JANE GARY HARRIS (Pittsburgh, U.S.A.)

LIDIJA GINZBURG, THE “YOUNG FORMALISTS,” AND RUSSKAIA PROZA

In the last decade of her life, particularly in memoiristic essays and interviews, Lidiia Ginzburg referred to her formative years as a student at the Petrograd State Institute of the History of the Arts [G.I.I.I.] in glowing terms and with growing frequency: “In the Institute of History of the Arts where I was then studying, our teachers included the brilliant philologists and linguists, Eikhenbaum, Tynianov, Tomashevskii, Zhirmunskii, Vinogradov, among others.” The education of the “young Formalists,” as she termed herself and her fellow students, was exceptional because of the faculty and their unique curriculum and teaching methodology: “This particular Institute did not adhere to strictly pedagogical demands because the systematic communication of information was not taught there. Our teachers talked about the work they were doing at the time. It was as if they were sharing with us their ideas and their research. This was an education in scholarly thinking.”

By the end of 1924-25, this “education in scholarly thinking” was harnessed in a special seminar conducted by Eikhenbaum and Tynianov for the best of the “young Formalists,” their students at G.I.I.I. and Leningrad University. The following year eight seminar papers, accompanied by two ed-

1. Petrogradskii gosudarskvennyi institut istorii iskusstv or G.I.I.I., located in the former Zubov mansion at 5 St. Isaac’s Square, opened a Section of Verbal Arts (Otdel slovesnykh iskusstv) in 1920. Its purpose was to study the verbal arts in an institutional framework devoted to the “arts” (music, theater, and the fine arts were already studied there). Lidiia Ginzburg matriculated in the so-called “Higher Courses” of G.I.I.I. in 1922, and upon graduation also taught there. The Institute and its “Formalist” faculty was subjected to hostile attacks in the press beginning about 1924; G.I.I.I. was officially closed down by the authorities in 1930. See Ginzburg’s “Iz starykh zapisei” and “Zapisi 1920-kh-1930-kh” in O starom i novom (Leningrad: Sovetskii pisatel’, 1982), Literatura v poiskakh real’nosti, (Leningrad: Sovetskii pisatel’, 1987), Chelovek za pis’mennym stolom (Leningrad: Sovetskii pisatel’, 1989), Pretvorenie opyta (Leningrad: Assotsiatsia “Novaia literatura,” 1991), Novyi mir, No. 6 (1992), and her memoirs of G.I.I.I., “Vspominaia Institut istorii iskusstv,” in Tynianovskii sbornik: Chervertye Tyhianovskie chitenia (Riga: Zinatne, 1990), pp. 278-89.

2. This interview, conducted by G. Silina, was published in Literaturnaia gazeta, No. 3 (5069), Jan. 15, 1986, p. 7.
itorial prefaces, were published as *Russkaia proza*. This “young Formalist” anthology represents one of the highest achievements of OPOIAZ, with which movement Ginzburg clearly identified at the time, and perhaps, the culmination of its initial phase, that period in which the autonomous study of the immanent laws of the verbal arts was proclaimed “literary science,” while correlations between literary phenomena and the phenomena of history, biography, psychology, and society were played down or avoided.

While Ginzburg’s journal entries acknowledge an enormous debt to her “maîtres” for both her professional and personal development, as early as 1925/26, she was already confessing disillusionment in her mentors, commenting on how the “young Formalists” had lost their initial enthusiasm, their sense of being “disciples”:

> We are cruel pupils. We have enormous human affection for our teachers, and feelings of gratitude and respect (Oh, we are not at all impudent! we are respectful). But—we no longer have that faith and that special exalted feeling of being disciples (previously, we had much more). Tynianov couldn’t care less about this—he’s very young and very strong. Boris Mikhailovich is another story....

By 1927, Ginzburg frankly discusses her dissatisfaction with the direction of literary scholarship taken by her mentors, and alludes to her interest in “literary sociology,” that is, interests beyond the original OPOIAZ emphasis on the “immanent development of literature.” Ginzburg made it quite clear both in journal entries written at the time and in essays and interviews written decades later that those differences were not merely the result of political pressure (although political attacks on the Formalists were begun in earnest as early as 1923/24), but were the natural outgrowth of serious efforts to reformulate the direction of their future literary research.

3. “Zapisi 1920-1930-kh godov,” in *Chelovek za pis’mennym stolom*, pp. 23-24. The first entries in Ginzburg’s *Journals* date from 1925-1926. This one is dated 1926. For more details, see my article “Lidiia Ginzburg and the Journals of the 1920s.”

4. See Leon Trotsky, *Literatura i revolutsiia* (Moscow: Krasnaia nov’, 1923); Eikhenbaum’s rebuttal to Trotsky, “Vokrug voprosa o ‘formalistakh’ (Obzor i otvet),” in *Pechat’ i revolutsiia* 5 (Sept.-Oct. 1924), pp. 1-12, is the first in a set of articles included under the common heading, “K Sporam o formal’nom metode.” However, the other articles by P. Sakulin, S. Bobrov, A. Lunacharskii, P. Kogan, and V. Polianskii (pp.12-38) all attack Eikhenbaum, varying in their harshness and hostility, from Pavel Sakulin’s gentle efforts to persuade him to renge on certain ideas, commenting that his essay on Nekrasov shows “how close” he was to sociology, to the extremely negative attacks of the others. Public debates on