

BETWEEN PARIS AND ST. PETERSBURG: SELECTED DIARIES OF ZINAIDA HIPPIUS. Edited and translated by *Temira Pachmuss*. Urbana, Chicago, London: University of Illinois Press, 1975. xvi, 329 pp. \$12.50.

Professor Pachmuss has diligently selected, translated, edited, and annotated the seven diaries of Zinaida Hippus, that make up this volume. The contents of the book can be divided into diaries proper of which there are four—*Contes d'amour*, *About the Cause*, *The Warsaw Diary*, and *The Brown Notebook*—and discourses and treatises—including *The Choice?*, *In Reply to Manukhina's Commentaries*, and *Explanations and Questions*.

Having read the remarks devoted to *About the Cause* in Pachmuss's lengthy general introduction, I expected to find this selection particularly illuminating, full of new facts and information about the religious-philosophical movement of the early 1900s. Unfortunately, all I found in the disjointed diary entries were reflections of the relationship between Hippus, Filosofov, and Merezhkovsky—the “central trio” of the hoped-for “inner Church.” These entries compelled me to conclude something which I know to be false, namely, that it was the capriciousness of Filosofov which led to the collapse of the Merezhkovskys' efforts to lay the foundations of the “New Church.” Moreover, the “central trio's” attempts, in 1911–12, to formulate their main theses appear to be a desperate and belated effort on the part of Hippus to preserve not the concept of the “New Church,” but the “three-persons-in-one” relationship for which she longed, but which held no attraction for the other partners (pp. 151, 154, 156–57). This diary also clarifies why accusations that the Merezhkovskys wanted to create their own sectarian church came to be made by their contemporaries. But the diary also contains a great many fascinating details about Hippus's life at that time and about a number of people with whom she was closely associated (such as Kartashev, Marietta Shaginyan, and Boris Savinkov, whose novel *The Pale Horse*, we learn, was edited and given its title by Hippus).

A wealth of informative material, which was missing from *About the Cause*, is provided in the selection entitled *In Reply to Manukhina's Commentaries*, which is basically a systematic exposition of “The Cause.”

The very personal *Contes d'amour* falls clearly into two parts. The first part reveals in Hippus a mixture of naïveté and pretentiousness that is unexpected of a woman of her intellectual caliber and age (mid-twenties). On the other hand, the second part, which starts with the March 13, 1901 entry, is interesting in its attempt to define Hippus's concept of the “new kind” of love. A natural continuation of this diary is *The Brown Book*, which offers a gentle, sad, and touching account of the breakup of Hippus's very special relationship with Filosofov, and the subsequent end to her hope of seeing “The Cause” materialize.

The only diary dealing with external affairs, rather than with Hippus's “inner” experiences, is *The Warsaw Diary*. This selection provides information about the émigrés' abortive attempt to form a military force which, with the help of Pilsudski's armies, would overthrow the Bolsheviks. Here the Merezhkovskys' political naïveté mixed with conceit and boundless intellectual arrogance is fully revealed.

*The Choice?* is Hippus's exposition of her belief about the nature and essence of Christianity. This is a lucid account, which deserves the reader's close attention. However, the same cannot be said about *Explanations and Questions*. It is a pity that the editor did not provide more information about this work.

In her introduction, Professor Pachmuss states that Hippius's diaries are "a valuable, highly artistic personal confession." Unfortunately, the artistic quality she speaks of must have been lost in translation. She also states that the diaries "have great historical and literary significance . . . because they re-create the spiritual atmosphere of St. Petersburg . . . , reveal the nature of life in Poland after the October Revolution, and the activities of 'Russian Paris' in the third and fourth decades of the century." The first two assertions are greatly exaggerated, the third is simply not true. Perhaps Professor Pachmuss—who has devoted her life to the study of Hippius's life and works, and whose scholarly efforts are aimed at restoring "Zinaida Hippius to her rightful place in the history of Russian literature" and at rescuing "from obscurity the influences of this most unique and colorful figure upon her contemporaries"—did see all these features in the diaries in this volume. I am afraid, however, that readers, who do not possess her profound knowledge of everything connected with Hippius, will fail to do so.

GLEB ŽEKULIN  
*University of Toronto*

CYPRIAN NORWID. By *George Gömöri*. Twayne's World Author Series, 305. New York: Twayne Publishers, 1974. 162 pp. \$7.95.

Gömöri's book is a descriptive analysis of Norwid's life, career, and work, with the emphasis clearly on the work. Gömöri has traveled into new territory—this is the first full-length study of Norwid in English—and returned to make a sober and, as he terms it in his preface, "modest" report. Though it is unfair to require that travelers return with colorful tales of exotic artifacts, it is not unfair to require them to transmit a sense of the place visited, its peculiarities, its charms, its dangers, and its use. Obviously, Norwid is abstract country, and any reports must necessarily resemble their subject, but I believe that this book has certain shortcomings which rob it of some flavor.

First, the matter of quotations, which are always exhibit A when making a case for a poet. The translations here are poor and weak (though the two-volume selection of Norwid's writings to be published by the University of Iowa may yet improve matters). Further, the translations are not accompanied by the Polish originals. This is unfortunate, because most of the book's prospective readers will probably have some knowledge of Polish. The original lines and a summary translation would have been ideal. A second shortcoming is the author's extensive use of cultural discussion (for example, Wallenrodian romanticism). Although he uses this approach well, it does have a clogging effect on the work as a whole. Finally, it must be remembered that, for English readers, Polish literature has long been a hermetic world inaccessible to the uninitiated, and for this reason Polish literature both expresses and reinforces Poland's uneasy sense of not being quite an integral part of the civilization to which it knows it truly belongs. Books such as Gömöri's should strive to aid reintegration. Thus, comparisons with European writers that are subsequently shown to be non-comparisons (unlike Hugo, unlike Baudelaire) raise my suspicions that the reflex ritual is being performed and communication is being inhibited. At this stage of the game, the judicious analogy is much to be preferred.