

THREE RUSSIANS CONSIDER AMERICA: AMERICA IN THE WORKS OF MAKSIM GOR'KIJ, ALEKSANDR BLOK, AND VLADIMIR MAJAKOVSKIJ. By *Charles Rougle*. Stockholm Studies in Russian Literature, 8. Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1976. 175 pp. Sw.kr. 53, paper.

"Whither Russia?" was a question that perplexed the Russian intelligentsia for many generations. The New World with its "free" institutions and rapid industrial development presented a fascinating alternative. With this in mind, Dr. Charles Rougle analyzes the attitudes of the writers Gorky, Blok, and Mayakovsky. Gorky and Mayakovsky visited the United States in 1906 and 1925, respectively; Blok never did.

Gorky's negative views have already been discussed by many commentators, including this reviewer, and not much can be added to what they have said. Gorky's American trip was punctuated by a personal scandal which strongly colored his impressions of this country. What he saw, above all, were the "evils" of capitalism and bourgeois democracy. His sketch, "The City of Mammon," was published in the August 1906 issue of the *Appleton Magazine* and evoked some twelve hundred irate responses from its readers. A somewhat different version, entitled "The City of the Yellow Devil" (together with several other similarly directed accounts), has become "a classic," used by the Soviets whenever their need for Cold-War polemics arises. Mayakovsky, though less hostile than Gorky, and, in such poems as "Broadway" and "The Brooklyn Bridge," even showing admiration for America's technological achievements, nevertheless shared the impressions the older writer had almost a quarter of a century before.

It was Alexander Blok who looked to America as an ideal to emulate and who prophesied that, by following the "American model," Russia would undergo both a material and spiritual regeneration and would become a "new America."

Three Russians Consider America is a doctoral dissertation, which, like many other dissertations, suffers from the inclusion of all material read, whether pertinent or not. Dr. Rougle would have done well to adopt a more uniform format in his use of Russian quotations. It is disconcerting indeed to read quotes in the original Russian, in transliteration, and in English translation. More thoughtful editing could have added considerably to this interesting study.

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A CAPTIVE OF TIME. By *Olga Ivinskaya*. Translated and with an introduction by *Max Hayward*. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1978. xlii, 462 pp. + 28 pp. photographs. \$12.50.

While it may be entertaining reading for many, for the serious reader (and certainly for Pasternak's biographer) *A Captive of Time* is a mine of vital, specific information. The facts are provided by Olga Ivinskaya, who, with much justification, claims to have been the poet's "right hand" and aware of his thoughts, deeds, and plans. She painstakingly collates information from every source available to her and also provides a narrative of key episodes in Pasternak's life.

Ivinskaya portrays Pasternak as a generous and unworldly figure, who has the courage of his convictions and who willingly delegates to her tasks too odious for his noble nature to bear. Such an overly idealistic portrayal is counterbalanced by the revelation of some of his flaws and weaknesses, such as his childish petulance and worldly vanity. In the eyes of his worshippers, the poet may emerge somewhat reduced, yet also more credible, because he is fallible.