

ALL about IDA

IDA. By Gertrude Stein. New York: Random House. 1941. 154 pp. \$2.

Simplified by W. H. AUDEN

IDA is not about IDA, but about Dear Ida. Who is Dear Ida? Why, everybody knows Dear Ida, but not everybody knows whom they know. Most people call the Dear Ida they know IDA, but most people do not know IDA. Then who is Dear Ida whom everybody knows? Miss Stein knows who Dear Ida is. Dear Ida lives from day to day, but a day is not really all day to Dear Ida because she does not need all day. She does not need all day because, of course, she is mostly sitting and resting and being there. Resting is what she likes best and sitting is what she does best. That is being natural, and, of course, being natural does not take all day. That is why she can only use the part of the day and night that she chooses to sit in. She stays there as long as she can, then she goes walking. Dear Ida walks in the afternoon when she is not resting. Everything happens to Dear Ida, funny things happen, husbands happen, going away happens, and Dear Ida does not know whether they are happening slowly or not. It might be slowly, it might be not. Dear Ida does not know because she does not begin, no, never, because, as Miss Stein says, if you begin, nothing happens to you. You happen. Dear Ida does not happen, Dear Ida is not funny. The only funny thing about Dear Ida is her dislike of doors. Otherwise Dear Ida is very well, very well indeed. Does Dear Ida know IDA? No, she does not know IDA, she only knows that IDA is beside her. She cannot know IDA because she thinks IDA is like what she thinks Dear Ida is like. Dear Ida does not even know Dear Ida. Only once in her life does she know Dear Ida. That is the only time Dear Ida cries. Knowing IDA beside her, and not knowing Dear Ida, like the Dear Ida she is, she thinks that IDA is Dear Ida, my twin, my twin Winnie who is winning everything and will never make me cry. When she tries to think of IDA, she can only think of her twin Winnie. When she tries to think of Dear Ida, she can only think a dog is a dog because it is always there. If Dear Ida does not know Dear Ida, who does? IDA knows. IDA is funny and is always beginning. Nothing happens to IDA. IDA does not call Dear Ida dear Ida. But Poor Ida, Lazy Ida, Bad Ida, why do you let such funny things happen to you, why don't you begin, why don't you cry? Dear Ida, you are wrong. The first of everything is not a sign of anything. Anything can be

the first of everything. Perhaps ten can be a sign of something. Yes, perhaps everything after ten is a sign. I am not your twin Winnie, Dear Ida, I am IDA. If you knew this, you would not be resting. Perhaps you would be crying, but you would know IDA, and that would be as well. Most novels are Dear Ida writing about her twin Winnie, but they do not say so. O dear no, they say this is IDA writing about IDA. But it is only Dear Ida writing, and what does Dear Ida know about IDA as she sits, Dear Ida, and lets funny things happen and does not cry. When she writes IDA she only says, My twin Winnie who is always winning, always counting, never sitting but always crying. There is too much winning, too much counting, too much crying, too much of not resting altogether. IDA is not Dear Ida writing about her twin Winnie. IDA is IDA writing about Dear Ida. There is not too much of anything, only one hundred and fifty pages, and Dear Ida only cries once. IDA does not pretend that Dear Ida is not resting and not thinking about her twin Winnie. Dear Ida writes very often, but I do not like what she writes



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because it is neither about IDA nor Dear Ida, only about her twin Winnie, and that is too much. I like IDA best when she writes about IDA but she does not write about her very often. Next to IDA writing about IDA, I like IDA writing about Dear Ida.

This is what Ida is. I like Ida.

Sigmund Freud as a Person

FROM THIRTY YEARS WITH FREUD. By Theodor Reik. New York: Farrar & Rinehart, Inc. 1940. 241 pp. \$2.50.

Reviewed by BERTRAM D. LEWIN, M.D.

CERTAINLY great men become legends before their death. It is eminently true that there exists and has existed for many years a Freud legend, compounded of impressions that are derived from his writings, his style, his subject matter, his portrait, and to no small extent of fantasies pure and simple, which arose in his readers, and in those who did not read him, for reasons that Freud himself would be the most competent to elucidate. Hence, we owe Dr. Reik a debt for putting down in the first part of his book, written shortly after Professor Freud's death, those recollections, which were still warm, of Freud as a person, including a somewhat gossipy account of his last visit to Freud. Dr. Reik's memories of Freud are interesting as records, and may some day be of importance in a definitive study of Professor Freud as a man; no final assessment is attempted.

The second part of the book is a report of an unpublished lecture of Freud. Dr. Reik serving as literary secretary to show how Freud analyzed

an interesting psychological experience, which a colleague had published. The analysis, slight enough, is in the manner of "The Psychopathology of Everyday Life," and is ingenious and interesting. Dr. Reik adds an original comment on an oversight made by Freud in this same analysis.

In another chapter Dr. Reik puts in a good word for Freud's followers. It is part of one Freud legend that the master is all right, a genius, but everyone else who practises psychoanalysis is a deluded bigot. Actually, if Freud had not so much overshadowed his immediate followers, sober consideration would have recognized them to be a rather superior and intelligent group.

The third part of the book is devoted to reviews of four of Freud's papers: Civilization and its Discontents, The Future of an Illusion, A Note on a Religious Experience, and Dostoevsky and Parricide. While the criticism is appreciative rather than analytic, certain of Dr. Reik's remarks on the last paper are of importance. The fourth part of the book consists of reprints of various original papers which have no direct bearing on Freud, but which were written on various occasions by Dr. Reik. One of these, which deals with embarrassment in greeting, is well worth reading.

What Russia Means to the Worker

WORKERS BEFORE AND AFTER LENIN. By *Manya Gordon*. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. 1941. 524 pp., with index. \$4.

Reviewed by SPENCER MILLER

MANYA GORDON knows whereof she writes and speaks. Hers has been no "six weeks' investigation," no uncritical acceptance of statistics designed to prove a case. This volume is a life work of one born in Russia but educated in America, who has attempted faithfully and objectively to appraise this great workers' experiment by the effect which it had on the lives and standards of those for whom this Republic was devised.

Her research and writing have produced an amazing book—amazing in its expose of conditions among the workers under the Czars and under the Soviets, and amazing in its portrayal of the contradictions of the Bolshevik mind when presenting its own case and when condemning its opponents' case.

It starts out by informing the reader, almost casually, that labor legislation beneficial to the workers was enacted exactly two hundred years ago in Russia. This dealt with hours, wages, working conditions, medical aid, equal pay for women and men, and other matters. This does not mean that the lot of the workers in Czarist Russia was suddenly made ideal nor that the legislation was inspired by concern for the workers' welfare. As Manya Gordon writes, "The condition of the workers remained miserable beyond description." And the legislation was enacted to put the industrialists of St. Petersburg on a par as far as labor costs went with their fellow-industrialists in Moscow. In the former there was a scarcity of labor and machines had to be used, which increased labor costs as compared with the costs in the latter city, which had a glut of starvation labor. However, this labor legislation did mark a step forward in the economic condition of the workers in Russia which lasted with minor setbacks until the Soviets were firmly in the saddle.

How little the workers benefited under their rule may be gathered from the fact that when they came to power they reduced the overtime to fifty hours a year from the one hundred and twenty which was legal under the Czars, but in 1922 the Soviets went back to the Czarist figures. And not only that, but whereas under the Czars the employer was compelled to make a definite agreement with the work-

ers regarding overtime, in Soviet Russia the workers are compelled to work overtime whenever the factory director decides it is necessary.

"Russia was definitely on her way, and in labor legislation particularly she was often in advance of western Europe," writes Manya Gordon of the year 1914. "After 1905, and encouraged by the shifty tactics of the government, the employers tightened their grip on the workers," she goes on. "But here as in the political sphere they could only reduce labor's gains and not wipe them out completely." In 1905 fifty-three per cent of all the wage-earners in the Moscow district worked eleven and a half hours a day; by the following year this figure had been reduced to twelve per cent. In the decade between 1896 and 1906 the number of night workers had been reduced from over 75,000 to 5,000.

And though, after the abolition of serfdom in 1861, wages decreased until in 1880 the average yearly pay for men was 187 rubles and half that for women, there was a steady increase of wages after the strikes of 1903, with the exception of the depression of 1909, so that by the beginning of the first World War wages had increased in the Moscow district to 304 rubles.

The Revolution of 1917 found Russian labor in an aggressive mood. That year the unions had a membership of 1,475,000 in 967 separate organizations and were increasing their numbers rapidly.

Lenin could not help being aware of this formidable growth, writes Manya Gordon. In his book "The State and Revolution" which he wrote on the eve of the November coup d'état he assured the working people that the working class would soon master all



Manya Gordon

the tasks that the bourgeois and the impotent Kerensky government had found insurmountable. Paradoxical as it may seem, Lenin further declared that as a result of the development of capitalism in Russia the vast majority of administrative and economic problems had become so simple that they could be handled "by all literate people" and that this could be done "in rotation."

In 1920 at the Eighth Congress of the Soviet trade unions the father of Russian Communism made an about face on the rotation theory. He ridiculed the idea of handing over the management of national industry to the workers who he had proclaimed as capable of running it when he was reaching for power. It was quite proper, according to Lenin, for the trade unions to take over control of industry at the beginning of the revolution when it was necessary to use them as a battering ram to remove the previous ruling order, but as soon as they had done their job he was through with them.

The real contrast in the status of workers before and after Lenin, the author sets forth with impressive words. But nowhere in the book does she do it with greater incisiveness than in her concluding appraisal of the Soviet rule.

During the early period of Soviet rule [writes Manya Gordon] labor managed to achieve a great deal. In the beginning of 1925 the membership of the Soviet trade unions comprised 8,500,000 workers and office employees. The unions had 3,417 clubs and 5,922 libraries and were interested in every kind of educational and recreational activity as well as in all proper trade union work. Under a democratic form of government these activities, with the large membership of the trade unions, would have ultimately compelled reorganization of the economic and industrial conditions of the country, no matter whether the ultimate ownership was private or national. Organized labor, would be in a position to make equitable collective agreements, protect its own rights and at the same time strike a balance between wages and reasonable profits for the State. This real promise in a momentous experiment was destroyed by the autocratic power of the Communist Party and later by Stalin, "the Father of the Country."

Apologists for Soviet Russia may challenge what Miss Gordon has written, but they will not alter her conclusions with less research and less painstaking care than she has employed in assembling her data. Her volume will help every student of labor problems in America to a somewhat more objective estimate of present labor conditions under the Soviet rule.

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