

The territory where Nĕmcová was at home was Slovakia. She spent long months there busy with ethnographic field work, meeting Slovak writers and collectors of folk songs and tales. Her collection of Slovak fairy tales ranks among the best of the century—Erben's and the Grimms' included. She knew outstanding Slavic ethnographers, the Serb Vuk Karadžić and the Bulgarian G. S. Rakovski. In Prague, among the Slavic visitors—this was the social side of the Slavic *Wechselseitigkeit*—she met A. N. Pypin, who mentioned her in *Moi zametki* (Moscow, 1910); the manuscript page of his Prague notebook was reproduced in plate 5 of the appendix. Nĕmcová read Pushkin and Gogol in Czech and German translations, as did many Czechs of her time. The Russian résumé of the book tries to press the point of her Russian affinities, though her knowledge of Russian language and literature remained on the periphery. It is interesting that translations of Nĕmcová's fiction appeared in *Russkii vestnik* (1866), at a time when this journal was publishing prose by Turgenev, Dostoevsky, and Tolstoy (p. 36). N. S. Leskov translated and praised highly her fairy tale *O dvanácti měsíčkách* (p. 37).

The last chapter treats Nĕmcová's linguistic *Wechselseitigkeit*—that is, her translations and adaptations from Slovak, Serbian, Slovene, and Bulgarian. Here Urban makes a good point in comparing the two Czech ethnographers of the middle of the century, Erben and Nĕmcová: he characterizes Erben as the folklorist concerned primarily with the structure of the fairy tale and Nĕmcová as seeking to put in relief its local (Slovak, Serbian, etc.) linguistic color (p. 131). Also, Urban's observations on how Nĕmcová's occupation with Slavic ethnography entered her fiction have convincing authority.

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PEN'Ō PENEV: POETŪT S VATENKATA. By *Liuben Georgiev*. 2nd edition. Sofia: Izdatelstvo na Bŭlgarskata akademiia na naukite, 1970. 612 pp. 4.40 lv.

In this biography of a modern Bulgarian poet who committed suicide at the age of twenty-nine (1930–59), the author rightly excludes from his analysis the artistic aspects of Penev's poetry. Penev was not a vanguard artist in the sense of making formal innovations. Before his death he had published only one volume of poems, and the critics at that time were rather cautious both in critical appreciation of his début and in anticipation of his further creative development. Today, fourteen years after the death of the author of *Dobro utro, khora!* (*Good Morning, People!*, 1956), his poetry is considered to be the most outspoken manifestation of the generation that with confidence and enthusiasm responded to the program of socialist construction in Bulgaria. Penev enjoys the official reputation of revolutionary bard who contributed most to the dissemination of what is called "socialist consciousness" among Bulgarian youth, and his role in Bulgaria is frequently compared to Mayakovsky's in the Soviet Union. His poems are read at political mass meetings, and have been included as compulsory reading material in the schools.

There is no doubt that Penev declared himself for the revolution at an early stage of his writing, and wanted to save from oblivion the heroic effort of that

generation of young workers who started the construction of Dimitrovgrad—the Bulgarian Komsomolsk. There is, however, the other side of the picture: the poems from the last period of Penev's life are filled with pessimism, and reveal a deep spiritual crisis that finally led to the catastrophe. Liuben Georgiev should be given credit for not passing over these contradictions, and for attempting to explain them as far as the vigilant eye of a censor and the present political atmosphere allow. Georgiev gives special attention to two questions: Penev's private life and his rebellious nature. Behind the ideological façade, and the poems written on "social command," was concealed an intense inner life, with hidden reflections about the nature of human relationships in present-day Bulgaria. From the letters to his girl friends and conversations written down by his colleagues, from the remarks made by physicians who treated him for psychiatric problems, and from the recollections of Georgiev himself, one can conclude that Penev was full of contradictions and in the long run certainly not destined to play the role of leading poet of the revolution. In his diary he wrote, "An artist is an artist because he has a richer private life, and not because he renounces it." Although Georgiev does not state it bluntly, one can understand from his deliberations that Penev's defense of privacy and independent thinking resulted in an intransigence that turned him into a dangerous rebel and ultimately led to conflict with social reality. At the end of his life Penev again and again talked about the "inflation of ideology" and deplored the rampant bureaucracy and indifference. A spirit of disappointment found expression in the series of poems entitled "Vseki svoia puteka si ima" ("Everyone Has His Own Path").

Georgiev knew Penev personally, and the credibility of the material gathered in the book is beyond doubt. What can be criticized, however, is the way some facts are interpreted, especially in the final part of the book. Georgiev maintains that Penev was on his way to overcoming his spiritual crisis, and to prove it he refers to the long poem *Dni na proverka* (*The Days of Test*). He also quotes a reflection made by Penev in his notes shortly before he died: "I have been a communist at heart and an honest man." If one takes a closer look at Penev's evolution as a man and a poet, then doubt arises whether his understanding of the word "communism" was the same as Georgiev's. It seems that in the last period of his life communism meant to Penev a certain civic attitude, an attitude of intransigence toward social injustice and evil irrespective of whether they were caused by the socialist or the capitalist system. Here one of the extreme features of Penev's character came again to the fore: his inability to accept opportunism as a way of life. Otherwise how can we explain his suicide? One wants to argue with Georgiev about that question as well. In the final chapter, "The Reasons Underlying His Death," Georgiev postulates that there were many factors that pushed Penev to suicide. The most important he considers to be the fact that Penev suffered from depression. According to Georgiev, the "cult of personality" and the abuses connected with it played a secondary role. Penev's poetry itself seems to contradict this theory, and makes us believe it necessary to reverse the order of importance of the reasons mentioned above. The disclosed crimes of Stalinism became for Penev a personal tragedy, because they as much as destroyed his youthful dreams.

In Georgiev's bold and skillfully written book we miss a final conclusion—namely, that Penev expressed not only the hopes of his generation but also its

disappointment. Only such an interpretation can explain the poet's popularity among his contemporaries and those who have come after him.

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BÉLA BARTÓK: LETTERS. Edited by *János Demény*. Translated by *Péter Balabán* and *István Farkas*. Translation revised by *Elisabeth West* and *Colin Mason*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1971. 466 pp. \$20.00.

BÉLA BARTÓK. By *József Ujfalussy*. Translated by *Ruth Pataki*. Translation revised by *Elisabeth West*. Boston: Crescendo Publishing Co., 1972. 459 pp. \$9.00.

This volume of letters is the first collection of Bartók documents in English. Appendix 1 lists four previous collections by the same editor—three in Hungarian, each containing different items, and one in German. The present volume adds sixty new documents among its total of 289. Appendix 8, the bibliography, discloses a further Italian volume, which, among its 270 items, includes some additional discoveries. These (about 750) documents are mostly letters written by Bartók, but also some draft notes and some letters written to or about Bartók, as appendix 2 (“Notes on the Present Edition”) shows. The first two appendixes should have been placed at the beginning of the book, after Sir Michael Tippett’s brief preface. That this was originally planned emerges from a misdirected reference. Similarly the bibliography should have been placed after the preface. Other useful appendixes include a “List of Letters” (which rather duplicates the “List of Correspondents”) and “Notes,” the most helpful section (referring to each document, this section cites the original edition from which it is translated and gives a full background). Another appendix offers a helpful but unfortunately incomplete chronological list of Bartók’s compositions; and a “List of Places” refers to places mentioned in the letters which are no longer in Hungary and therefore now have different names. This list could have been absorbed into the index, thus avoiding duplications. There is also an “Index of Bartók’s Compositions Referred To in the Volume.”

Nothing can serve better to reveal the man Bartók than such a collection; one would only wish it were more complete. The translation is excellent on the whole, and printing errors are at a minimum. Only rarely do the “Notes” slip up; for example, in the notes to letters 3 and 4 reference is made to persons not mentioned in these particular letters, and in the notes to no. 62 wrong reference is made to Rudolf Ganz’s last domicile and to the location of the Moldenhauer collection. The letters introduce us to the budding pianist and composer who at twenty-two became a fervent nationalist and as such devoted himself indefatigably to the collecting of folk songs, but who abhorred chauvinism and fascism (see nos. 207–211) and upheld the brotherhood of all nations. One learns firsthand of the successive influences and enthusiasms that played upon Bartók (Richard Strauss, Murillo, Wagner, Liszt, Nietzsche, Delius), who at twenty-four was fully convinced of his worth as a composer. At the same time he rejected religion for an ethical humanism and idealism which he explained to his first love, Steffi Geyer—who rejected both his ideas and his love (nos. 41–42). One is impressed by the tenacity with which Bartók pursued his folk-music research, and one is glad to see how much warm friendship and recognition he inspired among great artists such as Busoni, Hindemith, Kodály,