

# **DICTIONARY OF RUSSIAN LITERATURE**

*by* **WILLIAM E. HARKINS**



**GREENWOOD PRESS, PUBLISHERS**  
**WESTPORT, CONNECTICUT**

The Library of Congress cataloged this book as follows:

**Harkins, William Edward.**

Dictionary of Russian literature, by William E. Harkins.  
Westport, Conn., Greenwood Press [1971, c1956]

vi, 439 p. 23 cm.

1. Russian literature--Dictionaries.	I. Title.	
PG2940.H3 1971	891.7'09	75-139135
ISBN 0-8371-5751-X		MARC
Library of Congress	71	

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Originally published in 1956 by Philosophical Library,  
New York

Reprinted with the permission of Philosophical Library

Reprinted by Greenwood Press,  
a division of Williamhouse-Regency Inc.

First Greenwood Reprinting 1971  
Second Greenwood Reprinting 1976

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number 75-139135

ISBN 0-8371-5751-X

Printed in the United States of America

## PREFACE

The present work seeks to provide in a compact form essential information on the entire field of Russian literature, as well as much information on literary criticism, journalism, philosophy, theater, and related subjects.

Russian tradition has tended to obliterate the distinction between social and political criticism on one hand, and literary criticism on the other, and even, to an extent, the distinction between philosophy as such and literature. I believe that this tradition will help to justify the inclusion of many philosophers, as well as writers on political and social questions.

A number of short articles on historical topics have been included for the value they may have for readers of Russian literature who require background information on Russian history. In every case the reflection of these events in literature has also been mentioned.

While the present work does not aim at presenting a discursive history of Russian literature, the reader may obtain a continuous account of the historical development of literature in Russia by reading the following articles in succession: Literature, Old Russian; Classicism; Sentimentalism; Pre-Romanticism; Romanticism; Parnassian Poets; Realism; Symbolism; and Literature, Soviet. Other major subject entries include: Drama and Theater; Philosophy; Folk Literature; Criticism and Criticism, Soviet.

Although the book is primarily intended as a reference work, I have not refrained entirely from critical judgment, particularly in the case of the more important writers. I sincerely trust that readers will accept these comments as helpful suggestions rather than *ex cathedra* pronouncements.

The present work treats only literature of the Great Russian people, and Ukrainian and Belo-Russian literatures have not been included. A few leading Ukrainian and Belo-Russian writers are listed and identified as such, however, to prevent any possible misunder-

## Preface

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standing. In regard to the old Russian period, I consider writing of the Kievan period (tenth to thirteenth centuries) to be the common heritage of all three East Slavic peoples: Great Russian, Ukrainian and Belo-Russian. In support of this view I would point out that it is in Northeast (Great) Russia, to a large extent, that Kievan literature has survived.

I wish to express my sincere thanks to Mrs. Martha Bradshaw Manheim for her article on "Drama and Theater"; to Professor George Kline for his article on "Philosophy"; to Professor Rufus W. Mathewson, Jr. for "Literature, Soviet"; and to Professor Edward J. Brown for "Criticism, Soviet." All other articles are my own responsibility. Thanks are also due to Miss Rose Raskin, to Professor Leon Stilman and to Professor George Kline for their friendly and helpful criticism of certain articles. Sincere appreciation is also expressed for Mr. Richard Witz's aid in matters of style.

Cross-references may be indicated either in parentheses (see . . .), or simply by spelling the cross-referenced entry in capitals: e.g., PUSHKIN. The titles of published English translations are given only when they deviate significantly from a literal translation of the original Russian titles.

Every care has been taken to insure the accuracy of facts, but in a work of this nature certain errors will no doubt be found. Any comment concerning mistakes will be welcome; such communications should be directed to me in care of the publishers.

WILLIAM E. HARKINS

*New York, N. Y.*

# A

**Ablesimov, Alexander Onisimovich** (1748-83), a writer of comic operas, the most famous of which is *The Miller as Wizard, Cheat and Matchmaker* (1779), a light, gay comedy, based partly on folklore motifs, and concerned with the problems of love and matchmaking. The music was selected from Russian folk songs by Ablesimov himself.

**Acmeism**, a movement in Russian poetry founded in 1912 by Nikolay GUMILYOV and Sergey GORODETSKI as a reaction against SYMBOLISM. The nickname of "Acmeism" was accepted by the members of the Poets' Guild (as it was officially called) as a warrant of the perfection and achievement for which they were striving. The Acmeists objected to the mysticism of much of symbolist poetry, and, particularly, to the vagueness of its imagery. They also opposed the symbolists' use of images as symbols of unseen metaphysical realities, and called for a return to the use of clear, precise and concrete imagery. Gumilyov declared that he wanted to admire a rose for its beauty, not because it symbolized mystical love. In place of the suggestiveness of symbolist poetry, the Acmeists substituted an emphasis on naming, and for them the use of correct names was much of the essence of poetry. In many of their works, particularly those of Akhmatova, verbs are almost lacking. The Acmeists, and especially GUMILYOV, also emphasized the expression of the virile, the direct and the heroic in their attitude toward life. They applied the name "Adamism" to this tendency in their movement.

Besides Gumilyov and Gorodetski, the school included Anna Akhmatova (see Gorenko) and Osip MANDELSTAM. As an organized movement it lasted from 1912 only until the First World War.

**Adamism.** See Acmeism.

**Aesopic language**, the name given in Russian criticism to the language of oppositional political writing, disguised in literary form for the purpose of passing the CENSORSHIP. Such writing makes extensive use of circumlocution and topical hints at current political happenings; it may also be cast in a generalized form, such as the fable. The reader is supposed to read between the lines or give the particular application suggested by current events. Such devices were most used in the nineteenth century; present-day Soviet critics are better able to detect them. The great master of Aesopic language in Russian literature is SALTUKOV, who himself first used the term in this sense.

**Afinogenov, Alexander Nikolayevich** (1904-41), a Soviet playwright. He specialized in melodramas about Soviet and foreign life, filled with labor struggles, spies and sabotage. His play *Fear* (1930) became one of the most famous Soviet plays, though it hardly rises above the level of the sensational. It describes how an old Soviet scientist is led by saboteurs to oppose the Soviet regime, but ends by repenting of his error. The play's theme, that fear inspires opposition to Soviet progress, never really becomes credible. *Distant Point* (1935) is less melodramatic, though its thesis—that every Soviet village should be on the alert for defense—is still a sensational one. Afinogenov's final play, *On the Eve* (1941), depicts the German attack on the Soviet Union. It was completed only a month before the writer himself was killed in a German air-raid on Moscow.

**Akhmatova, Anna.** See Gorenko, A. A.

**Aksakov, Ivan Sergeyeich** (1823-86), a Russian poet and publicist of the second half of the nineteenth century. The son of the writer S. T. AKSAKOV, he was, along with his brother, K. S. AKSAKOV, one of the younger leaders of the Russian SLAVOPHILES. Outspoken and captious in his criticism of Russian life and politics, he insisted on his right to speak freely, and, in spite of his conservatism, he was often in difficulty with the authorities. Besides articles on political and social questions, Aksakov wrote poetry, for the most part in his younger years, the 1840's and 1850's. He is a didactic poet whose main theme is the civic duty of the individual. He calls for work and discipline that Russian society may progress, and criticizes the inaction of the Russian intellectuals. His unfinished narrative poem of peasant life, *The*

*Tramp* (1852), had considerable influence on NEKRASOV's long poem, *Who Can Live Happy in Russia?* Aksakov also wrote on literary questions, and his work includes a noteworthy biography of the poet TYUTCHEV (1874).

**Aksakov, Konstantin Sergeyevich** (1817-60), a Russian critic and thinker of the mid-nineteenth century. The son of the writer S. T. AKSAKOV, Konstantin, like his brother, I. S. AKSAKOV, was one of the younger leaders of the SLAVOPHILES. In his political writings he strongly idealized the Russian peasant commune as a voluntary association for self-government. The egoism of the individual was swallowed up by his association in this communal society, Aksakov held. He contrasted this "voluntary" social organization to the Western European concept of the state, governed by laws and bureaucratic apparatus, rather than by conscience and inner impulse.

Aksakov wrote literary criticism, in which he accused Russian writers of lacking an organic tie with the people. He also produced original poetry and plays of lesser significance.

**Aksakov, Sergey Timofeyevich** (1791-1859), a leading Russian prose writer of the mid-nineteenth century. The descendant of a family of gentry, he graduated from the University of Kazan in 1807, and entered the civil service. After an interval spent on his estates, he settled in Moscow in 1826, where he served as a censor and later as a school director. He retired from the service in 1839. In 1832 he had met the writer GOGOL, whose close friend he became. Gogol encouraged him to continue writing (Aksakov's early attempts had been without success). He began his *Family Chronicle* in 1840, but it was published as a whole only in 1856. For some years he wrote books on hunting and fishing, but returned to more serious literature when the eventual publication of his *Family Chronicle* established him as one of the leading writers of the day.

Aksakov's works mix fiction with personal reminiscences of his childhood on a provincial estate. His greatest merit is the delicacy and sensitivity of his recollections, their objectivity, and the intuitive understanding of the child for himself and his elders. He also had a keen and nostalgic feeling for nature and the landscape of the open steppe country of the Volga region, where he had lived as a child.

Aksakov's *Family Chronicle* (1856) is more fictional than most of his works, describing the life of his grandparents and parents before his birth. His grandparents were landowners who had settled on the borderland steppes. The vivid portrayal of the patriarchal figure of the grandfather, called Stepan Bagrov, as well as the accurate depiction of estate life in the eighteenth century, are the most striking features of the book. Aksakov, no liberal, was not greatly disturbed by the sometimes cruel and tyrannical behavior of the landowners toward their serfs, but he did not attempt to disguise it. The book thus served as political ammunition for both the conservatives and the radicals. The novel was published together with Aksakov's *Recollections of childhood*.

*The Childhood of Bagrov the Grandson* (1858) continued Aksakov's youthful reminiscences, this time in semi-fictional form. It is a peaceful and uneventful narrative, notable for its evocation of a contented, nostalgic atmosphere and its sensitive description of a child's development, rather than for any story interest as such.

Aksakov also left a collection of *Literary and Theatrical Reminiscences* from the period 1810-30, as well as his *Recollections of Gogol*. The latter work, the product of his close friendship with that writer, is of great value for understanding Gogol's complex psychology.

Aksakov's conservative idealization of Russian manorial life placed him close to the Russian SLAVOPHILES. His sons, K. S. and I. S. AKSAKOV, were destined to play leading roles in the Slavophile Movement.

**Albov, Mikhail Nilovich** (1851-1911), a story writer of the late nineteenth century. His serious tales recall DOSTOYEVSKI'S novels both in their manner and their depiction of pathological states of mind. He also wrote humorous stories.

**Aldanov, Mark.** See Landau, M. A.

**Alexeyev, Konstantin** (Stanislavski). See Drama and Theater.

**Aliger, Margarita Iosifovna** (1915- ), Soviet poet. Her early poetry was influenced by Anna Akhmatova (see Gorenko). She became popular for her war poetry. Her best-known poem, the narrative *Zoya* (1942), tells of the heroic death of a Young Communist girl tortured and executed by the Germans. Since the war she has been concerned with the theme of reconstruction. Her more inti-



mate and lyric verse gives her the right to be considered one of the most promising of the younger Soviet poets.

**Alphabet.** The Russian alphabet (*azbuka*) is derived from the alphabet of the OLD CHURCH SLAVONIC language, known as the Cyrillic alphabet after its supposed inventor, St. Cyril, apostle to the Moravian Slavs in the ninth century. Probably Cyril himself was not the inventor of the Cyrillic alphabet, however, but of the Glagolitic, an abstruse alphabet of obscure origin which soon lost favor, presumably because of its difficulty. So-called Cyrillic, modelled to a large extent on the Greek alphabet, then replaced it. The Cyrillic alphabet is still used in approximately its original form for the Church writings of the Orthodox Slavs, including the Russians. It was introduced into Russia some time after her CHRISTIANIZATION (988 or 989). From the Cyrillic alphabet there have developed the modern Russian, Ukrainian, Belo-Russian, Bulgarian and Serbian alphabets.

Under the direction of PETER THE GREAT, the modern Russian secular alphabet, the so-called "civil alphabet," was introduced in 1708. It is based on the original Cyrillic alphabet, but has a smaller number of letters and a less ornate form. Four characters were subsequently dropped as superfluous in 1918, while one, the "hard sign," was restricted in its use. The present alphabet consists of thirty-two letters. It is relatively phonetic, though it does not indicate word stress, an important element in pronunciation.

**Andreyev, Leonid Nikolayevich** (1871-1919), a Russian writer of the early twentieth century. He was the son of a land surveyor of the Province of Oryol. He studied law at the University of Petersburg, painting portraits in order to support himself. Gloomy and neurotic, he made several attempts at suicide during his student years, and left the university for a time. But in 1893 he enrolled again at the University of Moscow, and in 1897 took his degree in law. His practice consisted of a single case only, which he lost. He turned to newspaper reporting; his articles on court trial gave him material for stories, which he published in the Oryol papers. In 1898 he began to gain wider recognition, and came to the attention of Gorki (see Peshkov), who encouraged him and helped to publish his work. Andreyev's first stories were realistic, often on moral themes. But soon he added more sensa-

tional subjects, such as sex and horror, to his repertoire. He was tremendously popular, wrote rapidly, and earned a large fortune in royalties, much of which he dissipated in luxurious living. Ever in search of a more shocking and sensational manner, he drew further away from Realism, and cultivated a modernist style influenced by the Symbolists (see Symbolism). But his "modernism" was largely second-hand and derivative, and his talent, stimulated by drugs, waned rapidly. The First World War revived his activity as one of the few Russian writers who believed in the war, and he waged a vigorous anti-German propaganda campaign. In 1917, finding himself outside Russia (he lived in a villa in Finland, which was now independent), he took a violently anti-Bolshevik attitude in his writing. He died two years later.

Andreyev was a writer of great inventiveness who largely failed to develop his capabilities. He rarely rose above the level of a talented writer of sensational horror tales, in which his literary techniques, borrowed from many and various sources, were chosen with little sense of their taste or purposefulness. Poe, Maeterlinck, Przybyszewski, TOLSTOY and DOSTOYEVSKI were important influences on his work. At arousing a sense of horror Andreyev was skilled enough, at least for the readers of his own generation. But his attempts to inspire a feeling of "metaphysical horror," at which he aimed, largely failed, for his philosophical resources were too meagre. "Andreyev tries to scare us," Tolstoy said, "but I am not afraid."

Philosophically, Andreyev was an atheist and pessimist, without faith in life; for him the fundamental realities are death and sex. All else, even life itself, tends to become illusion, and is depicted as such in his stories. He specializes in blurring the outlines of reality; in his work opposites such as life and death, consciousness and unconsciousness, dream and waking, sanity and insanity—all tend to merge so that we cannot distinguish one from the other. Thus, in the story *Thought* (1902), a man murders a friend while feigning insanity, and is then put into an asylum to discover that he actually is insane.

Andreyev's early realistic stories were written under the strong influence of TOLSTOY. *In the Fog* (1902) is a powerful, if crude story of a young boy who contracts syphilis from a prostitute, and ends by killing both her and himself. *The Governor* (1906) and

*Seven That Were Hanged* (1908) are later works in this somewhat more restrained Tolstoyan manner. The first is the story of an old official who orders the execution of revolutionary terrorists, knowing full well that they will take reprisals and assassinate him. The second is the story of seven revolutionaries, condemned to death for an assassination which they have plotted. They are portrayed with considerable sympathy. The tale was written in an unsuccessful attempt to placate the radicals, with whom Andreyev had broken, partly because of a play, *King Hunger* (1907), which he had written depicting the corruption of all classes of modern society, including the workers.

*The Red Laugh* (1904), a pacifist tale published during the Russo-Japanese War, is typical of Andreyev's stories of unrestrained horror. It depicts, in non-realistic and stylized terms, how a soldier goes mad after he comes to know the "red laugh" of the madness and horror of war. The tale's principal merit is that it is one of the first literary works to show war as a cause of madness. But Andreyev is no psychologist, and the hero's insanity is described only in the most stereotyped terms. Similarly, *Lazarus* (1906) is an attempt to depict the horror of death and its corroding power in life; the Biblical Lazarus is used by Andreyev as a man who has seen death and who communicates its horror to the living. *Judas Iscariot* (1907) is another story on a Biblical theme. In it Judas betrays Christ as an inevitable first step in Christ's Passion, and kills himself in order to join Christ in his kingdom.

Andreyev's later writing and, in particular, his dramas, became more anti-realistic and symbolic in manner. *The Life of Man* (1906) is a morality play in which the characters are pure abstractions: Man, His Wife, Their Son, etc. "Someone in Gray," i.e., Fate, reads the chronicle of Man's life and at the end snuffs out the candle. *He Who Gets Slapped* (1914) has been very popular both in Russia and abroad. It depicts a circus, a milieu chosen to symbolize life; the clown who is beaten to make others laugh is Everyman.

Though Andreyev was sensationally popular during the first decade of the twentieth century, his popularity waned very rapidly after 1910. As a result, his later influence was quite restricted, though one can find traces of it in the work of Pilnyak (see Vogau), GLADKOV and one or two other Soviet writers. An-

dreyev's chief importance is historical. Perhaps no other writer was so in tune with the disillusionment of the Russian intelligentsia of his day, particularly after the failure of the REVOLUTION of 1905.

**Andreyevski, Sergey Arkadieovich** (1847-1920), a critic and writer of the late nineteenth century. By profession he was an advocate. His poetry is not important, but he wrote significant critical studies of Poe, DOSTOYEVSKI, BARATYNSKI (whom he "rediscovered" for our time), TURGENEV and LERMONTOV.

**Annals.** See Chronicles.

**Annenkov, Pavel Vasilyevich** (1812-87), a critic of the mid-nineteenth century. At one time the close friend of GOGOL, he left important recollections of that writer, as well as of BELINSKI, HERZEN and others. His study, *Pushkin in the Age of Alexander* (1874), is a classic in the field. In the 1850's and 1860's Annenkov broke away from the civic tradition of BELINSKI in criticism and advocated a doctrine of art for art's sake.

**Annenski, Innokenti Fyodorovich** (1856-1909), a poet of the early twentieth century. Annenski was professor of Greek literature at the Tsar's Lycée at Tsarskoye Selo and a leading classical scholar. He translated Euripides into Russian, as well as some of the French Parnassian and Symbolist poets. His first volume of lyrics, *Quiet Songs*, appeared in 1904, under the curious pseudonym of Nik. T-O (*nikto*, Russian for "no one"). His masterpiece was his second collection, *The Cypress Chest*, published posthumously in 1910.

Annenski's lyrics are refined, formally perfect and concise, so much so that the structure of the verse is rather elliptic and difficult to understand. The cryptic quality of his work has made him a "poet's poet," whose work is largely unread by the general public. His favorite theme is the weariness and futility of life, which can be surmounted only through love or through art. His lack of mysticism and clarity of expression were rare traits in a poet who was the contemporary of the symbolists (see Symbolism), and these qualities were influential on the younger Acmeists (see Acmeism). Indeed, Annenski was the teacher of both GUMILYOV and Akhmatova (see Gorenko).

**Apocrypha.** See Literature, Old Russian.

**Apukhtin, Alexey Nikolayevich** (1841-93), a poet of the late nineteenth century. His poetry expressed in conventional, almost salon verse his nostalgia for lost youth and its pleasures. He also wrote songs in gypsy style. Some of his poems were set to music by his childhood friend, Tchaikovski, and by Mussorgski.

**Artsybashev, Mikhail Petrovich** (1878-1927), a writer of the early twentieth century. After publishing some stories about the 1905 REVOLUTION, he turned to themes of free love and sex, so popular in Russian literature at this period. His novel *Sanin* (1907) was famous for its advocacy of free love and gratification of individual desires. Its philosophy was influenced by Nietzsche, or, more correctly, by a popular vulgarization of Nietzsche. Artsybashev is against culture, which he regards as a thin veneer imperfectly concealing the primitive sexual drive beneath. His other main theme is death, which for him is, together with sex, the only reality. His novel *At the Brink* (1911-12) depicts intellectuals who alternate between sexual desire and a longing for death; many of them end by committing suicide. Artsybashev's plays were better written than his novels, but their themes were equally crude and negative.

Artsybashev was expelled from the Soviet Union in 1923, and became a journalist abroad.

**Arzamas**, the name of a literary circle founded in 1815, which supported the new literary and stylistic reforms of KARAMZIN, opposing the "Slavonic" party of SHISHKOV. The group included the poets ZHUKOVSKI, BATYUSHKOV, VYAZEMSKI, PUSHKIN and others. The main activity of the circle was the composition and reading of parodies of the Slavonicized style of their opponents. It was disbanded in 1818. (See Shishkov, *Old Church Slavonic*.)

**Aseyev, Nikolay Nikolayevich** (1889- ), a Russian futurist poet (see Futurism), the friend and follower of MAYAKOVSKI. He entered literature in 1914 as a Bohemian extremist who attempted to shock by his use of vulgar images, such as his famous phrase, "The world is an ugly mug." In the Soviet period his work became more restrained and conventional. His principal poems are *Semyon Proskakov* (1926), a romantic picture of the Civil War, and *Mayakovski Begins* (1940), a long portrait of that poet's life.

Atava, S. See Terpigorev, S. N.

**Averbakh, Leopold Leonidovich** (1903-?), Soviet critic and politician. A prominent member of the group of proletarian writers called OCTOBER, Averbakh rose to a leading position in the Russian Association of Proletarian Writers (see RAPP). In 1929 the Party allowed RAPP to assume control of Soviet literature. Averbakh has been accused of using his position as unofficial head of RAPP for personal advantage, and even to pay off old scores. In April, 1932, RAPP was dissolved, and the "dictatorship" of Averbakh came to an end. He disappeared completely from the literary scene, and his subsequent fate is unknown.

**Averchenko, Arkadi Timofeyevich** (1881-1925), a humorist of the early twentieth century, editor of the humorous magazine, *The Satyricon*. His stories are often hilarious, based on an extravagant humor of comical situations. They make fun of the banality of middle-class, philistine life. After the Civil War Averchenko emigrated and settled in Prague, where he wrote stories directed against the Soviet regime.

**Avvakum, Archpriest** (ca. 1621-82), leader of the sect of Old Believers, which originated during the religious SCHISM of the middle of the seventeenth century. Avvakum was a parish priest who attracted attention by his religious zeal and puritanical strictness. For his opposition to the reforms made by Patriarch Nikon in the Church ritual (see Schism), Avvakum was exiled in 1653 to Siberia, where he served as priest to a band of troops who were engaged in the conquest of the eastern province of Dauria. Recalled in 1662, he accepted the Nikonian reforms, but soon attacked them anew, and was exiled to the far north. A Church council of 1666-67 defrocked and imprisoned him; in his subterranean prison he wrote a large number of works of devotional and inspirational literature for his followers of the Old Believers' sect. In 1682 he was burned at the stake.

As a writer Avvakum is most famous for his *Life* (written 1672-75), the first extensive autobiographical work in Russian literature. It is noteworthy for its directness and frankness; Avvakum succeeds in escaping from the vicious circle of high-style OLD CHURCH SLAVONIC and the rhetorical repetitiousness of earlier Church literature. He writes in the vernacular Russian, and does not hesitate to use colorful, even vulgar, expressions. A record of the tortures and privations of his many years of exile

and imprisonment, the work reveals a strong personality reminiscent of the Old Testament prophets in zeal and dignity, as well as not infrequent obstinacy, self-righteousness, and opposition to new ideas. A keen observer of reality, Avvakum was able to break away from the bookish subject matter traditional in earlier writing, and to depict contemporary life. Though in his *Life* he created a new form of expression, his influence was necessarily restricted, for he was opposed both by the official Church and by the advocates of Western enlightenment. Thus he has remained an isolated figure, though there is little doubt that he deserves to be ranked among the greatest Russian writers.

**Azhayev, Vasili Nikolayevich** (1915- ), Soviet novelist. His popular novel, *Far from Moscow* (1948), describes the construction of an oil pipeline in the far north during World War II.

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**Babayevski, Semyon Petrovich** (1909- ), Soviet novelist. His collection of stories, *Tales of the Kuban* (1940), concerns collective farms and the struggle to develop responsibility for communal property among the farmers. *The Cavalier of the Gold Star* (1947) and its sequel, *Light over the Land* (1949), treat post-war reconstruction in the collectives.

**Babel, Isaak Emanuilovich** (1894-1938?), a story writer of the early Soviet period. He was born in a Jewish middle-class family in Odessa. He first published in 1915, when Gorki, who encouraged him, printed two of his stories in his *Annals*. They were highly erotic, and proceedings were taken against Babel for pornography. During the Civil War he joined the Bolsheviks, and in 1920 served as a political commissar in Budyonny's famous cavalry army. In 1923 he returned to literature, and began to publish short sketches of the Civil War, which he subsequently collected in 1926 under the title of *Konarmia* ("Red Cavalry"). The next year he published a collection of *Odessa Tales* (1927) about Jewish life in the Black Sea port city.

The stories of Babel's *Konarmia* were fantastically popular during the 1920's, and went through many editions. At first the critics received them favorably, and only gradually was it realized that Babel's stories showed a certain lack of enthusiasm for the justice of the Red cause. He published little in the 1930's; his last article, a tribute to Gorki, appeared in 1938. Babel disappeared about that time, and was evidently arrested and taken to a concentration camp; report has it that he was executed. The cause of his arrest is not known.

Babel's best work is found in the volume of short tales, *Konarmia* (1926), or "Red Cavalry," as it is known in English translation. These stories show Babel, not unlike his contemporaries



Pilnyak (see Vogau) and Vsevolod IVANOV, fascinated by the violence and brutality of war. He sees the Civil War as a collection of malevolent ironies; he is attracted to the irrational aspects of life, to its ironic paradoxes, its surface color and picturesqueness. He is not interested in psychological analysis, for it is action which interests him, not its cause. Life in his descriptions remains profoundly irrational. Like Pilnyak and Ivanov, Babel is an ornamentalist (see Ornamentalism), and in this respect a follower of REMIZOV. His stories are told in *SKAZ*—colloquial narrative with much use of dialect elements and slang. Compositionally, with their sharp ironic *pointes*, they show the influence of Maupassant.

The stories of the collection are pictures of horrifying, uncomprehended violence. *The Letter* tells how a son kills his father, a White, and then reports the fact with brutal relish to his mother. *Berestechko* describes the looting and killing which accompany the Red capture of a Polish town; after the carnage is over the Red commander announces to the terrified populace that they are now "liberated." There is little doubt that *Konarmia* constitutes a powerful expression of what for Babel is the essential pointlessness of the Civil War. Budyonny himself criticized the collection as too negative and brutal.

Babel's *Odessa Tales* (1927) are colorful in their strong autobiographic notes and their descriptions of the exotic way of life of the Odessa Jews. The story *Benya Krik* (1926) introduces a fascinating character, a legendary Jewish gangster who lords it over the Odessa underworld and terrorizes the police.

**Bagritski, Eduard.** See Dzyubin.

**Bahdanovich, Maxim** (1891-1917), a leading Belo-Russian poet (see Preface).

**Bakunin, Mikhail Alexandrovich** (1814-76), a Russian radical thinker of the mid-nineteenth century, one of the founders of modern political anarchism. The son of a well-to-do nobleman, he was educated in cadet school in St. Petersburg, and entered military service. But he soon gave up this career and went to Moscow, where he joined the philosophic circle of STANKEVICH, and where he engaged in radical journalistic activity. Going abroad in the 1840's, he took part in the German revolutions of 1848-49, for which he was arrested by the Austrian government and extra-