



**Aleksandr Vasil' evich Druzhinin (1824-1864): Zhizn' i tvorchestvo**

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Brojde, Anmartin M. *Aleksandr Vasil'evich Druzhinin (1824–1864): Zhizn' i tvorchestvo*. (Copenhagen University Institute of Slavic Studies, No. 12.) Copenhagen: Rosenkilde and Bages Publishers, 1986. 536 pp.

This study is about the life and works of the mid-nineteenth century Russian author and literary critic, Aleksandr Vasil'evich Druzhinin (1824–1864). It is the culmination of more than ten years of research. Because of its depth and breadth, it is a definitive treatment of its subject. Brojde published a number of earlier pieces on Druzhinin in *Soviet Studies in Literature*, *Scando-Slavica*, and *Canadian-American Slavic Studies*. The present publication ties these together and greatly expands on them.

Druzhinin wrote several novellas, including *Polin'ka Saks* (Moscow: 1847, republished 1955), which defended the rights and dignity of women. The plot in his story *Lola Montez* (1848) was used for a movie directed by French director Max Ophuls. Druzhinin's translations of Shakespeare's tragedies, Charles Dickens, James Fenimore Cooper, etc., were admired by Soviet critics like A. V. Lunacharskii (1875–1933) and continue to be popular. His recently published diary, *Povesti Dnevnik* (ed., B. F. Egorov; Moscow: Nauka, 1986), and collected essays, *Literaturnaia Kritika* (ed., N. N. Skatova; Moscow: Sovetskaiia Rossiia, 1983), illuminate literary history. The Society for Aid to Needy Writers and Scholars (The Literary Fund), which was organized by his initiative in 1859, still serves.

Brojde emphasizes, however, that Druzhinin's main legacy is his literary criticism. It is characterized by the affirmation of human dignity, the family, and the goodness and purposefulness of life, by its sympathy toward working people like Agafia Matveevna, and by its faith in the future and a new society. Druzhinin defended clean living, self-sacrifice and strong character as exemplified in Oblomov, who preserved moral purity, simplicity, and love of neighbor throughout their lives. From his youth Druzhinin had a passionate contempt for the aristocracy, its lineage, culture, and social injustice. He celebrated and popularized America's democratic society and literature. Many writers of his day owed a debt to Druzhinin: Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Turgenev, Goncharov, Nekrasov, Fet, et al. They respected his ideas and, in Brojde's view, were influenced in a positive direction by his criticism.

In politics a pacifist and reformist, Druzhinin's early works (1846–1850) are more concerned with the rights of women than with the other issues of his age. These early works are his most important fiction, most of them written during a long spiritual crisis. In this crisis Druzhinin maintained the necessity to love human beings, while his acute sensitivity enabled him to perceive their dark side with painful clarity.

Brojde shows how Druzhinin's spiritual crisis resulted in a chronic depression that led to a decline in his artistic powers. In his morbid sensitivity to his internal state, he resembled nineteenth-century literary figures such as Nietzsche and Kierkegaard. Lacking their hardness, he attempted to drown his despair in the earthly pleasures: good food, wine, music, art, and feminine beauty. Loving literature above all else, he moved from writing to criticism. This did much to alleviate his depression. Valuing a literary work by how much aesthetic pleasure

he could derive from it, he was appalled by Gogol's grotesque portrayal of Russian society, though he did not mind similar portrayals in English writers like Dickens. And there was much in Gogol which he did not find of worth.

An interesting aspect of Druzhinin's career, which Brojde develops, was his polemic with the anti-tsarist literary critic, N. G. Chernyshevskii (1828–1889) and N. A. Dobroliubov (1836–1861), whose work Marx admired. Chernyshevskii was representative of those who even for a period in the twentieth century had a limited regard for writers such as Pushkin. Chernyshevskii preferred Gogol and those who tied their art directly to mobilizing the masses in their struggle against social and economic inequality. In the debate between the aesthetic and the publicistic schools of criticism, the public viewed Chernyshevskii as victorious. Druzhinin emerged as the victor in the eyes of the intellectuals. Minimized by those in the Chernyshevskii tradition was the Leninist notion that the political must be personal, just as the personal must be political. The dialectic between the two, along with public needs and Druzhinin's reputation, not to speak of Pushkin's, was restored, in time, with the Revolution. Writers like Derek Offord (*Portraits of Early Russian Liberals: A Study in the Thought of T. N. Granovsky, V. P. Botkin, P. V. Annenkov, A. V. Druzhinin and K. D. Kavelin* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985], p. 145) will appreciate Brojde's clarification of this point.

Since the 1950s a number of Soviet scholars have made studies of the head of the school of aesthetic criticism. Brojde's book, however, is the only comprehensive source for understanding Druzhinin's ideas and works. An English translation is needed.

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Frank, Joseph. *Dostoevsky: The Stir of Liberation, 1860–1865*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986. 396 pp. \$29.50.

The third volume in what Joseph Frank now projects as a five-volume biography of Fedor Dostoevsky has appeared and the grand scale of Frank's efforts is more apparent than ever. His approach is resolutely traditional in this volume linking Dostoevsky's intellectual biography to the cultural history of Russia during the dynamic period of the "the sixties." His version of Dostoevsky's psychology continues to be post-Freudian, but in an eclectic and common-sensical way. This great study also represents a notable act of faith in the genre of biography, in the idea that it is worthwhile for a biographer to spend several decades creating his or her version of the life of a great writer, not an idea that everyone would endorse nowadays.

Dostoevsky and the sixties is a particularly fascinating and important subject because of the complex relationship between the changes in Russia's intellectual climate and the changes in Dostoevsky's world view, as well as because Dostoevsky's development over this five-year period takes us up to the time in which he created the masterpieces of his maturity. The volume ends in fact with Frank's stimulating revisiting of *Notes from the Underground*.

Frank has worked over the cultural history of the sixties with great care