



by Werner Bräunig
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Fiction

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Common People

Gewöhnliche Leute

review

When Aufbau-Verlag published Werner Bräunig's novel *Rummelplatz* in 2007 (See NBG – Autumn 2007) it was received, by critics and readers alike, as one of *the* literary sensations of the past few decades. Written in the early 1960s, it had been banned from publication by the authorities in the GDR, where Bräunig lived, and where he died in 1976 at the early age of forty-two, having never lived to see it in print. He was not a prolific writer, but in 1969 the GDR permitted publication of a collection of short stories under the title of *Gewöhnliche Leute*, to which several more have now been added in this new edition, like its predecessor impeccably edited by Angela Drescher.

In comparison with *Rummelplatz*, this a restrained book. In the society it depicts there is no sense of community, no joy of collective labour and achievement. 'Is it that we all want something, but what comes out is something none of us wanted?' Bräunig asks. At the very least these stories are a varied, intelligent, atmospheric and highly readable panorama of life in the first two decades of the GDR. But, more than that, they fulfill Bräunig's stated aim, to write about 'the extraordinary in everyday lives'.

Both *Rummelplatz* and these stories are deserving of a new lease of life on our shores.

press quotes

'Imperceptibly Bräunig turns a snapshot into a character sketch, a character sketch into a milieu sketch and a milieu sketch into a critique of society.' – *Die Zeit*

about the author

Werner Bräunig born in Chemnitz in 1934, was regarded as the great hope of GDR literature – until an extract from his novel and masterpiece *Rummelplatz* ('Fairground') met with a ferocious opposition that sealed its fate. He died in Halle in 1976.

rights information

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