twelve years old, one of his serfs, Andryushka Voronikhin. . . Such talent! . . Or take the marvelous Cathedral of Vassili Blajenny. . . Who built it? Barma and Postnik, unknown Russians, created it, transferred into stone the rich tent-like forms of the wooden churches and as though with a chisel sculptured from stone this people's wonder, in the centre a cathedral, and nestling close, eight supporting churches, eight glorious towers, and all together nine cathedrals. And where did they get the idea from? Such fantastic beauty is only seen in dreams and visions. It is Russian genius. Russian genius!" exclaims Bazhenov.

The portrayal of Catherine bears witness to Shishkov's ability to depict the most complex historical characters. We get an insight into her contradictory inner feelings, her equally contradictory undertakings and actions, her great statesmanship, her vanity and practicality. Catherine, with her "liberal" plans of the period of her reign, her scholarship, wide reading, and efforts to instil into the people some elements of education, was able so to "captivate Europe" that Voltaire for example sang the praises of the Northern Semiramis. Diderot, who felt a sincere love for Russia, believed that Catherine's reforms might develop into something truly worthy of the Russian people. The author of *Yemelyan Pugachov* while fully recognizing the sagacity and diplomatic genius of the Empress, her measures in the sphere of the organization of the army, the development of science, crafts, trade, metallurgy and mining, is not in the least inclined to overestimate the activities of this "first lady of the nobility, who held in fee millions of tax-burdened souls". From the very first chapters the reader feels that he has before him not a "court history" of the Russian state, but a living history of a great people. The genius and unparalleled courage of this people in the struggle with the serf-owning landlords are embodied in a figure typical of the given historical epoch, that of the national leader Yemelyan Pugachov.

More than a century and a half separates us from the events described by Shishkov, but nonetheless the people of his novel, beginning with Pugachov and ending with the rank-and-file soldier, live, breathe, rejoice and hate with such convincing impetuosity, with such inimitable individual temperament, as though they had been miraculously recorded by a contemporary.

YAKOV TEMOV

SOVIET SHAKESPEARE STUDIES

The study of Shakespeare in the Soviet Union grows year by year. A few years before the war there appeared in our country for the first time since printing was introduced in Russia the carefully annotated texts, in the original English, of several Shakespeare plays, besides the publication of his collected works in English.

Large audiences gathered to the public readings of Shakespeare in English organized about that time by the Central Library of Foreign Literature. This was a clear indication of the fact that an ever-growing number of readers, and particularly of young students, were no longer satisfied with reading translations of Shakespeare but were beginning to read and study him in the original.

One remembers the time when one searched the shelves of the Moscow libraries for volumes of the *New Variorum*, that bible of Shakespeare scholars. Now the *New Variorum* has become the daily bread of any advanced student working on Shakespeare. What is more, one may now truly claim that many commentaries written by Soviet scholars are worthy of a prominent place among the pages of this universal edition.

As Shakespeare in English became increasingly popular, the work of the Shakespeare translators increased. One must mention, in the first place, the inspired "portraits" Pasternak painted from Shakespeare's "originals"; what I mean is that what Pasternak did was not mere translating, but he made living "portraits" of *Hamlet*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and *Antony and Cleopatra*; one must also mention the numerous works of our distinguished verse translator, Tatyana Shchepkina-Kupernik; the austere, harmonious and thoughtful translation *of Hamlet* by M. Lozinsky; and the delightful Marshak translations of the fool's songs from *King Lear*, to mention just a few.

This work of translating Shakespeare into Russian and into the other languages of the Soviet Union continues. I. Steshenko has just completed a new translation of *Twelfth Night* into Ukrainian, and this will be performed by the Franko Theatre in liberated Kiev; the poet Lakhuti is working on his translation of *Romeo and Juliet* into Tajik; during the war *Othello* has been translated into Chuvash, and *Twelfth Night* into Kirghiz; the Tartar Academic Theatre in Kazan is working on its production of *King Lear*, etc. Some of Shakespeare's plays have been translated into as many as 24 languages of the Soviet Union.

Apart from literary translations, I have undertaken a word-for-word translation of Shakespeare's plays, with accurate indications of the meanings of every doubtful word. In other words, these are scientific, prose translations which without claiming any artistic merit, aim at rendering the exact meaning of every word and idiom.

This work on Shakespeare's texts and their translations is, as it were, the background of our Shakespearean activity. The articles of Lunacharsky, the late I. Aksyonov, the research of Prof. A. Smirnov, the essays of S. Krzanovsky and the studies of other scholars, including the theses of many young scholars and the papers read to various Shakespeare conferences have both set and solved many problems in a new way.

My essay on *Shakespeare's Style and Language* appeared in the symposium *English Realism* published by the Academy of Sciences just before the war. A book of mine *A Commentary to Shakespeare Plays* appeared in

Leningrad at the time when that heroic city was besieged by German troops.

What is so typical of our Shakespeare scholarship is its close bond with the practical creative problems of our own present-day theatre. It is typical that, for the last five years, the annual Shakespeare conferences should have been organized by the All-Russian Theatrical Society. During discussions concerning Shakespearean performances the dominating question is usually whether the performance in question has rendered Shakespeare's thought with sufficient truth and depth, and whether it has contributed anything new to the understanding of the play. Our theatre not only reproduces Shakespeare, but endeavours to act as a thoughtful commentator.

Working, as they do, in close cooperation with the theatre, our research workers have thrown new light on a number of aspects of Shakespeare's creative genius, on his humanism, on his deep roots in his native soil and milieu, on the living bond existing between his work and his period; they have also made a fresh study of the immense gallery of his characters and approached from a new angle some of the principles of his dramatic art (evolution of character, continuity of action, etc.).

Soviet scholars have never attempted to work in a vacuum. They have always looked back to the famous comments on Shakespeare by both Russians, including such writers as Pushkin, Turgenev, Belinsky, and foreigners. With greatest attention our scholars have always studied the present-day Shakespeareana of England and America. Thus, in the Shakespeare Room of the All-Russian Theatrical Society, the works of Dover Wilson and Granville Barker in England, of Adams and others in America, have been discussed time and again. Great interest was aroused among Russian scholars by Professor Pinto's paper read to the Royal Society of Literature in April 1943 on the importance of Shakespeare in our struggle against Hitlerism.

To us, Russian scholars, Shakespeare is not simply a cold mirror of life, nor is his work an act of passive contemplation. Nor is it merely a gallery of psychological types. Shakespeare's work shows us, above all, the active struggle of Man against the dark powers of hatred and evil. That is the main theme of the ever-young poet and playwright, and this is what we realize today more than ever. Shakespeare's name, together with so many other great names, is written on the banner of progressive and freedom-loving humanity. We know that Shakespeare is one of those numerous and powerful bonds uniting the great nations in their common struggle against the nazi barbarians.

M. MOROZOV

NEW BOOKS

The Young Guard Publishing House has just issued an anthology of Byelorussian poems under the title of *Byelorussia in the Crucible*. The compilers set themselves the aim of presenting examples of all that is best and most characteristic in Byelorussian war-time poetry.

The thirty-eight poems in the collection, written by outstanding Byelorussian poets, each with his own particular style, have one common feature—elements of folklore in them. It is expressed in different ways, sometimes in purely song form such as in the *Nadya-Nadeika* by Petrus Brovko, about a girl partisan tortured to death by the fascists, sometimes in martial form as in the popular poem *To Byelorussian Partisans* by the late Yanko Kupala. Direct and indirect links with folklore are a feature too of the narrative poems, as for instance, the *Ballad of the Four Hostages* by Arkadi Kuleshov, which tells of a partisan's children who are tortured and murdered by the Germans, and the *Ballad of the Red Banner* by P. Brovko, about a valiant Russian guardsman.

The collection might be split up into groups according to a number of main subjects. The first is the unity of peoples in the struggle led by Stalin. On this Yakub Kolas, one of Byelorussia's best poets, has written a poem called *Stalin's Word*. P. Glebko's poem *Stalin Is With Us*, and Maxim Tank's *So Said Stalin* belong to the same group.

Partisans as a theme are popular: *Avengers* by P. Glebko, *Kotus Kalinovsky* (about a famous Byelorussian partisan) by P. Brovko, *Ambuscade* by Y. Kolas and many others.

The third subject, that of the Native Land, is represented by lyrics permeated with sorrow and tenderness for our fair country defiled by the fascists. One of the best of these is *I Hear Your Voice*, by Maxim Tank. The Native Land is personified by the poet, first in the character of a nurse, then of a mother, then of a girl partisan—her name is "whispered by the grass and leaves" and re-echoed by "the untramelled wind".

The poems about Byelorussian people carried off to slavery in Hitler Germany inspire implacable hatred for the enemy. Such are Arkadi Kuleshov's poems: *A Letter from Captivity* and *On the Minsk Highway*, Y. Kolas' poems *The Oath* and *The Earth Speaks* in which the poet promises the homeland "not long will you be in thrall" and M. Tank's *To Arms* also call for vengeance.

The Soviet Writer Publishing House has issued *Mountains and Night*, a collection of stories by V. Kozin written during this war. This author's pre-war books contain a number of short stories and narratives about Soviet Central Asia. His early books *Sun of Lebab* and *Desert Colour* are devoted to Turkmenistan. Others are about Kazakhstan.

Continuing the same theme in his new story *The Dungan Mountains*, which opens the collection *Mountains and Night*, the author shows the flourishing of life brought by the victory of the socialist five-year plans. Kassym Magui, people's poet of Kazakhstan sets out in the spring of 1941 to tramp the roads of his vast and wealthy country, to feast his eyes on the mountains and observe the people: "the poet must travel and see much so that his word does not become placid and complacent". In his wan-