

JAMES JOYCE AND THE RUSSIANS

Also by Neil Cornwell

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James Joyce and the Russians

Neil Cornwell

*Senior Lecturer in Russian Studies
University of Bristol*



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To Maggie Malone

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Preface

The theme of *James Joyce and the Russians* is a wide one. It ranges, within his works and life, from historical allusion, to linguistic jest, to personal contact; and, within Russia and Russian literature, from influence both ways to an embattled critical controversy, from the exclusion of Joyce as a decadent pariah of modernism to his gradual rehabilitation as a classic figure of twentieth-century fiction.

Allusions to Russia and to Russian writing are scattered around Joyce's works and letters. He himself acknowledged the Russian antecedents of 'stream of consciousness'. *Ulysses* contains certain Russian and Slavonic references, while *Finnegans Wake* is peppered with words and phrases from Russian and other Slavonic languages, as with the lexicon of many another tongue. Slavonicisms in the *Wake* have been meticulously listed and occasionally investigated further (as in the case of Buckley shooting the Russian general); however, these esoteric matters are probably familiar only to a handful of *Wake* specialists. We can now, though, speak of 'a Russian theme' in Joyce as a whole.

The present study endeavours to extend awareness of these and other matters. It moves on, noting Joyce's own contacts with various Russians, to outline his relationship to three leading Russian cultural figures who were his artistic contemporaries. One of these he never met: Andrei Bely (1880–1934), a survivor into the Soviet era from the 'Silver Age' of Russian Symbolism and a major figure in Russian modernism, frequently dubbed the 'Russian Joyce'. The other two he knew in Paris: Vladimir Nabokov (1899–1977), the émigré novelist whose own literary style and development has been described as 'Joycean'; and Sergei Eisenstein (1898–1948), the originator of film montage, who saw in Joyce an important precursor from the realm of verbal art and who left a vivid memoir of his visit to Joyce.

The third part of this study, however, considers Russian and Soviet responses to Joyce. Apart from a few items of émigré criticism, the emphasis is strongly on attitudes from within the Soviet Union. Translations of Joyce's works into Russian are

monitored (although detailed comparison or evaluation of these translations is beyond our present scope). Rather greater attention is given to the body of Soviet criticism which has attempted to deal with, or at times rather to fend off, Joyce's works and his place in European and world literature.

Internal cultural and political policies have of course heavily impinged upon the Soviet reception of Joyce. This process may be divided conveniently into two stages. The first, from the 1920s to 1941 (the year both of Joyce's death and of Soviet entry into the Second World War), saw the rise and fall of Joyce studies in the Soviet Union (and these were, in that period, rather more extensive than has generally been realised). The second, which began slowly in the 'Thaw' period (from 1941 to the death of Stalin, Joyce was a complete 'no-go area'), managed to regain lost momentum during the Brezhnev 'years of stagnation' and reached fruition with the appearance of the first full (or remotely full) Russian *Ulysses* in 1989.

Joyce's works have now, as far as Soviet criticism is concerned, been admitted, or re-admitted, into the pantheon of world literature, and into that now fast growing portion thereof which is accorded publication in Russian translation; the question of a Russian *Finnegans Wake*, if such can be imagined, now depends presumably on non-political considerations. There does remain, however, a further point of what is now perhaps only of historical interest: the relationship between Soviet criticism of Joyce, as now a historical entity, and Western Joyce scholarship of a roughly Marxist or loosely 'fellow-travelling' complexion. Why has Soviet criticism had such difficulty in coming to terms with Joyce, who after all in *Ulysses* provides, amongst other things, a quintessential exposé of a colonial bourgeois society? The simple answer is that, at crucial stages, Soviet criticism was not allowed to remain merely 'roughly Marxist' or 'loosely fellow-travelling'; however, there were more complex factors also at play.

The attempts made to elucidate the topics and questions outlined above, falling into three or more sections or categories (dealt with here under a tripartite scheme), may appear up to a point to be separate essays. At the same time, this study is offered as a concentration on an albeit narrow aspect of Joyce's life and works and as a contribution to the study of Joyce's reception in what has become a superpower with vast potential (and

actual) reading power. The theme of Russia in Joyce is augmented by that of Joyce and certain prominent Russian figures, to preface the other side of the coin: the theme of attitudes to Joyce in Russia.

This study owes a number of debts and acknowledgements. It grew out of activities associated with my editorship (from 1980 to 1986) of *Irish Slavonic Studies*. I am grateful to the (present) editors of *Irish Slavonic Studies* (formerly Belfast and now Dublin), and those of the *James Joyce Broadsheet* (Leeds), *Annali Di Ca' Foscari* (Venice) and *Coexistence* (Glasgow), for permission to reproduce or re-work material previously published as articles. I am indebted to the inter-library loan system, and to staff in the libraries of Queen's University, Belfast, the University of Bristol, at The British Library, Boston Spa, and in the Soviet Union for the procuring of much source material. I wish particularly to thank Michael Hagemester, of the University of Marburg, for a fulsome supply of references and xeroxes and Emily Tall (of SUNY at Buffalo) for generously passing on the fruits of her research. In Moscow I received every co-operation and encouragement from Ekaterina Genieva, who has done so much for Joyce studies in the Soviet Union, and Sergei Khoruzhiy, thanks to whose titanic labours *Ulysses* finally arrived in Russia. For additional advice, inspiration or assistance, at various stages, I am grateful to Eric Baker, Pieter Bekker, Adrian Clarke, Dick Danik, Carla de Petris, Martin Dewhirst, Julian Graffy, Simon Karlinsky, Nico Kiasashvili (Joyce's Georgian translator), Ron Knowles, Bill Mc Cormack, Arnold McMillin, Patrick O'Meara, Donald Rayfield, Robert Reid, Petr Skrabanek, Dennis Tate, Anna Tavis and Marcus Wheeler.

A NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION

The transliteration system used for Russian (except where quoting previously published works using other systems) is that of the Library of Congress, without diacritics. In the main body of the text, however, I have normally retained the customary '-y' endings for surnames (as in 'Bely', 'Dostoevsky' and so on). There are also some other accustomed western spellings (for example, 'Eisenstein'); these, as necessary, appear in the Bibliography in

more 'academic' form (for example, 'Eizenshtein'). All translations from the Russian are mine, unless otherwise accredited.

One small further point. Readers of the bibliography will note that, whereas the Russian spelling of 'Joyce' is constant (coming out in transliterated form as 'Dzhois'), that of James varies – between 'Dzheims' and 'Dzhems'; one wonders whether Joyce, had he realised this, would have derived from it mild amusement, or whether he would have preferred to sail in Russian under the all-purpose and more reliable, though for him over-intimate, flag of 'Dzhim'.

NEIL CORNWELL

Abbreviations

CW	<i>The Critical Writings of James Joyce</i> , ed. Ellsworth Mason and Richard Ellmann (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1989)
D	<i>Dubliners</i> (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1965)
E	<i>Exiles</i> (London: New English Library, 1962)
FW	<i>Finnegans Wake</i> (New York: The Viking Press, 1972)
L. I, II, III	<i>Letters of James Joyce</i> , vol. I, ed. Stuart Gilbert (London: Faber and Faber, 1957); vols II and III, ed. Richard Ellmann (London: Faber and Faber, 1966)
JJB	<i>James Joyce Broadsheet</i>
JJQ	<i>James Joyce Quarterly</i>
P	<i>A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man</i> (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1966)
P&SW	<i>Poems and Shorter Writings</i> , ed. Richard Ellmann <i>et al.</i> (London: Faber and Faber, 1991)
SH	<i>Stephen Hero</i> (London: Granada, 1977)
U	<i>Ulysses</i> (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1986)
SL	<i>Selected Letters</i> , ed. Richard Ellmann (New York: The Viking Press, 1975)

All other references are named by author and year in the text and are listed in the Bibliography.