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Title	亡命ロシア文学史研究者： グレープ・ストルーヴェ研究
Author(s)	中野, 幸男
Citation	境界研究, 1, 145-164
Issue Date	2010-10-29
DOI	https://doi.org/10.14943/jbr.1.145
Doc URL	https://hdl.handle.net/2115/61321
Type	departmental bulletin paper
File Information	08Nakano_summary.pdf, 英文要旨



On Gleb Struve: Historian of Russian Emigrant Literature

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This paper deals with the problems of “Russian literature in exile” from the contemporary perspective of literary studies, focusing on the life and works of Russian literary historian Gleb Petrovich Struve (1898-1985). Despite his important contributions to the study of the history of Russian literature, we know little about his life and his close relationships with contemporary writers such as Marina Tsvetaeva (1892-1941), Vladimir Nabokov (1899-1977), George Orwell (1903-1950) and Paul Celan (1920-1970).

The first part of this paper covers the period from his birth in 1898 to his employment at the University of London’s School of Slavonic and East European Studies in 1932. In this period his relationships with other contemporary writers deserve attention. His correspondence with Nabokov in his Russian-writing period tells us the role Struve played in the life of Nabokov as an adviser not only in his life in emigration, but also in his literary debut in emigrant journals and books in translation. After graduating from Oxford, Struve was engaged in journalism. He found jobs mainly at the publishing houses owned by his father. In 1922 he met Marina Tsvetaeva in Berlin and in 1923 Struve named his daughter Marina after Tsvetaeva. Tsvetaeva gave a copy of her new collection of poems, *Remeslo*, to Struve’s daughter with her dedication. Using his excellent knowledge of foreign languages, he worked as a translator in commercial companies and translated the works of economist John Maynard Keynes, politician Thomas Woodrow Wilson into Russian and Ivan Bunin, winner of the 1933 Nobel Prize for literature, into English. The second part covers the period from his employment in 1932 to his move to the United States in 1947, focusing on his life during World War II and his publications of Soviet Russian literary history. Since his employment as lecturer at the School of Slavonic and East European Studies, like his predecessor, Prince Dmitry Petrovich Svyatopolk-Mirsky (1890-1939), he taught Russian language and literature until his retirement and his eventual employment at the University of California, Berkeley

in 1947. Also, Struve was known for his works on Russian literary history written in English (*History of Soviet Russian Literature* (1935), *25 years of Soviet Russian Literature: 1918-1943* (1944) and *Russian Literature under Lenin and Stalin, 1917-1953* (1971)). Following his predecessor at King's College, Prince Dmitry Svyatopolk-Mirsky, a well-known literary critic and historian, the influence of Struve's English works went beyond Russian emigrant readers. George Orwell, one of Struve's non-Russian readers, found Zamyatin's anti-utopian novel *We in the History of Soviet Russian Literature* and got the idea for his anti-utopian novel 1984.

The third part covers the period from 1947 to 1985, focusing on his emigrant publishing including the Chekhov Publishing House. During World War II Struve lost his parents: his father died in 1944 in Paris, following the death of his mother in 1943. In 1946, Struve accepted an offer from the University of California at Berkeley as a visiting professor. In 1947 he accepted the position of professor at the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures at the University of California at Berkeley, and spent almost the rest of his life in the United States. In this period Struve's main contribution in the study of Russian literary history could be defined in his publications of the works of the depressed poets in the Soviet period and his studies and writings on "Russian literature in exile." In collaboration with publisher and literary critic, Boris Filippov (1905-1991), Struve published the works of writers banned in the USSR: Nikolai Gumilyov, Osip Mandelshtam, Marina Tsvetaeva, Boris Pasternak, Anna Akhmatova, Nikolai Zabolotsky and Iosif Brodsky. In 1959, German poet, Paul Celan found Mandelshtam in the first collection of Mandelshtam published by Struve and Filippov and began to translate his poems into German and introduced him into German literature.

His *Russian literature in Exile* (1956) still remains one of the most comprehensive works on Russian emigrant literature. He considered this book to be an "inventory" of the knowledge on Russian emigrant literature. This book was connected with the end of the Chekhov Publishing House subsidized by the Ford Foundation, and despite its short-lived existence of only four years, it published many legendary books banned in the USSR: the first collections of Nikolai Gumilyov (1952), Osip Mandelshtam (1955), and the original Russian version of Zamyatin's novel *We* in 1952. Behind the publication of these works, we can detect Struve's effort to disseminate the legacy of twentieth century Russian literature to the world.

On the basis of these observations, Struve's effort to disseminate Russian literature

to non-Russian readers materialized in the works of Orwell and Celan. His life was seemingly divided into two phases: before and after the American period, reminding us of Nabokov, one of Struve's most eminent contemporary writers. But his continuous interest in recording his contemporaries could be a unifying thread between these two phases. His writings on Russian literary history covering emigrant literature remain unfinished and should be rewritten and renewed by the generations that follow, positioning Struve himself in the context of the history of contemporary Russian literature.