



Hope Against Hope: A Memoir

By Nadezhda Mandelstam, Max Hayward

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The story of the poet Osip Mandelstam, who suffered continuous persecution under Stalin, but whose wife constantly supported both him and his writings until he died in 1938. Since 1917 The Modern Library prides itself as The Modern Library of the World's Best Books. Featuring introductions by leading writers, stunning translations, scholarly endnotes and reading group guides. Production values emphasize superior quality and readability. Competitive prices, coupled with exciting cover design make these an ideal gift to be cherished by the avid reader. Of the eighty-one years of her life, Nadezhda Mandelstam spent nineteen as the wife of Russia's greatest poet in this century, Osip Mandelstam, and forty-two as his widow. The rest was childhood and youth." So writes Joseph Brodsky in his appreciation of Nadezhda Mandelstam that is reprinted here as an Introduction. Hope Against Hope was first published in English in 1970. It is Nadezhda Mandelstam's memoir of her life with Osip, who was first arrested in 1934 and died in Stalin's Great Purge of 1937-38. Hope Against Hope is a vital eyewitness account of Stalin's Soviet Union and one of the greatest testaments to the value of literature and imaginative freedom ever written. But it is also a profound inspiration--a love story that relates the daily struggle to keep both love and art alive in the most desperate circumstances.

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Hope Against Hope: A Memoir By Nadezhda Mandelstam, Max Hayward Bibliography

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Nadezhda means "hope" in Russian. And Nadezhda Mandelstam, wife of Osip Mandelstam, one of the greatest Russian poets of the 20th century, is aptly named, for it is hope alone that seems to have buoyed her strength during very trying times. In this, the first of two volumes of her memoirs, she offers a harrowing account of the last four years she spent with her late husband. She re-creates in terse, stripped-to-the-bone sentences the atmosphere of intense paranoia that enveloped Russia's literary intelligentsia. In 1933, Osip had written a lighthearted satire ridiculing Stalin. It proved to be a 16-line death sentence. Nadezhda recalls the night the secret police came for him: "There was a sharp, unbearably explicit knock on the door. 'They've come for Osip,' I said." He was arrested, interrogated, exiled, and eventually rearrested. Nadezhda chronicles each turn of event, describing her feelings of heartbreak and joy with self-effacing discipline. Not only does Mandelstam write with the vitality and insight of the classic Russian novelists, she is far too selfless to write an account of her own travails. Instead, she acts as witness to a society's. Similarly, although Osip's mind became unbalanced by his ordeal in prison, his spirit remained unbroken; it is this liberating, imaginative force that Nadezhda celebrates in *Hope Against Hope*. --Lilian Pizzichini, Amazon.co.uk

Review

" Nothing one can say will either communicate or affect the genius of this book. To pass judgment on it is almost insolence--even judgment that is merely celebration and homage."

--George Steiner, The New Yorker

" Surely the most luminous account we have--or are likely to get--of life in the Soviet Union during the purges of the 1930's."

--Olga Carlisle, The New York Times Book Review

" No work on Russia which I have recently read has given me so sensitive and searing an insight into the hellhouse which Russia became under Stalin as this dedicated and brilliant work on the poet Mandelstam by his devoted wife."

--Harrison E. Salisbury

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Nadezhda Mandelstam was born in Saratov in 1899. She met Osip Mandelstam in 1919. She is also the author of *Hope Abandoned* (1974). She died in 1980. Nadezhda means "hope" in Russian.

Language Notes

Text: English (translation)

Original Language: Russian

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