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AUTODIDAKTS (SAMOUCHKI) by Anton Utkin

GERMANS (NEMZY) by Irina Velembovskaja.

THE FALCON (Stories) by Boris Evseev

THE LAST BOAR FROM THE PONTEVEDRA FOREST
by Dina Rubina

THE ONLY ONE.
NADESCHDA ALLILUJEWA – WIFE OF JOSEF STALIN
by Olga Trifonowa,

AUTODIDAKTS (SAMOUCHKI) by Anton Utkin,
first published in 1998, published in German in 2003.

ANTON UTKIN was born in 1967 in Moscow. After graduating his study of history at Moscow University he worked as a journalist. His first novel "Chorowod" (Round Dance) was published in 1996. It was nominated for the Russian Booker Prize and published in French by Gallimard.

In 2003 he won the prestigious prize "Jasnaja Poljana" (birthplace of Leo Tolstoy) for his literary achievements.

In his second novel *AUTODIDAKTS (SAMOUCHKI)* Anton Utkin confronts the problems of adaptation to the new play rules of the postperestroika society, considers the human aspects of the turbulent changes in economical and social life. The storyteller who bears the traits of the author himself meets his friend from the old times who managed to become one of the so-called "new Russians" and is now willing to polish his image and be a "sponsor". The newly rich Pavel is depicted with humour and sympathy. Anton Utkin succeeded in creating a truly authentic character strong and sometimes naive, who combines down to earth mentality in business life with a huge need for spiritual growth. The story of two friends with their emotional ups and downs develops in Moscow in late 1990s. The tragic death of Pavel brings the author to the house in the Caucasus where Pavel was born. In a contrast to the dynamic life of the metropole we see the south Russian provincial life where nothing seems to change. The author can equally well describe the life of modern "tusovka" – bunch of artists and musicians who dictate the tastes to the cash-rich public and the tristesse of the everyday life of those who cannot find their place in the new glittering world.

GERMANS (NEMZY) by Irina Velembovskaja.

IRINA VELEMBOVSKAJA (1922 -1990) . She was born in Moscow in a family with vast cultural and literary interests. In 1938 her father was arrested for “counter-revolutionary GERMANS (NEMZY) by Irina Velembovskaja, written in 1957 – 1960 (approx), first activities” and the life of the family drastically changed. Irina quit her studies and looked for work. In 1941 she was also arrested and sent in exile. She spent 16 years in Ural, where she worked as miner and agricultural worker. During the last years of the Second World war she met there Germans from Romanian province of Banat who were brought to the Soviet Union in 1944 as a labour force to reconstruct the economy. She returned to Moscow after Stalins death and from 1957 onwards studied in Literary Institute. After graduating she devoted herself to writing. Her novels and short stories enjoyed vast popularity and were translated in many languages. However one of her first novels NEMZY (GERMANS) in which she depicted her personal experience of forced labour and dealt with the problem of German labourers was never published while she was alive and only after her death did her daughter manage to find a publisher.

The novel is written in tradition of classic russian literature, the characters are depicted with compassion and psychological depth. The main protagonists are Tamara and Rudolf who are both working as woodcutters in the taiga. They belong to two different worlds. She is an orphan adopted by poor villagers and brought up as their own child, a girl of about eighteen years who finds herself in a position of a team leader who has to teach a group of forced labourers – former teachers, painters , shopkeepers - the lumbering and simple rules of survival in taiga. Rudolf is a young man from a small town in Banat , a carpenter. The development of their relationship constitutes the lyrical focus of the novel. From the first episode – the arrival of the train with Germans - to the final letter adressed to Tamara, we follow the depiction of relationship not only of two humans but also of different cultures brought together by a tragic conflict.

THE FALCON (Stories) by Boris Evseev.

BORIS EVSEEV was born in 1951 in Cherson, now Ukraine. He studied violin in Gnesin Institute in Moscow before he began his writing career. His poems, short stories and novels are marked by a stunning non-conformism and unprejudiced view. First published after the end of the Soviet era his works enjoyed vivid interest of the professional literary scene as well as of the vast public.

Boris Evseev takes a breathtaking journey through the mental landscape of modern Russia. He confronts us with the vulnerability and cruelty of life, by looking through the eyes of a falcon, a sheep and a fish. Evseev uses literary symbols and visions to make past and present combine into a picture of a frightening reality. In story “ DOG POWER” (VLASTJ SOBACHJA) we see a criminal caught between his own gang willing to punish him for disobedience and pack of wild dogs who use him as a bait to hunt human beings. In allegory “THE FALCON” a story of a degrading man who only escapes his death to become a victim of modern slavetraders is told from a cosmic perspective and eternal russian questions “Who is guilty?” and “What to do?” are put in a genuine new way.

In one of the most recent stories “HEARING” (SLUCH) the author depicts the political landscape of a small provincial town in modern Russia. The protagonists exist for the author quasi in two worlds – the of world of visual reality and the world of sounds. The life of characters and its perception by the author creates a truly mystic atmosphere of this story.

THE LAST BOAR FROM THE PONTEVEDRA FOREST by **Dina Rubina**,
published in German in 2005

DINA RUBINA was born in 1953 in Tashkent. She began writing since she was 16 years old and to the time of her emigration in 1990 to Israel she was already one of the most popular writers in Russia. She still enjoys vast popularity and her novels are put on stage and filmed.

THE LAST BOAR FROM THE PONTEVEDRA FOREST (POSLEDNIJ KABAN IS LESOV PONTEVEDRA) is a story set in modern Israel where descendants of different cultures confront each other in situations full of wit and unexpected collisions. We see Dina who bears the features of the author entering a new job – coordinator of cultural programmes in a small town not far from Jerusalem. Soon thereafter she finds herself involved in a sort of modern picaresque novel where her new boss Alfonso and his rival Lucio, both coming from Spain play a crucial role. The vivid depictions and sharp characteristics are always counterweighted by the quiet presence of the eternal background – the desert of Judea where the past seems to accompany the carnival of modern life.

THE ONLY ONE.**NADESCHDA ALLILUJEWA – WIFE OF JOSEF STALIN****by Olga Trifonowa,**

published in German in 2006

OLGA TRIFONOWA was born in 1938 in Moscow. Her father was arrested in 1948 as “enemy of the people” and her family experienced all the hardships of the Stalin era. After finishing school with the gold medal, Olga entered Moscow Energy Institute and began to write stories. Her first publication was in magazine “Moskwa” – a short story about the life of former war prisoner, who was imprisoned for “treachery” after being liberated from German camp. Well known writer Jurij Trifonow invited her to his literary seminar, later they got married. In her first novel – “The Day of the Dog” (Denj Sobaki) she described the tragic fate of Russian geneticists in 1948. Then followed “An Attempt of Farewell” (Popytka Proschanija) dedicated to Jurij Trifonow.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union she was engaged in different humanitarian projects and organized a museum “ Haus on the Embankment” dedicated to the history of 30 and 40-ies.

In this house lived the family of Nadeschda Allilujewa – Stalins wife. The documents she discovered served as the basis for her last novel.