



# Angels on the Head of a Pin

YURI DRUZHNIKOV

FICTION

190,000 WORDS

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**'I congratulate Yuri Druzhnikov on an excellent and very important book. This is the way, gradually, that at least most Soviet lies will be revealed, if not all of them.'**  
– **Alexandr Solzhenitsyn**

Set in a fictitious national newspaper in Moscow in the late 1960s, at a time when Khrushchev-era liberalization is being threatened by the return to personality cult and repression, this satirical novel sold more than 200,000 copies on its official publication.

The editor-in-chief of the newspaper collapses with a heart attack outside the Central Committee building. This has been precipitated by the appearance of a 'samizdat' (secret) manuscript on his desk that leads to his anguishing over who left it and what to do with it to avoid falling victim to the malevolence its content is likely to unleash. The solution lies with Yakov Rappoport, an ageing and cynical Jewish veteran of the war and two spells in the Gulag, the author of not only the obnoxious popular campaigns sponsored by the newspaper (and all its letters to the editor) but of every single speech that gets made in public by the principals of the regime as well. His efforts to help his stricken editor, as well as the novel's star-crossed lovers, lead to a hallucinatory climax.

**'This stunning work of genius . . . as scathingly funny as it is unrelentingly deadly'**  
– **Review of Contemporary Fiction**

**'Combines the scope of Solzhenitsyn with the mordant humour of Bulgakov'** – **Observer**

**'Ambitious epic satire . . . Employing the newspaper in much the same way that Solzhenitsyn used a hospital as a metaphor in *Cancer Ward*, Druzhnikov captures the essence of Russian life before the collapse of Communism.'** – **Publishers Weekly**

**'Sparkles with the lunatic brilliance that characterizes the very best satirical writing'**  
– **Jewish Chronicle**

**'Combines a sense of humour with a fantastic ability to write between the lines'**  
– **Isaac Bashevis Singer**

YURI DRUZHNIKOV is the author of a number of works of fiction and non-fiction. Blacklisted in his homeland until the collapse of the Soviet Union, the first edition of this novel sold a quarter of a million copies and was deemed one of the ten best Russian novels of the century at the 1999 Warsaw Conference. In 2001 the author was put forward by Poland for the Nobel Prize for Literature. He emigrated to the USA in 1987 and now teaches at the University of California at Davis.

*For further information please contact Simon Smith at Peter Owen*