

Reading as a heroic feat: The intelligentsia and uncensored literature

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Keywords: Intelligentsia, censorship, literature, reading practice, emigration, Russian poetry, the Bible, Gorbanevskaya, Pasternak, Brodsky

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It feels like the question about the Russian intelligentsia and its mission has been around longer than the intelligentsia itself. Clearly, it is still very much on our minds. Several years ago, I was summoned to Cyprus to see a dying friend. She had a thriving international legal practice, hobnobbed with the rich and famous, and wrote poetry in her spare time – may she rest in peace! It took five layovers to get to her, and when I arrived, she kicked everyone out of the room to ask me an important question. I was filled with trepidation. What could she possibly want to know – something about her will, where she wanted to be buried, special instructions for the living? After everyone left the room, she asked me: “Lys, what do you think the intelligentsia is?” I was really stunned but pulled myself together and answered: “Well, the intelligentsia are educated people whose actions are not motivated by self-interest...” She shook her head, “No, no.” She died that same night, leaving me to wonder why the question mattered to her in the last hours of her life.

I can't be entirely sure but hope this essay will provide partial answers. This vanishing breed is hard to pin down. The intelligentsia has included those leaning toward Europe and enamored with the East, liberals and conservatives, believers and atheists, workaholics and idlers, yet always humanists, the kind we meet on the pages of our beloved classics. Which suggests another trait common to the Russia intelligentsia – reading as an absolute necessity. Time, place, and personal inclination determine the specific kind of reading that takes place. Several years ago, I read the letters and diaries of my grandfather, from 1911 to 1937. They were filled with notes about books he had read and lists of books that had to be read right away, this month and this year. That experience made me think about my own life of reading, which began half a century ago, after my grandfather's death.

Each generation has special markings. I belong to the generation called, in hindsight, the baby boomers – those born between 1943 and 1963. The term was coined in 1991, but the issues behind it were known in distant antiquity. The elderly had always been complaining about the younger generation. Didn't Socrates decry the ignorance of the youth? These complaints are found on papyrus, on paper, even on clay tablets. The elders have always favored their own generation over the new one.

Generalizations are handy, even if they offer little more than approximations. The list of qualities attributed to the baby boomers includes an interest in personal growth, team spirit, conscience, and so on. Actually, these traits may apply only to a minority that valorizes value. I am talking about the process itself – passionate, tense, intelligent, and difficult reading. And dangerous, too, because reading in Soviet Russia could get you kicked out of college or cost you a job. It could even land you in jail. Reading was a risky endeavor; it required courage, or at least willingness to keep at bay one's fear. In a way, it was a heroic deed.

When I was thinking about this topic, I came across a wonderful article by Averintsev in a collection dedicated to the memory of Joseph Mandelstam. Titled “Fear as initiation – a thematic constant of Mandelstam's poetry,” the article included this quote from Mandelstam's *The Egyptian Stamp*: “Fear takes me by the hand and leads me... I love, I respect fear. I almost said, ‘when I fear, I'm not afraid!’ Mathematicians should set up a tent for fear, because it provides a coordinate of time and space. The latter are implicated in fear like a rolled-up felt cloth in a Kyrgyz nomad's tent. Fear unharnesses the horses when it's time to drive, and it sends us dreams with unreasonably low ceilings.”

I gasped when I read that passage, for neither I nor my friends suspected that fear and writing were so closely connected in Mandelstam. We, the Soviet readers, felt the shadow of that fear fall over us as well. But in truth, our reading was also a creative endeavor. This had to do with the fact that a certain percentage of books in our world were considered forbidden. The reading of such books was punishable by law. An article in the Criminal Code – initially

numbered 190 and then renumbered 170 – stipulated that the violators could face a prison term of five to seven years for the storage and distribution of anti-Soviet literature. That's to say, our literature was split into permitted and prohibited.

No one I know ever saw a list of banned books. Such lists, if they existed, were hidden somewhere in KGB offices. It took years for us to understand the divide between the permitted and the prohibited. We were hardly the first generation to wonder whether Pushkin's epigrams, passed privately from person to person in the 19th century, are permitted? What about his schoolboy mischief, obscene doggerel, not to mention *The Gabrieliad*? That was uncensored literature... Russian censorship has always been harsh. Just think about Chaadayev's *Philosophical Letters*, Radishchev's *Journey from St. Petersburg to Moscow* that earned him a death sentence. Ten years later, Catherine the Great showed her mercy by commuting this sentence to 10 years in a monastery. As for Radishchev's book, it was published only in 1905 following the first Russian revolution, over a hundred years after it had been published in 1790. Until that time, Radishchev's book could only be read in surreptitiously procured copies. Specialists estimate that there were about 100 such copies in circulation. Pushkin got a hold of one such copy and scribbled his commentaries on it. Thus, we have every reason to think that Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin was reading "samizdat."

We knew how to handle such books that came into our possession: read them quickly, lend them to friends, return to their owners, and never show to strangers. Practically any book was of value in those days, as evidenced by the enormous lines that would form whenever a subscription to approved classics was announced. Were they so harmless – Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky, Leskov? All had trouble with the censors during their lifetimes, and even after death. The history of Russian censorship has been written, and what a fascinating story it is.

Each person's history can be described in different ways. For instance, through genetics – the characteristics and features inherited from parents. Or through education – where, what, and with whom have you studied. Or through communication – who did you interact with, befriend, live nearby. One can also trace the sequence of books the person has devoured. Here I take a stab at recreating my own history of reading.

Oddly enough, even my childhood books were not on the "permitted" lists. Rather, they had been removed from libraries and kept in "special storage" to be retrieved with specific permission. They came from the book shelves of my grandmother, Elena Markovna, who graduated from high school in 1917, saved Charskaya's novels for girls, Louisa May Alcott's wonderful *Little Women*, with the same characters met again when they've all grown up. Grandmother had books about Japanese children and Dutch children, a collection of the children's magazine *The Heartfelt World*... On that same bookshelf I found my first real book, *The Ingenious Nobleman Sir Quixote of La Mancha* by Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, a name unfamiliar to me... Another bookshelf, which added to my education a little later, belonged to my other grandmother, Maria Petrovna. This one was more adventurous, and more interesting, although it took time for me to appreciate its content: *Stone* by Mandelstam, *The Rosary* by Akhmatova, *Kotik Letayev* by Andrey Bely, *Images of Italy* by Muratov, and *The Interpretation of Dreams* by Freud, even, Lord have mercy, Lenin's *Materialism and Empirio-criticism*, with mocking commentary in the margins from my deceased grandfather. One of the books I found there I still have in my home (I donated many documents belonging to my grandparents to the historical archive, but not this one) – *The Revolt of the Angels* by Anatole France. It has a strange appearance – the hardcover is handmade, and it is smaller than the pages, with the latter protruding beyond the cover. The inscription on the last page reads: "I made this cover out of a stolen folder and old socks in the hardest days of my stay in cell No. 3 in Stalingrad Prison." Then the date: March 1934. And my grandfather's signature.

Grandma Maria's bookshelf also held a Russian Bible, which would interest me at a later point. It was a well-used book, worn out from reading and heavily underlined. There was a second Bible, which belonged to my maternal great-grandfather, with parallel Hebrew and Russian text. Just the Torah, without the New Testament. Both are with me today.

I must digress here briefly on the meaning of "Bible." That was the name used at the time to describe the Old and New Testament, together in one book. This childhood volume was a rare book, published before the revolution. Later on, the Russian Patriarchate would reprint the Bible "for official use only." With the special permission from the Central Committee or the KGB, no doubt. It was nearly impossible to purchase this authorized edition of the Bible. I do remember once seeing a copy of the New Testament, handwritten by an old church woman, as in the time before Gutenberg. The very definition of samizdat!

The first New Testament I bought in 1960 was a present for a friend. I acquired it from a customs agent, who had confiscated it at the airport from an evangelizing foreigner trying to smuggle it into the country. The customs agent – I met the man through a gorgeous woman from the neighboring apartment building. She was a foreign-currency prostitute, although we weren't yet familiar with that term. This New Testament was brand-new, put out in Russian by the Belgian publisher Life with God. It cost 25 rubles; my university stipend was 35 rubles, which should give you an idea of the value of this prized possession. The New Testament was indeed an expensive book. The customs agent made a nice profit, but the buyers had no complaints.

Let us return to bookshelves. My grandmother's bookcases were my teachers, and so was the book shelf in the apartment of my friend and classmate, Lara. Her family hailed from Tbilisi, the Russian-Jewish intelligentsia home, and their bookcase was vast. Most of the volumes were placed with their spines outward, but some were tucked away behind the others. One day, Lara and I pulled two books out from there; one was an illustrated copy of the *Decameron*. I learned then what a codpiece was, and that seems to have drawn my interest. The book was fascinating, and we spent a long time flipping through and reading it, though it didn't seem to be particularly funny to us. Probably only contemporaries of the author could get a real laugh out of such trivial stories.

The second book was a collection of poems by Boris Pasternak, 1934 edition, titled simply the "Collected." It contained a poem I must include here. It was of great importance to me, and I think it will be of note to everyone interested in the relationship between poetry and reader:

That's how it starts. A two-year-old hears
 Mother's tune unfolding in the darkness,
 Child's ears are pricked in rapt attention; words
 Will come next, around the age of three.
 By then, the glow of wit is flickering already.
 Inside the furnace of a child's mind newfangled
 Doubts form about the mother and about the home –
 Whose are they? A lilac's branch forgotten on the bench,
 Its awesome beauty frightening to the child.
 Kidnappers lie in wait, fears are awakened.
 A dazzling comet streaks across the sky,
 Its radiance fantastic. The Ghost of Faust
 Hovering above illuminates the world that

Lost its customary firmness and shimmers
 Like a boundless sea. This is when iambic
 Verses come to beguile a child's imagination.
 As summer nights spread out through the fields,
 And hopes are ripe for wishes to be granted,
 The sun is poised to face its new contender –
 That's how you start to live in poetry.

The text was somewhat obscure for a 12/13-year-old girl. It was then or near that time that my life with poetry began.

My reading took a winding path, and my attitude towards writers evolved in accordance with the formula of a romance novel: the first touch, heat and fervor, then, perhaps the cooling of passion or a life-long love affair, with all its ups and downs. My romance with O. Henry took place in the fifth or sixth grade. I was moved by his laconic style and the elegance of his endings. Each page of the shaggy brown volume (still alive!) was dotted with soup stains and drops of juice. I know it by heart. Can't say the same about Chekhov. Not Chekhov at all! Then Tolstoy began. *Hadji Murat*. He had me for life. And definitely not Dostoyevsky, or Dickens, or Thomas Mann... Pasternak was a constant presence, and then Mandelstam.

The year I finished school, in 1960, things began to change. I made a new friend, Natalia Gorbanevskaya. A real living poet, Natalia was already publishing her own poetry. Back in the 1940s, Nikolai Glazkov had invented the term "samsebyaizdat" – publishing one's own work, but by 1960, we called it "samizdat." Natalia used to put together little collections, printed them on cigarette papers, which meant that she was able to produce about seven copies at a time. She bound them very elegantly and prettily, and they were thin little books. I gave all these books to the Memorial archives 50 years later, and they travel all around the world as part of exhibitions dedicated to that period.

So the first real samizdat I encountered were the books of Natalia Gorbanevskaya. Three years ago, I was on a train from Sheremetyov Airport, coming back home from somewhere abroad, and when I glanced out the window, I saw a beautiful landscape: fresh snow, birches bent over under its weight... I was returning from hot countries without a trace of snow, so the sight was welcome. Each time I delight in the beauty of nature, I repeat like a mantra a poem by Natalia:

I'll add fresh oil to the lamp.
 My Earth – thy searing beauty
 Cuts me to the quick as I contrive
 To stuff you in a basket I'm weaving.
 My universe fits snugly in this receptacle.

My Earth – thy searing beauty
 Is nourished by the willow that
 Lends me its submissive branches
 In hopeless struggle to rekindle love
 That will endure for a thousand years to come.

My Earth, my luminous strength,

My fate, thy beauty is transcendent,
 My star, you are as unperturbed today
 As Russia whose everlasting name
 I'm destined to proclaim until the end of time.

When I got home, still muttering that poem to myself, a friend called with the news that Natalia had passed away. For me, that poem and the news of her death forever merged on that day, along with the sense of the beauty of her life: "my fate, how lovely you are."

I have Natalia to thank for my early acquaintance with the St. Petersburg poetry of the 60s. It wasn't yet clear in those days which of the four young Petersburg writers would start the poetic revolution: Reyn, Nayman, Bobyshev, or Brodsky. Anna Akhmatova was the first to figure it out. The other three had a great deal of talent, but the sheer scope of it! The first poems of Brodsky I read came from Nataliya.

Here's a poem by Brodsky written in 1969. I can't deny myself the pleasure of recounting it here, all the more so that I am writing this essay on Tuesday, the second of January... And the millennium that Pasternak immortalized is no longer the one in which we dwell.

We dwelled together for so long that once again
 The second day of January fell on Tuesday,
 The eyebrows raised in a gesture of surprise
 Wipe off the sadness in your eyes the way
 A windshield wiper clears the glass and opens
 Unobstructed visage of the road ahead.

We dwelled together for so long that it began
 To look like the snowfall would last forever,
 And as I bent to shield your eyelids with my
 Hand from looming danger, your eyes had fluttered
 In my palm like butterflies oblivious to the truth
 That all I wished was to protect them gently.

We knew each other for so long that no surprises
 Could unsettle the familiar rhythm of our embrace,
 No psychoanalytic drivel would suffice to tear
 Apart our bodies, your lips aquiver on my shoulder,
 Mine ready to snuff out the candle, as we're poised
 To will the world into complete oblivion.

We dwelled together for so long that the bouquet of
 Roses on the wallpapers have been supplanted with
 The grove of birches every bit as dilapidated.
 Yet things are different now, for both of us have
 Money nowadays; just thirty days ago we traveled
 to observe the fiery sunset over the Turkish skies.

We dwelled together for so long without books,
 Utensils, furniture, and fixtures, our only solace
 Being a little couch, that we surmised at last why

A complete triangle, before it came into existence,
Was little more than an aspiring perpendicular
Eager to join forces with the kindred contours.

We dwelled together for so long that she and I
Built up a door from our weightless shadows.
It matters not if we are fast asleep or wide awake,
We're safe behind this door; and when the time
Arrives to bid farewell to our abode, we shall
Escape through our secret door into the future.

Looking back at the 60 years of my dangerous reading, I can see that a whole industry of underground sprang to life in the 1960s. This explosion had three main sources:

1. Pre-revolutionary and pre-war books removed from circulation and officially banned. These were mainly writers preoccupied with religious matters – Vasily Rozanov, Berdyayev, Florensky, Vladimir Solovyev. The Russian literary avant-garde of the start of the century came later.

2. Books written in Russia that never made it to the printing house, or destroyed after publication, reproduced privately through photocopying, typed on a typewriter, or in rare cases and much later, Xerox machines. Vasily Grossman to Solzhenitsyn and Shalamov, Yevgenia Ginzburg, Nadezhda Mandelstam, and Venedikt Yerofeyev belonged to this category.

3. Books published abroad, usually in Russian, smuggled into the U.S.S.R. Just as the aforementioned *Life with God*, such books were brought out by IMKA Press, the Russian Student Christian Movement, and finally, Ardis Publishing. Books in this series represented “tamizdat.”

For me personally, the first samizdat was poetry. In addition to the typewritten poems of Tsvetaeva, Gumilev, Akhmatova, and Mandelstam, I read samizdat poetry journals – *Sintaksis* (Syntax), compiled by Alexander Ginzburg, and several Leningrad poetry magazines. You must understand that the material available in samizdat were by no means restricted to poetry. In addition to the poetry and religious fare, there was also the political samizdat – the most dangerous kind, and it had a stunning effect on me. Orwell was the most notable, with *Animal Farm* and *1984*, some purely political studies that didn't achieve the same artistic heights – *The Technology of Power* by Avtorkhanov; *The Great Terror* by Robert Conquest; and *The New Class* by Milovan Djilas... The samizdat included translations of literary, scientific, nationalist, neo-Marxist, and even musical works.

We read day and night, we read for years, growing up together as we kept reading. Reprisals for producing samizdat grew in severity. An attempted periodical rarely lasted more than three issues; the editors, compilers, and typists were caught and imprisoned. Sinyavsky and Daniel went to trial in 1965 for publishing books abroad, and dozens were sentenced to prison in the aftermath. By the way, Alexander Ginzburg, the editor of *Sintaksis*, was also sent to prison for the *White Book* he compiled on this trial of the two writers. A little later, in 1968, publication of the *Chronicle of Current Events* began, in which two dozen daring authors and publishers gathered material from all across the country about the repressive actions and political measures of those years. That periodical set a record for longevity.

Now back to my personal reading. For me, 1965 was the year I discovered two great Russian writers, two cornerstones of Russian literature – Platonov and Nabokov.

Their books happened to fall into my hands almost simultaneously. Reading these two authors was a challenge, as they seemed to clash on many levels. The first posthumous edition of Platonov appeared in print at the time, but Nabokov came to me by a more circuitous route. A student from a neighboring department, a Canadian man from a Russian family, gave me *Invitation to a Beheading*. It was an absolute revolution for me – I realized that there was a different kind of Russian literature out there in addition to the classic Russian literature and Soviet writers. I shunned Soviet literature as alien to me. Why should I bother with Pavel Korchagin, Pavlik Morozov, and Zoya-Tanya Kosmodemyanskaya when “Werter has already been written”? I rejected even good Soviet literature, which was a form of snobbery on my part. I turned up my nose at Trifonov, for instance, whom I read belatedly, at which point he wasn’t that new and interesting. And why should I read *Bison*, when I had heard Timofeyev-Resovsky himself speak? I just kept reading books from bookshelves, no longer my grandmothers’ alone. One such belonged to Anatoly Vedernikov, the then-deputy editor of the journal of the Moscow Patriarchate. He had a wonderful home library, from Rozanov to Merezhkovsky. Another belonged to Father Alexander Men’. I’ll remain grateful to both of them for as long as I live. When I got a hold of *Invitation to a Beheading*, it changed everything. Reading this book was an absolute shock.

There was a prominent black marketeer in my university at the time, the lady who peddled in all sorts of things – shoes, tights, stockings, lipstick, underwear, bras – everything in short supply in those years. This operator hadn’t traded in books, though. I came to see her in a high-rise on the Sparrow Hills L campus to buy something, don’t remember what it was, maybe boots, and then I saw a book on a chair, *The Gift*, by Nabokov, the author already familiar to me. She saw my eyes lit up, and like the experienced saleswoman, she told me the book was not for sale. That was a forceful statement, but I beat her to the punch when I took my grandmother’s diamond ring off my finger and handed it to her. I never regretted the trade; that book was a real diamond. I read it over and over, as did all my friends. Even after *Invitation to a Beheading*, that was stunning read.

After graduating from the university in 1968, I ended up in the Institute of General Genetics of the Russian Academy of Sciences. You couldn’t dream of a better posting. Voracious reading went on. Books came to me from all quarters. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the movement in support of Jewish emigration gathered momentum. The exit door for those wishing to leave the country would open slightly, close again, then reopen. It was at that time that the periodicals *Jews in the USSR* and *Targut* first came out. I had no intention of resettling in Israel, but everything connected with the immigration movement captivated my attention. We knew nothing, or very little, about the history of that country. I had no idea that my grandfather Yakov got his 10-year prison sentence for working in the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee. The majority of its members were shot. My grandfather was sent to prison because he knew several foreign languages, compiled foreign press surveys for Mikhoels, the chair of the committee, and kept an eye on the Israeli and Arab politics, on the British, German, and French intrigues in the Middle East.

I read *Exodus* by Stanley Uris around that time. It’s a rather mediocre novel, but its action begins in Russia and unfolds during the founding of Israel, and it packed a lot of factual material. I had little time to read the novel, went over it in a rush, but I very much wanted my own copy. I had a typewriter – Erika – a gift from my mother for my university graduation. I was, and still am, a poor typist. We found a typist, gave her my typewriter (she didn’t have her own), and she began to copy *Exodus*. We waited and waited – in vain, as it turned out, for the typewriter along with the typed copy and the original had been scooped up by the KGB. Someone had tipped them off. I won’t recount the story in all the details, but that episode marked the end of a career in biology, not only for me but for several of mt

coworkers. They shut down the entire laboratory. That was the end of my love affair with biology. Well, not actually – if I had to go return to university, I would go back to genetics. Certainly not to the department of literature. It was my love of reading that made me a writer. The difficult, momentous, vitally important habit of reading formed by my generation, or at least the part of the generation to which I was privileged to belong.

We could stop right here. In 1990, censorship was abolished in Russia. Over the course of two years, almost all the books that had been unsafe to read appeared in book stores. Publishers didn't make much money on those books. My feeling is that everyone interested in risky reading had read them already. The most notable example might be *The Gulag Archipelago*, which generated more prison time and vicious attacks than any other book. In the early 1990s, the book went on sale everywhere, in book stores, in street kiosks, yet nobody wanted to buy it. Paradoxically, this great book enjoyed more popularity in the West than at home. The Communist movement in France and Italy went into decline when the Western Communists learned about the great terror, the role of the Cheka-NKVD-KGB in the life of the country. They took a step back from the Communist regime, from Stalinism. This didn't happen in Russia, however. Solzhenitsyn's book went unread. Why else, just a few years after the collapse of the Soviet Union, everyone merrily voted for a professional KGB officer? Here is the root of the Stalinist revival in our country.

The reading era began about 500-600 B.C. With writing invented, information was passed from person to person with the use of alphabets conjured up by human genius. The first recorded messages pertained to finances – ledgers of debts and transactions, as a modern accountant would say. Sacred texts, it would seem, are a lot younger than financial ones.

At the start of the 15th century, another invention changed the path of civilization – the printing press. With it, a new era began, the era of Gutenberg. Today, we are on the verge of another revolution, which is replacing books and pushing science and technology forward. Soon, people themselves will evolve to such an extent that our brains will be able to receive information directly from media, bypassing the reading altogether. No great feats will accompany efforts to gain information, which will come to you with one click of the mouse.

But here is a mystery: If the feat of reading is no longer required, why are we afraid again? What stocks our fears? This is a small puzzle, but one worth pondering.

If my late friend had asked me today her deathbed question about the intelligentsia, my answer would be a touch different, I think. I would say that the intelligentsia consists of educated people possessing intellectual fearlessness, whose actions are not motivated by self-interest... Alas, this "secret order" no longer exists.

The *intelligenty*, no matter how you define them, seem like comic figures to most of my countrymen. I'll go even further and say that the Russian intelligentsia committed suicide. This happened in the 1920s and 1930s.

Under relentless pressure from the government, the intelligentsia chose to "disembody." The best writers of the time contributed to this process by creating a gallery of protagonists like Erenburg's *Julio Jurenito* or Ilf and Petrov's *Twelve Chairs* and *The Golden Calf* – the caricatures that dishonored the very phenomenon of the "Russian intelligentsia." I conclude my essay on reading with this angst-ridden yet revealing observation that Yury Olesha made in 1930 (please note that Olesha placed his own stone on the Russian intelligentsia's grave).

We, the writers of the intelligentsia, should write about ourselves, should renounce ourselves and our *intelligentnost'*... My take on the intelligentsia in our time is bleak.

¹ The characteristics of a member of the intelligentsia.

Once and for all, we must declare that the proletariat has no need for what we call *intelligentnost*... I want to subject myself to perestroika. Sure, I am disgusted, terribly disgusted, to belong to the intelligentsia. You can't imagine how terrible it feels. It's a weakness I want to be rid of.

We, the descendants of those who were called the intelligentsia, we all share one weakness – the love of reading.

About the Author:

Ludmila Ulitskaya (born in 1943 in Davlekanovo, Bashkiria) graduated from Moscow State University with a B.A. in biology, after which she worked at the Institute of General Genetics, Russian Academy of Sciences, as a research scientist. In 1979, after she was laid off from her position at the institute, Ms. Ulitskaya became a repertory director for the Hebrew Musical Theater in Moscow. From the early 1990s, she devoted herself to literary work and playwriting. Ms. Ulitskaya is an internationally acclaimed author of novels, short stories, children books, and plays, which have been translated into more than 40 languages and sold over 2 million copies worldwide. Lyudmila Ulitskaya is the recipient of top literary awards, including the Russian Booker Prize (2002), National Literary Prize BIG BOOK (2007), Austrian State Prize for European Literature for her achievements (2014), Gran Premio delle Lettrici di ELLE (2010), Prix Simone de Beauvoir pour la liberté des femmes (2011), Ordre des Arts et Lettres (2004), Budapest Grand Prix (2009), China's National Literature Prize (2005), and other honors. In 2008, she served as the Writer in Residence at Stanford University. Among the notable books written by Ms. Ulitskaya are *The Green Tent* (2010), *Daniel Stein, Interpreter* (2006), *All Our Lord's Men* (2005), *Russian Jam* (2005), *Childhood Forty-Nine* (2003), *Sincerely Yours, Shurik* (2003), *Women's Lies* (2003), *Girls* (2002), *The Funeral Party* (1997), *Medea and Her Children* (1996), and *Sonechka* (1995).