

**Title:** Wrecking on Dostoevsky Street: Erenburg's *The Second Day* and the Suicidal Intelligentsia

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Along with Boris Pil'niak's *The Volga Falls into The Caspian Sea*, Il'ia Erenburg's 1934 novel *The Second Day* is generally considered a coerced declaration of loyalty to the Stalinist regime. Though critics have argued that both novels contain "Aesopian" subtexts that challenge state mythology and undermine official optimism, I argue that Erenburg's novel is most interesting as a unique example of pre-Socialist Realist efforts to overcome Russian literature's nineteenth-century heritage. *The Second Day* self-consciously pits two genres against one another: the production novel and psychological realism. Akin to what Lydia Ginzburg has described as an "intervalic" text, Erenburg's novel dramatizes the battle between "anachronistic" psychologism and the "active" literature of Soviet modernity. In doing so, it follows a familiar schema. Burdened by indecision and irony, the "superfluous man" perishes in the wake of proletarian ascendancy. In various guises, novels like Erenburg's had been prominent in Soviet literature for over a decade, and, rather than giving way to the new genre it claimed to herald, the story of the introverted *intelligent's* downfall eventually came to comprise a genre of its own. It is my argument that *The Second Day* constitutes this genre's epitome. In my presentation, I will detail how Erenburg, more than any previous author, transforms the production novel into a thoroughly psychologized allegory of proletarian political and aesthetic victory over the "bourgeois intelligentsia." This will involve a description of the novel's generic context as well as an analysis of the work's many references to Dostoevsky. This approach, which favors formal questions over political ones, will show how diverse writers used similar strategies for demonstrating the morbidity of psychological prose in the post-Revolutionary years.