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Autore	Thomson Boris
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Sommario/riassunto	Although the Russian novelist and playwright Leonid Leonov had published extensively before 1917 he considered that his literary career began only in 1922 with the short story <i>Buryga</i> . His talent developed rapidly in the comparatively free cultural climate of the first decade of the Revolution and by 1927 his characteristic style and themes were

already formed. It was in this year, however, that the Communist Party began to impose its demands on the artists and intellectuals. Leonov's beliefs and values were incompatible with the Soviet version of Marxism but he tried to affirm them indirectly in his work through structure, imagery and allusion, while outwardly conforming to official demands. This manoeuvring inevitably led him into some questionable compromises which in turn damaged his reputation, both at home and abroad. Leonov himself was painfully conscious of the moral dilemmas involved and his later works return again and again to the question: is it possible to compromise without being compromised? There are fourteen chapters in the volume, each devoted to one or more of Leonov's works, setting the successive stages of his evolution against a background of changing cultural and political policies.

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