

NEW DICTIONARIES, LEXICONS AND REFERENCES AVAILABLE FROM POLISH PUBLISHERS

Urszula Klingenberg

Until recently, few specialized dictionaries were available to Polish translators. Their main reference resource was—depending on personal choice—either a set of Stanislawski’s “The Great Dictionary* (1)**,” or, “The Kościuszko Foundation Dictionary,” (2) augmented by “The Dictionary of Science and Technology.” Specialized dictionaries published in Poland between 1950-1990 were few and rather general in scope, the printings small and soon out of print. These works reflected the growing pains in many fields of science, which were striving to keep up linguistically with their Western counterparts, while laboring under policies that actively discouraged or at least thwarted international contacts. Previous generations of translators—usually professionals in their fields—used ingenuity and extensive comparative study, compiled their own glossaries, and resorted to third language lexicons to find equivalents for many terms. Much of currently used terminology probably originated with such inspired coinages by translators striving—at short notice—for adequate renderings. The most prolific among such pioneers would soon become lexicographers in their own right.

Fortunately, with the fall of the Iron Curtain a real dictionary boom got under way. Although the two mainstays are still unrivaled in terms of scope (Stanislawski’s dictionary (1) now contains well over 200,000 entries in its 17th edition), their monopolist position has been challenged by “Practical...,” “Popular...,” “Universal...,” “Compact ...”...etc. dictionaries that are still coming out in force and continue to find buyers. Being sure sellers, dictionaries are often the first issues of startup publishing houses, and some publishers are established for the sole purpose of dictionary publishing. Right after the Cold War ended, absolutely everything was snatched up like hot cakes, but now the situation on the market has reached a dynamic equilibrium, with supply keeping pace with demand. All this, of course, has driven up quality but unfortunately price as well. Dictionary buyers have become more discriminating, looking for precisely what meets their needs.

A list of newly available dictionaries opens with updated editions of old standbys: the English-Polish “Dictionary of Science and Technology,” (3) its 13th edition fresh off the press, has added 20,000 entries for a total of 135,000. The streamlined

latest version of “The Medical Dictionary” (4) does away with some terminology from auxiliary fields and older terms of Latin and Greek derivation. Interestingly, its authors append a disclaimer to the effect that they have omitted a number of English terms that do not yet have equivalents in Polish medical literature. A similar stipulation is echoed in most dictionaries discussed here. They are considered by their authors to be works in progress, open to emendation as dictated by linguistic realities of the day. Just as frequently, dictionary readers are invited to send in comments and suggestions for new editions.

The following fields have recently gotten new or updated dictionaries and lexicons: sanitary engineering (5), the textile industry (6), transportation (7), sailing and maritime technology (8), fishery (9), hydrology (10), agricultural technology (11), printing (12), animal husbandry (13), alternative medicine (14), chemistry (15), mathematics (16), the automotive industry (17), and cinematography (18).

Translators can now avail themselves of the Duden pictorial dictionary (19), which contains 384 illustrations of objects depicted in intricate detail with names in Polish and English (28,000 entries each) for every part. This and similar publications—some in several languages and with color pictures (19a)—facilitate the translator’s search for specialized—and obscure—terms ranging from machine parts to architectural details.

A much-needed “Dictionary of Environmental Protection and Nature Conservation,” (20) comprises 42,000 entries and a Latin-Polish-English index of names of 4,600 species of plants

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* Unless otherwise indicated, titles of dictionaries include the “English-Polish/Polish-English” qualifier, which has been left out of the text for reasons of economy.

** The numbered references correspond to specific dictionaries listed at the end of this article.

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**TECHNOLOGY MATTERS:
FROM THE ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR**

Alex Lane

To gloss, or not to gloss, and if so... how?

From time to time, someone proposes that we post glossaries on the SLD web site. Aside from the utility of having such a resource, there are a number of other questions that must be addressed. These include copyright issues, as well as the extent to which a term should be defined. Does one include notations as to part of speech, gender, etymology, usage examples, etc.? To my mind, however, the two most important questions here are: whether glossaries are something with which the Division wants to get involved; and second, if the answer is affirmative, what "model" must be selected to assure the quality of the glossaries included.

By "model," I mean the way that responsibility for glossary quality is set up. There are at least two such models, which occupy diametrically opposite positions in this regard. One model consists of having an Authorized Committee to bless collections of terminology that have been accumulated and duly approved in some official way. The other model allows almost anyone to contribute terminology, but also encourages others to comment on the quality of such contributions.

I do not support the first approach, although it is easier to implement from a technical standpoint. However, from a practical perspective, I think it would be hard to enlist the appropriate Authority, and harder still to keep a concurrence process on track. If nothing else, any body of terminology deemed "good" by some will be condemned as "incompetent" by others, which would tend to lead to the kind of divisiveness we as a Division don't need.

The second approach would promote, in my opinion, a healthy marketplace of ideas, and ultimately, readers would most likely find individual(s) participating actively in the evaluation process whose judgment typically coincided with their own. The fact that, say, *my* set of individuals differs from the set *someone else* might identify allows everyone to coexist. Nobody's contribution would be excluded, and all would have an opportunity to comment on content.

At least in theory. Some kind of limitations might be necessary to prevent a string of comments from degenerating into endless bickering, stating and restating respective positions of the combatants *ad nauseam*. Undoubtedly, there would be other issues that would have to be considered (could terms be removed? by whom? under what circumstances?), but I'm getting ahead of myself. Comments and questions from interested SLD members on both issues ("Should we do this?" and "How should we do this?") are welcome.

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ADVERTISING RATES AND SPECIFICATIONS

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A marketing no-no

Also from time to time, I run across members of our profession whose idea of a catchy marketing campaign is to cobble together a collection of “funny” mistranslations and pitch them at prospective customers. (You’ve probably seen a million of these items, along the lines of why sales of Chevy’s “Nova” automobile supposedly tanked when marketed in Spanish-speaking countries, because the name means “it doesn’t go” in Spanish.)

Such “marketing” is bad for us all, as translators. Have you ever noticed that other professionals, such as doctors and lawyers, never try to convince you how good they are by pointing out what a bunch of boobs their colleagues are? That’s exactly what goes on when you expose potential clients to mistranslations, humorous or otherwise.

Moreover, it doesn’t do any good to try to point out that nearly all of those bad translations were, indeed, done by incompetent amateurs. As far as a potential client is concerned, if the folks who build Chevy Novas can’t tell a professional from a poseur, then (probably) all translators are equally bad, right? Thus, the client may end up thinking, “I may as well hire Vovka, the clerk in the basement mail room, to do the job; at least he’ll work cheap.”

Russians flock to LiveJournal

LiveJournal (www.livejournal.com) offers participants an opportunity to keep a journal on-line, to publish all or parts of it for public consumption, and to read and comment on the postings of others. To date, the vast majority of LiveJournal participants are based, as you might expect, in the United States. Earlier this year, however, a growing number of “netizens” from Russia have been signing up with the service (which is free if you don’t mind looking at banner advertising). As someone whose Russian is a second language, I find it very instructive — particularly from the perspective of slang and jargon — to read the postings of Russian LiveJournal participants. If this sounds interesting, check out www.livejournal.com/users/foma/friends, which displays the postings of several hundred Russian LJers.

Readers are invited to submit their own favorite professionally relevant websites to this column.

“The Time is Out of Joint?”

To the editors:

As a bicultural survivor of several decades of Russian dinner parties, I was most interested and amused by Ludmila Annable’s piece, “How to Survive as an American Guest at a Russian Dinner Party” (*Slavfile* Spring 2001, Vol. 11, No 2, pp. 8-9). The assertion, however, that “it is very important to arrive on time or even five or ten minutes early” differs considerably from my own experience, that of my American and Russian acquaintances, and that of the over 100 Russian-American couples whom I interviewed for my book on Russian-American marriages (*Wedded Strangers: The Challenges of Russian-American Marriages*: expanded edition, New York: Hippocrene Books, 2001).

While it is true that Russians do not generally sit down at the table until all the guests have arrived, and that predinner cocktails are not a part of the Russian tradition, chronic Russian lateness has long been a source of both puzzlement and irritation for Americans dealing with Russia. Russian lack of punctuality and an elastic concept of time were reasons for cross-cultural conflicts cited by almost all of the mixed couples I interviewed. “Russia still seems to operate in an atmosphere relatively emancipated from the clock,” wrote a British observer.¹ In more than thirty years of traveling to Russia, I have *never* seen a Russian dinner party at which all the guests had arrived by fifteen minutes after the appointed time. One American woman married to a Russian who had lived in Moscow for years wrote that “Russians look upon appointments as guidelines rather than anchor chains. Applied to dinner engagements, this is exasperating for the hostess, as I have experienced more than once.”²

Since by no means all Russian hostesses are ready to sit down as the first guest rings the bell, they do not expect — or appreciate — early arrivals. A Russian friend once commented that the only reason she would ever come early to a dinner party was to help the hostess wash and dice vegetables for the multitude of *salaty* which grace Russian tables. Another commented that she knew the hostess needed time to change and put on her makeup before the guests arrived, and that arriving early was as ungracious as excessive lateness.

In America, on the other hand, where punctuality in both business and social life is *de rigueur*, lateness — unless the guest has a valid excuse — is viewed as tantamount to rudeness. And all too many American spouses of Russians have had to persuade their mates that when guests are invited for 7:00 p.m. to a dinner party in the US, the bell is going to ring at precisely that hour, and that therefore 6:58 is not the ideal time to start showering and dressing.

The reasons for the fundamental differences in Russian and American attitudes towards time are complex, and “take time” to analyze in depth. Obviously, no one would advocate deliberately arriving late to a dinner party, either an American or a Russian one. But a guest arriving early at a Russian dinner party should hardly expect much company, aside from that of the harried hostess and perhaps a few of her close friends bustling about in the kitchen, carrying plates out to the table, and engaging in a flurry of hair-combing and lip-stick-freshening.

Lynn Visson

¹Ronald Hingley, *The Russian Mind* (New York: Charles Scribners’ Sons, 1977), p. 43.

²Margaret Wettlin, *Fifty Russian Winters: An American Woman’s Life in the Soviet Union* (New York: Pharos Books, 1992), p. 264.

SLAVFILE LITE: NOT BY WORD COUNT ALONE

Lydia Razran Stone

Early this spring, I found myself unable to understand the gist of a translation I was working on until a colleague kindly explained that Bishkek was simply the current name of the city formerly known as “Frunze.” The next day, literally minutes after I had checked a website to find the official spelling of “Kyrgyzstan,” I picked up the *Washington Post*, turned to Dave Barry’s humor column, and read the following.

“Unfortunately, most Americans know little about Kyrgyzstan. Most Americans can’t even *spell* “Kyrgyzstan,” although it’s easy if you remember this simple rhyme:

First, there a “K”
Then a “Y” comes your way
Which is followed by “R”
Then the hell with it...

“The capital of Kyrgyzstan is Bishkek, which used to be named “Frunze.” (Before that, it was “Pishpek.”) According to one Internet travel guide, Bishkek is — prepare to be strongly attracted as a tourist — “the only town in the world named after a wooden plunger.”

The Washington Post Magazine, March 26, 2001.

What is the moral of this coincidence (aside from the fact that such synchronicity occurs much more frequently in real life than we would ever allow it to occur in fiction)? In my view it is that what to the rest of the world are pedantic, exotic details, obscure to the point of hilarity, are the translator’s daily bread. Lest anyone feel that we have been insensitive in publishing a gratuitous mockery of a venerable nation, I would point out that the official Kyrgyzstan website now prominently features a link to this column of Barry’s. I suppose that when you are trying to attract customers, any publicity is good publicity. (This being the case, I wonder why the *Post* has never yet acknowledged the free publicity we repeatedly provide for it in this column.)

Having read the feature on cross-cultural dining differences by Ludmila Annable in the previous issue and Laura Wolfson’s perspective on a similar topic in this issue, I cannot resist adding a paragraph on my own experiences. A long time ago, possibly at my mother’s knee, I learned that if you were dropping in on

someone or inviting yourself to a house for some reason, the only polite time to arrive was when your hosts were least likely to be eating a meal, since otherwise they would feel compelled to invite you to partake, or, if provisions were not ample, would postpone their own repast. This rule of thumb works well with Americans but does not work with Russians at all, especially not with my cousin Nella from St. Petersburg. No matter what time we arrive, we are presented with a groaning board, even when we are just stopping at her house to pick her and her family up and continue on to have dinner with my mother in the adjacent borough. After several uncomfortable visits during which we were faced with a choice of being impolite by refusing food (not to mention forcing ourselves to resist tempting treats) or eating a large meal soon before another, we decided that the only good time to go to Nella’s house is at meal time. Since there is nothing we can say to convince her that we neither want nor need to be fed, we might as well visit at a time when she is preparing a meal anyway. This kind of situation, where a rule works one way with one group of people and the opposite way with another, is referred to among experimental psychologists as a “crossover interaction.” It is the most interesting result an experimenter can get, and even though I have not worked as a research psychologist for decades, I still experience great delight when I come across such interactions in real life. Perhaps we could coin the term “cross cultural-cross overs” for such phenomena. As always, readers are encouraged to contribute additional examples.

We at the *SlavFile* consider it our duty to provide practical advice to SLD members regarding all potential professional dilemmas, no matter how unusual. Here is one we have never seen described in print. What if you were to wake up one morning having forgotten whether you are an interpreter or a translator; how could you figure it out before getting out of bed and facing the world? Here in handy tabular form are some simple guidelines that can be used to solve this problem. Our thanks to our interpreter friends, whose way of life, quite different from ours, inspired these musings.

A DIVISION BY ANY OTHER NAME

Replies to call for suggested Russian translations of ATA, SLD

Dear Galina,

Responding to your discussion in *SlavFile* of possible Russian translations of ATA and SLD, I support your choice of option (1) for ATA and opt for (B) for SLD — «секция славянских языков».

Kindest regards,
Elena Kolesnikova
ATA, ID and SLD member

I believe that ATA originally reflected the American nature of our membership, but now, because of our expanded membership, it should reflect the American nature of our organization, i.e., its origin and headquarters location. Therefore, I feel that Американская ассоциация переводчиков best reflects our organization.

The SLD has two common forms in English, the long “Slavic Languages Division” and the short “Slavic Division.” Either form, or both, would seem acceptable in Russian: Отделение славянских языков and Славянское отделение.

There’s my two cents’ worth.
Ed Wright

HOW TO TELL IF YOU ARE AN INTERPRETER OR A TRANSLATOR

You are an interpreter if...	You are a translator if...
You can rise at 6:30 a.m. many days in a row	You are miserable unless you can get up 11 a.m. and go to bed at 3:00 a.m.
Your working wardrobe consists of suits, which you keep wrapped in plastic to avoid wrinkles and expedite packing	Your working wardrobe consists of jeans (shorts) and sweatshirts (t-shirts), which you store conveniently on the floor of your closet
You are prone to sore throats and foot problems	You are prone to carpal tunnel syndrome and backache
You talk all day; in your leisure time you frequently just want to be quiet	You are alone with a computer all day; when you are with other people you tend to jabber
Your bathrobe has been to hotels all over the globe and in half the cities in the U.S.	Your bathrobe is what you are apt to be wearing at 2 in the afternoon
You are sick of hotel and restaurant meals and are dying for home cooked food	You are sick of looking at four walls all day and are dying to go out to dinner
You know many words in your second language that you have never seen written down	You know many words in your second language that you do not know how to pronounce
You have met most of the professional colleagues you know on interpreting assignments (or at ATA conferences)	You have met most of the professional colleagues you know through e-mail or Internet chat rooms (or at ATA conferences)
You are always traveling and long to be at home more so you can spend quality time with your family	At home you are always working or thinking about work, so the best way to spend quality time with your family is to travel together
You struggle not to gain weight from constant exposure to banquet and catered meals and your work leaves you little time for exercise	You struggle not to gain weight from spending all day sitting on your duff and the constant availability of your refrigerator and your work leaves you little time for exercise
You stay up half the night stewing about the way you interpreted a term	You stay up half the night stewing about how you'll translate a term the next day
Your favorite dictionaries are battered from rough treatment by baggage handlers	Your favorite dictionaries are battered from the rough treatment they get on your desk when you are in a "term search frenzy"
It drives you nuts to have the work you do referred to as translation	It drives you nuts to be asked if you ever did "simultaneous translation" for a celebrity
You are chronically tired and short of money and you suspect that the world underrates how hard you work and how much you contribute	You are chronically tired and short of money, and you suspect that the world underrates how hard you work and how much you contribute
The <i>SlavFile</i> is your favorite reading matter	The <i>SlavFile</i> is your favorite reading matter

HISTORIC POLISH PRESENTATION AT NEXT CONFERENCE

Urszula Klingenberg, whose article on Polish dictionaries is on page 1 of the current issues of *SlavFile*, will be giving a presentation at our next conference in Los Angeles. Entitled "New Terminology in Polish," it is, to the best of our knowledge, the first ATA presentation ever devoted to Polish. We urge all interested SLD members and other Slavophiles to attend.

INTERNATIONAL TRANSLATORS CONFERENCE IN CZECH REPUBLIC

Dear Colleague:

There is still time to send your abstract for the International Translators Conference taking place in Slavonice, Czech Republic, September 20-23, 2001. Or just come and meet your colleagues and clients in this beautiful forgotten part of the world. Did you ever think "I wish I came to this place before the tourist hordes arrived"? This is your chance. This Sleeping Beauty of a wonderfully preserved Renaissance town (we just dug up a 16th Century carved lintel in our garden last week) will be on the UNESCO World Heritage list as of next year. Come and kiss her before then. Look it all up at www.scholaludus.cz and tell your friends.

Looking forward to welcoming you here,

Zuzana Kulhankova

The Slovist

Raphy Alden

Hi All:

I have added some subheadings to my column, which, I hope, will help clarify how the material was selected and why it is grouped as it is. The following section (“Not good enough”) includes some words, phrases and idioms (in **bold**), which were fun to translate or to interpret, but which I did not render to my own satisfaction. Your suggestions are appreciated.

Not good enough

1. Чем занимается ваш сын?
Да ничем, дурака валяет.
What's your son doing? Nothing much — just fooling around.
This was the best I could do for **дурака валяет**.
2. Когда в очередной раз начальник стал на меня орать, я решил **не оставлять в долгу и ответил ему той же монетой**. I interpreted this sentence as follows: *The next time my boss started screaming at me, I decided to reply in kind (to give him a taste of his own medicine).*
3. I am going to show you these [bad] reviews of your report to you only if you **take it with a grain of salt**. My translation: *Я покажу тебе отзывы на твой отчет только при условии что ты отнесешься к ним скептически*. I could not think of any other translation for **take it with a grain of salt**.
4. He could have shot N, returned to work, and no one **would have been the wiser**. И никто бы не догадался, не сообразил, не додумался, не узнал.
5. He is involved in this **up to the hilt**. Более чем кто-либо.

How do you translate...

Readers, can you suggest good translations for the following?

1. Clear and present danger

2. The word **privacy** cannot be rendered exactly in Russian, hence translation of this word depends on the situation and the circumstances. Here are some examples:

Chief Accountant: I need to discuss some issues with my Russian counterpart, and we need/would like some **privacy**.

Interpreter: Мы хотели бы **остаться наедине**.

Another example: *He doesn't mind working in a cubicle because he doesn't much care about **privacy**.*

Suggestions?

Surprise, Surprise

I had been wondering how to translate *жить на чемоданах*, and recently I came across this sentence: *She was moving every day like a gypsy, living out of a suitcase*. There you go!

Your suggestions

This section consists of suggestions sent in by readers.

Asya Sokirko writes:

technically challenged (Winter 2001)

There is a nice Russian expression *страдать топологическим кретинизмом*, which means that you are bad with directions and frequently get lost.. We could attempt a parallel expression, such as **страдать техническим кретинизмом**, or the more euphonious **страдать компьютерным кретинизмом**. The second choice would result in **мой страдающий компьютерным кретинизмом начальник**.

Mark Colucci writes:

(From *SlavFile*, Fall 2000)

— Ну, вы закончили уборку?

— Почти.

The question was whether **just about** sounded better than **almost** as a translation for **почти**. I would say that in this case, **just about** and **almost** are synonymous and that both sound fine as translations here. Even though **just about** is more colloquial than **almost**, **almost** is probably used in conversational English as often as **just about**.

— Дедушка, ну почему люди так поступают?

— Обычная человеческая вредность.

[In the Winter 2001 issue] **plain old-fashioned orneriness** is proposed as a translation of **обычная человеческая вредность**, and it is suggested that including **just** softens the translation unduly. Although I agree that **plain old-fashioned orneriness** is a good translation, the first expression that came to mind when I read the Russian version was: **It's just human nature**. Another possible translation, even freer, and perhaps even closer to the meaning of the original is: **That's just the way people are**. Calling the meanness **человеческая** implies that it is an intrinsic human quality, which would make it part of human nature. Also, I would interpret **обычная** as signifying that the meanness is common—nothing special or unusual, an idea that the word “just” conveys.

(From *SlavFile*, Winter 2001):

—The question was about the meaning of **workmanlike**.

Workmanlike implies being competent, responsible, and professional and getting work done on time or without any unnecessary delays, but implies that inspiration or some intangible extra is lacking. (I too would be interested in knowing a good Russian translation of the word!)

—**поломали все что можно**

Broke everything they could was the translation, which an editor changed to *broke everything that was breakable*. The original translation was definitely better. Literally, *поломали все что можно* (that is, *поломали все, что можно было ломать*) means “they broke everything that it was possible to break,” which is somewhat ambiguous in English. But clearly, the meaning is that they broke everything they had the opportunity to break, or *they broke everything they could*. To say *they broke everything that was breakable* not only sounds strange, but could be read as *meaning they broke everything that was fragile*, which certainly does not appear to be the intent of the original.

Alla Toff writes regarding the column in Spring 2001:

- *Понимаете ли* - is either *you see* or *you know*.
- *His way of life sucks* – perhaps: *Он отвратно живёт*; or *Он ведёт поганый (или отвратный) образ жизни*.

- *Ну и пузо у тебя!*
Что есть, то есть.

This statement simply means: *That’s right, man!*

- *Shit happens*
Жизнь - дерьмо, как ни крути.

Irina Knizhnik writes (Winter 2001)

- *А ты бы лучше курить бросил.*
- *С вами бросишь!*
You should quit smoking.
I would if it weren’t for you.
- *Technically challenged - технически недостаточно подкованный; технически тупой, равнодушный к технике, технически ушербный.*

The problem is that none of the above can render the flavor of *technically challenged*, which parodies so-called politically correct phrases, because political correctness has not infected Russia so far.

- *Workmanlike - квалифицированно и (или) добросовестно.*
- *Consenting adults - совершеннолетние лица, изъявившие обоюдное согласие.* When there is a verb present, the *phrase совершеннолетние лица по обоюдному согласию* could be used, as well.

Igor Belyaev writes (Fall 2000):

Непыльная работа (or, more “colloquially”, *непыльная работёнка*) has little to do with cleanliness. Of course, it may be a clean job in an air conditioned office, but it may well be a dirty and, actually, even *dusty* (*пыльная*) job too. The main point here is that this is an *easy* job providing adequate income for *minimal* output of effort. So, probably, a *cushy job*, the translation given in the Yu. Apresyan’s New E-R Dictionary would fit better.

Alex Svirsky writes (Spring 2001):

- *Заспанец* is *loser*. However, the Russian is pretty vulgar. You have to be careful whom you say this to.
- *Что есть, то есть*. Well, what are you gonna do?
- *Shit happens*. **И не такое бывает.**

Liv Bliss writes (Winter 2001):

Недоделанный: we have a lovely adjective in UK English—*half-baked*. But if you’re looking for a noun (as your suggestion of *jerk* seems to imply)... nothing I can think of really seems to convey *half-bakedness* to perfection, though *chowderhead* and *numbskull* are fun.

Чистосердечное признание облегчит вашу участь: *Confession is good for the soul* came to mind initially, but that certainly doesn’t carry the foreboding implications of *облегчит вашу участь*. Still, *making a clean breast of it* works nicely for *чистосердечное признание*.

А (какой) смысл? I thought of: *Why bother?* Although the doctor’s response is clearly not on the level of: *Now, why would you want to do a thing like that* banter, I didn’t perceive hostility in it; to me it sounded just world-weary. And isn’t it more satisfying to match the rhythms and cadences of the source Russian as closely as possible? (Or are you feeling too world-weary to care at this point?)

Lydia Stone writes (Winter 2001):

What I like best for *недоделанный* is any in the series of *one short* expressions: *one slice short of a sandwich, one neuron short of a synapse, missing a couple of screws somewhere, elevator doesn’t go up to the top floor* etc.

Bill Keasbey writes (Summer 2000):

- *Вскоре все благополучно забыли про скандал*. I would say, *Soon everyone blithely forgot about the scandal*.
- *Банк держал глухую оборону*. I would say, *The bank stonewalled*.

Masha Entchevitch writes (Summer 2000):

- *Недоделанный* – *he is some piece of work*.
- ... *благополучно забыли про скандал*. – *In a week the scandal was safely forgotten*.
- *He is a real brainiac* – *Он жутко башковитый*.

Thank you all very much for your suggestions and comments
Sincerely,

В.А

SLD’s Slovist Raphy Alden can be reached at raffialden@aol.com. His e-mail does not handle Cyrillic, so please send any message containing Cyrillic terms as an e-mail attachment.

Bicultural Care and Feeding: Part II

Laura Esther Wolfson

Editors' Note: This article may be considered a kind of follow-up to Ludmila Annable's article on cross-cultural dinner parties in the last issue of SlavFile; hence the Part II designation.

Once upon a time, or so my sister tells me (she met the protagonist of this paragraph when they were both students) a German family emigrated to Australia. The youngest child was a boy of four. He grew up in Australia, and when he attained maturity, he made a pilgrimage to the land of his birth. Though his active vocabulary in German was stalled at approximately a four-year-old level, his speech was accentless. He got around the country without mishap, except when in bars and other nocturnal gathering-places. There he would approach German women, and after an initial spark of interest, they would sidle away from him down the bar. The reason? Because his speech was so pure, the objects of his attentions thought he was German. They didn't believe him when he said he was from Australia. To them his childish vocabulary appeared rather to indicate arrested intellectual development. The general picture was not that of a man with whom most women would want to pass an evening.

The above anecdote is related to my own experiences only tangentially. The only language I will ever speak without an accent is my mother tongue, English. I have spoken it all my life without emigration or interruption and my vocabulary is age-appropriate, thank you very much. However, back when my Russian degree was still freshly-minted, and I was having my first lengthy immersions in that language, a similar mismatch between the fairly literate sound of my spoken Russian and my blithe lack of comprehension where cultural differences between Russians and Americans were concerned led, if not to an undeserved reputation for mental retardation, then certainly to some ridiculous slipups and misunderstandings. For, regrettably, matters of cultural difference are rarely discussed in the language classroom, even though culture, I believe, is simply a larger unit of language, perched atop words, phrases and sentences. And in the absence of classroom instruction, the quickest, if most painful, way to understand the norms of another culture is by transgressing them—unwittingly, one hopes.

I will attempt herein to recount some of my blunders, having mostly to do with food and hospitality. The lessons will, I think, be clear.

I. In Which the Non-Equivalence Between Russian “Обед” and English “Lunch” is Brought Forcefully to My Attention

A year or so out of college, I was taken on full-time by a company called Classical Artists International, which booked and organized US tours of such performing troupes as the Bolshoi and Kirov Ballets, the Moscow Virtuosi and the Georgian State Dancers, as well as solo classical musicians from the Russian-speaking world. I was the only Russian speaker in an office of hard-boiled theatrical impresario types. I was a sort of

Girl *Пятница*, forever being dispatched on a diverse array of errands. I took ballerinas to the dentist for root canals. I went to hardware stores in search of turquoise spray paint for dyeing pointe shoes. I combed pet shops to find a coat for a choreographer's poodle. I stood on the podium next to a wrathful Russian conductor as he rehearsed an orchestra of American musicians and conveyed his dissatisfaction with their playing: “Who ever told you that you are professional musicians? You are a nothing more than collection of amateurs!” I translated meekly, eyes downcast.

My officemates and bosses had not the faintest idea of Russian culture or gastronomic needs. And I was ill-equipped to advise them. This perhaps explains why, when my employers signed a contract to bring the Bolshoi Ballet over for a ten-week tour, they committed to provide a post-rehearsal lunch each day at the theater for the entire company (which, with dancers, stagehands, lighting technicians, wardrobe mistresses, conductors, administrators and massage therapists numbered well upwards of one hundred).

The *скандал* (which, as Nabokov reminds us somewhere in his sizeable oeuvre, should be rendered not as its apparent cognate 'scandal' but as something more along the lines of 'uproar' or the British 'row,' pronounced to rhyme with 'cow') broke on the troupe's first day at Lincoln Center. Weary and freshly-showered, the dancers came in to eat and found, not Russian *обед*, but American *lunch*. Not hot roast beef, potatoes, a green vegetable, soup, salad, tea and dessert, but shrink-wrapped sandwiches (choice of turkey, ham and roast beef with cheese), colorful foil bags of potato chips, also chocolate chip cookies and brownies, again in that ubiquitous shrink-wrap, and cans of Coke, Sprite and Seven-Up spangled with icy beads of moisture. (Truly an illustration that the much-vaunted American concept of choice can be most unsatisfying.)

The outcry was immediate, the indignation unadulterated. A phalanx of performers, a famous *danseur noble* at their head, announced their intention to contravene their contract and return home immediately without giving a single performance. The American lunch, they declared, was not only grossly inadequate to their enormous physical need for nourishment, it was an insult to the venerable traditions of Russian classical ballet.

An emergency meeting was called. The troupe administrators presented their demands. The impresario people, cowed and confused, listened and complied. Where had they gone wrong? they wondered. They had agreed to provide lunch, and they had done so. The next day, however, steam tables were duly brought in, a hot multi-course meal appeared, and preparations for *Swan Lake* and *Giselle* went forward. Unfortunately the tone of the entire tour had been irrevocably established. For the next ten weeks, the Bolshoi dancers and staff stalked about in a huff, anticipating further demeaning treatment at every turn.

“Why,” she said, as if speaking to a child, “they know that if they drop by without warning, I won’t feel embarrassed and ashamed that I haven’t spent two days grocery shopping and cooking for them, which I would have to do if they told me in advance that they were coming.”

IV. “I Love American Hospitality!”

Several years into my career now, and having learned the above lessons and more, I was making a mistake not uncommon among people who have dealings with another culture. I was assuming that their way was not only different, but superior. We Americans could never be as hospitable, as warm, as selfless as people from the former Soviet Union, I believed. Even when we tried, it was a put-on, a pale imitation. We were spoiled by our material wealth, our unbridled individualism. So I thought.

Then one day at a buffet lunch in honor of some collective farm workers, the head accountant of the farm exclaimed, as he struggled to balance a plastic plate on his lap with one hand, hold his drink with the other, and somehow wield his fork at the same time, “I just love your American hospitality!”

“Why?” I asked, watching him maneuver.

“It is so free!” he said. “No one sits you down at a long table and forces you to eat too much of things that make your stomach hurt. No one dominates the conversation and insists on making inane and sentimental toasts everyone has heard a thousand times before. Here, you go over to the table, serve yourself, leave what you don’t want, and go into a corner and talk to whomever you feel like for as long as you like. It’s wonderful!” He lifted his plastic cup high in a gesture of approbation, then caught his plate as it teetered and nearly flipped over.

V. Just When I Thought I Had Nothing More to Learn

Finally, as this article was going to press, the following happened. My charges, Russian entrepreneurs, expressed a desire to hear live jazz. I called a club and made inquiries. I was told that if we had more than eight people and they were intending to order food, we needed a reservation. However, if it was a matter of music and drinks only, no reservation was required. Ever cautious, I made a reservation.

Then I asked my group whether they would be eating. I think I used the word ‘кушать,’ [one of several verbs meaning ‘to eat’] the first time I asked. They said no. I called and cancelled the reservation.

On reflection, I found this answer odd. I asked again. Were they were planning to ‘ужинать’ [have dinner] at the club? Again they answered in unison, “*Nyet.*”

I pondered this at length. We would be at the club at precisely the dinner hour after a long day of meetings. Were they sure they were not going to eat? I asked again, this time employing the word ‘есть’. [the most common word for ‘to eat.’] They responded patiently in the negative.

Evening came. We went to the club. I made sure that they were seated, left them in the hands of other English-speakers at the table, and went to make a phone call. When I returned, all of them had soup or salad in front of them. They were busily eating. Apparently, because it was a weeknight and the place was almost empty, they had been allowed to order food although we had no reservation.

On the walk back to the hotel, I reflected on the fact that three times I had asked the group if they were going to eat, and three times they had clearly said no. And then they had ordered food and eaten. What part of *nyet* didn’t I understand?

I posed this question to one of the trip organizers who had been at the jazz club with us, a Russian employed at the US consulate in Yekaterinburg, someone with fluent English and no small experience communicating across cultures. She listened to my account, then paused a moment in thought. All at once she seemed to grasp the situation in its entirety. “Ah,” she said with a twinkle in her eye, “Это мы не ели, это мы просто перекусили. [“We weren’t eating, we were just having a bite!”]

I threw up my arms and rolled my eyes heavenward. When would I ever learn?!

Laura Esther Wolfson is a Russian-English interpreter/translator and the Associate Editor of *Slavfile*. Her most recent translation, [Stalin’s Secret Pogrom, the Postwar Inquisition of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee](#), edited and with an introduction by Joshua Rubenstein, was published this spring by Yale University Press.

REVIEWER SOUGHT FOR VISSON BOOK ON RUSSIAN-US MARRIAGES

We have available for review a copy of the Expanded (Second) Edition of Lynn Visson’s book *Wedded Strangers: The Challenges of Russian-American Marriages*, Hippocrene Books, Inc., \$14.95, 296 pages. The reviewer selected will get to keep the book and will have his/her review published in the Fall or Winter issue of the *SlavFile*. The most qualified in the first group of reviewers to respond will be the designated reviewer; in this case past or present participation in a Russian-American marriage will be considered a highly relevant qualification. We will entertain the possibility of having the book reviewed by two individuals with different perspectives, for example, a participant in a successful and in a failed bicultural marriage. If you are interested, contact Lydia Stone at lydiastone@compuserve.com.

**'PROROK' SEVENFOLD:
SOME RECENT AND NOT-SO-RECENT
TRANSLATIONS OF PUSHKIN'S 'THE PROPHET'**

Timothy D. Sergay

Пушкин! Тайную свободу

Пели мы вослед тебе!

— Александр Блок

One can scarcely imagine a verse translation, however “strict” and self-effacing, in which the translator has not claimed a *secret freedom*. Even the “jolting” variety of literalism that Nabokov prescribed in later life amounts to a highly disciplined exercise of discernment and selection—not a chastened automatism. Human, non-mechanistic translation always proceeds by a certain freedom with respect to linguistic means. Of the existence and indeed the necessity of this freedom, there is nothing, strictly speaking, all that secret. (Writing of Pushkin’s «тайная свобода» in his essay of 1921, «О назначении поэта», Blok allowed that what Pushkin meant by this phrase would in large measure have been expressed in Blok’s own day as «личная свобода».) Educated readers of poetry in translation must expect that such freedom has been exercised; the only question is how well it has served the objective of reconstituting the original, of recreating in new language what Henry Gifford called the “movement of each poem: its flight, or track through the mind.”¹ Where freedom is exercised by many on a single text, the result, of course, is variability of solution.

Pushkin’s bicentennial year of 1999 afforded many opportunities to reflect on the achievements of his translators. Milner and Company in Norfolk, England, published the ten-volume English-language *Complete Works of Alexander Pushkin*, with many new translations by various contributors selected by an authoritative tri-national board of Pushkinists. Here, for instance is Arina Henderson and Adrian Room’s translation of a couplet from an 1828 album verse to A.P. Kern: “Apple tart is hard to start / When we’re apart, my dearest heart” (Пастила нехороша / Без тебя, моя душа). In 1999 UNESCO conducted a contest for the best translations into various languages of Pushkin’s «Пророк» (1826), attracting about 70 entries, mostly in French and English. Three of the English entries, including the winner by Wayne Stuart McCallum of New Zealand, are presented below along with brief methodological comments from their authors—«людей, о коих не сужу, затем, что к ним принадлежу». These translations are followed by published versions: the one by John Coutts selected for the Milner *Complete Works* and older ones by Irina Zheleznova and Maurice Baring. Six translators: six instances of «Мой Пушкин». I present them here in the interests of discussion and enjoyment of the variety that results from the continuing encounter between Pushkin and his translators, each singing an entirely personal, intimate freedom in the master’s wake. “It is possible,” wrote Vladimir Veidle, “that nothing leads us closer to contemplation of the essence of literature than working at the translation of poetry, or at least thoughtfully appraising such work.”²

¹Henry Gifford, introduction to *Versions from Fyodor Tyutchev 1803-1873*, by Charles Tomlinson (Oxford University Press, 1960); quoted in Marina Tarlinskaja, “Lermontov-Liberman: A Study of Equivalence in Translation,” *International Journal of Slavic Linguistics and Poetics*, 1986, Vol. XXXIV, p. 156.

²Vladimir Veidle, *O poetakh i poezii* (Paris: YMCA-Press, 1973), p. 147, quoted and translated by F. Jude, *The Complete Poems of Tyutchev In An English Translation*, at <http://www.kulichki.com/moshkow/LITRA/TUTCHEW/english.txt>.

ПРОРОК

Духовной жаждою томим,
В пустыне мрачной я влячился, —
И шестикрылый серафим
На перепутье мне явился.
Перстами легкими как сон
Моих зениц коснулся он.
Отверзлись вещие зеницы,
Как у испуганной орлицы.
Моих ушей коснулся он, —
И их наполнил шум и звон:
И внял я неба содроганье,
И горний ангелов полет,
И гад морских подводный ход,
И дольней лозы прозябанье.
И он к устам моим приник,
И вырвал грешный мой язык,
И празднословный, и лукавый,
И жало мудрыя змеи
В уста замершие мои
Вложил десницею кровавой.
И он мне грудь рассек мечом,
И сердце трепетное вынул,
И угль, пылающий огнем,
Во грудь отверстую водвинул.
Как труп в пустыне я лежал,
И Бога глас ко мне воззвал:
«Восстань, пророк, и виждь, и внемли,
Исполнись волею моею,
И, обходя моря и земли,
Глаголом жги сердца людей».

Exhausted by spiritual thirst,
Through a bleak desert I shambled,
And a six-winged seraphim
At the crossroads before me appeared;
With fingers as light as a dream
He touched my pupils:
Opening prophetic eyes,
Sharp as a frightened eagle’s.
He reached to touch my ears,
Filling them with noise and ringing:
The heavens a quiver I could hear,
And on high a flight of angels soaring,
The serpents shifting in the sea,
And vines creeping in the vale.
He stooped down to my mouth,
And my sinful tongue, idle and crafty,
With his right hand bloody tore out,
Placing into the orifice benumbed,
A wise dragon’s forked tongue.
With a sword he clove my breast,
And my trembling heart plucked out,
Its substitute, a red-hot coal,
He thrust into my gaping chest.
Corpse-like in the desert I lay sprawled,
And God’s voice to me did call,
“Arise O prophet, see and hear,
So you may fulfill my will,
And travel by land and sea,
Setting hearts ablaze with your word”.

Translation © by W.S. McCallum 1999

Mr. McCallum writes: During my undergraduate studies, the rules and conventions of 19th-century Russian verse were impressed upon me, and even now I retain some foggy memories of them. However, I wrote the translation bearing in mind it was for modern English-speaking readers, and did not hesitate to alter structural elements in the original, whilst endeavoring to keep the meaning intact. The translation was completed in three sittings, throughout which I reread both the original and the translation aloud many, many times. The first session involved completing an initial draft and some dictionary work. The second session entailed rereading the original and making adjustments to the first draft. The third session consisted of rereading and amending the translation until it could stand in its own right.

—

Tormented by hunger for the living God,
 I scoured for manna in the wilderness
 When a seraph, crossing my thorny path,
 Took me under his self-righteous wings.
 With hands drawn like ethereal dreams
 He touched the horizons of my sunken face:
 A teeming abyss stretched before my eyes
 Beneath the plenitude of a harvest moon.
 He struck the drums of my untuned ears
 With resounding news of nature's prime.
 And I beheld the sky rise up like bread
 And heard mountains burst like cherubim
 And saw monsters swallowing the deep
 And felt the ripening of the lowly vine.
 Unleashing the fury of his right hand,
 The angel ripped out my crooked tongue
 And, within my mouth's wild confines,
 Planted the wise serpent's healing sting.
 Across the open vistas of my flesh
 He cut a path with his blazing sword
 And took my foolish heart by storm
 And filled its chambers with live coals.
 As I lay in the desert like a corpse,
 I heard God's voice above the ground:
 "Arise, prophet, behold the earth.
 Move and be moved by my will.
 Leap over perilous seas and lands
 And on parched lips set my Word."

Translation © by Benjamin Sher 1999

Mr. Sher writes: A poem's resonance is enveloped in the symbolic universe generated by the unique possibilities of the language in which it was written. We thus encounter an insurmountable barrier, and it is for this reason that I refuse, on principle, to "translate" poetry as such but aim instead for "collaborative" adaptations instead. The adaptation is not arbitrary. It attempts to systematically reproduce a new organism out of the bones, arteries and tissues of the original. The new poem arises out of the old one as an original poem connected by an umbilical cord that can never be severed. Ultimately, the whole question of coherence (of the words, images, sounds in a poem), correspondence (i.e., of the word as sign to something real outside the poem), of meaning and value within a given cultural context,—

all of this, I believe, must be considered by the translator/poet in reference to *the poem as a whole* and not to its individual parts. That accounts for my transformation of Pushkin's form, content and style into my "own" while echoing his. Whether this is still a "translation" or an original poem or something in between is an important but secondary issue. The real question facing the reader is: Is it a living poem?

—

Sore parched for spiritual things,
 In gloomy wastelands I abided.
 A seraph, then, with six bright wings
 Appeared to me where roads divided.
 With fingers fleet as dreams will be
 Mine earthly eyes at once touched he.
 Those eyes then oped with second sight,
 Like mother eagles' when in fright.
 Mine earthly ears his fingers found;
 And they were filled with mighty sound:
 To heaven's quakes mine ears grew keen,
 And angels' circling overhead,
 And 'neath the waves, sea crawlers' tread,
 And growth of vines in dales of green.
 He, bending to my mouth, reached in,
 Tore out my wretched tongue of sin,
 To gossip and deceit long trained,
 And fixed in mine insensate lips
 A cunning serpent tongue's twin tips
 With his right hand, by blood now stained.
 My breast then with a sword he split,
 My heart, still quiv'ring, he withdrew,
 And in my gaping breast he fit
 A burning coal of fiery hue.
 I lay upon the dust, a corpse,
 Then called a voice with God's full force:
 "Arise, my prophet, see and hear,
 My will alone let fill thy ken,
 And wand'ring lands both far and near,
 With utt'rance sear the hearts of men."

Translation © by Timothy D. Sergay 1999

My comments: I learned of the UNESCO contest soon after writing a paper on "singable" translations into English of 20th-century Russian "guitar verse." This is why I was interested in the isometrical and rhyming approach. Whether verses as solemn and elevated as these could sound appropriate today in English iambic tetrameter is, of course, debatable. My friend Nancy Anderson, whose deftly "semi-metrical" translation of Pushkin's "Little Tragedies" was published by Yale University Press in 2000, told me it probably couldn't, but encouraged me to try anyway. I resolved not to read any existing verse translations of «Иппок», sketched out a metrical framework, then replaced assonances with true rhymes over a period of weeks. The archaized diction is drawn from King James, Shakespeare, Donne and Coleridge. One lexical solution that I myself found surprising at first was *utt'rance* in the final line, which is used largely in the King James sense of "gift of prophecy," as in Acts 2:4: "And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance" and Eph 6:19: "And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel."

—

I wandered, parched in mind and heart,
 Across the desert, gloomy, grim...
 And where the roadways meet and part
 I faced the six-winged seraphim.
 With gentle pinions, soft as sleep,
 He brushed my eyelids. Wide and deep
 My vision grew, prophetic-sighted,
 Keen as an eagle, fierce, affrighted!
 And then he touched my trembling ear:
 What din, what clanging did I hear...
 Sensing the shuddering of the sky,
 Dim shapes that glide beneath the deeps,
 The flight of angels, heaven-high,
 The growing vine that buds and creeps.
 Close to my mouth his fingers lay —
 The cunning tongue he tore away
 (So foolish, idle, full of lies)
 Then his right hand, all bloody-red
 Implanted in my speechless head
 The sting that arms the serpent wise!
 Last, with a sword he sliced apart
 My breast, drew out the flaming heart,
 And in the space where once it beat
 He thrust a coal — O flaming heat!
 I lay exhausted — like the slain —
 Till God commanded: “Rise again!
 See, Prophet! Hear, and understand!
 Obey! The word, which you proclaim,
 In wanderings far, by sea and land
 Shall set the human heart aflame!

Translated by John Coutts
 Source: *The Complete Works of Alexander Pushkin. Vol. 3: Lyric Poems: 1826-1836.*
 Norfolk, England: Milner and Company Limited, 1999. P. 33.

—

My lonely heart athirst, I trod
 A barren waste when, so 'twas fated,
 A winged seraph 'fore me stood:
 Where crossed the desert roads he waited.
 Upon my orbs of sightless clay
 His fingers lightly he did lay,
 And like a startled eagle round me
 I gazed and saw the earth surrounded,
 Hemmed in by sky... He touched my ear,
 Then t'other, and, most marked and clear,
 There came to me the gentle flutter
 Of angels' wings, I heard the vine
 Push through the earth and skyward climb,
 The deep-sea monsters in the water
 Like tiny fishes glide... And o'er
 Me calm he bent and out he tore
 My sinful tongue... Not once withdrawing
 His gaze from mine, he pushed, unseen,
 A serpent's deadly sting between
 My ice-cold lips... Then, swiftly drawing
 His shining sword, he clove my breast,

Plucked out my quivering heart, and, sombre
 And grim of aspect, coolly thrust
 Into the gaping hole an ember
 That ran with flame... I lay there, dead,
 And God, God spake, and this He said:
 “Arise, O sage, and, my call hearing,
 Do as I bid, by naught deterred.
 Stride o'er the earth, a prophet, searing
 The hearts of men with righteous word.”

Translated by Irina Zheleznova
 Source: *Russian 19th-Century Verse.* Edited by Irina Zheleznova. Moscow: Raduga Publishers, 1983. P. 45.

—

With fainting soul athirst for Grace,
 I wandered in a desert place,
 And at the crossing of the ways
 I saw a sixfold Seraph blaze;
 He touched mine eyes with fingers light
 As sleep that cometh in the night:
 And like a frightened eagle's eyes,
 They opened wide with prophecies.
 He touched mine ears, and they were drowned
 With tumult and a roaring sound:
 I heard convulsion in the sky,
 And flight of angel hosts on high,
 And beasts that move beneath the sea,
 And the sap creeping in the tree.
 And bending to my mouth he wrung
 From out of it my sinful tongue,
 And all its lies and idle rust,
 And 'twixt my lips a-perishing
 A subtle serpent's forked sting
 With right hand wet with blood he thrust.
 And with his sword my breast he cleft,
 My quaking heart thereout he reft,
 And in the yawning of my breast
 A coal of living fire he pressed.
 Then in the desert I lay dead,
 And God called unto me and said:
 “Arise, and let My voice be heard,
 Charged with My will go forth and span
 The land and sea, and let My word
 Lay waste with fire the heart of man.”

Translated by the Hon. Maurice Baring
 Source: *Selections from the Prose and Poetry of Alexander Pushkin: A Laurel Reader*
 (Dell Publishing, 1961).

Timothy D. Sergay (tsergay@columbus.rr) is a translator/ editor on the staff of *The Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press* specializing in media affairs, and also an independent scholar.

Review of Lydia Stone's Conference Presentation

"Adventures in Cross Cultural Publication II: Irina Ratushinskaya, the Jesus People, and Me"

Elena Levintova

For me, one of the pleasures of the ATA annual conferences is the opportunity to hear Lydia Stone talk about translating poetry. Last year at the 41st ATA annual conference she discussed her latest published translation, a bilingual edition of selected poems (forty-six of them) by Irina Ratushinskaya entitled *Wind of the Journey* and put out by *Cornerstone Press* in Chicago..

Lydia's presentation was entitled "Adventures in Cross-cultural Publication II: Irina Ratushinskaya, the Jesus People, and Me." The Jesus People of the title are the parent organization of Cornerstone Press, a fact Lydia, who is not a Christian, discovered halfway into her work with them. While this difference in faith gave rise to some cross cultural issues, they were all at the level of amusing anecdotes rather than major problems.

The adventures of a translator are many. Some occur within the realm of semantics, syntax and prosody. Others take place between the translator, the editor and the poet. Lydia's first "Adventures" talk, some years ago, dealt with issues involved in managing the translation of a book published simultaneously in Russian and English by the Russian Academy of Sciences and NASA. At the most recent conference she discussed a new set of cross-cultural experiences, some of which pertain to theology and prosody, topics not emphasized by NASA.

Irina Ratushinskaya wrote many of the poems in this book while she was in a Soviet labor camp and those that were not actually written during her incarceration contain images of persecution and suffering and recollections of her time behind bars.. The editors of this volume, Curt Mortimer and Jane Hertenstein, produced this book for a predominantly Christian readership, emphasizing in their introduction the Christian motifs in Ratushinskaya's poems. In an attempt to create a context for understanding Ratushinskaya, the editors write in the introduction that her poems "tell the story of her journey out of imprisonment into a changing world of estrangement and exile. From a faith forged by suffering Irina shows that one lives by dying, one grows stronger by suffering."

Such motifs of suffering and religion are common in Russian poetry and an inseparable part of Russian poetic heritage. Inevitably, Ratushinskaya is influenced by the great poets of earlier generations. In her texts we find allusions to Blok, Akhmatova or Tsvetaeva. One such striking example is the conclusion of poem 42 ("Where was I when I saw a wet branch..."):

Только плакал старый трамвайчик между путей

Literally: Only a trolley car wept between tracks.

Compare the ending of Blok's poem "Девушка пела в церковном хоре..." ["A Girl Was Singing in the Church Choir"]

-
- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Вот их строят внизу: | 1. They're all formed up below, |
| 2. их со стенки можно увидеть. | 2. climb the wall, you will see quite a sight. |
| 3. (Ну а можно и пулю в невежливый глаз получить!) | 3. (Though a bullet might strike your inquisitive eye as you gape.) |
| 4. Золоченые латы (это – в Веспасиановой свите), | 4. Gilded breastplates (these Romans get only the best when they fight); |
| 5. Гимнастерки солдат, да центурионов плащи. | 5. The drab green of GI's; here and there — a red Crusader's cape. |
| 6. Завтра эти ребята, наверно, двинут на приступ. | 6. In the morning these heroes are sure to attack at our gate |
| 7. И, наверно, город возмут, | 7. And no doubt our poor city will fall |
| 8. Изнасилуют баб – | 8. And the rapes will commence; |
| 9. И пойдет, как века назад и вперед, – | 9. And the deaths, as in centuries past and in centuries hence. |
| 10. огонь да убийства: | 10. If you live you're a slave, |
| 11. Если спасся – счастливый раб, если нет – то судьба. | 11. if you don't – well that's fate! |
| 12. Храм, наверно, взорвут и священников перережут. | 12. Then they'll tear down the temple and savagely slaughter the priest |
| 13. Впрочем, может, прикажут распять, | 13. Or else crucify him once they've gone through |
| 14. сперва допросив. | 14. the famed "third degree." |
| 15. Офицеры возьмут серебро, солдаты одежду – | 15. Those in charge will take silver, the soldiers our clothes, at the least |
| 16. И потянутся пленные глину лаптями месить. | 16. And they'll march prisoners off through the mud on their bare, bloody feet. |
| 17. А потом запросят ставку: что делать дальше? | 17. Next, to contact headquarters for orders on what else to do.. |
| 18. И связист изойдет над рацией, матерясь. | 18. They'll try sending a cable, but arrows have shot through the line, |
| 19. Будет послан вдоль кабеля | 19. And despite all their cursing they "can't get a blasted thing through." |
| 20. рвущийся к славе мальчик, | 20. So they send some brash kid |
| 21. Потому что шальною стрелой перешибло связь. | 21. but he screws up and steps on a mine. |
| 22. А другая стрела его в живот угадает, | 22. Then they'll get down to business and napalm the buildings and stock |
| 23. А потом сожгут напалмом скот и дома, | 23. Cull the kids with the wheel; |
| 24. Перемерят детей колесом, | 24. Raze the wall to the ground. |
| 25. И стену с землей сравнивают, | 25. Perhaps sparing in mercy |
| 26. Но, возможно, не тронут старух, | 26. old women gone mad from the shock. |
| 27. сошедших с ума. | 27. There's no history text where the tale of this siege can be found |
| 28. И не тычьте в учебник: истории смертники знают – | 28. People sentenced to death know their history better than books |
| 29. Прохудилось время над местом казни, | 29. Time wears thin and springs leaks |
| 30. и хлещет течь. | 30. over sites of war's slaughter and blood. |
| 31. Дай вам Бог не узнать, что видит жена соляная: | 31. For God's sake don't turn back—you'd be salt with one look |
| 32. Автомат ППШ или римский короткий меч? | 32. At AK-47s and muskets and short Roman swords |

И только высоко у царских врат;...плакал ребенок о том, что никто не придет назад.

[Literally: Only, high up at the holy gates, a child was weeping because no one ever comes back.]

Such echoes and reflections of familiar motifs are essential to poetic tradition. Within this context the weeping trolley car acquires religious resonance simply by virtue of its connection with Blok's imagery. Thus, religion is powerfully present in Blok's poem, clothed in the accoutrements of Russian Orthodox Church services. Now, to what extent is Ratushinskaya's poem a religious poem? It depends on interpretation. I have given one possible interpretation within the context of 20th century Russian poetry by comparing it with the famous poem by Blok. If only this poem were familiar to the reading public in America in some well-known canonical translation, then Ratushinskaya's translator would have had, if not an easier task, at least a more clearly defined one. The translator then could have created a text with clear allusions to the canonical translation of Blok's poem. But as we know, reality often gives us more freedom than we want, and with that come opportunities for creativity. Blok's poem is not a classic text for the English-speaking reader, no canonical translation exists; hence anyone attempting to translate this poem by Ratushinskaya has to create a new solution...

On principle, Lydia does not yield to the temptation of rendering rhymed Russian poetry into English using blank verse. It might be more accurate to say that for her this has never been a temptation. She seems to enjoy the difficult job of reproducing rhyme scheme and rhythm, even though English and Russian are very different in their natural prosodic characteristics. It is interesting that the disputes she had with the editors over theological issues were mild and minor compared with the disputes over retaining rhyme and rhythm, which the editors felt made the poems less acceptable to serious English-speaking audiences. Lydia read some amusing excerpts from her correspondence on this point, as well as some of the rhymed versions of her translations that were rejected by the editors in favor of more literal, free verse versions.

In her translator's introduction, Lydia describes the translation of poetry as a "series of compromises punctuated by miracles." Listening to her presentation, I relished the delicious hair-splitting involved in discussing the compromises, and enjoyed hearing about the miracles of translation. I recall seemingly endless arguments, opinions, suggestions, agreement, disagreements, admiration and all sorts of scintillating stylistic digressions—and all this about just one word, "матерясь," in line 18 of poem 19. (See below for both versions.) Due to the esoteric qualities Russians ascribe to their "мат," they have a hard time admitting that there might be adequate renderings of Russian curses in any other language. But as translation compromises go, I think that this is a satisfying one.

This poem (19) is a mixture of images from various historical periods, in its artistic effects reminiscent of eclecticism in architecture. To reproduce this effect, a translator is probably justified in referring to historic periods and places other than

Wind of the Journey

Poems by

Irina Ratushinskaya

Translated by

Lydia Razran Stone

Cornerstone Press Chicago

Chicago, Illinois

those mentioned, as long as they form a mixture of things that usually do not go together. I think that in translating lines 4 and 5 of the original Lydia has achieved one of those miracles she herself referred to. Here the translation actually surpasses the original. If one is being eclectic, the more outrageous the better, and by translating "Gimnasterki soldat" as "the drab green of GIs" Lydia enhances the contrast between different historic periods by marking the modern soldiers as specifically American. The added diversity of color (gold, green, red, of which only gold is mentioned in the original, and drab green is only implied) makes up in my opinion for the "отсебятина" of the bracketed phrase, the substitution of crusaders for centurions and her omission of the reference to Vespasian. I am prepared to sacrifice even this allusion to Vespasian since, in exchange, we get the results achieved here in the English translation.

These are just a few examples of the kind of literary translator shoptalk that took place during this presentation. This is the sort of discussion among craftsmen that defies any attempt at description on paper. You just have to be there.

Elena Levintova is an English>Russian translator. She lives in Monterey, CA, where she is an Assistant Professor at the Defense Language Institute. Her doctoral dissertation was devoted to linguistic aspects of text genre.

The book, *Wind of the Journey*, is available for \$14.95 plus shipping from Cornerstone Press Chicago, 939 West Wilson Avenue, Chicago, IL 60640, cspress@jpusa.org, www.cornerstonepress.com.

Русско-английский аэрокосмический словарь

Roy Cochrun

This two-volume work is the first truly new dictionary on this topic since the well-known «Воениздат» 1971 edition compiled by А.М. Мурашкевич, which contained nearly 40,000 terms. The new edition, compiled by Н.Н. Новичков and published in 1999, contains nearly five times that number of terms, reflecting both the explosion in aerospace terminology since the late 1960s and the level of detail included in this latest work.

First, the bad news: In order to restrict the work to two volumes, the publisher uses three columns per page and a font of about 8 points. For old eyes, that means removing the bifocals and holding the volume about two inches from one's nose. In addition, lead terms are not given at the top of every column, although the first three letters of whatever is the first (last) entry on the left (right) page does appear in a larger font at the top edge of the page. For example, "САМ" appears at the top of 11 pages. Finding the entries for "Самолет," which doesn't begin until one third down the middle column of the second page of "САМ" words and runs on for eight pages, can take longer than it should. In addition, some words that are used in Russian press, such as "Стельс" and "Невидимка," do not appear in the dictionary at all.

But that's the only bad news. The good news is, this dictionary is terrific! Common aerospace abbreviations and acronyms are listed both at the start of the first volume, and then alphabetically where required, with all the different forms one may encounter. Both British and American translations and/or spellings are given, where appropriate. One even can find the correct Russian and English equivalents for the US-Russian arms control treaties beneath the "Договор" entry. The volumes are well bound and printed on good, albeit thin, paper.

Издательство «Руссо» (Russo) published the work. Date of publication is 1999 and there are over 1,200 pages. Russo has a Web site at www.aha.ru/~russopub. The volumes are available through Eastview Publications (www.eastview.com/) and Russian Shopping Club (www.russianshopping.com/).

Reprinted with the author's kind permission from Yahoo! Russian Translators Club. Roy reports that the best price he found for this dictionary was \$95.00 at Russian Shopping Club.

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CLUB MEMBERS DISCUSS DICTIONARIES

Russian-English Dictionaries

Does anyone know if Smirnitsky has been revised since 1987? Or do you have a recommendation for a better R>E dictionary, published recently? —Christina Sever

Re: Russian-English Dictionaries

The copyright date for the version of Smirnitsky incorporated in MediaLingua's *MultiLex Klassicheskii 2000* electronic dictionary is 1985-1991. It works very well and comes bundled with Mueller (1995) E-R. But Oxford recently updated the Oxford Russian-English (Wheeler); has anyone reviewed it? Bought it? Is it worth the \$40-\$50 to upgrade from the previous couple editions? —Tim Sergay

Re: Russian-English Dictionaries

While it is not a stand-alone reference (if there is such a thing), I've been having some good successes with the *Новый большой русско-английский словарь* by Makurov, et al. It comes in 3 volumes from Lingvistika Publishers in Moscow, 1997, price disremembered. —Cheers, Jim Shipp

Latest Oxford is worth it....

1. Oxford 3rd (2000) is well worth the \$40 or \$50. However, a few times I've had to dig up the 2nd for an old/obsolete term or definition that the 3rd dropped. Oxford and The Blessed Katzner meet my needs about 95 percent of the time.

2. A peevelet: Having the Oxford R>E and E>R in one hefty volume is bulky and awkward, and since I very seldom need the E>R I wish they still came separate like in the olden days.

—Kim Braithwaite

BUT NOT ONLY DICTIONARIES

Russian Proverb

I came across the following "Russian proverb" in a calendar: Ask a lot, but take what is offered. Can anyone come up with the original Russian proverb? Thank you. — Marina Aranovich

Марина, мне почему-то кажется, что это знаменитое "Много просишь - мало получишь" (искаженное, разумеется).

—Инна Ослон

Спасибо, Инна. Я бы сама ни за что не догадалась.

—Marina

Нарочно не придумаешь

В кадре фильма записка с текстом "Call me ASAP". Текст в титрах: "Называйте меня Асапом".

—Galina Raff

SLD MEMBER MAKES FRONT PAGE NEWS

Laura Esther Wolfson

April 16th, 2001 was an historic day for the Slavic Languages Division, marking, we believe, the first time (though, to tell the truth, we had not been keeping careful track) that one of our number has been quoted on page one—or any other page—of *The New York Times*. The SLD member in question is Ted Crump, who works by day as a staff translator at the National Institutes of Health, while by night, until recently, he has been toiling to compile the definitive work on language personnel needs in the federal government. It was in this latter capacity that he was quoted in an article by Diana Jean Schemo titled, “Washington Cites Shortage of Linguists for Key Security Jobs.”

The gist of the article was that a lack of specialists in little-known languages who hold the necessary security clearances is hobbling the government in its ability to prevent and prosecute crime, keep up to date on events and research conducted around the world and is generally harming national security. As an example, the reporter cited the fact that prior to the World Trade Center bombing in 1993 in which six people were killed, the government was in possession of videotapes, manuals, taped phone calls and notebooks on bomb-making relating to the planning of the event. However, all the materials were in Arabic and no specialist in that language listened to or read the materials until after the bombing.

Reasons for the lack of skilled linguists are various and include cuts in school foreign language budgets and an increase in the number and obscurity of languages in which competence is needed in order to understand and stave off security threats in the post Cold War world. In addition to this, according to Crump’s statement in the article, “government layoffs and employee buyouts have trimmed foreign language expertise drastically.” Crump’s other quoted remark in the article is as follows: “Back in 1985 the terrorist thing didn’t really come up,” he said of the year when he was working on an earlier version. “Now, when you have the possibility of someone coming with a weapon of mass destruction in a suitcase, it changes the whole picture.”

According to the Times article, Crump is updating his book cataloging the federal government’s foreign language needs. According to Ted himself, the book’s history is as follows:

“I first did the study,” he wrote in an e-mail to the *Slavfile*, “as the *New York Times* article mentions, in 1983, and published it myself. That survey covered nineteen federal agencies and ran forty pages. The study covered in-house and outsourced translation and interpretation activity, and wherever possible outlined the grade structure of the personnel, languages involved, nature of the parent organization, etc. It also included organizations in which foreign language capacity is a supplementary skill to the main job descriptions.

“I did this out of my own curiosity and initiative. It had nothing to do with my job at NIH, and I received no financial assistance at any time while I was working on it. I had recently joined the federal government and was curious about career ladders and opportunities for translators and interpreters in other agencies. Then I revised and updated it a few years later, and published it on my own. It was quite a hit. In 1998 I began updating it again, at the urging of the National Foreign Language Center, Johns Hopkins University and the Interagency Language Roundtable, with a contract to publish it from the NFLC. Work proceeded very slowly, as it was all on my own time, and I wasn’t getting much cooperation from the agencies.

“Finally last year the NFLC and I decided that if the book was ever going to see the light of day, I should just cut it off where it was and go with what I had. At that point I had covered 80 agencies to some extent and was daily finding out about more. The subject is a moving target. It looked as if it would go on forever, and in the meantime everything was changing.

NFLC then came up with the idea that ATA should publish it, not them. They concluded that they didn’t have the staff to market it, handle sales, etc. ATA expressed an interest, so I gave them the manuscript last October. I don’t know when they will publish it. I hope they will do so before the LA conference.”

Молодец!, Ted, and congratulations. We wish you success with this arduous project, we thank you for all of your hard work on it, and we hope that the latest version will go to press and become available in short order.

Ted Crump can be reached at crump@nihrrlib.ncrr.nih.gov.

REMINDER

SlavFile will publish
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We encourage unsolicited contributions
from our readers.
Especially welcome are
Newcomer Profiles,
introducing new
members to our readers.

Website Review

WWW.SOKR.RU (version 2)

Galina Raff

Last week, when I read in a Russian newspaper «представитель НИС заявил...», I did not know what НИС meant, so I looked it up on WWW.SOKR.RU. It took a few seconds to get the following reply to my query:

НИС настольная издательская система (компьютерный комплекс)

НИС научно-исследовательская станция

НИС научно-исследовательский сектор

НИС научно-исследовательский совет

НИС научно-исследовательское судно

НИС национальная информационная система

НИС Национальный исполнительный совет (Бенин)

НИС начальник инженерной службы

НИС Нижегородские информационные сети (интернет-провайдер) (www.nis.nnov.su)

НИС новые индустриальные страны

НИС нормативно-исследовательская станция

The WWW.SOKR.RU site houses the largest Russian dictionary of abbreviations and acronyms in the world. Now, in its second version, it contains 52,680 entries. The dictionary is based on «Словарь сокращений русского языка» (Рус. яз., 1984), «Новый словарь сокращений русского языка» (ЭТС, 1985), «Новые сокращения в русском языке 1996-1999» (ЭТС, 1999) and, most important, abbreviations continuously added by site users and editors. Entries are meticulously edited; I have used this dictionary dozens of times and cannot recall a single typo. Many entries are annotated to clarify the meaning of an abbreviation, and some entries contain an Internet link to a site containing additional information related to the abbreviated item.

The site is a personal (*pro bono*) project of a leading Russian web-designer, Artemy Lebedev. It is virtually free from advertising; opens rapidly and is easy to navigate. The user interface is attractive, uncluttered and highly functional. While the site is in Russian only, viewing and using the site do not require additional Cyrillic utilities, aside from Windows Multilanguage Support activation. Copy-and-paste operations are supported for Unicode-based applications like MS Word 97 and higher.

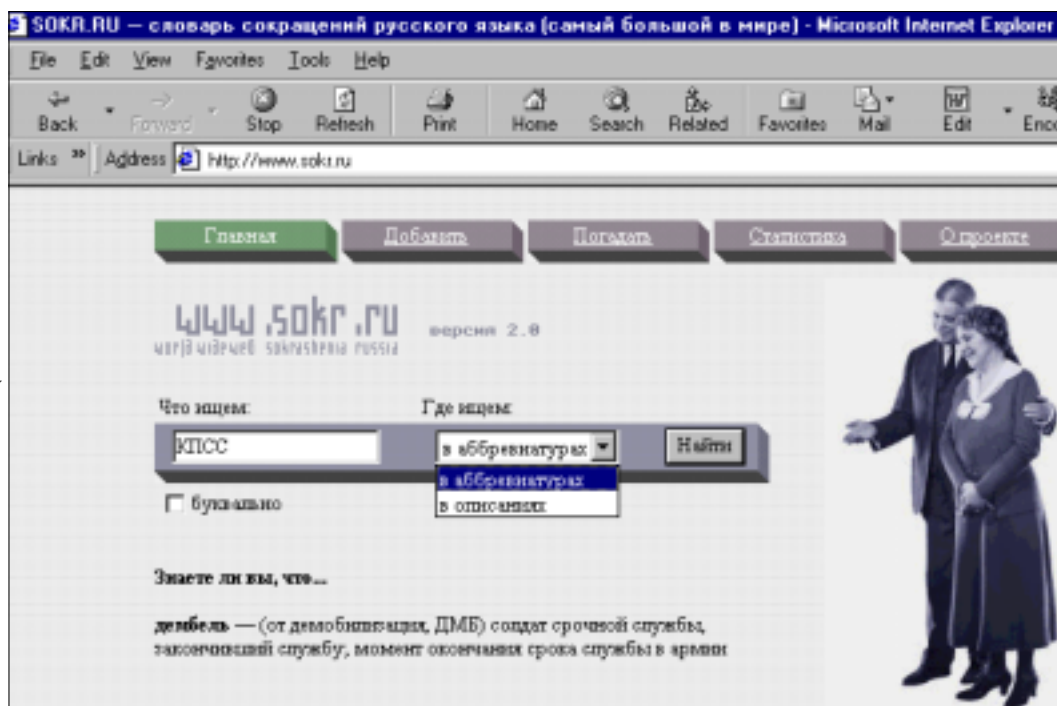
The main page provides a search window with two options: (1) to look up the abbreviation or to perform a full-text search; and (2) to search exactly as written (*буквально*). Checking the **буквально** box is recommended as it generates a shorter list and speeds up the search. The full-text search feature was recently added to WWW.SOKR.RU. For example, when I searched for *зона*, I generated a list of over 100 abbreviations that contain *зона* as one of the words. While full-text search is an important feature of electronic dictionaries, it is uncommon in on-line versions.

The search query is not case-sensitive (typing КИД and кид generates the same answer); punctuation marks, spaces and Latin letters are ignored. Those who need to expand an abbreviation written in the Latin alphabet are referred to the www.AcronymFinder.com — an on-line abbreviation dictionary with about 200,000 entries.

The user can select **Добавить** to suggest an expansion of an abbreviation that is not currently listed in the dictionary.

Two other buttons provide entertainment. **Погодать** generates a random abbreviation that purports to foretell the user's destiny. **Статистика** offers various site-related trivia: the longest abbreviation is 31 letters long, ПП has the most (73) meanings, 4583 abbreviations begin with the letter Н. There is also an amusing list of the most often requested words.

WWW.SOKR.RU is an excellent free dictionary. I recommend it to all Russian translators and interpreters.



and animals. Finally we will know with authority what we should call a robin in Polish. (It all depends on which continent the bird inhabits; there are eight species of robins named here).

Even if you are not a localizer, lack of familiarity with Polish computer terminology will haunt you sooner or later. Despite all the borrowings and literal translations of English terms, the terminology still holds some creative adaptations (e.g., *magistrala*, *bluzgi*, *zworka*, *czytnik*). The field is dominated by E-P dictionaries, the largest being “Duży słownik informatyczny” (21) with 31,000 entries, available also on CD-ROM. “The Dictionary of Computers and the Internet” (22) is a Polish adaptation of a lexicon by a British publisher Peter Collin. Each of the 10,000 English entries gives a working definition, its Polish equivalent, an English sentence to illustrate its use, and a P-E index at the end. The only P-E dictionary that I have managed to find is actually a small bi-directional, densely packed “Praktyczny słownik komputerów,” (23) with 20,000 entries—roughly half of them Polish.

Another *signum temporis* is a Polish version of a NATO ground troops terminology lexicon, compiled by German and Polish military experts. “Wspólne zadanie ...” (24) contains a thematically organized section, with entries on military actions and support, types of orders, etc. presented in all three languages. There are also E-German-P and German-E-P glossaries but a P-E-G section is missing, unfortunately. The pocket-size “E-P Military Dictionary” (25) of 20,000 entries, plus a very useful section on current and historical military ranks and names of units in Polish, British, and US armies, would greatly benefit from the omission of non-military terms, which constitute two thirds of the volume. A comprehensive dictionary of military terminology (26) is due to appear shortly.

“Słownik turystyki i hotelarstwa,” (27) with 20,000 entries, is a mixed bag of terms ranging from catering, transportation, culture and recreation to finance, economics, and statistics. A more narrowly focused option is “Słownik hotelarstwa i turystyki,” (28) another Peter Collin lexicon, with 6,500 entries.

“A Complementary Dictionary of English,” (29) contains roughly 6,000 neologisms not given in other dictionaries. Entries derive mainly from the media, computers, and popular technology, i.e., fields characterized by highly “volatile” terminology. Their Polish versions are—by the author’s own admission—first attempts at finding equivalent counterparts and may sometimes be little more than descriptive definitions of the term in question. Thus, “zapper” is rendered as “osoba szybko i często zmieniająca kanały telewizyjne za pomocą pilota.”

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- (19a) *Wielojęzyczny słownik wizualny pol-ang-niem-fran*, Przegląd Reader’s Digest.
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- (21) Szaniawski, J. *Duży słownik informatyczny ang-pol*, ArsKom, 1998.
- (22) *Słownik komputerów i Internetu ang-pol*, Wilga, 2001.
- (23) *Praktyczny słownik komputerów ang-pol/pol-ang*, Rea.
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A second installment of this article is planned and will feature new economic/business/law dictionaries and Polish monolingual references

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Newsletter of the Slavic Languages Division
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PLANS FOR SLD DINNER IN LA

Emilia Balke, a resident of L.A., and Nora Favorov, have succeeded fabulously in arranging the SLD dinner for us at this year's conference. The dinner will be held on Thursday *at The Blue Sea* a small restaurant in downtown L.A., which will be open exclusively to our party that night. They will provide a buffet of assorted appetizers from Russia and other former Soviet republics, a choice of 4 different hot meals and an assortment of pastries. The per person charge, estimated at \$30 each for 50 people, will also cover unlimited soft drinks, coffee, tea, tax and tip. Alcohol will presumably be available at the bar. Vans or a bus will be reserved for transportation to and from the hotel. A sing-along led by Russian professional musicians is also planned. Further details will be supplied in the next issue of *SlavFile*.