sincere interest in some of the young emerging "proletarian" poets of the 30s, including Aleksandr Tvardovskii, whose first major work, *Strana Muravia*, Pasternak recommended for publication in 1935.

The reader may have a few minor reservations. The titles of all Russian-language periodicals are translated into English, and it is somewhat irritating to read about *New World*, *Banner*, and the like, but this may simply be the style of the publisher. It is also distracting from time to time to run across a puzzling contradiction. For example: "There were no reports in the Soviet press about the death of the poet. Only *Literatura i zhizn* (*Literature and Life*) and the *Literary Gazette* placed the Literary Fund's one-sentence official note about the death of one of its members...." (p. 312) It turns out, then, that there were at least *two* reports, albeit brief ones.

There are many bibliographical and explanatory notes (pp. 317-49), but even so, important bibliographical information is omitted. The memoirs of Arkady Belinkov are cited on p. 307, for example, but are not included in the notes.

In spite of these minor shortcomings, Fleischman's book is extremely interesting and informative. He has succeeded in disproving that Pasternak was remote from practical life, and that his work was monolithic and inaccessible. On the contrary, not only was his artistic development influenced by changing conditions, but he was also a successful public speaker and often recited his poetry in public. He provided material help to several fellow writers, and he often defied unreasonable rules. He was indeed aware of the risks involved in giving the manuscript of *Dr. Zhivago* to the Italian journalist Sergio d'Angelo; this action was not the absentminded mistake that it is often claimed to have been.

Fleischman's conclusion—"Pasternak's work and fate serve as a constant reminder of the eternally nonconformist essence of art"—is a much too modest summary of this excellent book. It is better formulated in the preface: "I was astonished to learn how closely . . . [Pasternak] . . . was bound up with the historical realities." (p. ix) Fleischman had represented Pasternak's life and work from the standpoint of "his close ties to his epoch." (p.x) In spite of the fact that Pasternak was never an obedient servant of the government, his life and work were in fact closely tied to the country he lived in, loved, and would not leave, even when he had the opportunity to do so.

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Michaela Boehmig. *Das Russische Theater in Berlin 1919-1931* (Arbeiten und Texte zur Slavistik, LIX). München: Verlag Otto Sagner, 1990. 324 pp. (paper)

"Russian Berlin," the term refers to the magnificent, albeit short-lived period in the 1920s when the more than 300,000 Russians in Berlin turned that city into the literary capital and intellectual focal point of Russian

Canadian-American Slavic Studies, 27, Nos. 1-4 (1993), 317-444.

BOOK REVIEWS/COMPTES RENDUS

Lazar Fleischman. *Boris Pasternak: The Poet and His Politics.* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1990. xi, 339 pp. $37.50.

The author of this work started his research on Pasternak while still a student in the Soviet Union, where he was able to examine archival materials in various locations. In 1974 he emigrated to Israel and discovered that much Pasternak material had already been published in the West, including bibliographies, memoirs, sets of correspondence, and the three-volume work by Gleb Struve. Fleischman felt, however, that by the late 1970s Pasternak studies had reached an impasse and that there had been no effort to place the poet in his historical and cultural context. Fleischman firmly believes that literary life and works are linked to the other arts and political, economic and social conditions, in contrast to some critics who claim that the circumstances surrounding the origin of a work of literature are not really the most significant matters for study.

Fleischman then sets out to disprove the generally accepted opinion that "Pasternak seemed remote from the controversies of his era, . . . distanced himself deliberately . . . was turned toward the timeless universals of art . . . and quite indifferent to his own times." (p. ix).

Fleischman at first gives an exhaustive description of the many groupings of Symbolists and Futurists in Russia from the time of Pasternak's literary debut soon after 1910 until the early 1930s. The group Pasternak belonged to, the "Centrifuge," is described in greater detail than other groups - Acemists, Serapion Brothers, and so forth, which are mentioned more in passing. These introductory chapters are very informative, but they narrowly avoid becoming a text-book of literary movements.

While Fleischman paints a background of Pasternak's life—the social reality—in great detail, he resists the temptation of going into unnecessary biographical detail; after all, this work is not intended as a narrowly focused biography. For instance, there is not a word about the well-known anecdote that Pasternak was inspired to write *Dr. Zhivago* when Nina Tabidze gave him the writing paper left by her husband, who was arrested and killed in 1937. There is just enough biographical material to place Pasternak's life into the context of the political and social climate of the period.

Fleischman also eschews analyses of Pasternak's literary works; he limits himself strictly to his set task—to place Pasternak's life and works in their political context without including anything except the barest details of his personal life or literary achievements. This is certainly an ambitious goal in itself, and Fleischman deals with it very well in this fascinating book.

It is interesting to learn that Pasternak always loved and admired Maiakovskii, and in spite of some temporary disagreements between the two, Pasternak felt much closer to him than to Mandel'shtam, for example, although the latter's art seems closer to Pasternak's. Pasternak also felt a

cultural life, was rediscovered in the 1980s by a handful of German and American scholars. Michaela Boehmig has turned her attention to one of the more fascinating and least studied aspects of the period: the Russian theater.

Boehmig leads her readers through a careful and thorough introduction to the people and places of that era, from its infancy in 1919-21, the glory years of 1921-23, the decline in 1923-27 and then beyond. Three introductory chapters, "Das 'russische Berlin' (1919-27)," "Die Russen in Berlin," and "Das kulturelle Leben und kuenstlerischen Initiativen," offer an excellent overview for a broad audience before the author turns to the various aspects of Russian theatrical life.

Boehmig divides her history of Russian theater into three categories, each preceded by its own introduction. In extraordinary detail she captures for the historical record the earliest attempts by the emigre community to provide regular access to Russian theater: "Die Zeit der Wandertruppen und der Versuche, ein staendiges russisches Theater einzurichten (1919-22)." While all of these efforts were doomed to failure by a combination of political and economic factors, they testify to the energy and creative initiative embodied in the Russian colony in Berlin. Boehmig describes the efforts of W. Schumski, W. Wronski, M. Brans, the creation of Die Russische dramatische Theater, along with several attempts by members of Moscow's famous Art Theater to find a permanent home in Berlin and a place in the hearts of the Berliners. Their efforts recall a time when the theaters inside of Russia were struggling under the conditions of civil war in Russia, and remind one of similar attempts at survival by Russia's proud cultural institutions today. In spite of a repertoire of classics including the masterful and once revolutionary stagings of the plays of Anton Chekhov, casts of world renown Russian actors such as Olgo Knipper-Chekhova, the Russian language performances appealed primarily to the emigre colony. "Alles, alles russisch. Die paar Einheimischen wunderten sich, dass sie als "Ausländer" nicht noch höhere Preise hatten zahlen müssen." (49) The language barrier, the expansion physically and politically of the Russian community, new and better relations with the Bolshevik regime, and subsequent visits by theaters from Moscow had by mid 1922 doomed these efforts to create one's own Russian theater.

An alternative to traditional theater could be found in "Die russischen Kleinkunstbuehne und Kabarette (1921-31)." The most successful was the famous "Der blaue Vogel (Siniaia ptitsa) which opened its doors on December 20, 1921 at Goltzstrasse 9. The Russian cabaret broke through language barriers, and under the artistic direction of the master of ceremonies Iu. Luzhnyi, this theater embodied his words: "Man kann auf einer Klein-Buehne grosse Kunst zeigen." (p. 109) Boehmig catalogues in minute detail the theater, its programs, and the enthusiastic reception of the art form so well suited not only to the Russians' situation, but to Berlin's exciting nightlife. Even so, "Der blaue Vogel" too would be forced to pack its bags in April of 1923 and follow the flow of Russians away from Berlin and in search of a new home. From 1923 to 1929 the troupe performed in 166 cities throughout Europe and America, spending only a brief amount of time in its birthplace in Berlin.

Indeed, it seemed the fate of Berlin to give life to creative efforts that later would move on to please audiences beginning in 1923. The less well known attempts at *Kleinkunst* are all here to be seen: "Das Stehaufmaennchen," "Das Karussell," "Kikimora," "Das Theater von Duvan-Torcov" and "Das Russische romantische Theater."

The final chapter in the history of Russian theater in Berlin in the 1920s was the beginning of "Die Gastspiele sowjetischer Theater und Ensembles" beginning in 1922. In their search for hard currency, and cultural respite from the turmoils of their homeland came here the representatives of the best Russia could offer, the Moscow Art Theater, the State Academy Theater of Drama, the Musical Studio of the Moscow Art Theater and others. Along with the groups came some of the century's most prominent figures of theater: Aleksandr Tairov, Konstantin Stanislavskii, Vladimir Nemirovic-Dantschenko. What began in mid-1922 with the signing of the Treaty of Rapallo and formal recognition of Soviet Russia as a break for many from the harsh realities of Soviet life, would soon like other areas of cultural life be coopted for political messages and purposes of portraying Russian life in a positive light. "Mit kulturellen Verastaltungen möchte man dem westlichen Publikum die russische und sowjetische Kunst vorstellen und dadurch dem Vorwurf der Kulturarberei des neuen Regimes begegnen." (p. 159)

Boehmig's words to describe the phenomenon of Soviet theater can also be applied to her book. The close-up view of the rich and vibrant Russian theatrical life in and around Berlin provides us with a permanent record of a brilliant page out of twentieth-century cultural history. The meticulous coverage of figures major and minor in the text is supplemented by an excellent and user-friendly scholarly apparatus of Notes to each chapter, followed by a thematically arranged bibliography, and separate indexes for persons, theatrical performances and theaters. After an initial reading the book thus becomes not only a significant contribution to our knowledge, but also a valuable reference work for anyone interested in the phenomenon of Russian Berlin.

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Alice Stone Nakhimovsky. *Russian Jewish Literature and Identity*. Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1991. xiv, 215 pp.

In this book Alice Stone Nakhimovsky analyzes works of six writers of Jewish origin (Vladimir Jabotinsky, Isaac Babel, Vasily Grossman, Alexander Galich, Felix Roziner, and David Markish), writing in their native Russian language covering a hundred-year period from the late nineteenth century up to the 1980s. These writers through their particular works, as well as their personal lives, reflect the problems of Russian-language and later Soviet Jewry, and the constant quest for their individual identity as well as that of their fellow Jew.