

THE RUSSIAN'S WORLD: LIFE AND LANGUAGE. By *Genevra Gerhart*.  
New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1974. xiv, 257 pp. \$6.95, paper.

This is an uncommon little compendium of Russian "common knowledge." Not all readers will find everything in it valuable, but most students of Russian culture will find much that is worthwhile. For example, *literaturovedy* will find useful stylistic notes and descriptions of peasant households; those involved with technical literature will appreciate the thorough discussion of linguistic phenomena associated with mathematics; travel-study participants will value the descriptions of leisure use and the educational system; teachers of introductory culture classes will welcome all of the above plus the explanations of holiday customs.

The material, presented with wit and clarity, is divided into twelve sections covering areas such as "Clothing," "Education," and "Speech." The sections and subdivisions are not cumulative, so that any can be consulted at random. There are numerous appropriate illustrations, documents, charts, vocabulary lists, and short Russian passages, with translations provided in an appendix. Frequent reference is made to stylistics and other connotations. The layout is pleasing, the type is large and clear, and the Russian vocabulary is accented and in boldface. Misprints and spelling errors are remarkably rare.

Although the work contains many succinct and useful explanatory passages, it tends to center on vocabulary and factual detail rather than on broad unifying concepts. Even so it is useful, but could have been far more accessible had a Russian-language index been provided.

There are occasional passages which are misleading, such as the statement on page 76 that "at the end of eight grades the pupil, . . . has several choices." No mention is made of the testing program at this point which in the past has eliminated for many the choice of a college-preparatory track. There also is no mention of the role of *blat* and social class at each selection point in the educational process, nor of the emphasis on memorization.

Despite these and similar minor flaws, the work contains a wealth of useful and generally accurate detail. It should be considered obligatory baggage for *stazhery* and exchange teachers as well as a useful reference for any student of things Russian.

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RUSSIAN ART OF THE AVANT-GARDE: THEORY AND CRITICISM  
1902–1934. Edited and translated by *John E. Bowlt*. The Documents of 20th-Century Art Series. New York: The Viking Press, 1976. xl, 360 pp. Illus. \$20.00.

This is not a history of the Russian avant-garde. It is a useful collation and translation of selected theoretical statements, written between 1902 and 1934, by Russian artists, mainly easel painters. Professor Bowlt's selections range from essays that are little known and hard to obtain (such as Vladimir Markov's 1912 essay "Printsipy novogo iskusstva" from the journal *Soiuz molodezhi*) to those that are well known and already translated (Naum Gabo's "Realistic Manifesto" of 1920). Through the artists' own words the reader is able to witness the image of art change dramatically from a harbinger of a new religion to the revolutionary construction of a new society—the artist as priest giving way to the artist as engineer. In addition to the essays and manifestoes, Professor Bowlt has added a twenty-page introductory essay, biographical data introducing each artist, footnotes, illustrations, and a forty-page bibliography divided into works in Western languages (272 entries) and works in Russian (515