Garnett and others were so assiduously producing. His readers know what Edmund Wilson (who met Mirsky in Moscow in the summer of 1935) meant when he said that Mirsky seemed to have read everything and to know everything.

Even the history of his name is picturesque. It begins as Prince Dmitrii Petrovich Sviatopolk-Mirskii, in England becomes Dmitrii Mirsky or simply D. S. Mirsky, and upon his return to the Soviet Union in the thirties devolves into Dmitrii Petrovich Mirskii. These are the three phases of his life, to each of which a chapter of this book is devoted. By far the longest section is "La Carriere occidentale," by Nina Lavroukine, preceded by "L'Oeuvre de Jeunesse" and followed by "L'Oeuvre du Retour," both written by Leonid Tchertkov. The proportions are justified, not merely by our greater knowledge of the European, mainly English, phase, but by Mirsky's greater achievement in the middle years. But it is revealing that he was not less active in his Soviet period, from 1932 until his death in 1939 following deportation to Kolyma.

His life is a remarkable encapsulation of the history and the literary history of Russia in his time. A Russian prince who will fight under Deniken, he began publication with a volume of poems (and poetry continued to be a major preoccupation all his life); while in England—originally at the invitation of Maurice Baring—he followed closely the exciting literature of the twenties in Russia; in the thirties he published his book on Lenin and his Russia: A Social History, and upon his return to the Soviet Union, with the personal support of Gor'kii, Mirsky, now a Communist Party member, obtained Soviet citizenship and participated actively in the second and third congresses of Soviet writers. Throughout this career, tumultuous for a hard-working scholar, he served as a major interpreter of Russian literature to the West and as publicist and critic of contemporary English literature in the Soviet Union. As Nina Lavroukine makes clear, he was always the expert comparatist: a good small example that she gives is his skillful comparison of Pasternak to Donne.

The concluding pages of this book are devoted to a very useful listing of the names of persons cited in the bibliography. Here the rubric "Table des noms cités" could be improved to read "Table des noms cités dans la Bibliographie," since the listings do not include names like Edmund Wilson or Virginia Woolf, who are cited in the text but not in the bibliography. In dealing with the complexities of the spelling of names in such a heterogeneous coverage, the authors do well to provide two separate listings, one in Latin and a second in Cyrillic, with frequent cross-references. These lists necessarily include spellings in at least four variations: two or more varieties of familiar Latin spellings (Pouchkine and Pushkin, Tchehov and Chekhov), Russian names in Latin transliteration, and Russian names in Cyrillic. These complications are clearly required by the authors' careful preservation of the forms in which names had originally appeared in publication. The wise reader will emerge from this confusion by following an awkward but necessary rule: When looking for a name in these lists, consult both lists and bear in mind the possible variations of spelling.

A similar double listing is provided for the titles of periodicals in which Mirsky's work appeared. At the front of the text a chronological résumé of Mirsky's life gives the reader a clear overview of this remarkable biography. All of this represents much scholarly labor, for which every reader familiar with any of Mirsky's work can be grateful.

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Attractively, even elegantly, printed and bound (something well worth mentioning
these days), this book in its content too elicits admiration, though not unqualified; admiration for attempting the obviously important topic indicated by its title, qualification for inadequate perspective and insufficiently modulated emphases. Dr. Krasnov's point of departure, and the heading of his ten-page introduction, is "The Concept of Polyphony," about which Solzhenitsyn spoke with interest and approval in some interviews; but the uncritical enthusiasm for Bakhtin's work that is manifest in the introduction already seems old-fashioned and unsophisticated—attributing exaggerated significance to Bakhtin was characteristic of a period in Dostoevskian (and other) studies that seems at last, happily, to be passing. However, undertaking to compare "Stalin with the Grand Inquisitor, Rubin with Ivan Karamazov, Nerzhin with Alyosha, and Sologdin with Stavrogin," the author certainly whets the reader's appetite and perhaps arouses some apprehensions. Of the thirteen chapters that follow, eleven are in fact devoted to The First Circle, and then one each (though they are somewhat longer) to Cancer Ward and August 1914.

That many of the principal characters in The First Circle embody ideas, or rather viewpoints, which are tested and which sometimes clash, is obvious without adducing Bakhtin; as is some similarity of Solzhenitsyn's Stalinist Russia to the visions of Shigalev and the Grand Inquisitor, and even some schematic likeness between the latter and Solzhenitsyn's Stalin. More daring are the subsequent comparisons (Rubin-Ivan, Sologdin-Stavrogin, Nerzhin-Alesha): tragically amoral casuistry is shared by the first pair; elitist individualism by the second; selflessness by the third. Scrutinizing this central trio of Solzhenitsyn's characters in the light of some of Dostoevskii's, Dr. Krasnov manipulates much detail that deserves careful pondering, as well as skepticism. In a further chapter focussing on one character, Innokentii Volodin, with the observation that for both Solzhenitsy and Dostoevsky man is "unpredictable and incalculable," the conclusion is reached that "although it is hard to pinpoint any particular predecessor for Innokenty among Dostoevsky's characters, he belongs to the same category of heroes of ideas as Shatov, Kirillov, Ivan Karamazov, and Raskolnikov."

Relating then to the notion of polyphony the much-discussed question of just who is/are the hero/heroes of The First Circle, Dr. Krasnov rightly believes that Nerzhin, Rubin, and Sologdin may all be considered "protagonists of the novel with a common enemy and antagonist in Stalin." He startlingly relocates Sologdin and declares: "ultimately the three heroes of the sharashka parallel Dostoevsky's three brothers in representing three basic human types: (1) Ivan/Lev Rubin, a man of intellect, a rationalist, a positivist, who believes himself to possess the apple of knowledge; (2) Dmitry/Dmitri Sologdin, a man of will, an epitome of irrational, instinctual vitality and a strong animalistic drive for self-preservation; (3) Anyosh/Gleb Nerzhin, a man of heart, soul, and spiritual wisdom. As such they can also be reduced to the archetypes of 'scholar', 'warrior', and 'saint'.” (This is a fair example of the sweeping gusto generated by Dr. Krasnov.) Moreover, "each of the three has his doubles both within and without the sharashka's walls," such as Ruben-Roitman, Sologdin-Lakonov, Nerzhin-Volodin.

Subsequent chapters treat the structure and form, the symbolism, and the language and style of The First Circle. In the structural analysis, the four principal plots are usefully distinguished as a detective novel, a production novel, a political novel, and a romance. The discussion of style (with further extensive citation and application of Bakhtin) concentrates first on dialogue and then on narrative, emphasizing the contrast (fundamental to the whole novel and extending from the narrowly linguistic to the psychological, ethical, political, and philosophical planes) between authentic meaning and false jargon. Finally, with regard to the genre of The First Circle, Dr. Krasnov's reader would by now be surprised if he were not told that "Bakhtin's study of Dostoevsky also points the direction in which the answer to this question should be sought"; The First Circle, "like Dostoevsky's polyphonic novels, falls into the Menippean genre type."