

KASATKINA, Liudmilla

25 Apr. 1964

L participated in a seminar at Bryn Mawr College on the role and status of women in the Soviet Union Apr. 25, 1964.

She was born in Georgia, USSR, which she described as "the southern part of our country." She graduated from Moscow Univ. in Romance and German philology, then worked for two years in the Foreign Languages Publishing House in Moscow. Next, she was "an aspirant", and after defending her thesis, was invited to lecture at Moscow U.. During 1963-64 she is studying at Columbia.

Since coming here in September, she admits she has undergone a change in her outlook. "The first month I was here I thought I knew everything," she said, "but the second month I knew nothing."

"any things "shocked me at first, but I won't criticize, because I don't know what is the right way." L explained that some of the things that shocked her were her American professor who sat on a table during the lecture, put up his feet on the chair, and smoked a cigar. Also that nobody answered her when she walked into a class and said "hello". But she admitted that the reason she was "shocked" was that she was brought up differently. Now she is more used to the way things are done here.

L is very sensitive to any suggestion of criticism of the Soviet way of life, or the Soviet Union.

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SOURCE METHOD EXEMPTION 3B2B
NAZI WAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT
DATE 2007

74-124-29/3
25 ~~Apr~~ ^{May} 64

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An objective, academic discussion, where good and bad points of a given topic are brought out, is something she obviously is not accustomed to, or does not understand. At the symposium in Bryn Mawr, whenever a speaker was the least bit critical of something in the USSR, ~~Lid~~milla was immediately trying to counter it with a defensive explanation. Occasionally her remark would be to the effect that the speaker misunderstood what he learned about the Soviet Union, or that he does not know what he is talking about. The general impression is that L is unable to carry on an objective discussion.

L's view on Soviet literature:

The works such as those of Voznesensky and Yevtushenko are not new to the Soviet Union, she said. "It's just that now we have more time to read them, ~~more~~. During the war years we only thought about our survival." But L said these new poets cannot be classed as "great poets", because "they only pick things on the surface," and, presumably, don't go deeper into the problems they are tackling.

The ~~new~~ national poets of the various Union Republics are translated into Russian and thus receive wide circulation, she said. This widens the horizons "of our Soviet Russian literature." She added: "When a work of a national poet is translated into Russian, we consider it a Russian work. We don't have borders between our republics."

As examples of poetry translated into Russian she mentioned (several times) only the following: Armenian, Azarbeijan, Estonian, and Georgian.

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Although L says she was born in Georgia, there is not a trace of any national sentiment to that republic on her part. Even when she mentioned Georgian literature, she said that "of course I like it very much" but only because it ~~is~~ has been made an integral part of the Soviet Russian literature.

Another thing that seems to be an obsession with her, is that Russia is in Europe. During the symposium she repeated once again the incident ~~last~~ which occurred to her at a New York post office, where a clerk told her she needed a 25¢ stamp on her letter to Moscow, "because Moscow is in Asia."