, ne umolkaia, pamiat'. Vstrechi s proshlym,* (Moscow: 1982), 19, as cited in Uspensky, *V.O. Stenich*, http://www.nasledie-rus.ru/red_port/Sten04.php, footnote 10; alse see https://lavkapisateley.spb.ru/enciklopediya/s/stenich-
[31] Ibid., 331.
[32] Iutkevich, S. *Shumit, ne umolkaia, pamiat'. Vstrechi s proshlym,* (Moscow: 1982), 19, as cited in Uspensky, *V.O. Stenich*, http://www.nasledie-rus.ru/red_port/Sten04.php, footnote 10.
[33] Uspensky, *V.O. Stenich*, http://www.nasledie-rus.ru/red_port/Sten01.php

dedicated himself to translation. What he chose to translate suggests that even in literary translation he sought out works that aspired to combine both, and that he never held back from testing the limits of the possible in Soviet literary society and language.

Thus, for example, in 1928, acting as Dos Passos' informal tour guide in Leningrad, Stenich showed the American writer the statue of Peter the Great on the English embankment, calling Peter his "favorite Russian in history" and "the first Bolshevik," for his reforms and opening the window to Europe. Dos Passos reported their companions were shocked at such a politically incongruous remark.[34] He was jailed again and exiled briefly to Arkhangelsk in 1930, returning one year later, but spent the next several years expecting to be arrested. Following the 1934 Writers Congress where Joyce and others were held up as anti-models for Soviet writers, he and his friend, the writer Yury Olesha, published an ironic and at times scathing satire of the congress participants in the newspaper *Literaturnyi Leningrad*.[35] In 1935, he began to work with the famous theatre director Meyerhold on a production of Tchaikovsky's opera after the novella by Pushkin, *The Queen of Spades*. Stenich was tasked with rewriting the libretto, notoriously distant from Pushkin's original, and attempted to bring it back in line with language of the novella, "to give not only its plot, but also its tone, its color, its proximity to Decembrism, to Gogol's *Petersburg Tales*."[36] Implicit in this is a desire to inject a dose of political romanticism (Pushkin) and social satire (Gogol) into the melodrama of Tchaikovsky's opera. Did Stenich also see his translations of Dos Passos and Joyce similarly, introducing or reintroducing an original language to a Russian he saw as saturated with cliché? Or presenting a provocation to a Soviet cultural mainstream? Can one find the continuation of Stenich's irony and iconoclasm in his translations? Is it in the fact of the translation itself that Stenich claimed their literary innovations or

[34] Dos Passos, *The Best Times*, 331-32.
[35] Uspenskii, *V.O. Stenich*, http://www.nasledie-rus.ru/red_port/Sten03.php
[36] Uspenskii, *V.O. Stenich*ö http://www.nasledie-rus.ru/red_port/Sten01.php

their themes for Soviet literature? Both translation and libretto writing were safe occupations, especially for someone with a checkered past and a penchant to make shockingly inappropriate political remarks. Dos Passo probably seemed, when Stenich first began translating him, like a safe bet. How Stenich's fortune changed over the 30s as Dos Passos' own political and artistic trajectory shifted thus also shows how rapidly Soviet culture changed.

Translating a text even one as heterogeneous as Dos Passos *The 42nd Parallel* is still a variety of creative act that is "passive, practical and unfree," as Ilya Vinitsky recently wrote, even while it, like all artistic translation, "opens the possibility of secret freedom and of a game with readers."[37] Stenich translated more works by Dos Passos than he did by any other writer. What did Stenich hope to do with his translations, why did he dedicate so much time to this writer, if when he spoke to Dos Passos, he wanted to hear most about "Joyce and Eliot and Pound"? And if, when asked to speak about Dos Passos in 1933, after translating three of his novels, he had very little positive to say about his work?

The centralization of Soviet publishing and translation in the 30s would not lead one to expect duplicate translations, and yet there are a few curious cases where translations of the same work were published in a short span of time, and two of them involve Stenich. First was Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, whose 1930 translation by Adrian Frankovsky was mentioned in the previous chapter. Stenich also published a version of Swift's satire, aimed at adolescents, in 1935. And in 1936, when the state publishing house published the second edition of Stenich's *1919*, it also published a new translation of *The 42nd Parallel* by Stenich's rival in Moscow, Ivan Kashkin. Kashkin's archive in RGALI holds two documents with negative appraisals of Stenich's work—likely used, as such appraisals often were, to secure approval for his own translation. Jorge Luis Borges wrote of English translations of *The Thousand and One Nights*: "Lane translated against Gallard, Burton against Lane; to understand Burton

[37] Il'ia Vinitskii, *Perevodnye kartinki. Literaturnyi perevod kak interpretatsiia i provokatsiia* (Moskva: Ruteniia, 2022), 14.

we must understand this hostile dynasty."[38] It may be in his rivalry with Stenich that we must understand Kashkin's translation of Dos Passos, but through it we may also better understand Stenich's translation.

In "American Climatology" we can see Stenich choosing words with a more universal appeal, equally applicable to an American geography and a Russian one; the subject of "inexhaustible interest" are the "frequent storms" (*chastye buri*), in contrast to, in the later translation by Ivan Kashkin, more geographically specific "hurricanes" (*uragany*). Stenich repeats Dos Passos' rhythms, with deliberately run-on sentences lacking punctuation, including in the "Camera Eye" sections. Kashkin adds commas, normalizes Russian syntax. Stenich titles "Camera Eye" as "Kino-Glaz," retaining the reference to Vertov. Kashkin, meanwhile, obscures the relation to Vertov and emphasizes the obscurity of the section's style, calling it "Kamera Obskura." But the differences on the whole are in accent, not in style. Both of them provide a representative taste of Dos Passos' styles, including, in the Camera Eye sections, unpunctuated, breathless sentences. At times, one can find a phrase brilliantly translated by Stenich, which Kashkin fumbles. At other times, a line which Stenich manages acceptably is handled impeccably by Kashkin. A line-by-line comparison leads to an accounting which is difficult to reduce to a set of translation strategies, such as preference for producing a more or less formalist Dos Passos, though the public statements of Kashkin and reviews by his protégés show they positioned their differences in these terms.

By necessity, Stenich's translations must narrow the possible readings of Dos Passos, must close off some avenues, and must distort it in ways that reflects Stenich's interest, stylistic proclivities, biography. Yet there is little in these translations that one could not call "passive," "practical" or "unfree." Stenich's agency and personality declares itself instead in the choice to translate Dos Passos:

[38] Jorge Luis Borges, "The Translators of *The Thousand and One Nights*," in Lawrence Venuti, ed., *The Translation Studies Reader*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2004), 94.

the myriad conversations between working people, especially in sections following Mac, words highly charged within the Soviet context, testaments to the relevance of the October revolution, and yet expressed in ways deeply antagonistic to the growing conformity of Soviet discourse, and conveyed in a set of styles that contradicted the anti-formalist campaign already underway. Stenich's decision to make a Russian book in 1932—years in which the remarkably orderly, predictable image of the world was represented in Soviet print as in *Prozhektor*—speak in the contradictory and chaotic voices of Dos Passos' *The 42nd Parallel* was itself an extremely successful provocation of reigning Soviet taste. In this way, Stenich can be seen as the author of the controversy over Dos Passos.

There were many reviews of his Dos Passos' translations, both published and unpublished. Unpublished documents assembled by Stenich's rival Ivan Kashkin provide critical views of Stenich's translations. They may have been used to justify the 1936 publication of Kashkin's translation of *The 42nd Parallel*. An insightful and informed unpublished article on Dos Passos by M. P. Popov held in the archive of Ivan Kashkin was highly critical of the translations.[39] The author, summarizing his attitude to the discussion organized by the journal *Znamia* (discussed below), writes: "Unfortunately, it is unlikely that any more than one participant (Vishnevsky) has read Dos Passos: What is being passed off as a translation of Dos Passos by GIKhL [the State Publishing House for Artistic Literature] and Stenich represents a transmission of either misunderstood or distorted phrases of the original using hideous Russian."[40] While it is possible that he was correct in assessing who had read Dos Passos in the original, his statement about Stenich is clearly exaggerated. The author notes several errors to show Stenich's poor style in Russian, and follows this with a full page of notes on Stenich's "distortions" of Dos Passos, which, he claims, often turn passages in question into nonsense, and make the author look like a formalist. The specific errors he collects are compelling, the total

[39] M. P. Popov, "'Metod romana'."
[40] Ibid., l. 12.

assessment clearly prejudiced. Another holding in the archive of Ivan Kashkin, a study of rhythm in Dos Passos, compares three translations of sections of *1919*.[41] Similarly, Kashkin's protegee Igor Romanovich, in one of the appraisals, criticizes the "formalism" of Stenich's translation:

> Starting from the postulate of "the fragmentation of consciousness = bad formalism," using formalist methods of translation (not reading into the text and not trying to interpret it) [Stenich] actually does create the illusion of the fragmentation of consciousness (in the final score—for the reader—nonsense) in those places where there is no fragmented consciousness and no nonsense whatsoever."[42]

Romanovich denies possible formalist qualities in Dos Passos by attributing them to the "formalist translation" of Stenich, itself already a "bad formalism" consisting of calques directly from English. And yet the examples Romanovich show only errors in word choice, awkward phrasing, and some even clearly successful adaptations. One such phrase cited by Romanovich: Dos Passos writes "too many bugs in the bunkhouse," while Stenich writes: "there's a painful many bedbugs in the barracks"—(*klopov bol'no mnogo v barake*), which not only playfully recreates the alliterative phrase, but also uses colloquial Russian to approximate the tendency to regionalism of Dos Passos' text (though the original does not use regionalisms or colloquial speech).[43] Stenich's rivals were keen to paint his translation as formalist or "formalizing" (*formalistvuiushchii*), but could point only to rather typical translation errors. Dmitry Mirsky, who had lived for a decade in London and perhaps understood the Anglophone press better, offered an explanation for his comrades' reactions in his review of the novel: Dos Passos' "Newsreel" sections hardly look avant-garde from the American perspective and that it

[41] I. K. Romanovich, "'Dom Morgana," "Richard Sevedzh" i dr. perevody fragmentov proizvedenii D. Dos-Passosa s angliiskogo iazyka. Varianty. Chernoviki. Nabroski. Avtograf, mashinopis' s pravkoi avtora i pometkami avtora i I. A. Kashkina' RGALI f. 2854 op. 1 ed. khr. 327 [1930s].
[42] Ibid., l. 16.
[43] Ibid., l. 27.

is only the obscurity of the references for Russian readers that makes these sections resemble Futurist "Zaum" poetry in its abstractions.[44]

The critic and popular children's writer Kornei Chukovsky was much more positive. In his review of *The 42nd Parallel*, he recalled being asked by Dos Passos in Leningrad about the quality of Stenich's *Mankhetten*. Chukovsky replied evasively, as he thought the translation was "sloppy and hurried."[45] However, he found that the second edition of the translation was "newly renovated, and many of the cracks have been plastered over." The translations of *The 42nd Parallel* and the sections of *1919* which had been published by this time were "uneven." But Stenich had "unexpectedly" proven himself to be a "remarkable craftsman" (*master*), with a translation of *42nd Parallel* that was "made with love, poetic and creatively daring" and constituting "one of the great achievements of Soviet literature":

> Dos-Passos' style is so original that in the process of his work the translator was forced, as it were, to rebuild the Russian language anew, to introduce a new syntax, new intonations, new methods in distributing words. Here he is not a copyist but a creator.[46]

Despite Chukovsky's high praise, which also includes the claim that Stenich has virtuosically recreated each of Dos Passos' styles, he also notes the errors which mar some of the moments of the novel, most of which suggest Stenich lacked an idiomatic knowledge of English. In this light, of course, Stenich's achievement is still tremendous, as the reviewer writes: "But this is all trivial, and not what defines the value of this or that translation. The main thing is the proximity of the translator to the

[44] D. Mirskii, "Dzhon Dos Passos. 1919. Perev. s angl. Valentina Stenicha. —Lengikhl. 1933. 375 str. 6 r., perepl. 1 r. 50 k. 10200 ekz." In *Khudozhestvennaia literatura* no. 10, October 1933, 5-7, here 5.
[45] K. Chukovskii, "Dos-Passos u nas," *Literaturnaia gazeta*, 16.12.1932, 2. Quoted from collection of articles on Dos Passos from the archive of Ivan Kashkin in RGALI, f. 2854 op. 1 ed. khr. 352, l. 8 [1932-1936].
[46] Ibid.

author…"[47] Chukovsky was one of the few critics focused on the overall effect of the translation, with praise for its close proximity to the original in reproducing its style and thereby also pushing the envelope of stylistic possibility in Russian.

Cornering Discussion

In the public discussion that rapidly developed around Dos Passos, the dominant critical voices staked out a right to actively shape the vector and outcome of Dos Passos' writing, as well as the nature of Soviet engagement with his writing. On the evenings of March 17 and April 1, 1933, public discussions were held on the work of "the revolutionary American writer Dos-Passos" (as his last name was mistakenly spelled in Russian at the time), organized by the editorial board of *Znamia* and the Defense Commission of the Organizing Committee of Soviet Writers. The edited transcript of these discussions was published in the May and June issues of the journal *Znamia*. Such prolonged public scrutiny of a single subject and author was rather rare in a Soviet literary journal, and though examples of similar or greater coverage occurred before and after the Dos Passos evenings (e.g. the debates over Tolstoy in 1928 and the first All-Union Congress of Soviet Writers in 1934), no living writer but Dos Passos would ever receive such intense attention in the Soviet press that was so diverse in its range, including not only harsh criticism but also a great deal of praise from a range of perspectives.[48] It was also a kind of dress rehearsal or precursor to the 1934 Congress, run entirely within Soviet literary

[47] Ibid.

[48] The early Soviet period would see two moments of greater individual focus on writers and their work: Nikolai Ostrovsky's novel *How the Steel Was Tempered* and Pushkin's work on the centenary of his death in 1936. In both these cases, however, the overwhelming tenor of coverage and criticism was the celebration and justification of celebrating the works of these writers. Only in the case of the discussion of Dos Passos was a diversity of opinions both possible, as a review of the unpublished presentations confirms, and publicly maintained and modeled, as the published version of the discussion shows.

society without, however, having in this case any direct role for the party activists and functionaries who participated in the Congress.

The published version of the transcript in *Znamia*, titled "Soviet Literature and Dos Passos," frames it as part of a larger debate in the USSR. "While sweeping aside the alignment of the formalists (and those they lead by the nose)," write the editors in an introductory note, "with reactionary decadent writers such as Joyce and Proust, whose artistic form is a product of decay and born from bourgeois consciousness, we should not forget that there are a number of artists in the West, close to us, who in their work orient themselves toward the USSR."[49] Dos Passos, being one of these authors, should be criticized for his "mistakes and missteps" but it should not be forgotten that he has much that is "valuable" and which the USSR "needs." It further states that great interest in the discussion was shown by all of the "Soviet writerly public [*obshcchestvennost'*]." The event then, was clearly not only a discussion of one important and popular American writer, but itself modeled how the Soviet literary public should relate to these authors. Indeed, in noting how the questions and problems raised in discussion were those of current interest (*aktual'nye*) to the entirety of "our" literature, the editors expected that the same questions would play a large role in the pre-congress discussion and the very Congress of Soviet Writers itself.[50] They thus not only framed it as a model for relations between Soviet critics and writers to foreign revolutionary writers, advancing a relatively consistent paternalist attitude to the revolutionary writer's ideo-stylistic "method" while tolerating significant disagreement in individual responses.

This framework does not entirely align with the original transcript of the discussions held in Russian archives, although the picture of the proceedings portrayed by both versions contain

[49] *Znamia*, no. 5, 1933, 147.
[50] Ibid.

significant overlapping motifs.[51] For one, the editorial note introducing the transcript, signed "S.D."—Sergei Dinamov, critic, editor, and friend of Dos Passos since his 1927 visit—makes no mention of Joyce or Proust or other writers. These were probably added in response to the content of so many of the talks. Instead, it frames it as a discussion in which, alongside "attempts to understand Dos Passos' work from a Marxist point of view," other speakers focused on the "weak" aspects of his work, his "apologetics for formalism," and that these speakers "propagandized uncritical study" of the author.[52] And while the speakers are listed in the later published version only according to their order in the discussion, Dinamov's note in the transcript specifically distances the editors and other speakers from the remarks by "comrade Vishnevsky," in which "a number of incorrect, semi-formalist and semi-idealist statements" were "present" (thereby also distancing comrade Vishnevsky's errors from his person). However, the editor points out, these statements were "given proper critique" by comrades Kirpotin and Fadeev (the latter another personal acquaintance of Dos Passos from his 1928 visit).[53]

Opening remarks on the first night of the discussion by the chairman of the event, a certain comrade Subbotskii, introduce further differences from the description in the published version.[54] Here, he states the "evening" has been organized *in response* to the "large" number of literary debates taking place in print and "in all possible conversations of both a private and public nature," attracting

[51] RGALI, f. 618, op. 4, ed. khr. 1, Redaktsiia zhurnala "Znamia," Stenogramma vechera diskussii o tvorchestve amerikanskogo pisatelia Dos-Passosa, organizovannoi redaktsiei zhurnala. Mashinopis'. Mart-aprel' 1933, 92 l.
[52] Ibid., l. 1: "…наряду с попытками марксистского осмысления творчества Дос-Пассоса и его места в сегодняшнем дне, были выступления по формалистки апологетирующие слабые стороны Дос-Пассоса пропагандирующие некритическую учебу у него."
[53] Ibid.: "Публикуя в настоящем No. журнала доклад т. Лейтеса и выступления…, редакция оговаривает, что в выступлениях т. Вишневского имел место ряд неверных, полуформалистских и полуидеалистических высказываний, правильную критику которых дали т. Кирпотин и Фадеев."
[54] Ibid., l. 3-4.

the attention of the writerly community. The *Znamia* discussion had been organized as a corrective to the "somewhat incorrect line" of these debates, focused largely on Dos Passos' "formal devices and formal mastery" of the writer and "very little on substance." The organizers hope, he says, "should this evening attract attention," to "direct [these debates] on the right course" and make sure that "questions of form" not be torn away from "questions of content." A discussion with such a "specialized formal character" is "sterile" (*besploden*) on its own and, "in our time," hardly needed. The selection of discussants is said to represent the "general starting positions" (*obshchie otpravnye pozitsii*) He pleads once again following this for the participants to refrain from engaging in a "sterile" discussion of formalist issues, of "form and device as ends in themselves," before inviting the main presenter, Aleksandr Leites, to begin his presentation. Given the "large number" of literary debates said to be taking place in a number of fora, "public and private," this debate can be seen as part of the centralization of literary culture, gathering the public debate currently beyond the bounds of the official literary public under its auspices, giving voice to the "general" range of public opinions while reserving the right to steer them in a favored direction. The critic Aleksandr Leites took the helm. Unfortunately he, like most of the other participants in the discussion, was as incapable of filling in the missing "substance" of the debate as he had been unable to show literary glycerine in Proust.

His headlining talk, "The Path of Dos Passos," presents the American revolutionary author at a fork in the road. Leites proceeds in a rhetorical framework of false alternatives, "'With whom do you stand, masters of culture?"—this question, put by Gorky, is being worked out today not only in writers' abstract declarations and public presentations, but in the very process of the struggle for a creative method."[55] Leites continues his struggle to widen the "abstract declarations" of MORP ("How do you relate to the October revolution?") he began early the same year in his article on war literature

[55] A. Leites, "Put' Dos-Passosa" in *Znamia* no. 5, May 1933, 147-63, here 147.

and Proust, proposing to find political implications not only in the text of writers' work but in their creative method itself. Across disciplines in the bourgeois world, he sees the emergence of methods in which the creative mind is isolated from the world for the sake of locating truth in myopic perfection. Moving quickly from a quote by the progressive American economist Stuart Chase to comments on Spengler, Bergson and "a great many radical bourgeois academics," he claims that for more than twenty years now bourgeois art has bottled up questions of literary technique into a "narrow, closed container." This leads him recall Marcel Proust in his cork-sealed room, Chesterton and his exit from contemporary life into a "club of inventive people," and finally Joyce, "about whom they talk so much and whom so infinitely few read," and who is himself the "best expression of literary technique forced into a narrow and closed vessel."[56] While he says he does not want to simplify the question of Joyce's "huge creative abilities," he ties Joyce's work to the "illness of bourgeois society": "the obsession with breaking records" (*rekordmenstvo*), to the tendency of proceeding to the furthest technical ability or most novel form of literary creation, all while bourgeois artists avoid broad subjects: "space, time, motion," especially their social manifestations. He contrasts this with Balzac, with his huge social canvases, and Zola, with his dream of putting "all humanity on a white sheet of paper." In laying out this vision of (the possibility of) total representation as the lost heights of bourgeois art, Leites cannot conceive that the freedom of aleatory movement is thereby subtracted—arguably the freedom ultimately sought, or at least made room for, in both Joyce and Proust's work.

But the subject of his lecture, Dos Passos, is "born" in "the dilemma of John Reed or Joyce." The latter's scandalous themes and devices, he argues, could never have interested chronically reactionary American readers if not for the war: Leites mentions the censorship of Dreiser's *Sister Kerry* in 1900 and the reaction to Sinclair Louis' *Main Street* in 1920 as evidence that America remained in

[56] Ibid., 148.

the 19th century well into the beginning of the 20th when it came to questions of women's emancipation. "But this only seemed to be the case," he wrote. "Social storms passed along the entire 42nd parallel."[57] Serving in the Red Cross taught Dos Passos to hate capitalist civilization, but also exposed him to the "temptations of bourgeois literary decadence," picking up Joyce's "microscope" in the process. This microscope, in the hands of a writer who nonetheless would not remain in the confines of "a single room," but reached for wider horizons, resulted in his "mechanical" juxtapositions of various creative methods and his use of the "Camera Eye," thereby falling "victim of unconquered Joyceism."[58] His images of John Reed, Bill Haywood, Wilson and Pierpont Morgan are filled with "revolutionary gunpowder of great explosive power," but this powder has been spread over the novel so thinly that it cannot produce the necessary effect. With this we arrive again at the perennial problem of this variety of Soviet criticism (if it can be called that). For Leites, only clearly agitational or ideologically oriented writing, especially when closer to non-fiction than fiction, can aspire to "great explosive power," his sought-after purgative art with the paired ability to kill. Remarkably, an address that is supposed to be a "corrective" to the spontaneous discussions of Dos Passos' form has very little to say about his content. We learn nothing of why these specific portrayals of socialists John Reed and Bill Haywood or capitalist Pierpont Morgan are effective. The cast of characters followed over the vast majority of the book and upon whom the real value of the work should ultimately hinge are almost completely ignored.

The only one to mention them at all was Stenich, who spoke impromptu at the second evening of debate, having been informed about it at the last minute and "by coincidence" finding himself in Moscow. The discussion heretofore, judging by the transcript, had failed to focus on Dos Passos and had begun to circle around Joyce. About half the speakers contested Leites' formulation of the

[57] Leites, "Put' Dos-Passosa," 151.
[58] Ibid., 153.

problem. At the first evening Vsevolod Vishnevsky, the writer and theater director, took issue with the dismissal of Joycean techniques as anathema, proclaiming, instead, the need to "know your enemy." An animated debate developed over whether Marxist laws for art existed as they did for history. During this part of the debate, the critic Alexander Makarov, who bragged about reading Marx before coming to the event, was asked by Vishnevsky whether he had read Joyce. He said had not, and that he knew enough from the excerpts published in Russian translation, and held an informal vote on who in the room had actually read Joyce. A show of hands revealed three readers.[59] Though it was not an official vote, it is a telling number for an event that, according to occasional remarks by the speakers, was quite well attended. Of course, Joyce had not been translated in any significant way, and he was not the author everyone had come to discuss. Ivan Kashkin joked about the subject drift, making a pun on the similarity, in Russian, of Joyce's name (*Dzhois*) and John Dos Passos (*Dzhon Dos Passos*): "It looks like we all read D.P. at home and, arriving here, forget about him. We come here: 'to talk about Joyces and Dos Passoses.' We arrive: 'mechanism, tailism [*khvostizm*], objectivism'… Then: 'Now, in conclusion, a few words about D.P.'s work and let's go home.' … 'Dzhois Passos, Dzhois Passos, but not a single word about Dos Passos.'"[60]

Stenich, not having followed the debate, sidestepped the polemic and quickly got to the point: Dos Passos' composition is faulty. He has no sense for the laws of composition that help readers remember a character: He "takes a person, dips him into an ice hole and pulls him out of a different ice hole—the person dies in the meanwhile, the reader forgets what he said, what he did, forgets his sound and color."[61] But this error resulted from a larger artistic misjudgment. Stenich was perhaps the only one who was able or willing to recognize the Soviet influence on Dos Passos' work, perhaps

[59] I. Makar'ev, "Za literature 'tipichnykh kharakterov' i 'tipichnykh obstoiatel'stv'," in "Sovetskaia literatura i Dos-Passos," *Znamia* 1933 no. 6, 144.
[60] RGALI, f. 2854, op. 1, ed. khr. 109, I. A. Kashkin, Vystuplenie na diskussii. Stenogramma, l. 3.
[61] Stenich, "Kak rabotaet Dos-Passos," *Znamia* 1933 no. 6, 151- 54, here 152.

because he had shown him Soviet theater first hand: "we owe all of these three-story schemas in Dos Passos to his visit to Soviet Russia… [His] play *Airways* is a play exported from Soviet Russia… He wants to be revolutionary not only internally, but also externally… he thinks that, talking about revolution, you can't just write… you have to do something special, and so he does montage."[62]

It was not just that Dos Passos had taken compositional techniques from Russia, he was also naïve, even uncivilized. "We generally somewhat overestimate the Western writer—in particular, the American writer—in terms of his culture. The American writer is much more of a savage than we are."[63] While showing Dos Passos around Leningrad, Stenich had found him to be sentimental: "…he went to the theaters. But which ones? To the living newspapers, to the amateur [*samodeiatel'nym*] theaters. […] Dos Passos was drawn to early Soviet theatrical productions, to so-called constructivism and similar things, which have grown old for today's Soviet viewer and reader."[64] Here, Stenich speaks of the nostalgia for the early days of the revolution dismissively, projecting it on Dos Passos. In Dos Passos' memoirs (published in 1966, but based on his diaries from 1928), it is Stenich who is nostalgic for the revolution. Perhaps Stenich told each audience what he thought they wanted to hear.

Tellingly, Stenich speaks of "constructivism" rather than the derogatory euphemism of "formalism," and dismisses it as old hat, but not as an ideologically problematic artistic method. He assures his audience that Dos Passos is already tired of his devices—Stenich feels this in *1919*, which he has already translated by now—and that they merely have to wait for him to finish the trilogy, and that after that, he will write, "as he should," and that "we" must be friendly to him, as he lives in "monstrous circumstances."[65]

[62] Ibid.
[63] Ibid., 151-52.
[64] Ibid., 152.
[65] Ibid., 153-54.

Dos Passos was perhaps the ideal writer for Stenich: an experimenting modernist interested in left-wing theater, working with the leading communist periodical in the US (Michael Gold's *The New Masses*), and who thus gets a more prolonged pass for the deviation of his writing techniques. The ideal foreigner, who views the USSR as the home of the avant-garde in politics and art. Stenich could potentially play a kind of trick with Dos Passos. He could criticize his style, criticize his opinions and American naïveté, but also translate him, make a career of it, enjoy the celebrity of being a great Soviet translator—as Chukovsky, one of the most respected figures in Soviet translation, had called him in his review of *1919*.

Stenich had defended Dos Passos perfectly, transforming the nature of the debate entirely. From "masters of culture," to "American savages," from "Joyce" to Soviet art everyone is sick of, from questions of revolutionary intent to the naïveté of those Western leftists intellectuals, from 'how should he write,' to 'he will change on his own,' from "form" to composition, from how to judge Dos Passos to the need to have pity on the writers stuck in capitalism. There must have been at least some sincerity in this. Did he really believe that Soviet art of the last decade, like Vertov, was not only ineffective, but no longer interesting? Meyerhold, who Stenich worked with on *Queen of Spades*, continued to engage in precisely such "old" devices, called formalist by critics like Leites. Stenich could have continued to find the work interesting himself while observing a public exhaustion with it, and finding fault with Dos Passos' application. Certainly it sounds plausible that Stenich *did* find the composition of *USA* to be faulty, and *did* think Dos Passos would move on to more traditional realism after the trilogy (which he did). But Stenich's claim not to have read the transcript of the discussion is belied by how precisely he refers to Leites when appropriate—he had surely been informed of the debate by someone.

He also made several statements about Joyce. "We must draw a thick line between Joyce and Dos Passos." The former did his work on "microscopic scales," the other on "massive" ones. Joyce's

work isn't even literature, but a pattern or schema for literature (*vykroika literatury*). Joyce's work in "unknown territory," blindly, by feeling, brought him to the "discovery of his system" like "Copernicus discovered the earth's rotation around the sun."[66] To ignore Joyce is just as ridiculous as a physicist ignoring Einstein or Copernicus. But the larger problem is that, as the discussants had already shown, no one had read *Ulysses* in the USSR, since it was known only by "miniscule excerpts," by the outdated *Dubliners*, by the rare copies of *Ulysses* in Soviet Russian in French, German or English. Here Stenich makes the surprising admission that he considered translating *Ulysses* a year and a half previously, but decided not to out of fear: "fear for myself, fear of two years of prison labor," but also out of a sincere belief that the neither Soviet readers nor writers would manage to make it through the novel. Maybe someone will take up the translation of *Ulysses,* but I withdraw myself from this."[67] This, too, has the ring of subterfuge, but perhaps only retrospectively, as Stenich's translations of Joyce, limited though they were, would appear before any others at the end of the following year. He may well have given up on the idea already.

The Big Let-Down

Before the year was out, this debate about Dos Passos produced some less ephemeral and more reflective critical results: By early October 1933, the critic Abel' Startsev would submit the proofs for the first monograph dedicated exclusively to Dos Passos's work, in Russia or anywhere else, and this was published in early 1934.[68] As with so much criticism at the time, it begins with a tame polemical

[66] Ibid., 151.
[67] Ibid.
[68] A. Startsev, *Dzhon Dos Passos* (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo khudozhestvennoi literatury, 1934). While a dissertation had already been published on Dos Passos in 1931, Startsev's would remain the only monograph on the author until 1958: Werner Neuse, *Die literarische Entwicklung von John Dos Passos* (Giessen: R. Glagow, 1931); John Haughton Wrenn, *John Dos Passos* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1962).

apologia, dismissing much of the discussion of the author as so much noise in which even a critic of "good will" would find it "extremely trying" to reach the essence of interesting and meaningful questions" about his work. The failure of "our criticism" to properly appraise Dos Passos meant that "formalist and formalizing [*formalistvuyushchim*]" writers were able to turn him into a hero for their cause.[69] Meanwhile, non-formalist critics attacked him as "an 'idealist,' a 'Joycist,' a 'relativist,' a 'bourgeois objectivist' etc." But Dos Passos, he argues, is a political and artistic ally. In a formulation that echoes the opening of the *Communist Manifesto*, Startsev writes,

> One could say that the entire history of Dos Passos' ideological-artistic development is the history of the formation of the anti-capitalist protest which constitutes the primary content of his work… Dos Passos may be called an artist who was born of and fostered by the October Revolution.[70]

Dismissing the accusation of Joyceanism as overdiscussed and not as relevant as the influence of other American writers, Startsev promises to provide a "systematic" critique of Dos Passos' oeuvre.

The monograph only takes on the contours of a deeper engagement with the literary texture of the novels when Startsev arrives at the *USA* trilogy. As in so many works of Soviet criticism, the heart of every question is boiled down to one of with us or against us: "with the bourgeois world, or against it?" This, in Startsev's view, is the question posed by Dos Passos himself in all his mature works, but posed anew in the first two novels of the trilogy with particular "specificity, historicity" through Dos Passos' artistic approach. Startsev, in contrast to most Soviet critics, sees this historical lens as that which justifies and ties together all the fragmented pieces of the ensemble of narrative forms.

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[69] Ibid., 3: "Нужно признать, что наша критика не сумела своевременно дать достаточно авторитетную вдумчивую оценку Дос Пассоса и тем самым облегчила возможность формалистским и формалиствующим
литераторам поднять на щит Дос Пассоса и выступить в роли его комментаторов и интерпретаторов."

[70] Ibid., 4-5.

> Understood historically, this dilemma loses the character of an abstract problem to be solved by computing feelings and ideas; it presents itself in the epic in images of living social practice. It determines the single trend of all the historical characters of the epic, it penetrates the most dramatic episodes of the Cine-Eye, it leaves its fingerprint on the author's interpretation of the portraits of Americans.[71]

In the absences of the great social battles which, one senses, Startsev hopes will be the future subject of Dos Passos' writing, the infusion of this question into all the "little sorrows and joys" of the characters give their travails a greater breadth of meaning. Again perhaps projecting a hard-nosed revolutionary fervor onto Dos Passos, he calls the pity of the author towards the weaknesses of his creations the "old, unextirpated feelings and thoughts that have already been discarded by the organizing revolutionary consciousness of the artist."[72] Whether they have been discarded by Dos Passos himself, it seems hard to disagree with Startsev that the intention of the trilogy is deeply ethical, or, as he calls it, "artistic-propagandistic, socio-pedagogical." In the content of that pedagogy, Startsev sees a Marxist-Leninist lesson:

> It is meant to show, to prove [to the American petty bourgeoisie and petty-bourgeois intelligentsia]… the inevitability and the necessity of the proletarian revolution. It must show them, through the example of living human fates, the fatal nature of adapting oneself to the order of the exploiters, condemned by history, dying but still mighty, and the historical, social and moral necessity of taking part in the struggle of the working class with their common enemy—capital.[73]

In a closing overview of how the ideological content of the novels is worked out in their style and form, Startsev praises the virtuoso style in which Dos Passos employs tone to turn the third person narratives of his principle characters into subjective, "monological storytelling," in each case showing

[71] Ibid., 105
[72] Ibid., 112.
[73] Ibid., 121.

the world through their eyes but also, through the encounters of certain repeating characters, providing intersubjective impressions of characters and parallax views of phenomena or questions coming into overlapping view (corruption by money, the labor movement, desire). But although this method provides a comprehensive portrait of the heroes' psychology, it traps the treatment of events within an internal analysis, a "closed" phenomenological comprehension of the external world without the possibility of "correcting" any "aberration" they might contain.[74] Here again, for the first time in more than a hundred pages, appears the name of Joyce as the "most significant" representative of the psychoanalytic school in literature. Startsev sees Joyce's "deformation" of reality through the interior monologue as completely without limitations, measuring the world according to the "arbitrary scale" of individual subjectivity and appealing to a pathological subjectivity *because* it is the most active deformer of reality. Regardless of the degree to which Startsev adequately captures Joyce's intentions or achievements, his contention that no such distortions can be found in Dos Passos' epic strikes the reader as just. The interiority of Dos Passos' characters certainly never reaches the level of fragmentation, imaginative digression or linguistic play which occurs in *Ulysses*, not to speak of *Finnegans Wake.*

For two more years there was nothing new to read from Dos Passos, and the debate died down, but articles continued to appear. Startsev wrote in July 1934 *Literaturnaia gazeta* to defend Dos Passos from attacks by an American critic, boasting of the fact that his play *Fortune Heights* (*Vershiny schast'ia* in Russian) had found some success on the Russian stage, even as it had yet to be staged in the USA.[75] The fact that Joyce was the main foreign author criticized at the August 1934 Writers' Congress seems to have made Dos Passos less controversial, but the official definition of socialist realism it offered may have also made possible a reevaluation of Dos Passos. Zelinskii, who, in his

[74] Ibid., 122, 125.
[75] A. Startsev, "Napadki na Dos-Passosa," *Literaturnaia gazeta*, 18 iulia 1934 no 90 (406), 1.

previous article on Dos Passos, had faulted him for not following the 42nd parallel around the globe to the country "leading a cyclopedic labor of the construction of socialism," wrote on him again in *Pravda* in 1935. Here he was more generous, reframing *The 42nd Parallel* in directly in the terms of socialist realism: "And truly [*deistvitel'no*], the portrayal of revolutionary events [*izobrazhenie revoliutsionnykh sobytii*] is the main theme of the book" (emphasis mine, cf. the "portrayal [*izobrazhenie*] of reality [*deistvitel'nosti*] in its revolutionary development)."[76] His emphasis on the effect of Dos Passos' work, compared only to montage and not to Joyce, further evokes the ideas of "revolutionary development" and "historical concreteness," even while he admits that Dos Passos' is only "half-way" to "us" (in this he merely repeated Radek's judgement) but Zelinskii was convinced that Dos Passos' creative work will ultimately lead him to socialist realism. He could not quite be included as a canonical writer, but the promise of his books made it possible to include him very close to the canon. In a January 1936 article on the occasion of Dos Passos' 40th birthday, the former futurist poet and co-writer on *Battleship Potemkin* Nikolai Aseev also wrote in praise of Dos Passos' writing, ending with the hopeful prediction that "no darkness can ever eclipse nor separate his creative figure from us…On this path we foresee a new comradely meeting with John Dos Passos."[77] The comradely meeting would not take place, and Dos Passos works would soon be totally separated from the canon.

The highly anticipated culmination of the trilogy, *The Big Money*, finally appeared in 1936. After the publication of *1919,* Dos Passos had faced one of the more trying periods in his life, suffering from prolonged medical complaints and reduced income in the middle of the 1930s. His illness and financial problems were major factors in the delay in finishing *The Big Money*, and due to this he wrote to another friend from his Soviet visit, the editor of *International Literature* Sergei Dinamov, to request

[76] Kornelii Zelinskii, "Dzhon Dos-Passos," *Pravda*, 10 sentiabria 1935, no 250 (6496), 4; "Ustav soiuza sovetskikh pisatelei SSSR," in Pervyi vsesoiuznyi s"ezd sovetskikh pisatelei, 716.
[77] Nik. Aseev, "Dos-Passos," *Literaturnaia gazeta* 1936 no. 3 (566), 2.

whatever might be left of royalties owed him from Soviet sales of his books. By the time Dos Passos finished *The Big Money*, his doubts about the Communist Party, which he had long felt but had not engaged directly in his writing, had colored his view of the party more deeply. The novel partially gave Soviet critics what they wanted: finally, the Communist Party and its members were part of the plot. Rather than an idealistic portrait of the American Communist Party leading the masses towards socialism (which would have at least exaggerated the "historical-concrete reality" of the 1930s), Dos Passos gives a storyline much more in keeping with the idealistic but flawed characters of his previous novels. While the main Communist character, Mary French, is shown sympathetically, the Party is depicted as increasingly bureaucratic, more concerned with upholding the party line and raising funds than in helping the miners who give them their "last nickel." *The Big Money* was received very well in the United States, named "best novel of the year," by the Second American Writers' Congress, but the Soviet reaction was almost mute.[78] Startsev wrote the only review, closing the book with a feeling of "hurt or disappointment" due to its "political deficiency." Dos Passos had portrayed the Party in terms of personal animosity and differences of character between individual activists. "One must believe in the working class, one must know its life more closely and more deeply, its leading people, its party," concluded Startsev.[79] With this, Dos Passos, for a brief time one of the most repeated names in Soviet print, would largely disappear for decades.

Dos Passos' activism and politics, or rumors about them, may have also been behind the change. By this time, Dos Passos had already been named as a member of the American Committee for the Defense of Leon Trotsky—without his permission, as Dos Passos adamantly avoided being drawn into the Trotskyist or Stalinist camp, and the inclusion of his name seems to have been part of a ploy of Trotsky's American supporters, who also added Mary McCarthy's name in the same deceitful

[78] Virginia Spencer Carr, *Dos Passos: A Life* (New York: Doubleday, 1984), 379.
[79] A. Startsev, "O novoi knige Dos Passosa," *Internatsional'naia literatura* 1936 no. 10, 145-46.

manner.[80] Dos Passos even wrote to Sergei Dinamov in April 1936 of his hope to visit Moscow again.[81] The break on his part occurred gradually, but in response to a concrete, personal loss. While on assignment in Spain in 1937 with Ernest Hemingway *The Spanish Earth*, a documentary on the Spanish civil war, Dos Passos discovered that his friend José Robles, a professor from Johns Hopkins University who stayed in Spain to translate for the Republican government, had been secretly executed, supposedly for treason.[82] Dos Passos did not believe the story, and came to believe the Soviet secret police were behind it. Though he did not publish his version of the story until 1939, the incident led to a falling-out with Hemingway, who published two articles with thinly veiled descriptions of Dos Passos and spoke to many about Dos Passos' supposed treachery to the Loyalist cause.[83] Though it is uncertain what exactly triggered the effective blacklisting, some combination of disappointment with *The Big Money*, rumors of the (unintentional) association with Trotsky, of Dos Passos' time in Spain, and his total withdrawal from leftist causes (soon followed by his departure from the left, and later, joining the circle of William F. Buckley's *National Review*) was certainly enough.

In his *USA* novels Dos Passos, while hardly focused on the October revolution or Russia, makes it into one of the constant features of historical background, including bullet points of its events in his News Reels, choosing several figures in his biographies tied in some way to one of the Russian revolutions or to international social democracy or socialism, in which he tries to portray a current of history following a pattern in its favor, like the storms of the 42nd parallel. In his translation, Stenich was thereby able to present the history of international social democracy and the October revolution through foreign eyes, telling a story "grown old for today's Soviet reader" anew, translating an

[80] Carr, *Dos Passos*, 361.
[81] RGALI, f. 631 op. 11, ed. khr. 23, "Perepiska Dos Pasosa Dzhona s Inostrannoi Komissiei Soiuza Sovetskikh Pisatelei, ob izdanii ego knig v SSSR, ob uplate emu gonorara, o vysylke emu zhurnala 'Internatsional'naia Literatura,' o ego namerenii poekhat' v SSSR," l. 2-3 [1930s].
[82] Ibid., 367-71
[83] Ibid., 372-77.

American interpretation of constructivism back into Russian, and stories of American workers and socialists told with revolutionary intent and sympathy.

This, as mentioned in the first chapter, was part of Dos Passos strategy of "trying to reach a formula that will appeal to the average American worker and farmer and small businessman (confused, disoriented and suffering)" in an America that he saw as lagging at least 25 years behind Soviet Russia: "You must remember that we haven't had our 1905 yet."[84] Even in trying to bridge this gap by finding in Soviet film techniques the "formula" to appeal to the "average American," Dos Passos fails in the eyes of his Soviet critics. To Miller-Budnitskaya, the first two novels of the trilogy were the greatest work of contemporary revolutionary literature not because they appealed to the "average man" but because they "exposed" the philistine Yahoos, while Joyce praised them. To less generous readers like Leites and others suspicious of bourgeois art, formalism in any form represented, at best, the last symptom of bourgeois thought, and the promise of Dos Passos' broad social canvases could only be fulfilled by dropping any hint of formalism. Even for his own highly sympathetic translator, Valentin Stenich, Dos Passos' mistake was in seeking the formula through art that "has grown old for today's Soviet viewer and reader." Though there was certainly a genuine Soviet interest in Dos Passos' work (the book sales, play productions and multiple translations speak to this), a certain disappointment follows the enthusiasm. Perhaps the American reflection of Soviet artistic ideas was too crooked, perhaps Dos Passos was simply not up to the task. What was clear is that at every opportunity, Soviet critics, whether committed to the Stalinist line on realism or not, wanted to discuss Joyce, used Dos Passos as a means to define what Joyce meant, and almost none of them had actually read *Ulysses*, the work they all had in mind. At the First All-Soviet Congress of Soviet Writers in August 1934, party

[84] Dos Passos, letter to Béla Illés, 474.

leaders would speak directly to the question, seemingly with the intention to end the discussion. The result, however, would be two new simultaneous projects to translate *Ulysses* into Russian.

Chapter Four

Framing Joyce: Karl Radek Opens a Window to *Ulysses*

Into the Frames

An act of framing precedes the novel *Ulysses* wherever and in whichever language it is read. As Fredric Jameson notes, it is a novel "always-already-read."[1] A novel always already prepared for reading, already preceded by its name, its scandalous history, and its overwhelming bibliography. Even much of early scholarship on the novel focuses on the paratextual apparatus instead of analyzing the text proper, or the relationship between the two**.** In English one such framework appeared even before the first publication of the novel in 1922. One year earlier, Joyce had produced a key matching the episodes of the book to sections of the *Odyssey*.

Ulysses has also served to frame other works, or even writers' entire artistic doctrines, which were defined by analogy with or in contrast to Joyce's modernism. This was especially true in the Soviet Union, where Joyce and other writers were used as a foil to contrast with the project of socialist realism. Neither *Ulysses* nor its translation was banned in the Soviet Union, in contrast to the reactions of authorities in both Ireland and the USA, but the novel served for some as perhaps the most prominent example for what Soviet literature was not.

Joyce was first brought to the attention of Soviet readers in 1922 by the writer Yevgeny Zamyatin, who would later author the dystopian novel *We* (*My*).[2] Excerpts from *Ulysses* were published in Russian in the USSR in 1925, some of the earliest published translations of Joyce into any language.[3] But, after this, no efforts were made to translate the novel for several years, and all of them before the 1934 Writers' Congress were in the form of short excerpts from various

[1] Frederic Jameson, *The Modernist Papers* (New York: Verso, 2007), 137.
[2] Emily Tall, "The Reception of James Joyce in Russia," in Geert Lernout, Wim Van Mierlo, eds. *The Reception of James Joyce in Europe* (London: Thoemmes Continuum, 2004), 244-57, 244.
[3] "Uliss," trans. V. Zhitomirskii, in *Novinki Zapada* no. 1 (Moscow, Leningrad, 1925).

episodes.[4] The three authors who have written on Joyce's reception previously agree on a general trajectory: first efforts in the relative freedom of the 1920s, frozen by the "cold night of Stalinism" in Emily Tall's words, where the 1934 Soviet Writers' Congress marked the "culmination of a debate on the need for Soviet writers to learn from the avant-garde writers of the West, especially Joyce."[5] This history, in which this "frozen" reception of Joyce only found its "full bloom" at the very end of Soviet rule, is also common to the other overviews of Joyce's Russian and Soviet reception by Neil Cornwell and Sergei Horujy, the first to translate all of *Ulysses* into Russian in the 1980s.[6] In the broad strokes this narrative was first laid out by Gleb Struve in 1972, though without the happy end of *Ulysses*' full publication in the last years of the Soviet Union.[7] This chapter hopes to be a corrective to this reading of the reception of Joyce. I do not contest the trajectory from 1937, when the Great Terror saw the arrests and executions of many cultural figures, among them translators of Joyce, Dos Passos, and other foreign writers. In examining the debates in the 1934 Writers' Congress and the translations and articles which followed it, I find, however, the Congress did not mark the culmination of the debates at all, but the opening of a window during which new translations appeared and attempts were made to reconsider Joyce's use and place in relation to the Soviet canon of bourgeois literature.

There is no one reason to explain why Joyce began to be discussed so much in the 1930s, why he even needed to be considered, but there are several simultaneous developments which led to it. The publications of excerpts of *Finnegans Wake* (under its working title of *Work in Progress*) and the 1929 symposium of essays on the work, *Our Exagmination Round His Factification for Incamination of Work in Progress*, which some Soviet critics read, were possible sources for the uptick

[4] Two other fragments from episodes 4 and 8 were published in *Literaturnaia gazeta* in a translation by S. Alymov, 2 September 1929.
[5] Tall, "The Reception of James Joyce in Russia," 245.
[6] Cornwell, *James Joyce and the Russians*; Khoruzhii, *'Uliss' v russkom zerkale*.
[7] Gleb Struve, *Russian Literature under Lenin and Stalin, 1917-1953* (London: Routledge, 1972).

in discussion.[8] There was the 1930 surge in interest in Dos Passos, widely interpreted as being a student of Joyce, which may have stimulated interest in *Ulysses*. Yet another impetus to engage with Joyce's work was the US court decision in December 1933 by Judge John Munro Woolsey allowing *Ulysses*' publication in the US. Though the Soviet Writers Union had been formed in 1932 to replace all independent writers' organizations and the debate over what socialist realism might be was intensifying, it was, as Katerina Clark writes, a time of a second wind for internationalism in the Soviet Union: "'Boy' was not just meeting "tractor," he was also encountering Western culture."[9]

Clark's thesis regarding the 1930s Soviet Union, and Moscow especially, as a moment of Great Appropriation captures the dynamics of Soviet debates over foreign authors at the time, during which scientific and cultural developments in the capitalist West were actively mined for technologies useful for the "homeland of the proletariat." She quotes Joyce-enthusiast Sergei Eisenstein, from a 1933 article on his (later abandoned) film project *Moscow*: "Moscow as a concept is the concentration of the socialist future of the entire world."[10] The reception of Joyce, and Dos Passos and Proust as well, should be seen as part of this moment of socialist cultural concentration, when culture, and literature in particular, became "central to the Soviet Union's claim for international dominance."[11] Even while literature took on such an official role and Bolshevik leaders participated more directly in shaping the cultural landscape, they did not participate from "outside" that landscape, but as part of it, and among the many cultural figures who also understood this internationalism in their own ways. The story of Joyce's reception and translation as a defeat decided at the 1934 Writers' Union Congress, with the 1937 terror "looming" over

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[8] Samuel Beckett et al., *Our Exagmination Round his Factification for Incamination of Work in Progress* (Paris: Shakespeare and Company, 1929).
[9] Katerina Clark, "The Traveling Mode and the Horizon of Identity," in , *Moscow, the Fourth Rome: Stalinism, Cosmopolitanism, and the Evolution of Soviet Culture, 1931-1941*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2011), 136-169, here 139.
[10] Ibid., 1; for the "Great Appropriation," see 8; for the article she cites: Sergei Eizenshtein, "Moskva vo vremeni," *Literaturnaia gazeta*, 11 July 1933, 3.
[11] Clark, *Moscow*, 10.

many of his advocates, ignores the fact that the Great Purge of 1937 was as much a blow to cosmopolitan intellectuals as for the those who had criticized them at the Writers' Congress, like Karl Radek, a victim of Moscow show trials. In this chapter, I would like to tell this story differently, where the Writers' Union Congress was not an end, but a beginning, which saw a series of victories for those who would claim Joycean technology for Soviet writers.

In 1933, it was unclear how the debate would resolve, although the tone of the debate was suggestive of a negative outcome. Stenich, at the 1933 debate on Dos Passos, said he had decided not to translate *Ulysses* for personally safety, but also because he doubted Soviet readers would really be interested. The same year, the multilingual journal *International Literature*, a major publication for translated foreign literature in the Soviet Union, began promising to publish *Ulysses* in Russian translation. The outlines of a Russian *Ulysses* were appearing on the horizon. Critical articles told a different story. The respected critic Dmitry Mirsky published an article on Joyce with a series of representative excerpts from the novel in his own translation, in which he dismissed any possibility of Joyce's usefulness to Soviet writers (in contrast to Proust, who he deemed decadent, but whose psychologism was one-dimensional enough to be borrowed) and any possibility of an adequate Russian translation.[12] Another article dedicated to Joyce was written by the young critic Rashel Miller-Budnitskaya,. She was also highly critical of Joyce, but her emphasis on the revolutionary nature of *Ulysses* seemed to demand a translation.

Mirsky's relationship to *Ulysses* is an especially interesting one, which shows how even critics who had praised Joyce's work highly at the beginning of the 1920s might, in the changing times of the 1930s, take a quite different view. Mirsky was a critic of noble birth, a prince (*kniaz'*), who lived in London during the first decade of Soviet rule, having fought in the White Army under general Denikin in the Civil War. His views gradually evolved over the years towards Marxism. In 1923, even as he came to be "disappointed" by the "contemporary expressions" of English poetry,

[12] D. Mirskii, "Dzheims Dzhois," in *God shestnadtsatyi: Al'manakh 1* (Moscow: 1933), 428-50.

which he called "deeply exhausted," he was still a great admirer of Joyce.[13] Even several years later, in 1928, as he describes the positive qualities of Joyce, his own style drifts into the key of *Ulysses*' list-filled "Ithaca" episode:

> Hundreds of pages could be spent on Joyce: on his titanic power to shape language; on the athletic flexibility of his style which gives his prose an incredible variety of "keys;" on the completely fitting exactitude and specificity of his words; on the comic power in which he equals Aristophanes, Rabelais and Gogol; on the breadth of his imagination; on the profound metaphysico-ethical background—the agonizing awareness of sin, the impurity of life and the flesh; on features he holds in common with Freud, another great myth-maker and scholar of sin; on his roots in the Catholic mind; and on so much besides.[14]

Mirsky returned to Russia in 1932, with the help of Maxim Gorky, who secured him a pardon for his White Army service. His article on Joyce which appeared the following year was the first major article on Joyce to appear in the Soviet press. Ten years after he lamented the lack of "active, vital, revolutionary creative force [*stikhii tvorchestva*]" in contemporary English poetry compared to Mayakovsky and Blok, Mirsky now saw the same dead end in Joyce. He compares Joyce and Proust (whose collected works were already in preparation for print, as he must have known) as the two greatest writers of the literature "directly bound with the parasitical decay of the bourgeois culture of the West."[15] But where Proust was important to Marxists for the understanding of the contemporary bourgeoisie, Joyce had nothing to offer. Nothing, it seems, because he has too much, he is too much: he is too disconnected from his Irish roots (unlike Singe), too much of a word smith in outdoing the English in their own language (also unlike Singe), too constructivist in his psychological analysis of characters (unlike Proust, who in this is selfless and disinterested), too

[13] Sviatopolk-Mirskii, "O sovremennoi angliiskoi literature (Pis'mo iz Londona)," discussed briefly in the introduction.
[14] Dmitrii Sviatopolk-Mirskii, "Godovshchiny: 4. Dzhois ("Ulysses," 1922)," in *Stat'i i retsenzii*, 181-83, 183; orig. pub.: Kn. D. Sviatopolk-Mirskii in *Versty*, 1928 no. 3, 147-49.
[15] Mirskii, "Dzheims Dzhois," 428.

much of a builder of labyrinths, too demanding of his readers. Mirsky observes that, where similar word experiments had appeared at the beginning of Russian futurism, it led, eventually, to a poetry rich in meaning and one that "in its strongest manifestations worked for the revolution."[16] He poses the question directly, "What shall we do with Joyce? Do we need him and can we critically separate from him something useful for Soviet art? Here we must bluntly admit that there is too much in Joyce's creative method that is inseparable from that specifically decadent phase of bourgeois literature which he reflects."[17] Mirsky's answer to the question was unequivocal and straightforward. Joyce was not "*shirpotreb*," not a consumer good for broad consumption, not practicably translatable, and not necessary. His article was influential with other critics in 1933—it was mentioned, for example, at the *Znamia* debate on Dos Passos as an excuse not to need to read Joyce.[18] Emily Tall and others have seen in Mirsky's change of heart about Joyce as an expression of a possible anxiety "to prove his *bona fides*," having returned from emigration.[19] Certainly, the article would have been a boon to him in this sense, but the development of his ideas over ten years suggests the position he took could equally have emerged from a gradual, genuine evolution of his thinking about Soviet and Western European culture.

The playwright Vsevolod Vishnevsky, who would also defend Joyce vigorously at the Dos Passos debate, responded to Mirsky in print, using quotes from Gorky and Marx on the need to learn from both the classics and the enemy, saying to Soviet writers: "use *Ulysses*, overcoming it, filtering it, and intensify the search for new devices."[20] More details of Vishnevsky's arguments are considered by Cornwell. His advocacy for Joyce and the possibility of using modernists is well established, though it seems to be a somewhat facetious line of argument—though he *was* very concerned about "military readiness," especially as the decade bore on and another European war

[16] Ibid., 444.
[17] Ibid., 449.
[18] Makar'ev, "Za literature 'tipichnykh kharakterov' i 'tipichnykh obstoiatel'stv'," 144.
[19] Tall, "The Reception of James Joyce in Russia," 245.
[20] V. Vishnevskii, "Znat' zapad!" *Literaturnyi kritik* 1933 no. 7, 79-95, here 84.

looked inevitable, he would meet with Joyce in Paris and probably never seriously considered him as one of the Soviets' enemies.

Later in 1933 Mirsky wrote an internal review of an article by Miller-Budnitskaya, "On James Joyce's *Ulysses*" for the prestigious theoretical journal *Literaturnyi kritik*.[21] His criticism of her article underlines the points of divergence between their critiques, and the editors' ignoring of his recommendations suggests the editors and Miller-Budnitskaya might have had a more subtle intention in printing it.

Mirsky's report reads at times like a denunciation: "Miller-Budnitskaya's article is written under the influence of Joyce's bourgeois commentators," he begins. Taking these commentators at their word, writes Mirsky, Miller-Budnitskaya only adds to the mystifications Joyce himself created to suggest the revolutionary character of his novel *Ulysses*. Mirsky further criticizes the article for the failure to cite sources, making it impossible for the reader to determine which statements about Joyce's work derive from bourgeois critics and which are Miller-Budnitskaya's own evaluations.[22] He registers an ambiguity that often appears in Miller-Budnitskaya's writing on modernism: "The author apparently shares the views of bourgeois critics on the 'revolutionary' proportions of Joyce's innovation [*novatorstva*]." She takes all claims about Joyce "at face value." Focusing on another proclivity of her writing in the 1930s, he notes how she elevates the Irish novelist by turning the "chaotic muddle" (*putanitsu*) of Joyce's views into an entire "philosophy" and Joyce himself into a "thinker." Indeed, in this and other articles Miller-Budnitskaya would devote her attention to the "philosophy" of the Soviet and Western writers whose decadence she apparently decries. Mirsky concludes: "In its current form the article seems to me to be inappropriate for publication, in any case in such an important journal as *Literaturnyi kritik*." He

[21] RGALI f. 614 op. 1 ed. khr. 209, ll. 49-55, "Redaktsiia zhurnala 'Literaturnyi kritik'. Miller-Budnitskaia Rashel' Zinov'evna, 'Ob 'Ulisse' Dzhemsa Dzhoisa.' i otzyv o nei Mirskogo D. Stat'ia. Mashinopis' s pravkoi [no date]. Hereafter "Draft of 'Ob 'Ulisse'".

[22] He recognizes two sources, Herbert Gorman and Valery Larbaud, and believes there is a third source used for her description of "Circe." "Draft of 'Ob 'Ulisse'" l. 50.

adds, however, that he would consider the article publishable were Miller-Budnitskaya to make it clear whose analyses she relies on and where, and, further, to make a clear distinction between what Joyce has suggested to his critics and what they have imagined in addition (*chto oni k etomu primyshliaiut*].[23] If she were to "feel herself capable" of such an effort, a clear presentation of their views would be rather useful, he writes. After all, Mirsky had noted earlier in his report that the "author knows Joyce well and is capable of understanding him." A statement applicable to both Mirsky and Miller-Budnitskaya, we can affirm her clear *capability* of understanding Joyce while emphasizing her account's significant distortions and omissions.

Almost as if Mirsky's rejection was never read, Miller-Budnitskaya's article was published in the January 1934 issue of *Literaturnyi kritik*.[24] Although the typed draft of the article to which Mirsky's report is attached includes some large cuts and additions written in Miller-Budnitskaya's hand, Mirsky's primary suggestions seem to have been completely ignored by her and the journal editors. No footnotes were included in the edited or published version, although academic citations were quite standard in both *Literaturnyi kritik* and in some of Miller-Budnitskaya's other published essays. Claims from Joyce about his work and claims from his "bourgeois commentators" are no more distinguished from one another than in the draft, and it does not seem that any additional work was done to distinguish Miller-Budnitskaya's own analysis from that of her sources. One statement which Mirsky criticizes in his report and which *was* cut from the publication was her use of a quote from Marx. She uses this, in Mirsky's view, to overemphasize the enmity between the Anglophone bourgeoisie and Joyce. This, interestingly, was an attempt to present Joyce as a writer with a—misdirected, like Proust's—critique of capitalism.

The main addition to her article following Mirsky's criticism was a new concluding paragraph that delves more deeply into her evaluation of Joyce's "self-negation" of bourgeois art,

[23] Ibid., l. 53.
[24] G. [*sic*] Miller-Budnitskaia, "'Uliss' Zdhemsa Dzhoisa," *Literaturnyi kritik* no. 1, Jan. 1934, 169-79.

of language and logical thinking, which in Joyce goes "hand in hand" with the "collapse of the image" (*raspad obraza*). In it, she develops her thoughts on Joyce's abstraction by reference to his *Work in Progress* and ties this to recent tendencies toward the collapse of the image in "contemporary 'left-wing' bourgeois painting."

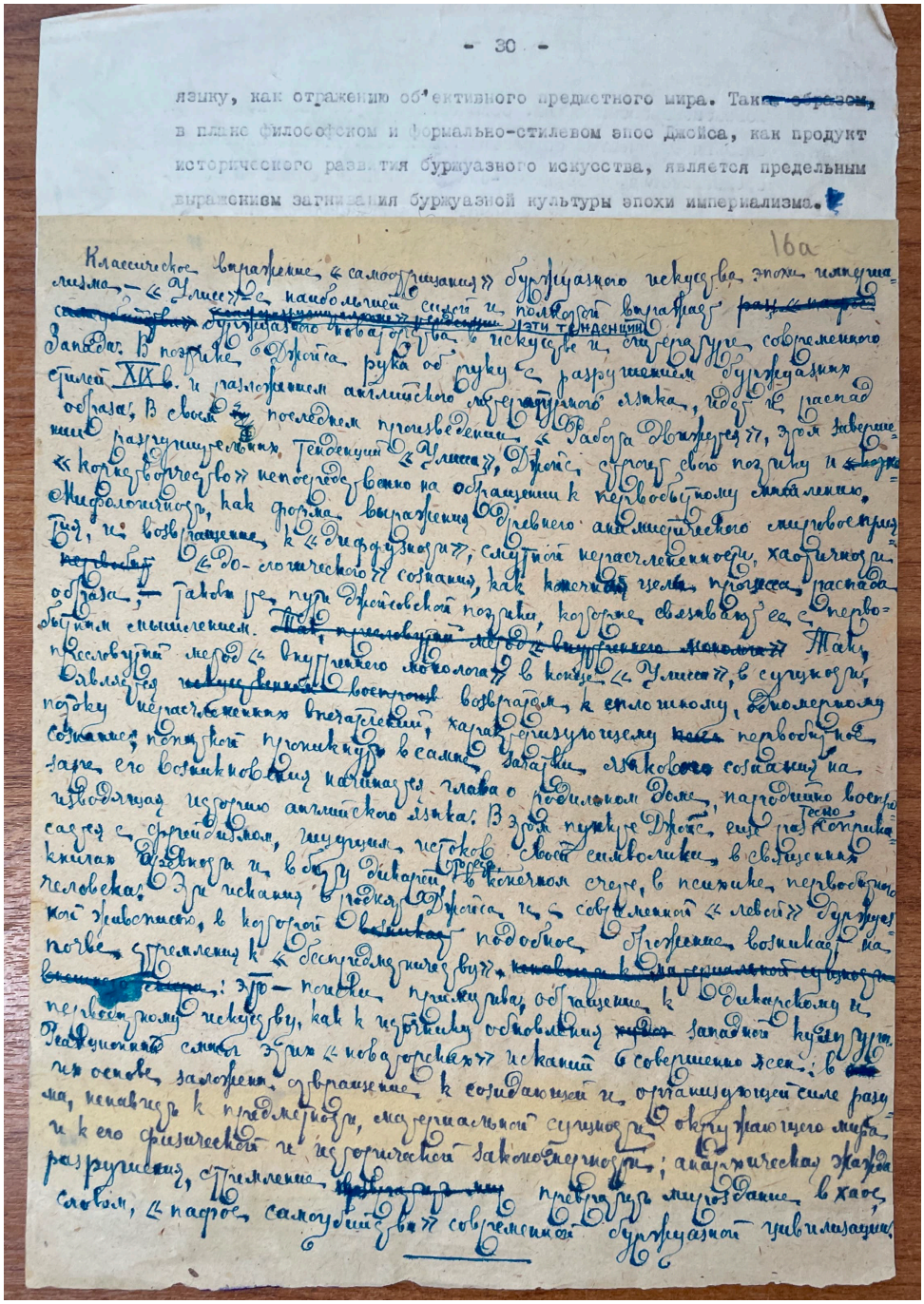

Fig. 4.1: Miller-Budnitskaya's addition of a new concluding paragraph to an article on Joyce in her (remarkable) handwriting (RGALI f. 614 op. 1 ed. khr. 209, l. 16a, 1933)

Stating that Joyce's "rootwork" derives from a desire to somehow recreate a primordial form of thought, she writes that the path of his poetics leads directly to mythology as a form of expressing an "ancient animist perception of the world, a return to 'diffusion' and vague disarticulation [*diffuznosti*, *neraschlenennosti*], the chaos of 'prelogical' consciousness as the eventual goal of the process of the collapse of the image."[25] Her mention of "rootwork" (*kornetvorchestvo*, itself an admirably Joycean neologism) and recourse to *Work in Progress* also suggests that, at this point *Ulysses* is partially being read through the early publications of his last novel. She continues that the method of the "internal monologue" as it appears at the end of *Ulysses* anticipates this return to a "uniform, one-dimensional stream of undifferentiated impressions." Again positing a connection between these artistic representations of modern thinking and "primordial thinking," she links Joyce's supposed desire to reach the "dawning of linguistic consciousness" to both Freudianism, with its search for the "psychology of primordial man" and the contemporary movement in abstract painting. "The reactionary meaning of these 'innovative' searches are absolutely clear," she writes, as they are fundamentally based on "a revulsion of the creative and organizing power of reason, a hatred of objectivity [*predmetnosti*], the material essence of the outside world and its physical and historical regularity [*zakonomernosti*]." This is the "anarchic thirst for destruction" and "zeal for suicide" of "contemporary bourgeois civilization" itself.

As in the article comparing Dos Passos and Joyce analyzed in the previous chapter, this one, like several articles of hers on Western modernists and Joyce especially, was ambiguous. On the one hand, it was clearly critical of Joyce on the whole, while it also described his mastery as a writer in detail and emphasized the mystique of his work. As Neil Cornwell wrote, it was a "competent analysis of *Ulysses*" that "can only have whetted the appetite of her Russian readership."[26] While it is written with (often gratuitous, even "decadent") invective, Miller-Budnitskaya's article is still probably the best introduction to *Ulysses* published in the Soviet Union

[25] Miller-Budnitskaia, "'Uliss' Zdhemsa Dzhoisa," 179.
[26] Cornwell, *James Joyce and the Russians*, 101.

up to that point—along with the articles she wrote accompanying the translations of *Ulysses* which followed the Writers' Congress. Where other critics presented a critique of Joyce that emphasized the inability to assimilate him, Miller-Budnitskaya gives us not only a critique but also a lengthy and relatively thorough introduction to his novel, some of the criticism by foreign writers, its themes and styles, some of the most notable chapters, including long, accurate translations of sections of "Penelope," "Proteus," "Circe" and "Ithaca." We cannot say for certain what she intended to do, but it seems at least likely that this erudite young critic (born in 1906, she was only 27 when she wrote this article) was using the opportunity of the anti-formalist moment to work on these suspicious foreign writers and read widely, exaggerating her critique (though certainly not dissimulating completely) for the sake of her career and her safety in an unpredictable time—and one she probably did not expect to get as dark as it did. In the 1930s she wrote almost exclusively on writers accused of formalism, but wrote on much safer topics after 1937.[27] She also wrote accompanying articles several times for Valentin Stenich, and co-signed a letter of protest written by Stenich to complain about a negative review of a book of translations of Rudyard Kipling, for which she had written the foreword.[28] Her style of writing, the subjects she chose and her collaboration with Stenich suggest she really did, as Mirsky claimed, take *Ulysses* seriously on an artistic and philosophical level. It further seems likely, as Cornwell noted, that her readers would have finished the article with only a greater curiosity about this fabulously scandalous book.

A reader habituated to the idea of modernism's achievements suspects Soviet critics of

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[27] Miller-Budnitskaia, 'Epigon formalizma'; Miller-Budnitskaia, 'O "filosofii iskusstva" B. Pasternaka i R. M. Ril'ke'; R. Miller-Budnitskaia, 'O patsifizme v tvorchestve Dos-Passosa: "Tri soldata" i "Mankhetten"', *Zalp*, no. 7, 1932, 55–60; R. Miller-Budnitskaia, 'Tvorcheskii put' Dos-Passosa', *Literaturnaia ucheba*, no. 9–10, 1932, 76–88; R. Miller-Budnitskaia, 'Kniga velikoi nenavisti', *Zalp*, no. 5, 1933, 64–71; R. Miller-Budnitskaia, 'Zapad i "novatorstvo"', *Literaturnyi sovremennik*, no. 6, 1934, 137–54; Rakhil' Zinov'evna Miller-Budnitskaia, 'Ob "Ulisse" Dzheimsa Dzhoisa', *Literaturnyi kritik*, no. 1, 1934, 162–79; R. Miller-Budnitskaia, 'Potomki ludditov', *Zvezda*, no. 4, 1934, 177–93; Miller-Budnitskaia, '"Uliss" Dzhemsa Dzhoisa', 1935; Miller-Budnitskaia, 'Filosofia kul'tury Dzhemsa Dzhoisa'; R. Miller-Budnitskaia, 'James Joyce's Ulysses', trans. N.J. Nelson, *Dialectics* 5, 1938, 6–26.

[28] RGALI, f. 634 op. 1 ed. khr. 394, "Redaktsiia 'Literaturnoi gazety'. Pis'ma v redaktsiiu" [4 April–5 July 1937].

making compromised arguments in the interest of self-preservation, or to read any number of motives into their statements, looking back from the 21st century onto that decade of high Stalinism and knowing how often it made moral pretzels of human beings. The overall tendency of Soviet criticism of *Ulysses*, however, shows multiple, often overlapping but sometimes contradictory critiques of the novel, and as a line of arguments committed to print deserve consideration as aesthetic, ethical and philosophical value-judgements. For critics who lived through the end of the Soviet Union, such as the late translator of Joyce into Russian, Sergey Horujy, did not think that Soviet criticism of Ulysses deserved to be taken seriously, ascribing to a view widely held by those who were born into and outlived the Soviet Union that the culture it produced was one of lies, or even the "Empire of Lies," suggesting the debate was merely a pretext for repression.

And yet, despite the tone of much Soviet criticism from the 1930s, which often looks overblown or even hysterical, a reckoning with its arguments is essential to understanding the dynamics of artistic modernism in its conflict with the modern(ist) socio-political logic which undergirded the development of the USSR: the desire to create a transformative economic and social system that would eliminate capitalism, and thereby class-based inequality and injustice, and its aim to establish a literary method that would further the goal of a classless (world) society and cement a revolutionary view of history. From this point of view, as others have already noted, socialist realism aimed to realize the dream of much of modernist writing: to re-envision or remake the world through art. Some of these cases suggest that *Ulysses* was not the real subject of discussion. To an extent, the novel was made into a symbol and a scapegoat in the question of realism or modernism—not only the modernism of Joyce or Proust, but the modernism of the immediate pre- and, especially, post-revolutionary period, with its exaggerated, fragmented perspectives and retreat from direct authorial commentary, in cinema and art as much as in literature. But, turned into an abstract symbol of modernism writ large, concrete aspects of *Ulysses* are raised to the level of ideas that threaten the Marxist project itself, at least in the minds of those

who saw Joycean technique and technology as unsalvageable. To others, as we already saw in the article by Miller-Budnitskaya on Dos Passos and Joyce, it was one of the most advanced technologies that might be used in the fight for socialism and the "engineering of human souls."

It should not be forgotten, of course, in reading the following, the extent to which *Ulysses* remained controversial in the non-Soviet world well into the 1930s and beyond. While it is known that *Ulysses* was banned in the US until 1933 and functionally banned in Ireland for nearly the remainder of the 20th century, it is less often remembered that even in 1931, a proposal for a series of talks on Joyce on the BBC was met with a public outcry and delayed for a month, and only broadcast after the organizer agreed not to even mention *Ulysses*.[29] In the Russian emigré press, too, intellectuals such as Fyodor Stepun decried the fact that the names of Joyce, Proust, and André Gide were mentioned more often in conversation by young Russian emigrés than the "greatest Russian names."[30]

Joyce's work was criticized harshly by official speakers at the First All-Union Congress of Soviet Writers in August 1934, as was interest in him from Soviet writers, but it was actually only after this that complete translations of episodes, and the first attempt to translate the whole novel, began to appear in Russian. This was likely a result of the acknowledgement, even by those critical of Joyce like Radek, that no one had read *Ulysses* and effectively could not, since there were no Russian translations and few editions available in other languages.

In his closing address to the Congress, party activist and critic Karl Radek put the question simply in his title: "James Joyce or Socialist Realism?" The text of his speech indicates that the choice was more complicated, and that he saw the choice as between socialist realism and two different false paths, that of James Joyce on the one hand and Marcel Proust on the other.[31] As

[29] Robert H. Deming, ed., *James Joyce: The Critical Heritage*, vol. 1, 1907–27 (London and New York: Routledge, 1970), 24.
[30] As cited by Galin Tihanov in "Russian Emigré Literary Criticism and Theory between the World Wars," in Dobrenko and Tihanov, *A History of Russian Literary Theory and Criticism: The Soviet Age and Beyond*, 153.
[31] *Pervyi vsesoiuznyi s"ezd sovetskikh pisatelei 1934: stenograficheskii otchet*, 315–18.

we saw in the previous chapter, Dos Passos' "path" was also a vexing question for critics and an enticing one for readers and writers, which demanded a discussion of whether writers with a revolutionary outlook could safely make use of formalist techniques.

Nonetheless, it was Joyce and his novel *Ulysses* that drew the most attention, sparking a lengthy debate before, during and after the Congress. Two separate translation projects began to be published after the Congress, one in Leningrad and the other in Moscow. It was *Ulysses* that provoked the greatest number of critical responses, with leading Soviet and Russian critics weighing in on the novel not only on its artistic merits but also on its ideological and cultural significance for the Soviet projects of world literature, socialist realism, and, explicitly or implicitly, world revolution. The debates over Joyce there and in other fora, as Katerina Clark writes, "illustrate the general point that one cannot set up a binary of Party writers versus dissident highbrow intellectuals as supporters of Western literature and modernism."[32] However, beyond deconstructing old familiar binaries, Anglophone and (some) Russian writing on this history has mostly considered the critiques of the anti-modernist Soviet writers either prima facie absurd or tragically confused, while a second approach has been to reconstruct the history without engaging the aesthetic and philosophical assumptions in the critiques.[33]

To Be or Not to Be: Karl Radek or James Joyce?

[32] Clark, *Moscow, the Fourth Rome: Stalinism, Cosmopolitanism, and the Evolution of Soviet Culture, 1931-1941*, 162.

[33] Gleb Struve addresses these debates in passing: Struve, *Russian Literature under Lenin and Stalin, 1917-1953*. Cornwell, *James Joyce and the Russians*. Svetlana Nikolaevna Stepura, 'Shestoi epizod romana Dzh. Dzhoisa "Uliss" v russkom perevode 1934 g.', *Vestnik Kostromskogo Universiteta im. N. A. Nekrasova* 20, no. 3, 2014, 173–76. Sergey Horujy's 2015 book provides a valuable history and inside look from his perspective as a translator and philosopher: Khoruzhii, *'Uliss' v russkom zerkale*. The story itself is extremely interesting, and has inspired multiple articles in Russian popular media, including a recent article by one of Russia's greatest contemporary novelists: Mikhail Shishkin, 'Bol'she, chem Dzhois', *Colta*, 13 January 2019, https://www.colta.ru/articles/literature/20202-bolshe-chem-dzhoys.

Karl Radek spoke at the Congress of the Union of Soviet Writers, its first such plenary gathering, and delivered a condemnation of *Ulysses* which seemed to consign it to the trash heap of history. This, at least, is how it has often been described, and how Sergei Eisenstein described this speech soon after.[34] There can be hardly any doubt that this was its intention, although not its only one: Radek also rejects Marcel Proust and John Dos Passos as models for the Socialist Realist writers, although at much less length and with less opprobrium. In actuality, it is only after this speech, which presented the assembled Soviet and sympathizing foreign writers with the choice, "James Joyce or Socialist Realism?," that the means to approach this question began to actually appear regularly in the Soviet press. It was therefore an end that was also a beginning. But as the main node of the reception of these three writers in the Soviet Union at a time of heightened party intervention and meddling in literary affairs, it is first worth considering the reasons why Radek saw Joyce as a poor model for socialist realist writers, and, indeed, what role the critique of Joyce and other Western writers, who only actually occupy only a small part of Radek's speech, actually played in Radek's conception of socialist realism.

First, for background, let us review Radek's place in the Communist Party of the Bolsheviks of 1934, and the stark choices he was facing and making himself. In the 1920s, Radek had suffered several dramatic setbacks and defeats in his career as a revolutionary organizer, activist, journalist and diplomat after a brief moment in the sun. By the time he gave this speech, this formerly committed organizer for world revolution in the Central Committee and Comintern of the 1920s had publicly capitulated to Stalin, denounced Trotsky as a counterrevolutionary and recanted all his own previous praise for him as erroneous, and proclaimed his support for building 'socialism in one country'. He was a well-read revolutionary who seems to have been prone to unruly outbursts and drastic shifts in opinion, which led both Lenin and Trotsky, at different times, to hold back from fully trusting him as a comrade. Stalin had once said of Radek's notorious wit:

[34] Tall, 'Eisenstein on Joyce: Sergei Eisenstein's Lecture on James Joyce at the State Institute of Cinematography, November 1, 1934', 137.

"Most men's heads control their tongues; Radek's tongue controls his head."[35] Rosa Luxemburg had defined him differently: "Radek belongs to the category of whore. Anything can happen with him around, and it is therefore much better to keep him at a safe distance."[36] Although Radek had been a supporter of Trotsky and expelled from the party in 1927 for his activity with the Left Opposition, but had an opportunistic change of heart in 1929 and by the beginning of 1934 had managed to ingratiate himself with Stalin sufficiently to act as a spokesman for the Party, especially in international matters, where, as one of the few representatives of the pre-revolutionary generation of Social Democrats with international ties remaining in Stalin's circle, and a talented polemicist, he could be particularly effective. As Warren Lerner writes in his classic biography:

> The "new" Radek never questioned official policies or criticized the leadership, but his articles contained enough of the old wit and originality to add some interest to what had become an extremely monolithic and boring press.[37]

Radek's role as a mouthpiece for Stalin at the Writer's Congress was preceded by three publications which returned him first to Stalin's ear and then to the public eye after his ouster as a Trotskyite. The first was an article in 1929 attacking Boris Pil'niak's novel *Mahogany*, in which Radek expressed a view he would reiterate 5 years later at the Writers' Congress and which would be a hallmark of the state's view of artistic expression under Stalinism and socialist realism: "freedom of expression must be subordinated to the goal of the liberation of the masses and not to individual liberty."[38] Then, in 1934, he published two significant articles, one abroad and one in the Soviet press. The

[35] Warren Lerner, *Karl Radek: The Last Internationalist* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1970), 154.
[36] Peter Nettl, *Rosa Luxemburg* (Frankfurt, Vienna, Zurich: Büchergilde Gutenberg, 1965), 453.
[37] Lerner, *Karl Radek: The Last Internationalist*, 155.
[38] Radek, "Der Streit um Pilnjak," *Moskauer Rundschaus*, no. 24, October 20, 1929, quoted from Jean-François Fayet, *Karl Radek (1885-1939): biographie politique* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2004), 652. As Fayet explains, Radek and Pil'niak been relatively close friends, and, sharing in common a love of the German language, had continued to write to one another even during their respective periods of disgrace. Stalin liked to "test the loyalty" of former Oppositionists by having them attack their comrades and friends: ibid., 651. For more on the connection between Radek and Pil'niak, see: 'O tvorcheskom otchete Borisa Pil'niaka', *Istochnik*, no. 6, 1999, 142–53; Vitaly Shentalinsky, *The KGB's Literary Archive*, ed. and trans. John Crowfoot (London: The Harvill Press, 1997), 143–50.

former was in the American journal *Foreign Affairs*, emphasizing the Soviet Union's willingness to work with capitalist countries within the existing international legal frameworks and downplaying any desire on the part of the USSR to agitate or support revolutions in other countries.[39] Simultaneously, he published a long panegyric to Stalin in the year's first issue of *Pravda* entitled "The Architect of Soviet Society," subtitled fantastically as the "Ninth Lecture of a Course on the Victory of Socialism Delivered in the Year 1967 at the School of Interplanetary Communications on the 50th Anniversary of the October Revolution."[40] As Lerner writes, the "obvious insincere idolatry" of his praise of Stalin was "completely out of keeping with Radek's character,"[41] and one cannot help wondering whether the gambit, framed so clearly as a fantasy, is not an absurd joke, delivered in pure dead pan, intended to be enjoyed perhaps only by the select few. There are, certainly, indications of this possibility in the text. When Radek writes as the fictional lecturer of 1967, he compares the idea of "socialism in one country" to a saying of the Russian satirist Mikhail Saltykov-Shchedrin about small-scale liberal reforms under tsarism—ultimately rejecting this comparison, but its logic, deeply based in historical Marxist theory, is never refuted:

> Radek too (then a follower of Rosa Luxemburg), found the building of socialism in a single country just as ridiculous as Shchedrin found the notion of a benevolent governor establishing liberalism in a single district of tsarist Russia. Radek based his argument on a schematic conception of the international nature of the labor movement, holding that separate national units could not solve the basic problems of the proletarian revolution independently because they were too weak as compared with international capital.[42]

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[39] Karl Radek, 'The Bases of Soviet Foreign Policy', *Foreign Affairs* 12, no. 2, January 1934, 193–206.
[40] Karl Radek, 'Zodchii sotsialisticheskogo obshchestva', *Pravda*, 1 January 1934, 3–4. Reprinted in Karl Radek, *Portrety i pamflety*, vol. 2 (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo 'Khudozhestvennaia literatura', 1934), 5–31. English translation in Karl Radek, *Portraits and Pamphlets* (London: Wishart Books LTD, 1935), 1–34.
[41] Lerner, *Karl Radek: The Last Internationalist*, 160. Also see Jim Tuck, *Engine of Mischief: An Analytical Biography of Karl Radek* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1998), 110–20.
[42] Radek, *Portraits and Pamphlets*, 7.

It is seductive to look for such hints of a subversive reading, as some of his biographers have done, but ultimately impossible to prove anything of the kind with any certainty.[43] And yet the nature of the questions he posed about socialist realism reveals the impossibility of the choice he asked Soviet writers to make.

This was one of the first articles in the Soviet press dedicated almost entirely to the adulation of Stalin, previous praise of the "Leader" having been incidental to the pieces in which it appeared, and, as such, Radek can be fully considered one of the founding authors of Stalin's cult of personality. He praises Stalin's accomplishments and foresight and poses the question of the "construction of socialism in one country" as one of "Socialism: To Be or Not to Be" (*Byt' ili ne byt' sotsializmu*)—the phrase is even the heading for the crucial section in which he adopts Stalin's revisionist reading of Lenin, and, as we will see, this Hamletian thinking is symptomatic of the way he addresses the problems of "socialist realism" as well.

His speech at the 1st All-Russian Writers' Congress should be seen as part of this trajectory: the remarks of an opportunistic spokesman relaying his version of a Stalinist position, but remarks which are also those of an intellectual who cannot suppress his own originality, taste and ego while doing this dubious duty. Entitled "Contemporary World Literature and the Tasks of Proletarian

[43] One is also tempted to hear a slight irony in what could be a paraphrase of Pushkin's Salieri in the description of young Stalin, "who threw himself avidly into the study of the algebra of revolution from a young age" ("…s zhadnost'iu brosivshiisia v rannei molodosti na izuchenie algebry revoliutsii"): Radek, *Portrety i pamflety*, 2:13. Compare Saleri's opening monologue in *Mozart and Salieri*: "I dissected music like a corpse. I tested harmony with algebra": A. S. Pushkin, 'Motsart i Sal'eri', in *Sobranie sochinenii v 10 tomakh*, ed. D. D. Blagoi et al., vol. 4: Evgenii Onegin; Dramaticheskie proizvedeniia (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo khudozhestvennoi literatury, 1960), 332. Of course, the idea of the "science of Marxism," and thus, as well, an "algebra of revolution" is unlikely to have seemed to be comparably absurd to an orthodox Marxist like Radek. Other biographers consider it unlikely that Radek would be so reckless: Fayet notes that this assumes a lucidity and courage on Radek's part that is rather extraordinary; Gutjahr recalls that, much earlier, Lenin had criticized the ambiguity of Radek's prose and that any reader could derive whatever they wanted from his articles: Fayet, *Karl Radek (1885-1939): biographie politique*, 646–47; Wolf-Dietrich Gutjahr, *Revolution muss sein: Karl Radek, die Biographie* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2012), 804; Iurii Fel'shtinskii and G. I. Cherniavskii, *Karl Radek: Povest' o beschislennykh oblich'iakh revoliutsionera, diplomata i publitsista, politika i politikana, tsinika i ostroslova, oppozitsionera i kholopa* (Moscow: Knizhnyi klub Knigovek, 2019), 350.

Art," it was delivered on the morning of August 24th, 134 at the 12th session of the Congress, taking up the entirety of the session, while the discussion of it took up the remaining two sessions of the day and lasted well into the following day. It is divided into seven sections, which are generally ignored in discussions of his judgement on Joyce: "1. World Literature and the War," "2. World Literature and the October Revolution," "3. The Crisis of Capitalism and the Rupture in World Literature [*raskol mirovoi literatury*]," "4. Between Proletarian Literature and Fascism," "5. Fascism and Literature," "6. The Birth of Revolutionary and Proletarian Literature," "7. James Joyce or Socialist Realism?"[44] Archival records show that it had been personally approved in advance by both Stalin and Kaganovich, and almost without any editorial intervention.[45] The work was then Radek's own. In Lerner's view, Radek "could consider himself completely rehabilitated" after making this speech, which, however, would be his last major achievement and address—Kirov's murder in December 1934 would begin the chain of arrests, trials and executions that brought Radek's own trial for treason and eventual death in 1939.

In scholarship that addresses Radek's critique of Joyce, the rest of the speech is universally ignored.[46] Radek, after all, was not a critic, but an activist, a revolutionary, and, by this point,

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[44] Karl Radek, 'Doklad Karla Radeka "Sovremennaia literatura i zadachi proletarskogo iskusstva"', in *Pervyi vsesoiuznyi s"ezd sovetskikh pisatelei 1934: stenograficheskii otchet* (Moscow, 1934), 291–318. Like his panegyric to Stalin, this speech was deemed important enough to receive a stand-alone publication: An English translation can be found in: H. G. Scott, ed., *Problems of Soviet Literature; Reports and Speeches at the First Soviet Writers' Congress* (New York: International Publishers, 1935). Also reprinted in: Karl Radek, 'Contemporary World Literature and the Tasks of Proletarian Art', in *Soviet Writers' Congress 1934*, by Maxim Gorky et al. (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1977), 73–182.

[45] Only Kaganovich made any notations in the text at all, a single question mark at the point where Radek wrote about the readiness of "the bourgeois writers of the world to accept fascism": RGASPI, f. 558, op. 11, ed. khr. 792, l. 83, as cited in Fel'shtinskii and Cherniavskii, *Karl Radek: Povest' o beschislennykh oblich'iakh revoliutsionera, diplomata i publitsista, politika i politikana, tsinika i ostroslova, oppozitsionera i kholopa*, 355.

[46] Struve, *Russian Literature under Lenin and Stalin, 1917-1953*, 275; Cornwell, *James Joyce and the Russians*, 103–6. Struve's book understandably mentions the episode in passing, and Cornwell's review of the subsequent discussion of Radek's speech at the congress inspired the deeper look at the transcript undertaken here. Although the old English biographies do not dwell on the congress in much detail either, each of the major biographies written since the turn of the millennium have focused on various aspects that majorly contribute to a reconstruction of the context in general and for Radek in particular: Lerner, *Karl Radek: The Last Internationalist*, 160–61; Tuck, *Engine of*

something of an apparatchik, and his literary pronouncements are not chiefly driven by aesthetic considerations. But this does not at all mean that he was indifferent to literature and high culture. In fact, he was converted to democratic socialism through classic Polish nationalist literature. His speech at the Writers' Congress may not be a fair consideration of the possible place of Joyce or Western modernism in the Soviet Union, but it shows what the range of Radek's interest in literature is, and what the speech itself was intended to prove.

The first several sections of the speech make it quite clear that Radek was much more interested in the literary reception of the Russian Revolution, Bolshevism and the Soviet Union than he was in the fine points of literary style. To the extent that writers and literary works are mentioned at all in most of his speech, it is only to note their positions vis-à-vis the Great War, the Russian Revolution, capitalism and socialism or the Bolsheviks: for the most part, in his view, a series of failures on the part of contemporary writers to act in solidarity with the epochal change of the Russian Revolution. Here, Radek sticks to the "material of their declarations," the public and journalistic statements of writers which Leites, writing on Proust and then Dos Passos in 1933, had seen as superficial. But he does not exactly fail to engage with the literary treatments of the war. Focusing on their pacifism, Radek faults the writers for failing to adequately describe or resist the war, or for their inability to see the class nature of their perception of the Russian revolution, a reception that Radek criticizes severely. He identifies the root of this failure with the perspective of bourgeois literature generally, its individual focus and inability to encompass the social on a mass scale:

> But even the best of writers, those who not only did not set themselves the goal of deceiving the popular masses through their writing, but who wanted to warn them, like [Stefan] Zweig, were only able to depict the world through teary [*slezami zalitye*] eyes, were

Mischief: An Analytical Biography of Karl Radek, 124–26; Fayet, *Karl Radek (1885-1939): biographie politique*, 652–55; Gutjahr, *Revolution muss sein: Karl Radek, die Biographie*, 817–31; Fel'shtinskii and Cherniavskii, *Karl Radek: Povest' o beschislennykh oblich'iakh revoliutsionera, diplomata i publitsista, politika i politikana, tsinika i ostroslova, oppozitsionera i kholopa*, 353–57.

> only able to depict the fate of a human grain of sand [*sud'bu chelovecheskoi peschinki*] caught in the vortex of the events of the war, powerless and helpless.[47]

Radek notes that "[e]ven Dos Passos, a major revolutionary American writer, lost in contemplation of the small bubbles of protest that rose up in the souls of petty bourgeois intellectuals, overlooked the hurricane that swept over the French army."[48] Even sympathetic (or sympathizing, in the classic Communist sense) Western writers, like Zweig and Dos Passos, were unable to adequately portray the scale of the war, and, due to their class position, in Radek's view, failed to look beyond individual protagonists or to see organized pacifism beyond the ranks of other petty bourgeois intellectuals. While he praises Erich Maria Remarque's popular *All Quiet on the Western Front* (*Im Westen nichts Neues*, 1929, which had already been publicly burned in Nazi Germany for degeneracy in 1933) for its "great depictions of the destruction of nations [*narodov*] by the forces of war," it too becomes the subject of criticism for the failure to "provide a picture of the nascent rebellions against the war," as does its sequel, *The Way Back* (*Der Weg Zurück,* 1931), where the protagonist, returning home from the war to become a school teacher, can only express his opposition to the war and the political and economic status quo with an all-consuming cynicism.

In this, Radek was levying a critique of Remarque that will emerge again and again in the literary views of critics intellectually and institutionally close to Stalin-era Communism, whether the subject of that criticism is a more popular writer like Remarque or Hans Fallada or more unusual modernist writers like Joyce, Kafka, Proust or Beckett: the failure to see beyond their own characters' imprisonment in their conditions and to provide a way out or a solution—specifically, of course, a Marxist-Leninist solution. The conclusion is always that the protagonist, and author, has either purposefully or carelessly overlooked the glaringly obvious omnipresence of the revolutionary movement, and this could have been avoided if the author had had a class status closer to the working masses or, perhaps sufficient intellectual engagement in Marxism. A more

[47] Radek, 'Doklad Karla Radeka "Sovremennaia literatura i zadachi proletarskogo iskusstva"', 293.
[48] Ibid.

open reading of how specifically works with those limitations came to be popular or critical successes under contemporary historical conditions was impossible, it seems, not only for someone like Radek to consider—as a Party functionary—but also for theoretically more sophisticated thinkers like György Lukács. Lukács would dismiss Joyce and Proust in a single parenthesis in his 1936 article, "Narrate or Describe."[49] His search for the right form of story-telling, Lukács brings in an Aristotelian telos: as Aristotle defined a knife as a tool with a specific purpose, Lukács considers the story-telling style of Tolstoy versus Zola and "(Proust, Joyce)" (the "highest level of development of subjectivism") against the criterion of human use. Lukács finds that it is Tolstoy's relationship to other human beings and the striving towards understanding the good life, the good society, that ultimately determines his perspective, a perspective that allows us, the reader, to properly evaluate the moral significance of the tale told—unlike Zola, who confounds the reader with a mass of facts. Long past the 1930s, Lukács would find this view of modernism compelling, writing as late as 1963, "It is clear, I think, that modernism must deprive literature of a sense of *perspective*."[50] This orienting perspective, for Lukács as for Radek, is not a historically and materially determined development—as historical materialism would seem to demand, indeed, as Lenin himself had long ago argued for Tolstoy in "Tolstoy as a Mirror of the Russian Revolution."[51] This perspective is a *choice*. Joyce, and others, had failed by refusing to make the choice of taking up a global, historical perspective.

In his overview of the literature of fascism, Radek argues that the current political situation presents authors with a choice. The "proletarian revolution" itself announced to artists that their work could not avoid expressing the position and striving of one class or another, but artists, in their "overwhelming majority, answered: 'This doesn't concern me'." But in no uncertain terms, while "burning books in the squares of Berlin, fascism says to world literature: choose."[52] And this

[49] Georgii Lukach, "Rasskaz ili opisanie,' *Literaturnyi kritik*, no. 8, 65.
[50] György Lukács, *The Meaning of Contemporary Realism* (London: Merlin Press, 1963), 33.
[51] First published in *Proletarii* no. 35, September 11 (24), 1908.
[52] Ibid, 304.

choice, which for Radek, was first presented by the 'proletarian' revolution, and whose line is drawn definitively by fascism, is stark, between night and day: "There are no intermediate positions, there is no 'left' fascism that could protect democracy and the popular masses. There is either proletarian revolution or fascism."[53] Later, Radek returns to the impossibility of any deviation from the "general line of the Communist Party," spelling out even more clearly that no author can support the "army" of the revolution, the proletariat and the party without the "internal unity and internal discipline" that makes a fighting army capable of winning battles:

> If one considers the history of the struggle against the general line of the Communist Party, then all those who fought against it at various stages (I myself belong to this group), who thought: After all, we agree with the party in everything fundamental, we only want it to allow us our freedom in the details; but these details consisted in our not understanding the role of the peasantry, not understanding the role of the enslaved peoples—huge decisive questions for the fate of the revolution—and not understanding that our differences were not differences without a distinction, but differences in something fundamental [*nashi raskhozhdeniia byli raskhozhdeniiami ne v ottenkakh, a v samom osnovnom*], and that behind these differences stood the interests of another class.[54]

Radek's remarks here bear a direct relationship to the USSR's and Comintern's 'Third Period' analysis and strategy as a response to the rise of German fascism, which claimed that the German Social Democratic Party, along with other parties from the defunct Second International, was actually 'social fascism,' or, in Stalin's words: "Social-Democracy is objectively the moderate wing of fascism."[55] And this stark definition of the ideological enemies of the revolutionary movement and the USSR, as existential and determining as a kind of 'To be or not to be?', this 'either one or the other', underlies all approaches to literature that define themselves, however tangentially, within the perspective of revolutionary literature within the Soviet Union of this period. For Radek, in any case, there can be little doubt about this. This does not need to be seen as a decree from on

[53] Ibid.
[54] Ibid., 312-13.
[55] Joseph. V. Stalin, "Concerning the International Situation," *Bolshevik* no. 11, September 20, 1924, in J. Stalin, *Works*, vol. 6 (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1953), 294.

high, an imposition of groupthink on authors, so much as a logical outgrowth of the Soviet Union's encirclement. For figures like Radek, with an entire lifetime of dedication to a movement that, by this time, was very much on the defensive, the choice to accept this rigid definition of the forces of good and evil in the world may not have felt as odious or absurd as it may seem from the outside and with historical perspective.

But Radek's insistent return to Hamlet bears mention. Besides the cases brought up here, there are two essays Radek wrote in the early 1930s in which *Hamlet* figures: First, a review of a play by Iury Olesha in which a female character identifies with Hamlet and figures as a modern version of him (*Spisok blagodeianii*—"A List of Good Deeds"); second, a production of *Hamlet* at the Vakhtangov Theater.[56] In the latter, Radek writes that Hamlet is a hero who hesitates, torn between the feudal familial responsibilities to revenge and… well, here Radek himself does not identify the antithesis: one presumes bourgeois responsibilities, but in what sense? Contractual? Responsibilities to the family as the social unit for the accumulation of wealth? He is more concerned with distinguishing between a bourgeois and a Marxist reading of Hamlet. In the former, Hamlet is "a universal, eternal human category," while for the Marxist critic, Hamlet is a "monument to an epoch, an epoch of rupture, the replacement of the old with the new."[57] Note here that Radek is not so quick to draw the additional distinction one might expect, namely that Hamlet is a monument to the early modern period, as Marx found monuments to French society under the Restoration the characters of Balzac. Instead, Radek seems to want to suggest both that Hamlet represents the specificity of a "type from the sixteenth century from the period of the beginning of the Reformation" and a type with some universal appeal, although less than the bourgeois critic would allow, as a figure between epochs, whose will and ability to act is broken by the contradictory demands of past and present. As a repeated touchstone for a figure like Radek,

[56] "Kak Vsevolod Meerkhol'd popal v Gamlety i kak Zhirofle-Zhiroflia nachali stroit' sotsializm" (1931) and "Po povodu postanovki 'Gamleta'" (1932), each reprinted in Radek, *Portrety i pamflety*, 2:174–81 and 182–88, respectively.
[57] Radek, 2:185–86.

who more than one commentator has suspected of writing encrypted messages after his capitulation to Stalin, one reading must certainly be that he saw himself as a kind of Hamlet, with his "spiritual father" (the world revolution, internationalism, some vision of social democracy, or much more simply, Trotsky) murdered by Uncle Joe, acting as a dutiful "son" and waiting for his moment of revenge. And certainly no less applicable is the use of Hamlet to describe the generation born before the revolution, especially these "bourgeois" writers, fellow travelers, with one foot in each epoch, torn between the obligations to an old system of values and demands and the new. Radek, like Hamlet, put off answering his own question. Perhaps because he understood, as Trotsky had said of him in 1929, that, having joined the Stalinists, "he will not be able to live with them. He is too much of a Marxist for that, and, above all, too much of an internationalist."[58] Perhaps Trotsky's observation was not quite right. Radek's thinking was fixed in the terms of Marxist dialectics, but always ended in the "either/or" of the polemicist, always the choice between two stark options—thesis and antithesis, without their harmonizing synthesis.

Nonetheless, Radek's speech is much more rooted in historical materialist dialectics than is typical for the Congress and in the Soviet press. For example, the speech given by Maxim Gorky at the opening of the congress, which focuses instead on the decadence of "bourgeois literature" in the first decades of the twentieth century, limits his diagnosis to the "cynicism" and "blindness" of individual writers. Radek does not directly link this vision of the historical role of talent and conviction with what he eventually says about Western authors such as Joyce, Proust or Dos Passos—the tactical orientation of the party line, as often happens when Marxist theory combines with political power, leaves little room for such nuances—but it does put some of the things he says about Joyce into a clearer light, especially one of the most quoted lines from the speech:

> What is the basic feature of Joyce? His basic feature is the conviction that there is nothing big in life—no big events, no big people, no big ideas; and the writer can give a picture of life by just taking "any given hero on any given day," and reproducing him with exactitude.

[58] Leon Trotsky, "Karl Radek and the Opposition," *The Militant*, vol. 2, no. 12, August 1, 1929, as cited in: https://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/1929/03/radek.htm.

> A heap of dung, crawling with worms, shot by a movie camera through a microscope – there's Joyce for you [59]

This pungent line about microscope, movie camera and dung became almost famous, perhaps another example of Radek's wit as, in Stalin's words, a tongue in control of a head. The image seems to owe something to the Hades episode of *Ulysses* ("But they must breed a devil of a lot of maggots. Soil must be simply swirling with them," thinks Bloom at the cemetery).[60] The analogy depended on a faulty logic, as the German writer Wieland Herzfelde would point out during the Congress and Sergei Eisenstein would note in a later lecture to students—like a man complaining to a scientist that of course cells aren't so large as the microscope projects them. But it was more about making the dung stick to Joyce. Radek did not understand the specifics of Joyce's novel or the literary context in which it fit. He sets *Ulysses* as taking place in 1916 during the Easter Rising, and faults Joyce for ignoring it. And yet it is hard to find too much fault with Radek's judgement of *Ulysses* on the whole. If one keeps in mind the role of conviction for Radek outlined above, one must grant him the point that the novel, and Joyce's work generally and intentionally avoids addressing any "big ideas" head on, which, for better or for worse, is part of its strategy of representation. To the extent that Irish nationalism and general social questions appear in the novel, they are treated symbolically: Bloom's schemes for "social regeneration" in Circe and he discussion of "social inequality" and "arbitrary classes" in Ithaca are not programmatic but personal, and the function of the antisemitic nationalist figure in the Cyclops, while it may be to directly satirize nationalist ideas, works by the association of specific social ideas with noxious personal qualities rather than by an explicitly ideological or philosophical discussion. "Big ideas" are even explicitly rejected in one of the programmatic dialogues, Stephen's office chat with the school principal, Mr Deasy ("I fear those big words… which make us so unhappy").[61]

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[59] Ibid., 316.
[60] James Joyce, *Ulysses* (New York: Vintage Books, 1990), 109.
[61] Ibid., 31.

Radek decries the Irishman's novel as small-minded, wallowing, like Proust's descriptions of more socially privileged characters, in the minutiae of Lilliputian human lives, too far from the panorama of history, zooming in too closely on the irrelevant thoughts and imperfections of a little man:

> Even when the artist depicts the great in the small, when he wants to show the world in a drop of water, in the destinies of one small man, he cannot accomplish his task without having in his brain an image of the movement of the entire world.[62]

Yet of course this misses the world that *is* present in *Ulysses*. From the early Zionist movement in Palestine, to the spread of disease through globalized trade (in Mr Deasy's letter to the newspaper on foot and mouth disease), to the omnipresence of current affairs and ineluctability of history even in sleepy Dublin, where an Irish nationalist and the converted son of a Hungarian Jew enter a bar and find themselves in a heated argument about internationalism, to Stephen being attacked by a British soldier in the nighttown episode, *Ulysses* has every right to be seen as a novel in which the "movement of the entire world" actually does play a significant role. Nevertheless, being written during the years of European turmoil in the Great War and the first wave of revolutionary unrest, and set in the relative historical calm of 1904, and with its own historical reference point—Joyce's meeting Nora Barnacle—never takes place for his alter ego, Stephen Dedalus, Radek is not wrong to identify *Ulysses* as a book marked by the pregnant absence of history and politics as forces which move, or are moved by, any of Joyce's characters. The entrances of the "world" into the novel are not magnified, the characters' stance in relation to that world are not suggested to be relevant, while flies copulating on a windowpane are magnified, and stasis holds over agency in Bloom's marital crisis and Stephen's homelessness and profligacy. What might most convincingly be called stylistically revolutionary in *Ulysses* is a kind of radical voyeurism which finds freedom in perception where there is none in action, whether Stephen's transformations in "Proteus" or

[62] Radek, 'Doklad Karla Radeka "Sovremennaia literatura i zadachi proletarskogo iskusstva"', 317.

Bloom's musings in "Calypso." The authors which Soviet writers could stand to learn from, argued Radek, were Balzac and Tolstoy, and not Joyce.

In both the West and in the Soviet Union, this was interpreted by many as the end of the road for anyone in the Soviet Union interested in Joyce, Proust or Dos Passos. This was certainly the impression of some in the immediate aftermath of the congress. And yet a "friendly" caricature published soon after even depicted Radek holding a book with Joyce's name on it, was it *Ulysses*?

Fig. 4.2: Speakers at the First All-Russian Congress of Writers in a newspaper caricature. From left to right: S. Marshak, P. Yudin, V. Stavskii, N. Tikhonov, K. Radek, V. Kirpotin, M. Gorky, V. Kirshon, N. Bukharin, N. Pogodin, A. Tolstoy (RGALI, f. 2196, op. 2, ed. khr. 119, l. 1, 1934)

Perhaps you couldn't write like him, but reading him might, after all, be necessary. Even Radek's speech contains a Hamletian ambivalence in its judgement of writing on the cusp of epochs—which he certainly believed his time to be—contradicting the more axiomatic and authoritarian directives of his speech. In 1972 Gleb Struve wrote: "Radek, not yet 'exposed' as an agent of Hitler and an enemy of the Soviet Union, was speaking as an official representative of the party, and his

verdict on Joyce, Proust, Dos Passos bore the stamp of finality. Soviet writers accepted it in silence, or even joined in the attack."[63] But Soviet writers did not accept it in silence, as we will see, and even when they "joined in the attack," their words were often ambiguous and contained Aesopian language, subversive to the officially condoned reading.

Nor was this the end of the discussion, which only began with Radek's speech and continued the rest of that day and the next. In his overview of Radek's speech and the discussion of Joyce at the congress, Neil Cornwell notes that Radek's speech was not the whole story of these Western writers in either the short or in the longer term. Objections were raised by several Soviet and foreign participants, including an member of the Bloomsbury Group in attendance, Amabel Williams-Ellis, who both defended the social nature of Joyce's novel and mentions other English writers of note, including Virginia Woolf, E. M. Forster and Vita Sackville-West. Cornwell covers these objections in some detail: Among them was the writer Vishnevsky, who had earlier argued for reading and translating Joyce in the Soviet press under the logic of "know your enemy," and the German writer Wieland Herzfelde, who objected and argued for Joyce's technical innovations on the basis of Radek's false analogy.[64] Similar points had been made in the previous years before by Soviet writers and translators, as we saw in the last chapter with Miller-Budnitskaya and Stenich. Perhaps the most effective intervention was made by Sergei Tretyakov, the former Futurist poet and constructivist playwright, who edited the journal *International Literature*. Tretyakov diplomatically called for the novel's translation:

> A word about Joyce. There is a heated argument about him. Some defend [him], others find fault [with him]. Vishnevsky says he's remarkable. Radek objects that he's rotten. You can argue forever, but who has actually read this book? After all, it hasn't been translated or printed.[65]

[63] Struve, *Russian Literature under Lenin and Stalin, 1917-1953*, 275.
[64] Cornwell, *James Joyce and the Russians*, 105–6.
[65] *Pervyi vsesoiuznyi s"ezd sovetskikh pisatelei 1934: stenograficheskii otchet*, 345–46.

Radek rejected Herzfelde's remarks in the strongest terms, calling them "dangerous," and insisting that ultimately no one had even questioned the fundamental point about the direction of socialist realism. But he quite agreed with Tretyakov: what harm could there be in translation? Indeed, he saw it as a useful task, an indication that he, too, saw the "socialist cultural concentration" of the 1930s as capable of assimilating even something as "dangerous" as Joyce's *Ulysses*. Since the Russian version of the journal *International Literature* had already announced in 1933 that it would publish the novel in a translation by the "First Translation Collective of the Writers Union," it is possible this was as much a plea to allow a project already underway to continue.[66] I was not able to unearth any documents in the Russian archives linking these discussions to the publication of episodes in Stenich's translation and, separately, about half of the novel in the Russian edition of *International Literature*, but a connection between them is at least plausible.

Following the Congress, some believed that reading or learning from Joyce was no longer possible. Not participating directly in the polemic, the director Sergei Eisenstein reacted to it in his lectures to film students.[67] Eisenstein had met Joyce in 1928, knew his work and had even referred to it in some of his theoretical writing.[68] Now, at the beginning of November, 1934, he saw the consequences of Radek's speech as a loss for Soviet writers:

> After Radek's speech, Joyce was completely done for and completely removed from consideration. And now there won't be any translation and those few who have been able to read him in English and German will know him, but the broad mass of Soviet writers, who should have known him as part of their studies, are left without him.[69]

[66] Clark, *Moscow, the Fourth Rome: Stalinism, Cosmopolitanism, and the Evolution of Soviet Culture, 1931-1941*, 161.
[67] Tall, 'Eisenstein on Joyce: Sergei Eisenstein's Lecture on James Joyce at the State Institute of Cinematography, November 1, 1934'.
[68] S.M. Eisenstein, "The Cinematographic Principle of the Ideogram," in Jay Leyda, trans. and ed., *Film Form* (Harcourt, Brace and World, 1949), 28-44.
[69] Tall, 137.

He explained to his students the features of Joyce's *Ulysses*, how the techniques and styles of the novel work, placing an accent, as so many had, on the scientific aspect of Joyce's project: "In his microscopic treatment of phenomena Joyce uses for artistic purposes a method more appropriate to science. [...] If he is examining the content (that very same individual) under the microscope, then the texture of the writing winds up under the microscope as well. […] He also enlarges each stylistic possibility…"[70] *Work in Progress*, a recording from which Joyce had played for Eisenstein in Paris, he considered "a clinical case." Joyce's discoveries could only go so far as text, indeed they required, in Eisenstein's opinion, cinematic treatment in order to be properly realized: "Formally Joyce went as far as literature could go. […] From Joyce the next leap is to film, where it's much easier" to show the progress of someone's inner struggle—and here Eisenstein gives the example of people reacting to the organization of kolkhozes.[71]

Eisenstein was yet another Soviet intellectual who saw in Joyce's work techniques and artistic technology that could be assimilated and appropriated for further use. Like most of them, he considered Joyce to be limited by his unquestioned bourgeois perspective, a shortcoming which politically conscious Soviet artists, like himself, could overcome and improve upon: "But here it's typical that Joyce, as a bourgeois artist, doesn't see beyond the surface of phenomena."[72] For him, handling Joyce's materials and borrowing from them presented no risk of metaphysical or political contamination: "Our task is to think through the next step in the process of dynamic understanding." More than that, he had already studied *Ulysses* and believed he had learned what he needed for his own art. In many ways, Joyce's discoveries complemented, rather than augmented, Eisenstein's thinking on cinema and artistic representation. In *Ulysses*, especially, Joyce's use of compound words and the stream of consciousness resemble the idea of montage as "the collision of ideas achieving an abstract concept to be created by the reader as a part of the

[70] Ibid., 135.
[71] Ibid.
[72] Ibid., 140.

process of artistic perception," as Thomas Burkdall, and others, have argued.[73] The links between their work, like the links between Dos Passos and Vertov, are rich and undeniable, though, so far, studies have limited themselves to Eisenstein's theoretical writing and statements like this lecture. No one has yet, it seems, illustrated Joycean links in Eisenstein's films following his 1928 meeting with Joyce—no doubt this is at least partially due to the tragic fates of his two major projects of the 1930s, *¡Que viva México!* (1930) and *Bezhin Meadow* (1937), of which we only have bits and pieces. The most obvious expression of his attempt to use Joyce was his proposal to film Marx's *Capital* using Joycean stream-of-consciousness, which he apparently proposed to Stalin personally. Unfortunately for posterity, Stalin was unreceptive: "This is not our task."[74]

Nor was Eisenstein alone in having already learned something from Joyce. In a fascinating new study, José Vergara has illustrated the ways in which five Russian authors responded to Joyce creatively in their fiction—three of them Soviet, a fourth born in the Soviet Union.[75] One was the writer Yury Olesha, a close friend of Stenich, who joined in the chorus of voices critical of Joyce in 1936: "The artist should say to man: 'Yes, yes, yes,' but Joyce says: 'No, no, no."[76] Vergara points out that this and other statements were likely not only "highly contrived" and deliberately ambiguous (as the above quote reverses the famous last lines of Molly Bloom's monologue), but makes the compelling argument that Olesha had already assimilated impressions of Joyce's work from the early translation of fragments in 1925 and used what he learned in his novel *Envy* (1927).

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[73] Thomas L. Burkdall, "In the Linguistic Kitchen: Joyce, Eisenstein and Cinema Language," in *Joycean Frames: Film and the Fiction of James Joyce* (New York, London: Routledge, 2001), 49-63, here 52; William F. Costanzo, "Joyce and Eisenstein: Literary Reflections on the Reel World," *Journal of Modern Literature,* 11 (1984), 175-89.

[74] *Inostrannaia literatura* 1 (1990), 179, as cited in Cornwell, *James Joyce and the Russians*, 83. Stalin's response is also mentioned by Horujy, although in neither case is there a citation of any confirming document from Eisenstein or another contemporary: Khoruzhii, *'Uliss' v russkom zerkale*, 242.

[75] José Vergara, *All Future Plunges to the Past: James Joyce in Russian Literature* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2021).

[76] Iurii Olesha, "Velikoe narodnoe iskusstvo," *Literaturnaia gazeta* 17 (March 20, 1936), 3. Quoted from Vergara, 16. As Vergara points out, Olesha further quotes Leopold Bloom's thought from episode 6 of *Ulysses* "A corpse is meat gone bad. Well and what's cheese? Corpse of milk."

Eisenstein was wrong, however, that this was the end. In the long term, of course, Joyce would again be mentioned in the Soviet press, and *Ulysses* published in full, and before that, Soviet intellectuals would read and discuss Joyce privately. But Eisenstein was also wrong about the short term. Within a year and a half of his lecture, half of the novel would be published. In these translations, the vast majority of Joyce's techniques and formal experiments were represented: stream of consciousness, compound words, symbolism, his parodies of newspaper headlines, his novel-within a novel, his lecture and play within a novel. Some of the best Russian translators in the Soviet Union provided not only an (incomplete) *Ulysses* that Soviet citizens could read but also accompanied it with contextual and explanatory material beyond what was typically available in English, French or German.

Filling the Frame: *Ulysses* in Soviet Translation

First, within days or weeks of Eisenstein's lecture appeared the sixth episode of *Ulysses* from Dos Passos' translator Valentin Stenich, who had renounced any intention of translating the novel less than two years before.[77] Then, in January 1935, the journal *International Literature* began publishing the episodes of the novel, starting from the beginning, accompanied by commentary to each episode and several stand-alone critical articles. The latter were themselves translated and published in the English versions of the journal. Stenich published two more episodes of the novel later in the year, and *International Literature* would continue to publish episodes of *Ulysses* into 1936. This alone suggests a much less bleak conclusion as a result of the Congress, at least for the years leading up to the Great Terror.

How they handled this delicate task deserves scrutiny. Cornwell and Tall do not analyze the translations or the way the episodes are presented in the publications, nor does Sergei Horujy in his more recent book, beyond a few scattered comments. Svetlana Stepura analyses Valentin

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Discussed in Chapter Three.

Stenich's 1934 translation of the sixth episode of the novel, *Hades*, without considering the discursive context around the novel in which the translation appeared, or how this may have influenced the translation, but strictly as a question of its correspondence to the original.[78] In Gerard Genette's terms, a book's title, along with other elements like commentaries or interviews, act as paratextual thresholds through which we enter the space of a work and accustom ourselves to its particular architectonics. *Ulysses* does this more pointedly than most, framing itself on the spine and its title page as standing in relation to the Homeric epic. But this is a relation the text itself does not help us pin down. In his book, Genette refers first of all to Joyce to support his argument, "...reduced to a mere text and without recourse to any other resource, how would we read the *Ulysses* of Joyce were it not entitled *Ulysses?*"[79] If it were called, *One Day in the Life of Leopold Bloom*, would this still be referred to as a modern epic, and would it require so much commentary?

To a certain extent, the answer to the latter question must be affirmative, though aspects of the Russian translations, as I argue below, try to reduce necessary commentary. Even if it were perfectly possible to read *Ulysses* without the critical commentaries that have sprung up around it, the novel already seems to require them. Insofar as the chapters have names at all, it is only by convention. The first edition of the novel had no chapter titles or even numbers. The most we get, in the recent Gabler edition, are numbers in brackets, to remind us that this is a mere convenience afforded by the editors, not the author's intent.

In Joyce criticism, the chapters are often referred to by Homeric names such as *Telemachus*, *Proteus*, *Ithaca*, *Penelope* and so on. These names all refer to the schemata that Joyce sketched for Stuart Gilbert and Carlo Linati, respectively, in 1921. The schemata present the structure of the novel as based on a number of categories, most importantly, how Joyce's episodes match up to episodes in the *Odyssey*. Joyce soon tried to distance his novel from this and eventually dismissed

[78] Svetlana Nikolaevna Stepura, "Shestoi epizod romana Dzh. Dzhoisa 'Uliss' v russkom perevode 1934 g.," *Vestnik KGU im. N.A. Nekrasova* 2014 no. 3. 173-76.
[79] Gerard Genette, *Seuils* (Paris: Éditions du seuil, 1987), 8.

this framework as a "mistake" and mere "advertising," but this did little to discredit the schemata, which are to this day one of the first things any reader of *Ulysses* encounters.

As stated earlier, Stenich's translation came first. His translation strategy seems to reflect the anxiety, expressed earlier in the discussion about Dos Passos, about whether the Soviet reader could overcome the length and density of *Ulysses*. Rather than begin his translations at the beginning of the novel, Stenich introduces readers to later, more approachable and readable episodes, anticipating the strategy recommended often over the following decades to first-time readers of *Ulysses* in Anglophone countries. First the sixth episode, Hades, appeared under the title "The Burial of Patrick Dignam," in November 1934, followed by the fourth and fifth episodes, Calypso and the Lotus Eaters, under the title "Mr Bloom's Morning," in May 1935. With these titles, Stenich or his editors had already made a small effort to avoid readers' possible confusion, giving a basic framework for the subjects of the episodes which Joyce does not provide clearly in the text. Additionally, the second translation collapses two chapters into one.

Like in his translations of Dos Passos, where Stenich had provided ample footnotes to explain historical facts and references to American everyday life, the *Ulysses* translations feature some footnotes. Through these he explains references to Irish political figures like Daniel O'Connell or untranslatable puns ("Father Coffey. I knew his name was like a coffin").[80] There are very few of them, perhaps because there are not so many references to historical information that could confuse the foreign reader, as there are in Dos Passos. The telegraphic nature of Bloom's thoughts are more of a challenge—maybe for this reason, and maybe also to avoid any political misunderstandings, a commentary was included at the end of the article by Stenich's occasional colleague, Rashel Miller-Budnitskaya. Stenich reads into the text and, rather than

[80] Joyce, *Ulysses*, 103; Dzheims Dzhois, "Pokhorony Patrika Dignema (otryvok iz 'Ulissa', perevod Valentina Stenicha, kommentarii R. Miller-Budnitskoi)," *Zvezda* 1934 no. 11, 116-143, here 128.

translating its peculiarities exactly, finds ways of approximating them. This can be seen in the very first sentence of his translation of Hades, where Joyce includes a neologism, "silkhatted":

> "Martin Cunningham, first, poked his silkhatted head into the creaking carriage and, entering deftly, seated himself."
>
> "Мартин Кэннингхэм первым всунул оцилиндренную голову в скрипучую карету и, ловко протиснувшись, уселся."

The word "silkhatted" would present a few problems to Russianization, first and foremost the similarity between "hat" (*shliapa*) and "slap" or "spank" (*shliopat'*), especially if one were to try to make a verb participle from it—it would result in a distractingly awkward, unintentionally comical phrase. Instead, Stenich turns this into Cunningham's "cylinderized" head, since "cylinider" was the normal word for the top hat in Russian. At another point on the first page with a Joycean neologism, Stenich also shifts the phrase to work better in Russian.

> "…an old woman peeping. Nose whiteflattened against the pane."
>
> "…какая-то старуха выглядывает. Нос добела приплюснут к стеклу."

In a case like this, the Russian involves no neologism at all, but uses normal words to convey the image, and Stenich embellishes the language with alliteration.

Neologisms are hardly the most important part of the text, which appear only a few times, mostly in the beginning of the chapter. What seems to have been more important, from Stenich's point of view, is that the text reads well, and his *Uliss* is probably more approachable than Joyce's, since Stenich's vocabulary is less arcane, but no less inventive. The sounds of "shliapa" and "shlëpat'," which he avoided in "silkhatted," Stenich employs effectively to render "Huggermugger in corners. Slop about in slipper-slappers for fear he'd wake":

> "Shushukaiutsia po uglam. Shmygaiut v shliopantsakh, tol'ko by ne prosnut'sia."
>
> "But they must breed a devil a lot of maggots.
>
> "Tol'ko chervei, dolzhno byt', chertovski mnogo.

And beyond the alliteration, he also captures the rhythms of the prose:

> All waited. Nothing was said…

All waited. Then wheels were heard from in front turning: then nearer: then horses' hoofs. A jolt. Their carriage began to move, creaking and swaying.

Vse zhdali. Nikto nichego ne govoril…

Vse zhdali. Potom vperedi razdalsia shum, zavertelis' kolesa. Potom bilzhe. Potom kopyta. Tolchok. Kareta dvinulas', skripia i raskachivaias.

The text repeats Joyce's sexual innuendos and literal potty humor, somewhat surprising for something to appear in Soviet print in the 1930s. When Bloom reflects on the death of his son Rudy, he remembers how the pregnancy started, inspired by his wife Molly seeing a pair of dogs having sex outside the window: "Must have been that morning in Raymond terrace she was at the window, watching the two dogs at it by the wall of the cease to do evil… Give us a touch, Poldy. God, I'm dying for it. How life begins." Stenich's Molly: "смотрела на двух собак, которые занимались у стены бросьте делать гадости… Ну-ка, Польди, давай и мы. Господи, я не выдержу. Так начинается жизнь." The description of Bloom in the outhouse in "Mr Bloom's Morning" renders the full description of his morning movement.

Understandably, Joyce's occasional unprintable expletives are removed and replaced with printable alternatives, as when Bloom, imagining Palestine as a "barren land," happens to see an old woman and he combines one idea of barrenness with another: "the grey sunken cunt of the world," which Stenich turns into the "grey sunken vagina [*vlagalishche*] of the world," using the Church Slavonic word. Other words that are printable, but not easily understandable in Russian, get paired synonyms. When Bloom tries to explain "metempsychosis" to Molly, she responds to his poetically literal answer, "transmigration of souls" (in Stenich the comparably opaque *transmigratsiia dush*) with a request to tell her in "plain words." His second explanation involves yet another fancy word, reincarnation (*reinkarnatsiia*), which would have been still less clear to Russian readers in 1935 than English readers, and Stenich helpfully renders this as "reinkarnatsiia, perevoploshcheniem": the second word uses Russian roots to better explain the idea.

Stenich treats these difficulties of language admirably. Stepura finds that in translating this episode, trying to "preserve and show the stylistic, orthographic, rhythmic and other particularities

of Joyce's novel," he also manages to show how the "fragmentary" nature of *Ulysses* works, being able to begin the story from "any point," and presenting the episode like a kind of model.[81] There is much in the episode, however, that does not present a challenge in translation but still remains a challenge to understand; the swirl of thoughts and their focus on death, the constant shifts between serious thoughts (about Bloom's deceased son, about Patrick Dignam) to humorous ones and physiologically disturbing ones. Perhaps for this reason, perhaps to guide readers on an ideological level as well, the unusual step was taken of following this translation with a short commentary by Miller-Budnitskaya.

The first full-length work of Joyce scholarship, Gilbert's *James Joyce's Ulysses: A Study,* traces these categories and their permutations across the entire novel. This set the tone of Joyce scholarship and the conversation about Joyce's novel itself as one of an arcane and learned book, to be read through a specialist lens, not to be seen and appreciated by the untrained or unaided eye. Like several other, less popular books to appear in the first two decades of the novel's existence, Gilbert's book only deals with the novel schematically. Brief summaries are combined with stretches of quotations from the novel and set against summaries of episodes of the *Odyssey*—today, one could hardly imagine such a book being published. Gilbert's book is very far from actual philological interpretation, which might tell us what it means that the daily routine of an advertising agent is juxtaposed to the long wanderings of a Greek hero (beyond the typical "heroicization of the everyday" usually offered), what it might mean for Leopold Bloom, for literature generally, or what kind of commentary that is on modern life. Nor does it address any of the more fundamental human questions of the novel: of parenthood and childhood and belonging, of perception and boredom, of love and adultery and monogamy, religion, race, nation and nationality, history and fate.

[81] Stepura, "Shestoi epizod," 175.

Exactly such hermeneutic questions appeared in the commentaries accompanying the Russian translations of the novel. In her commentary to "The Burial of Patrick Dignam," Miller-Budnitskaya begins by framing the episode as a (dark) masterpiece of world literature: "Before us opens, perhaps, some of the most pessimistic pages in world literature."[82] She compares it to Lucian's dialogue on Odysseus's journey to hell, Hamlet's gravediggers, Swift on torture by immortality, Michelangelo's poem on the grave of the Medici, the Catholic hymns of "Dies Irae" and "Miserere": such is the episode's company in world literature. She emphasizes the negativity of the work while never really putting the quality of the work into doubt, and perhaps, implicitly, puts Karl Radek's famous judgement on Joyce into doubt. She later quotes Radek's "apt" definition of Joyce's artistic technique as "photographing a heap of dung through a microscope on a film camera."[83] She emphasizes Joyce's microscopic technique while using language that recalls Stenich's remark (during the discussion of Dos Passos) comparing Joyce's novel to the achievements of great scientists, and evokes the work of Soviet avant-garde filmmakers: "Every atom of existence transforms into a microcosm, a closed, internally consistent solar system, in an orbit according to its own laws. Joyce's camera displaced the entire image. The relativity of time and space are affirmed, their reversibility and transferability. The unity of perspective is broken. The relative scale and shape of objects are distorted. The picture of the world is torn into separate shots. The laws of motion are displaced… The famous "internal monologue" of Joyce is the cinematization of the processes of thought."[84] Though she quotes from Radek's clearly negative comments, her explanation of them expands the perspective on them several times, describing them, in a progression evocative of "Ithaca," as admirable, enviable achievements. She guides readers step by step through the action, its parallels in the *Odyssey*, and gives a detailed description of how the "interior monologue" works (though hyperbolically). She focuses heavily on the

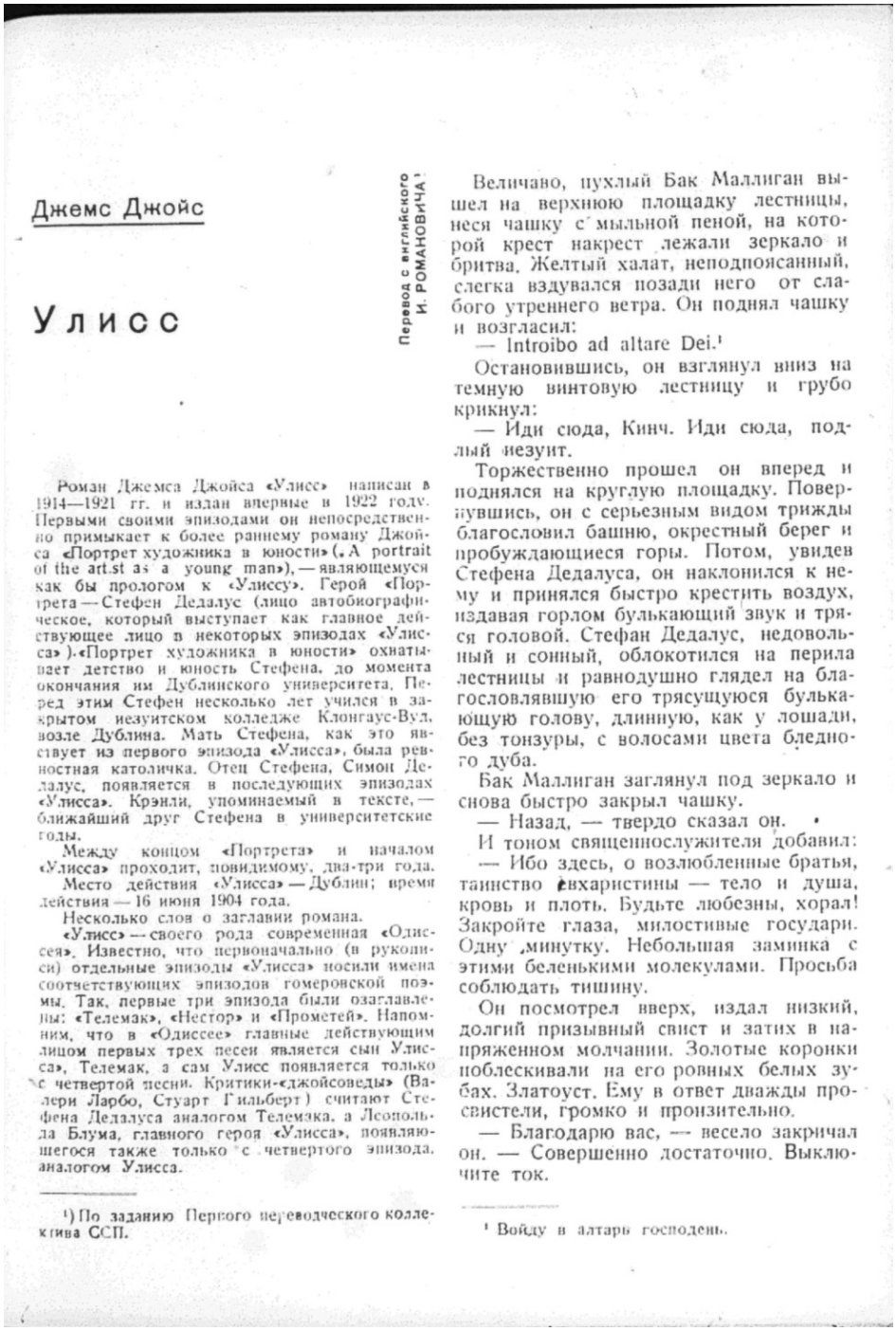
[82] Dzhois, "Pokhorony Patrika Dignema," 137-38.
[83] Ibid., 139.
[84] Ibid.

darkness of the episode, its pessimism, and does not mention its humor, but does quote, at the end, Bloom's joke: "A corpse is spoiled meat… Well, what is cheese? The corpse of milk."[85] The reader is free to decide what they think of the episode themselves, and the commentary provides several kinds of information: explanations of the various techniques and symbols to follow, the Homerian subtext, the place of Joyce's work in world literature, how the party leadership describes him, how to see him in relation to capitalism. At the end, she defines him as "the trashman and gravedigger of the capitalist world": is this not, rather, a compliment? More commentary from her was not included in Stenich's next translation from *Ulysses*, but Miller-Budnitskaya would publish yet another article to accompany the translations that appeared in the Russian version of *International Literature* in 1935.

Originally announced for 1933, the Soviet Journal *Internatsional'naia literatura* (hereafter IL) finally published the first ten of the eighteen episodes of *Ulysses* between 1935 and 1936.[86] The journal was a flagship of "transnational cultural exchange" and one of the longest surviving wings of internationalist institutions in the Soviet Union, continuing to be printed up to 1941.[87] Although its print run was rather small, as one of the few remaining "windows to the West," publishing writers like Langston Hughes, Hemingway, Steinbeck, Malraux, Nazım Hikmet and many other foreign authors, while, in its English, German and French editions appeared translations of Soviet poetry, prose and criticism. Even Radek, in his speech in response to critics and while praising Malraux's work, had lamented the small reach of the journal.[88] It was quite popular among the readers who could attain it, and one of the consistent complaints in letters from readers in 1939 was that it was difficult to buy a copy or become a subscriber.[89] The historian of Soviet censorship

[85] 84.
[86] *Internatsional'naia literatura* nos. 1-3 and 9-12 (1935) and nos. 1, 2 and 4 (1936).
[87] For more about the journal and its relationship to Soviet institutions, see Clark, *Moscow, the Fourth Rome: Stalinism, Cosmopolitanism, and the Evolution of Soviet Culture, 1931-1941*, 160–62.
[88] Radek, "Zakliuchitel'noe slovo," 371.
[89] Nailya Safiullina, 'Window to the West: From the Collection of Readers' Letters to the Journal *Internatsional'naia literatura*', *Slavonica* 15, no. 2, November 2009, 128–61.

Arlen Blium, born 1933, recalled that in the "early years of 'the Thaw' we would hunt for issues of [*Inostrannaia literatura,* the post-war incarnation of IL], which published the most unexpected things, especially since, as a rule, they would not come out as separate editions later."[90]



Джемс Джойс

Улисс

Перевод с английского И. РОМАНОВИЧА[1]

Роман Джемса Джойса «Улисс» написан в 1914—1921 гг. и издан впервые в 1922 году. Первыми своими эпизодами он непосредственно примыкает к более раннему роману Джойса «Портрет художника в юности» (A portrait of the artist as a young man), — являющемуся как бы прологом к «Улиссу». Герой «Портрета» — Стефен Дедалус (лицо автобиографическое, который выступает как главное действующее лицо в некоторых эпизодах «Улисса»). «Портрет художника в юности» охватывает детство и юность Стефена, до момента окончания им Дублинского университета. Перед этим Стефен несколько лет учился в закрытом иезуитском колледже Клонгаус-Вуд, возле Дублина. Мать Стефена, как это явствует из первого эпизода «Улисса», была ревностная католичка. Отец Стефена, Симон Дедалус, появляется в последующих эпизодах «Улисса». Крэнли, упоминаемый в тексте, — ближайший друг Стефена в университетские годы.

Между концом «Портрета» и началом «Улисса» проходит, повидимому, два-три года.

Место действия «Улисса» — Дублин; время действия — 16 июня 1904 года.

Несколько слов о заглавии романа.

«Улисс» — своего рода современная «Одиссея». Известно, что первоначально (в рукописи) отдельные эпизоды «Улисса» носили имена соответствующих эпизодов гомеровской поэмы. Так, первые три эпизода были озаглавлены: «Телемак», «Нестор» и «Прометей». Напомним, что в «Одиссее» главные действующим лицом первых трех песен является сын Улисса», Телемак, а сам Улисс появляется только с четвертой песни. Критики-«джойсоведы» (Валери Ларбо, Стуарт Гильберт) считают Стефена Дедалуса аналогом Телемака, а Леопольда Блума, главного героя «Улисса», появляющегося также только с четвертого эпизода, аналогом Улисса.

[1]) По заданию Первого переводческого коллектива ССП.

Величаво, пухлый Бак Маллиган вышел на верхнюю площадку лестницы, неся чашку с мыльной пеной, на которой крест накрест лежали зеркало и бритва. Желтый халат, неподпоясанный, слегка вздувался позади него от слабого утреннего ветра. Он поднял чашку и возгласил:

— Introibo ad altare Dei.[1]

Остановившись, он взглянул вниз на темную винтовую лестницу и грубо крикнул:

— Иди сюда, Кинч. Иди сюда, подлый иезуит.

Торжественно прошел он вперед и поднялся на круглую площадку. Повернувшись, он с серьезным видом трижды благословил башню, окрестный берег и пробуждающиеся горы. Потом, увидев Стефена Дедалуса, он наклонился к нему и принялся быстро крестить воздух, издавая горлом булькающий звук и тряся головой. Стефан Дедалус, недовольный и сонный, облокотился на перила лестницы и равнодушно глядел на благословлявшую его трясущуюся булькающую голову, длинную, как у лошади, без тонзуры, с волосами цвета бледного дуба.

Бак Маллиган заглянул под зеркало и снова быстро закрыл чашку.

— Назад, — твердо сказал он.

И тоном священнослужителя добавил:

— Ибо здесь, о возлюбленные братья, таинство евхаристины — тело и душа, кровь и плоть. Будьте любезны, хорал! Закройте глаза, милостивые государи. Одну минутку. Небольшая заминка с этими беленькими молекулами. Просьба соблюдать тишину.

Он посмотрел вверх, издал низкий, долгий призывный свист и затих в напряженном молчании. Золотые коронки поблескивали на его ровных белых зубах. Златоуст. Ему в ответ дважды просвистели, громко и пронзительно.

— Благодарю вас, — весело закричал он. — Совершенно достаточно. Выключите ток.

[1] Войду в алтарь господень.

Fig. 4.3: First page of *Ulysses* in Igor' Romanovich's translation in *International'naia literatura* (1935)

[90] Arlen V. Blium, ed., *Sovetskaia tsenzura v epokhu total'nogo terrora, 1929-1953* (St. Petersburg: Akedemicheskii proekt, 2000), 225.

This was also the case in 1935, but it was one of the several projects, and one of the last under the zenith of Stalinism, to both address an international audience and a domestic Soviet audience with an internationalist message and international literature in excellent translations, which, in contrast to translations from the latter period in the Soviet Union, always featured the translator's name on the first page. *Ulysses* was published with commentaries to each episode, something which seems to have been done only for this work. The first episode contains a roughly half-page introduction and no commentary, while all following episodes have explanatory "Notes" (*primechaniia*) appended at the end, which act as brief general commentaries on the episode. Under the direction of the translator Ivan Kashkin, seven translators worked collectively toward a complete Russian *Ulysses*.

Джемс Джойс

Перевод с английского И. РОМАНОВИЧА[1]

Улисс

Непреодолимая модальность видимого: по меньшей мере это, если не больше мыслимое глазами. Отпечатки всех вещей, которые я здесь призван прочесть, морские ракушки и морские водоросли, приближающийся прилив, этот ржавый сапог. Сопливо-зеленый, серебряно-голубой, ржавый: цветные отпечатки. Пределы прозрачного. Но, добавляет он: в телах. Следовательно, он сознал их как тела раньше, чем как цветные. Каким образом? Надо думать, стукнувшись о них башкой. Полегче, полегче. Лысый он был и миллионер, maestro di color che sanno[2]. Предел прозрачного «в». Почему «в»? Прозрачное, непрозрачное. Если тебе удастся проткнуть это своими пятью пальцами, значит решетка, если нет,— значит дверь. Закроем глаза и посмотрим.

Стефен закрыл глаза, чтобы слышать, как хрустят хрупкие раковины и водоросли под его ботинками. Как бы то ни было, ты проходишь сквозь это. Да, каждый раз по одному шагу. Очень небольшой отрезок пространства за очень небольшой отрезок времени. Пять, шесть: nacheinander[3]. Вот именно: это-то и есть непреодолимая модальность слышимого. Открой глаза. Нет. Господи! А если бы я свалился с обрыва, чье основанье омывает, непреодолимо провалился сквозь nebeneinander[1]. Я отлично продвигаюсь в темноте. Мой деревянный меч висит у меня на боку. Нащупывай им дорогу — так делают они. Моими ступнями в его ботинках оканчиваются его ноги, nebeneinander. Кажется, прочно: прибили молотом los Demiurgos[2]. В вечность ли шагаю я вдоль Сэндимонтского берега? Треск, хряск, хруст, хруст. Рассыпанные морем деньги. Отец Дизи знает их все.

Давай поедем в Сэндимонт.
Кобылица Маделин!

Видишь, возникает ритм. Я слышу. Каталектический ямбический тетраметр, шагом. Нет, в галоп: «былица Маделин».

Теперь открой глаза. Хорошо. Одну минутку. А что, если все исчезло за это время? А вдруг я открою их и навсегда окажусь в черной непрозрачности? Баста! Увижу, если я вижу.

Смотри теперь. Было здесь все время без тебя; и будет всегда, вовеки-веков.

Они осторожно спускались по ступеням с террасы Лихи, Frauenzimmer[3]: вниз по отлогому берегу, вяло погружая свои плоские ступни в илистый песок. Как я, как Олджи, спускаются вниз к нашей могучей матери. Номер первый, тяжело помахивая своей акушерской сумкой, другая зонтиком тыкая в песок. После отдыха на работу. М-с Флоренс Мак Кэйб, вдова покойного Патка Мак Кэйба, горько оплакиваемого Брайдстрит. Одна из товарок ее втащила меня плачущего в жизнь. Что у нее в сумке? Выкидыш со свисающей пуповиной, завернутый в окровавленную вату? Каждого пуповина, звеньями цепляясь, уходит назад, волокносвитый канат всего, что есть плоть. Вот почему монастырские мистики. Хотите быть яко боги? Созерцайти свой омфалос. Алло. Говорит Кинч. Дайте Эдем. Алеф, альфа: ноль, ноль, один.

[1] Под редакцией Первого переводческого колва ССП.
[2] Мастер цветов которого знают (итал.).
[3] Один за другим (нем.).

[1] Один после другого (нем).
[2] Демиурги (исп.).
[3] Женщины (нем.).

Fig. 4.4: Opening page of third episode of Ulysses in *Internatsional'naia Literatura* 1935 no. 3.

The *Ulysses* that emerges from these commentaries is strikingly different from the one that had been described and maligned in the press. It is a novel tied to a specific history, telling a story through a range of techniques, and not highly marked by emphasis on the class character of its heroes or author.

The commentary to the first episode is quite short and placed before the translated text, unlike the commentaries to the other episodes which come at the end of Joyce's text. Since the first episode launches readers directly into the minute-by-minute development of the novel, the introduction of stream of consciousness in commentary by Stephen on the dialogue, and a bundle of suggestive symbols on religious themes, it is odd that more extensive explanations only came later. It seems likely editors decided a stronger framework for readers was necessary. This could have been spurred by readers' responses, directives from above, or the anticipation of either. In any case, Joyce's text could not be left to speak for itself.

Like with the translations by Frankovsky and Griftsov of Proust, it is difficult to find fault or points worth commentary in the translations by Ivan Kashkin's translators' collective. Certainly, the wordplay and alliteration in *Ulysses* often forces them to choose between retaining sense or losing wordplay, and it is clear they chose the former in most cases, only including the wordplay when it is essential to the narrative. Thus, for example, in episode 2, "Nestor," the schoolboy Armstrong provokes his classmates to laughter in answering Stephen's question about Pyrrhus: "Pyrrhus, sir? Pyrrhus, a pier." Translator Lidiya Kislova gives the pun in English and Russian "Пирр, сэр? Pier — мол," following this up with a footnote to explain the English word. Many of the same points of the text's poetic strangeness were ironed out to more normal phrasing. Sometimes the language of these early translations is almost identical to the eventual complete translation published by Sergei Horujy in the last years of the Soviet Union.[91] A translation into Russian that would provide the same experience of the novel as given in English would require a

[91] "They are not to be thought away" becomes "Изгнать из памяти их нельзя" in Kislova (*Internatsional'naia literatura,* no. 2, 1935, 44) and "Их уже не изгнать из памяти" in Horuji.

similarly Joycean mixture of erudition, ambition, and hostility to the norms of the language, from a native speaker from a social and cultural position peripheral to, and alienated from, mainstream Russian literary culture. This would have been impossible for a translation in a mainstream literary journal, or in a Soviet book, in 1935.

Although the translations try to capture much of the fabric of the novel, they did naturally fall short in many points, and at least in one case this can be probably attributed to censorship. Glavlit likely objected to Mr Deasy's antisemitic joke in episode two. At the end of the chapter, Mr Deasy requests Stephen's assistance in publishing a letter about the scourge of foot and mouth disease among Irish cattle. During the course of the conversation, Deasy makes several racist and conspiratorial statements about Jews in British business. Having accepted the letter and the task of submitting it, Stephen prepares to leave, and says to himself, in Kislova's Russian: "Malligan nagradit menia novym prozvishchem. Bard-blagodetel'-bykov" (Mulligan will reward me with a new nickname. The bard-benefactor of bulls, cf. *Ulysses*: "Milligan will dub me a new name: the bullockbefriending bard.")[92] In the original, this is followed by the reappearance of Mr Deasy, who, apparently trying smooth over the poor impression made by his comments, then tells Stephen a joke that the Irish have the unique honor of not having persecuted the Jews because they "never let them in." Mr Deasy's laugh ends the episode, but Joyce has his own last laugh over Deasy, mocking the "rattling chain of phlegm." This entire passage was removed from the translation, although, strangely, the similarly racist fear of another character, Heines, in the first episode—that his country might fall into "the hands of German jews"—and Mr Deasy's remarks before this were translated and printed. The theme of Jews and antisemitism, so central to *Ulysses*, is noticeably suppressed in the early Soviet reception of the novel. A similar excision was made to Dos Passos *1919*, where the character Richard Ellsworth Savage, attending Harvard, befriends a "couple of

[92] *Internatsional'naia literatura,* no. 2, 1935, 44; *Ulysses*, 36.

socialist Jews." This is used to explain both why Savage is avoided by the elite WASPs and how he is introduced to pacificism and socialism. In Stenich's translation, they become only "socialists."

It is likely that in these cases the decision was made in anticipation of likely censorship, or in response to direct instructions from the state censorship organ, Glavlit (abbreviation for *Glavnoe upravlenie po okhrane gosudarstvennykh tain v pechati pri SM SSSR*, or the Main Directorate for the Protection of State Secrets in the Press uder the Council of Ministers of the USSR). Not long after Glavlit had established the new extent of its powers in June 1931 with the rapid centralization of control over the press, a new directive was circulated by its head, B. M. Volin, ordering the prevention of publication and, failing that, confiscation of anti-Soviet works or works which "distort Soviet reality"—a formulation used here to justify the confiscation of Gorky's recently republished article "On Antisemites" and Andrei Platonov's recently published short story "Vprok."[93] Although the justification for confiscation or censorship shifted, sometimes dramatically, depending on current domestic and international policy, a tendency began from this point in 1930s Soviet censorship to remove references to antisemitism on the basis that prejudice against Jews could no longer exist in the land where socialism had succeeded, and that references to incidents of antisemitism therefore constituted a distortion of Soviet reality.[94] Of course, these passages in Joyce and Dos Passos cannot be accused of distorting *Soviet* reality. However, the directive immediately preceding this established the unacceptable nature of publishing works which "agitate nationalist and religious fanaticism," which, squinting hard enough at Mr Deasy's terrible joke and the mention of Savage's friends the "socialist Jews," it may be possible to make such a classification.[95] In particular, the casual link of socialism with Jews by Dos Passos may have

[93] See "1931.07.06. Tsirkuliar Glavlita" in Arlen V. Blium, *Tsenzura v Sovetskom Soiuze 1917-1991. Dokumenty* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2004), 204–6.
[94] See "Gody bol'shogo terrora," in Arlen V. Blium, *Evreiskii vopros pod sovetskoi tsenzuroi 1917-1991* (St. Petersburg: St. Petersburg Jewish University, 1996), 64–87.
[95] "1931.06.06. Polozhenie o Glavnom upravlenii po delam literatury i izdatel'stv RSFSR (Glavlit) i ego mestnykh organakh [*sic*]" in Blium, *Tsenzura v Sovetskom Soiuze 1917-1991. Dokumenty*, 201–2.

been seen to reinforce antisemitic conspiracy theories already circulating in the Soviet Union about the role of Jews in the October Revolution and the Bolshevik party.

The commentary to the third episode explains that the stream of consciousness technique is used in this episode as the main material of the narration, in contrast to the first two episodes where it was the occasional commentary of the hero on the events. The commentator mentions Proteus as the Homeric parallel to illustrate and justify the constant transformations that take place in Joyce's chapter, noting that Stephen's thinking becomes like the mythical Proteus who could transform into animals, plants and even water. In Stephen's stream of consciousness the world he sees in front of him (on the beach at Sandymount Strand) and his memories are constantly shifting as he reflects on the essential "modality," or unstable and constantly changing nature, of the visible world. A dog in the distance, the commentary points out, is described in turn as a rabbit, a stag, a bear, a wolf, a calf, a panther and a leopard. The commentator clarifies several references to Shakespeare, particularly Hamlet, and the importance of Swift, Swinburne, Milton, Louis Veuillot, Thomas Aquinas and Pico della Mirandola. It also clarifies the reference to George Berkeley and his philosophy, the meaning of "modality" and the German terms that are used there, quoting Frank Budgen's explanation of what happens at the beginning of the episode. It goes on to explain the relevance of Catholicism and Ireland as "two traumas" which haunt Stephen. Finally, the commentator notes the richness of Joyce's vocabulary and illustrates this with several examples from the text, some of which are to a degree reproduced in the translation, some of which, the commentator admits, are not. Thus the paratextual framework of the novel places it in a distinct network of texts and historical contexts. It provides the evidence of a thorough examination of the episode, clarifying some of the obscurities for the reader and allowing them to launch into or return to the text with a richer understanding of it.

64 Д. Джойс

кая из всех смертей человека. Древний отец Океан. Prix de Paris [1]: берегитесь подделок. Предлагаю сделать проверку. Мы замечательно провели время.

Приди. Я жажду. Нависая тучей. Ни одной черной тучи нигде. В грозе и буре. Светлый в самом падении своем, гордая молния ума. Lucifer, dico, qui nescit occasum [2]. Нет. Посох мой и шляпа с перловицей на тулье и его-мои сандалии. Куда? В вечерние страны. Вечер найдет сам себя.

Он взял рукоятку своей палки, мягко ударяя ею, все еще мешкая. Да, вечер найдет сам себя во мне, без меня. Все дни идут к концу. Кстати, следующий когда? Вторник будет самый длинный день. В счастливом годе лучший день, о мама, татата, тата, тата, та. Лаун Теннисон, джентльмен-поэт. Gia [3]. Для старой ведьмы с желтыми зубами. И г-н Дрюмон, джентльмен-журналист. Gia. У меня очень скверные зубы. Интересно, отчего? Потрогай. Этот тоже портится. Скорлупки. Не пойти ли на эти деньги к дантисту? И этот. Беззубый Кинч, сверхчеловек. Интересно, отчего это, или, может быть, это что-нибудь значит?

Мой носовой платок. Он бросил его. Разве я не поднял его? Его рука тщетно обшаривала карман. Нет, не поднял. Надо купить новый. Он положил сухую козюльку, которую он вытащил из ноздри, на выступ скалы, аккуратно. А там пускай смотрит кто хочет.

Сзади. А вдруг там кто-нибудь есть?

Он повернул голову и оглянулся через плечо, rere regardant [1]. Разрезая воздух высокими реями трехмачтовика, с парусами на краспицах салинга, возвращаясь на родину, вверх по течению безмолвно двигался безмолвный корабль.

ПРИМЕЧАНИЕ

Данный эпизод «Улисса» написан в форме «внутреннего монолога».

Техника внутреннего монолога частично использовалась Джойсом и в первых двух отрывках «Улисса», особенно во втором (школа), где мысли Стефена являлись своего рода внутренним комментарием к его словам, словам его собеседников и образам, которые возникали перед ним.

Время действия третьего эпизода — между 11 и 12 часами дня 16 июня 1904 г. Стефен после урока в школе (второй эпизод) идет по берегу моря. Весь эпизод — подробная запись мыслей Стефена, в сознании которого переплетаются образы внешнего мира (море, берег, ловцы моллюсков и их собака), воспоминания о прошедшем утре (утро в башне с Беком Маллиганом и Гэйнсом, школа и м-р Дизи) и о более отдаленном прошлом (детство, пребывание в Париже), цитаты из прочитанных книг и т. п.

Каждому эпизоду «Улисса» соответствует какая-нибудь песнь его прототипа — «Одиссеи». Данному эпизоду соответствует четвертая песнь «Одиссеи» — «Протей». Хотя здесь ни разу не назван ни Протей, ни другие действующие лица «Одиссеи», однако, гомеровские ассоциации пронизывают весь этот эпизод. Его центральный образ — вечно изменчивое море. Живые существа и неодушевленные предметы, попадающие в поток сознания Стефена, подвергаются непрерывным метаморфозам. Так, собака, сопровождающая ловцов моллюсков, на протяжении трех абзацев превращается в зайца, оленя, медведя, волка, теленка, пантеру, леопарда. Палка Стефена названа в начале «деревянным мечом», затем она превращается в жезл авгура и дальше — в посох пилигрима.

Отметим одно превращение, которое невозможно передать при переводе на русский язык. Бак Маллиган, друг и сожитель Стефена, упоминается несколько раз: в связи со Свифтом и гуингнмами («овальные лошадиные лица, Темпл, Бак Маллиган...»), нашествием викингов («Малаки носил тогда золотой ошейник...»), с утопленником («он спасал утопающих...» — см. первый эпизод); но кроме этих явных упоминаний, есть еще скрытые намеки: с геральдическим оленем (олень по-английски — b u c k — бак), который по другой линии отождествляется с собакой собирателей моллюсков (см. ниже) и с щеголем (тоже b u c k): «обноски щеголя... в которых прежде удобно гнездилась чужая нога» (ср. «моими ступнями в его ботинках...», «его-мои сандалии») этот намек подчеркивается еще тем, что он следует непосредственно за стихом из песни, которую пел опять-таки Маллиган («не смей смотреть назад, вздыхая...»).

Кроме упомянутых ассоциаций, отметим еще несколько намеков на «Одиссею». По Гомеру, Протей живет на острове Фаросе, у устья Нила. Греки называли Фарос островом неутолимого голода; ср. у Джойса: «остров неутолимой жажды». Ловцы моллюсков названы в одном месте «красными египтянами»; тоже гомеровская ассоциация (Нил = Египет).

Видное место в «Протее» занимают шекспировские ассоциации, в частности тема Гамлета, связывающаяся с одной из основных тем всего «Улисса» в целом — с темой отца и сына

[1] Парижский приз (франц.).
[2] Люцифер, говорю я, который не знает заката (лат.).
[3] Уже (итал.).

[1] Смотря назад (франц; геральдический термин)

Fig. 4.5: Commentary to the third episode of *Ulysses* in *Internatsional'naia literatura* (1935)

Analysis of the translation of the third, or *Proteus* episode will show us some of the solutions adopted by Romanovich. It has been said that just the first line of this chapter convinced the

publisher of the *The Little Review* to serialize the novel, whatever the consequences.[96] And it is a sentence that could be called programmatic for the entirety of *Ulysses*:

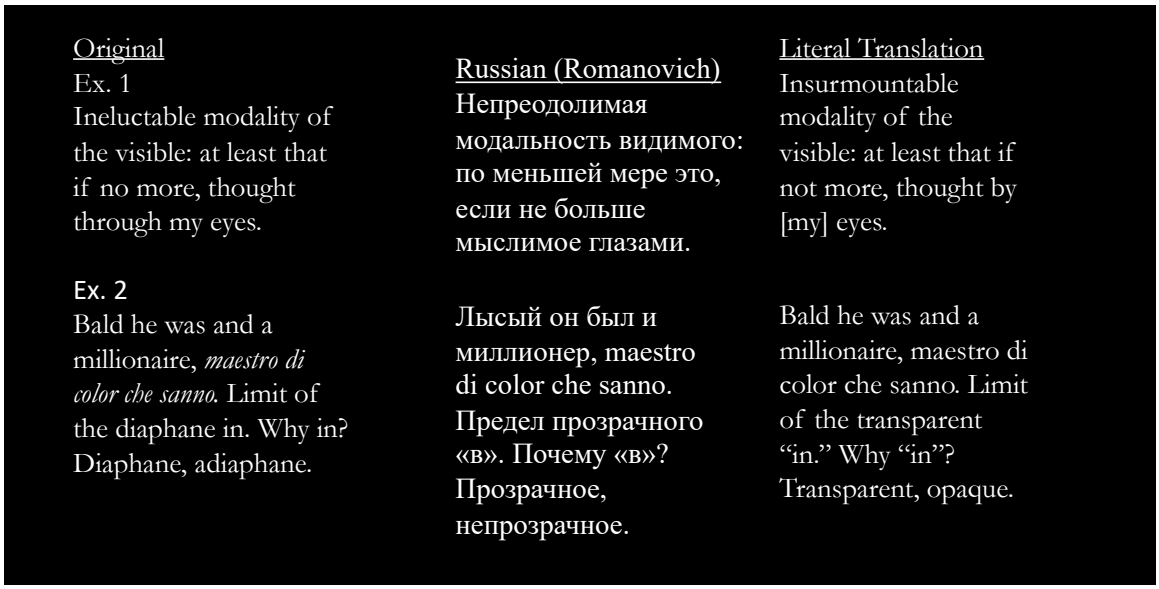


Fig. 4.6: Examples from Romanovich's translation of "Proteus"

The first sentence of the episode is notoriously opaque: "Ineluctable modality of the visible: at least that if no other, thought through my eyes." Just the word "ineluctable," has caused many Anglophone readers to scratch their heads for at least a moment, and the same goes for "limits of the diaphane," "Diaphane, adiaphane." Then there is the idiosyncratic syntax. In these and other moments, the translator, rather than substituting other obscure phrases in Russian, provides a more accessible formulation: "Insurmountable modality of the visible" ("nepreodolimaia modal'nost'"), and "Transparent. Opaque." (or even simpler, "Transparent. Untransparent": "Prozrachnoe. Neprozrachnoe"). Foreign words or phrases like "Nebeneinander" and "maestro di color che sanno" are footnoted in the Russian translation—a courtesy not provided to the reader in the original, or for that matter in the French translation which Joyce oversaw.

[96] Richard Ellmann, *James Joyce*, new and revised (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), 421.

Ex. 3		
In Rodot's Yvonne and Madeleine newmake their tumbled beauties, shattering with gold teeth *chaussons* of pastry, their mouths yellowed with the *pus* of *flan breton*.	У Родо Ивонна и Мадлэна подновляют свои помятые прелести, похрустывая пирожными на золотых зубах, губы их желтые от сока flan bréton.	At Rodot's Yvonne and Madeleine renew their rumpled charms, crunching pastries on gold teeth, their lips yellow from the juice of flan bréton.

Fig. 4.7: Examples from Romanovich's translation of "Proteus"

The typically Joycean neologism "newmake" ("In Rodot's Yvonne and Madeleine newmake their tumbled beauties")[97] highlights an interesting problem for the translator of Joyce into a language like Russian. Part of Joyce's novelty and difficulty lies in his fashioning of an English that is morphologically much more flexible in a way common in more traditional Germanic languages. While "newmake" may be unusual in English, in Russian is not difficult to turn "new" into a verb that means "make new"—it is already on hand for a native Russian speaker, with a range of choices with different shades of meaning: *obnovit'*, which means renew in the sense of replacing something old, and *podnovit'*, to renew in the sense of restore, to make something old seem new. This last is the choice Romanovich makes ("Ivonna i Madlena *podnovliaiut* svoi pomiatye prelesti"). Of course, Joyce himself could have simply chosen the standard word "renew," but instead chose this unfamiliar phrase that anticipates Pound's 1928 modernist slogan. Romanovich and the other translators of Kashkin's group tend to choose words already available in Russian. Where Joyce enstranges language, to use Shklovsky's term, his Russian translators naturalize, familiarize Joyce in order to conceal its strangeness—or perhaps equally, to translate those aspects of it that they deemed acceptable.

Romanovich simplifies Joyce's complex allusions as well, producing a more one-dimensional text. Joyce uses both "tide" and "flood" to refer to the edge of the sea as Stephen

[97] James Joyce, *Ulysses*, ed. Hans Walter Gabler, Wolfhard Steppe, and Claus Melchior (New York: Vintage Books, 1984), 35–36.

walks along the beach, making, with the use of "flood" a somewhat opaque reference to Shakespeare's Hamlet.[98] Even if the reference to Hamlet and Hamlet's ghostly father is not apparent to the reader in the original, we can't help but notice that something odd is being done with English. Stephen, of course, is on the beach, and thus the expected word might be the tide or the waves. "Flood" is, essentially, the "wrong word." In the original such "wrong" words often act as the indication that there is something going on beyond the foreground activity of the scene—usually an association that marks a digression into the thoughts of the character. We are given the trace, or ghost of an intertext, and made to do the work. Naturally, most often this cannot be reproduced in translation, where there may be, as in Russian, multiple translations of a given classic, and familiarity with the intertext cannot be assumed. Romanovich translates "the flood" as "the tide," (*priliv*) creating a consistent image and eliding the need for external reference.

Romanovich is clearly aware of and capable of reproducing the linguistic experimentation in the text, but when he does, he subtly reorganizes the words, couching oddness in the safely comprehensible. When Joyce provides a chain of words where three are synonyms from other languages used as English words (English, German, French, English, Italian, respectively), Romanovich translates the English and gives the foreign words Russian endings.

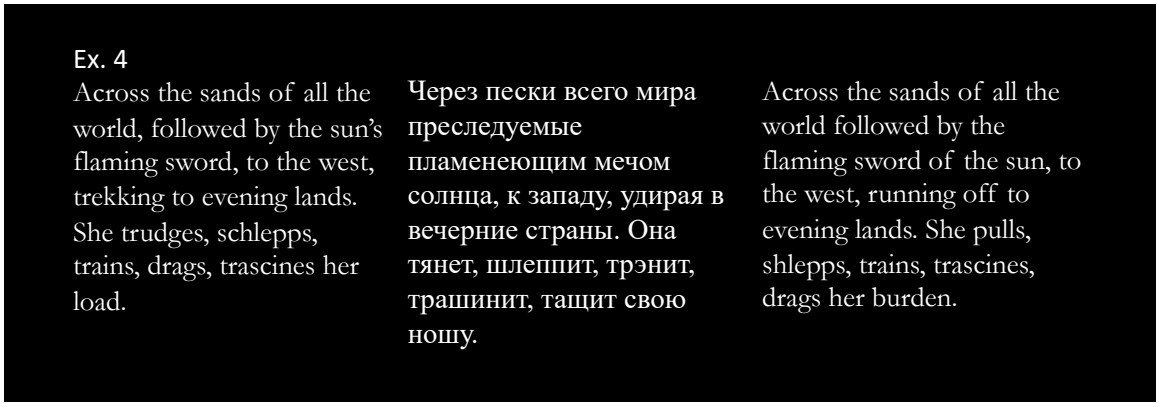


Fig. 4.8: Examples from Romanovich's translation of "Proteus"

[98] See Don Gifford, *Ulysses Annotated* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988), 58: 3.281 (44:28).

This is one of the few cases where the difficulties of the English text are reproduced in Russian, but here certain cues are provided to the reader. Romanovich frames the train of words with Russian equivalents, placing the strange words from German, French and Italian in the middle, while Joyce mixes the languages and denies his English a position of relative primacy. So, while the commentaries bring out the international character and world-literary significance of the novel, the translation consistently mediates this and mellows the extremes of the original, answering the Joycean defamiliarization of language with a more straightforward and accessible Russian text**.**

Of course, this is still only a question of *relative* accessibility. Encountered in the course of reading, the foreign words, whether they have a Russian ending or not, may be just as opaque in Russian as in English, indeed more so, as "schlepp" and "train" at least mean something to an English reader, which probably cannot be said about "*shleppit*" and "*trenit'*." And though Romanovich tends to simplify the text or choose words that make it more comprehensible in Russian, this is most likely a result of a genuine desire to understand the text himself as well as possible, and to give to Russian readers an approximation that, first, will mean something to them, while also, when opportunities present themselves to approximate the poetry of the text, using the opportunity to show the reader what he can render compellingly. Such, for example, is Romanovich's translation of part of Stephen's vampire poem.

Ex. 5 His lips lipped and mouthed fleshless lips of air: mouth to her womb. Oomb, allwombing tomb. His mouth molded issuing breath, unspeeched: ooeeehah: roar of cataractic planets, globed, blazing, roaring wayawayawayawayawayawaya	Его губы губили и ласкали бесплотные губы воздуха: рот к ее лону. Лоно, утроба гроба. Его рот придал форму его выдыху, бессловесно: ооееа: рёв водопадных планет, круглых, пламенных, в даль уносящихся с воевоевоевоевоевоем.	His lips lipped and caressed fleshless lips of air: mouth to her loin. Loin, womb of the grave. His mouth gave the form to the exhalation, wordless: ooeeea: roar of waterfal planets, round, fiery, carried into the distance with a voyevoyevoyevoyevoyevoyevoye.

Fig. 4.9: Examples from Romanovich's translation of "Proteus"

Not only does Romanovich excellently capture Joyce's alliteration with "utroba groba" but with "guby gubili" he adds an appropriate additional meaning to Joyce's text, as the first meaning of "*gubit'*" is to ruin, cause to die. Furthermore, with this and the various onomatopoeia, Romanovich evokes Futurist word experiments, most notably, Velimir Khlebnikov's «Бобэоби пелись губы."[99] In these cases Romanovich moves toward a Russian approximation to *Ulysses'* that borrows from a home-grown literary tradition of linguistic experimentation. If the Russian translation of *Ulysses* had taken place several years earlier, or if Futurism had not been completely marginalized and pushed out of Soviet culture, then this kind of experimentalism would likely have played a larger role in its translation and reception. These are, on the whole, exceptions, but even if the *local* radicality of *Ulysses* is usually lost in the translation, the episode as a whole is still fragmented and tends towards obscurity, and the necessity of any particular narrative moment is not immediately or even eventually apparent.

One consequence of this is that the commentaries perform an additional function for the Russian text, providing access to something that is absent in the translation. The consistency of this practice, in which the translation mellows the text in order to re-present the effect in the context of the commentary, suggests a deliberate strategy rather than inability or necessity.

We also have to ask how this works as a Soviet *Ulysses*. Joyce's *Ulysses*, the novel criticized by Mirsky, Radek and others, is unthinkable in what becomes canonical socialist realism, with *Ulysses'* obscenity, stylistic variety and structural and thematic obscurity. The Russian *Uliss* of *International'naia literatura*, however, is culturally possible as a less radical version of the modernist epic. If we consider the definition of socialist realism from the first Writers' Union, the translations have done little to meet the demand for "revolutionary development." We *could* say that this *Uliss*, with its somewhat less difficult text and historically-minded commentaries, takes some steps

[99] Several of Joyce's neologisms are given a Russian form, including "whiteheaped" (белокопенная), "horsenotrilled" (коненоздрый) and even "contransmagnificandjewbangtantiality," which becomes "единопреображидотамтарарамость".

toward the "truthful, historical-concrete portrayal of reality." But it is still far from a realist novel, a revolutionary novel, or a proletarian one. Ultimately the *Uliss* of *International'naia literatura* is sanitized and smoothed over just enough to avoid controversy, while introducing the reader to the important points of its plot, its structure, its style, its contexts and intertexts. While the commentaries do not discuss *Ulysses*' "usefulness" to the Soviet reader, they present a careful approximation of the text in Russian and neutrally explain how many of the techniques work. The result is a carefully crafted philological project that places the novel as a historically engaged and literarily rich work while eliding some of the experimental nature of the original—probably a deliberate strategy to get the translations published.

After only the first three episodes had appeared in IL, the next volume carried, instead of the next chapter of *Ulysses*, an article on the novel by Miller-Budnitskaya.[100] While the paratextual apparatus for the first three episodes had taken an essentially neutral approach to the novel, Miller-Budnitskaya takes a highly critical view. Her article is rich with examples and quotations from the novel, describing it as a blasphemous, traitorous and misanthropic book. Where her 1933 article had focused on Bloom (calling him a "Swiftian 'Yahoo'"), and her commentary to Stenich's translation had focused on Joyce's techniques and place in world literature, here she describes Stephen at length. She calls Stephen a poet, a philosopher, a "theomachist" (*bogoborets*) who has renounced the Catholic church, and mentions his childhood dreams of writing books. She identifies Stephen as Joyce. Oddly, she focuses her scorn on aspects which one might naively expect a critic in an officially atheist, nominally anti-nationalist country to celebrate: his godlessness, his rejection of his homeland, "philistine Ireland – the backwaters of Europe." Again she presents a fairly accurate and detailed summary of the content of *Ulysses*, its plot and reception in the West. The structure of her plot summary suggests that it may have been intended to serve as a primer, to give more background and an overview of the novel as a whole after the first three

[100] R. Miller-Budnitskaia, "'Uliss" Dzhemsa Dzhoisa', *International'naia literatura*, no. 4, 1935, 106.

episodes, and thus also the first full section of the novel, had been printed. It also seems to act as an ideological corrective. Throughout her introductory material, in which she quotes from Stuart Gilbert and often gives a neutral account of the plot and themes, she also repeatedly draws attention to (or makes exaggerated claims about) the novel's notes of blasphemy, depravity and mockery. Sometimes this is done by means of scare quotes: "*Ulysses* has become the 'new gospel' of a formalistically 'leftist', bourgeois 'experimental' [*burzhuazno-'novatorskogo'*] art."[101] Sometimes unattributed quotes provide a very positive image of the novel's achievement, as in the following:

> It would seem that with *Ulysses* there opened the way to the new mythologies of the future, 'an ideal history free from time in which all the histories of the nations find their embodiment', a 'synthesis of history, myth and language that supersedes human abilities'.[102]

Miller-Budnitskaya presents its reception in the West as that of a new *Divine Comedy*, *Faust* or *Temptation of Saint Anthony*, and with this gives a fairly accurate description of how it was then seen, at least by the modernist "leftist" or "experimental" circles she references. Again, placing the novel within a canon of works whose translation in prestigious projects was a priority of Soviet publishing in the 1930s.

Particularly interesting is her focus on the novel's attitude toward religion, the nation-state, and decadence. "Thus *Ulysses* begins on a sacrilegious note," she writes after quoting the first lines of the novel. Although, at the first mention of Bloom, she mentions his Jewishness and the importance of the theme of the wandering Jew in the novel, its convergence with the themes of Irishness, she does not mention antisemitism as a theme, and leaves it out where it would seem to be highly relevant, which is in keeping with the removal of Mr Deasy's antisemitic joke and Joyce's subtle mockery of it at the end of the second episode from the translation in *IL*.[103] Describing the twelfth episode (*Cyclops* in Gilbert's schema), she sums it up as the "cruelest mockery of the ideals

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[101] Ibid.
[102] Ibid.
[103] Dzhems Dzhois, "Uliss. 2," translated by L. D. Kislova, in *Internatsional'naia literatura* no. 2 (1935) 43-50.

of Irish nationalism, of its history, philosophy and aesthetics, its heroic past and its utopian future."[104] As the final word on this episode, it leaves out a very significant component: the confrontation that occurs there between Bloom and the anonymous belligerent antisemitic Irish nationalist, named only as the "citizen." Bloom, responding to an antisemitic muttering from the patriot, delivers a brief impassioned speech on the persecutions of the Jews and his view on nationality and the good life:

> – A nation? Says Bloom. A nation is the same people living in the same place.

Then, later:

> – And I belong to a race too, says Bloom, that is hated and persecuted. Also now. This very moment. This very instant. […] Robbed, says he. Plundered. Insulted. Persecuted. Taking what belongs to us by right. At this very moment, says he, puttiing up his fist, sold by auction off in Morocco like slaves or cattles.
> …
> – Right, says John Wyse. Stand up to it then with force like men.
> …
> – But it's no use, says he. Force, hatred, history, all that. That's not life for men and women, insult and hatred. And everybody knows that it's the very opposite of that that is really life.
> – What? says Alf.
> – Love, says Bloom. I mean the opposite of hatred.[105]

For reminding the citizen that, along with Mendelssohn, Marx and Spinoza, "your God" "Christ" "was a Jew like me," the nationalist threatens to crucify him. The episode ends with a farcical heroic description of the citizen throwing a "biscuit tin" at Bloom as the latter escapes in a carriage. Oddly, Miller-Budnitskaya says nothing about this crucial moment in the plot of the episode, which shows the citizen's entirely one-sided (hence his association with the Homeric cyclops) appreciation of all things Irish. Further, the episode presents Joyce's implicit critique of (Irish) nationalism's inability to see beyond its own borders, stuck in an insular vision of its own victimhood and wounded greatness. She chooses, instead to present the attitude towards Irish nationalism and history as obscene and decadent. Perhaps, like the excisions from translations with

[104] Ibid., 108.
[105] Joyce, *Ulysses*, 272 (1422), 273 (1467-1485).

racially sensitive language, her omission of these aspects of the novel reflects an anxiety over Soviet readers' ability to assimilate the author's attitude toward antisemitism.

And yet while her essay is filled with such provocative criticisms, much of her writing about *Ulysses* is accurate and even astute. "The main principle of *Ulysses'* poetics," she writes, "is the image as a multivalent symbol [*obraz – mnogoznachnyi simvol*]."[106] "From the naturalistic details" (this, notably, being a highly charged word in the debates on literary method then playing out in Russia) "is formed a fantastic image that enters as an unbroken link into the general, multidimensional and polyphonic system of symbols in *Ulysses*."[107] This is followed by detailed descriptions of these dimensions, how characters move in thought in time and place, and how time slows or speeds up in Joyce's prose. Much of this description is indistinguishable from one that might be enjoying this summarizing activity and the book's subject matter itself: They are rich, expansive lists of content, and contain their own echo of Joycean play and pleasure in language, even when the connotative play is in the direction of mockery or denunciation of Joyce's book. On the one hand, Joyce is a misanthrope who hates and has attempted to "destroy logical thought" with his novel; on the other, he is a magician of words, an enchanter who "strives to renew [*vozrodit'*] the word's ancient mythological image, reforge the initial synthesis of language and myth, cross the entire course of the development of linguistic systems in reverse order, right up to the first germination of primordial linguistic consciousness."[108] Importantly, she believes he fails in this, but the evidence she brings to this is only a few scattered, unattributed quotes that similarly posit the novel's failure.

Focusing on the *Circe* chapter of *Ulysses* as the heart of the novel (a strategy often adopted by western critics as well), Miller-Budnitskaya makes Joyce out to be offering just this kind of dark vision of the world. She makes no reference, of course, to the Russian developers of this aesthetic

[106] Miller-Budnitskaia, "'Uliss" Dzhemsa Dzhoisa', 1935, 113.
[107] Ibid.
[108] Ibid., 115.

vision. She translates Joyce freely, using language reminiscent of the Russian expressionist writer Leonid Andreev, taking various statements out of context and identifying Stephen with Joyce (as is common to most, even positive, criticism of the time, and not only in Russia). Opening her second section, she quotes Stephen Dedalus: "The world great and small, macrocosm and microcosm, is founded on emptiness, hung above an abyss"—a literal translation from the English.[109] Stephen in her quote sounds quite Nietzschean. But it is actually not even a full sentence from *Ulysses*. It comes from the ninth episode, when Stephen is expounding his theory of fatherhood:

> "Fatherhood, in the sense of conscious begetting, is unknown to man. It is a mystical estate, an apostolic succession, from only begetter to only begotten. On that mystery and not on the madonna which the cunning Italian intellect flung to the mob of Europe the church is founded irremovably because founded, like the world, macro and microcosm, upon the void. Upon incertitude, upon unlikelihood. Amor matris, subjective and objective genitive, may be the only true thing in life. Paternity may be a legal fiction."[110]

The point being made here has almost nothing to do with what she imputes to it. Although certainly the claim that "Paternity may be a legal fiction" is a general one, to consider this without his absolute affirmation of the mother-child relationship is to seriously misread the passage. And yet this is the chapter where, upon being asked whether he believes his own theory, Stephen answers unequivocally: "No."

One similarly has a hard time believing that Miller-Budnitskaya meant *all* of her critique of Joyce. Are the pronouncements on the novel which accompany her factual retelling to be understood as exaggerations? Or are they alibis? Unlike Mirsky, Radek, Vishnevsky, and other critics and advocates of Joyce in Soviet letters, she rarely speaks of his relevance to *Soviet* literature,

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[109] Ibid., 109: "Мир великий и малый, макрокосм и микрокосм, основан на пустоте, повис над бездной."
[110] Joyce, *Ulysses*, 170.

to socialist realism. After this article, seven more translations of *Ulysses* appeared in IL with their largely neutral commentaries. Did the editors of IL take her critique at face value, or was it, for them, an alibi, showing they had done due diligence to cover the ideological significance of the novel? These questions, unfortunately, are impossible to answer, but I hope that my overview of Miller-Budnitskaya's articles has suggested the curious incongruencies of her writing, which accompanied so much of the discussion around Dos Passos and Joyce.

The Window Closes

The translations in IL continued into 1936 but abruptly stopped in April of that year with the publication of the tenth episode of *Ulysses*. There is no clear explanation for why the project ended at that time. The archive of IL from these years has no survived, and while no event can be directly tied to it, the atmosphere in Soviet Russia had significantly changed for the worse by 1936. With the article "Muddle Instead of Music" appearing at the end of January in *Pravda*, a new anti-formalist campaign began, attacking, at first, the composer Dmitri Shostakovich and Meyerhold, but quickly moving on to figures in the other arts, inaugurating a period of denunciations against "formalism" and "naturalism" (the latter also a euphemism for sexually suggestive or explicit content). Though it was a trend of by no means limited to the Soviet Union (as Katerina Clark notes, it paralleled the Nazi campaign against "degenerate art" and had been preceded by the 1934 introduction of Hollywood's Hays Code), it was the beginning of a new moment in which world literature would no longer occupy an ideologically privileged position and any hint of "formalism" would not only be unpublishable, but could get you arrested by the NKVD. At some point in the mid-30s Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* was translated by Maria Bogoslovskaia-Bobrovaia, but would not be published until 1976.

The real culmination of the debates was extra-literary—or, to borrow from the playwright Nikolai Evreinov, the transformation of politics itself into a thrilling and deadly show. At the beginning of 1937, Karl Radek became chief defendant at the second Moscow show trial, was

sentenced to ten years of penal servitude and later killed in the camp. It was in a sense internationalism itself that was put on trial, as Grigory Zinoviev and Lev Kameniev, two other key Bolshevik internationalists, were prosecuted at the first trial in 1936. The party leadership under Stalin's direction made efforts to minimize or excise the Comintern from official history, and with it, the history of internationalism in the Soviet Union.[111] The window for Joyce also began to quickly close after Radek's trial. Even though the *Dubliners* was published the same year in a translation by protégés of Ivan Kashkin—likely the same group who had translated episodes of *Ulysses* for IL, but already without any indication of the translators due to fear of repression, and even the author of the preface hid behind a pseudonym. Sergei Tretyakov, who oversaw IL while it published *Ulysses* and whose play, *Roar, China!* had so impressed Dos Passos in 1928, was arrested, as were Stenich, Mirsky, and Igor Romanovich. The first two would be executed, the others would die in camps. Supposedly, one week before Stenich's arrest in November 1937, while bidding farewell to the friends, including the Mandelstams, who had only recently returned from exile in Voronezh, with Osip reading new poems at Stenich's apartment, Stenich had gestured from the stairwell towards "one door after another" telling them when and under what circumstances his neighbors had been taken. "Now it's my turn" he concluded.[112] A second-hand account has it that Romanovich's wife, Elena Verzhbolovskaya, believed her husband had been "arrested because of Joyce."[113] The Great Terror ended the possibility of any rapprochement between modernism and socialist realism, but it also meant the end for the kind of internationalism, and international socialist realism which Radek had championed in his speech.

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[111] Albert, *The Charisma of World Revolution*, 482.
[112] N. K. Chukovskii, "Milyi demon moei iunosti," in *O tom, chto videl: Vospominaniia. Pis'ma* (Moscow, 2005), 237-273, as quoted in Pavel Uspenskii, *V.O. Stenich: biografiia, dendizm, teksty*.
[113] The source for this is not certain: https://avrukinesku.livejournal.com/1037848.html "Арестован 2 ноября 1937 года; почти сразу была арестована и его жена, Елена Вержболовская (1904-2000), о которой вспоминает Е. Гениева: "'Его ведь арестовали из-за Джойса,' - почти выдохнула тетя Леночка." Романович был приговорен к десяти годам лагерей, Вержболовская - к восьми, однако чудом через три года ей удалось освободиться. От Романовича из лагеря приходили письма, поэтому дата его смерти (в отличие от других, сообщаемых КГБ) может считаться подлинной."

Miller-Budnitskaya also published her final essay on Joyce in 1937, "James Joyce's Philosophy of Culture," which examined *Work in Progress*.[114] It was as well-informed as so many of her other essays, with an explication of the relation of Vico's philosophy to Joyce's last novel—suggesting her reading had included Samuel Beckett's essay "Dante…Bruno. Vico…Joyce," in the 1929 symposium of articles on the work.[115] Miller-Budnitskaya compares Joyce unfavorably to Vico in the teleology of history, as Vico's ideas are justified as historically necessary and progressive for their time, and Joyce's adaptation of these ideas in our own time become instead reactionary. She writes:

> All of Joyce's enormous linguistic work, having started in *Ulysses* and reaching its limit in his most recent opus, *Work in Progress*, is founded on the endeavor to create a new universal language with an ancient Irish, Gaelic basis, intended to become an instrument for the world hegemony of Ireland and a cornerstone of a future Western culture.[116]

Dark accusations of plans for Irish world hegemony in 1937 are of course impossible to take seriously. This, too, sounds like a deliberately exaggerated claim, and one that might have shielded Miller-Budnitskaya from suspicions of advocating Joyce's work. But in the bitter tone of reproach and the references to "world-wide" language and "global hegemony," it is difficult not to hear the after tones of the absent world revolution of the 1920s. It is worth considering Miller-Budnitskaya's essay alongside what it clearly echoes: the world revolution as hoped for in the first decade of the Soviet Union, in which such projects of establishing "world languages" and a pan-European or world-wide culture of solidarity were meaningful political and cultural aspirations. The constructed language Esperanto, created in Warsaw by Ludwik Lejzer Zamenhof at the end of the 19th century, spread rapidly in the Soviet Union in the 1920s among idealistic intellectuals like Lev Kopelev, and, through its international pen-pal networks, for many years remained a

[114] R. Miller-Budnitskaia, "Filosofiia kul'tury Dzhemsa Dzhoisa," *International'naia literatura* 1937 no. 2 1937, 188-209.
[115] Samuel Beckett, "Dante… Bruno. Vico… Joyce," in Samuel Beckett et al., *Our Exagmination Round His Factification for Incamination of Work in Progress* (Paris: Shakespeare and Company, 1929), 1–22.
[116] Ibid., 203.

means of communicating with the outside world.[117] Trotsky, Lenin and other Bolshevik leaders were by many other accounts quite skeptical and dismissive toward the constructed language.[118] Regardless, the "new universal language" of Esperanto was far from a marginal phenomenon in early Soviet life. The Union of Esperantists of the Soviet Republics (Soiuz Esperantistov Sovetskikh Respublik, SESR) counted 200 regional organizations in 1923, and by 1926 there were already 350 organizations with over 10,000 members.[119] When English was still far from a global language, Esperanto offered the promise of an easy-to-learn lingua franca of a future world communist society to many in the Soviet Union and across the world. This popularity left its mark in Soviet literature as well. In Andrei Platonov's 1935 novel *Happy Moscow*, the idealistic socialist engineer Viktor Bozhko has decorated his room with three portraits: "Lenin, Stalin and doctor Zamenhof, inventor of the international language Esperanto."[120] Bozhko participates in the international letter writing campaigns of dedicated social democrats and communists:

> He received letters from Melbourne, Cape Town, from Hong Kong, Shanghai, from small islands lurking in the watery waste of the Pacific Ocean, from Madrid – from a village at the base of Greek Olympus, from Egypt and numerous locales in Europe. The public servants and workers, distant people, bound to the earth by immobile exploitation, learned Esperanto and defeated the silence [*bezmolvie*] between the peoples; exhausted by toil, too poor to travel, they conversed with one another in thought.[121]

Esperanto also finds its way into *Ulysses*. In the Nighttown chapter, Bloom is approached by an unknown figure who he seems to assume is a (Spanish-speaking) prostitute. The figure addresses him in Irish, which Bloom at first takes for Esperanto:

> BLOOM: *Buenas noches, señorita Blanca, que calle es esta?*

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[117] Lev Kopelev, *The Education of a True Believer*, trans. Gary Kern (New York: Harper & Row, 1978), 96–124; Albert, *The Charisma of World Revolution*, 404-409.
[118] Elliot R. Goodman, *The Soviet Design for a World State* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960), 264–84.
[119] Albert, *The Charisma of World Revolution*, 168.
[120] Andrei Platonov, *Schastlivaia Moskva. Ocherki i rasskazy 1930-kh godov* (Moskva: Vremia, 2011), 15.
[121] Ibid., 15-16.

THE FIGURE: (Impassive, raises a signal arm.) Password. *Sraid Mabbot.*

BLOOM: Haha. *Merci.* Esperanto. *Slan leath. (He mutters.)* Gaelic league spy, sent by that fireeater.

That Bloom confuses Esperanto and Irish provides a kind of ironic commentary to Miller-Budnitskaya's vision of Joyce intent on forcing an artificial, Irish-based language on the world. Even if Irish and three forms of Irish patois are among the more than 60 languages used as material for the puns of Joyce's last book, not a single one of his characters speaks Irish (nor could Joyce himself) and the "basis" of *Finnegans Wake* is clearly English, not Irish.

Looking at the (otherwise insignificant) place of Esperanto in *Ulysses* brings us to a rather interesting question about Bloom: could he have been, under different circumstances, more successfully assimilated as a socialist (realist) hero? Later on in the same chapter, Bloom includes Esperanto in his political program (right before he becomes "mayor"):

> I stand for the reform of municipal morals and the plain ten commandments. New worlds for old. Union of all, jew, moslem and gentile. Three acres and a cow for all children of nature. Saloon motor hearses. Compulsory manual labour for all. All parks open to the public day and night. Electric dishscrubbers. Tuberculosis, lunacy, war and mendicancy must now cease. General amnesty, weekly carnival with masked licence, bonuses for all, esperanto the universal language with universal brotherhood. No more patriotism of barspongers and dropsical impostors. Free money, free rent, free love and a free lay church in a free lay state.[122]

Granted, neither Bloom nor his creator employ (orthodox) Marxist language in any meaningful sense. The terms of socialist realism as adopted by the 1934 Soviet Writers' Congress are likewise not applicable: There is no "revolutionary development" in *Ulysses*: The events of the novel take place in a moment of historical stasis. But while many statements made by both Stephen and Bloom, and the thematics of the novel generally, lean if anything towards a kind of libertarian anarchism, Bloom himself often speaks in terms indistinguishable from that of utopian socialism, internationalism and the principles of early social democracy. It is unsurprising that his "socialistic"

[122] Joyce, *Ulysses*, 399 (1685-1693).

program, being presented in the carnivalesque atmosphere of Nighttown, would not be given serious attention in the histrionic atmosphere of high Stalinism. But if we consider Bloom as a "type" within the long trajectory of the socialist movement, then it becomes increasingly clear that he fits in surprisingly well to this history, and that any socialist movement should have been happy to count an everyman like Bloom among its ranks. It is suggested by the novel that, like many Jews in the labor movement in the first half of the twentieth century, Bloom's affinity to these ideas is at least partially inspired and made possible by his own outsider position within an Irish national identity. The circumstances of the Soviet reception of Joyce did not allow this aspect of *Ulysses* to be considered. It was a complex of questions too close to contradictions in the conception of Soviet personhood.

I have suggested in the above that there were grounds for incorporating Joyce into a political framework for the reception of his work by Soviet readers. Although steps in this direction were made, there were two major impediments to this. One problem was the heterodoxy of Joyce's views and his unstable political position: Joyce had responded mockingly the one time he had been asked his views by a Soviet organization, if his response had been received at all; he made no political pronouncements publicly, and his work treated political and historical questions too ambiguously for Soviet cultural politics of the 1930s. Another problem is in the form and texture of his writing. He is too interested in form and does not absorb the reader in a striving toward revolutionary consciousness. Some, like Eisenstein and, to a lesser extent, Vishnevsky, *did* believe that the Joycean formula can be used to produce Marxist consciousness. What Stenich, Tretyakov and the translators of IL sought in him is also not completely clear, but their efforts also suggest they were presenting Joyce as a technology that could potentially be used to create new literature, just as, in industry, Western engineers were being brought in to design Soviet factories and architects are brought to design ideal towns. Miller-Budnitskaya, for all the ambiguity and invective of her articles, consistently argues that Joyce, perhaps more powerfully that most writers, is capable of distorting the human soul, if not of engineering it for the better. Following the Writers'

Congress, the translations and articles, even the most critical, should be seen as the attempt to define him as a new world master—as Proust was defined at this time as the last stage in bourgeois realism—who needs to be assimilated. Though the Terror annulled this attempt at definition, it was already on a completely different plane—one that treated cosmopolitans of "formalist" and "communist" stripes with the same targeted, but also random violence. It was a negotiation of meaning on the margins of mainstream cultural production that was suddenly interrupted. This sense of loss in the culture would be repeatedly returned to, first in the Thaw with the rehabilitation of those tried and killed unjustly, then in the publications that appeared at the very end of the Soviet Union.

Conclusion

In 1989, the journal *Inostrannaia literatura* ("Foreign Literature," the later successor to *International Literature*) finally published all of *Ulysses* serially in Russian translation. In parts of the Soviet Russian intellectual world, there was excitement at this overdue fulfillment of an unfinished project, seen a symbol of rejoining the European West after a long separation. The excitement was not shared by all readers, however. A librarian from Kiev wrote to the journal to complain: "our readers do not accept *Ulysses*. They can't understand why you are publishing such a thing anyway, much less dragging it out over a whole year… Don't you understand that people are tired?"[1] The librarian's dispatch exemplified a normal reaction to modernist literature that had also been denied to Soviet readers: this is boring, for God's sake why should I read this?

In other countries, interest in modernism had in many ways been allowed to ebb naturally. Dos Passos himself moved on from both left-wing politics and experimental writing (the latter, as Stenich had predicted), and Joyce and Proust, while read, taught and admired, are rarely imitated—though that is hardly the point. In the violent Soviet culmination of the debates over foreign literature, an interest that might, also, have fizzled out, with some readers loving modernism and many ignoring it, had been frozen and acquired perhaps more mystique than it deserved. Clark finds a similar attachment to avant-garde ideas of the 1920s among German exiles who fled Nazi Germany, at a time when their peers in other countries had long moved on.[2] On the other hand, in 1989 a different reader wrote to *Inostrannaia literatura* in say that he had come across excerpts of *Ulysses* while hospitalized during the blockade of Leningrad, and had looked in vain for a complete copy after the war. He was

[1] "Pochta IL," *Inostrannaia literatura* 1989 no. 10, 235-39, 235.
[2] Clark, *Moscow, the Fourth Rome*, 171.

"very pleased" to be able to finish the novel 50 years later.[3] So it was a cathartic publication for some readers.

The Soviet critiques of modernist writing repeatedly, and at some points independently, converge on the metaphor of the microscope. Prominent old Bolsheviks like Lunacharsky and Radek saw in the modernist microscope and its work the dangerous separation of the writer from the urgent social crises of the contemporary world at a crossroads, the distraction from the choice between capitalism and socialism. Writers, in their view, had a greater responsibility to recognize the necessity of this choice and to use their creative abilities to direct readers towards the contradictions of the old world and the building of the new one: a responsibility to take, instead, a macroscopic view. Building that world required the use of many technologies, many of which had to be imported or borrowed from the capitalist and precapitalist world. Writing, too, was a technology, and one that, in the language of Stalin and Olesha, helped in the engineering of human souls. The Soviet laboratory of modernism, which put Proust, Dos Passos and Joyce under the microscope, left a legacy of Soviet "modernism" in a handful of books and journals avidly sought by some readers for years afterwards. But was this legacy just a small pile of books?

In taking on, giving up and ultimately taking up this project again in the course of a decade, I have often asked myself what, really, were and are the stakes of the Soviet debates about modernism, and about Proust, Dos Passos and Joyce specifically. Translating them, borrowing from them, copying from them could hardly cause very much of anything to happen. Surely a century after the wheels of that process began to turn, we know that writers actually cannot engineer the human soul, that literature cannot produce revolutions, that words cannot produce consciousness, and that the discussion was fundamentally mistaken? Unless, as Marx would say, the material and economic basis

[3] "Pochta IL," 237.

is there; unless, as Cavafy would say, "you bear them in your soul, unless your soul sets them before you."[4]

One part of the answer seems to be that the stakes simply changed. It did seem possible to change the world, as long as you could encompass it, through world revolution and then, failing that, by gathering in one socialist country all the best things of the world, and sorting them for use. The practical needs of culture in a large country with a newly literate population, understandably, did not require great investment in authors read with pleasure by the relatively few. The question in Proust's case was mostly resolved without a great deal of debate, and left unresolved only due to the untimely deaths of translators in two different periods of the Soviet Union's existence. In Joyce's case it was complicated by the reception of Dos Passos and interrupted, making him into an almost mythological figure. In Dos Passos' case, however, it does seem to be a moment in which Soviet writers and the American author really were developing along parallel lines. The disappearance of Dos Passos from both the American and Russian canons of American authors is therefore all the more remarkable. More than one American study has noticed the curious phenomenon that Dos Passos is frequently called a major 20th-century writer but rarely if ever discussed in relation to the major writers of his time, which is just as true in Russia.[5] He is not read in America, although the growth in interest in socialism and Marxism in the US since 2016 has produced some references to his early, socialist-aligned work in left-wing magazines and even some articles attempting to revive interest in him directly.[6] In Russia, though the third volume of his *USA* trilogy was finally published at the turn of

[4] C.P. Cavafy, "Ithaca," in *Selected Poems*, trans. David Connolly (Athens: Aiora Press, 2015), 27.
[5] Janet Galligani Casey, *Dos Passos and the Ideology of the Feminine* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 1; Linda W. Wagner, 'Dos Passos: Some Directions in the Criticism', *Resources for American Literary Study* 13, no. 2, 1983, 204.
[6] Cal Winslow, "When Being a Red Meant Risking Your Life," *Jacobin*, 12/09/2019, https://jacobin.com/2019/12/red-scare-1919-centralia-massacre-wobblies-iww; Lawrence Parker, "Reintroducing Dos Passos," *Cosmonaut*, 03/02/2022, https://cosmonautmag.com/2022/03/reintroducing-john-dos-passos/

the millennium, sixty four years after the original came out in English and the same number of years since the last Soviet Russian editions of *The 42nd Parallel* and *1919*, he is also not read, although his peers and writers among whom he was frequently discussed—Theodor Dreiser, Sinclair Louis, Ernest Hemingway, and Sherwood Anderson—are still household names for readers throughout the post-Soviet world. Some of Stenich's translations of Dos Passos, however, do remain in high regard among literati and translators.[7]

The question of useful or acceptable foreign writers did not disappear after the Terror, and new foreign writers were also published: Ernest Hemingway, John Steinbeck, Heinrich and Thomas Mann, whose fiction was already being published serially in IL alongside *Ulysses*, but which provoked no debates and continued to be published long after. In many ways mainstream American and Western European literature itself moved in a direction more amenable to the stylistic paradigm of socialist realism, even while remaining ideologically distinct. This did not mean, however, that readers distant from the Terror had absorbed the fact that Dos Passos or Joyce had been excluded from the canon. In 1939 a reader wrote to IL to request they publish more works by Dos Passos and more excerpts from *Ulysses*, including them in a long list of other, less controversial authors and making no distinction between their work.[8] The journal editors, perhaps because they knew better, did not publish the letter. For intellectuals in the cultural centers of the Soviet Union, copies of works by Proust and Joyce continued to be shared, studied and discussed after new publications of their works ceased.

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[7] See Elena Kalashnikova, *Po-russki s liubov'iu. Besedy s perevodchikami* (Moscow: Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie, 2008), 167, 372.

[8] His list is rather extensive, and, at least in the English writers, almost serves as a curriculum vitae for Stenich's work as a translator: "Feuchtwanger, A. Zweig, Bruno Frank, B. Brecht, V. Vasilevskii, Roger Martin du Gard… Hemingway, Dos Passos, Sinclair Louis, Upton Sinclair… It would be good if you published a cycle of Kipling's best poems and ballads, as well as excerpts from the novel by J. Joyce, *Ulysses*," signed by a "military engineer": Nailya Safiullina, "Window to the West: From the Collection of Readers' Letters to the Journal *Internatsional'naia literatura*," *Slavonica* 2009 no. 2, vol. 15, 151.

If critics and translators are the first intermediaries and readers for a foreign audience, who make it possible for other speakers of the language to read a new foreign author at all, then a further stage is missing from this dissertation: how these writers' influence is integrated into the language and literature by new writers. This would tell us more about the results of the debate, whether Soviet writers indeed saw themselves as extracting techniques from modernist writers. This dissertation did not take up this question, and, as of yet, it does not seem to have been pursued in relation to Proust or Dos Passos. As mentioned in the previous chapter, however, it has been carefully and wonderfully examined in Joyce's case by Jose Vergara in *All Future Plunges to the Past: James Joyce in Russian*, exploring Joyce's influence over the 20th century on five Russian novelists, who transformed Joyce's themes, styles and plots in their work.

There are several contemporary developments which suggest this history is more than just a curiosity and has some relevance today. First, in the United States and elsewhere, debates about the political significance of art have erupted, while politicized art, or at least the awareness of the political in art, as grown. The art discussed in this context now almost entirely consists of film, Eisenstein's medium of choice for Joycean montage, instead of literary works. Scholars, critics and writers can learn from the Soviet example—a lesson in how to treat literature scientifically, but also a lesson in the pitfalls of taking it too seriously. The Soviet debates over modernists might teach us to lower our expectations about what art can really achieve in the political arena, even as artists continue Dos Passos' search for "the right formula." Secondly, in Russia, but also in several other countries of the former Soviet Union, links to foreignness are again being put under suspicion: the attempt to repress all things Ukrainian amid Russia's brutal and cynical war; the branding of government critics as "foreign agents," accompanied by financial punishments and even prison sentences. At the same time, justified international sympathy with the plight of people in Ukraine has, unfortunately, sometimes been accompanied by dehumanizing attitudes toward the general population of Russia. This

dissertation has tried to show how varied, complex and ambivalent the words and actions of Soviet citizens could be during another time when the state imagined itself to have a monopoly on correct opinion and action, and to claim to speak for all people subject to it.

Most of this dissertation was written in Saint Petersburg, Russia, after the government's launch of the war against Ukraine. This was a result of personal circumstances, as my partner and I married in March, and her company remained in the country after the war. Although I watched a large protest erupt on Nevsky Prospekt on the day of the invasion while working in the National Library, any further showing of opposition to the war was quickly repressed and signs of protest activity, or of support for the war, became generally scarce. Russia has, for now, come in some ways to resemble the Soviet Union in its darker moments. The parallels can be exaggerated, and history teaches only that no situation will ever repeat itself exactly. Little of what I've observed cannot be learned from accounts of the everyday lives of people under High Stalinism. Normal life continues, public life bears little mark of the catastrophe occurring nearby. Where one can have half a conversation in private, even strangers will often say openly what cannot be said publicly. This combination of normalcy and secrecy has led me often to reflect on the conditions in which the protagonists of this dissertation lived and worked. Then too, it was possible to live one's usual life, speaking freely to friends, enjoying a novel, while knowing that one could not express oneself as one would like in print, in public, and while worried about the worsening political situation domestically and internationally. It has, at least, led me to treat the writing of critics and translators with extreme care. They wrote in their own words, but they did not write them as they pleased.

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