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## A Companion to Andrei Platonov's The Foundation Pit (Studies in Russian and Slavic Literatures, Cultures, and History)

*By Thomas Seifrid*



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Written at the height of Stalin's first "five-year plan" for the industrialization of Soviet Russia and the parallel campaign to collectivize Soviet agriculture, Andrei Platonov's *The Foundation Pit* registers a dissonant mixture of utopian longings and despair. Furthermore, it provides essential background to Platonov's parody of the mainstream Soviet "production" novel, which is widely recognized as one of the masterpieces of twentieth-century Russian prose. In addition to an overview of the work's key themes, it discusses their place within Platonov's oeuvre as a whole, his troubled relations with literary officialdom, the work's ideological and political background, and key critical responses since the work's first publication in the West in 1973.



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### **Editorial Review**

#### **Review**

The Foundation Pit by Russian Soviet writer Andrei Platonov (1890-1951) was a satirical novel following the travails of a group of workers digging out a foundation pit for a gigantic "House for all Proletariat" and is considered by some to have been a significant influence on other state-control dystopias such as George Orwell's 1984 and Aldous Huxley's Brave New World. This volume by Seifrid (Slavic Languages and Literatures, University of Southern California) is a companion work for students studying The Foundation Pit. It offers overviews of Platonov's life and his intellectual influences; chapters describing the literary and political contexts of the work; and an exegesis of the novel that includes discussion of principal characters, important symbols, and the language employed, as well as selected annotations of events and situations in the novel ((Annotation 2009 Book News, Inc. Portland, OR))

#### **About the Author**

Thomas Seifrid (Ph.D. Cornell University, 1984) is Professor of Slavic Studies, University of Southern California. Author of Andrei Platonov. Uncertainties of Spirit (Cambridge University Press, 1992), The Word Made Self: Russian Writings on Language, 1860-1930 (Cornell University Press, 2005), and numerous articles on Russian literature and culture.

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