



Translation Under Communism

Edited by Christopher Rundle
Anne Lange · Daniele Monticelli



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Part I

Introduction



1

Introduction

Christopher Rundle, Anne Lange, and Daniele Monticelli

This volume is intended as a sister volume to *Translation under Fascism*, which was edited by Christopher Rundle and Kate Sturge and published by Palgrave (2010). Both volumes share the premise that the study of translation can enhance our understanding of important historical themes such as fascism and communism, and cultural policies in twentieth-century totalitarian regimes.

In any context in which culture is brought into the service of a totalitarian project translation will play a key role because the regime

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must decide how it intends to engage with other nations and cultures and how that engagement can be rationalized in terms of its ideology, be it officially nationalist or internationalist. Therefore, in as much as cultural exchange becomes a highly politicized sphere, so do translations acquire an ideological significance in that context, whether this is because cultural exchange is encouraged as a form of collaboration between peoples who are related by race or ideology, or because it is resented as an unwelcome diluting of a people's national character and ideological or racial purity.

If one accepts this premise, then it is clear that the history of translation can and should be a part of the history of these regimes and that it can enrich our understanding of them. The research in these volumes, therefore, is addressed to all scholars with a historical interest in fascism and/or communism, including both translation historians, and historians from outside translation studies.

Furthermore, we hope that the research in these two volumes can provide examples of how historical research on translation can be fruitfully conducted and contextualized within a historical theme that is defined outside the specific remit of translation studies, in this case the history of fascism and of communism.

One of the interesting insights to emerge from a comparison between this volume on translation under communism, and the earlier volume on fascism, is the different connections that seem to exist between the history of these two systems and themes that are common to translation studies. The volume on fascism could justifiably be described as a volume of book history, one where the material history of books is more present than the literary history of the texts. In most instances, and without wanting to push this generalization too far, the fascist regimes of Italy and Germany (the two regimes which achieved the most fully realized fascism), were not particularly interested in the contents of the books or in their literary qualities. Translations, when they became a concern, did so for macro-economic and macro-political reasons: in Fascist Italy, the excessive popularity of translated popular fiction was an unwelcome sign of the regime's failure to create a recognizably fascist culture that could gain prominence both at home and abroad—a cultural expansion that was supposed to go hand in hand with the desired expansion

in the world of Italy's geopolitical influence (Rundle 2010); in Nazi Germany, translations were from the beginning framed in racial terms: translations of Jewish authors, and later of 'enemy' authors, were unacceptable regardless of the qualities of the individual text (Sturge 2010). But in both regimes, the undoubted success of translated popular fiction went virtually unhindered until the war and contributed to the modernization of the publishing industries. Most historians of fascism would agree that Spain and Portugal were two conservative and reactionary regimes, intended actually—despite the many trappings borrowed from pre-war fascism—to prevent the kind of palingenetic revolution that was the ambition of the Fascist and National Socialist parties (Griffin 1991; Payne 1995). Both regimes were constructed on the moral values of the Catholic church which were reflected in their censorship practices, and Spain in particular devoted a huge amount of resources to systematically vetting all books, regardless of whether they were translations or not. But, they were not particularly concerned with the literary or aesthetic values of the texts.

In the studies on communism in this volume, on the other hand, the texts and their literary and linguistic qualities are much more in evidence, as are the translators and their choices. This difference reflects a difference in the ideological and political value that was attributed to the aesthetics of both literature in general and translation specifically. In the communist regimes of the Eastern Bloc, literature as a field was expected to adopt the official aesthetic values promoted by the Party. Furthermore, the Party promoted high-brow literature among the masses (see the World Literature Series in the Soviet Union, for example), convinced of its beneficial impact as it expressed the moral values that were jeopardized by the vulgar implementation of Marxism-Leninism (Baer 2006). So strong was the influence of these aesthetic priorities that in some countries, such as Hungary and Yugoslavia, there was no need for an official censor. The regime could rely on authors and translators to align themselves with Party policy, under the supervision of editors and writers' unions (where they existed), and they could rely on the state-owned publishers not to print or distribute unacceptable texts.

This greater focus on the text means that for translation studies scholars, the approach used by the authors in this volume will probably seem more familiar than that used by the authors in the volume on fascism. It remains to be seen how this focus, though it undoubtedly reflects the historical circumstances, will be received by historians of communism.

The Focus on European Communism

From the outset we decided that this volume would focus on European communism and would not include the many variations of communism found in Asia, Africa, or the Americas. There are a number of reasons for this choice. We felt that if the contribution that the study of translation can make to historical studies is to emerge effectively, then we needed to ensure that we focused on a well-defined historical context, one where the different chapters would have a clear link to each other and share, at least to a certain extent, a common historiography and a common understanding of socialism. We wanted to avoid drawing superficial comparisons between systems that might have shared an origin in Marxism and Leninism but which were also very different geopolitically and culturally.

Furthermore, we felt it was important to remain within a sphere which we as editors were competent to address. These might seem rather obvious motivations, but one of the dangers that we see in translation history is a tendency to focus on the 'micro' events related to translation and to treat the specific 'macro' history of each context rather superficially. In our opinion, a lack of proper, historiographically informed contextualization, is one of the barriers to the diffusion of the theme of translation history beyond the disciplinary borders of translation studies.

So this volume contains essays on Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary, Poland, the Soviet Union (including studies on Russia and Ukraine), and Yugoslavia (including a study specifically on Slovenia). Unfortunately, despite our best efforts, we were not able to find contributors to write chapters on Albania or Romania.

The Focus on Books

Readers will notice that the focus of the studies in this volume is almost entirely on books and literature. It is worth noting that this focus emerged quite naturally and was not based on a prior decision by the editors. It reflects, perhaps, a general tendency in the history of translation in the former Eastern Bloc countries to focus on books and on texts: the Sovietization of a large part of Eastern Europe shaped the cultural milieu of its inhabitants and the study of the processes and mechanisms of literary translation is therefore of paramount importance for a more refined understanding of the functioning of culture under communism.

Furthermore, it is clear from the studies on both fascism and communism that the specifics of each regime, their individual characteristics, emerge most clearly when we focus on their policies concerning books and translated books. All would-be totalitarian regimes were aware of the immense propaganda potential of radio, film, and later television. Whether communist or fascist, it would have been unthinkable not to exercise absolute control over these forms of mass communication which could have such a powerful impact on the people and which had to be guarded from any misuse. Books, on the other hand, were perceived differently in different countries and their status was more ambiguous, resulting in a great variety of policies and methods of control (Kalnychenko 2011; Monticelli and Lange 2014; Sherry 2015; Thomson-Wohlgemuth 2009). It is this variety which emerges in the volume and which, in our opinion, is one of the historical contributions this collection can make; countering the tendency, particularly on the part of those who did not experience these events directly, to consider the Eastern Bloc a single, homogenous unit. Even the states that were under the direct influence of the Soviet Union, and which were generally perceived as its satellites, developed their own individual book policies and book cultures.

Not enough attention has been paid in historical research and translation studies to archival research on translation which can connect translation to its social and historical context. The aim of this collection

is to show the relevance of historical research on translation for historical disciplines and to encourage translation scholars to address audiences other than that of translation studies.

The Studies in This Volume

The volume opens with a general essay on translation and the history of communism by **Anne Lange**, **Daniele Monticelli**, and **Christopher Rundle** which is intended to set the scene for the studies that follow, and to lead into the response that closes this volume. The essay looks at the key features of culture under communism and considers how our understanding of the history of European socialist regimes can be enriched through the perspective of translation.

This is then followed by a first group of essays which deal with the Soviet Union. The first of these is **Nataliia Rudnytska's** study which analyses the formation of and changes to the Soviet canon of World Literature from the Revolution of 1917 to the collapse of the USSR in 1991. Launched with the aim of filling the cultural gap inherited from Tsarist Russia by broadening the Soviet readership's literary horizons and offering them an enriching reading experience, the initial, ambitious project of translating the great masterpieces of World Literature was soon subjected to the ideological control of an increasingly totalitarian regime. The Soviet canon of World Literature thus became, by the end of the Stalinist period, a 'stable ideological construct' translated into the many languages of the 'Soviet peoples'. Its functions, Rudnytska argues, varied according to the needs and shifts of Soviet power, ranging from creating the illusion of the universality of Soviet values through the selection of ideologically suitable foreign authors, to the construction of a Soviet identity through translation between the different languages of the Soviet peoples, and finally the attempt to internationalize the Soviet canon of World Literature through state-supported translations into foreign languages. Such politically directed construction of the canon was paralleled and was challenged by the formation of an alternative canon by the Soviet intelligentsia, who exploited the loosening ideological control and

ensorship during the Thaw period to promote the translation and reception of mainly Western authors, who were very distant from the Soviet ideological model, such as Franz Kafka, J. D. Salinger, Herman Hesse, Albert Camus, and William Faulkner. This had a decisive impact on the new generations of Soviet writers, artists, and intellectuals of the Sixties and the Seventies.

The importance of literary translations in early Soviet cultural policy boosted the need for trained translators, which in turn stimulated theoretical reflection and the birth of the Soviet school of translation of which the poet and translator Kornei Chukovsky was a founding and central figure. In his chapter, **Brian James Baer** analyses the development of translation policies and their relation to political and cultural changes in Russia through a close analysis of Chukovsky's seminal writings on translation from 1906 to 1968 and the related ideological debates. This reveals the tensions and shifts between: prioritization of the creative identity and personality of the translator (*lichnost*); recognition of how functional the activity of translators was to the regime's ideological agenda; and affirmation of the determinant role of the class background of creative people. While, with the progressive tightening of Stalinist repression, the previously praised creativity of translators became a negative sign of individualism, after the death of Stalin the concept of *lichnost* was rehabilitated in Chukovsky's writings. Baer's detailed analysis of Chukovsky's text reveals the complex play between accommodating explicit references to the regime's jargon and hidden allusions and subtexts, which allowed a certain aesthetic continuity in the self-imposed ideological discontinuity of Chukovsky's ideas on translation. Translation theory thus became 'a privileged site for discussion of key ethical concerns facing the Soviet intelligentsia, related to submission, resistance, individuality and originality' within the 'ever-shifting boundary of the sayable/unsayable in Soviet Russia'.

Susanna Witt's chapter focuses on another legendary translator of the Soviet era, Mikhail Lozinskii and his acclaimed version of Dante's *Divine Comedy* (1936–45). Witt interprets Lozinskii's work on Dante against the background of its historical context: thus, a translation of Dante becomes an Aesopian text which uses implied references to address taboo topics of the period, such as the terror of Stalinist repression, or the

horrors of the siege of Leningrad, in opposition to the heroic narrative of the Great Patriotic War being promoted by the regime. The case of Lozinskii and his *Divine Comedy* thus become an illuminating example of the importance of translation as a unique means of addressing the brutalities of Stalinism and the war for Soviet readers who were not at liberty to discuss them openly. The new translation of the *Divine Comedy* was also a way of paying silent tribute to the pre-revolutionary and mainly repressed generation of Russian writers for whom the myth of Dante had always been a way of reflecting contemporary historical issues and affirming aesthetic and moral values that were extraneous to the ideological framework of the Soviet regime.

Literary translation in the USSR was strongly conditioned by the relations between Russia, which constituted the cultural and linguistic centre of the Union, and all the other Soviet republics who were relegated to the periphery. **Oleksander Kalnychenko and Lada Kolomiyets** consider translation in the Stalinist period from the perspective of Soviet Ukraine, which belonged to the first (post-1922) group of Soviet republics. In Ukraine, the dynamics of translation only partially followed the pattern described by Rudnytska for Soviet Russia. The boom of translations into Ukrainian world literature classics extended well into the early 1930s, a direct consequence of the Ukrainian cultural Renaissance, which revalued local culture and language as a form of opposition to Tsarist Russification. This boom ended with the peak of the Stalinist terror and a return to the centrality of Russia and Russian. While the decreasing number of translations from Western literatures were subjected to an increasing degree of socio-political adaptation, attention shifted to translations from other Soviet literatures based on Russian as an intermediary language. Translations from Russian were, moreover, characterized by a 'superficial literalism', which favoured the Russification of the Ukrainian language, transforming it into a regional 'second language'. Translation thus became a powerful instrument for the creation of the 'Soviet reader' and the development of linguistic and cultural policies which reinforced the hegemony of Russian and its grip on the centre and the peripheries of the Soviet Empire.

Following on from these studies on the Soviet Union are a series of studies on the socialist countries of Eastern Europe. Here too, a key

theme is the tense and evolving relationship these socialist republics had with Moscow, whose authority as the home of the most developed form of socialism was very difficult to challenge. **Maria Rita Leto's** chapter focuses on translation policy in Yugoslavia between 1945 and 1952 and shows us how these policies evolved along with the country's relationship with the Soviet Union. In the immediate post-war years, the interventionist role of the Party in Yugoslav cultural life reflected the Soviet obsession with cultural politics as a central element in the ideological transformation of the people. In the field of translation this took the shape of banned foreign authors and texts, quotas, and lists of ideologically approved authors who were to be translated; a list which drew mainly on Soviet socialist realism and other Russian and Slavic authors. Despite the lack of an official system of censorship, strict control over the publishing of translations was exercised via the capillary action of the Agitprop network which controlled all aspects of cultural life. Following the rift with the Soviet Union in 1948 there were significant changes in Yugoslavia's cultural and translation policies. The Agitprop network was gradually dismantled and the level of control over translation decreased drastically. This opened the gates to a flood of literary translations from Western authors who had previously been banned and contributed to the creation of an 'alternative modernity', in opposition to socialist realism. Anticipating the development of the Yugoslav 'third way', translation became the intermediate space for 'new voices, new cultural models and new visions of the world', bridging the gap between the East and the West.

The *Kulturkampf* and the indoctrination of new generations was of great strategic importance in the construction of socialist societies, and **Nike K. Pokorn** analyses the mechanisms which influenced the production of translations for children and young adults in socialist Slovenia. Combining archival research and interviews with the former editors of the Publishing House Mladinska knjiga, Pokorn offers us a detailed reconstruction of the causal chain that went from the ruling ideology, through the visible and invisible macro- and micro-networks of power relations, down to the agents responsible for shaping the translation process and its products. She shows that this system didn't require the establishment of any institutionalized form of censorship such as that

found in the USSR, but worked rather through the tacit incorporation of the Party's demands and expectations into the management of the publishing house and its editors. This made self-censorship, rather than external censorship, the main instrument of socialist power, but, at the same time, allowed the Slovenian editors the space to 'push the boundaries of what was considered acceptable and publishable', to the extent that George Orwell's *1984* was published by Mladinska knjiga as early as 1967, a time when this would have been unthinkable in the USSR and other socialist countries.

While children's literature occupied an important place in the translation policies of communist regimes, popular and genre literature, especially that which came from capitalist countries, had a much more ambivalent, problematic, and suspicious status. In her chapter **Anikó Sohár** focuses on the translation of science fiction during the Kádár era in Hungary, and she provides us with a surprisingly contradictory account. On the one hand, she suggests that the loyalty of translators to the regime was bought by offering them generous royalties which enabled them to withdraw into their professional and private lives, and not oppose the regime publicly; on the other hand, she suggests the translations of science fiction introduced utopian ideas which eventually contributed to the downfall of the regime. A significant role in introducing science fiction into Hungary was played by Péter Kuczka who began his career as an award-winning Stalinist poet who believed sincerely in official socialist doctrine. But, frustrated by the regime's practices, Kuczka took an active part in the 1956 Hungarian Revolution, and was later 'silenced', that is banned from publishing any works of his own. The translation and promotion of science fiction therefore became the only way he could pursue his literary interests. By the late sixties the Hungarian Writers Union had its own science fiction section, which shows how the prestige of the genre had risen. Parallel to Kuczka's initiatives, there were also numerous fan clubs of science fiction who published their own fanzines. Although the role of science fiction in reshaping Hungarian society probably needs further investigation, there is no doubting the genuine zeal of the people who translated, read, and published this genre—be it officially or underground.

The ambivalent role and place of translators within the literary and cultural life of communist societies is also discussed by **Hanna Blum**. Her chapter considers ‘ideologies of translation’ as they can be reconstructed from the protocols of the meetings of translators who were members of the Writers Union of the German Democratic Republic (GDR). Contextualizing her analysis within the changing political climate, which depended heavily on the influence of the USSR, she stresses the role that literary translation played in the reformation of East German society and in disconnecting it, both from its Nazi past and from contemporary capitalist cultures. The official importance that the regime attributed to literary translation as a part of its cultural policies, meant that literary translators enjoyed a high status and numerous benefits: the life of a literary translator in the GDR was more comfortable than that of a technical translator, their fees were higher; and this, Blum argues, shaped their thinking and discourse. The official minutes that Blum has studied, however, only allow her to make a partial reconstruction as they clearly reflect the official line on any subject: as she suggests, more research on alternative records, such as interviews, is needed in order to ‘look deeper into the self-censorship carried out by translators’.

Through his analysis of Allen Ginsberg’s 1965 visit to Czechoslovakia, **Igor Tyšš** further widens the range of phenomena considered in this volume by investigating translation as a complex network of intercultural mediations and conflicts, which include bilingual poetry performances, interpreting in both informal and official occasions, and manipulative adaptations for the benefit of the authorities. This case study and its context thus reveal all the different, and even opposing, uses and impacts of translation under communist rule. On the one hand, translations of foreign literature and direct contact (via interpreting) with a subversive Western author offered the material to elaborate and sustain the poetics of a new generation of local writers and students, whose concerns were already very distant from the ruling ideology. On the other hand, translation was caught in a mechanism of ideological control and exploited by the authorities: cultural and linguistic mediators became agents and informants of the regime, and the police’s unauthorized, fragmentary translation of Ginsberg’s journal manipulated the text so that it could be used to publicly denigrate Ginsberg and expel him from the country.

Through the prism of literary translations from Russian and French, **Krasimira Ivleva's** study points to a similar ambivalence concerning the position of translators and the function of translation in communist Bulgaria (1944–89). Ivleva describes translation as 'a site of tension' where the official pressure to use translation as an instrument of ideological indoctrination clashed with the needs of translators, writers, editors who were often more interested in using translation as a way of channelling new literary trends and ideas into an otherwise strictly monitored cultural life. The comparison between translations from Russian and French functions as an effective litmus test of this fluid situation. The evolution of the fortunes of translations from these two high-status cultures, reflected the shifts in the ideological character of the regime, which went from a first period of strict adherence to Soviet Stalinism, in which Western culture was stigmatized and mass translations from Russian were used to import the models of socialist realism, to a period of post-Stalinist liberalization which led to a renewed interest in French authors regardless of any ideological considerations. That being said, however, the historical role that translations from French had played in the development of Bulgarian literature meant that French literature enjoyed a special status throughout the communist period. This could take the form of an appropriation of French critical realism and revolutionary traditions, facilitated by the communist sympathies of many contemporary French authors, as well as involving the translation of 'ideologically suspicious' French authors, which challenged the limits of acceptability in communist Bulgaria.

The potential of translation under communist rule to provide an alternative to official culture is also considered by **Robert Looby**, who analyses the translation of fiction in the *samizdat* press of late socialist Poland, a mode of publishing that was so widespread that it could be described as a veritable 'industry'. A closer analysis of *samizdat* publishing in Poland, or 'second circulation' as it was known, reveals that instead of functioning primarily as an alternative system of publication with a clear anti-communist agenda, as one might have expected, it often employed the same translators, published the same authors and even used the same presses as the official publishing system. Even if the choice of translated titles published in second circulation can be seen as evidence of

a reaction against the constraints of official ideology, at the level of translation strategy, it is difficult to draw a clear line between the presumed (self-)censorship practised in official translations and the presumably more liberal approach to *samizdat* translation. Looby thus concludes that, unlike the clear dissident character of underground publications in the USSR and other countries of the communist bloc, first and second circulation in Poland were complementary systems characterized by a series of interdependencies rather than by an opposition.

The volume ends with a response to these studies by **Vitaly Chernetsky**. The key to Chernetsky's reading is the way in which communism enrolled literature in the service of a battle or struggle towards the goals of the revolution, and the role that translation played in this struggle. He also reflects on how conditions have changed for translators since the collapse of communism and the loss of some of the benefits that its structures and planned economy provided; and on how the myth of the excellence of the 'Soviet School' of translation still persists, particularly within the former Soviet Union.

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2

Translation and the History of European Communism

Anne Lange, Daniele Monticelli, and Christopher Rundle

One of the striking features of Soviet and socialist cultures is the extent to which literary (and artistic in general) aesthetics were bound up in the political ideology. Due to the strong belief of authorities in ‘literature’s transformational power’ (Thomson-Wohlgemuth 2009: 226), even the smallest aesthetic choices, including those made in translations, could have political and ideological implications. This is why literary translation was of paramount importance in enabling socialist states to advance the ideology of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and its concept

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of progressive literature and also to construct an image of the West as an international field of class struggle. The canon of world literature was consistent throughout the Soviet bloc; next to the new classics of socialist realism it included Western authors like Jack London, Theodor Dreiser, Upton Sinclair, and John Reed, who depicted the hard life of the working people under the tyranny of capitalism and criticized Western bourgeois societies and culture. The paratexts of the translations and, more broadly, the reception of foreign literatures emphasized the ideological aspects of the texts, framing their plots, characters, and stylistic features within the logic of class struggle.

This does not mean that, after decades of controlled culture, the USSR or the countries in the Eastern bloc were exclusively populated by ‘new soviet people’ (Ustryalov 1934) or the notorious *homo sovieticus*. Publishers and translators, like every other citizen living behind the Iron Curtain, learned to discern what was plausible and possible under party regulations and mastered the art of self-censorship in their public conduct. The specific circumstances of each national context and the different dispensations that applied in each, emerge clearly from the differing reception of George Orwell’s *1984*, for example. It was published legally in Slovenia in 1967, but only much later in Poland in 1988, when the socialist system was already creaking at the seams—although a secret, CIA-funded, programme for distributing Western books behind the Iron Curtain had smuggled a translation of it into Poland already in 1956. It wasn’t published in the USSR until 1988 either, although underground and imported translations did circulate in some of the Soviet republics. Translations that dissented from the official party line—produced either locally or sent in from abroad—constituted a significant part of the translation cultures of the region, which developed well beyond the limiting factors of the ruling ideology. The variety of the translation practices within the Soviet bloc make it clear that we should not imagine there was total repression and control of the cultural field: translation could offer a disguised way of expressing cultural values and beliefs that were shared before Marxism-Leninism became the mandatory philosophy.

The Centrality of Cultural Policies in Socialist Countries

Ideally, communism was supposed to be a movement towards a classless society. Instead, it established a new class of privileged party functionaries and bureaucrats (Djilas 1957). In Lenin's pragmatic definition (1920/1965) communism is 'soviet power'. Although the statement was made prior to the official formation of the Soviet Union, it anticipated the way in which the meaning of the Russian word 'совет' ['soviet', i.e. council] would change and acquire the meaning of 'Soviet Union'.

When the Bolsheviks seized power in Russia with the slogan 'All power to the soviets', it demanded the recognition of the councils of worker, soldier, and peasant deputies that had been convened in March 1917 together with the formation of the Provisional Government after the abdication of Tsar Nicholas II. The councils were formed to ensure that the Provisional Government did not resort to policies that would override the demands of workers and peasants. Initially it was not the Bolsheviks who dominated the councils but other socialist parties and the meaning of sovietization was not one-party dictatorship but rather a form of grassroots democracy (Mertelsmann 2007: 13).

The situation changed after the October Revolution when the Bolsheviks began to use the concept of sovietization to mark their takeover of regional and institutional administrations (Mertelsmann 2007: 14). The question of culture was placed on the agenda almost immediately. Mikhail Heller has quoted the daily newspaper *Novaya zhizn* [New life] of 26 April 1918 that reported on a meeting in Maxim Gorky's home between the Union of Activists in the Arts and Anatoly Lunacharsky, who was then Commissar of Education. The Artists wanted to administer their activities themselves, but Lunacharsky's response was:

We were against the Constituent Assembly [a democratically elected body formed to draw up a new constitution for Russia] in the political arena. We are all the more opposed to a Constituent Assembly in the arts. (Heller and Nekrich 1982/1986: 191)

As membership of the Bolshevik party was small (Pipes 1995: 121), the only way it could develop and expand was through the forceful indoctrination of ‘intellectual cadres’ who could master the Bolshevik ideology and disseminate it.

After their victory in the Russian Civil War, the Bolsheviks became more confident and their ideas on the administration of culture more refined. During the first Congress of Soviet Writers in 1934, the leading cultural ideologue of the Communist Party Andrei Zhdanov said:

Comrade Stalin has called our writers engineers of human souls. What does this mean? What duties does the title confer upon you? In the first place, it means knowing life so as to be able to depict it truthfully in works of art, not to depict it in a dead, scholastic way, not simply as ‘objective reality’, but to depict reality in its revolutionary development. In addition to this, the truthfulness and historical correctness of the artistic portrayal should be combined with the ideological remoulding and education of the toiling people in the spirit of socialism. This method in *belles-lettres* and literary criticism is what we call the method of socialist realism. (Zhdanov 1934/1935).

This is the cultural ideal that was exported and implemented in collaboration with local communists of the subjugated territories once the Russian Bolsheviks began to expand across the borders: Ukraine became a founding member of the Soviet Union in 1922, the countries of Central and Eastern Europe began to come under the Soviet sphere of influence with the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact in 1939 and were brought fully under Soviet control after the Second World War. From the perspective of theoretical Marxism-Leninism, this was justified because, by being sovietized, these peoples were being saved from the miseries and misconceptions of capitalism and directed towards the historically inevitable road of progress. At the same time there is every reason to describe the foreign policy of the Kremlin as both revolutionary and imperialistic (Zubok and Pleshakov 1996: 11–9): the communist world revolution could advance only by strengthening and expanding the Soviet empire. The subjugated territories included not only former parts of the Tsarist Russia but also the other countries of Eastern Europe and the Balkan region. The aggressive *realpolitik* of the Soviets and their attempts to

dictate to local administrations, however, provoked dissent among the local people, including local communists.

In order to avoid dissonant ideas spreading in the nations of the Eastern bloc, it was necessary for them to create an effective system of censorship, while at the same time denying its existence. The methods they used to regulate the ideas that could circulate in society were modelled on those of the Soviet *Glavnoe upravlenie po delam literatury i izdatel'stv* [Main Administration for Literary and Publishing Affairs], or *Glavlit*, which was established in 1922, and worked hand in hand with various departments of the Communist Party (Ermolaev 1997; Špirk 2008; Thomson-Wohlgemuth 2006). The euphemistic names of the institutions and the constitutional declarations guaranteeing freedom of speech could not prevent the general realization that the Party had become the main administrator of culture and literature. But censorship wasn't limited to all-powerful institutions, it was diffuse and capillary, reaching the microlevel of apparently insignificant everyday decisions through the actions of the 'good communists' who were in charge of cultural activity, and through the self-censorship of cultural workers. This is how censorship was exercised even in those countries where there was no official censorship authority, like Yugoslavia and Hungary. When studying the censorship of translations during the communist period, it is often impossible to determine, due to the lack of documentary evidence, which agents in the publishing process, from the translators to the party functionaries, were responsible for any intervention.

Another means of controlling book production was the state-planned economy. Stalin introduced full central planning in the Soviet Union in the late 1920s, and once other countries came under Soviet influence, they adopted the same economic system. Without extensive nationalization and the establishment of central bodies of economic planning, it would have been impossible to restructure society in line with the Party's objectives. These economic changes undermined the position of the earlier, pre-Soviet cultural elite. In the context of publishing, this meant the nationalization of publishing houses and printing works, which allowed the State to exert complete control over all the different stages of the publishing process, from the preliminary selection of texts to post-publication censorship—the last check that was made on already

printed books before they could be distributed. And, although they seem to include a common core of explicitly anti-communist literature like Arthur Koestler's *Darkness at Noon* and Orwell's *Animal Farm*, the lists of officially or unofficially prohibited foreign literature differed in the USSR and the other socialist countries and constantly changed as the political situation in each context evolved.

The Soviet economy was a command economy rather than planned one (Gregory 2005), that is, the State Planning Commission (Gosplan), ministries and production units had to follow the instructions of the Party, especially its Politburo. Long-term plans gave very general instructions but annual or quarterly plans were the real operational reference in that they allocated resources for production (Jeffries 1993: 11). Publishers also had to follow financial and paper quota plans, which determined the print run of each book. Fulfilling the plan was the watchword of Soviet bureaucracy, yet the many permissions that publishers depended on tended to be delayed and were often incompatible (Möldre 2005: 87–8) as they had to be given by various party-controlled administrative bodies. With the exception of Yugoslavia (Uvalić 2018) and Hungary (Hare and Révész 1992), where decentralized economic systems were introduced in the 1950s and late 1960s respectively, the other socialist states continued to run command economies until the end of the Soviet era (Jeffries 1993).

Alongside central planning, another way to regulate publications was to inculcate Soviet values in writers and translators. This was done by means of Writers Unions as the above quote by Zhdanov clearly shows. The Writers Union of the Soviet Union was actually formed by a decree of the Central Committee of the Communist Party. Former literary organizations were dissolved and writers and translators had to join the union in order to be able to publish their work. Members of the Writers Union were paid generously for their work, as long as they followed party discipline and its artistic directives. These concerned not only translation policy and the selection of authors to be translated, but also textual and translation strategies. The central issue when it came to translating, was the inevitable dilemma of whether to translate sense-for-sense or word-for-word; but these philological discussions had to pay lip service to party jargon as Brian Baer reveals in his reflection on the rewritings of Kornei

Chukovsky's thinking on translation (Baer 2021). In accordance with the general pattern of Sovietization of countries outside the Soviet Union, the Writers Union's model for the ideological organization and control of publishing was adopted by the other Central and Eastern European socialist countries after the Second World War, and translators were generally organized into a sub-section of the Writers Union, with the interesting exception of the Yugoslavian Union of Literary Translators, which was founded in 1953 and was the first autonomous association of translators in the post-war socialist bloc.

The Role of Translators and Editors

Even though the role of the party as instigator of cultural life cannot be overemphasized, that of translators and editors should not be underestimated either. They were keenly aware of the functional value of their work as a form of communication that could either comply or clash with their cultural and political environment (Lange 2012). Translators and editors working under communism often described their activity as a game that had no fixed rules; where one had to be clever enough to get round the censorship regulations (Humphrey 2008; Sherry 2013; Lange 2017; Monticelli 2020). Nataliia Rudnytska recounts a fascinating example of this game in Ukraine where Vsevolod Riazanov and Dora Karavkina proposed Herman Hesse's novel *Unterm Rad* [Beneath the Wheel] for publication in 1958, classifying Hesse as 'an outstanding representative of German *critical realism of the nineteenth century*'. When the novel, the first translation of Hesse within the Soviet Union, was published three years later, it was described as offering 'sharp criticism of the senseless bourgeois system of youth education' (Rudnytska 2021). This is a good example of how the forewords of these books tended to reframe the texts they introduced, though this was not necessarily a demonstration of fidelity to party values, but rather an acknowledgement of these values intended merely to enable the translation to be published. At the same time, it was important to get a hitherto untranslated author on the list of 'approved' writers in the Soviet Union: the presence of a translation in one of the Soviet republics made it

easier to justify the translation of the author in others. This did not completely exclude the possibility of translating non-approved authors in the different languages of the republics without a previous Russian translation. However, this required a lot of effort by local editors and often presumed close personal contacts with local censorship authorities, in order to obtain the necessary permissions.

Both empirical research and theoretical reflection on the cultural practices within the Soviet system and, more generally, under communism (Yurchak 2006; Raud 2016: 151–71), indicate that although there were established structures of political power that should have supported the Soviet social order, the popular response to official discourse was ambiguous. The citizens of the Soviet bloc were supposed to take part in constructing a new Soviet culture by destroying the historical one, but this resulted in a mental conflict that was not compensated for by the promised benefits of the new communist future they were building. The experiences people had prevented them from believing in the possibility of a fundamentally new social era, and thus the rupture and the break with their past that was officially preached remained only partial. This applies also to translation. A very vivid example of this is the case of the Yugoslav communist party official, Milovan Djilas, who translated John Milton's *Paradise Lost* on toilet paper during his imprisonment at the hands of Jozip Broz Tito (Strojan 2017). Although Djilas could never have hoped to publish his translation, the very fact that he resorted to translation in order to maintain his sanity shows that under the conditions of ideological pressure, translation can function as a humanizing refuge. As Baer has argued,

[o]ne of the unintended effects of communism was to foster an intelligentsia that looked to world literature to express and preserve what it saw as eternal aesthetic and moral values, perceived to be threatened by the regime's vulgar interpretations of Marxist ideology and its centralized cultural policy. (Baer 2011: 9)

Perceived in this way translation cannot be considered an escapist or elitist activity; it was of constructive value.

United in Difference? Times and Local Cultures of the European Communist Regimes

The ideological clarity and relative homogeneity of communism is in marked contrast to the heterogeneity of the right-wing European regimes that are generally labelled fascist, such as Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy, or para-fascist, such as the Franco regime in Spain and the *Estado Novo* in Portugal (Griffin 1991; Rundle 2018). Nevertheless, any comparison between the different contexts of European communism is challenging when we consider that there were nine different communist countries (Albania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary, Poland, Romania, the Soviet Union, and Yugoslavia), including a multilingual and multinational Union and a Federation of Republics, and that these regimes lasted between 40 and 70 years.

The socialist states can be divided into two distinct groups: communist Russia and the first Soviet republics that were founded before the Second World War on the one hand, and the Soviet Republics that were annexed after the war as well as the countries of Eastern Europe that became socialist after the war, on the other. While the uncontested leadership of the USSR within the Eastern bloc and the process of Sovietization which quickly reshaped post-war socialist countries had a strong homogenizing impact on their social and cultural spheres, it is clear that the specific experiences of pre-war Soviet communism, the diverging positions of Eastern European countries in the Second World War, and the different patterns of the post-war communist takeovers in these countries, led to a degree of heterogeneity in their respective processes of Sovietization. This generated explosive tensions in some cases, such as East Germany and Hungary in the 1950s and Czechoslovakia in the 1960s, or even an explicit refusal to follow Moscow's dictates, as in the case of Yugoslavia, which officially defined itself as a socialist country but actually followed its relatively autonomous 'third way' between the socialist and the capitalist blocs. This means that even for post-war communism, it is far too exaggerated to speak of the 'same constraints' and 'identical conditions' (Chalvin et al. 2019: 367) for all the communist regimes of Eastern Europe.

Translation is a revealing indicator of the diachronic and synchronic complexity of communist power. In the earlier years of revolutionary Russia, the massive translation project of world literature led by Maxim Gorky's *Vsemirnaia Literatura* [World Literature] served the ideals of internationalism and cultural emancipation of the masses which lay at the basis of the revolution (Rudnytska 2021), while in the earlier years of Soviet Ukraine, a similar translation renaissance was related more to a local, national agenda (Kalnychenko and Kolomiyets 2021). With the rise of Stalin and Stalinism, culminating in the Great Purge of the 1930s, translation lost its revolutionary *élan* and was bent to the more internal priorities of cultural circulation and homogenization, or Russification, of the different republics of the USSR. The emerging canon of socialist realism dictated also the criteria for the choice of texts from foreign literatures, and the number of non-USSR texts translated dropped sharply in all the republics of the Union (Brandenberger 2002; Clark 2011). During this period translation became for many banned and repressed Soviet authors not only a way of earning a living, but also an opportunity to continue their activity as writers, albeit in a secondary position (Baer 2015). This later became a general pattern in all the Eastern bloc which ensured a minimum of cultural continuity, through translation, even during the bleakest periods of post-war Stalinist repression.

The early Sovietization of the newly acquired republics of the USSR and the socialist countries of Eastern Europe was extraneous to the revolutionary fervour and creativity of the earlier 1920s; it was almost exclusively based on the strictly codified form that Soviet culture had assumed under Stalinism. The exemplifying character of literature, which followed the style of socialist realism, became a means to transform the cultural and social character of the new socialist countries and peoples. Thus, the translation of canonical Soviet authors and their imitation by local writers were, not surprisingly, the primary means with which socialist realism was canonized in the whole of the post-war Eastern bloc—even in Yugoslavia, where extensive translations of Maksim Gorky's works were planned immediately after the end of the war. This canonization of the Soviet model was soon consolidated by cross-translations of local imitations of socialist realism in all the new countries of the Eastern bloc. Accompanied as it was by extensive bans

on pre-war translations of Western literature and ideologically unfit local authors, this process provoked a quick and significant cultural break in many Eastern European countries.

While in Yugoslavia this imposed Sovietization came to an end after the rift with the Soviet Union at the end of the 1940s, for the rest of the Socialist bloc it was Khrushchev's denunciation of the cult of personality and Stalinist terror in 1956 which opened a new political and cultural phase. Khrushchev's Thaw was an attempt to humanize socialism and, despite continuing censorship, it was understood as a push towards liberalization, touching first and foremost the cultural sphere as a kind of 'second cultural revolution' (Buchli 1999; Kozlov and Gilburd 2013; Zalambani 2009). The Thaw didn't only affect the USSR, but all socialist countries, although to varying degrees and according to different local circumstances: liberalization in Hungary ended with the repression of the 1956 Revolution and in the GDR with the construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961; and the liberalizing experiment was terminated throughout the Eastern bloc following the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968.

One of the principal outcomes of the Thaw was the opening of the cultural borders of the socialist bloc (Gorsuch and Koenker 2013) which resulted in an unprecedented invasion of Western and, more broadly, world literature, including authors such as Faulkner, Kafka, Sartre, Camus, and T. S. Eliot who were banned in the previous decade. The flourishing of new, relatively autonomous literary magazines devoted to translations of foreign literature such as *Innostrannaya Literatura* (1955) in Soviet Russia, *Loomingu Raamatukogu* (1957) in Soviet Estonia, or the Czech magazine *Světová literatura* (1956) are important early signs of this shift in the cultural policies of the Socialist bloc, which took longer to have an impact on the centralized book publishing system. Thus, in the USSR and many socialist countries, the 1960s saw the rise of a new generation of young intellectuals who were strongly influenced by this renewed contact with previously inaccessible foreign literature. Censorship was still imposed during this period, but its focus shifted from political to puritanical issues (Sherry 2015).

It is therefore no coincidence that one of the immediate effects of the ideological turn of the screw that was applied during what Mikhail Gorbachev called the Era of Stagnation, the period under Brezhnev's

leadership which followed the Thaw, was a new closure in the USSR towards Western culture and increased state control over the quotas of translated literature, which now privileged authors from the Soviet Republics and the socialist countries. As always, this increased closure in the Soviet Union also impacted the other countries of the Socialist bloc; though there were differences and exceptions here too, such as János Kádár's 'Goulash Communism' in Hungary, and the cultural leadership of Lyudmila Zhivkova in Bulgaria, both of whom maintained liberalizing policies in the cultural field well into the following decade. The new constraints imposed during the Brezhnev era triggered a strong revival of *samizdat* [self-published] literature which had developed in the USSR after Stalin's death. This underground system of distribution served not only as a channel for the circulation of explicitly anti-communist literature, but also as a venue where translators could more freely develop their own literary agendas, becoming the initiators of independent translation projects aimed at complementing the official publishing scene in different ways. The same translators and the same authors were often active in both the official publishing system and *samizdat*; this generated an interesting interaction in the 1970s and the 1980s between official and underground cultural activities (Looby 2021).

The phenomenon of *samizdat* translations gradually came to an end in the second half of the 1980s when Mikhail Gorbachev's *perestroika* began a progressive liberalization of the social and cultural atmosphere in the Soviet Union and the socialist countries of Eastern Europe. The publication of official translations of many of the most taboo works of the previous decades—such as Orwell's *1984*—in several languages of the Communist bloc marked the progressive collapse of the censorship system and opened a new era in which an initial effort to fill the important cultural gaps of the Soviet period with quality literature was rapidly overtaken by the capitalist logic of the international market. An unintended, though interesting, consequence of this has been the quick reprint of many unrevised translations from the communist period which involuntarily reproduce for the new 'free' readership the cuts and adjustments of communist censorship.

Communism Through the Lens of Translation

The thorough politicization of culture played a crucial role in the ideological transformation, or what we have been calling the ‘Sovietization’, of society in the USSR and the other socialist countries of Eastern Europe. Culture thus became a frontline in the struggle to eradicate pre-revolutionary, bourgeois values and establish the new values of communist society. This is the reason why the Party was so obsessed with cultural issues and constructed an enormous bureaucratic apparatus to direct and control every sphere of cultural production. Translation is a particularly revealing standpoint from which to study this cultural struggle because the liminary position of its processes and agents make it possible to observe the tensions which crossed the extensive ideological use of cultural policies under communism (see Monticelli and Lange 2014).

The first interesting aspect here is the tension between, on the one hand, the emancipatory and internationalist character of the communist reconstruction of society, which included ambitious translation projects such as Gorky’s *Vsemirnaia Literatura*, and on the other hand, the need to maintain ideological purity, both by shutting out the external (particularly Western) world, and by engaging in an implacable battle against bourgeois cosmopolitanism. On the translation front this led to foreign literature being categorized under a series of ideologically charged labels: ‘critical realist’, ‘progressive’ and ‘communist’ authors, ‘engaged literature of colonial countries’, ‘bourgeois’, ‘formalist’ literature, ‘anti-communist’ literature, to name but a few; and it also led to the imposition of translation quotas and bans, and the ideological framing of translated books. As Baer (2015) and Monticelli (2016) have argued, censorship did not only have a repressive and destructive function in this context, but also a constitutive and creative one: it shaped new sensibilities, new forms of expression, new ways of thinking and behaving. The construction of a new shared canon of foreign literature homogenized the cultural reference points of the communist bloc and helped to consolidate the cultural unity, first of the USSR and later that of the other countries within the bloc, under the leadership of Moscow.

Transformed into one of the ideological fronts of Soviet cultural policy, translation remained a highly contested and contradictory site (Baer 2021). Even if, as Kalnychenko and Kolomieyts (2021) explain, in the vision and practices of the party all the different agents in the translation process were conceived as a single, impersonal team with strictly defined goals, in real practice this was actually not always the case: translators, editors, stylistic editors, publishers, critics, translation scholars, reviewers, and censors did not all work to the same agenda. Particularly interesting from this point of view are the clashes between initiatives ‘from above’ and initiatives ‘from below’ (Witt 2011), where translators, editors, and publishers often struggled to keep a window open on the outside world due to the party’s restrictions. Both underground and official translations became a fertile ground for ‘Aesopian’ language and discursive dissimulation; more so than was possible with the strictly monitored original production (Witt 2021). The marginality of translation, and its polyphonic character (author/translator), became advantages that created a relatively more open and less controlled space for expression. Particularly during the Thaw of the 1960s, translations of previously banned authors and texts helped to constitute an alternative canon for the intelligentsia of socialist countries and played an important role in the renewal of local cultures, shifting the attention of cultural agents away from the limited topics and strict formal requirements of socialist realism.

Research on translation thus helps to add nuance to our understanding of the political and social options that were available under communist rule, allowing us to avoid the inadequate dichotomies that are often employed to describe this period: compliance vs resistance, censorship vs freedom, and officialdom vs dissidence. Between the two poles of the official, centralized, and ideologically tuned state publishing system and the underground anti-communist publications, we find a whole series of official, but peripheral cultural venues which developed a cultural agenda that was not explicitly dissident but was nevertheless incompatible with the prescriptions of the regime, such as journals, magazines, public readings, and other cultural events. It would be a mistake to underestimate the impact that these venues had on cultural life and its agents.

A final question we should consider is the hierarchical political structure of the communist bloc which was also mirrored in its social, cultural,

and linguistic interaction and stratification. The evidence on translation flows confirms that within the Soviet Union, Russian dominated over the other languages and literatures of the Union (Kamovnikova 2017); and also that Soviet literature dominated the other literatures of the communist bloc. In the other socialist countries a correct ideological framing and interpretation of translated texts was often achieved by translating paratexts and reviews by Soviet literary scholars. However, a careful analysis of translations also reveals local agendas which were not in line with the colonizing aims of the Soviet Union and which were a sign of the influence that local cultural traditions, and the international interactions which had forged them during the pre-communist period, still had on the ‘new’ Sovietized culture and society (Annus 2018). Both old translations which continued to circulate, and new significant translations brought out in difficult circumstances, maintained a degree of cultural anachronism and dislocation within socialist societies (Monticelli and Lange 2014); this prevented the complete ideological closure of the social and cultural fields within their communist present, and kept open a significant relationship with the local past and the contemporary external world, particularly the capitalist West.

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Part II

The Soviet Union



3

Translation and the Formation of the Soviet Canon of World Literature

Nataliia Rudnytska

Introduction

In the USSR, literary translation was used as a powerful tool of ideological manipulation (see for example Gentzler 2002; Witt 2011; Sherry 2012). As will be discussed in the following sections, due to a policy of selective exclusions and admissions, the world literature canon was represented as a single entity spreading ‘universal’ and ideologically appropriate ideas, values, and aesthetics, with Russian literature being its most important part. For non-Soviet authors, admission to the canon often meant legitimized appropriation: for instance, Theodor Dreiser in Soviet literary and translation criticism was often referred to as ‘our Dreiser’ (Panov and Panova 2014) while Robert Burns in the highly esteemed translations by Samuil Marshak became ‘a

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Russian'.¹ The official Soviet canon of world literature was established in the 1930s–50s and formalized through the literary-bibliographical reference books *Osnovnye proizvedeniia khudozhestvennoi literatury stran narodnoi demokratii* [Major Literary Works of People's Democracies] (1951) and *Osnovnye proizvedeniia inostrannoi literatury* [Major Works of Foreign Literature], regularly published since 1960, as well as multi-volume collections of world literature, such as *Biblioteka svitovoi klasyky* [Library of World Classics] (1957–74), and *Biblioteka vsemirnoi literatury* [Library of World Literature] (1967–77). Despite the severe ideological control which was imposed through a sophisticated system of state censorship (see Fedotova 2009; Etkind 2001), in the 1960s and 70s an alternative canon of the Soviet intelligentsia developed alongside the official canon of world literature.

The role of translation in establishing domestic canons for foreign literatures has been emphasized by a number of contemporary translation scholars (Venuti 1998; Woods 2006; Spirk 2014). Literary translation acquired a special significance in the USSR where the Soviet power realized 'the largest more or less coherent project of translation the world has seen to date' (Witt 2011: 149) and at the same time the sphere of literary translation became a site of resistance (Gentzler 2002: 216; Striha 2006). Nevertheless, the roles that literary translation and the official Soviet canon of world literature played in the establishment of a Soviet identity, the cultural homogenization of the so-called 'Soviet peoples', and their cultural colonization have not received much scholarly attention. These roles will be discussed in this chapter through the analysis of Soviet translation, meaning both translation into Russian and into other languages of the USSR. As well as examining the role of translation and its agents in establishing the official Soviet canon of world literature and an alternative canon of Soviet *intelligentsia*, such an analysis will make it possible to reveal the specific functions of literary translation as a factor of canon formation in a multinational society existing under totalitarianism.

This analysis is based on empirical data on Soviet book publishing in *Ezhegodnik Knigi* [Book Annual] (1925–91) and *Book Publishing in the USSR* (1966), as well as multivolume collections of world literature, Soviet state documents, critical and bibliographical publications, editorial instructions and correspondence, and translators' memoirs. The

study is arranged chronologically, covering the period from the Bolshevik revolution of 1917 to the dissolution of the USSR in 1991. This long period of time is divided into six distinct stages in the establishment of a canon of world literature in the Soviet state:

1. the transitional period from 1917 to the late 1920s;
2. the period in which the Soviet (Stalinist) literary canon was established (1930s);
3. the years of the so-called 'Great Patriotic War' (1941–45);
4. late Stalinism (1946–53);
5. late Socialism (1953–85);
6. Perestroika (1985–91).

From 1917 to the Late 1920s: From Enlightenment to Exclusion

The dramatic changes introduced by the Bolsheviks in all spheres of Soviet society during the first years of their rule could not but influence the field of literary translation. If, at the beginning of the period, the cultural elite dominated this field and determined the formation of the world literature canon, by the late 1920s it was the Party that was using translated literature as a powerful ideological weapon and was controlling the process of canon formation to enhance the Soviet ideology.

Due to a severe economic crisis in Russia during the first years after the Revolution, book production was scarce. Nevertheless, in 1917 Maxim Gorky initiated the creation of the *Vsemirnaia Literatura* [World Literature] publishing house with the aim of (re)translating and publishing the best works of world literature, and providing access to the canon for the 'new society' that was being formed. In 1919, the state-funded publishing house started operating under the direct patronage of Anatoly Lunacharsky, the People's Commissar for Education, and Lenin himself. The publishing house integrated many outstanding literary figures and researchers, including representatives of the pre-revolutionary Russian cultural elite (Alexander Blok, Nikolai Gumilev, Marina Tsvetaeva,

Yevgeny Zamyatin and many others). It was Gorky's personal responsibility to ensure that no material hostile to Soviet ideology and power was published (Khlebnikov 1971: 670) but it was the only restriction the Bolsheviks imposed.

After Gorky left the country and many of the old Russian cultural elite emigrated in 1921–22, the World Literature publishing house changed its initial programme and functioned within other state projects, in particular producing children's literature (Khlebnikov 1971: 699). Nevertheless, by 1924, about 200 volumes of outstanding works of classical, European, Asian, Arabic, North and Latin American literatures had been published. As Maria Khotimsky points out,

the understanding of world literature by scholars and translators of the World Literature publishing house extended beyond the traditional canon of European literature – a remarkable fact that parallels analogous developments in the Western literary world in the second half of the twentieth century. (Khotimsky 2011: 61)

Despite such a broad understanding of world literature in the USSR, in the following decades the inclusiveness of the Soviet canon was strictly ideological as it included only ideologically correct works that helped to promote Soviet values and aesthetics and create an impression of their universality.

Back in the early 1920s, the World Literature publishing house published translated foreign literature for different readerships, and the staff employed different strategies of selection and translation depending on the target reader. The well-educated could enjoy hardcover editions of masterpieces of world literature translated into Russian and supplemented with scholarly commentaries within *Osnovnaia seriia* [The Main Series], while *Narodnaia seriia* [The People's Series], on the other hand, offered abridged and adapted translations in the form of thirty-page paperbacks. These were translations of works that were considered to be ideologically appropriate for the working masses; among them were works describing the lives of ordinary people (Octave Mirbeau's short stories), depicting the fight for freedom (Friedrich Schiller's *The Robbers* and *Wilhelm Tell*), expressing anticlerical ideas (Voltaire's *The White Bull*

and *Candide*) and appropriate political ideas (John Reed's *Ten Days That Shook the World*).

Translations of foreign works dedicated to the struggle of the proletariat in different countries were the main product of another state enterprise: the Krasnaia Nov' [Red Novelty] publishing house founded in 1922. In the early 1920s it published novels by Victor Hugo, Upton Sinclair, Émile Zola, Anatole France, and another edition of Reed's *Ten Days*. These books were designed for a mass readership and were sold at a cheap price (Govorov and Kupriianova 1998: 202).

The selection of literary works for working masses was more dependent on the ideological demands of Soviet power than those selected for the well-educated in *The Main Series*. In fact, it amounted to a class distinction; for this reason books aimed at the cultural elite were published only in the first few years after the Bolshevik revolution, and accessible adaptations of foreign works ceased to be published by the end of the 1920s, with a gradual increase in the educational level. Later translations were usually made for an average 'Soviet reader', without specifying target audiences on the basis of their educational (in fact, social) backgrounds.

According to the statistical data of the State Chamber of Books of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR) on the book publishing sector in the Soviet Union,² up to 1928 there was a period of constant growth in this sector and the number of translated literary works also increased considerably due to the state cultural and economic policy. The Decree on State Publishing of 11 January 1918,³ commissioned the People's Committee on Education to 'nemedlenno pristupit' k polnomasshtabnoi izdatel'skoi deiatel'nosti' [immediately embark on large-scale publishing activities] (Dekret 1957: 298) and the state publishing houses responded accordingly. On the other hand, the New Economic Policy (NEP) introduced in 1921 promoted the growth of the publishing industry as well. As can be seen from Table 3.1, in 1925–27 the number of literary translations grew from 517 to 831. In 1928–29 Stalin introduced full central planning, re-nationalization and collectivization of agriculture that de facto meant the end of the NEP, and in the sphere of literary translation it resulted in a significant reduction: from 562 translations in 1928 to 440 in 1929.

Table 3.1 Translated literature in the USSR in 1925–29⁴

	Source language	Number of books/Percentage of total (per year)				Total number/Average percentage
		1925	1926	1927	1929	
1	English	234/45.3%	253/43%	334/40.2%	233/41.5%	1199/40.8%
2	French	154/29.8%	177/30%	251/30.2%	132/23.5%	838/28.5%
3	German	50/9.6%	56/9.5%	94/11.3%	61/10.9%	303/10.3%
4	Other foreign languages (Hungarian, Spanish, Italian, Polish, Chinese, Japanese etc.)	71/13.7%	92/15.6%	128/15.4%	112/19.9%	483/16.4%
5	Languages of the 'Soviet peoples'	7/1.4%	10/1.6%	19/2.3%	24/4.2%	108/3.7%
6	Ancient Greek and Latin	1/0.2%	2/0.3%	5/0.6%	0/0%	9/0.3%
7	Total	517	590	831	562	2940

In 1925–29 translations were made mainly from English, French, and German; ancient Greek and Latin literatures were almost completely neglected. It is also significant that translations from languages of the so-called ‘Soviet peoples’ constituted only a small part of the total number, especially in 1925–26. In 1929 the number of such translations increased significantly, signalling the beginning of a new ideological course in the USSR aimed at forming a Soviet identity.⁵ Another fact worth mentioning is the increasing number of translations from Yiddish which was one of the languages of the USSR: if in 1925 these translations constituted 0.4 per cent of the total number, in 1929 their number increased to 4.5 per cent, while translations from *all the other* Soviet languages together amounted to 6.4 per cent that year. This can be partly explained by the ethnic policy of the Communist Party during that period⁶; on the other hand, a closer look at this ‘translation boom’ reveals a keen interest not so much in the source literature but in a specific author, Sholem Aleichem. Aleichem was the most published of a few Jewish authors printed in the USSR owing to his literary merits and ideological appropriateness: the fact that he depicted the hard life of the poor in czarist Russia and that he was a friend of Gorky’s was enough to create a positive image of the writer, and his works were translated and popularized through critical essays, conferences and other events. In 1929 six of his books were published in Russian translation and one in Ukrainian (*Ezhegodnik* (1925–91): 367), while in 1930, 18 of his books were published in Ukrainian and two more in Russian (*Eistrakh* 2012).

The editorial policy towards Aleichem provides a typical example of the Soviet *canonization* of writers. I use the term in the way it is used by Nailya Safiullina (2012: 559) to denote ‘the process of transforming a writer into an exemplar for others to emulate’; such canonization had become a typical and permanent strategy of the Soviet official cultural policy since the late 1920s. The method of Soviet canonization involved foregrounding a limited number of ideologically appropriate authors as representatives of their national literatures, while totally excluding all the rest. As Khotimsky (2011: 96) notes in reference to the translation of Western authors, ‘[t]he inclusion of particular authors, and the politically

charged nature of their inclusion, meant that they served as a representation of the West as a whole'. This strategy was used towards any literature and was practiced for at least three decades.

In the second half of the 1920s this strategy continued to be used as a limited number of authors were (re)published each year by state publishing houses, such as Gosudarstvennoe Izdatel'stvo [State Publishing House], Priboi [Landswell] publishing house, while other well-known foreign authors were neglected or published only very sporadically. For example, while only one work by William Shakespeare was published in this period (*Hamlet* in a Russian translation, 1929), dozens of books by Jack London were published annually (see Table 3.2), with over a million copies each year.

Among the most published foreign authors of the period we can single out two groups of writers: those who remained popular throughout the Soviet period,⁷ such as London, Guy de Maupassant, and Walter Scott, and those published extensively but only during specific periods, such as O. Henry, Upton Sinclair, and Jules Verne.

Authors like London, Maupassant, and Scott were highly respected by official critics throughout the Soviet era: London was considered one of the founders of *proletarian* literature in the West (Badanova 1969); Maupassant was referred to as one of the last great French realists who felt 'duhovnuiu nischetu, poshlost', egoizm sobstvennikov' [the spiritual poverty, meanness, egotism of property owners] (Raskin 1969); while Scott, according to the *Great Soviet Encyclopedia*, wrote on 'bespravnoe polozhenie shotlandskogo naroda' [the lack of rights of the Scots] and showed 'determinirovannost' sudeb liudei otnosheniiami sobstvennosti' [the determinacy of human fates by ownership relations] (Belskii 1969).

Verne and O. Henry were published extensively only during the 1925–29 period and during *perestroika*.⁸ Sinclair was among the most translated authors in the 1920s due to his two novels: *King Coal* (1917), about a miners' strike, and *Jimmie Higgins* (1919), about 'riadovoi amerikanskii proletarii, vstaiushchii na zashchitu Oktiabr'skoi revoliutsii' [an average American proletarian defending the October revolution] (Gilenson 1969). But his later literary career was characterized by official critics as having gone through a 'decline' in the early 1930s and a

Table 3.2 The most published foreign authors in 1925–29 with number of titles released per year

	1925		1926		1927		1928		1929	
Jack London	70		Jack London	39	Jack London	45	Jack London	28	Jack London	26
Upton Sinclair	29		Guy de Maupassant	13	Guy de Maupassant	22	Walter Scott	15	Jules Verne	26
O. Henry	20		O. Henry	13	Upton Sinclair	20	Upton Sinclair	13	Guy de Maupassant	23

‘creative crisis’ in the 1950s–60s (ibid.), and he would never be published as widely as he was in the 1920s.

The 1930s: (Re)Shaping the World Literature Canon

The 1930s was a period of intensive formation of the Soviet canon of world literature, and this process, just as the state cultural policy on the whole, was predetermined to a large degree by the need to establish a new Soviet identity. The concept of world literature was expanded correspondingly, incorporating authors and titles of all cultures, including the ‘Soviet peoples’. For example, Karl Radek (1934) in his speech on world literature at the First Soviet Writers’ Congress in 1934 used the concept in its broadest sense, speaking of Aeschylus, Charles Dickens, and Mikhail Sholokhov among others; the concept was used in this meaning throughout the Soviet period. The development of literature was viewed as a single trajectory from classical literature to socialist realism with socialist realist literature as the only heir of the world literature of the previous centuries (ibid.). This vision of literature which neglected national cultural specifics but foregrounded socio-political factors is reflected in the way foreign authors were grouped in the *Book Annual* where they were listed alphabetically in two big sections: ‘Pisateli/poety antichnosti, srednevekov’ia i absoliutistsko-feodal’noi epokhi’ [Writers/poets of antiquity, Middle Ages and absolutist-feudal epoch] and ‘Pisateli/poety kapitalisticheskikh i kolonial’nykh stran’ [Writers/poets of capitalist and colonial countries] without any reference to the language/national literature of the original.⁹

The functioning of the whole sphere of literary translation in the 1930s was defined by the new course aimed at a ‘mutual enrichment’ of languages and literatures of the ‘Soviet peoples’ launched in 1928 (Gorky 1953). Nevertheless, ‘despite the internationalist rhetoric of official Soviet ideology, the Union’s internal policies were actually oriented towards cultural homogeneity and the Russification of different ‘Soviet peoples’ (Monticelli and Lange 2014: 102). It was a period of intensive cultural colonization on the part of Russia: the vast majority of the works

translated were by Russian authors, as can be seen from Tables 3.3 and 3.4.

Although there is some variation between target languages, the general tendency is clear: translations from Russian constitute 74.8 per cent of all translations, while translations from other ‘Soviet’ languages, only 8.5 per cent. Translations into these languages from *foreign* languages make up a modest 16.7 per cent.

As to translations *into* Russian, the situation is different. In 1935, the only year in the 1930s when the data on the Soviet book publishing were made public, 161 translations from national languages of the Soviet Union were published, and a roughly equal 164 translations from foreign languages. This correlation of literatures represented in translations into Russian and other languages is obviously not accidental as it reflects the special status of Russian literature. As Valentina Kharkhun (2009: 13) points out, in the context of the all-Union canon, Russian literature served as the canon for other national literatures, and ritualistic reference to it was obligatory both for literary and critical discourse, all of which ‘codified’ the status of non-Russian national literatures within the USSR as provincial and marginal.

Table 3.3 Translated literature in the USSR in 1935¹⁰

Target language (with the number of native speakers) ¹¹	Source language		
	Russian (77.8 mln speakers)	Other languages of ‘Soviet peoples’	Foreign languages
Ukrainian (31.2 mln)	90	5	20
Belorussian (4.7 mln)	24	–	6
Kazakh (4 mln)	13	3	–
Uzbek (3.9 mln)	8	2	1
Tatar (2.9 mln)	16	–	–
Yiddish (2.6 mln)	19	–	6
Georgian (1.8 mln)	3	–	6
Azerbaijan (1.7 mln)	6	7	3
Armenian (1.6 mln)	9	5	5
Mordovan (1.3 mln)	2	–	–
German (1.2 mln)	15	2	–
Chuvash (1.1 mln)	6	–	–
Total (percentage):	211 (74.8%)	24 (8.5%)	47 (16.7%)

Table 3.4 The most translated authors in 1935

Literature	Author	Number of translations	
		Russian	Other languages
Russian (Soviet)	Maxim Gorky	–	62
	Mikhail Sholokhov	–	23
	Dmitry Furmanov	–	14
	Alexander Serafimovich	–	9
	Alexander Fadeev	–	9
Russian (pre-revolutionary)	Leo Tolstoy	–	14
	Anton Chekhov	–	13
Foreign	Gustave Flaubert	10	3
	Romaine Rolland	10	2
	Honoré de Balzac	9	2

In the 1930s, translations *into* Russian acquired a special status: a published Russian translation of a foreign literary work, carefully censored before publishing, became not only this work's substitute providing its canonical interpretation for Russian-reading public, but it also functioned as 'a mediating filter' (Monticelli and Lange 2014: 102) between the foreign original and its translations into the languages of the 'Soviet peoples'. In Ukraine, foreign literature was normally translated directly from the original texts, but all translations were checked against the Russian translations in order to reproduce the same ideologically correct interpretations until the late 1980s (Kovhaniuk 1968: 40; Kohans'ka 2007: 19). Translations into the languages of the 'Soviet peoples' in the *Book Annual* were referred to as 'pereizdaniia' [republications] and the corresponding entries contained no information about the translators.

The Soviet Union tried to impose the Stalinist canon of world literature on other, non-Soviet cultures with the help of translation: a special publishing house was founded in Moscow in 1931. Up to 1938, it operated under the name Cooperative Publishing Society of Foreign Workers; in 1938–63 it was known as the Publishing House of Literature in Foreign Languages and later was reorganized into two publishing houses: Mir (a polysemous word meaning both 'world' and 'peace') and Progress. According to the Resolution of Sovnarkom (Council of People's Commissars) dated 27 March 1931, the aims of the publishing house

were publishing and distributing different kinds of literature among foreign workers, specialists, and students on the territory of the USSR.¹² For decades, this publishing house was viewed by Soviet state leaders as one of the USSR's main instruments of propaganda (see the Resolution of the Organizational Bureau of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of the Bolsheviks *On Improving Soviet Propaganda Abroad*).¹³ Every year this publishing house commissioned translations into languages such as English, French, and German of foreign works belonging to the Soviet canon of world literature. For example, in 1935 it published French author Paul Nizan's *Antoine Bloy* and *Short stories from China* in English translation and a German translation of London's *The Iron Heel*.

As can be seen from Table 3.4, the most translated foreign authors in 1935 were French ones; according to Katerina Clark (2011: 172), due to the anti-fascist movement in the mid-1930s there was intensive collaboration between the USSR and France, especially in the literary sphere, and 'it became common to pair French and Russian writers as the canon encapsulated'. As will be discussed further, the prevalence of certain national literatures among the works published in the USSR depending on the current policy of the Soviet state was also typical for the period of Late Socialism.

1941–45: 'Everything for the Front, Everything for Victory'

The period between the beginning of the German invasion of the USSR in June 1941 and the capitulation of the German army in May 1945, traditionally referred to as 'the Great Patriotic War' both in the USSR and contemporary Russia, was characterized by a complete mobilization of all resources—'vse dlia fronta, vse dlia pobedy' [everything for the front, everything for victory], as it was worded in the most popular war-time slogan. Funding for book production was limited in general, though books continued to perform a useful function as propaganda.

Soviet war-time propaganda was concentrated on promoting patriotism and the condemnation of fascism, raising martial spirits, and the

willingness of people to sacrifice their lives for the sake of their country. The literary works selected for translation were in line with these priorities. As can be seen from Table 3.5, the range of source languages was especially limited in 1941–43.

The choice of foreign works remained narrow throughout the whole period but they can be divided into five thematic groups:

1. Anti-fascist works, including anthologies *Gitler dolzhen past'. Stihi i prosa pisatelei-antifashistov* [Hitler must fall. Poems and prose by antifascist writers], *Nemetskie antifashistskie pisateli – boitsam Krasnoi Armii* [German antifascist writers to Red Army soldiers], and corresponding works by Willi Bredel, Wolfgang Langhoff, Lion Feuchtwanger, František Langer, and J. B. Priestley;
2. war stories, historical novels and other literature, intended to raise martial spirits: *Voennye rasskazy zapadnykh pisatelei* [War stories by Western writers], *The Fatherland in Danger* by Antoine Revillion, *General* by Mate Zalka, *The Attack on the Mill* by Émile Zola, and *Under Fire* by Henri Barbusse;
3. works of Communist immigrants to the USSR such as Béla Balazs, Johannes Becher, Friedrich Wolf, Óndra Łysohorsky and Chinese propagandist of Soviet ideology and literature, Lu Xun;
4. works by Voltaire, Bret Harte, John Galsworthy, Henry Lawson, London, Maupassant that were critical of ‘bourgeois society’;
5. a small number of works by authors that were ideologically neutral, such as Shakespeare, Eugène Labiche, and Pedro Calderon.

Table 3.5 Translated literature in the USSR in 1941–45

	Literature	Number of books per year				
		1941	1942	1943	1944	1945
1	German	12	14	4	4	5
2	French	10	13	2	9	12
3	English and American ¹⁴	9	9	9	33	21
4	Hungarian	4	8	7	2	6
5	Spanish	1	1	2	3	3
6	Others	0	3	5	9	20

1946–53: The Illusion of Inclusion

In the first post-war decade the Soviet canon of world literature remained a construct where exclusions and admissions were ideologically motivated. The foreign canon was based mainly on European and American literatures; while Asian literatures, apart from the regularly published *Arabian Nights*, were represented by a few authors from China, Turkey, Korea, and India, that appear to have been included for non-literary reasons.

For instance, translations from Chinese literature published in the USSR followed the fluctuations of Soviet foreign policy very closely. Thus, in the late 1940s no Chinese literature was translated at all, but in the two years after the signing of the Soviet-Chinese treaty of friendship in February 1950, thirty-nine Chinese titles were published.

Turkey was not a Soviet partner at the time, but translations of four Turkish authors were published regularly from 1950 onwards: Nasreddin, a thirteenth-century philosopher; Nâzım Hikmet, a Communist writer who studied in Moscow and moved to the USSR permanently in 1950; Orhan Kemal, a regular visitor to Moscow who was persecuted in Turkey for ‘Communist propaganda’; and Ali Sabahattin, who wrote about the poor being oppressed by the rich and the police.

It is worth mentioning that many of the foreign authors, selected for the Soviet canon of world literature in line with Soviet ideological and aesthetic values, were not necessarily recognized as canonical in their own countries. For example, nearly all the literature from the USA published in Russian during the first post-war decade was represented by three authors: Theodor Dreiser, Howard Fast, Mitchell Wilson (Orlova 1983: 5). Wilson, who criticized the US anti-Soviet policy in his novels, was presented as a leading American author, although his literary reputation was modest at home; Fast was a communist and Stalin Peace Prize winner; Dreiser’s decision to join the Communist Party a few months before his death allowed Soviet critics to present his life and career as a movement towards absolute truth. The Soviet canon did not include Dreiser’s novels *The Bulwark* and *The Stoic* (1946) which, although they were published in his *Collected Works* (1951–55), were ignored by the official critics as they did not correspond to the approved image of

this author as a herald of social revolution and of the victory of world communism. As to his social and political essays, only essays dedicated to the Soviet theme were translated, the rest were excluded and never published in the USSR (*ibid.*). Officially approved works by Dreiser were published annually and print runs were huge: 1950: 500,000 copies in different languages of the ‘Soviet peoples’; 1951: 470,000 copies; 1952: 320,000 copies. In the early 1950s, he was the most published foreign author in the USSR.

Explicitly anti-Soviet works and their authors, such as Arthur Koestler and George Orwell were never mentioned in Soviet public discourse, while translations of more ideologically appropriate foreign literary works were thoroughly censored and all unacceptable fragments were either cut or manipulated. Such ideologically unacceptable content included:

1. criticism of the Soviet ideology, policy, economy, culture, social life, communism, and communists;
2. prohibited themes which in different periods included the Civil War in Spain, fascism, anti-Semitism, Zionism;
3. religious content;
4. positive images of the so-called ‘class enemies’ and ‘bourgeois society’ as a whole;
5. Soviet ideologemes used in a heterodox meaning or improper context (see Sherry 2012);
6. patriotic feelings for any country other than the USSR;
7. any information about people who were banned in the Soviet Union.

The lists of ‘non-persons’ that were banned included political leaders such as Leon Trotsky and Béla Kun. ‘Friends of the USSR’ who were disappointed after visiting the country, such as André Gide and John Dos Passos, had the same status as other Western authors who criticized the USSR. Foreign writers Bruno Jasiński, Antal Hidas, and others who sympathized with the USSR, immigrated there to be later arrested as spies or counter-revolutionaries and, in some cases, executed. Censorial prohibitions were especially numerous in the period of late Stalinism;

some ‘non-persons’ and forbidden themes reappeared in public discourse during the Khrushchev Thaw, though anti-Soviet authors and works remained prohibited till the late 1980s (see Rudnytska 2015b).

By the end of the Stalin epoch, the Soviet world literature canon had become a comparatively stable ideological construct, translated into dozens of languages of the ‘Soviet peoples’, with a limited number of foreign writers incorporated along with canonized representatives of socialist realism. Due to translation and regular (re)publishing of works of a number of both Western and Eastern authors an illusion of inclusiveness was created; and in the Soviet translations writers and poets from different parts of the world all voiced the same ideas and values, thus asserting the universality of the Soviet ideology.

1953–85: After Stalin

Despite some fluctuations in Soviet cultural policy during the three decades between Stalin’s death in 1953 and the beginning of Gorbachev’s Perestroika in 1985, it is worth analysing the role of translation in the evolution of the Soviet world literature canon during the whole period, defined by Alexei Yurchak (2003) as ‘the period of Late Socialism’ in which there was a ‘hegemony of the form’.

During the first decade after Stalin’s death the censorial pressure remained strong; the approach of the censor in approving foreign literature for translation is characterized very well by Aleksandr Chakovsky, the editor-in-chief of *Inostrannaya Literatura* [Foreign Literature] journal (1955–63):

publishing, let’s say, ten good works does not completely neutralize the harm, the negative influence on the souls of people that one bad book can make. (Blium 2004: 397)

By ‘bad books’ Chakovsky means those not corresponding to ‘zadacham vospitaniia sovetskikh liudei v duhe predannosti ideiam kommunisma i nenavisti k burzhuaznomu bytu i ideologii’ [the task of bringing up the Soviet people in a spirit of devotion to ideas of communism and

hatred to the bourgeois way of life and ideology] (ibid.). Analysing a selection of works by foreign authors translated and published by Inostrannaya Literatura, Goslitizdat, and Molodaia Gvardiia publishing houses in 1960–62, Chakovsky enumerates works that are not in congruence with the above-mentioned tasks, and the list includes works by Archibald Cronin, Ernest Hemingway, George Simenon, and Maurice Druon (Blium 2004: 39–79).

Nevertheless, in the early 1960s it appears that translators would negotiate with editorial boards that normally served as the primary censorial bodies and promote the translation and publication of foreign literary works that previously had been considered ideologically inappropriate. According to Yurchak, a shift occurred from a ‘semantic’ to a more ‘pragmatic’ discursive regime, one where if you observed certain rules of behavior, this confirmed your status as a social actor who understood the regime’s rules and power relations (Yurchak 2003: 481–6) and gave you a certain amount of leeway.

As translator Sergei Romashko points out, ‘eto byla igra [...]: dobit’sia, opublikovat’, pust’ doidet khot’ urezannym do chitatelia’ [it was a game: to contest, to publish, to make it accessible to the reader, even if censored] (Romashko 2013). But this ‘game’ had certain rules and could take a long time as was the case when translators wanted to acquaint Soviet readers with Hermann Hesse’s works. Translators Vsevolod Riazanov and Dora Karavkina chose the novel *Beneath the Wheel* (1906) and made a ‘zaiivka na publikatsiiu’ [publication offer]¹⁵ to Goslitizdat publishing house in April 1958; in this offer Hesse was called ‘vydaiushchiisia predstavitel’ nemetskogo *kriticheskogo realizma XIX veka*’ [an outstanding representative of German *critical realism of the nineteenth century*] (my emphasis).¹⁶ In the abstract to the translation published three years later (1961), Hesse was also referred to as ‘talantlivyi predstavitel nemetskogo *kriticheskogo realizma*’ [a talented representative of German *critical realism*] while the novel was described as offering ‘ostraiia kritika bessmyslennoi burzhuaznoi sistemy vospitaniia molodezhi’ [sharp criticism of the senseless *bourgeois* system of forming youngsters] (my emphasis).¹⁷ The print run was small for an edition in Russian: 15,000 copies.

Even with just one translation published in the USSR a foreign author was usually included in the pool of 'approved' authors; in the next 'publication offer', for the translation of *The Glass Bead Game*,¹⁸ the translators did not need to employ official discourse to make Hesse fit the Soviet matrix of foreign literature that was appropriate for translation. The publication of Hesse's works in 1977 was initiated 'from above' to mark the author's centennial anniversary 'shiroko otmechaemomu mezhdunarodnoi obshchestvennost'iu' [broadly celebrated by international public] and 'predstavliat' nashu stranu za rubezhom' [to present our country abroad].¹⁹ The print run was 100,000 copies.

In the period of Late Socialism, it was normal practice that an initial selection be performed by experts who specialized in a number of foreign literatures and who suggested authors and works for translation to the editorial boards (Kalashnikova 2008: 84). This important function was also performed by a number of people among the Soviet cultural elite who used their status and connections within the Party to lessen the censorial pressure and promote the publishing of outstanding foreign authors. For example, academician Sergei Averintsev, who enjoyed a high political status, promoted the translation of works by Hesse and Thomas Mann (Romashko 2013).

Another positive tendency of the period was the increasing range of literatures representing world literature for Soviet readers. In 1941 works of six literatures were published, while the number of different literatures being translated rose to 25 in 1953, 36 in 1956, and 49 in 1957. From that time onwards, works of about 50 foreign literatures were published annually and ideologically appropriate works of many peripheral foreign literatures were accessible to Soviet readers. For example, *Book Annual 1975* included titles of Afghan, Bangladeshi, Burmese, Cambodian, Filipino, Indonesian, and Malaysian literatures. Nevertheless, the politically motivated exclusion of whole literatures was also typical. For example, Israeli literature was not published in the USSR, excepting a short period between Stalin's death and the break of diplomatic relations between the USSR and Israel in 1967; during this period, five books by Israeli authors were translated into Russian. Albanian literature had been known to Soviet readers before the Soviet-Albanian split, which occurred in 1957–61, but all the previously published Albanian

Table 3.6 German literature in Soviet translations in 1962–85

Years	Number of translations		
	Pre-partition Germany	GDR	FRG
1962–69	117	193	82
1970–79	201	193	66
1980–85	171	138	50
Total	489	524	198

books were banned, according to the Glavlit Order 43 dated 30 January 1962 (Blium 2008).

In the period 1962–77 works of German literature in *Book Annual* were divided into three separate groups: literature from before the division of Germany after the Second World War, literature of the German Democratic Republic (GDR), and literature of the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG). For obvious reasons, the literature of the Democratic Republic was translated much more extensively than that of the FRG until the late 1980s. As can be seen from Table 3.6, if in the 1960s literature of the GDR dominated, later more attention was also paid to classical German authors, while the literature of West Germany was never represented equally.

During the Late Socialism period, some major Soviet publishing houses launched series of world classics. In 1967, Khudozhestvennaya Literatura launched the *Biblioteka vsemirnoi literatury* [Library of World Literature] in Russian (200 volumes) which was published for a decade, with 300,000 copies for each volume. The *Library of World Literature* included works representing all historical periods and different world regions.²⁰ The inclusion of authors representing various cultures did not mean the inclusion of ideologically inappropriate authors and texts. For example, the French literature of the twentieth century was represented by *five* names: Roger du Gard whose fiction had been linked with the realist tradition of the nineteenth century highly valued as the harbinger of the socialist realism; Romain Rolland, an unofficial ambassador of French artists to the Soviet Union; Anatole France, the Socialist and outspoken supporter of the 1917 Russian Revolution; and the communists Luis Aragon and Henri Barbusse. Polish literature of the period was represented exclusively by the communist author Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz

who was removed from Polish textbooks after the collapse of the Soviet Bloc (Passent 2010). Modern Chinese literature was represented exclusively by Lu Xun, the head of the League of Left-Wing Writers in Shanghai.

Ideologically inappropriate parts were expurgated from all the texts included in the series. For instance, in the Russian translation of Geoffrey Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* by Ivan Kashkin and Osip Rumer, the Parson's tale was cut, along with some other parts, thereby reducing the religious background of the work and changing its ideological character (see Rudnytska 2014).

The *Library of World Literature* was dominated by Russian literature: 40 volumes out of 200 were dedicated to Russian authors of different periods; and in volumes dedicated to the Soviet short story (volumes 181, 182) there were 65 short stories by Russian writers and only 26 by writers of the other (over one hundred) Soviet nationalities.

A similar series in Ukrainian was published in 1957–74 by Dnipro publishers in Kyiv called: *Biblioteka svitovoi klasyky* [*Library of World Classics*]. This series included 52 volumes of ideologically censored texts.

In general, during the period of Late Socialism, besides the dominant Western literatures (French, English, American, and German), the most translated were literatures of countries of the Socialist bloc and India, the Soviet Union's strategic partner in Asia, as can be seen from Table 3.7. The figures in the table show the number of translations published in the USSR in four different years that were significant in Soviet history: 1957 was the first year of the Khrushchev Thaw after the 20th Congress of the Communist Party and 1962 was the climax of the Thaw and its last year; 1973 was the midpoint of two decades of economic and cultural stagnation during Brezhnev's rule; and 1985 was the very beginning of Perestroika. Though too incomplete for a comprehensive analysis, these figures do allow us to outline the main tendencies in the publishing of foreign literature during the Late Socialism period.

The variation in the number of translations from Chinese reflects fluctuations in Sino-Soviet relations. After Khrushchev's denunciation of Stalinism in 1956 and further ideological divergences between the USSR and Mao Zedong's China, the number of translations from Chinese was halved between 1957 and 1962 and then halved again by 1973.

Table 3.7 The most published foreign literatures in the USSR in 1957–85

Literatures (<i>Book Annual</i> categories)	Number of titles per year			
	1957	1962	1973	1985
French	89	55	61	109
British	58	69	44	76
American (USA)	44	43	58	105
German (pre-partition Germany)	9	14	23	38
German (GDR)	11	26	22	22
German (FRG)	4	5	4	5
Chinese	34	16	8	10
Czechoslovakian	30	32	26	25
Indian	26	28	31	15
Polish	19	31	28	39
Rumanian	16	–	10	6
Italian	15	19	12	16
Bulgarian	14	23	30	35
Yugoslavian	13	8	11	23
Hungarian	10	22	20	22

As far as Western European and American literatures are concerned, all except Italian saw an increase in the number of translations (despite certain fluctuations).²¹ In general, the quantity of foreign literature published in different languages of the USSR increased steadily after the Second World War: in the 1950s about 350 translations annually, in the 1960s about 450 translations, in the 1970s about 500 translations; in the 1980s it increased significantly and over 800 translations were (re)published annually.²²

The greater availability of works from the Western canon due to the Thaw and a number of other factors, such as the disillusionment of the Soviet *intelligentsia*, a general escapism and ‘reading boom’ in the 1970s, resulted in formation of an alternative canon: a ‘list’ of works of world literature most popular with educated people. These books were widely read, privately discussed, and shared as they were not among those (re)published regularly. Post-Soviet Russian critics and scholars have identified a number of authors who, although they were not part of the official Soviet canon, were part of this ‘alternative’ canon of the *intelligentsia*: Herman Hesse, Franz Kafka, Gabriel García Márques, Albert Camus, Ernest Hemingway, Erich Maria Remarque,

Jerome David Salinger, William Faulkner and others (see Andreeva et al. 2013; Romashko 2013). Nevertheless, readers had access only to those works that had been published in the USSR at least once: access to books published abroad was extremely limited. The only independent publishing platform before the late 1980s was *samizdat*. Works by banned Soviet authors and by foreign authors both circulated in society in *samizdat* editions, such as: Saint-Exupéry's works, Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (both published officially later); Camus's *The Plague*, *The Myth of Sisyphus*, *Nobel Prize Speech*, Koestler's *Darkness at Noon*; and Orwell's *Animal Farm* (Igrunov 2005). Despite their important socio-cultural function, these typewritten editions had a limited circulation, consequently, *samizdat* can hardly be considered as a factor in the formation of a Soviet canon.

It is worth mentioning that the Soviet state's policy of canonizing a number of foreign authors with gigantic print runs, translations into dozens of languages of the 'Soviet peoples' and by foregrounding them in cultural events sometimes worked against these authors, provoking opposition on the part of the audience. For example, recognition of Bertolt Brecht as an ideologically appropriate author caused many readers to turn away from him and he was read very little in the 1960s–70s (Romashko 2013).

1985–89: Perestroika

The beginning of Perestroika, the most democratic period in the life of the Soviet state, was announced by Mikhail Gorbachev in April 1985, but the sphere of literary translation only saw any real changes in 1988 when previously prohibited works were authorized, Soviet editorial canons were dismantled and the de-Sovietization of the images of foreign authors began.

Previously prohibited works were first published in small print runs by peripheral publishing houses in different Soviet republics, but not in Russia: for instance, *Animal Farm* was published in Russian in a journal in Riga called *Rodnik*, and in Estonian in Tallinn; while *1984* was published in Russian in the journal *Kodry* in Chişinău. In 1989

the same works were re-published by Moscow and Leningrad publishing houses, both state and newly founded private ones: *Animal Farm* was published by Inostrannaia Literatura, 1984 by Progress Publishers and DEM Joint Venture; Koestler's *Darkness at Noon* was also published by DEM Joint Venture and Lenizdat (a Leningrad state publishing house).

If in the previous decades a (carefully censored) translation was, as a general rule, *the* translation (the only version, re-published if necessary), in the late 1980s different publishing houses printed quite independent parallel translations into Russian: for instance, in 1989 *Animal Farm* was published in four different translations: by Larisa Bespalova (*Skotnyi dvor: skazka* [Animal Pen: a tale]), Viktor Golyshev and Gennadiy Scherbak (*Skotoferma – nepravdopodobnaia istoriia* [Animal Farm— an improbable story]), Vladimir Pribylovskii (*Skotoferma: povest'-pritcha* [Animal Farm: a parable novel]), Sergey Task (*Skotskii ugolok*) [Animal Haven].

Another important feature of the period was dismantling the Soviet editorial canon and de-Sovietization of images of foreign writers as was the case, for example, with Dreiser's image in 1988 after a collection of previously excluded publicist works was published in the volume *Teodor Draizer. Zhizn', iskusstvo i Amerika. Stat'i. Interv'iu. Pis'ma* [Theodore Dreiser. Life, Art and America. Articles. Interviews. Letters].

The Canon and the Curriculum

Any nation's literary canon is normally reflected in its school curriculum, with certain limitations which can depend on the age of learners and other factors, such as educational potential and vividness of literary works. Needless to say, the Soviet school curriculum was state-controlled and highly ideologized. According to Mikhail Pavlovets (2016), standard textbooks in literature appeared in the 1930s, regulated by the *State Program in Literature* (1927); despite changes introduced to the *Program* in 1938, 1960, and 1984 depending on the fluctuations of state policy, some important features did not change. Speaking of these, Pavlovets mentions the falsification of the history of Russian literature, and ideological and puritanical censorship (Pavlovets 2017). As will be discussed

further, the sidelining and appropriation of foreign literature were also permanent features of the literature curriculum, and translation into Russian was instrumental in that.

From the 1930s to the collapse of the Soviet Union, foreign works were taught and studied at school in Russian translations, integrated in the curriculum on Russian literature not only in Russia but in other 'fraternal republics', too. For example, in Ukrainian schools there were lessons on Ukrainian language and literature, but foreign literature was taught in Russian at Russian Literature lessons. In different forms, textbooks on this subject had different titles, such as *Ruskaia Literatura* [Russian Literature], *Ruskaia Sovetskaia Literatura* [Russian Soviet Literature], *Rodnaia Literatura* [Our Own Literature]. All such textbooks for all forms invariably contained works by Russian authors, but foreign literature was taught only in the seventh and the eighth forms, and extremely fragmentarily at that. For instance, the textbook for the seventh form *Rodnaia Literatura* by M. Snezhievskaja et al. (1985) contained three sections:

1. On literature of the nineteenth century represented by works of Russian authors and the Ukrainian poet Taras Shevchenko translated into Russian.
2. On Soviet literature that included works of Russian socialist realist authors.
3. On foreign literature that consisted of just a few chapters from Miguel de Cervantes' *Don Quixote* supplemented with extracts from writings of Ivan Turgenev and Maxim Gorky on *Don Quixote* (Snezhievskaja 1985).

The textbook for the eighth form *Rodnaia Literatura* by G. Belen'kii (1989) had the same three sections, while foreign literature was represented by only one work: an anti-fascist poem by Johannes Robert Becher.

This approach was used as a means of imposing the perception of all literature as 'our own' and (predominantly) Russian even during the last years of the Soviet regime. As a product of the official Soviet literary

canon, the school curriculum also enhanced the canon by imposing an ideologically correct perception of literature at an early age.

Conclusion

Establishing an official canon of world literature became an integral part of the Soviet cultural agenda from the 1930s, as this canon was an important ideological weapon which served multiple aims, including the cultural homogenization and Russification of the ‘Soviet peoples’ and the imposition of a Soviet identity. This canon, mainly composed of Russian translations in the 1950s, remained stable till the late 1980s. However, due to the lessening of ideological pressure during the Khrushchev Thaw, the disillusionment of the *intelligentsia* and the ‘reading boom’ of the 1970s, an independent, alternative, canon then evolved, one which remains largely unresearched.

The official Soviet canon of world literature based on Russian literature employed translation from foreign languages to enhance the dominant ideology through the inclusion of ideologically appropriate authors and works; translation into the languages of the ‘Soviet peoples’ promoted the creation of a universal ideological platform intended to shape the new Soviet citizen; and translation of the officially canonized works into dozens of languages made the canon itself more stable.

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the fate of the official canon varied in different post-Soviet states. In Ukraine, for instance, where the cultural and political elite have appreciated the ideological and socio-cultural significance of a canon of world literature as a unity of translated texts since the nineteenth century (see for example Petliura 1918), the (re)translation into Ukrainian of the masterpieces of world literature was seen as an essential task for Ukraine after it gained its independence from the Soviet Union (Zorivchak 2001).

In post-Soviet Russia the attitude to the Soviet official canon is ambivalent: significantly broadened due to the inclusion of previously prohibited works, the canon mainly consists of foreign works in ideologically manipulated *Soviet* translations. As Anastasia Borisenko notes about the attitude of contemporary Russian readers and publishers to

retranslations, ‘v nashei kulture novyi perevod plokh po opredeleniiu uzhe potomu, chto on “zamakhnulsia na sviatoe”’ [in our culture a new translation is bad anyway, just because it ‘has infringed on the sacred’] (Borisenko 2009), where ‘the sacred’ stands for the canonized Russian translations of the Soviet period.

Note on Translation and Transliteration

The transliteration in this chapter of Russian and Ukrainian words adheres to the Library of Congress system without diacritics. The translations of quotations are my own.

Notes

1. According to the catch phrase by Aleksandr Tvardovskii ‘On sdelał Bernsa russkim, ostaviv ego shotlandsem’ [He made Burns a Russian while keeping him a Scot] (Tvardovskii 1951: 227).
2. Initially, the data on the Soviet book publishing was gathered and made public by the State Chamber of Books of the RSFSR. The first issue *Kniga v 1925* [Books in 1925] came out in 1927; issues reporting on years 1926–29 came off the press within the next three years. After a gap of five years there appeared *Ezhegodnik Knigi* [*Book Annual*] (1935) which later was published yearly (from 1941 to 1999) with the last issue dedicated to the Soviet publishing released in 1994.
3. This Decree followed the Decree on Press of November 9, 1917 which introduced ideological censorship.
4. Here and further the figures and respective percentages have been counted on the basis of lists of published literature presented by the State Chamber of Books in *Ezhegodnik Knigi* [*Book Annual*] of the years in question. Data on *all* languages of the USSR as source and target languages are considered in Tables 3.1, 3.2, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6 and 3.7, while Table 3.3 contains data only on the languages with over a million native speakers in the USSR.

5. As will be discussed later, this course was one of the major factors that defined the sphere of literary translation and the formation of the Soviet canon of world literature in the following decades.
6. It was the time when the Soviet policy of ‘internationalism’ and support of national renaissance applied for all nationalities; in the 1930s Stalin expelled all Jews from the Central Committee of the Communist party and from that time onwards, translation of works by Jewish authors as well as the literature dedicated to the Jewish people and culture was restricted (see Rudnytska 2015a).
7. Except years 1941–45 when translation of foreign literature was extremely limited.
8. For more materials, see “Perestroika” further.
9. The quotes are from the 1935 issue of *Book Annual*.
10. The table shows the figures on translations into the most widely used languages in the USSR, i.e. with over a million native speakers; 1935 was the only year in the 1930s when the data on the Soviet book publishing was made public.
11. According to the Population Census of 1926; the next Census was conducted in 1939.
12. Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii [State Archives of the Russian Federation], Fond P-9590 ‘*Izdatel’skoie tovarischestvo inostrannykh rabochikh v SSSR (1931–1938)*’ [Publication comradeship of foreign workers in the USSR], op.1 ed. khr.1281.
13. Postanovlenie orgbiuro CK VKP(b) ‘Ob uluchshenii sovetskoi propagandy za rubezhom’, *Fond Aleksandra Yakovleva*, URL: <http://alexanderyakovlev.org/fond/issues-doc/69228> (accessed 2 March 2019).
14. According to the categorization in the *Book Annual*.
15. A ‘publication offer’ was a written proposition made to a publishing house by the person(s) who wanted to initiate publishing of a book; it was to provide information proving the ideological correctness of the text and the necessity of its publication and could be either approved or rejected by the editorial board.
16. Avtorskoe delo Gesse Germana. “Pod kolesami”. Povest’. Pervod s nem. V.M. Rozanova. RGALI f. 613 op.9 ed. khr. 1171.
17. *Ibid.*

18. Avtorskoe delo Gesse Germana. “Igra v biser”. Roman. Perevod s nem. D.L. Karavkinoi i V.M. Rozanova. RGALI f. 613 op.10 ed. khr. 4882.
19. Avtorskoe delo Gesse Germana. “Izbrannoe”. Povesti i roman. Perevod s nem. S.S. Averintseva, S.K. Apta, V.N. Kurelly i dr. RGALI f. 613 op.10 ed. khr. 48832.
20. The first series included the literature of Ancient East, followed by classical literature, European literatures of Middle Ages, Renaissance and the eighteenth century and classical Asian literatures; the second series included European literatures and some US authors of the nineteenth century as well as the twentieth century, European, Asian, American, Australian and African authors.
21. In the 1920s–30s Gorky promoted translations of Italian literature due to his personal interest and communications with Italian writers; later, Soviet publishing houses concentrated their attention mainly on Gianni Rodari the communist children’s author who often visited the USSR (see Shkol’nikova 2015).
22. According to *Book Annual* issues of 1950–89.

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4

Censorship, Permitted Dissent, and Translation Theory in the USSR: The Case of Kornei Chukovsky

Brian James Baer

The Soviet regime's commitment to translation, which began less than a year after the October Revolution with the founding of the publishing house Vsemirnaia Literatura [World Literature]¹ in 1918, was unprecedented. Seeing translation as vital to the promotion of its domestic and international agendas, the regime allocated valuable resources to the translation and publication of foreign works of literature, an investment which soon produced what is perhaps the earliest monograph on translation theory and practice, *Principles of Literary Translation* (1919), co-authored by Kornei Chukovsky and Nikolai Gumilev. This commitment to translation, however, was from the very start fraught with contradictions. While meant to contribute to the education of new Soviet citizens and to promote communist internationalism, the regime's investment in translation also provided much needed work—as well as

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an avenue of expression—for ‘bourgeois’ writers and scholars who had become personae non grata in the new Soviet state and were forbidden to publish original writing. And while the regime saw translation as enhancing its reputation as the cosmopolitan centre of world communism and many Soviet men and women of letters saw it as a relatively safe sphere in the field of cultural production, with Stalin’s consolidation of power in the late twenties, the regime grew increasingly suspicious of translated texts. Translations were viewed as a potential avenue of subversion and counter-revolution, and so translated literature and translators were subjected to ever greater censorship restrictions, or *kontrol’*, even going so far as to imprison the translators they had previously encouraged. Translation in the Soviet era, therefore, could be described as a highly contested and contradictory site.

In this chapter, I will trace the ideological debates that took place over the issue of translation through Kornei Chukovsky’s seminal writings on translation, beginning with an article published in the pre-revolutionary Symbolist journal *Vesy* [The scales] in 1906 and ending with the 1968 edition of his monograph *Vysokoe Iskusstvo* [A high art], the last to be published in the author’s lifetime, focusing in particular on Chukovsky’s conceptualization of the translator’s *lichnost’*, often rendered in English as ‘creative personality’ or ‘creative identity’.² During periods of especially intense ideological stridency under Stalin, Chukovsky was able to deftly graft his modernist concepts of translation and translators, conceived during the pre-revolutionary Silver Age, onto orthodox Soviet concepts, which were increasingly anti-modernist. Analysis of the various shifts that took place across Chukovsky’s writings will be informed by the author’s voluminous diaries and correspondences. In this way the chapter seeks to contribute greater nuance to our understanding of Soviet translation theory, the relationship of translation to communist ideology, and the workings of censorship, while also shedding new light on how Chukovsky survived the Stalinist years, which Lauren Leighton (1984: xvii) described as a ‘mystery’.

The illegitimate child of a Jewish banker and a Russian peasant, Kornei Ivanovich Chukovsky (1882–1969) was born Nikolai Vasilievich Kornechuk. He established himself as a journalist, poet, children’s writer, and translator in pre-revolutionary Russia, during the first decades of the

twentieth century, known in Russia as the Silver Age of art and literature.³ Chukovsky's background, as well as his leftist leanings before the Revolution (he was an outspoken critique of autocracy and an ardent admirer of Nikolai Nekrasov, who would become an early icon in the Soviet canon of Russian literature), would allow him to continue publishing in the early Soviet period. Nonetheless, Chukovsky did not escape the repressive arm of the regime; he soon came under suspicion for his pre-revolutionary promotion of Western 'bourgeois' writers, such as Oscar Wilde—in 1912 Chukovsky had edited the complete works of Wilde in Russian and published a short monograph on Wilde in 1920—and for his children's literature, which Lenin's widow, Nadezhda Krupskaya, condemned in the late 1920s as 'bourgeois rubbish' (Luk'ianova 2007: 528). While Chukovsky himself was never arrested, his daughter Lydia was exiled to Saratov in the mid-1920s, and her second husband, the physicist Matvei Bronshtein, was arrested in 1937 and executed in 1938 on the charge of 'active participation in a counter-revolutionary, fascist-terrorist organization'. It is believed Chukovsky and Lydia avoided arrest only by leaving Leningrad in the late 1930s for the Crimea.

Deftly balancing between permitted dissent and censorable speech, Chukovsky altered his writings on translation throughout his life in reaction to the shifting political landscape of the Stalinist and post-Stalinist periods, making it a testimony to the art of survival and confirming Chukovsky's reputation as a 'shrewd observer of cultural politics' (Weitzel Hickey 2009: 219). A careful examination of the various editions of his own writings provides a catalogue not only of self-censorship techniques and practices, which served to distance Chukovsky from previous positions and associations, but also of acts of resistance, which together allow us to trace the ever-shifting boundary of the sayable/unsayable in Soviet Russia over time as reflected in the various versions of Chukovsky's major works on translation, listed below:

1906 "Russkaia Uitmaniana" [Russian Whitmaniana], a review of Russian writings on Walt Whitman, including translations of Whitman's poetry by Konstantin Bal'mont

1907 "V zashchitu Shelli" [In defense of Shelly], a review of the *Complete Collected Works of Shelley in Russian*, trans. by K. Bal'mont

- 1919 *Printsipy khudozhestvennogo perevoda* [Principles of literary translation] (with Nikolai Gumilev)
- 1920 *Printsipy khudozhestvennogo perevoda* [Principles of literary translation] (with Nikolai Gumilev and Fyodor Batiushkov)
- 1930 *Iskusstvo perevoda* [The art of translation] (with Andrei Fedorov)
- 1936 *Iskusstvo perevoda* [The art of translation] (single-authored monograph)
- 1941 *Vysokoe iskusstvo* [A high art]
- 1964 *Vysokoe iskusstvo. O prinstipakh khudozhestvennogo perevoda* [A High Art. On the principles of literary translation]
- 1966 *Vysokoe iskusstvo* [A high art] (published in vol. 3 of his *Collected Works*, 1965–69)
- 1968 *Vysokoe iskusstvo* [A high art].⁴

Chukovsky's Pre-revolutionary Writings on Translation: From Anecdote to Abstraction

The seed for Chukovsky's Soviet-era writings on translation was sown in an article published by Chukovsky in 1906 in the Symbolist journal *Vesy* under the rather bland title 'Russkaia Whitmaniana' [Russian Whitmaniana], in which Chukovsky critiques Konstantin Bal'mont's translations of Whitman's poetry, which had been published by Bal'mont in the same journal in 1904 in an article entitled 'Pevets lichnosti i zhizni' [A singer of individuality and life]. Chukovsky begins his three-page review by critiquing current Russian scholarship on Whitman. After pointing out several errors of fact in a biographical study of Whitman and Wilde that appeared in the 1903 volume *Ocherki o sovremennoi Anglii* [Notes on contemporary England] by Dioneo, the pseudonym of Isaak Shklovskii, Chukovsky turns his attention to Bal'mont's translations of Whitman's verse. This critique of Bal'mont was quite different from the one that would appear in Chukovsky's 1930 *Iskusstvo perevoda* in that it was largely devoid of ideology. Chukovsky criticized Bal'mont's translations for being inaccurate due to Bal'mont's insufficient command of English. In Chukovsky's words:

Mr. Bal'mont's article "Walt Whitman" is not free from misunderstandings. One can surmise that Mr. Bal'mont could not feel the language from which he was translating. In three lines of the translation he makes five major errors – and, thanks to these errors, creates an image of Whitman that is very far from the authentic one. (Chukovskii 1906: 44)

Chukovsky, on the other hand, who had worked for several years in London as a journalist, had an excellent command of English.

It should be noted that both Bal'mont and Chukovsky were strong promoters of Whitman in Russia. Chukovsky begins his review with the statement: 'It is time to make Whitman a Russian poet'. In fact, their assessments of Whitman's poetry were quite similar, and Chukovsky had no problem with Bal'mont's description of Whitman as 'a singer of individuality [*lichnost'*] and life'. And so, this was not a debate over the quality of Whitman's poetry or even over competing interpretations of Whitman's *oeuvre* but rather over which translator was more qualified to present the American poet to a Russian-speaking audience. Bal'mont, in Chukovsky's estimation, simply could not 'feel the language from which he was translating' (1906: 44).

Chukovsky's translation criticism would take a great leap forward in terms of its sophistication when a year later in the same journal, *Vesy*, he published a scathing review of a Russian three-volume edition of the complete collected works of the English poet Percy Bysshe Shelley, translated by Bal'mont (1903–97).⁵ At the very beginning of the article he states clearly that he is not interested in isolated mistakes *ibo eto skuchno* [as that is boring] (2012: 171). Rather, he will focus on how Bal'mont, more generally, 'twisted, vulgarized, and doused with a barber's eau-de-cologne Shelley's most gentle and legendarily beautiful soul' (2012: 171). Chukovsky then asserts that the translations reflect not so much Bal'mont's style as that of Khlestakov, the ridiculous hero-imposter of Gogol's comedy *The Inspector General*. He carries the motif throughout the essay, opening with an epigraph attributed to Khlestakov, as if he were a real person—"This is a grilled axe instead of beef"—and later describing Bal'mont's overblown translations as resembling something Khlestakov might have written in the album of Mar'ia Antonovna Skvoznik-Dmukhanovskaia, the quiet daughter of

the provincial governor in the play—and that would have greatly pleased her (2012: 172, 173). What is important in this essay in terms of the development of Chukovsky's translation criticism is that he moves from a discussion of individual mistakes to a more holistic criticism of the translator's choice of poetic style: 'Shelley is for some reason stingy with words, compressing them. While Bal'mont is generous and kind' (2012: 173). This focus on style and the related concept of *lichnost'*, or creative personality, which could also be glossed in the realm of verbal art as a writer's poetics, would become the core of his translation criticism from that point onwards.

Principles of Literary Translation (1919, 1920): The Translator's Lichnost'

Chukovsky's translation criticism would reach a higher level of generalization or abstraction when he was asked to create a translator's guide for the publishing house Vsemirnaia Literatura [World Literature], founded by Maxim Gorky in 1918. Chukovsky served on the editorial board and headed the British and American section, initially with the writer Evgenii Zamiatin. The goal of this publishing venture would have been highly ambitious in any context but appeared especially so during a time of civil war with mass shortages of, among many other things, paper. As recorded by the poet Alexander Blok, who was head of the German section, the publishers reached a three-year agreement with the government to publish 800 large, foundational works of world literature with literary-historical forewords and notes, as well as 2000 smaller volumes also with short (2–3-page) introductions: 'the first requirement was that the works possess artistic merit' (Luk'ianeva 2007: 309).

In addition to material shortages, the publishing house faced two major challenges. The first had to do with the requirement that the translations be both scholarly and accessible to a mass reading public. The second challenge, which was both practical and ideological in nature, was finding a sufficient number of qualified translators to do the translations. The people with the language proficiency necessary to undertake this work were not the most ideologically acceptable in the eyes of the

regime: they were ‘former princes, ladies-in-waiting, and pages, graduates of the lycée, chamberlains and senators – all of Petersburg’s elite that had been thrown overboard by the revolution’ (Chukovskii 1967: 137), classified by the regime as *byvschie liudi*, or ‘former people’, and counter-revolutionaries. As for the few professional translators available at the time, ‘[they] were governed not so much by scientific principles as by intuition’ (Chukovskii 1967: 137) and so Gorky instructed Chukovsky ‘to provide professional development to these “gray masses”, to raise their literary and intellectual level and to instill in them a heightened sense of responsibility’ (Chukovskii 1967: 137). This was the impetus behind Chukovsky’s *Principles*.

However, the authors of the *Principles* were not themselves in total alignment with the regime, especially with its increasingly politicized view of literature and the arts. This non-alignment is especially evident in Chukovsky’s conceptualization of *lichnost’*, or creative identity or personality. Before we can trace the transformations in Chukovsky’s conception of the translator’s *lichnost’*, however, we should clarify precisely what Chukovsky meant by the term. First, *lichnost’* for Chukovsky was characterized by creativity. His core belief in translation as a highly creative act is set forward most forcefully in the opening paragraph of *Principles*, which begins with the epigraphs: ‘De tous les livres à faire, le plus difficile, à mon avis, c’est une traduction’ [of all the books to make, the most difficult, in my opinion, is a translation], attributed to Lamartine (1790–1869), and ‘Nor ought a genius less his worth / Attempt translation’, attributed to Sir John Denham (1615–69). Chukovsky then opens his section of *Principles* with the following description of the translator:

The translator of literary prose does not photograph the original but creatively recreates it. In order to be a translator, it is not sufficient to know this or that foreign language. The translator is an artist, a master of the word, a co-participant in the creative work of that author whom he is translating. He is the same kind of servant of art as an actor, sculptor or painter. The text of the original serves as the material for his complex – and often inspired – creation. The translator is first of all a talent. (Chukovskii and Gumilev 1919: 7)

The second defining feature of *lichnost'* for Chukovsky was autonomy, meaning that an artist's creativity could not be controlled by or subordinated to rules or dogma. Chukovsky's commitment to creative autonomy is revealed in a conversation between Chukovsky and Maxim Gorky over the selection of works for publication by the World Literature publishing house. As recounted by Chukovsky in his diary:

I told him that it was more pleasing for me to write about an author not as a *sub specie* of the human race or as actor in universal art, but as himself, standing outside any school or movement – as a singular, unrepeatable soul in the world – not about how he resembles others, but about how he doesn't. (qtd. in Luk'ianova 2007: 313)

Chukovsky's concept of *lichnost'* as creative autonomy is also evident in an argument Chukovsky had with the co-author of *Principles*, the poet Nikolai Gumilev, over the title of their book. Gumilev insisted that the title be *Pravila*, or 'rules', but Chukovsky vehemently objected. As he commented in his diary:

In my opinion, there are no such rules. What rules are there in literature, where one translator *creates* and it turns out perfectly while another transfers the rhythm and everything, but it doesn't move? What kind of rules are there? (Chukovskii 2009: 85)

Chukovsky's commitment to creative autonomy was also expressed in his extremely negative reaction to the politicization of the nineteenth-century writer Nikolai Nekrasov during the 1921 celebration of the hundredth anniversary of his birth. In his diary Chukovsky expressed 'his distaste for the prevailing "policeman-like, official, vulgar tone" of events [surrounding the celebration] that he associated with Party commissars' (Weitzel Hickey 2009: 272). Disgusted by what he perceived as the crude politicization of the writer, Chukovsky chose to read from his monograph *Nekrasov as an Artist* for one of the events held at the Pushkin House in St. Petersburg, a selection Weitzel Hickey (2009: 272) describes as distinctly 'apolitical'.

The third feature of *lichnost'* as Chukovsky conceived it was its malleability or the capacity of one *lichnost'* to assume the shape of

another. We see this in *Principles* when Chukovskii (1919: 7) compares the talent of a translator to that of an actor: ‘The more talented the translator, the more fully he is *transformed* into the author. The author’s will does not fetter him; it inspires him’.⁶ In that same paragraph he describes this talent as the ability ‘to merge with the will of the author’ (*sliianie c voliei avtora*) (1919: 8). This merging of *lichnosti* is also evident in Chukovsky’s understanding of his work as a critic. Chukovsky argued that the critic must ‘become’ the author he is writing about so as to discover ‘the true “face” of the author’ (Weitzel Hickey 2009: 222). As he wrote in his 1914 essay ‘Futurist’ [Futurists]:

I swear in my time I have been Sologub, and Bely and even Semon Yushkevich. You need to turn yourself into the one you are writing about, you have to be infected with his lyrics, his sense of life. (qtd. in Weitzel Hickey 2009: 234)

This celebration of the malleability of the artist’s persona, of its creative imposture, was also highlighted in the title of Chukovsky’s 1914 collection of essays on contemporary cultural figures: *Litsa i maski* [Faces and masks].

In the early years of the Soviet Union, the concept of *lichnost’* was hotly debated, as documented in Martha Weitzel Hickey’s monumental 2008 study of the Petrograd House of Arts. As Weitzel Hickey writes:

Evidence of contemporary readers’ alertness to the writer’s personality and biography preceded the writer’s appearance on the provisionally numbered stages of Petrograd. Gorky announced that promoting that awareness was the reason he had become a publisher, so that the masses “would know the role that *lichnosti* had played in the history of culture”. The outcome of the revolution sharpened the public’s anticipation and demand for certain virtues from the writer as a citizen and for certain abilities as an artist in the newly organized and emerging socialist state. Discussion of the writer’s life and art [...] was indicative of the kinds of questions that might be put to any author. (2008: 235–36)

In that spirit, Gorky would found the book series *Zhizn’ Zamechatel’nykh liudei* [Lives of remarkable people]. Gorky, however,

did not share Chukovsky's total commitment to the autonomy of the artist's *lichnost'* and made a concerted effort to accommodate a high art notion of *lichnost'* with the politicized Soviet version, as evident in his promotion of certain authors for publication by World Literature, as discussed above, and in his decision to inaugurate the Lives of Remarkable People book series with a biography of the nineteenth-century German poet Heinrich Heine, who was equally revered in Russia for his Romantic nature poetry as he was for his politically engaged poetry of social justice.

A less accommodating conception of *lichnost'*, however, was also circulating at that time, as put forward by the medical doctor turned writer and translator Vikentii Veresaev, who would become a major political player in the new Soviet state. In his 1922 essay 'What Is Needed to Be a Writer', which appeared in the journal *Pechat' i Revoliutsiia* [Press and revolution], Veresaev suggested that a writer's background was central to his or her creative work. As Weitzel Hickey (2009: 212) explains, for Veresaev, 'there is no "art" of writing; the writer's self accumulates experience, thoughts, and feelings ("soul") and confers the "living voice"'. Veresaev seems to be suggesting in that essay that there is no escaping one's social or class background and so, 'writers looking for protective camouflage [did] so at their own peril, he warned. Veresaev's counsel was accompanied by some sobering words for those of non-proletarian origins' (Weitzel Hickey 2009: 255). The autonomy of the creative *lichnost'* largely disappears in Veresaev's concept of the writer's background, which is seen as a product of his or her class and virtually impossible to overcome. Indeed, the determinative role of one's class background would lead to the punishment of entire families (see Alexopoulos 2008). Moreover, Veresaev's use of the phrase 'protective camouflage' lends a sinister valence to the creative 'merging' celebrated by Chukovsky and would inspire campaigns to 'unmask' counter-revolutionary elements.

In 1923, Leon Trotsky, then People's Commissar for Military and Naval Affairs, would include a damning chapter on Chukovsky in his work *Literatura i Revoliutsiia* [Literature and revolution], which was a collection of essays published before the Revolution. In fact, Trotsky had taken aim at Chukovsky in the early 1910s in two articles published in the newspaper *Kievskaiia Mysl'* [Kievan thought]. In those articles,

Trotsky describes Chukovsky as a representative of petty bourgeois culture, focusing in particular on his notion of *lichnost'*: 'Isn't the very concept of *lichnost'* in its contemporary meaning a product of bourgeois culture' (1914: 40). Following the publication of Trotsky's *Literature and Revolution*, Chukovsky and his family were subjected to increasing harassment by the regime, as reflected in the exile of his daughter Lydia to Saratov in 1925. Then, in 1929, Lenin's widow, Nadezhda Krupskaya, condemned Chukovsky's children's literature as 'bourgeois rubbish', inaugurating a general campaign against *chukovshchina*, or 'Chukovsky-itis' (Luk'ianova 2007: 528).

Chukovsky's *Iskusstvo Perevoda* (1930): Submission and Resistance

The 1919 edition of *Principles*, co-authored by Chukovsky and Gumilev, was re-issued in 1920 in a somewhat expanded edition, with a third co-author, the academic Fyodor Batiushkov (Chukovsky wrote about prose translation, Gumilev about poetry translation, and Batiushkov about drama translation). By the time this second edition was published, however, Batiushkov had died of starvation, and only one year later Gumilev would be executed as a monarchist, making any republication of *Principles* unthinkable. And so, when Chukovsky produced his second monograph on translation, entitled *Iskusstvo perevoda* [The art of translation], in 1930, co-authored with the twenty-four-year-old Andrei Fedorov, he felt compelled to establish his political bona fides by adopting the charged political rhetoric of this time, often referred to as Russia's cultural revolution.⁷ This rhetoric, associated with the first five-year plan (1928–32), reflected, among other things, the pressing need to build new 'cadres of workers' along with what Katerina Clark has described as an obsession with the nation's 'enemies' (Clark 1984: 114). The period was also characterized by a growing suspicion of writers as members of the cultural elite, divorced from the working classes. As Chukovsky's biographer, Irina Luk'ianova (2007: 540) notes, this led Chukovsky to alter his writing to appeal to a mass readership. It also

led to a significant re-framing of his writings on translation both in his introduction to the 1930 *Iskusstvo perevoda* and in the text itself.

The rapid industrialization of the first five-year plan underscored the urgent need to produce new cadres of workers, as expressed by Konstantin Tobolov in his 1933 article ‘On National Cadres’:

Apart from the policy of preserving the national cadres mainly by re-education, the present new stage makes it imperative to train, for the Republics and Autonomous Provinces, new leading proletarian cadres of party workers, engineers and technicians and economists from the workers, collective farmers and poor peasants of the formerly oppressed nationalities. (Tobolov 1933/1956: 212)

Chukovsky gives a nod to this rhetoric in his introduction by recounting the origins of his *Principles* in Gorky’s Vsemirnaia Literatura publishing venture:

Meeting the goal [of the publishing house] required large cadres [*obshirnye kadry*] of qualified master translators, and as such cadres were not available, energetic measures were undertaken to create them in a decisive fashion [*udarnym poriadkom*] and at the same time to raise the qualifications of apprentice translators. (1930: 5)

The words *cadre*, *master*, and *apprentice*, which were key terms in official Soviet rhetoric of the first and second five-year plans, were not present in Chukovsky’s 1919 *Principles*. Moreover, the phrase *udarnym poriadkom* [in a decisive fashion] alludes to *udarniki*, or ‘shock workers’, a phenomenon specific to this period of rapid industrialization; this term for highly productive workers was derived from the term *udarnyi trud*, or ‘superproductive labor’, formed from the word *udar*, meaning ‘strike’ or ‘blow’. The need for such *udarnyi trud* would be one of the main justifications for the violence and famine associated with the first five-year plans.

Other shifts related to Chukovsky’s ideological reevaluation of the Silver Age concept of *lichnost’* are evident in the body of Chukovsky’s text. For example, the opening chapter of the book is entitled ‘Litso perevodchika’ [The face of the translator], with *litso* being semantically

linked to *lichmost'* but now given a distinctly negative valence, associating it with bourgeois individualism. In this chapter Chukovsky critiques Bal'mont's translations of the English poet Shelley in distinctly class-based terms.⁸ Having a *lichmost'* that is too pronounced, Chukovsky argues, the bourgeois Bal'mont is unable to render the individual style of another poet: 'And as his talent is devil-may-care, or, to tell the truth, foppish, so Shelley becomes in his translations a fop'. For Chukovsky, this unholy union of two incompatible poetic styles produced monstrosities, described famously by Chukovsky as *Shel'mont*. Bal'mont, Chukovsky alleges, commits the sin of *otsebiatina*—a Russian term that translates literally as 'from oneself'—which Chukovsky uses to describe the imposition of the translator's individual style onto that of the source text author. His use of the term is interesting insofar as it describes this phenomenon not in terms of inaccuracy or even infidelity, as in his 1906 critique of Bal'mont, but as a sin of pride or egotism, which would become a running motif in Soviet discourse condemning bourgeois art as characterized by 'individualism'.

In the even more provocatively titled second chapter, 'Perevodchik – vrag' [The translator as enemy], Chukovsky revises his pre-revolutionary critique of Bal'mont's translations of Whitman, lending it a ferocity typical of the class-based polemics of the time by attributing Bal'mont's errors not to ignorance or a lack of feeling for the language of the original, but to class hatred. The term 'enemy' acquired particular salience in the late 1920s when revisions to the Criminal Code of the Soviet Union defined as an 'enemy of the workers' (*vrag trudiashchikhsia*) anyone who engaged in espionage (Article 58.6), as well as, more broadly, anyone found guilty of offering:

whatever kind of aid to that part of the international bourgeoisie, which, not recognizing the equal rights of a communist system replacing a capitalist system, exerts itself for its overthrow, and likewise to public groups and organizations, being under the influence or directly organized by that bourgeoisie, in the carrying out of hostile activities toward the USSR. (Article 58.2)

Therefore, Chukovsky's use of the term *vrag* in 1930 to describe bad translators was one of his more blatant capitulations to the rhetoric of the time, which popularized the phrase 'enemy of the people'.

In this chapter, Chukovsky viciously condemns Bal'mont for imposing his personality and stylistics onto that of the American poet, whom Chukovsky refers to, significantly, as the American *bard*, with bard at the time having clear folk connotations. This allows Chukovsky to present Bal'mont's translations as a moral corruption of the plain, straightforward Whitman by the decadent Bal'mont. The following extract reflects the charged political rhetoric of Chukovsky's critique:

The translation turned into a struggle between the translator and the translated poet. It could not have been otherwise, as, essentially, Bal'mont hates the American bard; he does not allow him to be what he is; he tries in every way possible to correct him; he foists upon him his Bal'montisms, his *artsystyle moderne*, which was so loathsome to Whitman. (Chukovskii and Fedorov 1930: 14)

As Luk'ianova notes:

Chukovsky often applied the strong word 'to hate' when denouncing bad translators, editors, commentators, and editors of textbooks: Well, they must hate the author to give such an impression of him! This Bal'montian 'hate' toward Whitman would be preserved even in the very last edition of *A High Art*. (Luk'ianova 2007: 241)

But Luk'ianova fails to note that this 'hate' was introduced into Chukovsky's writings on translation only in 1930. Indeed, Chukovsky's use of 'hate', as well as his description of the relationship between poet and translator as a 'struggle', distinguishes Chukovsky's translation criticism not only from his pre-revolutionary writings, with their focus on discrete errors caused by a lack of proficiency in the source language, but also from his 1919 *Principles*, with its focus on the translator's creative autonomy and malleability.

Of course, Bal'mont was by this time an easy target for such a pointed attack—born into a Russian noble family, he only barely avoided execution by emigrating to Paris in 1920, where he remained until his

death in 1932. Chukovsky would in fact save his most vicious critiques for pre-revolutionary and émigré translators or deceased Soviet translators, perhaps so as not to endanger his contemporaries. For example, Chukovsky was no fan of Pasternak's translations of Shakespeare but never critiqued them in print. (Two notable exceptions to this rule was the criticism he directed at translations of Shakespeare's plays by Mikhail Kuzmin and Anna Radlova, which appeared in his 1936 revised edition of *Iskusstvo perevoda*.)⁹ At the same time, one could argue that such an approach lent tacit confirmation to the view that one's background was destiny.

Chukovsky's support for this biographical determinism, which was accompanied by a discursive retreat from his commitment to creative autonomy as embodied in the Silver Age concept of *lichnost'*, is most evident in Chapters 3 and 4, entitled 'Sotsial'naia priroda perevodchika' [The social nature of the translator] and 'Perevody prezhde i teper' [Translations then and now], respectively. In Chapter 3, the translator's creative autonomy and capacity to merge with the original author is, Chukovsky argues, severely limited by his or her social class. 'Indeed, even the most talented [translator]', Chukovsky claims, 'is powerless, despite his wishes, to violate that aesthetic canon imposed upon him by a given literary (*and that means social*) group' (1930: 16; italics added). In such cases, translation becomes a site of class struggle (1930: 18). It should be noted that Chukovsky was especially ashamed of this chapter, as it represented a total repudiation of the translator's creative autonomy and malleability (Luk'ianenko 2007: 541). He would remove it from all versions of the book that appeared after Stalin's death.

In Chapter 4, Chukovsky presents translation no longer as the creative merging of two *lichnosti* [creative personalities] but in very negative terms as a kind of self-censorship, achieved through the conscious repression of the translator's *lichnost'* in favour of that of the original author:

Toward this the translator must strive: the diminishing [*umalenie*] of his talent, the reduction of his *lichnost'*. The translator should develop his talent so as to be unnoticed. The translator must renounce his individual particularities, he must learn to imitate the gestures, intonations,

poses, and manners of others and to forget about his own I. [...] This is demanded by the contemporary reader. This is demanded by our age, which places above all else: scientific truth, documentariness, exactness and trustworthiness. (1930: 24)

This is in keeping with the dominant Soviet rhetoric condemning the ‘individualism’ of bourgeois culture and the deeply subjective nature of bourgeois art. As Clark (1984) describes it, Soviet aesthetic doctrine would focus on the ‘de-individualization’ of artistic production through a commitment to objectivity, referenced here by Chukovsky as ‘scientific truth, documentariness, exactness, and trustworthiness’. Chukovsky ends the paragraph cited above by declaring: ‘Let [the translator] be concerned only with the exact recreation of the original’ (1930: 24), later insisting that ‘any willful treatment of a text is perceived [by the new Soviet reader] as a crime’ (26). ‘A dull and talentless translation of a talented, vivid work’, which he described in 1919 as ‘an unforgiveable *sin* before culture’ (1919: 8), now becomes ‘a *crime* before the reading masses’ (1930: 30).¹⁰

While this might appear as a total capitulation to the charged politics of the moment, Chukovsky does not abandon his opening chapter from the 1919 *Principles*, which in the 1930 version becomes, with some revisions, Chapter 5, ‘Perevodchik i avtor’ [Translator and author]. Here he includes a paragraph that problematizes the whole question of *tochnost*, or ‘accuracy’, which he had just claimed in Chapter 4 as a *sine quo non* for modern Soviet readers: ‘Are such [accurate] translations possible? In this lies the tragedy of the art of translation, that a literal translation is often the least accurate of all. [...] What is maximal accuracy and by what means can it be achieved?’ (1930: 28). And with that he takes up where he began in 1919: ‘The translator of literary prose does not photograph the original, he creatively recreates it’ (1930: 28). In this way Chukovsky attempts to salvage his concept of creative transformation, while still paying lip service to ‘accuracy’.

***Iskusstvo Perevoda* (1936) and *Vysokoe Iskusstvo* (1941): The Friendship of Peoples**

Having survived Russia's cultural revolution, Chukovsky began publishing again in the mid-1930s with a series of articles on translating Shakespeare. Several of these articles would be included in his single-authored monograph of 1936, *Iskusstvo perevoda*. This revised edition, as well as the subsequent 1941 edition, published under the title *Vysokoe Iskusstvo*, reflected new political and cultural realities in a number of ways. First, the overt politicization of translation continued with a short introduction to the 1936 volume provided by the editors of Academic Publishing House tying Chukovsky's work to the broader struggle against formalism in the arts: 'Especially valuable in this book is that it is directed [*svoim ostriem*] against the formalist tendency in our translation practice' (1936: 5). Here formalism is used to refer to the so-called *bukvalisty*, or 'literalists', who were roundly condemned by the official Soviet establishment for their slavish devotion to the source text (see Azov 2013 on *bukvalizm*). The 1941 edition would include a chapter titled 'Intonatsiia. – Bezplodnost' formalizma' [Intonation.—The sterility of formalism].¹¹

The introductions and some new chapter titles in the 1936 and 1941 editions also reflect the shifting ideological landscape of the Stalin-era, specifically what Clark has described as the promotion of expertise, higher education, and scientific achievement. In the late thirties and early forties, Clark writes, 'the arena for "revitalization" changed from the factory, kolkhoz, and bureaucracy to academic and scientific circles' (1984: 195). No longer were writers—and by extension translators—expected to be like manual workers (Luk'ianova 2007: 518); they were now seen as bearers of expertise or specialized knowledge. This is evident in the new title given to Chapter 1, which has a distinctly academic rather than propagandistic ring to it: 'Dominanty oshibok' [Dominants in errors], which would become the even more scholarly sounding 'Dominanty otklonenii ot podlinnika' [Dominants in the deviations from the original] in the 1941 edition.¹² We see another hint of

scholasticism in the title of Chapter 5, ‘Tekstual’naia tochnost’ [Textual accuracy] (1936; 1941), presaging the search for ‘objective stylistic correspondences’ that would come to dominate Soviet translation studies in the post-war era (see Dmitrienko 2015).¹³ This promotion of expertise is also signalled in the renaming of the book in 1941 as *Vysokoe iskusstvo* [A high art], delineating it from mere craftsmanship. This would remain the title through all subsequent revisions and re-editions.

Iskusstvo perevoda and *Vysokoe iskusstvo* reflect the revaluing of expertise also in their call for an academic theory of translation, which would replace ‘spontaneity’ (1936: 8) with consciousness.¹⁴ Arguing that the elevated status of translators in the Soviet Union has made it imperative to place translation on a more scientific footing, Chukovsky writes:

And now, when the practice of translated art has reached such a height, it is time to create a theory on the basis of this unprecedented practice. We need an authoritative, strictly scientific book on the fundamental principles of literary translation here in the USSR, and this book must make equal use of the experience not only of Russian translators but also of Georgian, Ukrainian, Belorussian, Armenian, and Tartar translators. (Chukovskii 1936: 10)

Another way in which both the 1936 and 1941 editions reflect the politics of their time involves the general movement in official Soviet culture over the course of the 1930s towards promoting the cultures of the various peoples of the Soviet Union, as evidenced in the monumental celebrations of folk culture that were staged in Moscow in the late thirties, the promotion of bardic authors, such as the Kazak *akyn* Dzhambul Dhabaev, and the founding in 1939 of the journal *Druzhbba Narodov* [Friendship of peoples], which published Russian translations of literary works from the languages of the Soviet republics. This cultural and political shift is trumpeted in the introduction to the 1936 *Iskusstvo perevoda*:

The question of literary translation in our country, the USSR, is an affair of great, state importance in which millions of people have a deep

interest. Fifty-two nationalities came to our Writers' Congress. Turks, Jews, Uzbeks, Tadzhiks, Belorussians, Latvians, Moldovans, Kazaks [sic], Uyghurs, Kalmyks, Avaris, Armenians, Karelians, Burito-Mongols – all of whom need unbroken exchange of various cultural treasures, including, of course, artistic literature. (1936: 6)

The list of nationalities grows in the introduction to the 1941 *Vysokoe Iskusstvo*:

The victory of Leninist-Stalinist nationalities policy has laid the foundation for true friendship of the peoples of the USSR. That friendship has profoundly changed the entire literary life of our multi-lingual country. Ukrainians, Belorussians, Georgians, Armenians, Lithuanians, Estonians, Latvians, Azerbaijais, Jews, Uzbeks, Tadzhiks, Moldovans, Kazakhs, Uyghurs, Kalmyks, Avaris, Karelians, Burito-Mongols – precisely from the fact of becoming brothers have established among themselves an unbroken exchange of all their literary treasures. (Chukovskii 1941: 3)

In these introductions, as well as in the body of these works, Chukovsky employs the official rhetoric of friendship of peoples and in doing so attempts to redress an 'imbalance' in his 1919 *Printsipy* and his 1930 *Iskusstvo perevoda*, which focused almost exclusively on translations of Western European, especially Anglophone, authors. In the first chapter of the 1936 edition, for example, Chukovsky adds a discussion of Russian translations of the Georgian poet Georgii Leonidze, while in the 1941 edition he includes an entire chapter dedicated to Russian translations of the work of the nineteenth-century Ukrainian poet Taras Shevchenko.¹⁵

While this ideological shift is reflected in the introduction of new source authors from the Soviet republics, the sharp, class-based criticism levelled at the translators is very similar in tone and rhetoric to the criticism in his 1930 *Iskusstvo perevoda*. For example, in his pointed journalistic style, Chukovsky describes Russian translations of Shevchenko's poetry by Maksim Antonovich Slavinskii as a *dlinnyi katalog lakirovaniykh poshlostei* [a long catalogue of lacquered vulgarities] (1941: 26). Slavinskii, Chukovsky contends, imposes his overly refined style onto

Shevchenko's *prostye, razgovornyie, narodnye, bytovye intonatsii* [simple, colloquial, folk, and everyday intonations] (27), transforming them into a *salonnyi romans* [salon romance] (28), thus erasing their revolutionary essence:

Shevchenko's style is as revolutionary as are the thematics of his verses. Nonetheless an enormous number of his translators have done everything they could to remove from Shevchenko's poetry not only its militant thematics but also its innovative, revolutionary and democratic style. (Chukovskii 1941: 22–3)

While the class-based criticism of Chukovksy's 1930 *Iskusstvo perevoda* remains, the translator's 'crime' is reframed; it is now less a betrayal of the proletariat than it is a betrayal of the Soviet family of nations. The fact that Slavinskii had served as the ambassador for the Ukrainian government in exile after the Revolution made him a perfect target.

More striking changes, however, were introduced in the chapter 'The Social Nature of Translators', which had originally appeared in his 1930 *Iskusstvo perevoda*. The revised versions of the chapter in the 1936 and 1941 editions include a distinctly optimistic paragraph as to the positive effects of the friendship of peoples policy. Communism, Chukovskiy argues, was bringing about the dissolution of classes and with it the social barriers dividing translators and their authors (1936: 52). He ends the chapter with the example of Soviet translator Nikolai Tikhonov's translations of the Georgian poet Simon Chikovani, arguing that Tikhonov feels himself to be Chikovani's *sobrat*, or 'brother-in-arms', someone of the same 'social nature'. And it is this, Chukovskiy concludes, that guarantees the closeness of the translation to the original (53). In this reformulation, the successful merging of translator and source author occurs not through the malleability of the translator's *lichnost'* but as a result of the Soviet policy of friendship of peoples, which makes the translator and the author into brothers.

The Post-Stalinist Editions of *Vysokoe Iskusstvo*: The Return of *Lichnost'*

The post-Stalinist editions of *Vysokoe iskusstvo* are characterized by a full-throated rehabilitation of the Silver Age concept of *lichnost'*, which Chukovsky achieves through various means: first, by adding a subtitle: *O printipakh khudozhestvennogo perevoda* [On the principles of literary translation], which references *Printipakh khudozhestvennogo perevoda* of 1919 and 1920, second, by removing the chapter on the social nature of the translator; third, by combining the chapters entitled *Litso perevodchika* [The translator's face] and *Perevodchik – vrag* [The translator as enemy] from the 1930 edition into a single, less politically charged and more aesthetically inclined title: *Perevod – Avtoportret perevodchika* [Translation—A self-portrait of the translator]; and fourth, by celebrating the enormous talent and very individual creative personalities of many Soviet writer-translators who were compelled to do translations when they could no longer publish original writing. As he writes in the introduction to the 1964 edition:

And now the very number of brilliant artists of the word who have dedicated themselves to this difficult work [of translation] testifies to the fact that the unheard of has occurred. And it is a fact that it has never happened that such talents have worked together, shoulder to shoulder, within the span of a single decade.

Even the most original of our poets – those with a strongly expressed, distinct style, with pronounced features of creative individuality – are giving their energy to the art of translation. (Chukovskii 1964: 3)

What is striking here is that the personal style and pronounced individuality of these poets is now presented as a virtue to be celebrated, not as a problem to be addressed or a crime to be punished, which in fact goes further than Chukovsky's statement on the translator's creative autonomy in his 1919 *Printsipy*. These paragraphs would be retained intact in the 1966 and 1968 editions of *Vysokoe iskusstvo*.

Of course, in stressing the individual creativity of those poets who dedicated their energy to translation, Chukovsky was alluding to the Stalinist practice of consigning politically suspect authors to translation work, a fate that indeed befell some of Russia's greatest—and most original—poets, such as Anna Akhmatova, Marina Tsvetaeva, Osip Mandel'shtam, and Nikolai Zabolotsky, to name but a few. These poets were politically suspect precisely for being *samobytnieishie*, or 'highly original', and for being unable to comply with the prescriptive dictates of Socialist Realism. Chukovsky's oblique reference to this Stalinist practice reflected the broader culture of the post-Stalinist Thaw. This was a period when the Soviet creative intelligentsia was remembering those who were repressed under Stalin, including its poet-translators (see Baer 2018).

That allusion to the victims of Stalinist repression is reinforced in the body of the text where Chukovsky mentions Tatyana Gnedich in his pantheon of great translators:

Therefore, with what joy – indeed with what unexpected joy! – there appeared before us *Don Juan* in the translation of Tatyana Gnedich. When you read this translation after the previous ones, it is as if you have been suddenly released from a dark cellar in which you had been languishing onto a verdant expanse. To the surprise of Russian readers, it suddenly turns out that *Don Juan* is not at all a pile of countless rhymed rebuses that no one cares to decipher, but a crystal clear work of art fully worthy of the delight with which it was met by Pushkin, and Goethe, and Shelley, and Walter Scott, and Mickiewicz. (Chukovskii 1964: 255–6)

The image of being released from a dark cellar may have been a slightly veiled reference to Gnedich and, by extension, to Soviet society of the post-Stalinist period. Gnedich began the translation from memory while incarcerated in a holding cell after her arrest in the 1940s on the charge of high treason, so the fact that she could be mentioned at all is a testament to the liberalization of the Thaw period and to Chukovsky's desire to memorialize the victims of Stalinist repression. Indeed, the story of Gnedich's translation of *Don Juan* had already entered the folklore of the intelligentsia by this time, making additional commentary unnecessary (see Baer 2006).¹⁶ But Chukovsky also lends the imagery a distinctly religious overtone, alluding to Christ's resurrection with such words as

joy, grieving, and dark cellar, which he introduces at the opening of the passage with *voistinu* [indeed, or truly]. This adverb is used in the traditional Orthodox Easter greeting and is not typical of everyday speech.¹⁷ The markedness of the term appears intended to alert his readers to a religious subtext.

It should be noted, however, that Chukovsky is not only referring to Gnedich herself. He says that reading her translation of *Don Juan* is like emerging from a dark cellar. A true product of Gnedich's creative *lichnost'*, her translation brings this work back to life for contemporary Russian readers, allowing them to greet it like the original was greeted by the leading figures of the pre-revolutionary canon of world literature: Pushkin, Goethe, Shelly, Walter Scott, and Mickiewicz. The metaphor of resurrection then also alludes to Chukovsky's concept of translation quality as determined not by the exactness of the translation but by whether or not it moves, *shevelit* (Chukovskii 2009: 85)—in other words, is it alive?

Alongside the religious imagery in the post-Stalinist editions, Chukovsky gives a nod to the changing times by introducing the psychological term 'ego' as well as the rather classist notions of 'high culture' and 'sophisticated taste' as prerequisites for the translator: 'Those who possess the valuable capacity to overcome their *ego* and to artistically transform themselves into the author they are translating are people of high culture and discriminating, sophisticated taste' (1968: 47–8; italics in the original). (Incidentally, the word *izoshchrennyi*, or sophisticated, reoccurs about a dozen times in the post-Stalinist editions.) To achieve this, however, no longer requires the 'diminishing of one's talent and the minimizing of one's *lichnost'*'—as in the Stalinist editions—but rather the 'renunciation of one's own intellectual and psychic predispositions [*navyki*]' (1966: 39). The process that had been cast in quasi-religious terms, as a kind of *kenosis*, in the 1930 edition is now described as an intellectual and even psychological process.

More politically daring than the introduction of psychoanalytical terms, however, is Chukovsky's insistence that canonical authors of world literature who may not be entirely 'correct' from an ideological standpoint should be translated nonetheless:

Are we really going to remain without translations of Xenophon, Thucydides, Petrarch, Apuleius, Chaucer, Boccaccio and Ben Johnson simply because certain features of their worldview are alien or even hostile to ours? Of course not. (1966: 39; 1968: 47)

While the mention of Gnedich would remain in the two subsequent post-Stalinist editions of *Vysokoe iskusstvo*, changes were made that reflected the shifting politics of the Soviet 1960s following Khrushchev's ouster. For example, the version of *Vysokoe iskusstvo* that was published in 1966 in volume three of Chukovsky's *Collected Works* contained a scathing critique of the English translation of Solzhenitsyn's *A Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*, which, as Leighton puts it, 'were rushed into print in a disgraceful quest for political sensationalism' (1984: x). As with his discussion of Gnedich, Chukovsky does not present Solzhenitsyn as a dissident, focusing instead on the shoddy, politically motivated translation of *Ivan Denisovich* into English. Nevertheless, the fact that he was able to mention Solzhenitsyn's name represented the limits of permitted dissent at that point in time. Indeed, Chukovsky was one of Solzhenitsyn's most vocal defenders. The changing political climate of the late 1960s and Solzhenitsyn's increasing opposition to the Soviet state, however, led to the removal of any mention of the author in the 1968 re-edition of *Vysokoe Iskusstvo*, the final version of the work published in Chukovsky's lifetime.

That final edition, however, also reflected greater openness to the West by including an appendix not found in the 1964 or 1966 editions: Correspondence with Foreign Slavists, mostly from the USA, as well as a section on translations of Pushkin's *Eugene Onegin*. The latter was a reaction no doubt to the enormous attention generated by Vladimir Nabokov's controversial translation into English, which was published in 1964.

Conclusion

In 1984 the first and only English translation of Kornei Chukovsky's classic work on literary translation appeared under the title *The Art of*

Translation, Kornei Chukovsky's A High Art, which references two very different editions of Chukovsky's work. Moreover, the translator, Lauren Leighton, selected for translation not the first single-authored edition of the work under the title *Iskussto perevoda*, or *The Art of Translation*, from 1936, nor the first to bear the title *Vysokoe iskusstvo*, or *A High Art*, from 1941, nor even the last edition produced in Chukovsky's lifetime, from 1968. He chose the 1966 edition, a slightly expanded version of the 1964 Thaw-era edition, in which Chukovsky was able to mention Tatyana Gnedich as well as Solzhenitsyn, who was celebrated in the West at the time as a writer-dissident. In this way, the Thaw-era edition, which could be said to be most free from censorship, reinforced the image of Chukovsky in the West as a friend and supporter of dissidents, while obscuring the far more complicated reality of Chukovsky's survival as played out across the various iterations of this text. The reality is complicated indeed, for couldn't one argue that Chukovsky's strategic retreats from his initial conception of *lichnost'* as creative autonomy and malleability reflect a keen ability to adopt the shifting rhetoric of the times and, as such, are a manifestation of that very creative malleability? And no matter what the ideological content he espoused, Chukovsky never abandoned on the rhetorical level the *elitarnaia iazykovaia lichnost'* [elite linguistic identity] he had perfected in the pre-revolutionary Silver Age (Chusova and Salimova 2015: 112). This study also demonstrates how translation theory became a privileged site for discussion of key ethical concerns facing the Soviet intelligentsia, related to submission, resistance, individuality, and originality with the relationship of translator and original author often serving as a convenient allegory for the artist's relationship to the state.

Appendix

See Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Various editions of Chukovsky's writings on translation with chapter titles

1919. <i>Printsipy khudozhestvennogo perevoda</i> [Principles of literary translation] (with Nikolai Gumilev)	Perevody prozaicheskie [Prose translations] 1. Fonetika i ritmika [Phonetics and rhythm] 2. Stil' [Style] 3. Slovar' [Lexicon] 4. Sintaksis [Syntax] 5. Tekstual'naia tochnost' [Textual accuracy]
1920. <i>Printsipy khudozhestvennogo perevoda</i> [Principles of literary translation] (with Nikolai Gumilev and Fyodor Batiushkov)	Perevody prozaicheskie [Prose translations] 1. Fonetika i ritmika [Phonetics and rhythm] 2. Stil' [Style] (expanded) 3. Slovar' [Lexicon] 4. Sintaksis [Syntax] (expanded) 5. Tekstual'naia tochnost' [Textual accuracy] (expanded) 6. Frazeologiya, idiomy, i proch. [Phraseology, idioms, etc.]

1930. <i>Iskusstvo perevoda</i> [The art of translation] (with Andrei Fedorov)	<p>Predislovie [Foreword] Printsipy khudozhestvennogo perevoda [Principles of literary translation]</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Listo perevodchika [The face of the translator] 2. Perevodchik – vrag [The translator as enemy] 3. Sotsial'naia priroda perevodchika [The social nature of the translator] 4. Perevody prezhe i teper' [Translations then and now] 5. Perevodchik i avtor [The translator and the author] 6. Fonetika [Phonetics] 7. Stil' [Style] 8. Slovar' [Lexicon] 9. Sintaksis [Syntax] 10. Tekstual'naia tochnost' [Textual accuracy] 11. Frazeologiiia, idiomy, i proch. [Phraseology, idioms, etc.] 12. Redaktura inostrannykh pisatelei [Editing foreign writers] <p>Prilozhenie V zashchitu Dikensa [Appendix: In defense of Dickens] (consisting of six numbered but unnamed sections)</p>
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(continued)

Table 4.1 (continued)

1936. <i>Iskusstvo perevoda</i> [The art of translation] (single-authored)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Dominanty oshibok [Dominant errors] 2. Sotsial'naia priroda perevodchika [The social nature of the translator] 3. Slukh perevodchika. – Sintaksis [The translator's ear.—Syntax] 4. Stil' [Style] 5. Tekstual'naia tochnost' [Textual accuracy] 6. Perevody prezhe i teper' [Translations then and now] 7. Edinoborstvo s Shekspirom [One-on-one combat with Shakespeare] 8. Redaktura inostrannykh pisatelei [Editing foreign writers] 9. Idiomy. – Tipicheskie oshibki. – Transkriptsiia sobstvennykh imen [Idioms.—Typical mistakes.—Transcription of proper names] <p>Prilozheniia [Appendices]</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Iz zametok M. Gor'kogo [From the notes of M. Gorky] 2. Fet o zadachakh perevodov (po avtografu Al. Bloka) [Fet on the tasks of translation (from a manuscript by Al. Blok)]
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1941. *Vysokoe iskusstvo* [A high art]

1. Dominantny oshibok [Dominant errors]
2. Sotsial'naiia priroda perevodchika [The social nature of the translator]
3. Slovar'. – Stil' [Lexicon.—Style]
4. Slukh perevodchika. – Ritmika. –Zvukozapis' [The translator's ear.—Rhythm.—Sound recording]
5. Sintaksis [Syntax]
6. K metodike perevoda Shekspira [Toward a method for translating Shakespeare]
7. Intonatsiia. – Bezplodnost' formalizma [Intonation.—The sterility of formalism]
8. Tekstual'naia tochnost' [Textual accuracy]
9. Perevody prezhe i teper' [Translations then and now]
10. Idiomy. – Tipicheskie oshibki. – Transkriptsiia sobstvennykh imen [Idioms.—Typical mistakes.—Transcription of proper names]
11. Tendentsiia sovetskogo stilia v novykh perevodakh Shevchenko [The tendency of Soviet style in new translations of Shevchenko]

(continued)

Table 4.1 (continued)

<p>1964. <i>Vysokoe iskusstvo: O printsipakh khudozhestvennogo perevoda</i> [A high art: on the principles of literary translation]</p>	<p>Pro etu knigu [About this book] 1. Slovarnye oshibki [Lexical errors] 2. Perevod – avtoportret perevodchika [Translation as the self-portrait of the translator] 3. Netochnaia tochnost' [Inaccurate accuracy] 4. Bednyi slovar' – i bogatyi [A poor lexicon—and a rich one] 5. Stil' [Style] 6. Slukh perevodchika. – Ritmika. –Zvukozapis' [The translator's ear.—Rhythm.—Sound recording] 7. Sintaksis. Intonatsiia. K metodike perevoda Shekspira [Syntax. Intonation. Toward a method for translating Shakespeare] 8. Sovremennoe. Iz literaturnogo dnevnika [Contemporary. From a literary diary] 9. Perevody prezhe i teper' [Translations then and now] Prilozheniia [Appendices] 1. M. Gorkii. O khudozhestvennom perevode. (Zametki) [M. Gorky. On literary translation. (Notes)] 2. Istoriia knigi. Bibliograficheskaia spravka [The history of this book. A bibliography]</p>
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1966. *Vysokoe iskusstvo* [A high art] (published in vol. 3 of his *Collected Works*, 1965–69)

Pro etu knigu [About this book]

1. Slovarnye oshibki [Lexical errors]
2. Perevod – avtoportret perevodchika [Translation is the self-portrait of the translator]
3. Netochnaia tochnost' [Inaccurate accuracy]
4. Bednyi slovar' – i bogatyĭ [A poor lexicon—and a rich one]
5. Stil' [Style]
6. Slukh perevodchika. – Ritmika. –Zvukozapis' [The translator's ear.—Rhythm.—Sound recording]
7. Sintaksis. Intonatsiia. K metodike perevoda Shekspira [Syntax. Intonation. Toward a method for translating Shakespeare]
8. Sovremennoe (Iz literaturnogo dnevnika) [Contemporary (From my literary diary)]
9. Perevody prezhe i teper' [Translations then and now]
10. Na putiakh k sovremennogo stiliu (Kratkaia istoriia russkikh "Kobzareĭ") [On the paths toward a contemporary style (A short history of Russian "Kobzars")]

(continued)

Table 4.1 (continued)

1968. <i>Vysokoe iskusstvo</i> [A high art]	<p>Pro etu knigu [About this book]</p> <p>1. Slovarnye oshibki [Lexical errors]</p> <p>2. Perevod – eto avtoportret perevodchika [Translation is the self-portrait of the translator]</p> <p>3. Netochnaia tochnost' [Inaccurate accuracy]</p> <p>4. Bednyi slovar' – i bogatyj [A poor lexicon—and a rich one]</p> <p>5. Stil' [Style]</p> <p>6. Slukh perevodchika. – Ritmika. –Zvukozapis' [The translator's ear.—Rhythm.—Sound recording]</p> <p>7. Sintaksis. Intonatsiia. K metodike perevoda Shekspira [Syntax. Intonation. Toward a method for translating Shakespeare]</p> <p>8. Sovremennoe (Etiudy o perevodchikakh novoi epokhi) [Contemporary (Sketches of translators of the new era)]</p> <p>9. Perevody prezhe i teper' [Translations then and now]</p> <p>10. Russkie "Kobzari" (Na putiakh k sovremennomu stiliiu) [Russian "Kobzars" (On the paths to a contemporary style)]</p> <p>Biografiia knigi [The biography of this book]</p>
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Notes

1. All translations are mine unless otherwise indicated.
2. Merja Suomi's 2016 dissertation on Chukovsky's writings on translation deals with similar topics but focuses on the Stalinist-era editions, analyzing their relationship to the specific chronotope of the Soviet thirties. My primary interest lies in his conceptualization of the translator's agency and traces shifts in that conceptualization from his pre-revolutionary writings to Chukovsky's final post-Stalinist edition of *Vysokoe iskusstvo* (1968).
3. The Silver Age is used to designate a period of enormous vitality in the creative arts during the last decade of the nineteenth century and the first two decades of the twentieth. The designation is meant to associate this period with the so-called Golden Age of Russian literature in the early nineteenth century, which saw the emergence of some of Russia's greatest writers, such as Pushkin, Lermontov and Gogol.
4. Henceforth these works will be referred to simply by their date. A complete list of the chapters authored by Chukovsky in each of these editions can be found in Appendix.
5. Unlike the 1906 review essay, this one from 1907 was included as an appendix in the 1908 volume *Ot Chekhova do nashikh dnei* [From Chekhov to our days], now under the title "Bal'mont i Shelli" [Bal'mont and Shelley], and would later appear in that form in volume six of Chukovsky's *Collected Works* in 1966.
6. Chukovsky does, already in *Principles*, acknowledge limits to this creative reincarnation. Like an actor choosing a role, the translator must choose an author to translate who is similar in 'temperament and the nature of his or her creative gift [*darovanie*]' (1919: 8).
7. Fedorov was a product of the new Soviet system of higher education, having graduated from the Institute of Art in 1929. Chukovsky wrote the first half of the book, entitled *Printsipy khudozhestvennogo perevoda* [Principles of literary translation], and Fedorov, the second, entitled *Priemy i zadachi khudozhestvennogo perevoda* [The devices and tasks of literary translation]. It is interesting to note Fedorov's

use of the key Formalist term *priem* [device] shortly before the regime would launch its campaign against formalism.

8. Of course, one cannot rule out the possibility that the ferocity of Chukovsky's class-based attack on Bal'mont in 1930, which Rachel Polonsky has convincingly demonstrated to be exaggerated and unfair (Polonsky 1997), served the additional purpose of distancing Chukovsky from another decadent author, Oscar Wilde, whom Chukovsky had championed in pre-revolutionary Russia. In fact, in the introduction to the twelve-volume complete Russian works of Wilde that Chukovsky edited, he famously declared Wilde to be 'our very own Russian writer' [*nash samyi rodnoi russkii pisatel*] (Chukovskii 1912: xxxiii). He had also included a chapter on Wilde in his 1914 collection *Litsa i maski*, which was published separately in 1922 under the title *Oskar Uail'd* and contained a chapter that treated the author's homosexuality under the Latin title "Modo vira, moda femina." This work, needless to say, was never re-published during Chukovsky's lifetime and was not included in his collected works.
9. For a detailed discussion of the possible motivations behind these critiques, see Suomi (2016, 177–96).
10. That being said, Chukovsky's use of the word *umalenie*, or 'diminution,' in the above-cited passage may be a covert expression of resistance to Soviet cultural policy, as the verb form *umalit'* appears in a passage in Paul's Letter to the Phillipians, which is central to the theological notion of *kenosis*, which holds that Christ renounced his divine nature in order to be entirely receptive to the will of God the Father. It is translated variously in the many English translations of the Bible, but there is only one translation into Old Church Slavonic: '*On sebe umalil*' [He diminished himself]. As an intertextual reference then, Chukovsky's use of *umalenie* may mark not a capitulation to the regime but a translation, if you will, of the regime's dictates into the language of Christian humility, transforming this act of submission into an expression of agency. Similar kenotic motifs have been identified in the work of Chukovsky's friends, the poets Osip Mandelshtam (see Freidin 1987) and Boris Pasternak (see Sergay 2008: 88–105).

11. While Chukovsky was sympathetic to the work of the Russian formalists, he did not espouse formal experimentation in translation; indeed, he would remain throughout his life a strong proponent of a domesticating style, that is, one that conforms with the norms of Russian canonical literature, encouraging translators to immerse themselves in the nineteenth-century Russian classics, ‘Dal’, Leskov, Mel’nikov-Pechersky, Gleb Uspensky’, despite Gorky’s objections (Chukovskii 1967: 137).
12. It should be noted that while dominant is a key Formalist term, it is used differently by Chukovsky. For the Formalists it denotes the central orientation in a literary text, which the translator should attempt to recreate (see Chukovskii and Fedorov 1930: 208–10), while Chukovsky uses it to describe a pattern of translator errors.
13. That being said, the recognition of translation as an essentially creative activity remained a key concept in Soviet translation studies, as evident in Andrei Fedorov’s *Vvedenie v teoriiu perevoda* [Introduction to translation theory]: ‘This process of searching and selection [of translation solutions] is in all cases a creative one. The translation of artistic and political literature, as well as the translation of scholarly works characterized by the expressive use of language, is an art and requires literary talent’ (Fedorov 1953: 12).
14. On the dialectic of spontaneity/consciousness in Marxism-Leninism, see Clark (1984, 15–16).
15. For a detailed overview of Chukovsky’s engagement with the friendship of peoples policy, see Suomi (2016, 96–108).
16. Such allusions, however, would become increasingly dangerous following the forced removal of Khrushchev as Soviet premier and the consolidation of social control under Brezhnev. And so, when Efim Etkind stated in the introduction to his 1970 *Mastera russkogo stikhotvornogo perevoda* that poets under Stalin were forced to speak through their translations, the offending passage was excised and Etkind was subjected to a humiliating public scolding (see Etkind 1978, 111–66; Baer 2006).
17. The greeting in Russian is ‘Khristos voskres’ [Christ is risen] and the response: ‘Voistinu voskres’ [Indeed he has risen]. The fact that

this reference is lost in the English translation may have led Lauren Leighton to render the phrase ‘temnyi pogreb’ [dark cellar] as ‘dark tomb’, so as to index the motif of resurrection.

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5

Translating Inferno: Mikhail Lozinskii, Dante and the Soviet Myth of the Translator

Susanna Witt

Introduction

In Russian culture, the poet-translator Mikhail Lozinskii (1886–1955) and his famous translation of Dante's *Divina commedia* (*Bozhestvennaia komedia*) have acquired an almost legendary status, a process that began already during the translator's lifetime. Appearing in separate editions in 1939 (*Inferno* [*Ad*]), 1944 (*Purgatorio* [*Chistilishche*]) and 1945 (*Paradiso* [*Rai*]), the complete translation was published in 1950 and has been re-published regularly since, both during and after the Soviet period. A sign of its canonic status was its publication in 1967 in the series *Literaturnye pamiatniki* [Literary monuments], published by

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the USSR Academy of Sciences, in connection with the 700th anniversary of Dante's birth in 1965.¹ An important factor in shaping its status was the Stalin Prize awarded to Lozinskii in 1946, for his 'exemplary verse translation of Dante's *Divine Comedy*' (Svin'in and Oseev 2007: 165).² There are two circumstances, however, that complicate our appreciation of this award. The Stalin Prize, which was the ultimate sign of consecration in Soviet culture at the time, did not include the category of translation. Moreover, Lozinskii's translation of Dante was actually based on principles that were quite alien to the then emerging 'Soviet school of translation' which was to promulgate adaptive translation practices that affected both style and 'ideological content' of the translated work (see Witt 2016a). Such apparent paradoxes at the heart of the canonization process make Lozinskii and his *Divine Comedy* an interesting case through which to explore translation under the specific constraints of Soviet communism, which were superimposed on the specific translation culture that had been developing in Russia for centuries prior to the Bolshevik takeover in 1917.³

How did Lozinskii's translation come to occupy the position it still retains in Russian culture? What values did it represent to its contemporary readerships and how were they created and sustained? In order to answer such questions it is necessary to address a set of problems related to the historical, political, and cultural contexts in which the work appeared. Thus we will have to consider three separate but intertwined issues: the significance of translation itself in the Soviet context, the significance of the translator, and the significance of Dante in the target culture in general. As a tool of analysis I will draw on two cultural myths: the Soviet 'myth of the translator'—understood as a specific set of projections and dispositions related to this figure within the Russian intelligentsia (Baer 2010)—and the 'Dante myth' in Russian literature, and more specifically, in Russian literary modernism. By focusing on one translator, his magnum opus and the context in which it was embedded, the chapter illuminates some of the complex functioning of translation and its significance under 'Soviet communism', a 70-year period whose impact on current developments in Russian culture still needs to be more fully explored.

Translation in the Soviet Context

The issue of translation in the Soviet context cannot be separated from the status that literature itself has traditionally enjoyed in Russian culture. Despite its belated entrance onto the European literary scene and low rates of literacy well into the nineteenth century, Russia has historically been distinguished by a logocentrism, a cult of the word that, among other things, has shaped certain attitudes towards literature and its authors. As autocracy and a lack of civil rights have been the rule for most of Russia's history, literature has, to an extraordinary extent, been endowed with—and taken on—social and existential responsibilities. Accordingly, it has more often than not been perceived by the state as a threat, in need of close surveillance in the form of censorship. And, as expressed by Caryl Emerson,

[t]he flip side of a country that exiles and shoots its poet is a culture that nurtures an image of the writer as prophet, philosopher; a person with the status of (in Solzhenitsyn's words from his novel *The First Circle*) a "second government" (Emerson 2008: 23)

This is the background for Russian exceptionalism in relation to its writers, famously expressed by Soviet thaw-era (1954–64) poet Evgenii Evtushenko as: 'a poet in Russia is more than a poet'. Translation work—as part of literary culture—has generally been held in high esteem and we may perhaps, by implication, say that *a translator in Russia is more than a translator* as well.

Traditional Russian word-centredness, combined with the revolutionary internationalism which marked the early Soviet years, were arguably important factors behind the large translation projects of the 1920s, first and foremost the World Literature Publishing House launched by writer Maksim Gorky and Anatolii Lunacharskii, people's commissar for education, in 1918.⁴ Although the truly utopian plans of this enterprise materialized only to a limited extent during its short-lived existence (it was closed down in 1924), its significance went far beyond the 220 books that were actually published. This first attempt at creating a canon of world literature *à la soviétique* contributed substantially to

raising standards in translation and to the professionalization of translators as well as editors and commentators.⁵ The small in-house manual produced for the needs of its translators laid the ground for Russian translation theory: the booklet *Printsipy khudozhestvennogo perevoda* [The principles of literary translation], produced in 1919 with contributions by writer, translator, and critic Kornei Chukovskii and poet Nikolai Gumilev (with an additional chapter by scholar Fedor Batiushkov in the second edition of the book in 1920) was to have an impact for decades as Chukovskii's chapter gradually grew into his own classical work on literary translation, *The High Art*.⁶ And, no less importantly, the World Literature publishing house provided a much needed source of income for the numerous members of the pre-revolutionary intelligentsia, who were now struck by both poverty and general suspicion on the part of the authorities. The translation of foreign literature in the USSR during its early period was a matter of 'cultural capital' in both senses of the word. Large-scale translation enterprises such as World Literature and the Leningrad-based publishing house Academia (1921–38) were to accrue cultural capital to the young Soviet state in order to lend it authority and legitimacy on the international scene which it did receive, for example, in 1934 when it became a member of the League of Nations. Translation—both into and from Russian and some other languages of the Union—was also instrumental in the efforts made in the 1930s to make Moscow a cultural capital for the 'progressive' part of the world, as shown by Katerina Clark (2011).

However, not all works of world literature were considered suitable to enter the Soviet canon of world literature. Due to ideological, thematic, stylistic, or other perceived shortcomings in the originals, a careful selection process was needed. Official censorship had been re-established in Russia immediately after the Bolshevik takeover in October 1917, following a period earlier that year in which censorship had been significantly relaxed by the Provisional Government. Centralized and fully bureaucratized with the establishment of *Glavlit* [The main administration for literary and publishing affairs] in 1922, the Soviet censorship apparatus had an especially important role to play when it came to translation of foreign literary works with their potentially 'dangerous' influences. Censorship in this case was often a complex process involving

ensorial agents and negotiations on various levels.⁷ Problems could arise even with the most canonical of Western masterpieces as illustrated in the following excerpt from the diary of Kornei Chukovskii referring to an editorial meeting at World Literature publishing house:

Tikhonov gave a report on expanding our publishing agenda. He wanted to include Shakespeare, Swift, [and] Latin and Greek classics in the proposed publication list. But in order to pass each book through the editorial committee at the State Publishing House, we needed to supply each author with an ideologically appropriate recommendation: Boccaccio – struggle against the clergy; Vasari – moving art closer to the masses; Petronius – satire on the NEP.⁸ But we could not quite figure out how to recommend *The Divine Comedy*. (13 February 1923, cited in Khotimsky 2013: 146–7; trans. by Khotimsky)

This type of ‘ideologically appropriate recommendations’ was also an indispensable part of the Forewords that were added to translated books throughout the Soviet era, likened by one translator to ‘a visa of sorts for a book to enter the USSR’.⁹ In editorial parlance, such a text, intended to ‘tow’ a foreign work into the domestic literary system, was called a ‘locomotive’ (*parovoz*). Whether or not the failure to produce a recommendation for *The Divine Comedy* at this meeting was the reason, the book did not appear with World Literature, nor was it published by Academia, which published Dante’s *Vita nova* in Abram Efros’ translation in 1934. When it finally appeared in Lozinskii’s translation, all three parts of *The Divine Comedy* carried introductory essays by Aleksei Dzhivelegov, a renowned historian of literature who had written the first Soviet monograph on Dante, published in 1933 in the prestigious series Lives of Remarkable People. His ‘strategy’ when recommending the work was to indicate Dante as a pioneer of realism in literature. When introducing *Purgatory*, Dzhivelegov declared:

The extraordinary formal organization of the *Comedy* was a result of Dante’s use of the legacy of classical poetry as well as the poetry of the Middle Ages. But the formal side in its entirety served a purpose that was especially precious to him; to devise a frame for a realist art. This process

was far from unconscious. Dante felt that the path of a genuine artist in his days was the path to realism. (Dzhivelegov 1944: 9)

A certain tension could be perceived between this introduction and Lozinskii's commentary in the same edition which, on the contrary, emphasized the non-realistic mode of the work:

When we read *The Divine Comedy* we have to constantly bear in mind its polysemous character: beneath the real images there always hides an allegorical sense. (Dante 1944: 191)

Already in nineteenth-century Russia, the conditions of political censorship had prompted certain strategies on the part of writers aimed at circumventing restrictions. One of these strategies was so-called 'Aesopian language', an allusive mode of expression intended for a readership well-versed in allegorical meanings, a competence that was continually refined during the Soviet period. The term 'Aesopian language', commonly attributed to nineteenth-century satirist writer Mikhail Saltykov-Shchedrin, has been theorized by Lev Loseff, who defines it in the following way:

Imagine the situation, therefore, when the Author, who fully understands the system of political taboos (i.e., the censorship), determines to anticipate the Censor's intervention: dispensing with a number of direct statements in the text and with the straightforward depiction of certain details of real life, he replaces them with hints and circumlocutions. While his rationale in this instance lies outside literature, the Author has no means but the literary — tropes, rhetorical figures, and intrigues within the structure of the work as a whole — to realize his hints and circumlocutions. [...] It is the systemic alteration of the text occasioned by the introduction of hints and circumlocutions which these pages will take to be Aesopian language. (Loseff 1984: 6)

Listing the specific devices of Aesopian language, Loseff distinguishes their workings on several levels which are always based on the principle of 'metonymic substitutions'. On the level of genre, for example, a work could be presented as treating a historical plot, while actually implying

a parable (Loseff 1984: 60). Among the ‘Aesopian genres’ proposed by Loseff we also find translation. Either an original work could be presented as a translation (‘feigned translation, pseudotranslation’), or an authentic translation could be ‘stylistically modified’ so as to render it ‘the Aesopian original of its translator’ (Loseff 1984: 77). Well-known examples cited by Loseff include the poet Boris Pasternak’s renditions of Shakespeare’s plays in the 1940s which at times were used to ‘communicate his experience of the years of Stalinist terror’ (Loseff 1984: 80, see also Witt 2003). As will be clear from the following analysis of the case of Mikhail Lozinskii’s *Divine Comedy*, however, translation as an ‘Aesopian genre’ does not necessarily imply manipulation of the original text.

The function commonly ascribed to translation in the politically repressive setting of the USSR—that of a substitute for original writing for otherwise unpublishable authors, providing an outlet for otherwise unsayable meanings (cf. Friedberg 1997)—has important theoretical implications. If we assume such a ‘substitutional’ role for translation we must recognize its corollary: the necessity to approach translations on the same premises as original writing, that is, as literature in the context of the target literature, and more broadly, the target culture as a whole. We will have to inquire into meanings produced by context, style, and intertextuality (see Witt 2016b).

The context of reception was informed by what I will refer to here as ‘the myth of the Soviet translator’ (Baer 2010). According to Brian James Baer, the translator emerged in the USSR as an idealized figure displaying ‘selfless devotion to the “word” and to the genius of individual artists’ as opposed to the ‘active collective heroism of socialist realism’ (Baer 2010: 151). Translation was regarded as a *sacrifice* as exemplified by heroic figures such as Tatiana Gnedich, whose translation of Byron’s *Don Juan*, carried out in prison, acquired the status of a ‘feat’ [*podvig*].¹⁰ Translation of Western literature was regarded by many as an ethically acceptable occupation because it was seen as unpolitical (a non-participation in Solzhenitsyn’s sense), while simultaneously providing a site of resistance as ‘it was aimed at preserving literature’s pretensions to timeless and aesthetical values’ (Baer 2010: 166). What Baer thus pinpoints is a superimposition of existential and ethical values on the function of cultural transfer traditionally associated with translation, projecting the translator

as a moral hero. Mikhail Lozinskii is another example mentioned by Baer. Enduring illness and pain while carrying out his translation of the *Divine Comedy*, Lozinskii was mythologized for his integrity and perseverance. As we shall see, however, the status of his translation has to be more broadly assessed, beyond that of a representation of the 'eternal values' inherent in Great Literature.

The Translator and His Context

Born in 1886, Mikhail Lozinskii was a child of what is known as the Silver Age, a period of unprecedented vitality in Russian culture which lasted roughly between 1890 and 1920. The son of an attorney-at-law who spoke Italian, had Dante in his library and used to cite him in the original, Lozinskii received a double education in law and philology at St. Petersburg University.¹¹ In 1914 he joined the staff of the State Public Library (now Russian National Library) in St. Petersburg, where he held various positions (as head of the Department of Fine Arts, as head of the library of Voltaire) until difficulties in the early 1930s resulted in his eventual dismissal in 1938.¹² Lozinskii was close to the Acmeist literary group, which had emerged in the early 1910s in opposition to the Symbolist movement, and in 1916 he published his first (and only) collection of verse, *Mountain Well* (*Gornyi kliuch*) (republ. 1922).¹³ Although never formally part of the group, Lozinskii worked closely with its leader Nikolai Gumilev on several projects, and was a lifelong friend of its most famous members, Anna Akhmatova (married to Gumilev until 1918) and Osip Mandel'shtam. It was Mandel'shtam who later defined the ethos of the group as 'a longing for world culture', placing an impulse to translate at its very centre. All the Acmeists were in fact to produce translations at various points in their life although they identified to differing degrees with the role of translator.¹⁴ Gumilev had been translating from the beginning of his career, introducing poetry that inspired his movement (e.g., Théophile Gautier). After the revolution, he took part in the activities of the World Literature publishing house as translator and editor until he was executed in 1921, falsely accused of participation in a monarchist conspiracy. Mandel'shtam, although his

prose translations in the 1920s were made in order to earn money, was genuinely interested in problems of translation and produced versions of Petrarch in the early 1930s. Akhmatova, taking to translation as a means of survival in the 1950s, did not enjoy it and worked mostly from literal interlinear versions. Lozinskii was the only one in this context to give up original writing and identify wholly with the role of translator, working from the early 1920s within World Literature while simultaneously teaching at various institutions and conducting a workshop with young translators in Petrograd. Lozinskii's later comments on his early lyrical poetry (Fedorov 1983: 297), as well as a thorough analysis of his oeuvre (Segal 1983), suggest that his reasons for giving up original writing were more personal and had to do with his poetical development. It has been estimated that during his 35-year career Lozinskii translated a total of 80,000 lines of poetry and 8000 pages of prose.¹⁵

Lozinskii began translating *The Divine Comedy* on 8 February 1936.¹⁶ In so doing he entered into the space of what I will refer to as the Dante myth in Russian literature, that is the complex reception and appropriation of Dante both as an author and a public figure.¹⁷ Most of the great Russian writers had a strong interest in Dante's life and works, beginning with Pushkin who expressed his particular fascination with the design of *Inferno*, and Gogol, who took the plan of the *Divine Comedy* as a foundation for his *Dead Souls*.¹⁸ Appropriated in various ways by Symbolists such as Aleksandr Blok and Viacheslav Ivanov, Dante came to play an especially important role in the creative imagination of the following generation. Among these, Akhmatova and Mandel'shtam, in particular, developed personal mythologies of Dante. Invoking Dante already in the poem 'The Muse' (1924), Akhmatova portrayed the poet as an exile in her poem 'Dante' (1936). Mandel'shtam learned Italian in the early 1930s in order to read *The Divine Comedy* in the original. This reading resulted in his main poetological essay 'Conversation about Dante', written in 1933 but published in the USSR only in 1967.

In this work Mandel'shtam stresses the topicality of the *Comedy* as a salient feature: 'It is inconceivable to read Dante's cantos without directing them toward contemporaneity. They were created for that purpose. They are missiles for capturing the future. They require commentary in the *futurum*' (Mandelstam 2001 [1933], 67). Arguably

one of the most perceptive readers of his epoch, already in 1933 Mandel'shtam pointed to an important factor in the contemporary reception of Dante: the isomorphic relationship of his work with current developments in Soviet reality. So, for example, he reflected on the passage in the sixteenth canto of *Inferno* where Dante encounters a group of unlucky fellow-countrymen who ask him to tell them about home:

The *Inferno*, canto 16. The conversation is conducted with that intense passion reserved for the prison visit: the need to utilize, at whatever cost, the tiny snatches of a meeting. Three eminent Florentines conduct an inquiry. About what? About Florence, of course. Their knees tremble with impatience, and they are terrified of hearing the truth. (Mandelstam 2001 [1933]: 65)

The penitential institutions of mundane life evoked here as an association originating in Dante's underworld are commented upon some pages later with reference to the alleged historical reality:

In the subconscious of the Italian people prison played a prominent role. Nightmares of prison life were imbibed with their mother's milk. The Trecento tossed men into prison with astonishing unconcern. [...] There was a lively intercourse between the prison and the free world outside resembling diffusion, mutual infiltration. (Mandelstam 2001 [1933], 76)

Had it been published, the Aesopian reference of this statement would not have escaped a Soviet reader in the early 1930s with arrests and deportations already becoming routine. When Mikhail Lozinskii's translation of *Inferno* was published in 1939, Mandel'shtam had already perished in a transit camp in the Far East.¹⁹ Lozinskii himself had been arrested repeatedly, beginning in 1921 in connection with the case of Gumilev. In 1932 he had been found guilty of 'anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda', receiving a three-year, conditional prison sentence. In 1935, following the murder of Sergei Kirov, Lozinskii was informed that he was on a list of arrests. This time he was saved thanks to the connections of his father-in-law, the influential establishment writer Aleksei Tolstoy who appealed to Gorky, who in turn had Stalin's ear (Ivanovskii 2005). For a

long time, however, Lozinskii was one of those people who always kept a packed suitcase ready in case of a nightly raid from the NKVD.

Lozinskii's respected status as translator at the time is confirmed by the fact that, such difficulties notwithstanding, he was invited to deliver one of the principal speeches at the First All-Union conference of Soviet translators, held 3–7 January 1936 in Moscow.²⁰ His talk entitled 'The Art of Poetic Translation', is of particular interest for us since it is Lozinskii's only full statement on the subject; there is no translator's foreword in any of the canticles in his *Divine Comedy*. The talk, delivered some weeks before the first tercets were translated, can be seen as a preparatory declaration. Here, Lozinskii ascribes to the translation of literary texts a twofold function: '1) aesthetic, as a literary work, and 2) educational — as monuments which acquaint us with another country, another epoch, another culture, with a way of thinking and feeling that is new to us' (Lozinskii 1955). In order to produce a 'translation proper'—what Lozinskii labels a 'recreative translation' as opposed to a paraphrasing, 'reorganizational', one—the translator has to reproduce 'with greatest possible fullness and accuracy (*tochnost'*) the form and content of the original' (ibid.). Not only is the content of an artwork socially and historically conditioned, Lozinskii argues, but so are its formal elements, their genesis, and their meaning. For verse translation, Lozinskii argues, form is of specific significance. Although the content of foreign verses, their imagery and flow of phrases may be rendered in prose with even greater accuracy than a verse translation, such a prose translation would be poetically 'dead', because it is precisely the form that affects us emotionally: 'In order to be not dead but alive, a translation must recreate the *form* of the original, for in this form, poured into it and indivisible from it, is its *content*' (Lozinskii 1955: 162). Of the elements that make up form in poetry—rhythm and the phonetic elements of expressivity—rhythm is the fundamental one: 'The inspiring strength of rhythm is broader than the boundaries of language, it is universal'. As for the phonetic elements, which 'most strikingly' affect the reader emotionally, Lozinskii advocates an approach aimed at recreating not individual sounds, but the original's 'system of echoes and resonances' with the help of the phonetic resources of the target language (Lozinskii 1955: 164). Since a full rendition of all elements pertaining to form and content is of course not feasible, the

translator has to decide beforehand which elements are the most essential, and must be reproduced at any cost, and which can be sacrificed.²¹ In terms of poetics, it is worth noting that Lozinskii, throughout his theoretical essay, retained an unmistakably Acmeist tone. His principles of accuracy and equilinearity in translation²² were expressed with the help of building metaphors, the core imagery of Acmeism:

words and collocations are just bricks out of which the building is erected. They serve the builder [*zodchii*] in the realization of his architectural thought. The important thing is the design [*chertezh*], it decides everything. And the translator is obliged to follow the design indicated by the original [...]. (Lozinskii 1955: 162)

The requirements laid out at the conference in 1936 were all to a large extent applied to Lozinskii's Dante.

The Translation

In one of the relatively few studies devoted to analysing Lozinskii's translation of the *Divine Comedy*, Italian Slavacist Eridano Bazzarelli (transcribed as Batstsarelli in Russian) argues that 'the genius of his work' lies above all in the consistency with which he let himself be guided by his chosen method (Batstsarelli 1976: 316).²³ Emphasizing the 'enormous difficulties' involved in translating the *Comedy*—'an amazing synthesis of different styles, contrasting systems of intonation in which the realist, at times naturalist, expressivity of *Inferno* is combined with the lofty gentleness found in some of the cantos of *Purgatory*, written in *il dolce stil nuovo*, and the extatic splendor of Paradise'—Bazzarelli maintains that Lozinskii had to 'provide equivalents', that is, 'organize the whole complex of subsystems' in such a way as to approximate the 'total harmony of the original' (Batstsarelli 1976: 317). Noting that the 'discrepancies' between original and translation are often minimal in parts of the poem where a rationalist (philosophical, intellectual) mode prevails (due to the relative translatability of the antique and medieval rhetorics applied by Dante), Bazzarelli provides a list of 'subsystems' where Lozinskii achieves 'equivalence', or at least approximates it. Even

at a phonetic level, Bazzarelli concludes, the translator often succeeds in reproducing the patterns of the original. Thus the first line of *Inferno* XXVI, 'Godi, Fiorenza, poi che se' sì grande', [Rejoice, O Florence, since thou art so great] is rendered by Lozinskii as 'Gordis', Fiorentsa, dolei velichavoi!' [Be proud, Florence, of your majestic lot] which reproduces the initial *go-di* sound combination and, although differing in meaning, actually captures the shade of 'conceited pride' implied in the original and thus the sarcasm directed towards Florence, whose fame has spread so widely in Hell (Batstsarelli 1976: 321).

The remarkable closeness of the translation to the original text was a feature widely commented upon in the generally positive reviews when Lozinskii's *Divine Comedy* was published. The critic of *Literaturnaia gazeta* [The literary gazette] claimed: 'The corresponding parts of the original [...] could not have been translated better and more faithfully; even if they had been rendered in prose it would have been impossible to find a more adequate translation' (Aleksandrov 1945: 3). Russian-American scholar Vera Sandomirsky, in her 1941 review of *Inferno* for *Italica* (the journal of the American teachers of Italian) remarked: 'If one translates the Russian text into English, it still follows the Italian more closely than many English translations' (Sandomirsky 1941: 118). Translation scholar Andrei Fedorov, in his review of the completed *Divine Comedy* in 1946, implicitly echoes Lozinskii's main point in his 1936 speech about the double function of any literary translation as a work of an aesthetic as well as of a cognitive order. The new translation, Fedorov remarked, 'is a work of the greatest, not only artistic, but also cognitive value, it leads us to a real knowledge of the original, making it at the same time the property [*dostoianie*] of our present time, a live work of contemporary Russian poetry' (1946: 128).

Let us examine how Lozinskii rendered Dante's meeting with his fellow-countrymen, invoked by Mandel'shtam in his 1933 essay, bearing in mind that now, due to the Great Terror, many more Soviet readers were familiar with the communication problem presented in this scene. Dante the protagonist appears as a *witness* with all the responsibilities that such a role entails. Here is the appeal to him from the Florentines:

Inferno XVI: 82–87

Da uzrish' snova krasotu svetil,
Prostias' s neozarennymi mestami!
Togda, s otradoi vspomianuv: "la byl",

Skazhi drugim, chto ty vidalsia s nami!
I tut oni pomchalis' vdol' puti,
I nogi ikh kazalis' mne krylami.
(Dante 1939: 98)

You will see the beauty of the stars
again,
Having bid farewell to the unlit places!
Then, having recalled with joy: 'I was
[there]'
Tell the others that you have been seeing
us!"
And then they rushed away
And their legs seemed to me as wings.^a

^aHere and in the following examples I provide my own literal back translation of Lozinskii's Russian rendering of Dante

Però, se campi d'esti luoghi bui
e torni a riveder le belle stelle,
quando ti gioverà dicere "l' fui",

fa che di noi a la gente favelle.
Indi rupper la rota, ed a fuggirsi
ali sembiar le gambe loro snelle.
(Dante 1957: 190–1)

Lozinskii retains rhyme and meter—the Italian *endecasillabi* rendered in iambic pentameter gives Russian lines with alternating 10 and 11 syllables—but omits the line about the interlocutors breaking up the 'ring' in which they have been arranged (*Indi rupper la rota*). Thus sacrificing 'the less important', according to his own principles, Lozinskii produces a translation with maximum emphasis on the appeal to Dante to bear witness.²⁴ To bear witness is a topic that reemerges in the beginning of canto XXVIII of *Inferno*. Now, as an object of reflection for Dante, this act appears a problematic task due to the limits of language itself:

Inferno XXVIII: 1–6

Kto mog by, dazhe vol'nymi slovami,
Povedat', skol'ko b on ni povtorial.
Vsiu krov' i rany, vidennyie nami?

Chi poria mai pur con parole sciolte
dicer del sangue e delle piaghe a pieno
ch'i' ora vidi, per narrar più volte?

Liuboi iazyk naverno by sploshal:
Ob'em rassudka nashego i rechi,
Chtoby vmestit' tak mnogo, slishkom
mal.

Ogne lingua per certo verria meno
per lo nostro sermone e per la mente
c' hanno a tanto comprender poco
seno.

(Dante 1939: 160)

(Dante 1957: 319–20)

Who could, even with free words
[prose],
Tell, no matter how many times he
tries,
Of all the blood and wounds we
saw?
Any tongue would fail for sure:
The dimensions of our mind and
speech
Are too small to take in that much

The question posed here—who could express the horrors?—takes on specific weight thanks to Lozinskii's use of a very colloquial verb (*sploshat'*) when referring to the powerlessness of the tongue, while his translation as a whole is marked by an elevated style. For Dante, the question turns out to be mainly rhetorical as he actually goes on to depict the atrocities he witnesses in the eighth circle of *Inferno*. A straightforward answer to this question, however, was given by Anna Akhmatova in the introduction to her poem *Requiem*, an epitaph to the victims of the inferno of the Great Terror, written from 1935 to 1961 (but published in her own country only in 1987). In her Foreword she casts the whole poem in a Dantean frame:

In the terrible years of the Yezhov era, I spent seventeen months in prison lines in Leningrad. One day someone 'identified me'. Then a woman with blue lips who was standing behind me and, of course, had never in her life heard my name before, awoke from the torpor normal to all of us and breathed a question in my ear (everyone spoke in whispers there):

– 'Can you describe *this*'?

And I said:

– ‘I can.’

Then something like a smile slipped across what had once been her face.

April 1, 1957, Leningrad (Akhmatova 2004: 135)

If Lozinskii’s translation of the *Inferno* largely coincided with the period of the Great Terror,²⁵ his translation of *Purgatory*, which he began on 10 October 1939 and completed on 7 December 1940, came to be associated with the Great Patriotic War. The planned publication of this part of *The Comedy* was halted by the outbreak of war following the German invasion of the USSR on 22 June 1941. The German siege of Leningrad began 8 September that same year and, like many other cultural workers, Mikhail Lozinskii was evacuated from a city already ravaged by famine in the autumn of 1941. He left on an airplane bound for the city of Kazan on 31 November, having deposited the manuscript of his translation of *Purgatory* together with his commentary in the cellar of the Hermitage museum which served as a bombshelter.

When *Purgatory* appeared in print in the summer of 1944 the Leningrad blockade—which lasted for 872 days and resulted in the death of 800,000 inhabitants (about 40 per cent of the pre-war population)—was over and Lozinskii had returned to the city. Its remaining inhabitants, traumatized by ceaseless bombings, extreme malnutrition, cold, widespread cannibalism, violence, crime, and the relentless activities of the secret services, were a very special audience. Lidiia Ginzburg, one of the most acute observers and chroniclers of the siege, has described how the inhabitants used literature in order to calibrate their reactions to this unfathomable situation:

People run through the frost, overcoming the now tangible space. The more intellectual of them recall Dante as they do so, that circle of Dante’s Hell where cold reigns. In the canteen it will be just as cold, so that the fingers won’t straighten out after being outside and the spoon has to be jammed between the thumb (the only active digit) and the frozen stump. (Ginzburg 1995: 16)²⁶

As evidenced by surviving diaries, even people who were not writers by profession kept notes scrupulously recording the physical and psychic

effects of the hardships, most notably, the long-time starvation (Peri 2017). Such narratives were at odds with the official Soviet rhetoric of heroic resistance which was promoted after the war, and many of these personal documents were confiscated and destroyed. Party commissions arriving from Moscow seized thousands of books and large quantities of documents (Peri 2017: 250).

This was the context in which *Purgatory* was first read and we might posit another parallel which would have been obvious to the reading public of post-blockade Leningrad. In Lozinskii's close rendering of cantos XXIII and XXIV, which portray the punishment of the gluttons, readers were presented with what could be best described as a *phenomenology of famine*. While describing this infernal 'reality', Dante makes comparisons with scenes in Ovid and Josephus Flavius displaying starved people eating themselves or their children, scenes that were not so distant from what many of the readers had recently observed during the siege. Lozinskii's commentary further foregrounded the topic of famine. This is how the emaciated sinners are described in *Purgatory*: XXIII: 31–33:

Kak perstni bez kamnei, glazitsy
byli;
Kto ishchet 'omo' na litse
liudskom,
Zdes' bukvu M prochel by bez usilii
(Dante 1944: 131)
Their eye sockets seemed like rings
without gems;
He who looked for 'omo' in the
human face,
Could easily read the letter "M".

Parean l'occhiaie anella senza gemme:
chi nel viso de li uomini legge 'omo'
ben avria quivi conosciuta l'emme
(Dante 1957: 656)

Explaining that 'omo' is 'a conventional transcription instead of homo', Lozinskii comments: 'It was assumed that in the features of the human face one could read "Homo Dei" ("man of God"), the eyes depicting the two "O's" and the eyebrows and the nose making up the letter "M". On the starved faces the similarity to this letter appeared with particular sharpness' (Dante 1944: 229). At a time when written accounts of the reality of the blockade were rapidly becoming taboo, Lozinskii's translation took on the function of an Aesopian work in the

sense described by Loseff, when it is the ‘cathartic effect’ brought about by publicly mentioning a taboo subject that is the ultimate goal: ‘For catharsis is the inner content of an Aesopian literary work, a catharsis which the reader experiences as a victory over repressive authority’ (Loseff 1984: 230).

The last *cantica* in Dante’s tripartite transcendental travelogue, *Paradise*, was published in Moscow in early autumn 1945, almost three years after Lozinskii had completed the translation during his evacuation in Yelabuga. Already at the beginning of the year, however, excerpts of cantos XXVII and XXVIII had been published in the journal *Leningrad*. With the feeling that the end of the war was rapidly approaching and with a full victory over Germany expected very soon, it was difficult *not* to perceive the topicality of tercets such as this one:

O radost’! O vostorg nevyrazimyi!	Oh gioia! oh ineffabile allegrezza!
O zhizn’, gde vsë liubov’ i vsë pokoi!	oh vita integra d’amore e di pace!
O vernyi klad, bez alchnosti khranimyi!	oh senza brama sicura ricchezza!
(Dante 1945b: 157)	(Dante 1957: 1108)
O joy! O delight inexpressible!	
O life, where all is love and all is peace!	
O reliable treasure, preserved without greed!	
(<i>Paradiso</i> XXVII: 7–9).	

Also predating the actual publication of the book was a review of the completed translation of the *Divine Comedy* printed in *Literaturnaia gazeta* 5 May 1945, just a few days before victory was announced. Praising the translation for both its accuracy and literary merits, the reviewer contextualized the work by stressing two of the themes in Dante’s work, ‘the theme of judgement, the live verdict’ and the ‘theme of the journey’: ‘Both the judgement and the journey in Dante’s poem we perceive as something understandable and as deeply concerning ourselves—in our days of great historical ascent and lofty historical judgement’ (Aleksandrov 1945: 3).

During and after the war there were expectations among Soviet citizens of a change in the political climate of the country and of an unavoidable alleviation of repression. In view of the war experience, many people thought it impossible for the authorities to continue the

‘management by fear’ introduced during the pre-war decade. This apprehension is perhaps best expressed in Pasternak’s 1957 novel *Doctor Zhivago* (Soviet publication in 1989), at the end of which the surviving characters reflect over the post-war situation in the following terms:

Although the enlightenment and liberation expected to come after the war did not arrive together with the victory, as people had thought, nevertheless the portents of freedom filled the air throughout the postwar period, and they alone defined its historical significance. (Pasternak 1990: 510)

The paradise so eagerly awaited by many failed to materialize. Instead, a new wave of Stalinist repressions was initiated. In cultural life it started in August 1946 with the party resolution ‘On the journals *Zvezda* and *Leningrad*’, which inaugurated the period of the so-called *zhdanovshchina*—named after Stalin’s sinister minister of culture Andrei Zhdanov—entailing enhanced party control and sharply anti-Western rhetoric. The journals were condemned for publicizing the poetry of Anna Akhmatova and prose by satirist Mikhail Zoshchenko, now deemed ‘apolitic, individualistic and bourgeois’.²⁷ *Leningrad*, which had carried the excerpts from *Paradise* the previous year, was closed down. With paradise cancelled, Soviet reality eventually started to deviate from the narrative of Dante’s work.

The Workings of Myth and the Stalin Prize

The 700th anniversary of Dante’s birth was commemorated in the Soviet Union with an official celebration which took place at the Bolshoi Theater in Moscow on 19 October 1965. Among the speakers was Anna Akhmatova, who at this point had gained international recognition largely securing her reputation at home as well. Now, at one of her last public appearances (she died less than five months later), Akhmatova delivered a short speech about the significance of Dante for herself and her close friends and colleagues. While detailing the dialogue with the Italian poet in her own work as well as in that of Mandel’shtam and Gumilev—both of whom were still unpublishable in the USSR—she

demonstrated the function of the Dante myth in this particular literary context. Akhmatova declared:

[...] when the ill-wishers sarcastically ask: ‘What do Gumilev, Mandel’shtam and Akhmatova have in common?’ — I want to answer: ‘a love for Dante’. It was not for nothing that Nikolai Stepanovich [Gumilev] almost up to his last minute wanted to give his book *The Pillar of Fire* the title ‘When half way through the journey of our life’ (Nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita), and I myself, in 1940, when I was renouncing everything after the years of Requiem, when, having been where a human being should not have to go, I said: ‘I do not need anything on earth, not the thunder of Homer, not the wonder of Dante...’ and in ‘Ode to d’Annunzio’ Gumilev turns again to Dante in connection with the fate of poets. (Akhmatova 2011: 321)

Akhmatova refers to several sensitive topics here. The poem ‘Requiem’ had only been published by an emigrée publishing house in Munich in 1963 and was not known to the general Soviet public. The mention of Gumilev’s ‘last minute’ drew uncomfortable attention to his execution. The line cited was from her poem addressed to Gumilev, while the words ‘the fate of poets’ (cited from Gumilev’s 1915 poem) evoked the repression of Mandel’shtam as well. Thus, for Akhmatova in 1965, the Dante myth became a vehicle with which to reaffirm her solidarity with her long-deceased Acmeist fellow poets, allowing her to mention things publicly by their name.

In her speech, Akhmatova also mentioned Lozinskii: ‘A feat [*podvig*] — the translation of the immortal tercets of the *Divine Comedy* into Russian — was triumphantly performed by my lifelong friend, the friend of all of us, Mikhail Lozinskii’ (Akhmatova 2011: 321).²⁸ By referring to the ‘feat’ Akhmatova actualized a main feature of the Soviet myth of the translator as discussed above. The word had been applied to the work from the very beginning as evidenced by V. Aleksandrov’s review in the *Literaturnaia gazeta*: ‘To translate the *Divine Comedy* in the way M. Lozinskii has done, that is a genuine poetic feat’ (Aleksandrov 1945: 3).

The workings of the Dante myth may be perceived also in Andrei Fedorov’s 1946 review of Lozinskii’s translation (cited earlier) which declared that ‘the new translation [...] leads us to a real knowledge of

the original'. By using the verb 'lead' (in Russian *vesti*, in the conjugated form *vedet*), Fedorov recalls the semantic core of the word for translation, *perevod*, 'leading across' or 'leading through'. Thus, while some languages (English among them) have derived their word for translation from the Latin *translatio*, which is a conceptual metaphor with the meaning of 'carrying over', the Russian word is analogous to the Latin *tractio* with its core meaning of 'leading'.²⁹ By emphasizing this function, Fedorov, as it were, invites us to draw a parallel: in relation to the Soviet readers Lozinskii performs the role of a leader or guide, leading them through the complex creation of Dante the author. Thus, in a sense, he is playing the same role as Virgil, *lo duca*, who in the *Comedy* guides Dante through the worlds of the afterlife.

As noted in the introduction, an important factor in the mythologization of Lozinskii's translation was the Stalin Prize it was awarded in 1946. The first prize—conceived in 1939 in connection with Stalin's sixtieth birthday—was awarded in 1941 and it continued, with some interruptions, until his death in 1953. The prize money (100,000 rubles for the first class, 50,000 rubles for the second class, and 25,000 rubles for the third class) was supposedly drawn from royalties on Stalin's works, translated and published abroad (Frolova-Walker 2016: 11). In 1944, Stalin decided not to award any prizes at all (Svin'in and Oseev 2007: 113). The practice was only resumed in spring 1945 when Stalin ordered that a joint list of recipients be drawn up for the years 1943 and 1944. Lozinskii's nomination (for 'an outstanding work' of this particular period) was discussed at a plenary meeting of the Stalin Prize Committee on 25 March 1945, where it was promoted by Aleksandr Fadeev, secretary of the Writers' Union.³⁰ He remarked:

We have never nominated anyone for a translation, but this is a work of outstanding poetic craft. In Lozinskii's translation it is possible for the first time to read *Inferno* and *Purgatory* freely. These are not translations of a mechanical character [*remeslennogo svoistva*], but truly poetical translations and in this sense they have to be equated with prominent works of poetry, in the same way as Zhukovskii's translations.³¹

Consequently, Lozinskii was nominated for the 'Poetry' prize. The final recommendation on the part of the Stalin Prize Committee was to award him a second class prize.³²

However, this was not the end of the story. As pointed out by Marina Frolova-Walker, many Committee members were not even aware of the fact that their list would pass through five more stages: Stalin Prize Committee → Ministries (in this case, the governmental Committee for Arts Affairs) → Agitprop (the Department of Agitation and Propaganda of the Central Committee of the Communist Party) → Politburo Commission → Politburo → Stalin (Frolova-Walker 2016: 19). In the case of Lozinskii, we know that the recommendation to award him the second class prize was endorsed by the Committee for Arts Affairs as well.³³ The final decision was publicized by a government decree in *Pravda*, 26 January 1946 (Svin'in and Oseev 2007: 165), where it was announced that Lozinskii had been awarded a first class prize, rendering him an incomparably greater honour. It is still unclear in which of the stages, and on whose initiative, Lozinskii's prize was elevated to first class. Although Stalin always had the final word, the system of approving awards was much more complex than is generally assumed. The question of real agency and its motives in the final stages of the prize procedure further contributes to the mythologization of Lozinskii and his translation.

Conclusion

The position of Mikhail Lozinskii's version of Dante's *Divine Comedy* in the Russian translational canon has transcended radical shifts in the historical, social, and cultural development of the country. As shown in this chapter, the values represented by Lozinskii's translation were created and sustained in a close interplay between text and historical context. This interplay was reinforced by the Russian tradition of cognizing reality through literature. Such a self-reflexive reading opened the translation to identifications and projections that were significantly different from those provided by the original works of socialist realist literature being published at the time. Thus, readers who survived the Great Terror could

reflect together with Dante in *Hell* over the problems inherent in the act of bearing witness. The phenomenology of famine articulated by Dante in *Purgatory* coincided with the experience of many survivors of the German siege of Leningrad, an experience which became a taboo topic after the Soviet victory and consequently rendered the translation an 'Aesopian' text.

In the translation, the educational aspect inherent in Dante's work, expressed by the relationship between the 'teacher' Virgil and the 'pupil' Dante, was extended to include the translator, whose task, according to Lozinskii's philosophy, was both 'aesthetical' and 'educational'. As for *Inferno*, by replicating Virgil's role as guide the translator takes part in a process described by Daniele Monticelli as the 'neutralization of fear [*paura*]' achieved by means of the aesthetic education of Dante the protagonist, which 'represents a necessary complement to his moral, cognitive and emotional education' (Monticelli 2015: 110). Lozinskii reconciled this diegetic education with his own literary education of the Soviet readers. He brought to his translation work an acute awareness of the 'Dantean' dimension of the contemporary historical period as well as the Dantean, mythical, dimension of the target culture, inherent not least in the works of his closest literary associates.

Perhaps we will never find any documents that tell us why Lozinskii was awarded the Stalin Prize of the first class while the original recommendation of the Prize Committee was that of a second class. And perhaps this question is not so important. In the canonization of this translation as a whole, it is impossible to separate internal literary factors from, external, contextual ones, and, in the last case, official from unofficial ones. The powerful crossing of two myths—the Soviet myth of the translator and the myth of Dante in Russian literature—has given Lozinskii's translation a unique position in Russian culture.

Archival Sources

Russian State Archive for Literature and Art (RGALI): Fond 631 (Union of Soviet Writers); Fond 2073 (Stalin Prize Committee for the field of literature and art).

Notes

1. The appearance of new translations in recent years has not diminished the canonical status of Lozinskii's version, see Andreev (2008).
2. All translations in this chapter are mine (S.W.) unless otherwise indicated.
3. For an overview, see Friedberg (1997), Baer (2015: 1–20), Baer and Witt (2018: 1–16).
4. For a comprehensive overview of the history and activities of the publishing house, see Khotimsky (2013) and Tyulenev (2016). See also Rudnytska and Baer in this volume.
5. According to Efim Etkind, the institutionalized function of editors (*institut redaktorov*) was set up for the first time within the World Literature publishing house (Etkind 1974: 8).
6. See Baer in this volume.
7. This is described in detail by Samantha Sherry (2015) with a focus on the 1930s and 1950s.
8. NEP, acronym for the New Economic Policy: the reintroduction in 1921 of some principles of market economy in order to improve the disastrous situation in Soviet economy following WWI, the revolutions and the period of war communism. NEP was abolished by Stalin in 1928.
9. Translator Pavel Toper at a 1953 meeting of the Translator's Section of the Union of Soviet Writers (RGALI, f. 2854, op.1, ed. khr. 122, l.14).
10. Cf. Witt (2016a), where the case of Gnedich is discussed from the point of view of canon formation.
11. For biographical information I draw chiefly on S. Lozinskii (1989) and Fedorov (1983).
12. Facts drawn from the website of the Russian National Library, http://www.library.spbu.ru/blog/?page_id=4578 (accessed 7 September 2018).
13. For an analysis of Lozinskii's original poetical work as representing a mediatory position between Symbolism and Acmeism, with a significant influence on the poetics of the latter, see Segal (1983).

14. The Acmeist core group included also Sergei Gorodetskii and Georgii Ivanov, who were likewise to become translators. Lozinskii edited the joint translation of Voltaire's *Pucelle d'Orléans* [*Orlean-skaia devstvennitsa*] produced by Gumilev, Georgii Ivanov and Georgii Adamovich (also associated with the Acmeists) for World Literature in 1920, shortly before the execution of Gumilev and the emigration of the two others (see Friedberg 1997: 137).
15. The prose works were translated mainly during the 1920s (André Gide, Jules Romains, Henri de Régnier, O. Henry, Stefan Zweig) and early 1930s (Romain Rolland's *Colas Breugnon*, *The Life of Benvenuto Cellini*, short stories by Prosper Mérimée). Lozinskii preferred epic to lyric poetry, of which he translated scattered poems by Leconte de Lisle, Charles Baudelaire, Goethe, Schiller, Heine, Coleridge, Kipling and others. Apart from *The Divine Comedy*, Lozinskii translated three plays from Italian, by Carlo Gozzi. From English he translated Shakespeare (*Hamlet*, first version 1931; *Twelfth Night*, 1933; *Othello*, 1947; *Macbeth*, 1947–1948; *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, 1953), Fletcher and Richard Brinsley Sheridan (*The School for Scandal*, 1936, and *Duenna*, 1940). From Spanish he translated Lope de Vega's *The Dog in the Manger* and works by Tirso de Molina, from French Molière (*Tartuffe*, 1929) and Corneille (*Cide*, 1935).
16. For information on the translation process I draw here, and in the following, on the account given by Lozinskii's son, based on his father's scrupulous documentation (Lozinskii 1989).
17. The Russian translations which preceded Lozinskii's were also part of the Dante myth, of course—five full translations in verse and a handfull of prose renditions. Of the verse translations Lozinskii himself singled out the one carried out by Dmitrii Min (first part published in 1844, full edition 1902–1904) as particularly worthy, although 'not sufficiently accurate and, more importantly, rendered in verses by which it is difficult to get an idea of the poetic force of the original' (cited in Lozinskii 1989: 11).
18. For an overview of the reception of Dante in Russia, see Golenishchev-Kutuzov (1971). Pushkin's remark, 'Edinyi plan "Ada" est' uzhe plod vysokogo geniia' [The unified design of Hell is already

- the fruit of a high genius] is cited on p. 458. See also the overview of Dante in the Soviet Union, aimed at an international audience and published in *Books Abroad* (Yelina and Khlodovsky 1965).
19. That Mandel'shtam had died became known to his relatives only in June 1940 when they were informed by the authorities (Mandel'shtam 2016); the date of his death was later established as 27 December 1938.
 20. For more on this conference, see Witt (2013).
 21. Here Lozinskii explicitly invokes symbolist poet and translator Valerii Briusov and implicitly the formalist notion of 'the dominant' (*dominanta*) (Witt 2013: 175).
 22. Equilinearity is when a translation has the same number of lines as the original poem.
 23. Bazzarelli makes no reference to Lozinskii's speech at the 1936 conference.
 24. Similar situations featuring Dante as a witness and messenger are found in *Purgatorio* II and III.
 25. As indicated above, the translation was begun 8 February 1936 and it was completed 13 January 1938 (Lozinskii 1989: 11), that is, in the political terms of the period work on *Inferno* lasted from the 'anti-formalist campaign' launched in January–February 1936 to just before the last Moscow trial (to be held in March 1938).
 26. Ginzburg's account, entitled *Zapiski blokadnogo cheloveka* [Notes of a Blockade Person] was written in 1942 and revised in 1962 and 1983. It could only be published in 1989.
 27. As Clark and Dobrenko observe: '[t]he fact that after the war the state's goals were achieved almost exclusively through the use of resolutions (ten years before, in 1936, the same functions had been filled by lead articles in *Pravda* in combination with outright terror) attests to the fact that the system had achieved maximum efficiency, confirming yet again the impetus for such actions was not only the desire to "intimidate society"' (Clark and Dobrenko 2007: 350; on the resolution against the journals *Zvezda* and *Leningrad*, see 409ff.).
 28. This friendship was reflected in Akhmatova's literary works as well. For example, she took one of the two epigraphs to the third chapter

- of her *Poem without a Hero* ('That was the last year...') from the last poem in Lozinskii's collection *Mountain Well* (for more on the dialogue with Lozinskii in Akhmatova's work, see Fedorov (1983: 292–3), Segal (1983: 410–3)).
29. For a discussion of the conceptual metaphors underlying words referring to translation in various languages, see Tymoczko 2010 (the Russian word is not discussed here, however).
 30. During the period in question, 1943–44, only *Inferno* (*Ad*) and *Purgatory* (*Chistilishche*) had actually appeared in print. Two more translators were to receive the Stalin prize, still without any specific category of translation being introduced: In 1949, Samuil Marshak, also listed under the heading of 'Poetry', was awarded the Stalin Prize of the second category for the year 1948 for his 'translation in verse of Shakespeare's sonnets' (Svin'in and Oseev 2007: 364). In 1950, Ukrainian poet and translator Maksym Ryl'skyi was awarded the Stalin Prize of the first category for his translation into Ukrainian of Mickiewicz's poem *Pan Tadeusz* (also appearing under the heading of 'Poetry') (Svin'in and Oseev 2007: 387).
 31. RGALI, f. 2073, op. 1, ed. khr. 11, l. 107. Zhukovskii was the eminent Russian poet-translator of the Romanitc era.
 32. RGALI, f. 2073, op. 1, ed. khr. 15, l. 6.
 33. RGALI, f. 2073, op. 1, ed. khr. 15, l. 6.

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6

Translation in Ukraine During the Stalinist Period: Literary Translation Policies and Practices

Oleksandr Kalnychenko and Lada Kolomiyets

Introduction

Can Translation Change History?

Viewed from the perspective of the history of communism, the study of the translation practices and (mostly tragic) personal histories of the writers-translators in Soviet Ukraine broadens the horizons of our understanding of both the strategies of translation and the political strategies of the Communist Party, which de facto continued Tsarist Russia's policy of

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imperialistic colonization of Ukraine. Following in the steps of Christopher Rundle's view of translation as an organic part of the history of political regimes in Europe outlined in his article 'History through a Translation Perspective', in which he discusses the history of Italian Fascism through the prism of literary translation in Italy in the 1930s (Rundle 2011), we assume that the history of translation in the USSR will give us an insight into the nature of communist power. In particular, the study of translations into Ukrainian will make a significant contribution to our understanding of Soviet cultural policy. Reworking Rundle's idea, the historians of translation in post-Soviet countries should ask themselves not what the Soviet political regime tells them about the history of translation but *what translation can say about the history of Communism* in the twentieth century.

A Brief Flourishing of the Ukrainian Language and Culture: Why Translations Became an Urgent Task After the Collapse of the Russian Empire

At the beginning of the 1900s, when Ukraine was part of the Russian Empire, the Ukrainian language was presented as a dialect of Russian. Moreover, the Ems Decree of 1876 by the Russian Tsar Alexander II banned the printing and distribution of any Ukrainian original works or translations in the 'Little Russian dialect' (as well as the importation of Ukrainian publications and the staging of plays or lectures) (Savchenko 1930). A period of leniency after 1905 was followed by another strict ban in 1914, which also affected Russian-occupied Galicia. To overcome the bans and censorship, Ukrainians often had to adapt the source texts to Ukrainian life and hide the names of the authors, pretending that the translations were original works; or else they printed them in Western Ukraine which was under the comparatively liberal government of Austria-Hungary.

This view of the Ukrainian language as a spoiled dialect was shared by many influential Russian thinkers such as Maxim Gorky.¹ Yet the situation changed dramatically in 1917 when, following the February Revolution in the Russian Empire, the Central Council of Ukraine

(Central Rada) was formed in Kyiv as well as an autonomous Ukrainian government, with the total independence of Ukraine being proclaimed on 22 January 1918. The moving force of the national idea launched the processes of state-building, but it also revealed an urgent need for publications in the vernacular and, accordingly, for qualified translators. Ukrainian writers, both men and women, actively filled this and other gaps in the cultural, educational, and management areas of that national state-building process. If we take fiction, poetry, and drama altogether, there were approximately 580 translators working in these literary genres in the 1920s, about 20 per cent of them women ('Pokazhchyk prekladachiv' [Index of Translators] in Kolomyiets 2015: 319–40).

The Ukrainian War of Independence, which lasted from February 1917 to November 1921, resulted in the division of Ukraine between Poland, Romania, Czechoslovakia, and the Bolshevik Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. In 1922, the Communists proclaimed the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) as a federation of Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, and Transcaucasia. Ethnic Ukrainians were divided between the so-called Central Ukraine (the Ukrainian heartland, or the Dnieper Ukraine), which became Soviet, and Western Ukraine (or the so-called Polish Ukraine). However, 'these turbulent years also witnessed an unprecedented burst of Ukrainian cultural activity', as Vitaly Chernetsky aptly points out in his English-language survey of the Ukrainian translation tradition (2011: 44).

In his review of Ukrainian translation history, Hryhoriy Kochur (1908–94), a cultural studies scholar and exceptionally able translator (he translated from 33 different literatures), suggested dividing the Ukrainian translation tradition into periods. In the post-1917 period, Kochur distinguishes between two contrastive phases. The first 15 post-revolutionary years (that is, up to 1932) which were a time of 'great enthusiasm and an upsurge in translation activities' (Kochur 1968: 95),² when hundreds of translations were published from dozens of languages (both living and dead), along with multivolume collected works of translated authors, as well as a period in which there was a significant boost in the development of translation theory. The following phase, from 1933 to the mid-1950s, witnessed a decline in translation activities,

with numerous retranslations and relay translations usually made from Russian as the intermediate language (*ibid.*: 96).³

One of the factors that contributed to the rapid growth of literary translations in the 1920s, after the Bolsheviks managed to achieve victory over the independent Ukrainian People's Republic, was the translation and editing activities of those public intellectuals who had played an important role in the Ukrainian War of Independence. The translations carried out by these intellectuals became more and more severely criticized in the 1930s, and later they were either printed without the translators' names or they were not published at all.

Contrary to Western Ukraine, where literary translation continued to develop more successfully until the Soviet invasion of Poland in September 1939, a tide of detrimental factors brutally broke up the large-scale translation activities and theoretical research in Soviet Ukraine starting from the late 1920s to the early 1930s. An outburst of political repressions against Ukrainian literati, scholars and academicians began in the late 1920s and reached its peak in 1937. From among Ukrainian men of letters active in the 1920s–30s, about 500 were repressed and some 150 perished. This decapitation of the intellectual life of the nation was accompanied, throughout the 1930s and later, by increased Russification in all spheres (Nahaylo and Swoboda 1990). The number of published translations into Ukrainian dropped in comparison with 1930 and their quality was far worse. The number of separate volumes of fiction in translation went down from more than two hundred in 1930 to barely more than thirty-five books in 1937—a drop of over 80 per cent. Drama translations dropped by half, from twelve in 1930 to six in 1937. However, poetry books in translation doubled in 1937 compared to 1930 (rising from twelve to around thirty editions) due to numerous publications of the works of Aleksandr Pushkin on the hundredth anniversary of his death.⁴

It became typical in the late 1930s that the names of translators recently subjected to repression would simply disappear from their newly published translations, as well as from many reprinted editions. Extended forewords and editorial notes, which were still welcomed, gradually became instruments for forming the outlook of 'an average soviet reader' by means of abridgements and simplifications of the source text. Editors

and translators were required to work for a mass audience, for example, for the cult of ‘revolutionary’ writers and members of the Communist Party, such as Henri Barbusse and the like. No wonder, then, that by the mid-1930s a large number of multivolume projects that had been started earlier remained unfinished, and the bulk of manuscripts that had already been prepared for publication were never published.

Those Ukrainian intellectuals who viewed translations as a gateway to European civilizational and cultural values would be victimized by the Party, even if their outlook was of a non-political character and remained essentially private. Scores of translators from that time would be almost, or completely, forgotten; their lives and experiences almost unknown even to competent and experienced researchers (Kolomiyets 2015). The fate of Veronika Cherniakhivska (1900–38) is exemplary in this respect. A talented poet, and professional translator, she started her career with a translation of the comedy *The White Carnation* by Alphonse Daudet, published in 1923. As an interpreter at the People’s Commissariat for Health, Cherniakhivska went on a business trip to Germany in 1928 and got married there to a German citizen, Theodore Hekken, whom she had met earlier in Kyiv. But she returned to Ukraine the following year, despite knowing that a new Soviet Law, implemented in the late 1920s, denied Soviet citizens the right to free travel on returning home from the West. In addition to medical literature, Cherniakhivska continued translating fiction. Her translation of Charles Dickens’ novel *Oliver Twist*, which was published in 1929 (and was reprinted in new editions in 1963 and 1993), is still widely admired.⁵ When the State Publishing House of Ukraine (DVU) issued the 18-volume collection of the *Works* of Émile Zola in 1929–30, Cherniakhivska contributed her translation of Zola’s novel *Germinal*. She also entered into an agreement to translate Victor Hugo’s novel *The Man Who Laughs* but was suddenly arrested in the autumn of 1929 on charges of participating in the non-existent Union for the Liberation of Ukraine, fabricated by the Soviet secret police (OGPU), and died under torture while being interrogated in 1938.

From the Ukrainian War of Independence to the Early Stalinist Era: Translation in the Period of Active Ukrainization in the UkrSSR

The CP(B)U Nationalities Policy Refracted in Translation Practices⁶

The active phase of the process of Ukrainization (the implementation of indigenization policy in Soviet Ukraine), which effectively lasted from 1925 till 1929, greatly influenced all spheres of cultural life in Ukraine. Its beneficial effects persisted until the late 1930s. It was the national revival idea that inspired a rapid development of literary and non-literary translation in the 1920s, a decade that has gone down in Ukrainian history as the National Renaissance period. The expansion of literary translation into Ukrainian even involved opera houses in Kharkiv, Kyiv, and Odesa (Odessa in Russian), which in 1926 switched to using Ukrainian translations of Western and Russian classics in accordance with Ukrainization Decrees (Strikha 2006: 196).⁷

Sometimes these mandatory measures caused an outraged reaction and resistance, for example, by the Odesa Opera House, with its long-standing Italian and Russian tradition (Shevelov 1989: 118). In spite of the fact that Ukrainization resulted in an increase of media and literature publications in Ukrainian, the introduction of the Ukrainian language into the school and university curriculum, and a general rise in interest in Ukrainian culture, a coercive administrative campaign ‘on the one hand, encouraged and required the use of Ukrainian and, on the other hand, viewed any sincere personal move in that direction as suspect and dangerous’ (ibid.: 128). Moreover, any initiative in this sphere that went beyond the allowed limits was seen as a form of dangerous nationalism.

The flourishing of translation in Soviet Ukraine lasted, then, from the mid-1920s to the early 1930s, approximately. In 1925, as Oleksandr Biletskyi (1884–1961) wrote in his review article ‘Perevodnaia literatura na Ukraine’ [Translated literature in Ukraine], translated literature still did not occupy a very prominent place in the Ukrainian

book market (Beletskii⁸ 1929/2011). But in 1927 the situation started to change dramatically: it became possible to offer the reader not only some pamphlets, but also the books of foreign authors, and even entire collections of their works, sometimes even prior to similar publications in Russian, such as *An Anthology of Contemporary American Poetry*, compiled and translated into Ukrainian by Ivan Kulyk, which was published as early as 1928 (ibid.: 388).

Literary scholar Yelyzaveta Starynkevych was able to assert in her 1930 review of the literature translated into Ukrainian in 1929–30 that the emergence of numerous valuable translations of world classics compelled sceptical readers to believe that translating into Ukrainian was not a waste of time and effort (Starynkevych 1930/2011: 443) and that the Ukrainian language was absolutely capable of meeting the demands posed by the content and style of these works.

In the late 1920s, early 1930s, dozens of European classics were published in one- or two-volume editions by various publishers and often reprinted afterwards. The scope of book editions of translated authors ranged from the classics to popular modern writers, and the works of contemporary European authors were also abundantly translated and published. For instance, several different editions of the popular Belgian symbolist poet Emile Verhaeren were published (a first edition in 1922 and an expanded version in 1927). One example of a quick translation of newly published works by acclaimed authors is Georges Duhamel's psychological novel *The Stormy Night* written in 1928 and published in Ukrainian translation in Kyiv in 1929. The short stories of Jules Romains, likewise, became quickly accessible to the Ukrainian reader, as well as the works of American fiction writers James Oliver Curwood, Upton Sinclair Jr., Konrad Bercovici, Theodore Dreiser, Anita Loos, John Dos Passos, and Pearl S. Buck.

During the 1920s, translations from Western literatures prevailed; French, Polish, English, and German being the dominant source languages (Moskalenko n.d.: 100–281). The dominant French orientation, at least for big projects, came from the pre-revolutionary cult of French literature among the Russian Empire's cultural elite and, respectively, from the translators' educational background connected with this

cult (studying French had been a part of the school curriculum in the Russian Empire).

In the later 1920s, the joint efforts of older and younger public intellectuals and representatives of well-educated national intelligentsia could ensure the formation of qualified editorial boards, truly devoted to high standards of book publishing and responsible for the realization of long-term multivolume translation projects of Western classics. Some of the most important were: the complete 27-volume collection of the works of Jack London, published from 1927 through to the early 1930s in Kyiv; the 10-volume collection of the works of Guy de Maupassant, published in Kharkiv in 1927–30; the 18-volume collection of the works of Émile Zola, published by the State Publishers of Ukraine in 1929–30; the 24-volume edition of the works of Anatole France, planned by the Knyhospilka cooperative publishing union starting from 1930, of which only 8 volumes saw the light of the day; the two-volume collection of the works of Gustave Flaubert, published by Knyhospilka that same year; and the two-volume collection of the selected works of Denis Diderot, published by the Radianska Literatura [Soviet Literature] publishing house in Kharkiv in 1933. From the mid-1930s—in a climate of denunciation and increasing oppression—the earlier planned multivolume editions of Western classics would remain unfinished. In particular, the Literatura i Mystetstvo [Literature and Art] publishing house launched a multivolume edition of the selected works of Honoré de Balzac in 1934, though it managed to release only the first volume.

At the turn of the 1920s both in Soviet and Western Ukraine, the average print run for non-propagandistic fiction or poetry book in high-quality translation, recognized as such by contemporaries, was 3000–5000 copies, and occasionally up to 20,000 copies for children's editions, such as *The Mowgli Stories* by Rudyard Kipling (Haidei and Mikhno 2018: 7), which is relatively small in comparison with the print run for original Ukrainian books of fiction of that time, with some of the socialist-oriented works rising from 5000 to 50,000 copies due to their topicality. For instance, *The Romance of Tristan and Isolde*, translated by Maksym Rylskyi, was printed in 3100 copies (1927). The novel *Madame Bovary* by Gustave Flaubert in Oksana Bublyk-Gordon's translation appeared in 4000 copies (1930). An anthology *French Classics of*

the seventeenth century in Ryl'skyi's translation was published in 1931 in 3000 copies (Kolomiyets 2015: 14). It included the treatise 'The Art of Poetry' by Nicolas Boileau, the tragicomedy *Le Cid* by Pierre Corneille, the comedy *Le Misanthrope* by Molière, and the tragedy *Phaedra* by Jean Racine. However, translating Western classics was a kind of 'elitist' activity, which the ruling communist government considered of little use to the mass reader: it was tolerated but limited to certain authors and a narrow circle of readers. Even though Ukrainian translations were formally encouraged during the active Ukrainization period, most urban readers continued to prefer translations in Russian.

At the same time, translating and publishing favourable propagandistic literature was encouraged. For example, the novel *Barrikaden an der Ruhr*, written in 1925 by the German Communist Kurt Kläber, appeared in Ukrainian translation in 1929 and was reprinted in 1931. In general, propagandistic books were printed in tens of thousands of copies and appeared in Russian translation prior to the Ukrainian one, as was the case of Kläber's novel, which was published in Russian in 1926, the year after the original was published. Print runs of Russian translations of the most favourable political works by contemporary authors, published in Moscow (which was viewed by the leftist writers and politicians as the future capital of the world),⁹ could reach even hundreds of thousands of copies. For instance, Polish Futurist Bruno Jasioński's utopian novel *I Burn Paris*, a political response to Paul Morand's anti-Soviet satire *I Burn Moscow* (1925), written in the last three months of 1927, was printed in the author's Russian translation, *Ya zhgu Parizh*, in April 1928 by the Soviet publishing house 'Moscow Worker' in 140,000 copies (Belov 2018; Skatov 2005: 812). In its time, the novel was considered the absolute best seller of proletarian literature (Stemberger 2010: 229). The Ukrainian translation of the book (from the Polish original) was published by the Literatura i Mystetstvo publishing house in Kharkiv in 1930. The exact print run of this edition remains unknown, however, because of its removal from circulation and destruction in the mid-1930s.¹⁰

Translations of Russian Belles-Lettres as a Sign of the Rising Prestige of the Ukrainian Language

Despite the upsurge of translation in the 1920s, there were only a few translations from Russian literature, although there were numerous translations of non-literary Russian texts. With the purpose of maintaining political control over Ukrainian journalism, the Kremlin encouraged translation in the media. Tetiana Kardynalovska, who started working in the Kharkiv newspaper *Selianska Pravda* in 1922, at first as a copy editor and translator and later also as a stylistic editor, remarked in her memoirs (published in Saint Petersburg in Russian after the collapse in the Soviet Union) that ‘all the newspaper material came in Russian from Moscow and was translated into Ukrainian’ (Kardynalovskaia 1996: 97).¹¹

At this stage, several separate editions of Russian poetry in translation were published, such as: *Selected poems by Pushkin* (1927), *Anthology of Russian poetry in Ukrainian translation* (1925), *Selected poems by Valerii Briusov* (1925) translated by Mykola Zerov, Maksym Rylskyi, and Pavlo Fylypovych, the unofficial leaders in the field of literary translation in the 1920s.

However, in her review of translations into Ukrainian in 1929–30, Starynkevych points out some ‘positive achievements’ in the area of classics: ‘Maupassant, Zola, Flaubert, Daudet, Swift, Walter Scott, Hugo, Balzac are already represented by a wealth of volumes of translations skillfully performed’ (Starynkevych 1930: 444). But she also remarks that the situation was much worse as far as Russian classics were concerned: ‘[w]e can only hope that in the near future the publishers will fill this gap’ (ibid.).

And fill this gap they did. The second period of translations from Russian (1927–32) was characterized by abundant translation of prose including multivolume editions of classics like the ‘living soviet classic’ Maxim Gorky. Thus, since the early 1930s, the dynamics of publication of translated books in Soviet Ukraine reveals a significant predominance of Russian and Russian-language literature. Triumphant recognition by Stalin of an array of cultural figures from the Tsarist period—and their specific identification as ethnic Russians—signalled a new direction and a rigid hierarchy in translations from Russian, limited to the figures from

Stalin's canon. Within the period from 1928 up to 1966 the number of Gorky's books published in Ukrainian totalled 186. This figure can be compared to: Chekhov: 83; Gogol: 77, Leo Tolstoy: 76; Turgenev: 39; Lermontov: 13 (Nyzovyi, Brezghunova, and Medvediev 1967: 72–3).

One of the leading Ukrainian critics of that time, Volodymyr Derzhavyn (1899–1964) dared to shake the Russian canon of those classical Russian-language writers (Nikolai Gogol, Nikolai Leskov, and Anton Chekhov) who were of Ukrainian background and whose works sounded Ukrainian stylistically, or were focused on Ukrainian topics, by classifying them as Ukrainian writers (Derzhavyn 1930b/2015). Derzhavyn developed the theory of 'back translation', based on Gogol but also incorporating writings by Leskov and Chekhov. In his review for the 4-volume collection of Gogol's works, published in 1929–32, Derzhavyn calls this edition 'an exemplary work of translated literature' (Derzhavyn 1929/2015: 164), and Gogol himself is defined by Derzhavyn as a 'Ukrainian classic' (166), whose style was rooted in the Ukrainian national tradition. Derzhavyn's attempts to foreground a 'genuine school for the Ukrainian translator' in the 1929–32 collection of Gogol's works (Derzhavyn 1931/2015: 262) would be completely forgotten after the ideological turn in the Party's attitude to translation strategies.

Different Strategies for Translating from Russian and from Other Languages

In the 1920s, Ukrainian literary critics did not, on the whole, support the use of relay translations from Russian as an intermediary language; in fact, the most authoritative openly denounced such a strategy, as Biletskyi did in his Russian-language survey of translated literature in Ukraine (Beletskii 1929/2011: 376–91). In 1929 Biletskyi remarked that translations via Russian as an intermediary language had not been eradicated yet, but they surely would be (*ibid.*: 386). Nevertheless, the idea that translations should be made from the original language was far from

universally recognized and did not extend to literature for a general readership. In the case of translations intended for performance on the stage, relay translations from Russian were commonplace.

By the mid-1930s, in the new ideological atmosphere a 180-degree methodological turn struck both the theory and practice of translation. The source text oriented, or 'homological' translation (to use Derzhavyn's term, opposed to 'analogical' translation) which aimed to reproduce the style of the original as much as possible, was condemned as literalistic. In place of stylistic adequacy in translation, thematized by the Derzhavyn, Biletskyi, Zerov, and Rylskyi literary school, a new and much freer approach arose, as well as a general style of translation that later would be retrospectively called 'creative' (Gasparov 1971).

But this did not apply for translations from Russian. Superficial literalism became an unspoken norm in literary (re)translations from Russian in the mid-1930s. The *Selected Works of Mykola Hohol* (translators Antin Khutorian and Kostiantyn Shmyhovskyy), which was a Russified retranslation of Gogol's works printed by the Derzhlitvydav Ukrainy State Publishing House in 1948, can serve as one of the most vivid examples of this general tendency towards Russification (cf. Kalnychenko and Kalnychenko 2012).

Relay translations from Russian in the Soviet Union can be explained by changes in the proportion of translations from Western languages compared to translations from the languages of the USSR. While in the early and mid-1920s translations from Western languages substantially dominated because of the scarcity of translators who knew the languages of the Soviet Union (excluding Russian), in the early 1930s this situation started to be reversed. With the help of Russian as an intermediary language, the mass production of translations from national literatures of the USSR began. This shift from translating directly from the original text to translating via Russian as relay translation was dictated by the formation of 'the mass soviet reader'. In their turn, the ideological precepts of the new reader formation would appear to have been highly conducive to retranslating the works by Western authors, even if the quality of recent translations had been considered perfectly adequate a short time before.

The first signs of a strategy of socio-political adaptation of Western authors became conspicuous as early as 1928, in the *Anthology of American Poetry. 1855–1925*, compiled and translated by Ivan Kulyk (it was mentioned earlier in this chapter with regard to Biletskyi's 1929 review of translations).¹² The *Anthology* comprises the works of American poets who were Kulyk's contemporaries, and considerable attention is paid to their forerunner Walt Whitman as well. All translations were done from the English-language originals, to which Kulyk had personal access when he lived in Canada in 1923–27, where he held the rank of Consul of the USSR in 1924–26, and frequently visited the USA as a Soviet diplomat. This was the first anthology of American poetry in Ukrainian, and it attracted a great deal of attention from literary critics. In his Foreword, Kulyk justifies his deviations from the source texts laying out the reasons for them, among which his own socio-political motivation occupies the primary position. Kulyk emphasizes that he translated for the 'contemporary and Soviet' Ukrainian reader, with 'a different psychology', generated by the different economic system and the opposite political factors and social order (Kulyk 1928/2011: 485; author's emphasis).

From the Cultural Renaissance in Ukraine to the Great Purge: Translation as Ideological Battlefield

The CP(b)U Propaganda Objectives and Priority Books for Translation

During the years leading to the Great Terror of 1937–38—which followed the decade of Cultural Renaissance—the number of translations declined dramatically, as did their quality. Russian became a mediator-language (in the 1950s relay translation was mandatory in social sciences where translation was allowed only from the authorized Russian version, for example, in the case of the works of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels). From the late 1920s, the Party imposed an order of priority of the texts to be translated, a list which would become more rigid by the late 1930s.

First priority was given to texts by contemporary Russian authors, and after them the works by other Soviet writers, but predominantly from the Russian language as an intermediary, or relay language. This strategy became common practice, while direct translations from other languages of the USSR were never that common (for more details see: Kolomyiets 2019).

Secondly, priority was given to translations of classics from Russia and the other Soviet Republics. What's more, during the 1930s several classic Russian writers achieved iconic status. The most obvious example was Aleksandr Pushkin, who was transformed into the icon of official Soviet literature. This prompted numerous translations and reprints of his works, reaching a peak at the time when Stalin's great terror was in full swing. In 1937 alone, to mark the hundredth anniversary of Pushkin's death, two volumes of his *Selected Works*, a volume of *Selected Prose*, and 17 other separate editions of his narrative and poetic writings were published in Ukrainian, not counting the innumerable items published in Soviet periodicals (Kolomyiets 2015: 38).

Thirdly, priority was given to authors from colonial countries, for example, *Chorna Khvyliia* [The Black Wave] by Afim Asanga from Sudan or *The True Story of Ah Q* by the Chinese writer Lu Xun. After WWII this list included 'socialist' countries.

Finally, there were the so-called 'progressive' Western authors, usually communists, such as Henri Barbusse, Willi Bredel, or Martin Andersen-Nexø; those Western writers who were positive in their opinion about the USSR, like Franz Carl Weiskopf, Herbert George Wells, or Bernard Shaw; and now less well-known but then truly popular 'proletarian' authors, such as the French writer Pierre Amp, the German writer Kurt Kläber and the Japanese writer Naosi Tokunaga.

Meanwhile, translations of contemporary works by 'non-progressive' Western authors, such as *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1928) by Erich Maria Remarque, published in Kyiv in 1929, were not considered worthy of any literary merit or critical analysis. Although the novel became popular among readers and was reprinted in 1930, its anti-war sentiments contradicted the CP(b)U's political agenda. In juxtaposition to Remarque and authors of that ilk, Soviet critics took note only of those 'bourgeois-intellectual' Western writers who presumably had

an outspoken anti-pacifist, 'revolutionary' ideology, such as Bernhard Kellermann, whose 1925 novel *The Brothers Schellenberg* was published in Ukrainian in 1931. Whereas Polish was one of the most popular source languages in the 1920s, practically no translations from Polish were published in the late 1930s, after the Soviet secret police (GPU-NKVD) concocted the case against the Polish Military Organization (POW), allegedly acting in Ukraine in 1933–35 in the service of Polish landowners and Ukrainian nationalists (Kostiuk 1960: 94).

Influenced by vulgar Marxist sociology, many reputable critics of that time thought it inadvisable to translate the works of classical authors that were thematically and stylistically dated, for example, Alexandre Dumas' world-renowned novel *The Count of Monte Cristo*, as well as the novels of Charles Dickens, and particularly his famous *Oliver Twist*, which was characterized by Derzhavyn as 'the least artistic' of all the so-called 'classical' works of Dickens, 'excluding his short stories and historical novels', because 'a primitive melodramatism [...] reaches its peak here' (Derzhavyn 1930b/2015: 209).¹³ Among the Party's priorities was to ensure that literature for children and young adults was oriented towards class struggle. On these grounds, the old popular adventure books for children were considered 'ideologically foreign' and, thus, unable to orient the young readers correctly for the tasks they would face as adults.

From the mid-1930s, translations serving a propagandistic purpose would frequently be published widely in the political press as well as in sector-specific periodicals and children's journals. For instance, the leading Ukrainian poet Pavlo Tychyna, who knew such languages as Yiddish, Armenian, Georgian, Arabic, and Turkish, among others, frequently published his translations of popular poems of mainly Jewish¹⁴ and Russian authors in the daily *Visti VUZVK* [The News of the All-Ukrainian Central Executive Committee], the daily *Komsomolets Ukrainy*, the weekly *Proletarska Pravda*, among others.

Justification of the Struggle Against 'Nationalistic Wreckers' in Translation: A Drive Towards De-Ukrainization and Strengthening the Agency of the Russian Language

As American historian James E. Mace has pointed out, in March 1930 Moscow started a political campaign against nationalist deviations in Ukraine. Soon after, the XII CP(b)U Congress determined that 'the main enemy was and remained the Ukrainian bourgeois nationalism' (Mace 1996: 35). From that time on, 'Ukraine was embarked upon a tragic period of total Russification, where going over to Russian meant a demonstration of political loyalty to the regime' (ibid.).

The first distinct sign that Ukrainization was being abandoned came in 1929, when the GPU began to arrest 'older' Ukrainian intellectuals, on the charge of belonging to a bogus organization, the Union for the Liberation of Ukraine. This was in preparation for one of the first Soviet show trials which was staged in the Opera House in Kharkiv from 9 March to 19 April 1930, and which largely targeted the leadership of the Ukrainian intelligentsia which had been at the forefront of the Ukrainization drive. At the trial, the GPU uncovered the 'wrecking' carried out by linguists who had actively participated in standardizing Ukrainian spelling and compiling bilingual and terminological dictionaries, and who were accused of separating the Ukrainian language from 'the fraternal Russian' language. Of the 45 defendants (others were convicted without trial), at least 4 were leading translators: Serhii Yefremov, Andrii Nikovskyi, Liudmyla Starytska-Cherniakhivska, and Mykhailo Ivchenko.¹⁵

In order to secure the Party's and State's control over literary output, and to take the place of the numerous groups and societies that had flourished in the 1920s, the Bolsheviks founded the Union of Soviet Writers (1932) and the Writers Union of Ukraine (1934), with Socialist Realism established as the principle method of Soviet literature and literary criticism, both converging on the ideological transformation and education of workers in the spirit of socialism. With Socialist Realism's rigid precepts hindering the freedom of Ukrainian translators and prescribing the choice of works to be translated, many translators found their

works censored, ignored, or rejected. By 1931, all private publishers in Ukraine had been banned (e.g., the Chas literary circle in Kyiv, the Rukh publishing house, and others) and cooperative publishers, such as the Knyhospilka cooperative union, had been converted into state enterprises. The private translation market thus ceased to exist and the state (i.e., the party hierarchy) became the only commissioner of translation, as well as the only owner and distributor of material resources (money, premises, equipment, materials, etc.).

The substance of culture became identified with ideology. Departure from the materialist proletarian internationalism characteristic of the 1920s towards the national Bolshevism of the 1930s–50s, with its the cult of personality, Russo-centric traditions, state-patriotic ideology reminiscent of the Tsarist ‘great power’, supported by the party hierarchy’s statist view of history (Branderberger and Dubrovsky 1998), had a significant impact on Ukrainian translation practice and theory.

As early as the beginning of the 1930s, Stalin’s regime attempted to openly regulate literary expression, not just in the selection of texts to be translated, but also in the choice of translation strategy. Many works that had been newly translated into Ukrainian were retranslated to bring them closer to Russian, especially after the wave of publications accusing ‘nationalistic translators’, launched by the Soviet ‘linguist’ Naum Kahanovych in his article ‘Natsionalistychni perekruchennia v ukraiinskykh perekladakh tvoriv Lenina’ [Nationalistic distortions in Ukrainian translations of the works of Lenin], published in the academic journal *Movoznavstvo* in 1934. Initiating a campaign against ‘nationalistic wrecking’, Naum Kahanovych blamed the translators who had contributed to the first Ukrainian edition of Lenin’s works, edited by Mykola Skrypnyk, for having falsified, distorted, and perverted their sense,¹⁶ and accused them of being nationalists who were seeking to separate the Ukrainian language from Russian and move it towards the language of German and Polish fascists (Kahanovych 1934: 11).

Similar charges were brought in a slew of articles, for instance in one published in the journal *Pid Markso-Lenina praporom* with the title ‘Pro vydannia tvoriv Lenina ukraiïns’koiu movoiu’ [On the publishing of Lenin’s works in Ukrainian] by A. Shevchenko (1935: 137). But even in much earlier publications, the translators were inundated with fabricated

accusations of undertaking ‘fascist-nationalist attacks’ (Khm-kyi 1933: 4).

The article by Kahanovych served as a guide for translating from Russian in the most literal, word-for-word way (Hofeneder 2010; Kalnychenko 2017). In the summer of 1934, a conference of translators and editors of Gorky’s works was held at the CP(b)U Central Committee. In its wake, the *Literaturna Hazeta* [Literary Newspaper], dated 12 August, published an editorial which severely criticized the recent Ukrainian translations of Gorky’s works, and announced that they would be retranslated. Andriy Paniv, the author of the Editorial, elaborated on the ways of the nationalistic wreckers, accusing them of deliberately avoiding the words that ‘are used in the live language of the broad Ukrainian working masses’, that ‘sound similar in Russian and Ukrainian’, and that, supposedly, ‘enter all the dictionaries’ (Paniv 1934: 1). The latter statement was not really true. The words given by Paniv as examples mostly mark the traits of Russification in the common speech of urbanized Ukrainian workers. These are such morphological forms of Russian provenance as ‘staryk’ (correct Ukr. ‘staryi’ [an old man]), ‘mohuchyi’ (correct Ukr. ‘mohutnii’ [mighty]), or a Russified lexeme for the ‘city’: ‘hórod’ (correct Ukr. ‘misto’). These lexemes could not enter the dictionaries as genuinely Ukrainian words. Some other words given by Paniv as an alternative to the translators’ choices do have a common etymological origin with their Russian counterparts, but there are also peculiarly Ukrainian synonyms for them, such as ‘harnyi’ for ‘krasyvyi’ [beautiful], ‘shkodá’ for ‘zhalko’ [it’s a pity], ‘gendliar’ for ‘torhovets’ [vendor], as well as other synonyms from Ukrainian stock—the ones that the translators drew upon. Nowadays, some of the lexical units of Russian provenance mentioned by Paniv as normally Ukrainian ones have forced out genuinely Ukrainian units; for instance, the term ‘dvoiuridnyi brat’ [cousin] has superseded its synonym ‘brat u pershykh’.

The following issue of the *Literaturna Hazeta*, dated 20 August 1934, featured an article on ‘How Pylypenko Distorted Sholokhov’, signed by a famous translator and aircraft designer Ievhen Kasianenko (1934), who analysed the unpublished Ukrainian translation of Sholokhov’s novel *Virgin Soil Upturned*. The translator Serhii Pylypenko (1891–1934), director of the Taras Shevchenko Scientific Research Institute in Kharkiv

and an influential writer and editor, was arrested in 1933 and sentenced by the GPU to death by firing squad (March 3, 1934) for belonging to a fake counter-revolutionary Ukrainian organization. In his article, Kasianenko exposes the methods applied by Pylypenko in 'distorting' Sholokhov, which, in his opinion, included misrepresenting the novel's political content at certain points, belittling the main characters, and introducing 'fictitious words', such as 'merezha' instead of 'sitka'. Both words have the same meaning in the given context: 'a fishing net', but the latter also has a common root with its semantic correspondent in Russian, 'setka', while the former doesn't, which is why the usage of 'sitka' is preferred to 'merezha'.

When 'the wreckers were caught red-handed' (Kasianenko 1934: 2), the accusation of substituting the so-called 'fictitious words' for certain Ukrainian words which had common roots with the Russian language abruptly turned into the opposite accusation of a hasty imposition of Russianisms: 'After the party delivered them [the wrecker-translators] a blow on the language front, they immediately made a U-turn and began replacing with Russianisms a lot of commonly used Ukrainian words, whose roots do not coincide with the roots of Russian words' (ibid.). Kasianenko accused the translators of disseminating 'rumours that the party forces them to do this, thus drawing the line towards the Russification of the Ukrainian language' (ibid.). Further in his article, Kasianenko points at Pylypenko's translation of *The Virgin Soil Upturned* as a model for the wreckers. He proclaims this translation 'the directive pattern on the part of the class enemy on how to destroy the translated Ukrainian Soviet literature in the future' (ibid.).

Such extreme rhetoric of 'an increased class vigilance' was indicative of the militarization of thought and of the fear of imagined enemies of the people that was spreading in society. This fear affected the mass consciousness of the Soviet people and led to the formation of an alternate reality in their minds (Mace 1996: 38). The impact of the Party's social and cultural policy on people's lives became all-pervasive. Translation, seen through the perspective of new social conditions, appeared to be a life-threatening occupation. No wonder, then, that from the mid-1930s onwards, in the words of Ukrainian translator Stepan Kovhaniuk

‘a heavy all-binding seal of literalism’ (1957a: 60), became mandatory for all translations from Russian.

Together with encouragement for translating from Russian as a relay language, came the censorship policy of revising and rewriting formerly published translations to align them as closely as possible to Russian lexical and grammatical patterns. This superficial, word-for-word kind of literalness corrupted the stylistic qualities of previous translations. The 1934 article by Kahanovych and some other publications ‘uncovering nationalistic wreckers’ served as directives to translate as close as possible to the wording of Russian texts. As Ivan Dziuba, a famous Ukrainian literary critic and dissident, aptly observed:

The Communist Party authorities chose the strategy of elaborate censorship of the cultural reserves of indigenous peoples as one of their principal belligerent campaigns, purposefully increasing the pace and scope of the Russification of Ukrainian and other non-Russian nationalities of the Soviet Union. [...] The Communists’ fight against the Ukrainian translation school was an important part of the broader strategy of provincializing Ukrainian literature and weakening the Ukrainian language until it reached the level of otioseness. (Dziuba 2004: 10)

When it comes to concrete examples, a clear distinction between translations from the Russian versus other languages can be traced, together with a drive towards the Russification of previous translations. For instance, in 1929, the novel by Ethel Lilian Voynich *The Gadfly* appeared in print in Maria Lysychenko’s translation under the title *Gedz’*, but it was retranslated by Maria Riabova in the mid-1930s, and from that time on the novel became known under the Russified title *Ovid* (from Russian: ‘Ovod’). In comparison with Lysychenko’s full translation of the novel, Riabova’s version of it, abridged for high school students, features omissions as well as stylistic and syntactical simplifications. Nevertheless, it is this Russified translation which was repeatedly reprinted in Soviet and even post-Soviet Ukraine: first published in 1935; and then reprinted in 1936, 1938, 1955, 1985, and 2008. It may also serve as a clear example of the Soviet policy of ignoring the translator’s copyright: none of the four Soviet reprints included the translator’s name.

Translation in the Late Stalinism Period: Consequences of Total Governmental Regulation and Political Censorship

Russifying Retranslations of the Classics

From the mid-1930s to the mid-1950s, the Soviet cultural, language and translational policies hindered the free development of the Ukrainian language and caused the formation of a kind of *parallel language*, which could only have been the product of Russian coercion. The Soviet system established top-down control over the structure of the Ukrainian language and prohibited certain words, syntactic constructions, grammatical forms, orthographic and orthoepic rules (Shevelov 1989).

Numerous attempts on the part of the Bolshevik government to restrict the usage of Ukrainian (for example, excluding it from the military and technical spheres) and to purify it from European elements, unknown in Russian as well as to incorporate the bulk of specifically Russian words and structures were turning it into *a regional 'second language'* (Strikha 2006). Re-published translations were purged of 'archaisms' (which harkened back to national history) and 'alien' elements of non-Russian origin. The prohibited words and phrases were replaced by 'internationalist' ones: Russian-derived modern vocabulary and grammatical borrowings from Russian. Translations were to play a fundamental role in this process (Nahaylo and Swoboda 1990: 78).

After WWII the persecution of Soviet Ukrainian writers and translators continued. For example, Yelyzaveta Starynkevych, who began her career as a translator in the late 1930s (she translated the works of French classics, such as Honoré de Balzac, Stendhal, Émile Zola, and Guy de Maupassant) was lucky to survive Stalin's purges. In 1945, she defended the first Doctoral thesis in translation studies in the UkrSSR, entitled 'Topical Issues of Literary Translation and Ukrainian Soviet Translations of French Classics'. But not long after she was officially criticized in the journal *Soviet Literary Thought* for her 'refined bourgeois aestheticism

and naked formalism' as well as for her 'contempt and anger towards Soviet culture' (Editorial 1949: 7).

New translations of the classics appeared to be largely copied from the Russian ones. This was, for instance, the case with Jack London, who happened to be the most frequently published Western author in the Soviet Union. Heavily redacted by Soviet censorship, his works constituted the core of the Soviet canon of foreign literature, just as *The Gadfly* by Voynich did. According to the statistical reference book *The Publishing Industry of the Ukrainian SSR, 1917–1966*, in the period 1918–66 the number of Jack London's books published in Ukrainian totalled 102 (Nyzovyi, Brezghunova, and Medvediev 1967).¹⁷ Thus, in the 1930s, Soviet censorship managed to transform London's works—through translation—into an ideological weapon for the Party. Oswald Burghardt, the general editor of the 27-volume complete collection of London's works in Ukrainian translation, remarked in 1939 (having emigrated from the USSR by that time) that 'Soviet satraps do not admit any information about the real state of affairs in the West' (Burghardt 1939: 97). The censors would diligently cross out information in the translations that didn't fit a socialist perspective.

The differences between the 1933 edition of the novel *The Iron Heel* (London 1933), which arguably features London's socialist views, published under the general editorship of a certain Z. Barska (the translator's name is unknown), and the 1959 edition (London 1959), which appeared without any mention of the translator's or editor's name, lead us to conclude that Russian was the source language for the 1959 translation. This is evident from an excess of clichés and idiomatic phrases of Russian origin, rendered literally into Ukrainian. This translation shows the general assimilation of the Ukrainian language with Russian by the late 1950s.

Translations from Western authors were considered mainly as ideological weapons in the formation of the 'soviet mass reader'. Vulgar Marxist sociology prevailed over literary criticism even in the writings of the most educated and professional literary reviewers of their time. The best European classics became stigmatized by a class-based ideology: for instance, George Gordon Byron was labelled as a 'declassed aristocrat' (Derzhavyn 1930a/2015: 186–7). In this socialist rhetoric, the informed discussion

of semantic and stylistic accuracy in translation intermingles with the political use that was made of such terms as ‘accurate’, ‘adequate’, and ‘faithful’ translation.

Obligatory Literalism in Translations from Russian Versus the Declared Zero Tolerance of Literalism

From the late 1930s, official Soviet doctrine condemned translational ‘literalism’ and imposed ‘free’ (‘creative’, ‘realistic’) translation. But this only applied to direct translations from Western literatures, while the strategy of literalism was imposed on translations from Russian into Ukrainian, as well as into other national languages of the Soviet Union, by editors, censors, and critics. Officially, the dogmas of socialist realism denounced ‘elitist’ literalism in translation, perceiving it as a manifestation of ‘literary formalism’ (which term served as a negative label because to privilege the form over the content was seen as an approach against socialist realism), and, later, even as ‘cosmopolitanism’ (see Azov 2013; Witt 2013a). But in practice a double standard applied. The censorship and ideological correction of foreign-language texts was much easier to implement using the strategy of ‘creative’ translation. What is more, all agents in the translation process (translators, censors, publishers, editors, stylistic editors, critics, translation scholars, and internal reviewers) were thought of as a unified team with strictly defined goals.

The opposition to the slavish literalism that was used in translations from Russian brought about the birth of a theory of translation from closely related languages developed by Maksym Rylskyy (see, e.g., Rylskii¹⁸ 1958) and a theory of the impact of word-to-word translation on the literary language elaborated by Oleksa Kundzich (see, e.g., 1957). In his speech ‘Prohresyyna zakhidnoieuropeiska literatura v perekladakh na ukraiinsku movu’ [Progressive Western European Literature in Ukrainian Translations], delivered at the Republican Conference of Ukrainian Translators in Kyiv on 16 February 1956, Mykola Lukash denounced relay translations (Lukash 2009).¹⁹ At the same conference Stepan Kovhaniuk, Oleksa Kudzich, Borys Ten, and others condemned literalism (Kovhaniuk 1957b). Lukash emerged as a reformer

of Ukrainian literary translation, both in poetry and prose. In his translations of classical and contemporary foreign authors, he actively used the lexical and stylistic diversity of his native language, despite an avalanche of politically motivated and mostly unfair criticism for having 'archaized' the language of translated texts and made it sound 'folkloric'. The translation activities of Lukash and those translators who were returning from the GULAG camps, such as Hryhorii Kochur, Vasyl Mysyk, Borys Ten, and Dmytro Palamarchuk, together with a partial reappearance of the works and names of the 'executed generation' of translators (first and foremost the rehabilitation of the 'Neoclassical school'), changed the disastrous situation in the Ukrainian translation field.

A new period was beginning in translation that would bring with it 'the emergence of translations which are models for the authors of the original writings' as well as an 'upsurge of critical thought around the translation issues' (Kochur 1968: 96). Very soon the book 'Internationalism or Russification?' by Ivan Dziuba (1968) would appear, which dealt with the analysis of Soviet national and cultural policy in Ukraine and argued that during Stalin's rule the CP(b)U had moved to positions of Russian chauvinism.

Conclusion

For the Ukrainian intelligentsia, literary translation was a conscious project of resistance against Russification and cultural assimilation, from the beginning of the nineteenth century and throughout the Soviet era (Strikha 2006). The history of translation in Ukraine during the Stalinist period that we have presented seeks to provide insights into the political character of the regime in the Soviet Union and its impact on Ukraine.

In the early 1920s, the Party's official attitude towards translations, in accordance with the internationalist drive-in force at the time, had been very positive. Translations were supposed to familiarize the masses with the cultural heritage of all nations and to impart a feeling of solidarity with the workers and peasants of other countries (Witt 2013b). Consequently, translators were viewed as cultural workers within the Soviet

culture. For this reason, the 1920s are remembered as a key period in the development of Ukrainian literary translation.

But in the early 1930s, after the total concentration of power into Stalin's hands, a gradual shift in official attitudes to translation took place (*ibid.*). A decline in the interest in translations from Western languages, especially translations of poetry, was in line with the isolationist tendencies of that period (Friedberg 1997: 112). Instead, a new function for translations emerged, in connection with the Soviet nationalities policy. Translations came to be seen as an instrument of consolidation of the Soviet Union (Leighton 1991: 18), and after 1945, as an instrument of consolidation of the socialist camp, and a tool of communication between its component cultures. Hence, from the year 1935 onwards, the quantity of translations from the languages of the USSR nationalities increased in the wake of the recently established discourse of 'friendship of the peoples' in accordance with Stalinist nationalities policy, with the Russian language as a dominant source language or an intermediate one. The art of translation was turned into an instrument for reinforcing the relationships of dominance (political as well as cultural) and submission in Russia's favour, one where Ukraine was placed in a position of subalternity.

From the mid-1930s onwards, therefore, a Russo-centric superficial literalness not only allowed the rewriting of existing translations, but it also often led to the 'correction' of the works of Western authors, when Russian was not the source language or even the relay source language of the text. Ukrainian translations from Western languages were supposed to target the Russified Soviet mass reader. For this reason, Western authors appeared in translation rather freely interpreted, and their works were subject to omissions, additions, and rewritings. While almost all lexicographic work was declared 'nationalistic' and banned, the differences in grammar, lexis, and idioms between Russian and Ukrainian had to be reduced as much as possible. Translation was seen by the Communist Party as a tool for the rapid implementation of this policy.

Notes

1. Even in his 1927 letter to Oleksa Slisarenko, the Editor-in-Chief of the Knyhospilka cooperative publishing union, Maxim Gorky negatively responded to a request to grant permission to translate his novel *Mother* into Ukrainian and thrice referred to the Ukrainian language as a ‘narechie’ [dialect] (Strikha 2006: 208–9).
2. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations in this article are by the authors.
3. A relay (or indirect) translation is one made from a translation in another language rather than from the original text. E.g. the translation into Ukrainian of a French novel using a Russian translation.
4. These comparisons are based on the original manuscript of the bibliography of literary translations into Ukrainian of the years 1920–40, compiled by Mykhailo Moskalenko (Moskalenko n.d.: 182–200, 261–66). The manuscript is kept in the Manuscript and Textual Studies Department of the Shevchenko Institute of Literature of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine and is in the process of being catalogued.
5. For instance, this translation was praised by the reputable critic Serhiy Rodzevych (1888–1942) for its fluency, richness, and the quality of Ukrainian expression, as well as semantic accuracy and stylistic adequacy (Rodzevych 1929/2011: 409–21).
6. CP(b)U: Communist Party (Bolshevik) of Ukraine.
7. On July 27, 1923, Radnarkom (Council of People’s Commissars, UkrSSR) issued a Decree ‘About the measures in the matter of Ukrainization of schools and cultural educational institutions,’ and on August 1, 1923, it issued another Decree, ‘About the measures to ensure equality of languages and assistance in the Ukraine language development.’ Both Decrees were adopted based on the Resolutions of the 12th Congress of the Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik), held on April 17–24, 1923. They had to assure the implementation of the Ukrainian language in all types of schools and at all levels of state administration and official business institutions with the defined terms of their Ukrainization. As Matthew Pauly has shown, ‘the initial articulation of a Ukrainization strategy in 1923 might

be seen as arising from the political requirements of an unstable post-war Ukraine' (Pauly 2014: 6).

8. Since the article was written in Russian, the source data provides a transcription of the name from the Russian language (Aleksandr Beletskii), in other places the scholar's name is given in the transcription from the Ukrainian language (Oleksandr Biletskyi).
9. In his novel *Flight Without End* (1927), the Austrian writer Joseph Roth was pretty clear about this: 'What can I say? Paris is the capital of the world, Moscow may well become so one day' (Stemberger 2010: 229).
10. The translator, Mykhailo Lebedynets, was arrested and executed by firing squad in 1934, and the author, Bruno Jasiński, fell victim to repression in 1938.
11. In the sources her name is transcribed in Russian as Tatiana Kardinalovskaia; elsewhere her name is transcribed in Ukrainian as Tetiana Kardynalovska.
12. A talented writer and poet-translator of Jewish origin and a member of the Central Committee of the All-Union Bolshevik Party, Kulyk was a highly influential public figure and literary critic himself. In 1923–27 he lived in Canada where he held the rank of Consul of the USSR in 1924–26, and as a Soviet diplomat he frequently visited the USA.
13. *Oliver Twist* was nevertheless published, as we mentioned earlier, in 1929, translated by Veronika Cherniakhivska, whom another notable critic, Serhiy Rodzevych, compared to 'a diligent 'friend' of the author' in contrast to a popular view of translator at that time as either a 'slave,' or a 'competitor' of the author (1929/2011: 416). In 1930 the novel *Oliver Twist* was published once again, by the Knyhospilka cooperative union, this time with a foreword and in the 'retelling' of Ukrainian writer Borys Hrinchenko (under the pen name N. Selskyi). From the 1930s and until the early 1960s, when the State Publishers of Literature in Moscow finished publishing the *Collected Works* of Dickens in 30 volumes (1957–63), Ukrainian translators and publishers quite rarely turned their attention to Dickens.

14. Translations from Yiddish, an ethnic-minority language in Ukraine, continued to be encouraged throughout the 1930s in the context of the CP(b)U nationalities policy.
15. Yefremov and Nikovskiy also edited and supplemented a new edition of *Slovar ukrains'koi movy* [The Dictionary of the Ukrainian Language], published in 1927–28 in 4 volumes, adding material from the 20th-century. The dictionary was originally edited by Borys Hrinchenko and first published in 1907–9.
16. Mykola Skrypnyk was a popular Ukrainian Bolshevik organizer who led the cultural Ukrainization effort in Soviet Ukraine.
17. Cf. (in descending order) Guy de Maupassant, 40; Emile Zola, 33; Jules Verne, 32; Victor Hugo, 30; Mark Twain, 23 (Nyzovyi, Brezghunova, and Medvediev 1967: 85–8).
18. Since the article was written in Russian, the source data provides a transcription of the name from the Russian language (Maksim Rylskii), in other places the translator's name is given in the transcription from the Ukrainian language (Maksym Rylskiy).
19. The speech was delivered just a week before Khrushchev's secret report vilifying Stalin 'On the Cult of Personality and Its Consequences,' on February 25, 1956, at the Twentieth Communist Party Congress.

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Part III

Communist Europe



7

The Politics of Translation in Yugoslavia from 1945 to 1952

Maria Rita Leto

This chapter looks at translation policy in Yugoslavia between 1945 and 1952. These are the years in which the country began by conforming slavishly to the Soviet model, creating a centralized and bureaucratized state apparatus,¹ and then, following the breakdown in relations between Stalin and Tito in 1948, gradually but significantly opened up to the West, while continuing to declare itself a socialist state.² If, from a political point of view, the symbolic date of its separation from the Soviet Union is 28 June 1948, when Yugoslavia's expulsion from Cominform, the central organization of the international communist movement, was officially announced, the change that took place in the country's culture was more complex and gradual. Indeed, between 1949 and 1951, Yugoslavia's efforts to demonstrate its communist orthodoxy and refute Soviet accusations of revisionism coexisted with a progressive distancing

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from Soviet positions that were, with time, criticized ever more openly. This is the context in which Yugoslavia began to look at new models, not only in the political sphere but also in culture. It was a very fluid situation in which it is difficult to indicate precisely the ongoing changes. Overall, however, these were becoming increasingly clear. In many respects, 1952 saw an irreversible change in the process of Yugoslavia's separation from the Soviet Union and, at the same time, the beginning of a 'third way' experiment as an alternative to the Soviet bloc, on the one hand, and NATO, on the other. If, up to that point, it had been felt that the 1948 break with the USSR could be healed, the VI Congress of the Yugoslav Communist Party held in Zagreb on 7 November 1952 marked the final separation. During the Congress, the Yugoslav leadership, with a clear reference to Marx's Communist Manifesto, changed the name of the Yugoslav Communist Party to the League of Yugoslav Communists, underlining a re-thinking of the role of the party in society. A series of constitutional reforms seeking to streamline bureaucracy and to 'socialize' rather than nationalize the means of production pointed to the beginnings of a Yugoslav version of socialism.³

This original measure involved not only the economic and political sphere, but also touched on the broader ideological and cultural dimensions, creating an environment that had not been seen before. In the first three years of the second Yugoslav state,⁴ there had been a major drive to increase literacy and raise the cultural level of the country, albeit within the extremely narrow confines of the ideological framework and with a strongly oligarchic control. From 1948 on, however, even the cultural field began gradually to gain independence compared to the earlier cast-iron political control. In this situation, translation played a leading role and followed a similar path: from having been a mere reflection of the totalitarian Soviet ideology, after 1948 translation practice rose to become an emblem of the cultural and ideological experimentalism taking place in Yugoslavia during those years. Indeed, it was to be precisely in the area of translation that the country opened up to the West to an extraordinary degree, with the publication of a considerable number of texts, in particular of English and American literature, that was still banned in the rest of the Soviet bloc and that brought to ideas

and sources of inspiration Yugoslavia that would have been unthinkable just a few years before.

Translating a Political Programme

On 29 and 30 November 1943, when a good part of Yugoslavia was still occupied by German troops, the second session of the Anti-fascist Council for the National Liberation of Yugoslavia (Antifašističko vijeće narodnog oslobođenja Jugoslavije, AVNOJ) was held in Jajce, Bosnia. The Council outlined the future structure of Yugoslavia on a 'federal and democratic basis as a state community of equal peoples' (Marković and Srdić 1987: 15).⁵ At the same time, the ideological cornerstones on which the new state was to be based were established. These principles, which remained unchanged throughout almost the entire existence of the country were: the principle of fraternity and unity of all the peoples of Yugoslavia; the struggle for liberation led successfully by the Communist Party that became a constant subject of literary, cinematic, and political narration; the myth of the founding father of the nation, Josip Broz Tito, who was nominated Marshall and President of the Committee for Liberation at this session. The resolution of the second session of the AVNOJ expresses 'warm feelings of friendship' (Marković and Srdić 1987: 14) on the part of the peoples of Yugoslavia above all towards the Soviet Union, but also towards Great Britain and the USA, who were providing support in the form of food and military equipment to the Yugoslav partisans. However, it was emphasized that 'with their tenacious fight for freedom, the peoples of Yugoslavia had shown their desire and resolution to create their homeland themselves on the basis of true democracy and equality among peoples' (Marković and Srdić 1987: 15). The pride felt for its success in liberating the occupied territories, albeit with external help, was one of the premises for the autonomy which Tito's Yugoslavia claimed within the Soviet bloc, and that led to the rift with Stalin in 1948.

More or less furtively during the war (because the Yugoslav partisans did not wish to lose the support of the Western powers), but then more openly from 1945 onwards, Yugoslavia did, however, look

to the Soviet Union as a model to follow and to replicate. The bonds linking the Yugoslav communists and the Soviet Union, which had been re-enforced during the partisan war, were further strengthened by the party through the promotion within the population of 'feelings of trust and love' towards the leading communist country and its leader, Stalin (Jandrić 2005: 198). The first constitution of Democratic Federative Yugoslavia, passed in 1948, was modelled on the Soviet constitution of 1936, as were the laws, the economic programmes, the organization of the state apparatus, and the model of political culture. The Agitation and Propaganda (Agitprop) apparatus was perfected following the Soviet model, and was very active during the war, contributing significantly to the promotion within the population of the People's Liberation Struggle (Narodno-oslobodilačka borba), which would not have been as successful without this support.⁶ In March 1945, just before the end of the war, the Agitprop was re-organized and strengthened, becoming a diffuse and hierarchical system which controlled all aspects of cultural life through a close-knit network of trusted individuals. Literature, film, and all the arts were called on to produce a *master-narrative* centred on the fight for liberation. This master-narrative (together with the leader's aura) offered Tito the powerful rhetoric that he needed both to maintain the unity of the different peoples of Yugoslavia who had fought together against the Nazis, and to counterbalance the effects of the subsequent rift with Stalin.

At the end of the war, Yugoslavia was a devastated country. In culture and education, it was extremely backward, with marked inequalities between its republics (Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Macedonia). One of the first tasks that the new rulers sought to address was the promotion of literacy and, in general, of the education of the people. Indeed, at that point in history, 'in the social reality of post-war economic depression and an uncertain future, culture took on a significance that it would rarely enjoy again in Yugoslavia' (Doknić, Petrović, and Hofman 2009: I, 16). Political culture was, therefore, a crucial factor in the transformation and education of the masses, as well as being indispensable for state politics. Yet, if on the one hand, political culture sought to raise the cultural level of the population through a series of state measures, such as free education, grants, schools

for adults, general access to any type of cultural activity, the set-up of cultural meeting places and associations, and even the organization of travelling cinemas in villages that were still without electricity, on the other, all measures were perfectly in line with party ideology. Like that of the Soviet Union, this was a totalitarian ideology, which left no room for any other worldview.

The Agitation and Propaganda Department was the only organization in the post-war state apparatus to be divided into three sections (the Agitation section, the Theory section, and the Cultural section), which were, in turn, divided into around ten sections that, in accordance with the directives of the Central Committee of the CPY, had the power to control and direct all aspects of the country's cultural life from education to publishing, printing, radio, cinema, theatre, and translation.⁷ Based on a centralized and hierarchical structure, the various sections existed at federal, republic, and city level and could only communicate with each other via the forums of the party committees to which they belonged. This tight control, known as the 'Agitprop model of political culture', lasted throughout Yugoslavia's strictly Soviet political, economic, and cultural period. The head of the Agitprop was Milovan Djilas, a party ideologue and close associate of Tito, who held an apparently modest post of Minister without portfolio, but was actually the enormously powerful controller of the entire cultural field in Yugoslavia, which thus became the exclusive prerogative of state institutions responsible not only for its funding, but also for its control and administration. Any cultural activity was effectively impossible without the prior authorization of the Agitprop.

The party placed the media and publishing houses under increasingly totalitarian control, while making every effort to maintain a facade of freedom that was, in fact, progressively eroded by a series of measures. As stated by the lawyer, Leon Geršković, in the preface to the edition of the Official Gazette (*Službeni list*)⁸ in which the Law on Constituent Assemblies, the Press Law and the Law on Associations, Choirs, and other Public Gatherings were published, the Press Law of 31 August 1945 guaranteed 'that freedom [...] for which the people had fought before and during the war' (*Zakon ustavotvornoj skupštini 1945*: 3). Article 3 of the law further guaranteed that 'for the publication of books, works

of art or similar non-periodic works, no prior notification or approval of the authorities was required' (*Zakon ustavotvornej skupštini* 1945: art. 3). However, in Article 6, there were a number of limitations that with a broad and flexible interpretation provided a powerful means of censorship. Among others, those who had lost their political and civil rights could not be publishers. As remarked by Croatian journalist Josip Grbelja (1998: 67), this meant almost half the adult population of Croatia. In addition, people who for various reasons were compromised with past regimes were excluded, in particular 'those who had been publishers, editors, associates or authors of fascist and pro-fascist books, newspapers or other periodical and non-periodical writings' (*Zakon ustavotvornej skupštini* 1945: art. 6). Article 15 of the same law, which given its importance and sensitivity was modified a number of times, stipulated that books could be imported from abroad, but only through authorized institutions. An August 1945 decree prohibiting Ustaša⁹ and fascist literature (Naredba o zabrani ustaške i fašističke literature) required books published in Croatia during the period of the Independent State of Croatia (Nezavisna država Hrvatske, NDH; 1941–45), a satellite state of Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy, to be withdrawn from sale until a committee of experts had decided their fate (Hebrang Grgić 2000: 119).

This is the context in which a particular Yugoslav policy on translation began to take shape. The State Archive in Zagabria holds an unsigned and undated list—with glaring spelling errors—of over 150 Yugoslav and foreign authors 'who must be urgently banned, and distribution of their work impeded' (Grbelja 1998: 92; the full list is in Vukelić 2012: 48–52). For some authors, individual texts were banned, for others, like D'Annunzio and Nietzsche, their complete works. As underlined by Deniver Vukelić (2012: 25), this list is highly significant in understanding what the authorities considered to be so ideologically dangerous as to 'urgently' ban its distribution.

Translations as possible carriers of 'noxious' foreign ideology were seen as even more dangerous if they were works for children, readers that were considered to be more easily influenced. In Yugoslavia, as in the other socialist countries, great attention was paid to young people, who had to absorb the new values and become citizens loyal to the state and socialist

ideology. Consequently, a very careful eye was kept on children's literature with publication and distribution regulated by a special law of 1947, the 'Law on publishing and distribution of children's and youth literature and press'. The law stated that books for children could only be published following prior authorization by the Ministry of Education in the individual republics, while texts published abroad required the authorization of the Committee for Schools and Sciences of the Federal Government in order to be translated. Offenders were fined or imprisoned for up to one year (Hebrang Grgić 2000: 121). Many of the books that had already been translated were retranslated and, in the main, ideologically manipulated (Pokorn 2012).

Censorship, which officially did not exist, was often undertaken by the publishing houses themselves who refused, for example, to publish works on religion. This was an uncommon form of censorship, as there was no law that obliged them to accept or refuse manuscripts for ideological, religious, or any other reasons. It could be called a form of self-censorship, a sort of internalized preventative measure that meant that publishers obligingly acquiesced to a form of censorship whose power and effectiveness rested on the fact that it was both implicit and officially denied. Conversely, as argued by Aleksandar Stipčević (2005: 3), it might not have been the publishing houses that decided, but rather the party committees, and this frequently occurred without leaving any written trace, as party directives were usually given orally or imparted over the telephone. As a result, it is difficult to discover who actually decided the fate of a manuscript.

A subsequent passage rendering party control ever tighter was the nationalization not only of private publishing houses, but also of cinemas, theatres, libraries, and reading rooms, in addition to the closure of religious schools and cultural associations (Dimić 1988: 57). The nationalization of the publishing houses was not immediate, but at the end of the war, private publishers faced a series of difficulties that the state publishers did not have, such as a shortage of paper, problems with distribution, and reductions in book prices. From 1945 to 1949 private publishers, who were seen as potential propagators of 'dangerous texts' and an ideology potentially at odds with the Communist Party position, were subjected to defamatory media campaigns that prepared

the way for their eventual complete disappearance (Dimić 1988: 155) leaving free reign to state publishers linked to the party. These were the State Publishing House (Državni izdavački zavod known as DIZJUG) and Kultura in Serbia; and, albeit more controversially, the Croatian Publishing House (Nakladni zavod Hrvatske) and Matica hrvatska in Croatia.¹⁰ Full control of all publishing was further perfected by a series of internal provisions, such as the requirement that publishers present an annual plan of their publications, or detailed requirements from Agit-prop (and therefore from the party) regarding the composition of the editorial staff and what they had to publish and translate.

The documents held in the AgitProp section of the Central Committee of the Yugoslav Communist Party, which are kept in the Yugoslav Archive in Belgrade (Arhiv Jugoslavije), reveal how systematic the party's intervention in cultural life was, including in publishing, leaving very little room for manoeuvre. A document dated 16 May 1946, for example, determined that the tenth anniversary of the death of Maxim Gorky would be celebrated with translations of his work in journals and newspapers. Furthermore, the programme in his honour would include showing Soviet films adapted from his work throughout the country. This would involve academies, universities, newspapers, writer associations, and even factories, where lectures and lessons would be held on the 'greatest of proletarian writers'. Similarly, the complete works of Marx, Engels, and Lenin were translated and published by Kultura¹¹ on the fortieth anniversary of the foundation of the Yugoslav Communist Party in 1959.

Literature was expected to follow the party's directives, contribute to the creation of a new conscience and, more generally, to that of a new socialist individual. Following the well-known formulation that the Soviet politician Andrei Alexandrovich Zhdanov attributed to Stalin, writers were supposed to be 'engineers of human souls'. In the main, the first congress of Yugoslav writers, held in Belgrade in 1946, followed the aims of the first congress of Soviet writers held in Moscow in 1934. The programmatic speech given by the writer and ideologue Radovan Zogović entitled 'On the Position and Tasks of Our Literature Today' ('O našoj književnosti, njenom položaju i njenim zadacima danas') assigned to literature the job of awakening the masses and making them aware of

their strengths, through which they had liberated themselves from the enemy and led the country to victory. It was the writers' task to:

recount significant and decisive facts and events of the five years of the People's Liberation Struggle, and during the subsequent years of renewal and reconstruction of the country, of the regeneration of a certain type of individual and of the destruction of another type. (Zogović 2006: 24)

Literature, then, was in the service of the party and its ideology, narrating historical events in accordance with the principles of Soviet social realism, whose theoretical writings were disseminated in Yugoslavia during those years. Translation played a key role, mirroring in this phase Yugoslavia's close ties with the Soviet Union. For example, the resolution of the Central Committee of the USSR in 1946, in which Zhdanov launched a forceful attack on the Soviet journals *Zvezda* and *Leningrad*, was translated and published in the same year both in *Borba*, the Yugoslav party newspaper, and in special volumes published by Kultura in Belgrade and Zagreb. According to the Soviet ideologue responsible for the propaganda sector, the two journals were guilty of having hosted a 'vulgar writer' such as Mikhail Zoshchenko and a 'salon poetess' such as Anna Akhmatova, authors of works that were 'without ideas, trivial and reactionary' (Ždanov 1946: 21). In Yugoslavia, considerable emphasis was given to Zhdanov's criticism, because it clarified the cultural limits within which authors had to move, as well as serving as a lesson to anyone who might still dare to follow a bourgeois and reactionary literature that was distant from the people.

Translation as Political Programme

Thus, immediately after liberation, the political and ideological markers were laid down, according to which:

the old capitalist publishing system in which books had been a means to accrue profit and wealth was eliminated completely; a new relationship

in the choice and publication of books was established; publishing practice was re-organised and improved – in particular in the less developed republics – and the general guidelines and directives regarding publishing specified. (Stoilović 1950: 253)

The dictates of the Party, as well as its changes in direction, also had a significant impact on the choice of foreign books to be translated and promoted among Yugoslav readers.

The party line on translation was not laid down through specific rules and regulations and so it needs to be deduced from the general framework on cultural policy in Yugoslavia in those years, in particular by reconstructing the general planning on publishing through an analysis of internal Agitprop documents. These clearly reveal the Communist Party's attention to translation practice as a form both of domestic cultural policy and foreign policy, at least up to the 1950s. The letters sent to various committees, the list of books recommended for translation and those banned, and the directions regarding editorial plans, which from 1946 on all publishing houses were obliged to present and respect scrupulously, clearly indicate that, in the first years after liberation, translation was an area of crucial importance for the party.

A significant recommendation sent by Agitprop as early as 1945 to the two most important publishing houses in Belgrade—DIZJUG and Kultura—concluded with an invitation to dedicate particular attention to the translation of Marxist-Leninist and literary classics, since:

translations are the weakest element of recent publications. Old translations are not to be re-published before they have been reviewed and updated. New translations must undergo numerous collective and individual checks. (Doknić, Petrović, and Hofman 2009: II, 98)

Both publishers were told what to include in their three-year publishing plan, since through their work, the state 'has to realise and illustrate the guiding principles of its domestic, foreign and cultural policies' (95). The publisher DIZJUG had to provide the peoples of Yugoslavia with the most important national and international works in scientific and artistic literature. The document listed in detail the

scientific disciplines and the authors to consider, ranging from classics in philosophy, history, biology, and anthropology (to name just some of the areas mentioned), to works by French materialists such as Denis Diderot, Paul Henri Thiry, Baron d'Holbach, and Julien Offray de La Mettrie; from Charles Darwin to Ivan Pavlov; from classics in Western European and American literature—in particular François Rabelais, Honoré de Balzac, Stendhal, Guy de Maupassant, Charles Dickens, William M. Thackeray, Mark Twain, Heinrich Heine, Miguel de Cervantes, Émile Zola—to selected Greek and Latin classics. However, since literary publications were supposed to strengthen the idea of brotherhood not only between the peoples of Yugoslavia—the much proclaimed 'Bratstvo i jedinstvo' [Brotherhood and Unity]—but also between all the Slav peoples, the publishers were obliged to publish the main works of artists and scholars who supported solidarity and Slavic reciprocity.¹² These included the classics of Slav literature, above all Russian, such as the works of Nikolai Gogol, Ivan Goncharov, Nikolai Leskov, Leo Tolstoy, Mikhail Saltykov-Shchedrin, Vladimir Korolenko, and Anton Chekhov; the works of nineteenth-century materialist critics such as Vissarion Belinsky, Nikolai Dobrolyubov, Nikolai Chernyshevsky, and Alexander Herzen; classics of Ukrainian literature, such as Taras Shevchenko and Ivan Franko, and classics of Belorussian literature; classics and more modern works of Polish, Czech, Slovak, and Bulgarian literature, as well as the popular literature of the Lusatian Serbs (Doknić, Petrović and Hofman 2009: II, 95). Once again, particular attention was paid to literature for young readers, the authors recommended for translation being, above all, Mark Twain, Jules Verne, Jack London, Daniel Defoe, and Leo Tolstoy. The editorial board of DIZJUG was further invited to set up special commissions to propose editorial plans and check manuscripts and translations. Within these commissions, there was an interesting and noteworthy division between Slav literature, on the one hand, and Western and American works, on the other. Similar indications were given to the publishers Kultura, who had a monopoly of the translation of Marxist literature, as well as responsibility for the publication of those scientific and artistic texts that were the 'direct precursors of Marxist scientific thought and neo-realist literature' (Doknić, Petrović and Hofman 2009: II, 97). As in the case of DIZJUG,

these were not general but very specific indications. The authors to be published were: Gorky, Mikhail Sholokhov, Alexander Serafimovich, and Alexander Fadeyev, together with Theodore Dreiser's *An American Tragedy*, as well as *King Coal* and other works by Upton Sinclair (Doknić, Petrović and Hofman 2009: II, 98).

In a letter of 17 October 1946—significantly sent ‘to everyone’—the head of Agitprop, Djilas, stressed that every printed text had to be carefully checked by the party, while translations from English, American, and French literature should be ‘only [of] the leading works of critical realism and combative romanticism, as well as the main texts of contemporary progressive writers’. In contrast, ‘attention should be focused on Polish, Albanian, Bulgarian, Czech and, to a certain extent, Romanian literature’ (Grbelja 1998: 120), that is works from the Soviet bloc countries.

In his *Report on the agitation and propaganda activities of the Central Committee to the V Congress of the Yugoslav Communist Party (Izveštaj o agitaciono-propagandnom radu Centralnog komiteta Komunističke Partije Jugoslavije. Referat održan na V kongresu KPJ)* of 1948, Djilas underlined that the guiding principles followed in publishing had been:

the publication of Marxist-Leninist classics with the most correct translations possible [...]; the publication of national and foreign literary classics, and of national and foreign realist and contemporary revolutionary literature, among which contemporary Soviet literature occupies the first place. (Dilas 1948: 24)

Similarly, the minutes of the Central Committee of the Agitprop directorate of 9 October 1950 recommended publishing good editions and ‘ensuring that the translators are good’.¹³

As is evident from the publishing plans of 1949, Agitprop attempted to coordinate work between the publishers in the different republics, especially between Croatia and Serbia, to avoid translating the same work, since efforts were being made in those years to create a uniform Serbo-Croatian linguistic area.¹⁴ Indeed, it was felt that a lack of coordination or even open rivalry between publishers in Belgrade and Zagreb could be harmful. A case in point is the novel *An American*

Tragedy by Dreiser, where a translation completed for the publisher Prosveta in Belgrade was not published because a translation had already been published by Kultura in Zagreb (Doknić, Petrović and Hofman 2009: II, 107).¹⁵ The intention was to create a single Serbo-Croatian literary market and ‘pull down strictly nationalist walls’. To this end, the minutes of another Agitprop Central Committee meeting on 17 January 1947 show that the Committee analysed the annual plans of the different republics, and addressed a report to the Croatian Agitprop recommending that the publishers Nakladni zavod Hrvatske and Matica hrvatska should not publish Serbian authors in Croatia using only the Latin alphabet, while Prosveta in Belgrade was similarly criticized, because it only used the Cyrillic alphabet.¹⁶

As is clear from these examples, the question of translation played a crucial role in Agitprop’s policies. Its indications were not merely suggestions, but fully fledged impositions. In the Nagode trial of 1947 (named after one of the 32 Slovene liberals accused of treason), one of the accusations against the lawyer Boris Furlan was that he translated, copied, and distributed a typewritten copy of George Orwell’s *Animal Farm*.¹⁷ Although the defendant claimed that he had only read and not translated the work, he was sentenced to death: a sentence which was subsequently commuted to seven years hard labour and the loss of all civil rights (Pokorn 2012: 15).

The *Bibliography of Translations published in Yugoslavia 1944–59 I–II* (*Bibliografija prevoda objavljenih u Jugoslaviji 1944–59 I–II*), published by the Union of Yugoslav Literary Translators (1963), reveals that a lot of translations were published in this fifteen-year period. There were translations from 29 languages and into 14 languages, taking into account both the national languages of the Federation and those of various ethnic minorities, with a clear predominance of texts in Serbo-Croatian (6.544), followed by Slovenian (1.764) and Macedonian (983). The preface highlights the work of the translators, more than a third of whom translated three or more books. It is particularly significant that the translators were some of the leading authors and poets of the time, such as Dobrica Cesarić, Isidora Sekulić, Gustav Krklec, Tin Ujević, and others, as well as figures such as Radovan Zogović, who was not only an author, but also an influential member of the Agitprop, who had determined (together

with Djilas) cultural and translation policy in Yugoslavia at least until the end of 1948 when he was accused of Stalinism, expelled from the party, and detained under house arrest. Of the 10,906 translations in various fields in the *Bibliography*, 53 per cent are literary texts. Overall, 28 per cent are translations from Russian, 15 per cent from English, 11 per cent from French, 10 per cent from German, and 1.9 per cent from Italian. The clear disparity between Russian and the other languages is no accident. English and French were considered 'bourgeois' languages, while German and Italian were the languages of the occupying forces, even if the percentage of translations from German includes the works of Marx and Engels. The small number of translations from Italian is surprising and probably the result of the disputes between Yugoslavia and Italy regarding Dalmatia and its Italian minority that were still unresolved. According to data reported by Ljubodrag Dimić (1988: 173), the figure for translations from Russian in the first four years after liberation (1945–49) was as high as 85 per cent in Serbia.

In the years immediately after the end of the Second World War, the Soviet Union appeared to Yugoslav eyes to possess much greater symbolic and cultural capital, both as the leading communist state which only produced works that were uncontaminated by other ideologies, and as a Slav country with a rich and authoritative literary tradition. As early as 1945, the Association for Yugoslavia-USSR cultural collaboration (*Društvo za kulturnu saradnju Jugoslavija–SSSR*) was set up with sections in all of the republics. The association was responsible for numerous initiatives (commemorations, lectures, musical evenings, theatre productions, lessons) including importing texts, books, and journals from the Soviet Union that were, if needed, translated and distributed throughout the country. In some cases, the works were translated, while, in others, they were distributed directly in Russian, since after the war the study of Russian had been increased through the organization of a network of courses in all the Yugoslav republics, and by giving it a dominant position in the school system. In some libraries, approximately 80 per cent of the holdings were Russian books or translations from Russian (Dimić 1988: 171). The universities were full of textbooks translated from Russian. In Belgrade, for example, 24 texts in the fields of law, social and natural sciences, and history were translated from Russian

between 1945–48 (Petranović, Končar, Radonjić 1985: 721). However, the texts caused confusion, because they were neither adapted to Yugoslav reality nor even made reference to it. Dimić (1988: 175), for example, remarks that reference was made to the Soviet homeland, Soviet patriotism, the leader Stalin, and the stakhanovite movement, but there was no mention of Yugoslav events.¹⁸ Soviet texts also predominated in the party's evening courses that aimed to train new administrators through familiarization with Marxist-Leninist theory. Of the 60 compulsory texts used in the party schools in Croatia, 19 were by Soviet authors, while the works of Stalin and Lenin were obviously the most widely translated and studied (Jandrić 2005: 169).

In the first years after liberation, works by Soviet authors were among the most frequently translated as they satisfied the primary prerequisite, which was not artistic quality, but proven ideological loyalty and an avoidance of any ideas in conflict with the communist worldview.¹⁹ In film, which was considered an important means to communicate with and indoctrinate the masses, the Soviet Union also played a leading role. In 1945, 93 of the 217 imported films were Soviet productions, while the record was set in 1948 with 113 of the 122 imported films coming from the Soviet Union and its satellite states, and only one from America (Knezović 1992: 111).

It is evident that the wave of increased 'sovietization' took place between 1947 and 1948. However, these were also the years in which party leaders realized that the cultural policy of falling into line with the Soviet model was a failure. They had not managed to realize their project of an art that was at once 'authentic', popular, and ideologically correct (Lilly 2000: 142). Moreover, the enthusiasm of the post-war period had flagged somewhat and party rhetoric no longer enjoyed its initial success. Newspapers were read ever less frequently, while ideologically correct literary works did not attract readers. They began to realize—albeit timidly—that not everything from the Soviet Union was necessarily right and appropriate for Yugoslavia. For example, as early as November 1947, Djilas criticized the translation and publication of an article by Alexander Fadeyev, president of the Union of Soviet Writers, as an expression of Russian nationalism and, as such, contrary to the very principles of communism (Lilly 2000: 147). Nevertheless, despite

moves to overcome the acritical acceptance of every element of Soviet culture, even the breakdown in relations between Stalin and Tito—which took many by surprise—did not bring about a significant change in cultural policy. On the one hand, the Yugoslav Communist Party wished to demonstrate its own orthodoxy and refute the accusations from Moscow, while, on the other, it hoped that the rift might not be irreparable. Although one month after the expulsion from Cominform, Tito concluded his address to the fifth Congress of the Yugoslav Communist Party with the words ‘Long live the Soviet Union, long live Stalin’, and although Stalin’s works were still widely translated in 1949; from 1950 onwards, the country began to distance itself ever more openly from the Soviet Union.

In the minutes of the Publishing Council meetings (undated, but presumably 1951), Puniša Perović, a poet and editor of various journals, claimed that Soviet works were not only ‘full of revisionism’ and therefore harmful (Doknić, Petrović, and Hofman 2009: II, 380), but also qualitatively weak. Therefore, with the exception of Sholokhov and Konstantin N. Leontiev, Soviet authors and those from Cominform states as well as those from capitalist countries that supported it and attacked Yugoslavia were not to be published. Similarly, Perović demanded that Russian prefaces to translations, such as in *1001 Nights*, should be removed and replaced by Yugoslav prefaces. Above all, Perović held—and this was now the official line—that Yugoslavia should translate the best that world literature had to offer and not poor quality works, be they Soviet or Western. These views reveal that the change in political direction was accompanied by similar changes in ideological, cultural, and translation policy. At the same meeting, Djilas went as far as stating that ‘the policy followed to date of publishing everything Russian irrespective of its quality was the policy of a vassal state’ (Doknić, Petrović and Hofman 2009: II, 381).

In 1950, the Party journal, *Komunist*, published an article by Zagorka Stoilović which began by underlining the significant achievements reached in the field of translation in the years following liberation: the great stimulus given to translation, the removal of decadent and reactionary works, and the translation of many key texts from world literature, which appeared for the first time in Yugoslavia. But the author saw

a certain weakness in the imbalance between the number of translations of Russian-Soviet works and the very few translations from other literatures. Furthermore, she felt that insufficient attention had been paid to the quality of these works, some of which were not only without any artistic merit, but also had no political worth and could even be ideologically harmful, as they were expressions of Russian nationalism. There was, then, increasingly strong criticism in Yugoslavia of the home of communism, which was no longer seen as a model and was even accused of nationalism. The translation of Soviet works ceased to be a priority; and publishers were encouraged to turn their attention to other literatures.

Translation: A Third Way

The years of ‘Sovietization’ in Yugoslavia between the end of the Second World War and the beginning of the 1950s are perhaps the only time in which there was a unified ‘Yugoslav literature’; the impositions from above were so centralized that they created a uniform literature, translation, and culture across the six republics.²⁰ In this phase, translation performed a dual function: it unified the country by importing texts that on entering the Serbo-Croatian environment were immediately felt to be part of the entire Yugoslav system, while at the same time facilitating the Soviet model. Through Agitprop, the party exploited translation in the process of constructing the new Yugoslav state, using communist ideology to try to overcome ethnic-religious differences. The approach was similar to that employed by the Soviet Union, which was also a federation of different republics. This explains the preponderance in the first years of the second Yugoslav state of translations of political and theoretical texts together with works of social realist literature.

However, the breakdown in relations with Stalin forced the country into a strategic re-positioning that inevitably also implied a re-thinking of its identity. Yugoslavia’s expulsion from the Cominform resulted in the forceful internal repression of would-be and actual Stalinists, as well as stricter censorship of certain topics that could not even be touched upon. Criticizing the leader Tito, calling into question the justice of

the People's Liberation Struggle, and expressing nationalist sentiments could all be extremely dangerous. These were the dark years symbolized by the infamous Goli Otok prison camp. At the same time, however, the distancing from Soviet positions created room in Yugoslav cultural life for new openings and other influxes, albeit in a rather slow and contradictory way.

This realignment occurred in the following stages: the Third Party Plenary (December 1949), during which Djilas intimated the possibility of less Party control over cultural life; a speech to the Slovene Academy of Sciences by Edvard Kardelj, a close associate of Tito and later one of the architects of the theory of self-determination, in which he criticized the Soviet model and practices; Miroslav Krleža's 1952 speech to the third Yugoslav Writers' Congress; and, finally, the dismantling of Agitprop in the form in which it had operated up until then.²¹ A further sign of ongoing changes, one which is more directly related to the subject of this chapter, was the creation in 1951, by a group of translators who were already active before the Second World War, of the Association of Serbian Literary Translators (*Udruženje književnih prevodilaca Srbije*, UKPS). Soon afterwards, similar associations were also set up in the other Yugoslav republics.²² In 1953, the Association of Serbian Translators founded the Union of Yugoslav Literary Translators (*Savez književnih prevodilaca Jugoslavije*) in Belgrade, which, as a centralized institution, brought together all the associations of the different republics. Considering that 1953 was also the year in which the *Fédération Internationale des Traducteurs* (FIT) was founded, Yugoslavia played a pioneering role compared to other East European countries in the creation of an institution that legitimated the work of translators and ensured them a certain freedom in their contacts with the West. In the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia and Hungary, translators only had a subsection within the Writers Union. In Bulgaria, a translators' association was not set up until 1974, and in Poland not until 1981—unsurprisingly, at the time of the establishment of *Solidarność* (Małczak 2015: 283–4). Yugoslavia, then, was also taking a third way in the field of translation studies—permitting an openness that was inconceivable in the other countries of the Soviet bloc, while remaining a communist state.

Changes were felt throughout Yugoslavia. In Serbia, in the literary field, these changes were more cautious in literature with the appearance of 'works that constituted an attempt to combine the revolutionary theme with a new, modern literary expression' (Dimić 1988: 258). In the figurative arts, on the other hand, the innovations were very evident. The exhibitions put on in those years in Belgrade interrupted the tradition of socialist realism in painting (the exhibition of the Montenegro artist Petar Lubarda in 1951 was a watershed event in this respect). In Croatia, where most intellectuals enthusiastically welcomed the establishment of contacts with countries outside the communist bloc, the turning point in cultural terms was certainly the year 1952. Krleža's speech to the third Writers' Congress, the publication of the first issue of the literary journal *Krugovi* (*Circles*) and of a translated anthology of American poetry are some of the events that marked a radical change in Croatia's cultural policy.

Even during the years of greater 'Sovietization' in Yugoslavia, and despite the centrally imposed uniformity, the various republics reacted differently. Given its past religious, cultural, historical, and political ties with Russia, Serbia was more inclined to follow the dictates that came from the Soviet Union via Agitprop, while Croatia was more reluctant to do so, also because most of the heads of Agitprop were Serbs and Montenegrins (Milovan Djilas, Jovan Popović, and Radovan Zogović). The minutes of the various Agitprop commission meetings, show more or less explicit criticism being levelled both at some Croatian intellectuals—accused, at the very least, of passivity—and at the excessively autonomous Croatian journals. In particular, *Republika*, directed by Miroslav Krleža and Josip Horvat, was subjected to a number of attacks which ceased only when the two men were replaced by new management which devoted much more space to translations of 'Soviet literature – the most democratic literature in the world' (Knezović 1992: 113), as was claimed in an article published in the journal at the time.

Following Yugoslavia's move away from the Soviet Union, it was Krleža, who had been criticized and isolated until then because of his anti-Stalinist position, who now spoke for the new course, officially rejecting the dogma of socialist realism and any Party impositions on art. His speech at the third Yugoslav Writers' Congress in Ljubljana,

which bore the significant title of ‘On the liberty of culture’, and which had apparently been discussed beforehand with some of the communist leaders (Kardelj, Djilas, and maybe Tito himself), called for autonomous and independent art that was free of any ideological dictates; art that was the authentic product of national culture and did not follow other cultures, be they from the East or the West.

The anti-American feeling that had characterized the years 1945–48, again primarily the result of Soviet influence, receded and, in addition to military and economic aid, jazz, films, cartoons, and literature arrived from America. English became increasingly popular. At the University of Zagreb, for example, 700 students attended the course in English language in the academic year 1952–53 (Jakovina 2003: 463). On the other hand, from 1950 to 1951, Russian was no longer taught as a compulsory foreign language, and the number of university students studying the language fell dramatically. Having moved away from the Eastern bloc, Yugoslavia’s need to turn to America and the West generated a fervour of cultural stimuli in which translation and its practices played a leading role.

In translation, there was no longer an exclusive concentration on Soviet literature, nor was there still the division into Soviet and Western literature (Dimić 1988: 260). Above all, the ensuing liberalization allowed the publication of authors that in other communist bloc countries could only be read—at great personal risk—in *samizdat* editions. Authors such as Erich Fromm, William Faulkner, Franz Kafka, Jean-Paul Sartre, Albert Camus, and T. S. Eliot, who had previously been banned or fiercely criticized, began to be translated. Underlining her astonishment at the sudden availability in translation of the leading authors of contemporary European and American literature, the Serbian writer Svetlana Velmar Janković recalled how in 1952 her generation came to know and was thrilled by Camus and Sartre, while ‘bookshop windows, which once had not been particularly appealing, filled up almost *simultaneously* with books that we simply had to read: Hemingway, Saroyan, Faulkner, Vittorini, and many others’ (Velmar Janković 1957: 882).

The number of translations of Soviet authors declined in all the republics, but particularly in Croatia. Between 1950 and 1955, not a single volume of Russian poetry was translated. As shown in the

bibliography of Croatian translations edited by Nataša Dragojević and Fikret Cacan (1989), 69 Russian prose works were translated in 1948—a considerable number, if we consider that no translations of German works were published that year just two Italian, four American, six English, and eight French; but the number of translations from Russian fell to 35 the following year, and to just seven in 1952. In contrast, the number of translations of Western literature grew. The process of liberalizing translation practice reached a peak when Yugoslavia adhered to the Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works in 1960, under which Yugoslav publishers obtained the right to establish direct contact with foreign publishing houses.²⁴

The launch in 1952 of the above-mentioned monthly journal, *Krugovi*, brought a breath of fresh air to the Croatian literary scene, while also provoking conflict between generations and political attacks. The so-called *krugovaši*, that is the poets and writers who worked with the journal, were called ‘modern and dangerous’ (Prica 1953: 49) and were accused of having taken the wrong way out of the dullness of socialist realism. The journal, which was set up to give a voice to young writers, actually brought together various movements and various generations that were united in their desire to renew Croatian literature. Thanks to the *krugovaši*, two parallel processes began: ‘the utilitarian type of literary work was abandoned, and modernism emerged as a result of a new relationship with literary material’ (Donat 1983: 7). A sentence from the introductory essay by the first editor, Vlatko Pavletić, entitled ‘Freedom and Art’, became the motto of the journal and of an entire generation of young people, many of whom would become prominent writers and poets: ‘Let there be liveliness!’ (Neka bude živost). This frequently repeated phrase is a clear indication of how the cultural climate was perceived at that time: stagnant, conservative and with little propensity to innovation and experimentation. The liveliness which the editors sought was centred on the opportunity to move towards Western and, in particular, American literature, to which the journal devoted considerable space. From the first issues, essays were published on the French surrealists, on Sartre and Camus, Cesare Pavese, Luigi Pirandello, Bertold Brecht, Scandinavian literature, Ezra Pound, T. S. Eliot, Edith Sitwell, John Dos Passos, and William Saroyan. The journal mainly published

the poetry and prose of the young Croatian writers for whom it was founded, but not only, as, in the words of Tatjana Jukić (2003: 49), the project ‘differed from similar generational initiatives in the history of Croatian literature in that it attributed equal symbolic value to literary works and to literary translation’. *Krugovi* published translations of works by Virginia Woolf, Gertrude Stein, and Elio Vittorini; some poetry by Jacques Prévert, André Breton, Paul Éluard, Salvatore Quasimodo, and Oscar Wilde; a translation of Eliot’s *The Wasteland*, Afro-American poetry, Scandinavian poetry, and other works. As is apparent, the journal engaged with a range of literatures, as if it wanted to catch up for the time lost during the isolation of the previous years by presenting authors who just a few years before they would not even have dared to include in their publishing plans.

Two of *Krugovi*’s most active and polemical collaborators were Ivan Slamnig and Antun Šoljan who were responsible mainly for translations of American and British authors.²⁵ The story of these two young men, one a high-school student and the other in his first year at university, and who had published a translation of Edgar Allan Poe’s *The Raven* together in 1951, is rather striking, as they worked as translators for about ten years while establishing their reputation as writers and poets in their own right. In 1952, in the wake of the enthusiasm following Yugoslavia’s opening up to the West (the ‘thawing’ of relations, as Slamnig called it in an interview on 1982), they published an anthology of American poetry (*Američka Lirika*).²⁶ According to Slamnig, their motivation for publishing the collection was simply curiosity about something new ‘which was actually old, but it was new in our situation’ (Slamnig 2011: 358). The anthology, then, grew out of their interest in foreign poetry, and in particular American poetry because it was the least well known in Yugoslavia. In fact, they took a broader and more general interest in American literature, probably as a reaction to all those years in which only Russian authors and French realists had been translated and read. Old American works were reprinted and new texts were translated. The two translators had no difficulty finding the originals of the poems they translated for their anthology because they had access to old anthologies, to the English reading room in Zagreb,²⁷ and to the university library. Also, there were no political vetoes, despite the fact that they included

a controversial poet such as Ezra Pound. As Slamnig recalls in the same interview, the only request made by the publisher, Zora, at the time a very popular publishing house, was to add a couple of authors, including Claude McKay, a politically active black poet with communist sympathies. The afterword of the anthology states that in choosing which texts to translate the two editors had respected three principles:

to show the development of American poetry in the fullest way possible [...]; to translate those poems that were particularly appreciated and had been included in most anthologies; to translate those poems which we felt could best represent American poetry to our readers. (Slamnig and Šoljan 1952: 167)

Their purpose, then, was both to introduce the American canon and its development to the Croatian reading public, while also choosing those poems that Croatians could most learn to love.

Between 1955 and 1957, Slamnig and Šoljan's fruitful collaboration resulted in around ten translations of American and English literature, producing an effect that was well beyond what the two translators had imagined.²⁸ Thirty years later, Šoljan reflected on this experience in his essay 'The writer as translator, the translator as writer', attributing to the translator a similar status to that of the writer, in that importing a foreign work into your own culture means 'creating something that was not there before, a text that previously did not exist; [the translator] constructs a new reality in the language.' (Šoljan 1991: 122)

Overall, Slamnig and Šoljan's translations favoured a transfer of knowledge that was of immense literary as well as political and cultural value. Their mediation contributed to the opening up of Croatian (and Yugoslav) culture to the West and, at the same time, to the initiation of a process of reconfiguration in the national literary field, given that their American poetry anthology became a fully fledged part of the cultural and literary development of Croatia. Translations of American literature contributed to an increased awareness, one that had been lost during the years of ideological dictates, of the specificity and autonomy of literary discourse, freeing it from any heteronomous pressures, especially from the political field. It is, then, no surprise that Slamnig and Šoljan showed

great interest in Edgar Allan Poe's *The Philosophy of Composition*, which Slamnig translated a few years later in 1961. Poe seeks to redefine the internal laws that oversee literary creation, and the text gave the young authors an opportunity to reflect on their own poetry, as:

even today, (Poe's) poems can serve as an example of modernity, a term we use in the sense of concise expression, effective imagery, general moderation and refinement of sound. (Slamnig and Šoljan 1953: 5, 470)

The translation of American and British authors sought to import a new modernity compared to the model represented up to that time by the Soviet Union. This alternative modernity, this sort of Americanization of Croatian culture, had a major influence on the writing of Croatian authors, including the two prolific writers/translators.

Conclusion

It is clear that, whereas previously translation was an almost one-way activity that served to mediate the assimilation of ideology, after the rift with the Soviet Union, it became a means of exchange between Yugoslavia and the rest of the world, opening the country up to a multiplicity of opportunities. The drastic reduction in the level of control over translation from the 1950s onwards was not just intended to demonstrate to the West that Yugoslavia was a free country (which it was compared to the other members of the Eastern bloc), but was also motivated by the fact that translation was a key element in the process of developing a third way at all levels, not just cultural but also political and social. Without openly violating communist orthodoxy, translation was a practice that helped Yugoslavia to escape the binary choice between East and West. The introduction into the Federation, through the intense translation activity of these years (and that continued subsequently), of new voices, new cultural models, and new visions of the world, facilitated the legitimization of an internal diversity within the communist bloc that the monological Stalinist rhetoric had repressed and censored and which Yugoslavia also expressed in other areas through worker self-management

and the Non-Aligned Movement.²⁹ However, this translation activity was not matched by an effective reflection on the target language: Serbo-Croatian, as it was commonly but also problematically, called. In fact, the language question was symptomatic of Yugoslavia's inability to find a compromise between unitarism and separatism, as its later history would show.

Notes

1. These are the years of what Slovene economist and politician Jože Mencinger (1991: 71) calls 'administrative socialism', which other scholars date earlier at 1949 or 1950. Mencinger divides Yugoslav history between 1945 and the end of the 1980s into four different phases, administrative socialism (1945–52); administrative market socialism (1953–62); market socialism (1963–73) contractual socialism (1974–88), which were followed by the collapse of socialism and the breakup of the Federation.
2. Tito was accused of deviation from the principles of Marxism and nationalism for having pursued a hostile policy towards the USSR. Certainly, Tito's excessively autonomous foreign policy was a cause of the confrontation, as was his intention to head a Balkan federation. The expulsion was announced, probably not coincidentally, on 28 June, St. Vitus Day, a fateful date that recurs many times in the history of the area from the Serbs defeat by the Turks in 1389 to the assassination of Franz Ferdinand in 1914 (Pirjevec 1993).
3. Yugoslavia abandoned Soviet-type socialist nationalization to launch a project that was not completed but remains unique: self-management, that is the introduction of worker councils in companies and the involvement of workers in decision-making processes.
4. The 'first' Yugoslavia refers to the country created at the end of the First World War under the name Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes. The so-called 'second' Yugoslavia had various names: Democratic Federative Yugoslavia (*Demokratska federativna Jugoslavija*) from 1943 to 1946, Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia (*Federativna narodna republika Jugoslavija*) from 1946

to 1963, and Socialist Federative Yugoslavia (Socijalistička Federativna Republika) from 1963 to 1991. The country comprised six republics (Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, and Macedonia) and two autonomous provinces (Vojvodina e Kosovo) belonging to Serbia.

5. All translations are by the author unless otherwise indicated.
6. *Narodni* means both popular and national. Consequently, depending on the context, 'Narodno-oslobodilačka borba' is sometimes understood and translated as 'National Liberation Struggle' and sometimes as 'People's Liberation Struggle'.
7. The number of people who were progressively recruited by the Agitprop is significant: for example in 1947, about 100 people worked for Agitprop in Croatia, while in 1950, this figure had already risen to 600 (Šarić 2010: 390).
8. The *Official Gazette of the DFY*—later renamed *Official Gazette of the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia* (*Službeni list Socijalističke Federativne Republike Jugoslavije*)—printed laws and regulations which came into effect on the eighth day after their publication.
9. Ustaša was a Croatian fascist movement active between 1929 and 1945. During the Independent State of Croatia, led by the leader (*poglavnik*) Ante Pavelić, members of Ustaša murdered countless Serbs, Jews, and Roma.
10. Matica Hrvatska (or Matrix Croatica) is the oldest Croatian cultural association and one of the most significant book and magazine publishers in Croatia. It was founded in Zagreb in 1842.
11. Arhiv Jugoslavije ACKKSJR VIII, II- or 1.
12. In the post-war period, the rhetoric of pan-Slavism, solidarity, and Slavic reciprocity, was frequently used to explain the close ties to the Soviet Union and its satellite countries; while, later, more ideological reasons were used (Lilly 2000: 138).
13. Arhiv Jugoslavije A-CKSKJ, VIII, II/2-b-(1–84) K4.
14. The language which was called Serbo-Croatian or Croatian-Serbian up to the 1990s and is today known as Bosnian, Croatian, Montenegrin, and Serbian, played a crucial role in the balance between the national peoples of Yugoslavia (in particular in relations between

Croatians and Serbs); and their attitudes towards it reflected their different ways of understanding their membership of the Federation. From a linguistic point of view, the four languages that emerged from the dissolution of Yugoslavia are based on the same *štokavo* dialect and are almost fully mutually comprehensible. From a political and historical point of view, linguistic specificity has been a significant element in the construction of national identities, especially for the Croatians and Montenegrins. As far as alphabets are concerned, in the Catholic Slovenia and Croatia where the Latin alphabet is traditionally used, the Cyrillic alphabet was also known and taught in schools. In Orthodox Serbia and Montenegro, where the traditional alphabet is Cyrillic, the Latin alphabet was also used. Both alphabets were recognized for official use. In multi-ethnic Bosnia where both alphabets were used, the well-known newspaper *Oslobođenje* was written using both alphabets on alternate pages. From the 1990s, Serb nationalist launched a campaign in defence of the Cyrillic alphabet, which was seen as a symbol of national identity, and since 2006 it has been the only official alphabet in Serbia.

15. Two translations of Ignazio Silone's novel *Bread and wine* were published in 1952 one in Croatian using the Latin alphabet and one in Serbian using the Cyrillic alphabet (Roić 2011: 101). The problem of double translations was partially resolved with the institution in 1955 of the Yugoslav Copyright Agency (Jugoslavenska autorske agencije).
16. Arhiv Jugoslavije A-CKSKJ, VIII, II/II/1-a-5.
17. This aversion to Orwell was probably also derived from the Soviet Union, where he was considered a particularly dangerous author, to the extent that translations of his works were made for the authorities to study. Nevertheless, many clandestine copies of the British author's texts were in circulation and were absolute 'samizdat bestsellers' (Loseff 1984: 75).
18. Speaking at the Third Plenary of the Central Committee of the Yugoslav Communist Party in January 1949, when the rift between Stalin and Tito had occurred and the process of separation from the

Soviet Union was underway at all levels, Djilas underlined the weakness of the translations of Soviet manuals that were not suited to Yugoslav reality and the urgent need to find a remedy (Petranović, Končar, Radonjić 1985: 299–301).

19. The numerous translations of theoretical texts published in Zagreb included: *The Bolshevik Party and Soviet Literature* (1948), *The Communist Committee of Young Writers of the USSR* (1948); and *Selected Articles* by Belinsky (1950). In Belgrade, Kultura published, among others: *Literary-critical writings* by Dobrolyubov (1949); *Socialist realism and the duties of Soviet literature* by Mikhail I. Kalinin (1946); three volumes by Belinsky (1948; 1948; 1952); *On Literature* by Gorky (no date); Zhdanov's resolution mentioned previously, which was also published in Slovenian in 1946; *On Literature* by Lenin, published in Zagreb and Belgrade by Kultura in 1949 and later also translated into Hungarian in 1950; *On Culture and Art* by Lenin, translated into Slovenian (1950), Serbian (1957), and Macedonian (1959). The most frequently translated Soviet writers were Gorky, Vladimir V. Mayakovsky, Ilya G. Ehrenburg, and Sholokhov. *Stories about Lenin* by Alexander T. Kononov was translated into Croatian, Slovenian (two editions, one in 1946 and one in 1948), Rusinian (for the Rusinian minority in Vojvodina), Slovak (for the Slovak minority in Bački Petrovac), and Albanian (but translated from Serbian). In particular, texts from popular tradition and Russian classics were published: Gogol, Chekhov, Alexander S. Pushkin, Leskov, Ivan S. Turgenev, Tolstoy, and Alexander N. Ostrovsky. Fyodor M. Dostoevsky's status in Yugoslavia probably suffered from the negative criticism of Gorky who invited young writers to take Tolstoy and Chekhov as models rather than Dostoevsky, who 'having been a person who was easily influenced and who had lived among criminals, felt a particular fascination for the psychology of the villain, such that most of his novels are built on that psychology. In more general terms, even his philosophical ideas are foreign to us, since, I believe, we have finished with God once and for all' (Gorki 1947: 412). Dostoevsky was not translated until 1950, and, interestingly, the first work in Serbian was *Poor People*.

20. At this time, reference was made to literature of the 'Narodno-oslobodilačka borba (NOB)', that is the People's Liberation Struggle, a dogmatic literature to which more or less all authors of the time paid tribute.
21. In the general process of decentralization, which began at the end of 1949, the large number of Agitprop units was drastically reduced.
22. In Croatia in 1952, in Slovenia in 1953, in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1954, and then later in Macedonia and in Montenegro, up to the 1970s when Writer and Translator associations were even created in Vojvodina and in Kosovo. In the late 1950s, even specialist translator associations appeared.
23. From the outset, Yugoslav translators worked together with FIT, and it should be remembered that the 4th FIT Congress, during which the Translators' Charter was drawn up, was held in Dubrovnik in 1963.
24. The Soviet Union only joined the Berne convention in 1973, but paradoxically membership led to an even more marked centralization of contacts with foreign publishers and greater official control of translations (Zalambani 2009: 97).
25. Slamnig and Šoljan later became critical of the journal, which they felt was not sufficiently focused and independent. They left and founded a new journal called *Medutim* of which only two issues were published in 1953; after which they returned to work with *Krugovi*.
26. This is an interview recorded by Željko Ivanjek and published by him two years later in the journal *Gordogan* (1984, 15–16: 168–198) and republished in Slamnig 2011: 357–91. It is also available online from Zagreb <https://stilstika.org/stiloteka/analize/53-ponekad-ponedjeljkom> (accessed 7 April 2018).
27. There had been an English reading room in Zagreb since 1936, while the American reading room was opened in 1961.
28. As well as the 1954 translation of T S Eliot's *The Waste Land*, which was enormously successful, the following should also be noted: *The Deer Park* by Norman Mailer, *The Man with the Golden Arm* by Nelson Algren, *The Old Man and the Sea and Other Stories* by Hemingway, *U.S.A.* by Dos Passos (with other translators), the anthology *Modern British Poetry*, *Winesburg, Ohio* by Sherwood

Anderson (1957), *The Open Boat* by Stephen Crane, *These 13* by Faulkner, *The Champion* by Ring Wilmer Lardner, *Indian in the Depth of Night* by Irwin Shaw, and *The Man that Corrupted Hadleyburg* by Mark Twain.

29. The Non-Aligned Movement included those countries which rejected the logic of two opposing blocs. It began to take shape in the summer of 1956 during a meeting between Tito, the Indian leader Jawharlal Nehru, and the Egyptian President Gamal Abd el-Nasser on the Brijuni Islands.

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8

Ideological Control in a Slovene Socialist State Publishing House: Conformity and Dissent

Nike K. Pokorn

Introduction

This chapter aims to reveal the importance of translation for the success of the communist ideological agenda in socialist states by describing the mechanisms of ideological control of translation production in the Socialist Republic of Slovenia, one of the six republics that constituted the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Focusing on the publishing house Mladinska knjiga [Juvenile book], the largest and most influential publisher of children's literature in the Socialist Republic of Slovenia, and the only Slovene socialist publishing house to survive the transition to the post-socialist era, the chapter will define the main focus of communist ideological indoctrination and identify the most important agents that were responsible for ideological shifts in translations in Socialist Yugoslavia. It is argued here that translation policy, that is the way the

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source texts and translators were selected, which agents were allowed to influence the production of target texts, and ideological shifts visible in these, provide an insight into the hidden mechanisms of control and into the ideological focus of socialist Yugoslavia.

Communist ideological imperatives were clearly reflected in translation and publishing policies: on one hand, the textual manipulations of translated texts provide a viewpoint on the values of socialist Yugoslav republics, on the other, the publishing process that defined the selection of source texts and that of suitable translators and editors reveal the concealed workings of socialist ideological control. While my previous work has focused on the textual manipulations in translated texts in the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Pokorn 2012), this chapter will describe how the ideological control was ingrained into the publication process at the Mladinska knjiga publishing house, attempting to ensure the publication of translations that were in line with dialectical materialism, the chosen ideology of the Communist Party, but which, however, also allowed for isolated instances of dissent.

The Main Concepts

The term children's literature in this chapter is defined pragmatically, that is as literature that is published as children's literature (Nodelman 2008: 146), which means that it includes literature originally written for children and also literature that was originally written for adults but was later adapted for children (50). In parallel with the functionalist definition of translations as texts that the target society, that is, the society of their readers, defines and accepts as translations and recognizes as 'facts of the culture that hosts them' (Toury 1978) or 'facts of target cultures' (Toury 1995: 138), the term translation of children's literature will refer to texts that were defined and accepted as works for children by the target society at the time of publication.

When discussing the practice of translators in socialist Slovenia the term self-censorship will be used, denoting a preventive form of censorship exercised by translators who conform to ideological dictates by

internalizing the state-imposed censorship agenda (cf. Gambier 2002; Wolf 2002).

The term totalitarianism will be used only in reference to the Soviet Bolshevik or Soviet-style system of government. According to Hannah Arendt and her seminal work *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, totalitarianism draws its power from the masses, relies on terror, and attempts to permanently dominate each individual in every sphere of their life (Arendt 1973/1958: 326). Following Arendt's claim that until 1958 there had been only two authentic forms of totalitarianism, namely the Nazi state in Germany and Stalin's dictatorship in the USSR (Arendt 1973/1958: 419), the socialist system in Yugoslavia will be referred to as totalitarian only in its initial stages after the Second World War (that is, in 1940s and early 1950s) when Yugoslav communists attempted to govern the newly established republic according to the Stalinist model.

The term 'dialectical materialism' is used to describe the world outlook or the official doctrine of the Communist Party, which encompassed a materialist view of reality, fundamentally opposed to philosophical idealism, metaphysics, and any idealist understanding of the world. This ideological position of the Party saw the material world as an objective reality as something which is independent of the mind and spirit and which can be wholly understood and explained by scientific thought. An example of this trust in the power of science can be found in Stalin's influential *Dialectical and Historic Materialism* (1938):

Marxist philosophical materialism holds that the world and its laws are fully knowable, that our knowledge of the laws of nature, tested by experiment and practice, is authentic knowledge having the validity of objective truth, and that there are no things in the world which are unknowable, but only things which are as yet not known, but which will be disclosed and made known by the efforts of science and practice.¹

And finally, a distinction is made in this chapter between the terms communism and socialism, which some authors use interchangeably (see for example Wedel 2015; Markov 2014). Following Marx's division of communism into two phases in his *Critique of the Gotha Programme* (1875), the term socialism and socialist is used in reference to the

first, transitional phase of communism, in which the working class still controls the government and economy and finds it necessary to pay people according to the quality of their work. While the term communism refers to the second phase, that is, the ideal classless society without government, in which goods are distributed according to the needs of individuals. Communism and communist will thus mainly be used in reference to the political party and doctrine that aims to abolish private property and a profit-based economy, while the term socialist and socialism will refer to a historical socio-economic system whose aim was to establish socialism.

Other terms specific to Yugoslav socialism will be explained more in detail in the sections on historical background and the management structure of the publishing house.

Methodological Approach and Extra-Textual Sources

There are numerous works by political theorists and historians which focus on the ideological pressures exercised by communist parties in socialist states. For example, Arendt (1973/1958) describes the use of propaganda and indoctrination as a means of promoting the regime's political and ideological agenda. Similarly, historian Michael Burleigh in his book *Sacred Causes: The Clash of Religion and Politics, from the Great War to the War on Terror* (2006), attempts to create 'a coherent history of modern Europe primarily organized around issues of mind and spirit' (2006: vi) by revealing the 'pseudo-religious pathologies' of Bolshevism, Fascism, and Nazism and complex reactions of different churches to the challenges of these new ideologies. Both these studies describe the imposition of atheism on different societies in Central and Eastern Europe and reveal the ways these states attempted, on the one hand, to indoctrinate their citizens, and on the other hand, to present themselves as open and democratic political systems. They analyse the ideological agendas of such totalitarian and authoritarian regimes and describe the workings of indoctrination through the publishing of falsified news or the rewriting of history (see for example Burleigh 2006: 72), but do not

include in their analysis the role of translation as one of the means of indoctrination, one which makes it possible to exploit the authority of the original in order to maximize the effect of a chosen ideology and at the same time hide the imposition of a particular ideological position. Similarly, historians writing on the cultural history of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and of Slovenia describe the ideological framework of the Communist Party and its focus on the *Kulturkampf* [Cultural Struggle], that is, its power struggle with religious authorities over the place and role of religion in modern society, but they never consider translations and translation policy as a significant part of the cultural struggle against organized religion (Boeckh 2006; Fišer 2005; Gabrič 1995; Griesser-Pečar 2005; Repe 1990; Repe and Prinčič 2009).

On the other hand, translation policies in other European socialist societies have lately attracted the interest of Translation Studies scholars. For example, East-German censorship files on the translation of children's literature have been analysed (Thomson-Wohlgemuth 2009), ideological filtering of translations in Socialist Yugoslavia (Pokorn 2010, 2012), Romania (Ionescu 2010; Terian 2012; Antochi 2012), Soviet Union (Baer 2011; Witt 2011; Inggs 2011; Sherry 2015), Poland (Looby 2015), and People's Republic of China (Chang 2008) have been studied, literary transfers from socialist states to France have been outlined (Popa 2010), and conferences have been organized focusing on different aspects of socialist translation (Schippel and Zwischenberger 2017). However, while the complex relationships between translators and editors have also been studied in Translation Studies (see for example Jansen and Wegener 2013; Paloposki 2017), studies of editorial policies concerning translation in socialist states are rare (some notable exception being Sherry 2015 and Bedson and Schulz 2017 both focusing on the USSR). The present chapter is an attempt to provide an insight into this issue and describe the editorial mechanisms influencing the production of translations for children (that is, individuals below the age of eight), juveniles (children between the ages of 8 and 12 years), and young adults (teenagers 12 to 18 years of age [see for example Stork 1950]) in Socialist Slovenia.

Since the process of creating a translation and the translations themselves are always influenced by different factors, and translators inevitably cooperate with other agents in the field, the research presented in this

chapter follows the multiple causation method which, according to Pym (1998) and Brownlie (2003), stipulates that one should not give any particular factor influencing translation a prevalent role. Therefore my approach combines historical and archival investigation, interviews with the editors of *Mladinska knjiga*, and biographical research.

I have used post hoc accounts and interviews with the editors at *Mladinska knjiga* who were responsible for publishing children's literature. However, keeping in mind that 'memory is a matter of dynamic processes involving ongoing reconstructions of the past in the present' (Brownlie 2017: 2), these extra-textual sources were supplemented with the archival research.

Archival research has become more prominent recently in Translation Studies: the value and importance of archives for the construction of translation histories have been highlighted (Munday 2013, 2014); some publisher's archives have been analysed for the creation of translators' microhistories (see for example Paloposki 2017; Walker 2017); and archives have also proved to be an extremely important source for the evaluation of the impact of different ideological positions on the selection of source texts, translation practice, and target texts in Fascist Italy (Rundle 2010; Cembali 2006), in Franco's Spain (Camus Camus 2010; Merino Álvarez 2007; Fernández López 2005), in Nazi Germany (Kujamäki 2006; Sturge 2004; Tryuk 2010), and in different Socialist states (Sherry 2015; Pokorn 2012).

In this study I will use two different sets of archival sources: the Archives of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Slovenia,² and the Archives of the Socialist Alliance of the Working People of Slovenia. The Central Committee of the Communist Party was the highest governing body of the Communist Party, while the Socialist Alliance of the Working People of Slovenia was an organization established in 1952, whose aim was to highlight the benefits of the socialist system in comparison to other political systems (Gabrič 1995: 16–17; see also Drnovšek 1992).

Both of these organizations had various committees that were used for monitoring publishing activity and exerting ideological influence. For the earliest period after the Second World War the transcribed minutes of

the meetings of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party were used. The Politburo was the political executive body of the Communist Party between 1945 and 1954, the highest policy-making body, consisting of five to nine people only.³ The transcriptions were published in a separate volume by the Archival Association of Slovenia in the collection *Objava arhivskih virov* [Publication of archival sources] (Drnovšek and Dolinar 2000).

For the later periods, that is from 1954 to 1990, archival material of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Slovenia was used. Due to frequent reorganization and renaming of different committees, the archives are organized in 80 different subject domains (Drnovšek 1992).⁴ Some of these include material for the whole period in question, like, for example, the subject domain 'Executive-political bodies of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Slovenia/League of Communists of Slovenia', others contain material which covers only one year, like the material of the short-lived Committee for Self-Management in Associated Labour (1972–73). I have focused on ideological issues, publications, culture, and education, making use of the archival materials of various committees. Some of these committees existed for years, others were reformed (often only in labels) and renamed without changing its members, some were introduced at a later stage, others cancelled. In addition, the work of some of these committees was further divided into different sections: for example, in 1969 the Committee for ideological issues in culture introduced 6 subsections: a section for ideological questions in publishing activity, periodicals and daily newspapers, a section on mass culture, a section on literature, literary theory and criticism, a section on visual arts, art theory and criticism, a section on film and television, and a section on philosophy (AS 144, a.u. 352–54).⁵ I have thus looked at the minutes of the following committees and their subsections:

- (a) Committee for socio-political relations and ideological-political issues
- (b) Committee for ideological issues in culture
- (c) Committee for socio-political and ideological issues in science, education, and the ideological-political training of communists

- (d) Committee for political propaganda and information activity
- (e) Committee for ideological-political issues in education, training, culture, and science
- (f) Committee for agitation and propaganda
- (g) Committee for public information and propaganda
- (h) Committee for public information and communication.

In addition to this, I have also checked the archives of the Socialist Alliance of the Working People of Slovenia, an organization that was established in 1953. In 1948 the split between Tito and Stalin led to a reorganization and ideological reorientation of the Yugoslav Communist Party, so much so that at the 6th Congress of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia in 1952, the Party changed its name to the League of Communists and abolished Agitprop Committees that used to exert ideological control on all spheres of life. However, the communists did not relinquish all pretensions to ideological control of the population: they only transferred them to the newly established Socialist Alliance of the Working People (SAWP). This new organization had relatively independent branches in all republics⁶ and was led by communists, for example, the head of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia and the President of Yugoslavia Josip Broz Tito became the president of SAWP (Drnovšek and Dolinar 2000: 13; Režek 2005a: 943). Its membership was open to different associations and to any individual over 18 supporting the development of socialism and fighting against all phenomena that could harm the socialist way of thinking. In order to do that, several committees were founded. Although the Communist Party soon dismissed the work of these committees as not thorough enough and reinstated its ideological committees as early as in 1956 (Gabrič 1995), the SAWP committees were not abolished.

The archives of SAWP are also divided into several domains, including the material connected with the congresses, its executive branches, and several committees. I have looked through the material pertaining to the following committees of the Socialist Alliance of the Working People of Slovenia (SAWPS):

- (a) Committee for printing at the presidency of the SAWPS

- (b) Committee for ideological education
- (c) Committee for publishing and printing
- (d) Committee for political and ideological education
- (e) Committee for culture and education
- (f) Committee for political-ideological and cultural-educational issues
- (g) Ideological committee.

I have also, unsuccessfully, attempted to access the archives of the publishing house Mladinska knjiga. Unfortunately, these are not catalogued, and the documents are held in various boxes in different individual offices, which means that they are unavailable to external researchers.

The Cultural Struggle in the Socialist Federal Republic of Slovenia

After the Second World War, which left the area inhabited by Slovenes ravaged not only by occupying forces but also by civil war, the victorious Liberation Front and the Partisans took control of the territory. The Liberation Front of Slovene People was an organization established in 1941 in Ljubljana, the capital city of Slovenia, which led political and armed resistance of Slovene partisans against the occupying forces during the Second World War. Although initially composed of members of the Communist Party, Christian Socialists, left-wing members of the gymnastic organization Sokol,⁷ and some other representatives of left-wing intelligentsia (Repe 2008: 36), in 1943 the Liberation Front changed from a coalition to an organization in which the Communist Party held the leading role (45). As a result, after the war, a new one-party state, the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia, was formed with members of the Communist Party assuming all important positions in society. This changed position of the Party which became the leading political party of the new state started to attract new people: in only seven years after the war, the membership of the Communist Party increased 11-fold and had more than 54,800 members in 1952 (Drnovšek and Dolinar 2000: 9).

The Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia followed the Soviet model in the first years after the war and manifested several characteristics of a totalitarian regime, including show trials and the incarceration of political opponents in secret concentration camps. The Slovene Communist Party also adopted the Bolshevik attitude towards Christianity. In 1918 Lenin signed the *Decree on the Freedom of Conscience, and on Clerical and Religious Societies* through which the separation of the church from the state became official. The document also deprived the Churches of their legal entity and of the right to own property, while at the same time seemingly guaranteeing freedom of religion and atheism. But although item 3 of the *Decree* stated: 'Every citizen is free to profess any religion or profess none', the state waged war against Christianity and attempted to eradicate it, in particular, the Russian Orthodox Church (Burleigh 2006: 42–3).

This negative attitude towards religion found its theoretical grounding in Marx's *Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right* (1843) in which Marx argues that not God but man is 'the supreme being for man', and defines religion as an essentially man-made historical phenomenon. Because religion negatively influences people and functions as 'the opium' that creates an 'illusory happiness', Marx therefore calls for 'the abolition of religion' and urges philosophy 'to unmask self-estrangement in its unholy forms'.

Yugoslav and Slovene communists adopted this position and also saw religion as something that does not belong to man's real nature. The archival material, titled 'Socialistične sile, religija in cerkev v SR Sloveniji' [Socialist forces, religion and church in Socialist Republic of Slovenia] organized by the Faculty for Political Sciences of the University of Ljubljana for the party members and presented to the Central Committee of the Communist Party, defined religion as an aberration and a prejudice that lingers in 'specific historical conditions of the material and spiritual backwardness of the people'⁸ (16 October 1967, AS 1589, a.u. 215), as a phenomenon that developed in a specific historical period in man's development, and which should be therefore repudiated by the emancipated people. Religion for them was just a historical category whose content changes with the increased influence of man on nature and the social environment (cf. 14–16 October 1967, AS 1589, a.u. 215). The archives

of the Central Committee reveal that the highest echelons of the Slovene communists paid particular attention to this issue and also reviewed the work of the Centre for the Study of Religion and Church at the Faculty of Political Sciences of the University of Ljubljana. They acquainted themselves with the material prepared by the Centre, including the text entitled 'Society and religion' where it was claimed that 'the essence of man is work, and that work is the ontic and ontological meaning or both together' (seminar organised in 1969. AS 1589/62, a.u. 193–194).⁹

In addition to adopting this philosophical position, Slovene communists also fuelled their animosity towards the Catholic Church from the Slovene political tradition, characterized by a struggle against the political power of the Catholic Church, and the positioning of some of the Catholic clergy during the Second World War. Already towards the end of the nineteenth century, Slovene political parties became embroiled in the so-called *Kulturkampf* and created a rift between left-wing and liberal anti-Catholic political movements on the one hand, and right-wing, pro-Catholic political parties on the other. The antagonism regarding the role of the Catholic Church and its involvement in daily politics continued up to the Second World War. Furthermore, during the war the Bishop of Ljubljana, Gregorij Rožman, to cite one example, followed the anti-communist stance of the Vatican and collaborated with the Italian and later German occupying forces (Jakelić 2016: 135). On the other hand, Christian Socialists formed one of the founding groups of the victorious Liberation Front, and some priests even joined the Partisan forces (Griesser-Pečar 2005: 88). Consequently, after the war, the Roman Catholic Church was not dissolved, but its activities were closely monitored and treated with suspicion (852).

As in many other socialist states, the population was not aware of the scale of this ongoing ideological struggle, also because the Communist Party worked behind the scenes. For example, between 1954 and 1961, over 400 priests were put on trial and 339 imprisoned, but the official reports in the newspapers claimed that no actions were being taken against the clergy on the basis of their profession, and that only a few (a dozen) who had committed criminal offences were imprisoned (Gabrič 2005c: 853; Griesser-Pečar 2005: 103). Following the Tito–Stalin Split in 1948 and a failed attempt to create a parallel Church, separate from

the Vatican in 1949, the initial anti-religious fervour of the Communist Party gradually abated. In 1966 Socialist Yugoslavia signed a protocol with the Vatican, and in 1971 Tito was received by the Pope, the first communist leader to be accorded this honour (Režek 2005b: 1052). The liberalization process continued throughout the 1980s, and in 1986, for the first time since the end of the war, national television broadcast the Archbishop's Christmas address to the nation (Gabrič 2005a: 1165).

In the first three decades after the war, however, the ideological focus of the Communist Party was mainly on the religious re-education of its members and on the moulding of the coming generations. Controlling the minds of the young became a crucial battlefield, and the state started actively promoting atheism in schools. For example, on 1 May 1952 the major Slovene daily of the time, *Slovenski poročevalec* [Slovene Reporter], quoted Josip Broz Tito as saying:

We do not persecute religion, we allow every individual the freedom to choose. But we cannot allow children that still need some education to be brought up according to the wishes of those who have chosen a completely different path from the one we prefer. The state has the right to educate children and it has to educate them.¹⁰

Similarly, the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, during a meeting on 20 November 1950 drew the following conclusion¹¹:

The issue of the influence of religion should be urgently and critically discussed in youth organisations. Religious education should be removed from public schools and confined to churches, and the state surveillance of religious education should be ensured. Different events should coincide with religious education, and systematic endeavours should be made to lure young people away from the influence of Church. (Drnovšek and Dolinar 2000: 235)

The Communist Party in Socialist Slovenia thus embarked on a direct doctrinal struggle with Christianity and attempted to indoctrinate new generations mainly by promoting dialectical materialism in education, and in translated publications for children. Previous research

(Pokorn 2012) has shown that the ideological indoctrination of children in Socialist Yugoslavia was mainly exercised through retranslations of children's classics, such as the fairy tales by Brothers Grimm and those of Hans Christian Andersen. The results of a textual comparison of 9 sources and 96 target texts, consisting of translations into Slovene, Croatian, Serbian, and Macedonian that were published in the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, have shown that 80 per cent of these translations were ideologically censored with passages referring to Christianity either eliminated or attenuated. These ideological interventions were found in translations from different decades (although they were most common between 1945 and 1955), published by different publishers in all the languages of Yugoslavia, and by different translators. Moreover, although ideological manipulation of target texts was frequently used, it was never publicly acknowledged. In order to keep these interventions hidden from the public, control of the publishing process was crucial.

Publishing Policy

Maintaining Control Over Publishing in Socialist Slovenia

After the war in 1945, the first step taken by the new ruling class was to close down all pre-war publishing houses, nationalize their assets, and imprison their owners (Drnovšek and Dolinar 2000: 27). Out of 26 existing publishing houses, only three were allowed to continue with their activities after the war (Žnideršič 1995: 119–36), and only one of them, Mohorjeva družba (Hermagoras Society, established in 1851), was able to retain some sort of independence because of its strong influence on the Slovene ethnic minority in the Republic of Austria.¹²

Secondly, in the same year, the new government established four new publishing houses: Cankarjeva založba [Cankar Publishing House] which published mainly Marxist literature; Slovenski knjižni zavod, Založba OF [Slovene Book Institute, the Publishing House of the Liberation Front] which published fiction for a larger audience and

later merged with Cankar Publishing House; Državna založba Slovenije [National Publishing House of Slovenia] which published mainly textbooks, academic books, and official government forms¹³; and Mladinska knjiga [Juvenile Book], whose official founder was the Youth Association of Slovenia and which published mainly children's literature and literature for a juvenile audience (Gabrič 2005b: 903; Žnideršič 1995). While still maintaining its role as the lead publisher of children's literature in Slovenia, Mladinska knjiga developed into a general publishing house in the early 1960s (Štraus 2005).

When the ideological fervour of the Communist Party abated, additional publishing houses started appearing, so that by the 1980s there were approximately 20 of them functioning in Slovenia (Žnideršič 1995: 130). However, until 1990, when the first multiparty democratic elections were held and the socialist system of government was abandoned, the market was controlled by three publishing houses established in 1945 (Cankarjeva založba, Državna založba Slovenije, and Mladinska knjiga), after they widened their repertoire and became general publishing houses with branches in other republics of Yugoslavia (Mladinska knjiga, for example, had a branch in Serbia and Croatia).

Although in Socialist Yugoslavia there was officially no censorship (Gabrič 2005b: 903), the Communist Party started to efficiently control everything that was published immediately after the war. In December 1945, the first Prime Minister of the Government of Socialist Slovenia and the head of the Slovene Communist Party, Boris Kidrič, at a meeting of the Politburo of the Communist Party (17 December 1945) stated that: 'All printing works should be organized in such a way that all material in print, including the contents and all locations where printing is carried out, are controlled. Our Agitprop Committee must help organize all this work, carry it out and manage its supervision' (Drnovšek and Dolinar 2000: 56).¹⁴

As in the Soviet Union, real and ostensible power coexisted in the Socialist Republic of Slovenia after the war: the visible government with different ministries and agencies was paralleled by the hidden government represented by different committees of the Communist Party of Slovenia. The result was that the de facto highest governing body in the Republic was not the government but the Central Committee of

the Communist Party. The Central Committee had an executive agency called the Politburo, and various departments, including the department for agitation and propaganda (Agitprop) (Drnovšek and Dolinar 2000: 11). Agitprop Committees were composed of the most trusted members of the Communist Party who monitored what was expressed in print and attempted to make all artistic creativity conform to official Party lines (cf. Gabrič 2005b: 900–4). According to the principles of democratic centralism, the committees existed in every republic and reported to the central Yugoslav Agitprop Committee. Although their existence had never been publicly acknowledged, the committees were publicly and formally abolished in 1952 at the 6th Congress of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia.

The minutes of the meetings of the Politburo and the Agitprop were not meant to be public and therefore provide us with a very interesting insight into the control mechanisms of the Communist Party. Regarding publishing, the directive given on 20 December 1951 by the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party to its Agitprop committee was clear: publishing houses ‘must be given a general manager who will not allow anything to be printed without our knowledge’.

After the abolishment of Agitprop Committees in 1952, their activities were transferred to the newly established Cultural and Educational Committee at the Socialist Alliance of the Working People (SAWP) (AS 1589/III, a.u. 76). However, the supervision exercised by the SAWP committees was soon considered to be insufficient, so that a year later, in 1954, there were two committees monitoring publishing activity (Gabrič 1995: 16–17): one at SAWP, called Committee for Print at SAWP, chaired by France Perovšek (1922–2011), a pre-war communist, a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, and the general manager of Slovene national radio and television at the time; and the other at Central Committee of the Communist Party, called the Ideological Committee, chaired by the pre-war communist Boris Zihlerl (1910–76), the former chair of the Agitprop committee.

Archival material shows that both committees exercised ideological supervision over publishing. For example, in 1955 a report on publishing was submitted to the Ideological Committee of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, in which the collaboration between the two

committees emerges clearly, with the committee at SAWP taking executive decisions and the committee at the Central Committee supervising the whole activity:

The publishing policy did not only consist of checking and approving annual publication programs of the publishing houses, but also of endeavouring to ensure that the publishing houses should have a managerial structure composed of good communists who would be able to function independently in publishing houses and consistently carry out policy that was in line with that of the League of Communists and the Socialist Alliance of the Working People. The Presidency of SAWP therefore ensured that certain publishing houses were strengthened by the following comrades: the general manager of Državna založba became Ivan Bratko (1952), general manager of Mladinska založba Zorka Peršič (1953), general manager of Slovenski knjižni zavod Miško Kranjec (1952), and the general manager of Cankarjeva založba Lev Modic (1953). (AS 1589/III, a.u. 76)

All newly established publishing houses thus received general managers who were closely connected with the new nomenclature, that is, the socialist Establishment (cf. Kovač 2015: 199–203). However, additional measures were taken to assure ideological control. In 1955 a new Yugoslav law was passed that stipulated that each publishing house in the state must have a publishing council whose members were selected by the print committee of the Socialist Alliance of the Working People (Gabrič 1995: 72–3). The print committee nominated trustworthy Party members for the positions on these councils whose main task was to approve yearly publishing programmes. This procedure assured that only those texts that were considered appropriate to the ruling party were published (cf. Žnideršič 1995: 129; Gabrič 1995: 23).

Because of this system, the editors and translators practised self-censorship: the editors did not suggest works for translation that they knew would not be approved by the publishing councils and they selected translators who were attuned to the new ideological line, while the translators modified their translations to meet the expectations of the ruling ideology. As a result, the system worked like a well-oiled machine without the need for any formal censorship office, something which is

confirmed by the minutes of the Committee for print at the Socialist Alliance of the Working People from 1956 which include the following report by France Perovšek (1922–2011):

Our publishing houses are led by politically very good people, and, in general, there are no problems there, especially because in all publishing houses there are also good publishing councils. (AS 537, a.u. 180)

Three years later, in March 1959 the Ideological Committee discussed a report on publishing and was informed that two thirds of the councillors on the publishing councils were members of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, and that eight councillors in three Ljubljana publishing houses were members of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Slovenia. The report also included information on who was in charge of different departments in five publishing houses: Državna založba Slovenije, Cankarjeva založba, Mladinska knjiga, Lipa, and Obzorja (AS 1589/III, a.u. 77). The same report was then discussed by the Committee for Publishing at the Socialist Alliance of the Working People (SAWP) (7 August 1959). However, when discussing the managerial structure, the editors and the members of Mladinska knjiga, the Committee went into more detail. For example, they focused on whether employees and councillors had been actively involved in the work of the Liberation Front during the war and whether they were still politically active. The meeting concluded that despite a favourable managerial structure, SAWP should further coordinate actions with the presidents of publishing councils (AS 537, a.u. 212).

No evidence has emerged from the archives so far of instructions specifically requiring religious elements be removed from translations. However, there is a document which calls for an end to the practice of eliminating religious references from translations and movies: in 1983, the Committee for public information and propaganda stated that the elimination of religious expression from literature and film was

morally and legally unacceptable and challenges the integrity of copyright. Translations have to be authentic and professionally well-done, that is, in accordance with the norms of translational activity in all fields: in

translations for TV, in film and television subtitling, in books or any other printed matter. (AS 1589, a.u. 697)

After 1989, in line with a more liberal orientation of the Slovene society, the Slovene Communist Party had no more committees with an ideological focus and introduced a new Committee for the Restoration of Injustice that started to clear the name of individuals wrongly persecuted during post-war show trials.

Maintaining Control Over Publishing at Mladinska Knjiga

The Mladinska knjiga publishing house was established in 1945 by the section for juvenile publications at the Agitprop of the Association of Slovene Youth. Initially, the publishing house had no traditional hierarchy and only eight employees (Štraus 2005: 11), six of whom were prominent members of the Communist Party. However, archival material reveals that the activities of the newly established publishing house were further supervised by incorporating its employees into the work of the Ideological Committees of the Communist Party: for example, the minutes of the meeting of Politburo of the Central Committee of 25 August 1947 state that 'a representative of Mladinska knjiga' was a member of its Committee for Print and Propaganda (Drnovšek and Dolinar 2000: 90).

In 1947 the Party also nominated an editor-in-chief for Mladinska knjiga: Ivan Potrč (1913–93), who held this position until 1972. Potrč was a pre-war communist, a writer, and one of the main representatives of socialist realism in Slovene literature. He also sat on the Committee for publishing activity at Socialist Alliance of the Working People in 1960 (AS 537, a. u. 139), and on the Central Committee of the Communist Party, responsible for ideological and political issues in education, culture, and science in 1974 (AS 366, a.u. 2526–2541) and in 1976 (AS 368, a.u. 2565–2577).

Six years later, in 1953, a general manager was appointed at Mladinska knjiga: Mrs Zorka Peršič (1914–2007). Mrs Peršič was one of the eight

original employees of Mladinska knjiga and at the same time the head of the section for culture at Ministry for Education and Culture in the Government of the People's Republic of Slovenia between 1948 and 1953. That she was considered a trustworthy member of the Communist Party is further proven by the fact that she also sat on the Agitprop Committee of the Central Committee of the Communist Party: the minutes of the Central Committee list her as one of the members of Agitprop in 1947 and 1951 (meetings on 25 August 1947, 12 October 1951) and of the subcommittee of the Central Committee of the Communist Party for culture, art, and people's education in 1952 (meeting 13 February 1952). When the Agitprop was abolished and ideological control was transferred to Socialist Alliance of the Working People (SAWP), Zorka Peršič became a member of its committees responsible for publishing: for example, in 1961 and 1962 she is listed as a member of the Committee for Publishing and Printing at SAWPS (meeting on 7 June 1961, AS 537, a.u. 140; AS 537, a.u. 287). At a meeting of this committee on 24 November 1961 Peršič described the functioning and the roles of different bodies at Mladinska knjiga in her report. She explained that yearly publishing programmes were created at departmental level, that these programmes were then submitted to the publishing council for approval and that, in addition, the programmes were discussed by the printing committee at SAWP (AS 537, a.u. 140).

Peršič held the position of the general manager until 1972 when she was let go because of her support of the so-called 'liberal Slovene government' of Stane Kavčič and was replaced by Party hardliners (Kovač 2015: 223).

In 1970s Mladinska knjiga continued to be supervised by the authorities (see AS 173, a.u. 407). However, times had changed. When in 1971 the Committee for Publishing and Print at the Socialist Alliance of the Working People wanted to gather information on the publishing councils, numerous publishing houses did not reply—including Mladinska knjiga (AS 537, 507).

Interviews

In addition to carrying out archival research, I have also interviewed three former editors at Mladinska knjiga: Kristina Brenk (1911–2009) and Niko Grafenauer (1940–) who were the editors responsible for children's literature in 1947–73 and 1973–95, respectively; and Ivan Minatti (1924–2012) who was the editor of a number of influential series of children's literature.

Kristina Brenk was interviewed on the telephone on 8 November 2006. Brenk, one of the eight founding members of Mladinska knjiga, was an active member of the Resistance movement during the war, but never joined the Communist Party. In the interview she confirmed that the selection of translators was in the hands of the editors in charge of a particular department within the publishing house, which means that she selected translators of children's literature herself. She invited those translators that she knew would do the work well (for example, because they knew the source language well), but sometimes she also wanted to help certain individuals (for example, those who were imprisoned in Nazi and later also communist concentration camps). She said she never checked the translations and never intervened in the work of translators. Since she also translated some of the most popular works for children from German into Slovene, including Felix Salten's *Bambi*, in which she deleted the sole, but significant religious reference (Pokorn 2010), I asked her if she had been told to do so. She replied that she did not remember that deletion, but that Salten's book had so much to offer to children that it was better to have it published with certain changes than not to have it published at all. Brenk was thus aware of the ruling ideological position and acted accordingly: she assured the publication of a work she considered important by practising self-censorship and thus avoided a possible rejection of translation.

The second editor of the department for children's literature at Mladinska knjiga, Niko Grafenauer, was interviewed on 25 March and 12 May 2010. Grafenauer is one of the most prominent Slovene poets, who used to be an active political dissident in the 1980s. Like Brenk, he also confirmed that there was no censor employed at Mladinska knjiga during the time he worked there (1973–95). According to Grafenauer,

self-censorship was widespread, especially because of the existence of Community Party committees and because they knew that the annual list of the books to be published had to be approved by the publishing council that was presided by 'staunch members of the Party'.

And finally, Ivan Minatti, a highly respected Slovene poet, was the editor of the three most influential book series for young readers at Mladinska knjiga (Sinji galeb [Blue Seagull], Biseri [Pearls], Zlata knjiga [Golden Book]), which included numerous translations. Although not a hardliner, he was nevertheless a member of the Communist Party and close to the ruling nomenclature: for example, he is listed as a member of the Committee for Socio-political Relations and Ideological-political Issues at the Central Committee of the Communist Party in 1966 (see AS 1589, a.u. 193). In an interview on 15 April 2010 he too confirmed that there was no censorship office at the publishing house. However, unlike Brenk and Grafenauer, Minatti was more willing to intervene: he admits to having instructed the translator of Karl May's *Winnetou*, which, according to Minatti, contained elements of Pan-Germanism and sentimental Catholicism, to 'tone down or simply leave out' these passages (Minatti 1984: 69–70); which the translator duly did.

The interviews thus appear to confirm that there was no official censorship office active during the socialist period at Mladinska knjiga or at state level, such as the one described by Gaby Thomson-Wohlgemuth in the German Democratic Republic (2009), that is, translations were not checked by a state censor before going to print (see also Gabrič 1995). All interviewees nevertheless admitted the ideological control ingrained into the managerial structure was efficient: it either imposed on translators the practice of self-censorship (like in the case of Brenk's translation of *Bambi*) or it was carried out by editors through their instructions to translators (like in the case of Karl May's *Winnetou*, for more see Pokorn 2012).

The Possibility of Dissent

The control mechanisms of the ruling ideology that supervised the ideological suitability of translations at Mladinska knjiga were incorporated

into the management structure of the publishing house. The general manager and the editor-in-chief were both staunch Party members, and so were two thirds of the publishing councils that approved annual publication plans. The editors of individual departments, who were not all members of the Communist Party, were aware of the ruling ideological position and selected translators accordingly: they invited either left-wing translators who supported the Communist cause or translators they knew would conform to the party line. The selected translators responded to those expectations by practising self-censorship, creating translations in line with the tenets of the ruling ideology (Pokorn 2012)—consequently, no centralized censorship office was needed.

Although the ideological control worked well in the majority of the cases, not all translations were completely in line with dialectical materialism or praised the proletarian revolution. For example, in 1967, when Mladinska knjiga had already evolved into a general publishing house, it published a Slovene translation of George Orwell's dystopian novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, despite the fact that twenty years earlier, in 1947, one of the defendants at a show trial in Ljubljana was accused of attempting to translate Orwell, and was consequently sentenced to seven years forced labour (Puhar 2001: 253–4). The 1967 translation, which was the first translation of this novel in the socialist East, was made possible by one of the editors at Mladinska knjiga, Mira Mihelič (1912–85), who was close to the new political elite. Although ideological orthodoxy was transmitted and imposed by choosing the right people for the right positions, sometimes, people the Party trusted, like Mira Mihelič, managed to push the boundaries of this orthodoxy and extend the field of what was considered as ideologically acceptable.

Other editors similarly manifested resistance and dissent. As we have seen, Ivan Minatti, actively intervened in the work of a translator of Karl May's *Winnetou* directing him how to change the target text in line with the official *Kulturkampf* and hostility towards Christianity. On the other hand, he tried in the same period to challenge through translation the prevailing taste and broaden the horizons of the juvenile audience beyond the confines of official dialectical materialism. For example, he tried to publish a translation of *The Little Prince* by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, and finally succeeded in 1964, after four years of thwarted

attempts. The book had been consistently rejected by the editor-in-chief Ivan Potrč, who considered it to be too spiritual and unsuitable for socialist times (Štraus 2005: 24).¹⁵ When it was published, it became one of the most popular children's books of the socialist period and was reprinted nine times up to 1991.

Kristina Brenk also successfully defended the translation of Ivan Olbracht's *Biblical Stories* in 1969. She was called by the editor-in-chief to his office, but she managed to persuade him that these stories belong to the world's cultural heritage, and thus safeguarded the publication (interview 8 November 2006).

And finally, Niko Grafenauer also got into trouble because of the publication of translated fairy tales from Corsica (Ortoli 1976), which contained Biblical allusions. His editor-in-chief, Mr. Borut Ingolič,¹⁶ was asked by one of the Committees of the Central Committee of the Communist Party to defend the publication.¹⁷ He was successful and the publishing house did not need to change or withdraw the published fairy tales.

As argued by Kovač (2015: 201), editors in Socialist Slovenia were, on one hand, seen as the guardians of national identity because they enabled the publication of Slovene literature, and on the other hand, they were a source of frustration for the Party since their sporadic deviations from the expected programme were difficult to predict and control. Indeed, in a system where no official censors existed at republic and federal levels, some concessions were possible and some publications negotiable. These little changes, brought about by editors negotiating their way and adapting their policy to the historical and political constraints, managed to help crack the monolithic structure of party ideology and push the boundaries of what was considered acceptable and publishable.

Conclusions

Socialist states, including Socialist Slovenia, attempted to present themselves as open and democratic, and not as environments where surveillance and oppression were ingrained into the system.¹⁸ Ideological

control was therefore officially concealed.¹⁹ The vast majority of influential studies written by historians, such as Burleigh (2006), Gabrič (1995), Fišer (2005), Boeckh (2006), that analyse the control mechanisms exercised by the Communist Party in different forms and in different environments, including Socialist Slovenia, do not cover translation in their analyses. The present study thus attempts to show that translation was also used as one of the channels for indoctrination which allowed the Communist Party to use the authority of the original author and that of the original work to enhance the effectiveness of the ideological transfer.

Since communists paid particular attention to the ideological indoctrination of new generations (see Byford 2012; Davis 1935; Weinberg 2012; Zajda 1980), translations for children provide a particularly clear insight into the values of socialist societies, while the publishing process that led to a publication of a particular translation reveals the hidden workings of socialist ideological control. A description of socialist translation policy allows us therefore to identify 'the neuralgic point' of a particular socialist system and describe the mechanisms of control exercised by the Communist Party and the Party's influence on the cultural life.

The description of the surveillance mechanisms in Mladinska knjiga, the largest and most influential publisher of children's literature in the Socialist Slovenia, shows that there was no official censorship office, no official censor employed at the publishing house, and that production was monitored through the managerial structure. Because of the absence of an external censor, more prominence was given to editors, who proposed source texts for translation and chose appropriate translators. It was the editors who were able to strengthen or weaken the ideological line of the Communist Party, and while they, in general, functioned along Party lines, they were also sometimes able to negotiate slight deviations and thus challenge the ideological hegemony of the Communist Party.

Notes

1. Stalin, Joseph Vissarionovich 1938. *Dialectical and Historical Materialism*. <https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/stalin/works/1938/09.htm> (accessed 27 March 2018).
2. The party later changed its name and from 1952 to 1990 was known as League of Communists of Slovenia, for the sake of brevity only the term Communist Party of Slovenia will be used hereafter.
3. The Politburo was later replaced by the Executive Committee (1954–66), the Secretariat (1968–74), and the Presidency of the Central Committee (1966–68, 1974–90), while the person who led the Party was until 1966 called Political Secretary, from 1966 President of the League of Communists of Slovenia, and then President of the Presidency of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Slovenia.
4. For example, one domain is the archival material connected with the conferences of the Communist Party of Slovenia, another domain contains the documents of different commemoration committees (such as for celebration of the 100th anniversary of Lenin's birth or for that of 40th anniversary of October Revolution).
5. Full references to archival sources and the explanation of the acronyms are given just before the bibliography.
6. In Slovenia, Freedom Front, the Slovene resistance organization, was cancelled and transformed into the Socialist Alliance of Working People of Slovenia (SAWPS) in 1953. SAWPS was transformed into a political party in 1990.
7. Sokol was a gymnastic society, which was established in Prague in 1862 and then soon spread to Slovakia, Slovenia, Croatia, and so on. Its aim was to combine gymnastics and physical education with social, educational, and communal activities.
8. The quotations are taken from written and unsigned materials prepared for the seminars organized by the Faculty of Political Sciences of the University of Ljubljana for the members of the Communist Party. The text only contains the date that is given in the brackets. The material does not indicate who delivered specific talks at various seminars.

9. The quotation is taken from the unsigned text found in the archival box—the document only contains the date of the seminar and the name of the lead researcher of the project, the prominent Slovene philosopher and sociologist Dr. Spomenka Hribar.
10. Unless otherwise indicated all translations are by the author of the article.
11. Each minutes of the meeting included conclusions which were not attributed to any of the participants at the meeting and seemed to have been collectively upheld.
12. See the meeting of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Slovenia, 20 November 1952. In Drnovšek and Dolinar (2000: 320).
13. That is forms for various legal pleadings, such as for child benefit support, and so on.
14. Yugoslav politicians and party leaders denied the existence of censorship in the country, however, after the war secret preventive censorship was introduced which ensured that works which were informally prohibited were not published. The list of prohibited works included fascist and Nazi works, propaganda against partisan resistance, works by those authors who actively opposed the Liberation Front, works that were critical of the Soviet Union and some religious works. After the Law of Printing and Other Forms of Information was passed in 1960, punitive censorship was introduced banning the works that had already been published (Gabrič 2005b: 902).
15. There is no evidence to show whether Ivan Potrč read *The Little Prince* in the original, in translation or whether someone else informed him about the contents of the book.
16. When Ivan Potrč retired in 1972, the position of the editor-of-chief at Mladinska knjiga was taken over by Borut Ingolič, who held this post until 1983. He then became the general manager of the publishing house until 1992.
17. Grafenauer assumes that the committee was informed by one of the overzealous members of the party.
18. Officially there was no censorship in the Soviet Union and its republics (Lauk 1999: 22; Tax Choldin 1996: 129; Dewhirst 2002:

22; 2004: 187), Eastern Germany (Thomson-Wohlgemuth 2009: 62), Romania (Manea 1992: 93), Hungary (Batt et al. 1992: 120), to name just a few. Also today, Article 35 of the Constitution of the People's Republic of China claims that 'Citizens of the People's Republic of China enjoy freedom of speech, of the press, of assembly, of association, of procession and of demonstration'. Similarly, freedom of speech in Cuba is guaranteed by Article 53 of the Constitution of Cuba.

19. Censorship is not always hidden from the public eye. For example, the situation was different in tsarist Russia: 'Under the tsars censorship was open and acknowledged; it was conducted by a large state bureaucracy that told Russian writers what they were not permitted to publish and banned outright or excised passages from foreign publications deemed unacceptable. Under the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, in contrast, there was officially no censorship...' (Tax Choldin 1996, 129) This does not, of course, preclude that all the major actors in the field of publishing in the Soviet Union were aware of the censorial mechanisms that were operating hidden from the public eye.

Archival Sources

All the records were studied at the Archives of the Republic of Slovenia (National Archives). The citations below include:

- a) the name of institution: Archives of the Republic of Slovenia (AS)
- b) the serial number of the fund or the collection (AS 537)
- c) the document reference, that is, number of the archival unit which contains the archival records (AS 537, a.u. 139).

Archives of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Slovenia:

AS 144, a.u. 352–354

AS 173, a.u. 407

AS 366, a.u. 2526–2541

AS 1589, a.u. 193

AS 1589, a.u. 215

AS 1589, a.u. 697

AS 1589/3, a.u. 76.

Archives of the Socialist Alliance of the Working People of Slovenia

AS 537, a.u. 140

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AS 537, a.u. 212

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9

'Anyone Who Isn't Against Us Is for Us': Science Fiction Translated from English During the Kádár Era in Hungary (1956–89)

Anikó Sohár

Hungary, whose semi-fascist government allied the country with the Axis powers during the Second World War and lost, was first liberated from the German occupation, and then occupied by the Soviet army in 1945. Before the peace treaty of Paris became operative (1947), an interim system existed under the surveillance of an Allied Control Commission led by Marshal Voroshilov. With Soviet help, the Hungarian Communist Party gained ascendancy in 1947, and started to establish a Stalinist political, economic, and cultural regime, with nationalization—for instance, of all publishing houses—forced industrialization, collectivization, and mass adult education, among others. The Stalinist period lasted until 1956 when the Hungarian Revolution broke out which quickly escalated into a fight for freedom. It was soon crushed by the Soviet forces upon János Kádár's request, who then became the First Secretary of the

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re-named, officially Socialist (not Communist) Party and remained in power until his retirement in 1989, more or less simultaneously with the collapse of the regime (for a thorough historical account, see Romsics 1999; Valuch 2001; Kontler 2006; Cartledge 2011).

Although various monographs and studies have been published on the Kádár era, hardly any touch upon literary translation, and none of them discuss the translation of science fiction (SF) except in passing (Sohár 1999), despite its peculiar and exemplary status, as has been observed by Ioana Popa (2013: 25). There is no systematic translation history of that period either in Hungarian or in English. Indeed, *Metagalaktika 11*, the 2009 'Chronicle of Hungarian SF' (abbreviation of either science or speculative fiction)¹ does not mention translations at all, not even when foreign SF writers are referred to in an article about *Galaktika*, the first SF magazine in Hungary. The studies which mention literary translation at all usually deal with certain aspects, for instance, with the publishing of classical and mainstream world literature (Bart 2002; Takács 2002), the reviewers' responsibility (Czigányik 2011), or the uniformity of literary translations of canonized writers (Scholz 2011). Thus, this chapter pioneers a programmatic line of research, investigating the characteristics of translated SF in the Kádár era, and asks: which institutions were involved in the introduction of the new genre and to what extent? Who chose the works to be translated and their potential translators? What sorts of texts were then expected, that is, what sort of translation policy was extant in this specific area?

Out of a corpus which includes both relevant SF and non-fiction, I shall only examine translations from English, because Anglophone authors dominated the genre. At the same time, given that the English-speaking countries were seen as the leaders of the capitalist camp, official cultural policy had an ambivalent relationship with the genre, its famed Anglophone authors, and, possibly, its translators as well. Thus, these translations provide a unique opportunity to examine the regime's contradictory attitudes.

From the selected texts, their published form, and the secondary literature dealing with SF of the period I have also made an attempt to deduce how the genre itself was perceived and presented: a special issue of a

scholarly periodical obviously had a different and smaller target audience than one in a popular magazine.

Science Fiction as an Example

Science fiction, which is called *tudományos-fantasztikus irodalom* [scientific-fantastic literature] in Hungarian, often included fantasy and horror in the Kádár era, and I am going to use the term in this less specific sense throughout this chapter. This type of literature is still regarded as genre fiction, sometimes called 'entertainment literature' (together with romance, suspense, and the like) in a derogatory sense, and seen as part of popular culture. Literary criticism in the twentieth century often considered writings in the fantastic mode to be of no literary value.² So, if SF was considered low/popular culture in Hungary during the Kádár era (Sohár 1999; Erdei 2003), then its translation might be governed by different, possibly more lenient, rules and norms than that of mainstream literature. Moreover, since literature in the fantastic mode was pushed to the periphery of the literary system by the imposition of Socialist Realism, it may have been subject to a double and contradictory set of norms: it may have been innovative and experimental, particularly in terms of its themes, and at the same time conservative and strictly protective of traditions, especially in terms of its use of idiomatic Hungarian as well as its narrative techniques.

From another perspective, SF seems a borderline case: it was often considered a children's or young adult's genre, not complex enough for mature and learned readers. To this day, attitudes in Hungary to this genre still abound in stereotypes and preconceptions and its literary merits are rarely recognized.

I argue that SF, and the related genres of fantasy and horror, were ultimately incompatible with a totalitarian regime since they encouraged critical thinking, and we shall see how promoters and fans tried to cover up this fact and make these genres more palatable to the authorities. To a certain extent, not just SF but all popular genres like romance, crime fiction, or family sagas cast doubt on, or challenged the totalitarian way

of thinking by showing alternatives, and by valuing individualism and private life.

‘Engineers of Human Souls’: Attitudes Towards Literature, Publishing, and Literary Translation in the Kádár Era (1956–89)

Literature had pride of place in communist ideology (see Czigány 1984, Kalmár 1997; Bart 2002) which aimed at the cultural hegemony of the proletariat (Gramsci 2000) and sought to gradually but irreversibly indoctrinate the people with materialistic, atheistic, and anticlerical propaganda until they acquired communist ‘consciousness’ (Haraszi 1986; Kalmár 1997).³ It was therefore very strictly controlled and regulated with decrees by the Politbureau, the highest authority within the Hungarian Socialist Workers’ Party (see Cseh et al. 1999, 2004), although the importance of literature steadily decreased throughout the period.

Following the Soviet example, creative writing and literary translation were centralized, just like everything else. For authors and translators, it meant compulsory membership in the Hungarian Writers Association (HWA), which was established in 1945 and came to be controlled by the Communist Party. Only writers whose works had already been published could join the Association, at least two members of the Association had to recommend them for membership, and the executive board had to approve the candidate. If the HWA refused someone’s application for membership, then the person was not officially acknowledged as a writer, which meant that their being a writer was not indicated on their identity card as their profession, that they could not get published, and they could not share in the privileges that were due to (other) writers. Naturally, this also applied if you were expelled from the association. This pre-selection of acceptable writers and translators was a pivotal point in the whole system of *structural censorship* (explained below) that was in place in Hungary.

If the members of the HWA accepted the ruling party's ideology and produced their work according to party standards, they were indeed privileged. From having previously suffered from a rather low social status, writers now became highly esteemed, influential members of society who enjoyed high salaries. Their works were published in many copies and put on the compulsory reading lists in schools, and they also enjoyed considerable recognition. Workers wanted to meet these authors and quoted their poems; they wrote letters to them and behaved like fans. The writers effectively became popular idols and celebrities (Standeisky 1993, 2005). By consenting to follow party rules, the literati provided the regime with a legitimacy which it sorely needed after 1956. An interdependence was established between politics and the literary domain, and lasted almost as long as the Iron Curtain.⁴

The regime's compromise with the writers consisted in its reluctant acquiescence to the reintroduction of popular genres: first crime novels and later all the others, except erotic literature and porn which remained banned during the whole period. In December 1958 the Politbureau (officially named Political Committee) passed a decision on publishing policy:

The Political Committee is in agreement with the publication of detective fiction and other entertainment literature in small circulation, at a high price. The publishing houses should make an effort to select works of high standard of this genre, too. The loss in book publishing due to producer price adjustment should cease within a few years. The Political Committee is agreed [...] that the price of books which are decorative, or intended for a limited audience, or purely entertaining, should already be raised in 1959 [...].⁵

The reappearance of popular genres after their ban in the strictly Stalinist Rákosi era turned out to be a great economic success on the one hand, and a serious ideological predicament on the other hand. In 1968 there was a long debate in party forums, but also in literary and cultural journals (e.g. *Kortárs*, *Kritika* [Contemporary, Critique]), about whether culture could be considered a commodity. Popular culture was produced to fill a need, to meet market demands, so it was considered

a commodity unlike high culture which was its creator's self-expression and, being original, resisted conventions and rules (see Radnai 1986). Having recognized its influence, an attempt at forming a socialist mass culture was made: there were police procedurals written by retired policemen, novels for adolescent and teenage girls (the so-called *Pöttyös könyvek*, *Csíkos könyvek* [Dotted Books, Striped Books]), and SF written by both acknowledged and low-profile writers. However, this did not mean plain sailing in all cases: one of the SF novels by György Botond-Bolics, an engineer by profession, entitled *Orbitron Design*, was written in 1962, and only published in 1986, a case that is similar to that of *The Master and Margarita* by Mikhail Bulgakov, which, by the way, was published in a complete edition in Hungary in 1969, earlier than in the Soviet Union.⁶

Publishing was a state monopoly under the control of the *Kiadói Főigazgatóság* [General Directorate of Publishers] to whom the 22 specialized state-owned publishing houses submitted their annual publishing plans for approval. The plans were made by reliable reviewers (readers) and editors at each publishing house (Bart 2002; Cziganýik 2011). For a book to be published, it first had to have three positive reviewer reports, and then its merits were discussed during an editorial meeting, and would only be included in the publisher's plan if the director was convinced of its merits (Lator 2002, Bart quoted in Szentpály 2013). If these plans were approved by the General Directorate, then the publishers haggled over their paper quota and the very limited amount of foreign currency available for copyright fees (Bart 2002; Agárdi 2013).

István Bart (2002: 48–51) claims that in most cases it was the executive director of the publishing house who decided about selection and censorship, not the General Directorate of Publishers who only provided general guidelines. Bart had extensive first-hand experience of publication and translation policies during the communist period. First, from 1973, he was a literary translator and an editor at the publishing house *Európa*, which specialized in world literature; and later, from 1984 to 2003, he was the director of *Corvina*, a publishing house which specialized in art and Hungarian literature translated into foreign languages.

His claim is confirmed by several memoirs of the period (for instance, Géher 1989; Lator 2002, 2016; Réz 2016).

Hungary had no official censorship authority in the Kádár era, but of course, this did not mean there was no censorship.⁷ Quite the contrary. Overt, covert, and self-censorship occurred in diverse forms and on several levels (Oikari 2002; Eörsi 2008; Czigányik 2011), often in unpredictable ways. Up until the peaceful political transformation of 1989, the Hungarian system amounted to a form of Bourdieusian *structural censorship* (1982) which Brownlie (2014: 205–6) describes as follows:

[structural censorship is] the structure of society itself, or more specifically the structure of the field in which the discourse circulates, which constitutes censorship in the form of control on discourse exercised without explicit laws. The structure consists of dominating positions whose authorised position-holders have a dominant visible and audible discourse, and dominated positions in which people are silenced or relegated to non-normative rebellious discourse.

The most conspicuous form of direct censorship was when an authority ordered copies of a journal or a book to be pulped. This was still practised in the 1980s, for instance: on the instructions of the Politbureau all 75,000 copies of a previously permitted reprint of the first volume of an encyclopaedia (*Révai-lexikon*) were pulped in 1986 (Horváth 2013). The most frequent form of overt censorship was the *silentium*, when works by an author or a translator were banned from being published, making their professional position and subsistence untenable. Silencing an author or a translator for an indefinite period (which the victims usually believed to be lifelong) was employed regularly for diverse political reasons: for instance, Balázs Lengyel was silenced in 1948 for his humanist principles and for praising a disgraced Mihály Babits⁸; Tibor Déry was silenced after the 1956 Revolution, when even writing implements were denied him in prison (Konrád 2006: 195). The works of certain foreign authors were also forbidden. It is difficult to say whether these decisions were made by the Hungarians on their

own initiative or whether they were prompted by the Soviet Union, but works by George Orwell, Poul Anderson, Robert A. Heinlein, and many others were blacklisted until the collapse of the dictatorship in 1989 (Sohár 1999; Bart 2002; Lator 2002; Gombár 2010). Zsolt Czigányik summarizes how the censorship system worked as follows:

The system of censorship throughout the Kádár era rested on two pillars. One was the firm conviction of the morally and intellectually constructive influence of literature (which is why pessimism or decadence was seen as a major argument against the publication of a book). The other pillar was the exclusion of political taboos, the most important of which were the following: criticism of the Soviet Union or the one-party system, anti-Marxism, and ironically, the existence of censorship. Other expressly prohibited issues were the Uprising of 1956, the Treaty of Trianon after the First World War, and the difficulties faced by Hungarian minorities in neighbouring countries. (2011: 226)

Later, in the seventies when the severity of the ideological repression lessened a little, financial considerations came to the fore as the effects of the oil crisis spread through the Iron Curtain. Popular genres, including science fiction, gained a huge number of fans and the Party introduced the so-called '*kulturális járulék*' [cultural contribution], popularly known as *giccсадó* [trash tax], which was applied to any book which was not a textbook or did not serve educational purposes. This was usually one per cent of the cover price, although if the book included any violence or eroticism the rate rose to twenty per cent. The problem was that nobody ever defined what counted as violence or eroticism. It was thus left to the tax inspectors' discretion to decide, whether a smack in the face could be considered violent or a seductive smile erotic. This means that all SF and fantasy novels could be potentially taxed at the rate of twenty per cent (Sohár 1999: 74–5; Bart 2002).

The trash tax was supposed to contribute to the publication costs of ideologically approved but unprofitable literature. Graphic representations of violence, eroticism, and pornography were totally banned until the beginning of the seventies when this norm gradually slackened as profitability became an important issue. However, despite the lucrative cultural contribution, the ban was never lifted completely (Bart 2002).

Preliminary norms, that is Party expectations which considered literature to be a means of adult education that could change reality and reshape it according to communist principles, also affected the language used in translations, though implicitly. Neither authors nor translators could employ vulgarisms or slang extensively, and even colloquialisms were criticized: only a refined literary parlance was acceptable (Bart 2002; Scholz 2011). A few SF texts were retranslated after the political transformation in 1989, and comparisons of the two versions always reveal significant differences in register: the translations of the Kádár era tend to be more fluent and erudite than the later, more colloquial ones.

As profitability became a priority in publishing, popular genres gradually gained ground despite the elitist cultural policy:

The genres indicated in Table 9.1 are literary translations of the categories I found in my sources. Note that romantic literature was listed under mainstream literature at the time. If we were to list romantic literature¹¹ as a subgenre of popular literature, then the market share of popular literature would increase significantly: to 64 per cent in 1978 and 70 per cent in 1985. Another important change from our perspective is the significant increase in 'pulp fiction' by 1985 while the other

Table 9.1 Books published in the Kádár era according to genre⁹

Genres	Subgenres	1968 (%)	1978 (%)	1985 (%)
Mainstream literature		45.2	40	34
	<i>Contemporary</i>	<i>n/a</i>	7	3
	<i>Realistic</i>	<i>n/a</i>	20	21
	<i>Romantic</i>	<i>n/a</i>	13	10
Popular literature		38	51	60
	<i>Pulp fiction</i> ¹⁰	<i>n/a</i>	28	41
	<i>Crime fiction</i>	<i>n/a</i>	23	19
Popular science		<i>n/a</i>	7	4
No data		3.5	2	2

two popular genres slightly declined: this evidently means that the new genres, science fiction, fantasy, horror, which were mostly in translation, were able to capture a larger segment of the market.

The Position of Translators

Since literature featured prominently in the indoctrination and re-education of the masses, so did literary translation. But the Kádár regime had an ambivalent attitude towards the knowledge of foreign languages: on the one hand, it was considered a ‘bourgeois hangover’,¹² a suspicious and outdated vestige of the pre-war period that was typical of the aristocracy, the upper-middle classes, and the intelligentsia. It was suspect because it could lead to unsupervised relations outside the communist camp. On the other hand, translating the exemplary and superior Soviet and other communist literature into Hungarian as well as promoting Hungarian achievements abroad were also priorities, so knowledge of foreign languages seemed a necessary evil. It followed from this that only trustworthy people could be allowed to work as literary editors and translators, particularly in the first half of the Kádár era (1956–74, see Géher 1989; Lator 2016; Réz 2016).

Only a relatively small number of people could translate foreign texts into Hungarian. Many of them were intellectuals, whose existence was barely tolerated in the 1950s, but the Kádár administration made an effort to buy their loyalty with the prosperity they offered to those who withdrew into their professional and private life and did not oppose the regime publicly (Haraszti 1990; Veres 2007). This meant that translators were well-paid in the Kádár era: their fees were fixed by the state and were the same for all languages and, mostly, for all genres. On 20 March 1970, the Ministry of Education issued decree 1/1970 which regulated the conditions of contracts with publishing houses and the fees due to authors, editors, translators, and others, and lists in its appendix the categories and the amounts. Section VI of the decree concerned translations (see Table 9.2), and no distinction was made between literary and non-literary texts; unlike the fees for authors which were different depending

on whether the original work was literary, scholarly, professional, popular science, or educational.

By way of comparison, the average gross income of employees in the same year, 1970, was 2222 HUF per month.¹⁴ It is clear from the figures in Table 9.2 that a translator could earn the average monthly wage in just a few days, underlining just how privileged a translator was financially.

This is why the Kádár era can be considered a golden age for literary translators: talented, creative people whose outlook, due to their command of foreign languages and knowledge of other cultures, was broad-minded, were able to spend years or even decades translating foreign works into Hungarian. Since quite a few authors were silenced for political reasons, they had to look for a way to earn money, and turned to literary translation (although the imposed silence, the *silentium*, sometimes also included being forbidden to translate).

Not only was the selection of the literary works to be translated closely monitored, but the translations themselves were also thoroughly checked: first, a *lektor* [reviewer] compared the source and target texts, then literary editors, copy-editors, and proofreaders checked the target text in several rounds, all of them making a great effort to produce a text that satisfied all real or imagined requirements. It is not surprising, then, that most literary translations of the time were written in the same homogeneous style (Scholz 2011) and often differed from the original. Perhaps the best-known case in SF is *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* by Philip

Table 9.2 1/1970 decree, section VI. Fixed fees for translators¹³

Prose translation	per 40,000 characters/20 pages
Simple texts	
from foreign language into Hungarian	1000–2000 HUF
from Hungarian into foreign language	1200–2500 HUF
from foreign language into foreign language	1500–3000 HUF
Difficult texts	
from foreign language into Hungarian	1500–3000 HUF
from Hungarian into foreign language	1800–3500 HUF
from foreign language into foreign language	2200–4000 HUF
Poetry translation	
	per line
from foreign language into Hungarian	10–28 HUF
from Hungarian into foreign language	15–36 HUF

K. Dick (see below). Another famous example in mainstream fiction is *The Tin Drum* by Günther Grass. About twenty ironical lines which describe the everyday life of the occupying Soviet army in Danzig were omitted from the first translation in 1973 and all successive ones; a fact which was only discovered in 2004 and which caused quite a scandal as that year Günther Grass was the guest of honour at the Budapest International Book Festival where he was talking against censorship and about the inevitability of facing past mistakes (Szántó 2004).

The Infamous 3 Ps: Promotion, Permission, and Prohibition in Science Fiction and Its Translation

After the 1956 Revolution when the re-Stalinization attempt failed and the regime's new motto 'Anyone who isn't against us is for us' was sanctioned by the Party congress, the re-named Communist Party realized that certain compromises were needed, among them with the agents of the cultural scene, particularly writers. György Aczél promoted this compromise with the intelligentsia, which asked for their loyalty in return for an undisturbed private and professional life, in his motion to the Politbureau on 6 August 1957 which was incorporated verbatim into the 1958 cultural political directives (Révész 1997). Aczél became the all-powerful supervisor of culture, and introduced the infamous 3 P-system¹⁵: the Party and the government would promote Socialist Realism and other progressive realist works, they would permit other cultural products which were not antagonistic to the People's Democracy and the status quo, and they would prohibit anything which was intended to undermine the state and its social order. This provided a flexible, differentiated, and ideologically indeterminate framework, which fluctuated between permissiveness and rigour, with key agents in place in all areas to micro-manage each case (Révész 1997; Bart 2002; Oikari 2002; Czigányik 2011). The key person for science fiction was Péter Kuczka.

Hungarian translation history still lacks an (impartial) account of Péter Kuczka's role in introducing and propagating SF, and fostering its

home production but he can be seen as the kingpin of the Hungarian SF sphere. Kuczka started his career as an award-winning Stalinist poet (Czigány 1984), and as a sincere believer in communism; but he became disappointed when he saw what was actually happening in the country and took part in the 1956 Uprising. He was silenced after the Revolution,¹⁶ so he became the apostle of SF for want of any alternatives. For him, SF was literally escapism, an escape from the *silentium*. He had an extensive domestic network of writers and politicians, as well as an international SF network, and he used these to advance the cause of SF in Hungary. He wrote the entry on Hungarian SF for *The Encyclopaedia of Science Fiction* (1995: 603–4, now online). He was undeniably well-versed in the genre, and worked hard to publicize it, or to be more precise, a version of it (Szélesi 2019) based on Darko Suvin's Formalist definition of SF, that is: 'a literary genre whose necessary and sufficient conditions are the presence and interaction of estrangement and cognition, and whose main formal device is an imaginative framework alternative to the author's empirical environment' (Suvin 1979: 7–8).

Kuczka selected both experienced and less experienced literary translators who then translated those works which had previously been approved by the General Directorate of Publishers. He himself also translated SF, for instance *The City* by Clifford D. Simak, and *The Martian Chronicles* by Ray Bradbury.¹⁷ Further research and thorough text analysis are needed to prove or disprove the widely held opinion among Hungarian SF fans that many translations published under Kuczka's name were in fact done by other writers, who had been silenced by the Party and, thanks to Kuczka's help, were able to earn some money with this ghost-translating.¹⁸

Still, the Aczélian cultural policy of the 3 Ps was present in the field of SF as well. The SF genre itself was generally permitted, but there were exceptions, and some SF works were prohibited, some promoted.

Authors who criticized the Soviet Union, communist ideology, or the socialist camp were blacklisted,¹⁹ as were those who sided with the 1956 Revolution or who said anything positive about it, and those who supported the Vietnam War, the so-called war hawks, such as Frank Herbert.²⁰ Other authors on the blacklist were those who fully backed individualism and human rights; those who were gay (Samuel R. Delany,

for example); or who were religious, such as Madeleine L'Engle. And certain authors, like Joanna Russ, were blacklisted for no discernible reason.²¹

Not just criticism, but any unfavourable fictional portrayal of the Soviet Union was censored (Kuczka 1973; Tóth 1992; Gombár 2018). Even in the 1980s, during the period of so-called 'goulash communism',²² the first Hungarian translation of *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* by Philip K. Dick, was published in an abridged form, in which the villain, an android called Max *Polokov* was renamed Max *Polieux* so as to avoid any Soviet or Russian associations.²³ Then, the episode where the android disguises himself as a Soviet policeman with a Hungarian name *Sandor Kadalyi* is changed in the Hungarian translation so that his origin becomes a vague 'Asian' and his assumed name becomes *San Kada*. Czigányik quotes a similar case, from a reviewer's report in 1974 on the language of *A Clockwork Orange* by Anthony Burgess, in which the reviewer explicitly states that the novel's Russian vocabulary has no political implications but anyway recommends the use of another language in the translation (2011: 228)—an example which confirms that this was a general practice at the time: any reference to the Soviet Union or the communist camp, unless commendatory, was best eliminated.

Censorship was at its most strict during the sixties. The first Isaac Asimov short story collection translated into Hungarian (Kossuth 1966) was incomplete: the closing story entitled 'The Evitable Conflict' was omitted due to its political content. In the story, the Soviet Union has broken up long ago, and the ideas of Karl Marx (and Adam Smith) have become obsolete due to the extensive use of robots and automation. In Asimov's novel *The Caves of Steel* (1958: 51), for example, when the murder of a scientist is ascribed to a well-organized terrorist group, the word 'terrorist' was cut by either the translator (self-censorship) or by the editor acting as censor. This may have been because in the 1960s and 1970s this was a sensitive issue: many left-wing revolutionaries who called themselves 'guerrillas' or 'freedom fighters' (like Ernesto 'Che' Guevara) and who received support from the socialist camp, were labelled as terrorists by the West. Similarly, in the translation of Dick's *The Maze of Death* when a 'Communist theologian' is mentioned, the attribute communist was cut (it is not clear whether by the translator

or by Kuczka), as it was considered ideologically unsound to equate communism with religion, and references to religion in general were forbidden (Sohár 2015). All translations of the era that I have examined show traces of this kind of intervention to varying degrees, although SF translations, thanks to the peripheral position of the genre, and its apparently unrealistic nature, appear to have been less rigorously controlled, and less adjusted to communist conventions than other genres.

The values the regime sought to promote are apparent in the texts which were selected for translation, such as those which dealt with a bright future after nuclear warfare, technological development, or the conquest of space, as well as works by writers who denounced capitalism, such as Brian Aldiss, Isaac Asimov, and Arthur C. Clarke.²⁴ The feminist perspective, represented by authors like Ursula K. Le Guin, emerged only later. Although the communist regime considered itself emancipatory, having provided equal rights to everybody irrespective of sex, it conveniently forgot about gender issues such as household chores and nurturing, the so-called 'second shift' traditionally and predominantly done by women. The translators of feminist works were always men who did not know anything about the feminist movement, its jargon or ideology; something which is clear from the translated texts. The tone of the selected books had to be optimistic which excluded all dystopias until the publication of Huxley's *Brave New World* in 1982.²⁵

Book Translations

From the communist takeover in 1945 up to Kádár's rise to power in 1956, only Soviet SF works were published in Hungary. From 1957, however, science fiction by authors from other communist countries started to be published. Furthermore, Clarke's *The Sands of Mars* was also published (1957) as part of a series which offered light entertainment and included authors such as Alexandre Dumas, Victor Hugo, and H. G. Wells. This was the first Anglophone SF novel to be translated into Hungarian since the Second World War, and it probably went unnoticed in the chaos that followed the Revolution, when the government was too taken up with other priorities to exercise any real control over

book publishing, allowing several previously unpublishable books to be brought out (Bart 2002; Lator 2002; Réz 2016).

After an eight-year-long hiatus, the next science fiction to be translated from English came out in 1965. It was an anthology of 23 SF stories entitled *Riadó a Naprendszerben* [Alarm in the Solar System] which included 13 translations from English of stories by many of the great names of SF such as Asimov, Bradbury, Fredric Brown, Clarke, Heinlein, Pohl, and Wyndham. In 1967, the first American SF novel was translated: *Caves of Steel* by Asimov, a classic of the genre. The Hungarian title, *Gyilkosság az űrvárosban* [Murder in Spacetown] underlines the fact that this is also a crime novel in a bid, perhaps, to exploit the prestige of this popular and better-established genre (Simon 1990). Interestingly, the Hungarian translation was issued by the Party's publisher, Kossuth, opening the way for the genre, so to speak.

In 1969 Móra, a publisher which specialized in children's and juvenile literature, launched a science fiction series called *Kozmosz Fantasztikus Könyvek* [Cosmos Fantastic Books], which was later re-named as *Galaktika Fantasztikus Könyvek* [Galaxy Fantastic Books] and was also edited by Kuczka. Forty-seven books were translated from English between 1969 and 1989. Table 9.3 demonstrates the spread and popularity of works translated from English:

The only novel to have a higher print run than those translated from English was *La planète des singes* by Pierre Boulle (in the UK: *Monkey Planet*; in the USA: *Planet of the Apes*), due to the great critical and commercial success of its film adaptation in 1968. It is also noteworthy that Anglophone books always reached nice round numbers: *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley was the first book to reach a print run of 50,000 in 1977; *Star Wars* by George Lucas²⁷ ran to 120,000 copies in 1980, and its sequel, *The Empire Strikes Back* by Donald F. Glut was published in 150,000 copies in 1981. The only two non-Anglophone novels to have a print run of 100,000 were *Głos pana* [*His Master's Voice*] by Polish writer Stanisław Lem, which was published in 1980, and the second edition of *La Planète des singes* in 1981. Thus, I conclude that the Anglophone dominance in science fiction in Hungary did not appear after 1989,

Table 9.3 The number and print runs of the Cosmos (later Galaxy) Fantastic Books published in the Kádár era²⁶

	1969–73	1974–78	1979–83	1984–87	1988–89
No. of titles					
From English	8 (31%)	7 (20%)	14 (38%)	11 (38%)	11 (58%)
From Russian	3 (11.5%)	7 (20%)	4 (11%)	1 (3%)	3 (16%)
Hungarian	8 (31%)	11 (31%)	10 (27%)	14 (48%)	4 (21%)
Other source languages	7	10	9	3	1
Total	26	35	37	29	19
Print runs					
Highest	46,760	59,800	185,000	178,000	n.a
Highest trans from English	35,100	59,800	185,000	178,000	n.a
Lowest	11,300	17,800	40,000	37,700	n.a
Lowest trans from English	15,500	29,800	56,000	74,000	n.a
<i>Difference</i>	<i>+ 4200</i>	<i>+ 12,000</i>	<i>+ 16,000</i>	<i>+ 36,300</i>	
Average	24,875	32,145	79,025	82,220	n.a
Average trans from English	25,340	39,655	106,215	112,782	n.a
<i>Difference</i>	<i>+ 425</i>	<i>+ 7510</i>	<i>+ 27,190</i>	<i>+ 30,562</i>	

rather, it was the consequence of popular demand already in the seventies: the public increasingly preferred 'genre fiction' to the ideologically correct mainstream books (Simon 1990).

Table 9.3 also shows that translations exceeded domestic production in number, except between 1984 and 87. This might seem usual when introducing a new genre, however, Hungarian literature certainly did not lack works in the fantastic mode, even SF, such as those by Mór Jókai, Frigyes Karinthy, Mihály Babits. Undeniably, fantasy and space opera²⁸ were absent from the Hungarian literary system at the time and were only introduced later, in the 1980s. One reason for the greater numbers of translations might also be ideological: they were a way to present topics Hungarian authors were not allowed to discuss. This would also account for the great demand for such fantastic literature evidenced by the print runs in Table 9.3: not only fans of the genre, but those who were interested in different, even dissident thinking read these books with great enthusiasm (Sohár 1999; Szélesi 2010).²⁹ We also have to bear in mind that payments for the Anglophone copyrights had to be

made in hard currency, which was scarce in the Kádár era, therefore the presence and increasing rate of such books confirm the popularity of Anglophone science fiction, simultaneously with the regime's need to placate the population by providing popular books and music and films.

The Cosmos (later Galaxy) Fantastic Books series clearly shows the editor's preference for British hard science fiction, and male writers, given that only two female authors were published in it: Shelley and Le Guin. This is noteworthy as since the seventies, the number of female science fiction writers has been increasing and they have written some of the most seminal works in the genre, including many gender-based utopias and dystopias, such as *The Female Man* by Joanna Russ, *The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood, or *The Gate to Women's Country* by Sheri S. Tepper. The selection of works to be translated in Hungary ignored this trend completely.

Twenty different translators worked on the series, the most prolific being Piroska F. Nagy and Gyula Baranyi, both of them translating only SF. Six of these twenty translators were women: a better gender distribution than that of the authors, possibly due to the secondary status of literary translation compared to original literature.³⁰ Another explanation might be the type of work itself: housewives and women on maternity leave could supplement their income by translating popular fiction.³¹ It seems evident that some translators already specialized in SF, particularly if we also take into account translations in literary magazines.³² In the case of mainstream literature, it was customary to employ one literary translator to translate all (or most) of the works of an author, but in SF multiple translators were used for the same author making it difficult for these authors to acquire a recognizable voice in Hungarian.³³

A short-lived science fiction series *Kossuth Fantasztikus Sorozat* [Kossuth Fantastic Series, 1970–5] published by the Party's publisher, Kossuth, was also edited by Kuczka. It brought out 18 hardbacks, among them seven novels by Anglophone writers.³⁴ This SF series adds the highest proportion of translations from English in book format of the era (39 per cent), with its five American originals diplomatically balanced by five Soviet ones.³⁵ The fact that the series was published by Kossuth clearly showed that the Party approved, and the hardback format revealed

either the improving status of the genre, or more likely, the publisher's preference.

An illustrated paperback series for children and teenagers, *Delfin könyvek* [Dolphin Books] by Móra also brought out a few books of SF, two anthologies, and several novels between 1964 and 1990, including *Dolphin Island* by Clarke, and *The Runaway Robot* by Lester del Rey,³⁶ in accordance with the concept that this genre fits young people best. The editor of the series was Miklós Rónaszegi, who later co-edited with Kuczka the juvenile SF magazine *Robur*.

Other publishers also brought out fantastic literature, but on an irregular basis, and these were never marketed as science fiction, speculative fiction, or as fantasy. For instance, *Flowers for Algernon* by Daniel Keyes was published in 1968 by Európa, which specialized in world literature, and *The Lord of the Rings* was published by Gondolat, which specialized in social sciences, popular science, and occasionally contemporary fiction.³⁷

To put all this activity into perspective, however, it is worth noting that more SF and fantasy books were published in the first five years after the collapse of communism in 1989 than in the whole Kádár era (Sohár 1999).

Galaktika

Galaktika, launched and edited by Kuczka, and published by Móra, was the first and most influential science fiction journal in Hungary. It started as a quarterly, and then became a monthly (1972–85, 'anthology' issues 1–60, B5 size, 128 pages).³⁸ Its circulation ranged between 38,000 and 94,000 copies. It had thematic, national, and mixed issues. For example, Issue 28 introduced Swedish science fiction, Issue 45 dealt with fantasy, Issue 51 discussed vampire literature, and Issue 60 discussed the work of Brian Aldiss. The journal had well-designed, easily recognizable covers, it used experimental layouts, and a variety of fonts. It also presented readers with carefully selected, nicely but often inaccurately translated short stories, poems, comics, graphic art, news, studies, conference reports, book and film reviews.

In the period 1972–89 *Galaktika* published 666 short stories of which 574 were translations, including 241 from English. It also published 100 poems (56 translations, of which 14 were from English), 159 articles (79 translations, 25 from English), 6 comics (6 translations, 2 from English), 5 conference reports, and 57 short essays on the narratives or illustrations in the issue, offering readers ready-made interpretational frameworks (all of them written by Kuczka). Hungarians mostly wrote poems and essays, while the Anglophone writers shone at fiction: another manifestation of structural censorship as poems had the smallest audience, and the essays transmitted strictly controlled knowledge and promoted a politically approved context to ensure that readers saw things in the proper perspective. It was propaganda disguised as epitexts of SF.

The somewhat higher proportion of Anglophone authors among the translated works (42 per cent) would imply that literary magazines were less closely monitored than book publishing. Further proof of this is the presence of the names of otherwise silenced authors among the contributors of the magazine. For instance, an article on the aesthetics of Peruvian vases by the philosopher Béla Hamvas was published in 1983, confirming the educational role of literary and cultural magazines.³⁹ Hamvas' essay appeared in the 50th issue of *Galaktika* which celebrated Kuczka's sixtieth birthday, so it is possible that permission to publish educational essays by already deceased writers who had been silenced by the Party was given as a present to Kuczka.

Galaktika became so popular that a selection of the already carefully selected short stories was regularly reissued in an anthology called *Metagalaktika*, so these were *crème de la crème*. Over nine issues from 1978 to 1986, 160 stories were published in *Metagalaktika* of which 156 were translations. Of these 91, or 60 per cent, were translations from English, an even higher percentage than in *Galaktika*. By the 1980s, when the publishers received fewer state subsidies and needed the profit produced by bestsellers, including SF, the dominance of Anglophone writers in the genre became even more pronounced.

Galaktika was defined by and identified with Kuczka's autocratic editorship and personal taste. In the 1970s and 1980s, an increasing number of SF fans, writers, and translators felt excluded from the SF

sphere dominated by him; consequently they turned elsewhere to satisfy their interest (Szélesi 2019).

Other Science Fiction Magazines

Besides *Galaktika*, the only other publication which specialized in science fiction was a short-lived juvenile magazine entitled *Robur* [after *Robur-le-Conquérant* by Jules Verne]. It came out in sixteen issues between 1984 and 1986, and each issue had at least one piece translated from English. Not surprisingly, it was co-edited by Kuczka. There were two other periodicals which published SF quite regularly: *Rakéta Regényűjság* [lit. Rocket novelistic journal], which specialized in contemporary literature and was published by Magvető; and *Univerzum* which was published by Kossuth. There were also other periodicals which would occasionally publish SF, such as *InterPress Magazine* of the International Federation of Journalists, which published the already mentioned bowdlerized translation of *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* in instalments in 1984. *Rakéta*, whose overt goal was to entertain, printed short stories as well as novels in instalments. Out of the 132 published between 1974 and 1989, 91 were translations from English. These figures are misleading, however, as *Rakéta* also published samples from works in progress, such as an excerpt from Göncz's translation of *Frankenstein*, as well as writings by Edgar Allen Poe, Walter Scott, Washington Irving, and Oscar Wilde. In many cases it is hard to see a connection between these authors and SF, but their canonical status was useful as a way of promoting the status of the genre.⁴⁰ *Rakéta* enjoyed a wide circulation, starting with 100,000 copies and rising to 130,000 copies due to public demand. But after 1989 the print run dropped, and the magazine ceased. *Univerzum* brought out a few novels in instalments but mainly short stories, and every issue had one or two SF stories: 127 altogether in 1957–88, 48 of them indirect translations from English via Russian. An incomplete bibliography of all the SF stories published in *Univerzum* is available online. Although it only shows the author's name and the Hungarian title, and does not include the translator's name, which would reveal that it was a translation from a translated version, it is apparent that the hardliner

Univerzum published significantly fewer translations from English and more from Russian.⁴¹

In 1989, Kuczka and Móra launched a new magazine entitled *Fantasy* to introduce this genre, but because of the political changes which took place that year, only one issue was published.

Fanzines

The amateur SF movement began in 1968 when, following the American example, a number of young people interested in the genre founded SF clubs and launched their own fanzines. The fanzines were xeroxed manually which was not a safe enterprise as duplication was a state monopoly and rigorously controlled. What these SF fans produced was a sort of *samizdat*, despite the fact that often, particularly in secondary schools and at universities these fanzines were officially published by the local branch of the Hungarian Young Communist League (KISZ)—a typical Kádár era absurdity. The permanent paper shortage was also an obstacle, so many of the fanzines only had one issue. The following are some examples: *Aréna*, *Helios*, *Képzelet* [Imagination], *Kyborg*, *Moebius*, *Sol-3*, *Szovjet SF* [Soviet SF]. The contents of the fanzines were written, translated, and edited by secondary school pupils, university students, SF club members, and even workers in the case of the *Csepeli Tájékoztató* [Csepel Brochure], which came out in 3 issues in 1977.⁴²

It is interesting but perhaps not surprising that most of the amateur SF publications were based in secondary schools and universities, cultural centres, and SF clubs; the readership of SF is reported to have been made up mostly of male teenagers and young adults as opposed to the readers of fantasy who were mostly female, apparently. Unfortunately, there are no reliable statistics to confirm this.

During this period (1968–89) the audience, or, more precisely, the active part of it, appears to have been rather small: irrespective of the publisher's location the contributors—the editors, translators, writers, and reviewers—were all the same people. This fact also shows their enthusiasm and devotion. They went anywhere when there was an opportunity to talk about SF or to publish their stories, even knowing

that their activities were merely being tolerated, and that support was rather difficult to come by, a fact which explains why these fanzines vanished after very few issues. Obviously, these youngsters were fascinated by and became well-versed in SF; it is thus no wonder that later, after the fall of the regime, some of them were able to exploit the opportunities offered by the political changes to link their hobby with their business enterprises (Sohár 1999).

These fanzines were full of unauthorized translations and other copyright violations. For instance, 'The Battle' by Robert Sheckley⁴³ appeared in the second issue of *Analog H*, a fanzine published at the Móricz Zsigmond Secondary School in Budapest. The story was translated by András Gáspár who was the co-editor of the fanzine, and who arguably became the most famous SF writer, editor, and publisher in the 1990s. Another example is 'The Dragon' by Ray Bradbury, which was published five times in four different translations between 1968 and 1987, only once legally.⁴⁴ I assume that these grass-root groups were isolated in the beginning, unaware of the existence of other groups, other fanzines, and ignorant of any potential copyright issues. The case of 'The Dragon' also shows that although the SF communities consisted of mainly men, a few women contributed to the fanzines from the very beginning, particularly as translators or reviewers, and rarely as writers or editors.

Quite a few of the people who worked for the fanzines shaped the SF scene in Hungary after 1989, and that may explain the abundance of pirate editions and other copyright violations, such as an unofficial translation of the *Star Wars* stories (see Sohár 1999).

The SF community that grew around the fanzines, who liked SF but opposed the official line represented by *Galaktika* and Kuczka, gave voice to previously suppressed trends. Attila Németh,⁴⁵ for example, mentions in an interview in 2011 that Kuczka hated *Star Trek* and refused to publish any related stories. These communities founded their own clubs and associations, among them Véga which organized the first Hungarian SF convention in 1980: the HungaroCon. Less than ten years later, in 1988, Budapest hosted Eurocon, the European science fiction convention, showing that SF continued to thrive in Hungary. Franz Rottensteiner expressed this view as early as 1979 in his chapter on European SF in *Science Fiction. A Critical Guide* (1979: 216–7):

The Hungarians have a well-developed SF field, including many books, one of the most beautiful and most determinedly international SF magazines in the world, *Galaktika*, and a theoretical magazine on SF, *SF Tájékoztató*, published by the SF section of the Hungarian Writers Union. The prime mover of SF in Hungary is Péter Kuczka, a well-known poet and scriptwriter who edits a beautiful, also very international SF series for *Kozmosz*.⁴⁶

Characteristics of the Translations

What are the most typical features of the authorized SF translations done in the Kádár era? First, their literary purism which is often regarded as linguistic excellence. As has been mentioned, the language used in translations was expected to be refined and free of vulgarity, and adopt a high literary register.⁴⁷

Second, the translations included the four translation universals—normalization, simplification, explicitation, and levelling out (Mona Baker 1996)—to an unusually high degree, due to the influence of the communist system. Normalization that modified the original in order to conform to communist norms was a fundamental and unavoidable requirement. Simplification very often followed normalization or was the result of the fact that translators were not allowed to communicate with the foreign authors and could not visit the West to improve their language skills and learn about culture-specific items. They worked with outdated dictionaries and had ‘translatorial licence’ to change such peripheral and uncanonized texts as SF novels were considered to be. Explicitation was also the natural result of the general public’s—and sometimes the translator’s—lack of familiarity with Anglophone culture, as well as of the pervasive communist didactics which always offered the only proper interpretation for everything. According to convention, SF must by definition be inventive, unconventional, and out of the ordinary.⁴⁸ It often speculates about crucial issues of our present and projects them into a fictional past, future, or parallel universe, and obviously this must be apparent in its language use and vocabulary, as well through the use of newly coined words and expressions. However, the Hungarian

translations, particularly at the beginning, very often normalized and/or simplified these ideas and terms, and thus divested the texts of their extraordinariness and novelty, while levelling out the register—even if to a high literary standard.⁴⁹

Third, regardless of the (in)accuracy of these translations, they were indeed target-oriented and acceptable in the Touryan sense (Toury 1995: 56–7), that is, altered in order to fit Hungarian literary conventions: translators smoothed the text out at all levels, made them palatable to the audience,⁵⁰ and many a Hungarian developed a liking for the genre reading these publications then, and even now. What's more, these translations shaped the norms for later SF translations, and may be one of the reasons why these still tend to be exclusively target-oriented as well as rather free, often deviating from the original texts (cf. Popa 2013: 28), especially when done by literary translators who are writers and/or poets themselves.

Finally, when looking at the translated texts, in many cases it is impossible to decide who is responsible for any changes, and to what extent they can be attributed to the effect of censorship, since written censorship instructions were avoided at all costs in the Kádár era (Gombár 2011). When politically sensitive issues are systematically omitted from the texts, the explanation seems self-evident, but one-off cases, which are much more typical in literature, can easily be misinterpreted, so historical research on the translations of this period has to be circumspect.

Conclusion

For most of the Kádár era, one person, Péter Kuczka, and his ideological and literary biases, defined SF in Hungary and dominated its reception. Kuczka worked hard to lay the foundations of Hungarian SF with dedicated magazines and university courses, and he established an institutional space in which it could thrive. He involved competent people in his pet project, while he also trod on many people's toes. He let SF in, and with it, new, progressive, even dissident ideas and aesthetics, without realizing that the introduction of his beloved genre would help to precipitate the end of the communist government. SF, whether science

or speculative fiction, challenged the totalitarian way of thinking and ideological monopoly by its very diversity, raising otherwise suppressed questions, so it is no wonder that Rosemary Jackson calls it ‘the literature of subversion’ (1987). What Standeisky (2005) has said about the Kádár era’s cultural policy in general, applies perfectly to SF as well: opening the door to the West and allowing alien works to contaminate the system and be available to the public hastened the collapse of the regime. It is ironical that the moment the Kádár administration seemed willing to compromise, and turned to goulash communism to placate the population, it practically signed its own death sentence.

Notes

1. The term ‘speculative fiction’ was introduced as a synonym for science fiction, and is frequently used by those writers who ‘fight hard to avoid the [science fiction] label, perhaps feeling that it might deleteriously affect their sales and/or reputations’ (http://www.sf-encyclopedia.com/entry/definitions_of_sf); for instance, Margaret Atwood. It is often employed as an umbrella term including science fiction, fantasy, and horror (and possibly other genres as well).
2. Just think of the reception of what is probably the most influential modern fantasy, *The Lord of the Rings* by J.R.R. Tolkien in the 1950s, in Curry (2005).
3. Miklós Haraszti claims in his famous book *A cenzúra esztétikája* [The Aesthetics of Censorship] (published in English in 1987 as *The Velvet Prison*), which was issued as a *samizdat* in 1986, that Hungarian intellectuals were so thoroughly co-opted by the party-state that censorship became obsolete. It was no longer a form of external intervention; the artists and their art were under total control.
4. For the traditional relationship between Hungarian writers and politics, the role of the *vates*, that is, the prophetic poet, see Oikari (2002).
5. 2 December 1958, PB meeting /MKS-288–5/106.őe. Unless otherwise stated all translations are by the author.

6. *The Master and Margarita*, written between 1928 and 1940, was first published in a censored version in two instalments in 1966–67 in the Soviet Union. Lator (2002) mentions that the Hungarian edition was made possible because Bulgakov's widow smuggled out the complete manuscript in her underwear on an Aeroflot flight. Iván Földeák, a well-known literary translator from Russian, has also claimed (at the meetings of Hungarian Writers Association) that many Russian SF works were published in Hungary during the seventies and eighties either uncensored or less censored than in the USSR.
7. Unless we consider the General Directorate of Publishers a censorship office like Lator does in his memoirs, *My Life as Editor* (2002: 67). 'Hungarian scholars' relative delay in investigating censorship issues under socialism might also be attributable to the lack of tangible evidence, since communist authorities as a general rule avoided written directives and instructions, and relied for the most part on informal and semi-formal oral communication' (Gombár 2011: 106). 'Whereas in Portugal, book censorship reports stored at the National Archive of Torre do Tombo are freely available to researchers, Hungarian scholars are left only with scraps of information and anecdotal evidence. Hence, the presence of censorship remained largely unconfirmed due to the absence of conclusive evidence' (Gombár 2018: 433).
8. Balázs Lengyel (1918–2007) was a writer and literary critic. He was declared 'Righteous among the Nations' in 1997, and wrote young adult (YA) novels and translated while being silenced for thirty years. After the *silentium*, he won many awards for his editorship and literary criticism. Mihály Babits (1883–1941) was a poet, writer, translator, and literary critic, in 1929–41 the editor of *Nyugat* [West], the most famous Hungarian literary journal that is still highly respected today. When teaching Latin and Hungarian literature in a secondary school, Mátyás Rákosi, who later became the First Secretary of the Communist Party and the dictator of Hungary in 1948–53, was one of his pupils. Babits was disgraced in the Rákosi era because 'he had not realised the historical role of the working classes' (Vasy 2014).

9. Figures compiled by the author and based on data in Bak (1970), Varga (1975), and Simon (1990: 107).
10. In the original Hungarian the term is 'ponyvá' [lit. canvas], this term came into being with a transfer of meaning: the cheap and popular books sold in markets were put on a canvas. Its use is always derogatory, this is why I translated it as pulp fiction.
11. Romantic literature does not equal to romance, it really means works by Romantic authors and their epigones (Simon 1990).
12. Bart (2002: 139–47).
13. Source: Magyar Könyvkiadók és Könyvterjesztők Egyesülése [Hungarian Publishers' and Booksellers' Association] (1987) A könyvkiadást érintő fontosabb jogszabályok [The important laws in relation to book publishing], Budapest, MKKE. Second editions were paid half the sum paid for the first editions, all the later editions were paid 25 per cent. In the case of less known languages, the fees might be raised by up to 30 per cent.
14. Source: Hungarian Central Statistical Office. 1000 HUF is approximately the equivalent of 50,000 HUF, or €150, at today's values.
15. In Hungarian it was 3 Ts: *tiltás, tűrés, támogatás*. Translated by László Kontler' as: promotion, permission, prohibition (Kontler 1999: 445, quoted in Czigányik 2011: 226). Other translations are 'Support, Tolerance, and Prohibition' (Czigány 1984), 'Support, Toleration and Denial' (Oikari 2002).
16. He was not allowed to publish anything for eight years. Later he was allowed to publish in literary magazines, but no books until 1994.
17. Clifford D. Simak (1904–88) was an American journalist who won numerous awards for his works of SF. He was a Science Fiction Writers of America (SFWA) Grand Master and won three Hugo Awards and a Nebula. He was also given the Bram Stoker Award for Lifetime Achievement. Ray Bradbury (1920–2012) was an American SF writer who is best-known for *Fahrenheit 451*, *Martian Chronicles* and *The Illustrated Man*. He also won numerous awards and remains one of the most celebrated SF authors.
18. According to his family, Péter Szentmihályi Szabó claimed that all translations from English published under Kuczka's name had been his translations. Since he was a SF writer, translator, and Kuczka's

English interpreter, it cannot be ruled out. (Communication by Miklós Veres, researcher at Petőfi Literary Museum, Budapest in the discussion after the commemoration entitled *The Controversial Péter Kuczka* on 13 November 2019). Bradbury's short story, 'The Golden Apples of the Sun' is rumoured to have been translated by Árpád Göncz (1922–2015), who was a writer and a literary translator, translated, for example *The Lord of the Rings* by Tolkien, took part in the Revolution, was imprisoned after 1956, learned English in prison, and after the amnesty in 1963, he worked as a translator. In 1990, after the political transformation he was the first President of the Hungarian Republic.

19. Source: Hungarian National Bibliography. Bibliography of Books, and *Külföldi szerzők művei Magyarországon: 1945–1970, 1971–1975* [*Works by foreign authors in Hungary: 1945–1970, 1971–1975*].
20. Franklin Patrick Herbert Jr. (1920–86) was an American SF writer, and author of the best-selling *Dune* (which was adapted for film by David Lynch) and its sequels.
21. Samuel R. Delany (1942–) is an African-American author and literary critic who is best-known for *Babel-17*, winner of four Nebula and two Hugo Awards. The SFWA named him its 30th Grand Master in 2013. Madeleine L'Engle Camp (1918–2007) was an American writer of fiction, non-fiction, and poetry. Her most famous work is a YA novel, *A Wrinkle in Time* and its sequels. She was given a World Fantasy Award for Lifetime Achievement in 1997. Joanna Russ (1937–2011) was an American writer, academic and radical feminist, who was the author of the revolutionary *The Female Man* (1975). Feminist SF scholarship owes a lot to her.
22. Goulash communism was a term used by Western journals to describe Hungary's new political system in the Kádár era, partly based on consumerism, a big step forward after the meagre economy of the fifties. See, for example: 'Goulash Communism Savored' in *The Washington Post*, 14 September 1977; 'A New Ingredient Spices "Goulash Communism"' in *New York Times*, 10 November 1983. See also Valuch (2002), Nyssönen (2006).
23. Philip Kindred Dick (1928–82), the first ever canonized American SF writer. He wrote some of very unusual, deeply philosophical, and

- thought-provoking novels, including *The Man in the High Castle*, *A Scanner Darkly*, and *Ubik*.
24. Brian Aldiss (1925–2017) was a British SF writer, artist, and editor. His most famous novels are *Greybeard*, *Non-Stop*, and *Helliconia*. Isaac Asimov (1920–92) was a Russian-born American SF and non-fiction writer, as well as a professor of biochemistry. His *Foundation* and *Robot* series were favourites for generations of SF fans. Arthur C. Clarke (1917–2008) was a British SF writer, science writer, and television series host, as well as a proponent of space travel. His best-known work is *2001: Space Odyssey* and its sequels.
 25. When the ‘New Economic Mechanism’ failed, resulting in the accumulation of foreign debt, Hungary turned to the IMF for financial help in 1982.
 26. Unfortunately, print runs are not available for the last two years before the collapse of the regime. Note that the titles translated from English include some novels that were originally written in another language.
 27. The novelization of the film script was in fact done by Alan Dean Foster (1946–), an American SF writer.
 28. A disparaging term coined by analogy with soap opera. ‘The space opera is an action adventure, commonly of galactic scale, of which the film cycle *Star Wars* (1977, 1980, 1983, 1999, 2002, 2005, 2015–17) is the best-known exemplar’ says the Encyclopaedia Britannica Online, whereas others consider it SF at its most romantic, or simply fantasy or even Western set in space.
 29. From a communist point of view, even emphasizing the importance of private life or the importance of the individual’s interests as opposed to those of the community seemed dissident thinking at the time.
 30. One collection of short stories by Ray Bradbury had five different translators, which slightly distorts the distribution.
 31. It would be interesting to establish whether the introduction of three-year maternity leave in 1967 influenced the gender distribution of literary translators.

32. There can be no doubt about Gyula Baranyi's specialization: he edited the first fantasy magazine entitled *Atlantisz* [Atlantis] in 1990–1, also published by Móra.
33. Asimov, for example, was translated by at least 19 different translators, Clarke by 17, and Le Guin by 5 just in the Kádár era. In many cases, particularly that of the fanzine and *Universum* translations, we do not know the translator's name, so the numbers are not definite.
34. Clarke, Crichton (2), Norton, Stapledon, Pohl-Kornbluth, Vonnegut.
35. Strugastsky brothers, Yefremov, Belyayev, Bulichov, Yemtsev-Parnov.
36. *Delfinek szigete*, trans. Margit Török 1980; and *A székevény robot*, trans. Zoltán Árokszallásy 1973.
37. The translation of *The Lord of the Rings* is also a rather revealing case: Ádám Réz, after translating the first 11 chapters, died suddenly, and the project was put on hold for years until the job was given to Árpád Göncz who after his release from prison earned his living doing both technical and literary translations. He hated translating the trilogy because of the tight deadline he had to meet (he had to translate 25 pages per day, regardless). He regarded it as 'the biggest garden gnome made of marble in world literature', yet, he re-read it every time he fell ill (Göncz 1997).
38. It became a magazine between 1985 and 1995 (issues 61–175, A4 size, 96 pages between 1985–93, A5 size, 128 pages between 1993–5).
39. Béla Hamvas (1897–1968) was a writer, translator, aesthete, and philosopher. He worked as a librarian until philosopher György Lukács, the ideologist of the Party, pronounced his views politically harmful in 1948, consequently Hamvas was dismissed and silenced for the rest of his life. He then worked as a shop assistant and janitor far from Budapest. Manuscript copies of his works were circulated illegally in the seventies. His public rediscovery in the eighties started with the publication of this essay in *Galaktika*.
40. <https://galaktika.hu/bibliography/Raketa.html>.
41. <https://galaktika.hu/bibliography/Univerzum.html>.
42. Csepel is a district of Budapest. After the First World War, it was one of the centres of the working-class movement, and during

- the communist era it was one of the centres of communist heavy industry, and was often called Red Csepel. Evidently, SF was not just a white-collar affair.
43. Robert Sheckley (1928–2005) was a prolific and versatile American writer, best known for his absurd and comical way of presenting human society, and his unpredictable storylines.
 44. The first translation for *Diákévek* fanzine (Berzsenyi Secondary School, Budapest) was made by Ilona Juhász in 1968; the second and official translation by András Békés was published in *Ország-Világ* weekly in 1970; Katalin Tóth translated it for *Androméda*, fanzine of the University of Chemical Industry in Veszprém in 1976; then a third fanzine illegally re-published Békés's translation (*Supernova*, Galaktika Sci-Fi Club, Szeged) in 1987; and next year, György Koch rendered it again for a fourth fanzine (*Millenium*, Sci-Fi Club of Vega Hungarian Sci-Fi Association, Ózd), re-published a year later in *Rakéta Magazin*. Since it had two new translations after the political changes, it may be the most translated SF short story into Hungarian.
 45. Literary translator and editor of *Galaktika*, the Best SF Translator of Europe in 2016 who received the Trethon Ring for the Best SF Translator of Hungary in 2017. At the beginning of his career, he worked with Kuczka.
 46. Interestingly, Rottensteiner groups Hungary together with Albania and Bulgaria in a section called 'Other Slavic countries'.
 47. The style of these translations is still appreciated today, as can be seen from the discussions of Asimov, Bradbury, and other SF writers on the Hungarian version of Goodreads: <https://moly.hu/>.
 48. See the definitions by Darko Suvin, Kingsley Amis, Isaac Asimov, and Northrop Frye in Frederik Pohl's Introduction to *SF: Contemporary Mythologies*, Tom Shippey's Introduction to *The Oxford Book of Science Fiction*. http://www.sf-encyclopedia.com/entry/definitions_of_sf.
 49. In *Caves of Steel*, the time travel device is called a 'kettle': 'Andrew Harlan stepped into the kettle'. This evokes a sense of wonder as well as fun, while the Hungarian normalization misses both, being a rather ordinary: 'Andrew Harlan belépett a kabinba' [Andrew Harlan

stepped into the cabin]. Can we consider this a kind of censorship? Did either the translator or the editor curb their inventiveness so as to conform to the norms, stick to the less risky, adopt a tried and trusted formulation? How much did the questionable status of the genre influence the actual translations?

50. The audience was relatively big: broadcasting television programmes—three times a week—only started in 1957, colour television arrived in 1969, daily broadcast in 1989, so reading was a very important pastime during the Kádár era. Also, due to the very limited variety, everybody interested in SF read the same books, the same translations in Hungarian which helped to form a close-knit community.

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10

The Impact of Cultural Policy in the GDR on the Work of Translators

Hanna Blum

Introduction

The cultural life of the German Democratic Republic (GDR)¹ was a highly complex network shaped by many different factors such as government policy, different governmental and non-governmental organizations as well as the work of artists themselves. This is mainly due to the fact that, in the GDR, cultural life in all its forms played an important role in shaping the new socialist state which meant that it was heavily regulated. Due to the complexity of the cultural field, this regulation did not only emanate from leading politicians in the form of censorship, but took place on many different levels, for example through the Writers Union of the GDR. Culture and the people working within

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the field were used by the government to educate the people in accordance with official political ideology, and cultural agendas were explicitly added to the five-year plan (Ulbricht 1950: 149).

Literature especially was seen as a progressive instrument with which to form the 'new man', as Walter Ulbricht, head of state of the GDR until 1971, phrased it, to overcome fascism and to fight 'US-American imperialism' (Ulbricht 1950: 149). Along with the construction of a socialist society, the construction of a socialist culture was one of the most important aims of the regime (Ulbricht 1952: 239f.; Becher 1952: 240f.). This process did not depend only on works written by East German authors but included translations which also contributed significantly to the establishment of a literary canon in the GDR. Translation was considered an important element of the literary field by GDR politicians since they contributed to the establishment of a socialist literary canon. Due to their importance for the socialist cause, writers and literary translators were, on the one hand, closely monitored by the regime, but were also celebrated for their important contribution. So, while this official pressure certainly had an impact on their work, they also had an influence on official cultural policy.

In Translation Studies, little research has been done on translation and socialism, although scholars agree on the pivotal role that translation played in communist countries (see, e.g. Popa 2018: 425; Witt 2011: 151). The focus of existing research on translation and socialism has been predominantly on case studies which illustrate the role of censorship and concentrate mainly on textual comparisons. This rather text-centred approach has recently been extended to include sociological questions dealing with the agents and networks behind the ideological constraints (see, e.g. contributions in edited volumes by Baer 2011; Chalvin, Lange and Monticelli 2011; Schippel and Zwischenberger 2017; and Popa 2014). Some of these sociological contributions also deal with translator meetings within the respective Writers Unions: Witt (2013), for example, analyses various records of the first all-Union translator conference in the Soviet Union in 1936 and reconstructs the discourse on the role of translation as well as the use of more creative or literal translation strategies. This chapter has a similar aim, that is to reconstruct the ideologies of

translation that emerge from the protocols of translator meetings in the GDR.

Outside the German-speaking world, the GDR in general and its cultural life in particular are still under-researched (Lewer 2013: 5). Since the opening of the state archives after the collapse of the GDR, German scholars have mainly concentrated on the way the omnipresent state interfered in the creative work of artists and writers and have investigated the censorship process called 'print permit process' (*Druckgenehmigungsverfahren*).² In Translation Studies, only very few scholars have done research on the GDR with the notable exception of Gaby Thomson-Wohlgemuth, who has investigated the effect of ideology on the translation of children's literature in the GDR by looking at print permit files (Thomson-Wohlgemuth 2009). She has also discussed some beneficial features of the 'socialist approach to translation' (Thomson-Wohlgemuth 2004), such as the economic status and training of translators in the GDR (505–7).

There is no doubt that the state had a significant impact on the work of writers and literary translators; in this essay, however, this influence will not be seen as necessarily repressive, such as strict laws or forms of censorship, but as something that shaped writers and translators in their thinking and discourse. This insight should open up a new understanding of cultural life in the GDR, moving away from what has been the common perception to date.

Cultural Policy of the GDR

Phase of Renewal (1945–49)

After the Second World War ended in 1945, the cultural policy of the Soviet occupation zone (SBZ), which would eventually become the GDR, was aiming for an 'anti-fascist democratic transformation' (Emmerich 1996: 72) and the de-Nazification of Germany. At the same time, all cultural areas were to be reformed towards humanism and socialism (*Entschließung der Ersten Zentralen Kulturtagung der SED* 1948: 91). One means of achieving this was the confiscation of

militaristic and Nazi literature, as was decided in the Potsdam Agreement. One of the first organizations founded for this purpose, in 1945, was the Cultural Association for the Democratic Renewal of Germany (Kulturbund zur demokratischen Erneuerung Deutschlands), intended to work for a common cultural life in a unified and anti-fascist Germany, as stated in its articles of association (Grundaufgaben des Kulturbundes zur demokratischen Erneuerung Deutschlands 1949: 121). Additionally, the first institution for the control of the publishing industry was founded, the Cultural Advisory Board for the Publishing Industry (Kultureller Beirat für das Verlagswesen), which was responsible for reviewing manuscripts before they were printed (Emmerich 1996: 116). A first indication of the limited freedom that writers would face in the future.

Despite the founding of such organizations, only a moderate degree of renewal was sought during the first years after the war.

Setting up Socialism (1949–61)

Although efforts were made, at least in public, to reunite Germany after the Second World War, the Federal Republic of Germany was founded in 1949, approved by the first election of the Bundestag in August 1949. As a reaction, the Soviet Union authorized the founding of the German Democratic Republic on 27 September 1949 under the leadership of the Socialist Unity Party (SED), which was established in 1946. A self-appointed parliament elected Otto Grotewohl as premier and Wilhelm Pieck as president. About a year later, Walter Ulbricht, who had made a significant contribution to the establishment of the GDR, was appointed First Secretary of the SED and became the *de facto* leader of the country from that time onwards. In October 1949, an apparently democratic constitution was established—apparently insofar as it promoted human and civil rights but was mainly used to enforce the authoritarian position of the SED (Malycha 2011: 19f.).

This authoritarian role of the Party was especially noticeable in the cultural life of the GDR. The first years after the new state was established were shaped by several radical changes in its cultural policy, which

was seen as an important instrument with which to educate East German citizens (Ulbricht 1950: 149); and so-called cultural tasks were included in the five-year plans. The main goals of this cultural policy were the fight against 'US-American imperialism', racial ideology, and the establishment of a new and progressive literature to create a 'new man' (149f.). Supporting socialist art and culture was the most important objective after the organized construction of a socialist state, for example through land reforms (Ulbricht 1952: 239f.; Becher 1952: 240f.).

One of the most important events during the establishment of a socialist art and culture was the fifth meeting of the Central Committee (ZK) of the SED held in Berlin in March 1951. At this meeting, leading politicians decided on the fight against formalism in literature and art to promote a progressive German literature. Formalism in literature and art was demonized because art which saw its purpose in its form and not its content could not fulfil its proper function and was seen as an assault on German cultural heritage and thus as a form of support for US imperialism (Entschließung des Zentralkomitees der SED 1951: 178). Instead, the Central Committee pressed for a cultural doctrine based on the model of the Soviet Union. In the words of Andrei Zhdanov, a leading Soviet politician, art and literature should depict life

truthfully, not to depict it in a dead, scholastic way, not simply as 'objective reality,' but to depict reality in its revolutionary development. In addition to this, the truthfulness and historical concreteness of the artistic portrayal should be combined with the ideological remolding and education of the toiling people in the spirit of socialism. (Zhdanov 1935)

An especially important aspect of this cultural doctrine was that literature and art needed to be progressive in order to educate the people in a socialist spirit (Entschließung des Zentralkomitees der SED 1951: 183). Socialist Realism was deemed the leading principle in art and literature. In literary works, the central topic should be about a positive hero who should be a role model and whom the readers could identify with (ibid.: 120f.). In order to reach these goals, several strategies were enacted at the Central Committee meeting: preparing a governmental commission for cultural affairs, educating artists and writers in Marxism-Leninism, as

well as providing specific support for young artists and writers. Another agenda was to encourage the active shaping of art forms within the respective unions of the Cultural Association, such as the Writers Union (Schriftstellerverband), for example (ibid.: 184f.).

Apart from the strategies adopted at the meeting of the Central Committee of the SED, important institutions were subsequently established, like the Office for Literature and Publishing (Amt für Literatur und Verlagswesen), which was founded in 1951 and later became part of the Ministry of Cultural Affairs (Ministerium für Kultur) with the name of Central Office for Publishing Houses and the Book Trade (Hauptverwaltung Verlage und Buchhandel). This Office became the most important institution for controlling literary works. In its founding documents, it states that the Office's key aim is to enhance the quality of literary works by 'examining the planned works and advising publishers' (Verordnung über die Entwicklung fortschrittlicher Literatur 1951: 203). As announced at the fifth meeting of the Central Committee of the SED, the Governmental Commission for Cultural Affairs (Staatliche Kommission für Kunstangelegenheiten) was founded in 1951 (Malycha 2011: 23). At the inaugural meeting of this commission, Otto Grotewohl held a speech on the significance of cultural affairs:

Literature and fine arts are subordinate to politics but it must be stated that they have a strong influence on politics. The idea of art must follow the direction of the political fight because only politics can perceive and fulfil the needs of the working people properly. What has proven itself beneficial for politics, must be right in art as well. (Grotewohl 1951: 208)

These developments during the first years of the GDR provide an initial indication of the close and important connection between politics and cultural affairs in East Germany. After the East German uprising of 1953,³ many artists and writers but also official institutions, urged for more freedom in their creative work as well as for a stronger voice in decisions concerning cultural policy (Erklärung der Deutschen Akademie der Künste 1951: 289; Vorschläge des Kulturbundes für die Entwicklung unseres Kulturlebens 1953: 290f.). Officially, the SED accepted these

demands and granted artists and writers more freedom and agreed to the abolishment of administrative constraints (Ulbricht 1953: 296; Grotewohl 1953: 296; Entschließung des ZK der SED 1953: 297f.). However, in reality, hardly anything changed (Emmerich 1996: 125). Only in 1956, after Nikita Khrushchev had denounced Stalin in a 'Secret Speech' during a closed session of the twentieth congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, did a more open and critical debate on the role of culture become possible.⁴ For example, Walter Ulbricht apologized for possibly 'incorrect administrative methods' concerning cultural affairs at the third party conference of the SED in 1956 (Ulbricht 1956: 429). This short period of liberalization was called the Thaw. However, this period of greater openness was short-lived and ended the same year. After workers' uprisings in Poland and civil uprisings in Hungary,⁵ many East German intellectuals who were critical of the regime were imprisoned (Malycha 2011: 28f.).

Achieving Socialism (1961–71)

The year 1961 marked an important turning point in the history of the GDR when the decision was made to construct the Berlin Wall. In the preceding years, many people had left the GDR (Malycha 2011: 33) which prompted the government to tighten regulations in order to prevent any economic problems that might be caused by a lack of qualified workers. As a result, the construction of an 'antifascist boundary wall' was commissioned, all borders with the West were closed and guarded by the military (Mählert 2010: 99f.; Malycha 2011: 33).

The construction of the Berlin Wall exerted a crucial influence on artistic and literary works in the GDR (Emmerich 1996: 176). By closing its borders, the GDR became an enclosed entity, and artists and writers began to deal with this new reality in their work even more, many of the young writers had already been socialized in the GDR which was reflected in their work. As a consequence, so-called 'arrival literature'⁶ (Ankunftsliteratur) emerged (176)—these young authors had 'arrived' as East German writers. Before then, there were no authors who had been socialized as East German citizens and thus their work was seen less as

part of a GDR national literature. This changed at the end of the 1950s and especially with the construction of the Berlin Wall when authors increasingly identified with the GDR and a national literature emerged.

In this enclosed country, the government now tried to enforce several reforms in the areas of economics, education, science, and cultural affairs (Malycha 2011: 37–43) which, at first, seemed to imply a liberalization of the GDR's overall political dispensation, especially for young citizens. This liberal development changed radically at the eleventh meeting of the Central Committee of the SED in 1965 after some incidents of youth unrest in Berlin and Leipzig (Mählert 2010: 103f.). Many plays and books were banned, and writers were excluded from the SED or were even banned from their profession (Wagner 2009: 115; Mählert 2010: 106; Malycha 2011: 44). Erich Honecker especially, who later became the leading figure of the GDR, was appalled by the 'US-American immorality and decadence' reflected in the art and music of that time and urged that the GDR return to being a 'clean' state (Honecker 1964: 1076). In the same year, a newly written constitution was approved, strengthening the SED's position as the sole governing party in the country (Malycha 2011: 45).

The stricter perspectives and practices enforced by the government of the GDR also had negative consequences for artists and writers in terms of censorship of their works, many of which were not published anymore. Some were criticized in public for their works or banned from the stage, such as the popular singer-songwriter and poet Wolf Biermann who had emigrated to the GDR in 1953, and others were even arrested (Emmerich 1996: 179f.). The new climate of repression was also noticeable in Ulbricht's speeches during the 1960s: he criticized writers and artists whom he accused of using the controversy over Stalin to undermine Socialist Realism as the leading principle for art and literature (Ulbricht 1963a: 813; Ulbricht 1963b: 887). At the second Bitterfeld Conference in April 1964,⁷ not only was literature by Kafka, Joyce, and Proust criticized and condemned as 'non-contemporary' and 'unrealistic' (Koch 1965: 946), but further emphasis was placed on the role creative artists should play in the GDR:

It is the most important task of an artist to persuade the people, and to enthruse them for the victory of socialism, for the fraternity of peoples, for peace, and the fight against anything unprogressive.⁸ (Ulbricht 1964: 988f.)

This strict policy continued until 1971: many more works were censored or banned outright (Emmerich 1996: 183).

Constant Shifts Between Liberalization and Repression (1971–89)

In 1971, Ulbricht, who had become a *persona non grata* for the Soviet Union both because of his form of leadership, which repeatedly caused economic crises, and because of his ideas on reunifying Germany, stood down as General Secretary of the SED, officially for reasons of age (Mählert 2010: 115; Wagner 2009: 122; Malycha 2011: 47). Ulbricht himself suggested Honecker as his successor, and he was welcomed by the Soviet Union as a leader who was compliant with Soviet ideas of a planned economy and who was against a united Germany (Malycha 2011: 47f.). After Honecker had taken office in 1971, a certain optimism spread among the population as well as among artists and writers due to his seemingly more open-minded social policy. At a meeting on the development of cultural life in December 1971, Honecker stated:

If you take socialism as the strict starting point, there can be no taboos in the area of art and literature in my opinion. This concerns questions of content and style – briefly speaking: all questions which you can call artistic craftsmanship. (Honecker 1971)

Although this seemed to open many possibilities for artists and writers, the true intentions of Honecker's words become clear with a closer examination: any liberalization was only intended for those who remained within the boundaries of socialism; and these boundaries were defined by the government. Works that did not respect these guidelines were harshly criticized in public by official cultural critics (Malycha 2011: 56) and were subjected to stage and print bans (Emmerich 1996: 247).

In the following years, there was a constant shift between rather short-lived periods of liberalization and periods of repression. The year 1976 marked another turning point in this political to-and-fro when Wolf Biermann was expelled from the GDR (Malycha 2011: 56). Biermann had been to West Germany for a concert and wanted to travel back to East Germany, but he was denied entry and lost his East German citizenship on Honecker's direct orders (56f.). A few days later, several renowned East German writers such as Christa Wolf and Stefan Hermlin published a public letter of protest in which they criticized the decision of the SED (Mählert 2010: 129). The party reacted promptly and issued several stages and publication bans, and interrogated and spied on many writers (Malycha 2011: 57). This resulted in many formerly pro-socialist writers leaving the country. Those who stayed in East Germany and dared to speak out against the political regime feared further consequences such as expulsion from the Writers Union (Mählert 2010: 130). In 1979, for example, Stefan Heym and eight other writers were expelled from the Writers Union as a punishment for supporting Biermann (Malycha 2011: 57).

In the course of the 1980s, East Germany faced severe economic problems which may be one reason why the government did not devote as much attention to the cultural policy as in previous decades. In the last years of the GDR, there was no clearly identifiable cultural policy. It gradually became possible to publish works which would have been unthinkable in the first years of the GDR (Kirsten 2004: 193). As Mikhail Gorbachev initiated the policies of *perestroika* and *glasnost* and made the governmental decision-making processes in the Soviet Union public, including those regarding cultural affairs, the GDR resisted the new political course of the Soviet Union and Gorbachev's policies of liberalization, despite the increasingly fierce national and international demands for a new Soviet way (Emmerich 1996: 266). At the tenth meeting of the Writers Union in 1987, two writers publicly called for the abolition of censorship. This was ignored by government officials in public; however, in the following years, the print permit process was first decentralized and then finally abolished in 1989, shortly before the GDR ceased to exist as a country (269). This step was the last of many in the ever-changing cultural policy of the GDR.

Censorship of Artistic Work in the GDR

One important element of the GDR's cultural policy was the censorship process. The censorship of artistic works in the GDR is a somewhat complicated topic since it was always denied in public by leading politicians such as Ulbricht and Honecker (Reichardt 2011: 364). Also, all editions of the East German constitution guaranteed freedom of opinion and of speech. In the 1968 version, Article 27 states that:

1. Every citizen of the German Democratic Republic has the right, in accordance with the spirit and aims of this Constitution, to express his opinion freely and publicly. This right is not limited by any service or employment relationship. Nobody may be placed at a disadvantage for exercising this right.
2. Freedom of the press, radio and television are guaranteed. (Verfassung der DDR 1968)

For this reason, politically and ideologically motivated censorship in the GDR had to be covert and could not be imposed through visible actions. The censorship process started with the founding of the Cultural Advisory Board for the Publishing Industry in 1946 which was intended to review all manuscripts before publication (Emmerich 1996: 116). A more comprehensive monitoring started in 1951 when the Office for Literature and Publishing and the Governmental Commission for Cultural Affairs were founded. Both institutions later became part of the Ministry of Cultural Affairs. In 1963, the Central Office for Publishing Houses and the Book Trade was established within the Ministry (Reichardt 2011: 368) which, from then on, was responsible for the so-called print permit process.

In the GDR, publishing houses had to plan ahead by several years. They first had to create a prospect plan (Perspektivplan) for the next three to five years and a thematic plan (Themenplan) for the following year which included the authors and/or books they intended to publish (Friedemann and Wollesky 2011: 320). After these plans had been accepted by the Central Office for Publishing Houses and the Book Trade, the publishing house also had to apply for a print permit from

the Central Office. This Office was responsible for the publication of literary as well as scientific texts and can be considered the GDR's covert censorship board. In addition to the manuscript to be published, this application had to include a standardized form as well as a report written by the publishing house stating why they regarded the book as worth publishing. This application usually included a preface written by the leading editor of the book, which ideologically positioned the author(s) and their texts in the target culture, particularly with regard to their educational value for socialist readers in the GDR, or to 'excuse' ideological or moral lapses. These paratexts together with the manuscript were then reviewed by employees of the Central Office who wrote a report themselves, either approving the application or rejecting it.

The print permit process was a form of *preventive censorship*, meaning that literary works were censored before their publication. When asked about their involvement in the literary production process, government officials explained their intervention simply as a form of guidance (Jäger 1993: 21) or as a necessary part of the fight against 'imperialistic barbarism' (Breuer 1982: 242). The process was the same for translations: the publishing house had to hand in the translation with the same standardized form, along with a report arguing in favour of the book and the author. As this could prove costly if the book was not authorized after it had been translated, publishers generally selected for translation those authors and books which they were reasonably sure would be approved by the Central Office for Publishing Houses and the Book Trade. The non-selection of potentially problematic books as a form of self-censorship was thus another decisive factor in the censorship process in the GDR.

The Role of Translations in the GDR

As we have seen from this account, great importance was attributed to the cultural life of the state and especially its literature by the Party—the GDR was often called a 'country of readers' (Leseland) by party congress of the SED in 1981 (Honecker 1981), again emphasizing the importance of literature for the political cause. Translations made up a

significant amount of all literary works published in the GDR, especially at the beginning of its existence. Figure 10.1 shows the proportion of translations compared to overall production, including non-fiction and non-fiction translations. ‘Overall production’ is all books and brochures published in the GDR, ‘Fiction’ comprises all publications belonging to literary fiction and the category ‘Translations (fiction)’ includes all translations of fiction.⁹

Fiction played a particularly important role and accounted for about one third of annual book production. This can in part be explained by the fact that after the founding of the GDR, attempts were made to re-educate the population in favour of socialism and literature was considered to play an important educational function. However, the circulation of works of fiction was much lower than that of political propaganda magazines. Translations, on the other hand, accounted on average for half of all fiction titles, with the percentage ratio being particularly high at the beginning of the GDR and successively falling from the end of the 1970s onwards. There are various reasons for this: the initially high proportion of translations is due to the fact that in the early days

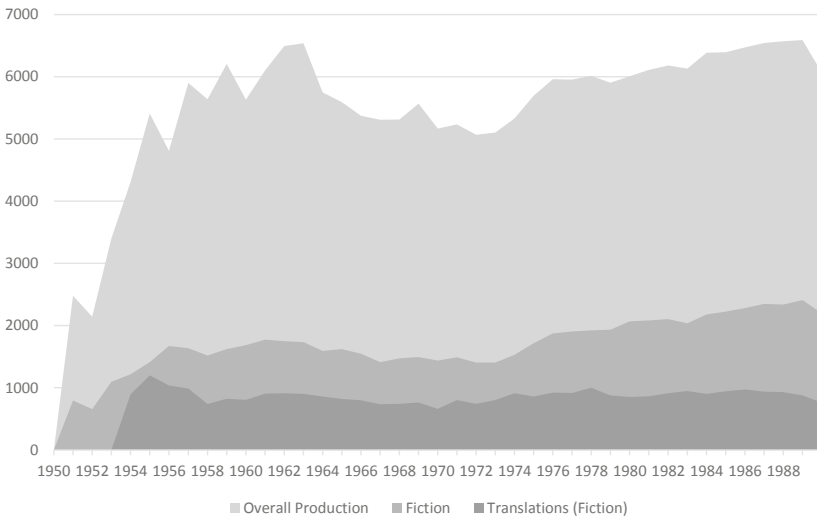


Fig. 10.1 Publication figures in the GDR

of the GDR there was no literature by GDR authors; this changed in the course of the 1950s, leading to a decline in the percentage of translations. The Bitterfeld Conference of 1959 also contributed significantly to the focus in the GDR's literary production on works by domestic authors. The construction of the Berlin Wall, however, had hardly any influence on the percentage of translations. One of the reasons for the shifting proportion of domestic works and translations from the end of the 1970s onwards can be found in the GDR's economic constitution: due to the country's economic instability there was less incentive to spend valuable resources on buying the rights to translations. Of these translations, the majority were translated from languages of the Soviet Union, with Russian unsurprisingly exceeding all other languages. One genre that was especially popular in the GDR was so-called adventure literature. The publishing house 'Neues Leben', for example, issued a series of books called 'The New Adventure' which comprised 530 titles for a total of 79,000,000 copies printed between 1949 and 1990 (Kranter 2009: 2). These titles included both new and republished German works as well as translations, mostly of Jack London.

The GDR was called a 'country of readers' but the significant amount of translations in relation to the overall publication of fictional works raises the question of whether the GDR can also be described as a country of translators. The following section will examine the status of translators in the GDR by looking at the educational situation, their financial remuneration, and their recognition in the form of prizes, scholarships, and the like.

Being a Translator in the GDR

Training Situation

If someone wanted to become an interpreter or translator in the GDR, there were several 'language mediator' (the collective term for interpreters and translators in the GDR) training centres to choose from. The two most prestigious and important were the Karl Marx University in Leipzig (Leipzig University 2019) and the Humboldt University in

Berlin (Salevsky 1996). From 1974 onwards, there was a state curriculum for university language mediator training, developed first and foremost by Otto Kade, the first professor of Translation Studies (*Übersetzungswissenschaft*) in the GDR (24). This curriculum standardized the training and made the following subjects compulsory: language and translation theory, modern language and comparative linguistics, language training, translation and interpreting practice, literature, regional studies, diploma training as well as German, and typing (24). In addition, trainee translators had to complete practical work assignments and a long internship.

Financial Situation and Social Status

Although the majority of translators in the GDR worked freelance, they were still financially secure. A so-called ‘normal publishing house contract’ (Normalverlagsvertrag) was drawn up between translators and publishers regulating payment (SV 1118): from the 1970s a fee was fixed for literary translators at between 14 and 20 GDR marks per page (Reschke 2005: 20f.), while technical translators generally received less (Thomson-Wohlgemuth 2009: 111) since the cultural value of literary translation outweighed the economic value of technical translations. One third of this was paid when the contract was signed, another third when the translators submitted the translated manuscript, and the rest when the publisher accepted the manuscript (SV 1118). This meant that translators received part of their fee even before they started work. In addition, translators could receive additional fees in the form of royalties (Reschke 2005: 21) and translation licenses (Thomson-Wohlgemuth 2004: 506). Usually, it was also stipulated that the name of the translator had to be included on the book cover, something that was also regulated in the normal publishing contract (SV 1118). However, an examination of some translations would suggest that this was hardly ever observed.

One organization responsible for these favourable conditions was the professional association of translators in the GDR, namely the translators’ section of the German Writers Union (DSV), which, for example, negotiated the ‘normal publishing house contract’ with the Ministry of

Cultural Affairs in 1955 (Thomson-Wohlgemuth 2009: 111). In the DSV, translators had the same status as authors and therefore enjoyed the same privileges (Thomson-Wohlgemuth 2004: 504). For example, social security contributions were also paid by the Writers Union if one was a member (Thomson-Wohlgemuth 2009: 110). Social security—regardless of whether the contributions were paid by the translator or by the DSV—was a second important safety net for translators in addition to the ‘normal publishing house contract’, as it meant that they could receive money during sick leave or parental leave (Thomson-Wohlgemuth 2004: 505). If you were a member of the translators’ section, you were also entitled to stay in a work and recreation home, where you could retire for a few weeks or months and work at a very reasonable rent. Furthermore, the professional association supported and organized such stays in foreign socialist countries (Reschke 2005: 21).

Translators, however, were not only supported in their work by financial means or with social security benefits, but also by translator prizes, which were awarded regularly in the GDR. The translators’ section of the Writers Union regularly honoured outstanding translations with special translation competitions (Thomson-Wohlgemuth 2004: 504). From 1957, the Academy of Arts (Akademie der Künste) awarded the F.C. Weiskopf Prize which was also given to translators, and individual publishers also awarded prizes for translations (Reschke 2005: 21f.). Furthermore, if certain ideological requirements were met, the national prize of the GDR which, among others, honoured outstanding works and achievements in the areas of art and literature could also be awarded to translators (Reschke 2005: 21). Due to increased public awareness, translators were also invited to read from their works (Thomson-Wohlgemuth 2009: 113).

These very favourable working conditions, especially in comparison to Western countries, were also reflected in the self-perception of translators and their work, as we shall see in the following sections.

Writers Union of the GDR

The Writers Union of the GDR was founded in 1950 under the name German Writers Union (Deutscher Schriftstellerverband) as part of the Cultural Association of the GDR, and it was the main professional organization for East German writers. In 1952, it became an independent organization which was heavily subsidized by the government (Walther 1996: 42f.). The first president of the union was the East German writer Anna Seghers who remained in office until 1978. In 1973, it was renamed Writers Union of the GDR (Schriftstellerverband der DDR) and was controlled by the cultural department of the Central Committee of the SED (Kanning 2009: 301).

The union was organized into several different district unions which corresponded to the territorial structure of the GDR. The Berlin section was the biggest with the majority of the overall members (Walther 1996: 42). All writers of belletristic works, translators, editors, publishers, literary critics and scholars, and other persons connected to the literary field could become a member of the union. To become a member, the applicant had to be a citizen of the GDR and formally apply for membership at their respective district union which also involved handing in two recommendations which certified his/her literary worth and political affiliations (Herbst, Ranke, and Winkler 1994: 865). It was not necessary to be a member in order to publish, but it made things easier (Goldstein 2017: 5) and writers were only granted official status as writers when they were members. There were also sections according to professional groups. Some examples are the sections for literary translation, poetry, drama, and even crime fiction.¹⁰ As a professional organization, it was responsible for the support of young writers, for scholarships, as well as visits abroad (Walther 1996: 43). The sections also organized readings, book fairs, and other related events.

Although it was the professional organization of and for writers and it was allegedly independent, it must not be forgotten that, ultimately, it was yet another body created to enforce the cultural policy of the government. For example, the bylaws of the union from 1973 stated:

The members of the Writers Union of the GDR acknowledge the leading role of the working class and their party in cultural policy. They commit to the principle of Socialist Realism. They vehemently oppose all forms of ideological coexistence with and the intrusion of reactionary and revisionist perceptions in the areas of literature. (Statuten des Schriftstellerverbandes der DDR 1973, in Kanning 2009)

It thus becomes clear why the Writers Union was often seen as a ‘transmission belt’ (Michael, Pötsch, and Walther 1997: 63) between the government and writers and a monitoring tool of the SED. One of the main activities of the union was regular writers’ congresses. These conferences were an opportunity for members to discuss questions concerning their work and also to elect the board of the union. However, only delegates elected by their district unions could attend these conferences (Herbst, Ranke, and Winkler 1994: 865), which were seen as a platform to give an account to the SED of its achievements.

Protocols of Translator Meetings Within the Writers Union

As has been mentioned before, the Writers Union was often seen as a means to transmit government cultural policy to writers. This may also hold true for the translators’ section within the union. To examine whether the discourse on the role of cultural affairs in the GDR was adopted by translators, several protocols of these meetings will be analyzed in what follows. The protocols are from conferences held from the 1950s to the beginning of the 1970s. As was shown in the overview of the GDR’s cultural policy, this is an especially interesting period in which many radical changes took place. The results of the analysis will be discussed against the backdrop of these developments.

It must be noted that, since the Writers Union was at least partly a political organization, the discourse reflected in these speeches and reports mainly reflects the official opinion of the translators rather than their personal one. This distinction is important but it can be assumed that their official and personal opinions overlapped, at least in the case

of those translators who gave speeches at the meetings. Although it was possible for any translator to become a member, only renowned translators, especially those who translated from Russian and other Soviet languages, were asked to participate actively in these meetings.¹¹ Therefore, they were public figures to a certain degree which makes it reasonable to assume that they acted in accordance with Party principles out of personal conviction.

The Role of Translation and Translators

The translators' section within the Writers Union met on a regular basis starting in 1954. At these meetings, members of the translators' section discussed specific professional questions and problems of translation such as the translation of dialect elements or difficult source texts (SV 332; SV 777; SV 785; Remané 1961). One theme that was regularly discussed was the role of translation and translators in the GDR and also for the GDR.

Already in 1954, one of the translators spoke about the role of translation in the establishment of a national literature.¹² He argued that translation was a part of the literature one translated into and that the translator acted as a servant who connected cultures. As he summarized it: 'the translator is less than the author, and the translator is more than the author' (SV 332).

This discourse on the importance of translations for a national literary canon was continued in the report of the translators' section for the fifth congress of the Writers Union in 1961, the year the first bricks of the Berlin Wall were laid. For the first time, a report of the translators' section was included in the official protocol of the congress (V. Deutscher Schriftstellerkongress vom 25. bis 27. Mai 1961). The translator listed as author of this report, Liselotte Remané, emphasized the importance of translations of Soviet literature for the de-Nazification of East Germany (Remané 1961: 284) in line with the leading doctrine of East German cultural policy. Remané was a particularly renowned translator who, together with her husband Martin Remané, translated from Russian and English into German (Reschke 2002: 7). Her translations

of children's literature, especially, are still well-known today, such as her translation of *Peter and the Wolf* which was the first German version to be published. After the Second World War, she worked as a journalist for the *Berliner Zeitung* but had to leave after its organization was taken over by the Central Committee (*Berliner Zeitung* 2002).

In her report, Remané noted that translations of works which were of great political and ideological value, and of a high literary quality, were very important to the East German literary canon. In her words, it was the role of the translator to create a masterpiece in their mother tongue which was adequate to the ideological and aesthetic content of the original (Remané 1961: 287). As a concluding remark, Remané asked the board of the Writers Union to include the following passage in the bylaws of the organization:

The development of a socialist world literature is unthinkable without the translations of the best literary works of the peoples of the Socialist Camp, the young nations which fight for their liberation, not only at an economic and political level, but also on an ideological one, as well as progressive and humanist authors of capitalist countries. To discover and interpret these treasures of contemporary literature in addition to the classic heritage of the past, is the important task of our translators. To be able to fulfil this task, they certainly need to struggle for absolute ideological clarity and artistic quality, just as authors do. Only in this way, will these literary translations become an integral part of the socialist national literature of Germany.

At the meeting in 1954, one of the speakers listed four requirements expected of a translator, namely: language skills, a knowledge of the source culture, understanding the topic of the work, but also a 'minimum of ideological clarity' (SV 332). A translator had to be able to perceive and transfer the progressive aspect of any text. Remané spoke of a similar responsibility when she said that translators had to have a certain artistic talent. However, she also stressed that in addition translators needed to be 'partisan', meaning that they had to actively support the cause of the GDR.

It can be said that these contributions match the discourse of the SED on the ideological responsibility of literature as described in the first

section above. The translators, of course, emphasized the significance of their work, but the general notion held by the SED, that literature plays an important part in society, is also reflected in these speeches and reports. One possible reason for this may be that, although they were limited to a certain extent in their work by official regulations, the importance is given by the state to literature, and thus literary translation, also increased the status of translators and the value of their professional activities; a fact which made them more inclined to adopt the leading ideology.

Translation Practice

At the meeting in 1954, several translators held speeches on translation practice in the GDR and on the principles that should guide translators in their work (SV 332). One speaker claimed that a translator should always and absolutely value the content above the form of a text. He further argued that this principle allowed the translator to deviate from the original in some cases, especially if the text to be translated showed naturalistic or formalistic features. His colleagues shared similar ideas saying that the translator was responsible for recognizing the revolutionary and realistic value of a book and that they should reproduce this accordingly.

More than 15 years later at another meeting of the translators' section in 1971, the discourse on translation and its role in society had hardly changed (SV 777) despite the many political changes that had taken place in the meantime. In a discussion on the partisanship of translators, several translators spoke of the correct approach towards a text. Since no foreign text was written for East Germany, translators needed to detect the value of a book for the GDR and translate it accordingly. They further stated that certain books needed stylistic improvement in order to emphasize the true intentions of the author as well as the realistic elements of a text. This mention of the importance of Socialist Realism again reinforces the notion that the leading doctrines of GDR cultural policy were reflected in the discourse on translation concerning the way a text should be translated. According to one translator, if some parts of

a text were 'weaker' than others, translators had two possibilities: they could either increase the quality of these weaker parts, in other words, alter and censor them in a way, or they could 'denounce' them in the translation, meaning translate them literally, and thus reveal the tensions in the original texts.

This choice made between two possible approaches to translation was discussed in other meetings. In most speeches, the translators referred to 'adequate' translation as the correct method (SV 332, SV 777, Remané 1961). The notion of 'adequacy' as used in the GDR should not be confused with the usual understanding of adequacy in Translation Studies as being source-oriented, in opposition to the target-oriented notion of acceptability (Toury 1995: 56f.). For translators in the GDR 'adequacy' meant that translations needed to be (re)written for the East German audience in accordance with the principles of East German cultural policy. The notion of what constituted an adequate translation, therefore, varied in line with changes in state cultural policy, ranging from the appreciation of more literal strategies to the promotion of freer, or more manipulative, strategies. At a meeting in 1954, a more literal approach was still considered appropriate. At this meeting, one translator said that translating freely was a falsification of the original text. He went on to say: 'Usually, it is said that the highest praise for a translation is that you can read it as if it weren't a translation. I have never considered this to be praise' (SV 332). One of his colleagues seems to have followed the same notion when formulating four principles of translation, of which the first was to acknowledge the possibility of a translation that is as equivalent to its original.

However, equivalence and the adoption of a literal approach apparently started to give way to more manipulative strategies, in line with changes in cultural policy. As work on the Berlin Wall began in 1961, restrictions on the publication of literature became steadily stricter, accompanied by more restrictive regulations and the increasing institutionalization of the censorship process. Consequently, an 'adequate' translation came to mean one where more changes were made to the text so that it would be accepted by the Central Office for Publishing Houses and the Book Trade. However, these different approaches were not applied consistently. So, while in her report for the protocol of the

Writers Union's congress in 1961 Remané still called for an adequate translation, meaning literal equivalence, and said that a translation has to be a text 'which is at least approximately adequate to the original' (Remané 1961: 287), by 1971 her colleagues had moved towards a freer understanding of adequacy where there could be loss of information in a translation, either concerning the opinions of the author or the information given about the world. But it was understood that this loss of information could lead to better quality, that is greater ideological adequacy (SV 777).

Another aspect that was repeatedly discussed over the years in the meetings of the translators was the active selection of books to be translated:

We will not passively and randomly accept all books that are recommended for translation. Although we know that the publishing houses have qualified employees and act carefully when selecting books to be translated, the translator, in my opinion, is obliged to engage himself in analyzing the work for its political and literary quality in order to be able to decide whether the translation is justified and whether he is qualified to do the translation. (Remané 1961: 286)

In the discussion on the partisanship of translators at a meeting in 1971, one translator tried to formulate several guidelines on this topic. The first concerned the choice of books to be translated (SV 777). Choosing a book or accepting a translation offer was the first 'partisan' decision of the translator. He argued that a translator needed to be aware of the importance of a book and of the effect it could have on East German readers and assess its socio-political value. Based on this assessment, a translator needed to decide whether or not to accept a particular translation commission. The second guideline concerned the actual translation of a selected book which, he argued, not only required excellent language skills but also knowledge of the source and target culture. The translator should then translate according to the Bitterfeld Way. Thirdly, translators were also responsible for facilitating the reception of a translation by arguing in favour or against the postface or any reviews in order to help people to perceive the importance of literary translation.

Problems for Translators

At these meetings, the members did not only talk about the role and practice of translation and translators in the GDR, but also about problems they faced in their daily work. One of the most common was collaboration with editors. It was the editors who were responsible for the publication and had to obtain a print permit. Therefore, they would sometimes alter a translation to ensure that the Central Office for Publishing Houses and the Book Trade would approve of the manuscript. Translators clearly did not always appreciate this interference.

This was mentioned in several of the speeches at the translators' meetings:

We all know this from our practice or the practice of others, the everlasting conflict between translators and publishers or editors [...] which complicate our collective work in one way or another. (SV 332)

Another quote indicates that editors also changed translations without the approval of the translator:

I am afraid, the editor has interfered here. (SV 332)

Remané also mentioned this conflict in her report:

It is needless to say that the responsibility of a translator does not end when he hands in the manuscript to the publishing house. He is responsible for the end-product of his work and thus needs to be interested in a fruitful, collective collaboration with the publishing editor. There have been frictions in the past which have resulted from a lack of qualification of one or the other. (Remané 1961: 287)

It should be said that both publishers and translators did not select works for translation and did not alter texts for reasons of censorship alone: they adopted the ideology of the SED to strengthen their position, not just to avoid negative consequences.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined the impact that the cultural policy of the SED had on the life and work of literary translators in the GDR and the way that this evolved as the political context evolved.

Although there was an institutionalized but covert censorship process, the literary field and its actors were guided on many more levels. For example, organizations such as the Writers Union served as a kind of mouthpiece of the SED to spread its ideology among writers, literary translators, and other actors in the publication process, as well as a monitoring instrument to keep a close eye on their work. On the one hand, the archival evidence has shown that literary translators did in fact adopt the ideological discourse of the SED in documents concerning the cultural policy of the East German state. They did so to emphasize their own importance for the establishment of a new society in the GDR. Without setting aside or wanting to underestimate the impact of official censorship mechanisms, translators were, in a way, adapting to the *milieu* of that time in a positive sense as well. On the other hand, translators were probably forced to adopt the appropriate discourse as a means to please the government in the authoritarian environment of the GDR. Further research on other documents with respect to those examined in this chapter, such as interviews or certain literary genres, could be used to look deeper into the self-censorship carried out by translators.

Based on the research done so far, it is difficult to define where the freedom of East German writers and translators began and where it ended. However, by contrasting different levels of material, such as tracing the developments of the cultural policy, analysing the operating principles of certain organizations, and shedding light on the thoughts of the actors, this chapter is intended as a starting point to dissolve the dichotomy between the dictatorial government and a suppressed individual to allow for a more comprehensive understanding of the cultural life of the GDR.

Institutional Names and Abbreviations

English translation	German term	Abbreviation
Central Committee of the SED	Zentralkomitee der SED	ZK
Central Office for Publishing Houses and Book Trade	Hauptverwaltung Verlage und Buchhandel	HV
Cultural Advisory Board for the Publishing Industry	Kultureller Beirat für das Verlagswesen	
Cultural Association for the Democratic Renewal of Germany	Kulturbundes zur demokratischen Erneuerung Deutschlands	
German Democratic Republic	Deutsche Demokratische Republik	GDR
German Writers Union	Deutscher Schriftstellerverband	
Governmental Commission for Cultural Affairs	Staatliche Kommission für Kunstangelegenheiten	
Ministry of Cultural Affairs	Ministerium für Kultur	
Office for Literature and Publishing	Amt für Literatur und Verlagswesen	
Socialist Unity Party	Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands	SED
Soviet occupation zone	Sowjetische Besatzungszone	SBZ
Writers Union of the GDR	Schriftstellerverband der DDR	

Archived Documents of the East German Writers Union at the Archiv der Künste, Berlin

Sv 332

Sv 777

Sv 785

Sv 1118

Notes

1. A list of all abbreviations and organizations in German and English can be found at the end of the chapter.
2. On these topics, see publications by the two leading scholars on literary and book studies in the GDR, Siegfried Lokatis, and Dietrich Löffler.
3. Several political developments of that time led to the East German uprising of 1953 which was violently suppressed by the Soviet military. The enforced implementation of socialism had a severe impact on the economy of the GDR. Industrial workers, who had to accept a *de facto* wage cut of up to 30 per cent because the workload had been raised significantly, were especially dissatisfied with their economic situation. This dissatisfaction culminated in the uprising of 17 June 1953 which started as a downing of tools at one construction site in East Berlin but soon became a nationwide demonstration on the same day. Already on June 17, the GDR leadership called on the Soviet military for help and declared a state of emergency in Berlin and later in other GDR cities. During the uprising 34 demonstrators were killed, several thousands were arrested. For more information on the uprising, see Ostermann (2001).
4. The Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev's speech at the twentieth congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1956 is commonly referred to as his 'Secret Speech' in which he heavily criticized the deceased Joseph Stalin. This speech had far-reaching consequences not only in the Soviet Union where it marked an important point in Khrushchev's Thaw but also beyond as, for example, in the GDR.
5. Both Poland and Hungary, satellite states of the Soviet Union, were in a phase of political liberalization which began after Stalin's death in 1953 and was fueled by Khrushchev's speech in 1956. These developments led to worker protests in Poland demanding better working conditions and student revolts against the government in Hungary which spread quickly across the entire country. Both revolts were violently suppressed by Soviet forces causing many victims, especially in Hungary.

6. The expression originates from the book ‘Ankunft im Alltag’ by Brigitte Reimann.
7. The aim of the Bitterfeld conference was to encourage workers to become active as artists and writers, and also authors to become familiar with the socialist reality in factories in order to be able to write about it afterwards in their works. This idea of bringing artists and workers closer came to be known as the ‘Bitterfeld Way’.
8. In Socialist Realism, the guiding principle in the cultural policy of the GDR, central dogmas are progress and positive development of life—the desired aim of creative work was the progressive development of heroes and heroines.
9. The data in Fig. 10.1 and that referred to in the discussion that follows was taken from the *German National Bibliography*, the *Index Translationum* and Löffler (2011).
10. Although crime fiction was not considered appropriate literature in the official cultural policy of the GDR and was seen as contrary to Socialist Realism, it enjoyed great popularity, especially in the 1970s and 1980s after Honecker had taken over (Germer 2009: 178).
11. For more information on the different categories of translators concerning their political allegiance, see Blum and Hofeneder (2020).
12. The translators’ names are not given here in accordance with the policy of the archives of the GDR that the names found in documents of people who may still be alive not be published.

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11

The Allen Ginsberg 'Case' and Translation (in) History: How Czechoslovakia Elected and Then Expelled the King of May

Igor Tyšš

In 1965 American Beat poet Allen Ginsberg visited the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic (CSSR) twice. His stays in Prague, Bratislava, and several other cities, impressed and inspired many cultured people, mainly the younger generation and students. However, Ginsberg could not escape the watchful eyes of the state and its security services, namely the police force, *Verejná bezpečnosť* (VB, the Public Security), and the secret service, *Štátna bezpečnosť* (ŠtB, the State Security), who monitored him, intervened, and in the end had him expelled from the country.

In this chapter, we shall look at the historical circumstances of Ginsberg's 1965 visits from the perspective of translation history, since translation played an important role in the episode. By drawing attention to the translational and intercultural aspects, we can better understand

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the complex relationships between the culture, society, and the politics of the era and contribute to a better historical understanding, not just of what happened to Ginsberg but also *to* and *in* the era itself. Such a historical approach views translation as one of an era's discourses whose order (Foucault 1981: 52) needs to be 'mapped out'. However, in order to refrain from anachronistically imposing contemporary perspectives on historical material, in this instance, translation will be treated as a historical case deeply embedded in its context (see Saldanha and O'Brien 2014).

An Interstitial Period: The Regime vs. Writers and the Youth

Nikita Khrushchev's Secret Speech in February 1956 denouncing Stalin's personality cult and oppressive policies left most of the Eastern Bloc puzzled, and de-Stalinization did not proceed in the individual Soviet satellite states in the same manner or with the same intensity.

The Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (KSČ), which had always been extremely loyal to the USSR, did not dare to criticize Stalin's personality cult too harshly because prominent Czechoslovak Stalinists, many of whom were complicit in the political and judicial crimes of the 1950s, were still members of its upper echelons. However, when the first signs of economic recession started to appear in 1956 (most significantly the collapse of the 1949–53 five-year plan, see Pernes 2000), the Party was forced to abandon the frequent use of overt methods of exerting its power (Marušiak 2001) such as political trials, public purges, and sanctions in the workplace. Small concessions had to be made, slow decentralization was pursued, and venues for freer discussion were opened. However, the so-called 'first attempt' at de-Stalinization (Marušiak 2011) effectively came to a halt by early 1957. Having seen what transpired in Poland and Hungary in 1956, the Czechoslovak Politburo became once again suspicious of *any* internal criticism.

In 1956 writers and students were the most critical of the regime. The Second Congress of the Union of Czechoslovak Writers took place

on 22–29 April 1956. The writers publicly rejected the party's direct leverage over art (through centralized institutions such as artists' unions and state-run publishing houses) and its promotion of socialist realism as the only valid artistic method, and asked for more space to be creative and critical (as seen in speeches by František Hrubín and Jaroslav Seifert, see Příbání 2002: 432–43). Translator Zora Jesenská (1956: 4) used a camouflaged language in her speech to publicly promote more translations of Western literary works in order not to hinder 'great ideological discussions which even translated works could spark off'.¹ The writers' union congress was one of the very few platforms through which writers and translators could leverage some informal influence over the cultural policy. The congress in 1956 took place after news about Khrushchev's secret speech had already leaked to the Czechoslovak public (Marušák 2001) and caused some tension in the lower tiers of the party (Štefánský 2012). Another source of concern for the party leadership at the time were the discussions about the problems of the state school system and persecution of intellectuals that were starting to appear in the press (Matthews 1998). The 1956 writers' congress was one of the most significant cultural events of that year, and it was widely covered in newspapers and magazines (the popular magazine *Kultúrny život* [Cultural Life] printed the texts of speeches and minutes of meetings in full). Therefore, Jesenská's arguments resonated among the literati. The particular mode of camouflaged apologetics in favour of the need to translate—and thus confront—Western literature became popular. It was used in 1956 on the pages of *Světová literatura* [Foreign Literature] to defend the translations of Ernest Hemingway (Semínová 2003) and survived well into the 1960s (Tyšš 2017a). Thus, it could be said that Jesenská was instrumental in shifting the translation policy from translating indiscriminately and *en masse* almost exclusively from Soviet literature (Kusá 2017) to a more nuanced translation policy in which the opinions of experts could influence the editorial plans of publishing houses.

Even though many of the most urgent demands voiced at the congress did not materialize, some did. The most significant in terms of translation was the establishment of the Czech magazine *Světová literatura* which focused on foreign literature translations and whose editors sought to publish more English and American literature (Semínová

2003). The writers were also allowed to launch two magazines for young authors, the Czech *Květen* [May] and the Slovak *Mladá tvorba* [Young Creations]. These not only promoted further development of their respective national literatures, but also published translations and texts on foreign literature, basically filling the void which the rigidly centralized publishing industry was too slow to fill (Tyšš 2017a).

University students represented the 'gray zone'² (Šiklová 1990) of socialist society, and, because of their education and competences, the regime was keen either to woo them or, if necessary, silence them. In 1956 the students spoke out against the bad conditions in their dorms, compulsory military service, and the poor quality of the education they were receiving in a series of resolutions which were printed and unofficially distributed in larger cities (chiefly Prague). They also called for the unified, party-controlled Czechoslovak Union of Youth (ČSM) to decentralize. Some of their resolutions even called for democratic reforms (Matthews 1998; Svatoš 2000; Marušiak 2009).

In May 1956 the students showed their dissatisfaction with satirical, carnival-like parades called *majáles*³ which they organized in Bratislava and Prague. In the 1956 parades, which in Prague attracted around 100,000 onlookers (Svatoš 2000), the students carried witty posters criticizing not just the schools but also the government (for instance, the state's devotion to the USSR). As a result, the party did not allow *majáles* parades for nearly ten years, but the students' dissatisfaction persisted. From 1961, every year on May Day for three years, students would protest near the memorial of the Czech Romantic poet Karel Hynek Mácha in Prague. The police would always engage them, and these protests would end not just in reprimands by their faculties but also in court hearings and prison sentences. However, after 1963 the Czech Communist Party decided not to engage in reprisals against students anymore. This marked the beginning of the so-called 'policy of trust', signalled by the catchphrase 'after all, they are our children' (Svatoš 2000: 98). It was agreed that non-conformity is natural in students and that, instead of punishing them, discussion was more useful. The public and secret police followed suit, and in 1963 they changed tactics from direct intervention to close monitoring of student activities. However, they also

built networks of collaborators and informants among them (see Pažout 2008; Svatoš 2000).

In 1965 the Party decided to allow *majáles* parades again, since it wanted the students to vent their frustrations. However, according to Michal Svatoš (2000: 102), socialist *majáles* was a form of 'organized entertainment' and, if it exceeded certain boundaries, would lead to harsh repression, trials, and expulsions. So even though the regime did not officially interfere with the *majáles* preparations, everything needed to be sanctioned and the secret police was always close by.

In terms of its cultural history, the period between 1956 and 1968 can be seen as an interstitial period of compromises and precedents. This is also true of the reception of foreign literature in Czechoslovakia in the 1950s and 1960s, whose characteristics have been summed up by Kovačičová (2009: 122–3) as follows:

1. An incremental de-ideologization of literature—with a return to aesthetic criteria, intellectual qualities, experimentation, and individuality.
2. A programmatic attention to contemporary literature.
3. Increasing coverage of authors from all over the world in literary magazines, and not just from the East.

Yet the centre of the politically organized literary system—book publishing, the writers' union, and cultural politics—resisted such changes and only opened up very slowly (which we shall return to later).

Ginsberg and Beat Literature in Czechoslovakia Before 1965

The reception in Czechoslovakia of less conformist American literature reflects the instability of its literary field. Czechoslovak readers first got to know the Beat Generation through translation, reviews, and critical articles which started appearing in periodicals after 1956, while book publications came later. When it came to books, by 1965, there was a Czech translation of Ferlinghetti's poetry (1962) and a Czech edition of

Kerouac's short stories (1963); these were followed a year later by another Ferlinghetti translation (1964) and a book of Corso's poems (1964). Interestingly enough, all these translations into Czech were carried out by one person: Jan Zábřana. As for Slovak translations in book format, there was just one, of Ferlinghetti's poetry (1965), the result of collaboration between language expert Ján Vilikovský and poet Vojtech Mihálik.⁴ By 1965 the most translated Beat author was Ferlinghetti whose style is less radical (if Beat at all). But his texts did help to establish a precedent which favoured the publication of more 'pure-bred' Beat writers (see Vilikovský 1965: 148).

Commentators in magazines often criticized the Beat writers for their drug use, homosexuality, and eccentricities taken from 'negro streets' (Ruppeldt 1959). Soviet critics (in articles published in Czech or Slovak translation) also criticized the Beat authors on ideological grounds with claims that they were 'degraded and weak, lacking in will and ideas' (Orlovová and Kopelev 1959: 366) or that their rebellion was just a pose (Romanovová 1962). But there were also commentators who were able to evaluate the Beat Generation without falling back on ideologically motivated moralizing and were able to perceive the objective aesthetic and worldview properties of their work (Ruppeldt 1959; Válek 1960).

Typically, however, the people presenting translations of the Beat authors had to rely on discursive camouflage. When, for example, the *Mladá tvorba* magazine published a selection of such translations in 1962 (in which one of Corso's poems appeared in Slovak for the first time and which included a positive review of Ferlinghetti's novella *Her* by Zuzana Bothová), the editors prefaced them with a fairly critical article by Soviet literary critic E. S. Romanovová (1962).⁵ Such paratextual camouflage was common in other literary magazines as well. Translations in magazines were frequently introduced with a biographical paratext where some of the author's views were criticized. Significantly, these paratexts were more often than not in a smaller typeface and positioned on the margins of the page. Many authors at the time also wrote reviews of translated or even original literature (as seen below) in which they voiced a more general critical claim about the target culture or literature. The review thus served as a kind of cover-up.

Thus, it could be argued that young Czech and Slovak critics were aware of the values of Beat literature, even though, under the circumstances, they could not emphasize them too much. A good example of this is Zuzana Bothová's note on the Beat authors' worldview which she 'hid' in her review of Ferlinghetti's *Her*. She claimed that Beat individualism grew out of a different literary tradition, and that it should not be examined using solely the criteria of the Czech and Slovak target cultures (1962: 50). When comparing their local traditions with contemporary American non-conformist literature, the Czech and Slovak critics recognized the deficiencies and provincialism of these traditions. This is the conclusion Bothová once again presented 'covered up' in a review: 'The younger generation of writers seeking adequate forms to express their views of life derive their inspiration from streaks of Modernism which have been developing without ruptures in countries where no revolutionary social changes have taken place' (1964: 36).

Even though there were no book translations of Ginsberg's works, and his poetry was only known through a small number of translations published in magazines (albeit with exceptionally large circulations) or from having been presented at readings, the poet was already known in Czechoslovakia before his arrival in 1965. Jan Zábřana's Czech translations of Ginsberg's poems, which first came out in the *Světová literatura* magazine (Hájek 1959), were very successful and widely read. Zábřana would lend the manuscripts of his Beat translations to friends and they were circulated widely among the youth of Prague (Zábřana 2001; Bezr 2014). The translations were also read at jazz evenings that were held in the café and wine bar called Viola in Prague, where American poetry had been presented regularly since 1963 (Divadlo Viola 2018).

American Beat poetry also influenced a group of young Prague poets known as the Czech Beats, namely Václav Hrabě, Inka Mahulová, and Vladimíra Čerepková (Rauwolf 2007). In Slovakia, there were also poets who felt an affinity with Beat aesthetics and lifestyle, most notably the group known as *Osamelí běžci* [Lonely Runners], which included Ivan Laučík, Ivan Štrpka, and Peter Repka (Somolayová 2007; Tyšš 2017a), as well as individual poets such as Maja Gáboríková, Jozef Urban, and Ivan Kolenič (Šrank 2011).

Allen Ginsberg in Czechoslovakia: The First Visit and 'Not Getting into Trouble'

Allen Ginsberg's first stay in Czechoslovakia lasted from 18 February to 19 March 1965, and he saw the visit as 'relatively successful in the sense of not getting into trouble' (Ginsberg and Lass 1998: 170). Ginsberg had been deported from Cuba, but because of the embargo, he could not be sent directly to the US and so was sent home via Czechoslovakia. But although his arrival in Prague was a mere chance, Ginsberg decided to stay and got a residence permit. This was possible thanks to his Prague friends, the writer and editor Josef Škvorecký and the translator Jan Zábřana, who registered him as an official guest of the Union of Czechoslovak Writers. The union even awarded Ginsberg a grant (see Blažek 2012).

The support of the writers' union, the only nationwide association of writers, translators, and literary scholars and one which was under direct supervision of the party, meant that Ginsberg was formally recognized by the state. This status is evident in the news coverage of the poet in official periodicals (see Tyšš 2016). As an official visiting writer, Ginsberg was a guest of honour at public and cultural events, most notably the reading of his poetry (by himself in the original and Zábřana in Czech) at Charles University and readings at the Writers' Club and the Poetry Theatre in Bratislava.

Apart from the grant, Ginsberg was also given considerable royalties for the readings of his poems in several small poetry theatres and bars (like the Viola). He was not just welcome in Czechoslovakia, but, thanks to the well-known translations in *Světová literatura* and public readings of his works, also well-known and relatively well-off:

And I was owed money for those dramatic performances in the Kavárna Viola. And this had been going on for years. So when I arrived in Prague every student that was awake knew my poetry, it had been published in *Foreign Literature* [*Světová literatura*] [...] It was quite a bit of money, enough for me to accept the two weeks' hospitality from the writers' union and at the same time have a large roll of cash and pay for my

own room in the most elegant hotel [...], Ambassador. (Ginsberg and Lass 1998: 171)

The public image of Ginsberg in Czechoslovakia was very positive during his first visit in 1965. Even though critics pointed out some of his eccentric ideas (regarding sex and politics), in general, he was viewed as a 'progressive' and 'honest' author intent on getting to know life in the Eastern Bloc.

In the 1960s Ginsberg was exceptionally popular with young people. This was in part due to his literary works and their translations. Young people were also fascinated by his unconventional ideas and nomadic lifestyle. An itinerant writer, Ginsberg travelled all around the world, relying mostly on the hospitality of friends and audiences wherever he went (see Kostelanetz 1965).

Such a lifestyle was in stark contrast to what was expected from writers in a centralized socialist literary field. They had to toe the line, attend congresses, and enrol in their union. However, in the 1960s the Czechoslovak literary field saw the steady emergence of small pockets of artistic freedom, mainly in small theatres and around certain literary magazines, such as the Czech *Světová literatura* and *Literární listy* [Literary Gazette], and the Slovak *Kultúrny život*, *Mladá tvorba*, and *Slovenské pohľady* [Slovak Views].

That Ginsberg's presence has been described as 'nothing short of a vision' for young Prague intellectuals (Blažek 2012: 36) attests to the growing internal divisions in the literary field which manifested itself in two ways. Firstly, the 1960s saw a very complex division between the canonical and officially organized centre of the literary field, directed by centralized state institutions such as publishing houses or the writers' union, and the peripheral parts of the field where not only small theatres and literary magazines but also many loose groups of young artists, semi-official magazines such as *Divoké víno* [Wild Wine], or student periodicals such as *Buchar* [Steam Hammer] (see Pažout 2008: 87–8; Tyšš 2017a) operated. Secondly, the generational tensions that existed between the culture and lifestyle of the 'old guard' and that of the younger generation clearly revealed themselves in the Ginsberg case, showing a significant rift between the world of young people,

mostly university students, and the representatives of the state whose aim was to infiltrate their organizations, monitor them, educate them in proper socialist ways, and, if needed, root out any ‘dangerous bourgeois elements’ (see Pažout 2008: 95; Svatoš 2000). Clearly, when Ginsberg arrived, Czechoslovakia was at a crossroads of different interests and ideas.

Ginsberg, who spoke neither Czech nor Slovak, required language mediators to render his poetry or interpret for him at official events. Yet the mediators played an even more important role during Ginsberg’s nightlife exploits in Prague. According to language experts of the time (Vilikovský and Magová 2013) and young people associated with the fledgling local rock music scene (Fenomén underground 2014), good knowledge of English was very rare at the time. Ginsberg’s dependence on translation and interpreting also made it difficult for him to properly communicate with the police—and vice versa. The most important among Ginsberg’s unofficial Prague mediators was Andrew Lass. Lass, the son of an American communist immigrant, met Ginsberg at the Viola where the poet spent many nights. The bilingual Lass showed Ginsberg around the city and introduced him to several young artists and musicians, wrote an article about him (which was never published), and even produced a short documentary featuring Ginsberg at the official May Day parade.⁶

Translation in the Hands of the Regime

Allen Ginsberg’s second visit to Czechoslovakia lasted from 29 April 1965, when he arrived in Prague from Poland (Blažek 2012), to 7 May 1965. His fortunes (and media image) changed dramatically after he was elected King of May at the Prague *majáles* parade on 1 May 1965. The parade with him in attendance had immense symbolic value, a fact understood by the state and students alike (see Ginsberg and Lass 1998: 178). Ginsberg, too, felt the importance of what was going on, even if he rendered it in imagery more familiar to him and overestimated the sexually liberating implications of the event:

And I am the King of May, which is the power of sexual youth,
 and I am the King of May, which is industry in eloquence and action in
 amour,
 and I am the King of May, which is Kral Majales in the Czechoslovakian
 tongue,
 and I am the King of May, which is old Human poesy, and 100,000
 people chose my name, [...] (2010)

Following his election, the security services, who had already been keeping a close eye on Ginsberg, organized a systematic and orchestrated smear campaign against him, comparable to other campaigns against Czechoslovak émigré writers (like Ladislav Mňáčko, see Taragel 2015) or members of the intelligentsia (see Marušiak 2001). We are able to reconstruct the campaign against Ginsberg thanks to archival research by the historian Petr Blažek (2012) and to Lass' own eye-witness accounts (Ginsberg and Lass 1998; Lass 1998). What makes it unique was the significant role played by translation.

As soon as Ginsberg arrived in Czechoslovakia, he was considered a person of interest, and the police started monitoring his activities. Undercover police officers were assigned to the Hotel Ambassador where he was staying (Ginsberg and Lass 1998: 171). Even before the *majáles* events he was stopped several times by police patrols, but never taken in for questioning (Blažek, Stárek and Rauwolf 2015). It seems that the ŠtB launched a full investigation into the poet after the Secretary of the Central Committee Vladimír Koucký and Education Minister Čestmír Císař witnessed his election as May King. The problem was that Ginsberg's candidacy had not been approved beforehand (Blažek 2012: 43–4). Furthermore, the interest of the secret police was probably also fuelled by the poet's growing fame among young people.

Only 30 uniformed policemen were assigned to the 1965 *majáles*, while there were 150 operating undercover (Svatoš 2000). As soon as Ginsberg was elected, two ŠtB officers established contact with him. One of the officers was Capt. Karel Vodrážka, commander of the counter-intelligence department of the ŠtB, who was responsible for monitoring the younger generations (Blažek 2012: 44). The two officers joined the students who were accompanying Ginsberg to the dorms at the Czech

Technical University Hlávková. Vodrážka looked young, and he introduced himself and his colleague as admirers of Ginsberg. A former secretary of the Union of Youth university committee, he was familiar with the environment and even spoke some English.

The students organized a late-night debate with Ginsberg, and the secret police was able to get hold of the photographs and a recording they made of the event. Afterwards the agents started wiretapping the students who had attended the debate and used various means of surveillance, including their vast network of student informers.

With so many assets being employed, the ŠtB managed to get hold of Ginsberg's personal diary, which became vital 'evidence' in the campaign against the poet and the people associated with him:

The existence of the journal came as no surprise. Ginsberg sat in pubs, in front of everyone, always scribbling his observations. Unbeknownst to him, the citizen of a state in which the rule of law applies, he was providing evidence against himself and the people he met. These were often individuals whose growing public standing the Party wanted to undermine. (Šlajchrt 1990: 11)

It was probably ŠtB agents or their student collaborators who managed to steal Ginsberg's journal.⁷ The secret service then had it translated, and Vodrážka used some fragments of it in his final report on Ginsberg's activities, while some parts of the report were leaked to the pro-regime press during the campaign.⁸

At the time of writing, Ginsberg's original journal and its full translation are unavailable. Sources even disagree on whether the ŠtB had it translated in full (Zábrana 2001) or only the parts they needed (Blažek 2012). However, what happened afterwards was a destructive manipulation of the journal in the way it was translated and of the translated text in the way it was presented in public. The account that follows is based on the surviving fragments, on our knowledge of Ginsberg's biography, the accounts of those who met him, and on the memories of other people who went through ŠtB investigations.

As for the translation of the journal itself, this was carried out by an unknown graphologist and sworn translator (Blažek, Stárek and Rauwolf

2015) who had to work with an often barely legible manuscript and in a very short time. The journal was stolen on 3 May, and less than three days later the police confronted Ginsberg with what he had written (Blažek 2012: 44–6). Jan Zábřana (2001), who had a chance to read it in 1973, found the translation to be almost incomprehensible, since the translator summarized heavily and omitted several passages, making it impossible for a reader to understand when the text reproduced the poet's voice, and when it presented the opinions of the translator. Most of these issues were probably due to the extraordinary circumstances under which the translation was carried out—the State Security needed it as quickly as possible.

The first aim of the ŠtB was to find out who had met with Ginsberg, so the translator had to provide them with a complete list of all Czech and Slovak names which appeared in the diary. The list contained 42 names (Blažek lists all of them 2012: 45) and included Slovak poets and Beat poetry translators Miroslav Válek and Ján Buzássy. The ŠtB let it be known that it was in possession of this list by publishing the following implicit threat in *Mladá fronta*: 'Of course, we could quote even more from Ginsberg's journal, including what he thought about official and unofficial meetings with some of our writers' (quoted in Šlajchrt 1990: 11).

The state sought such information to gain leverage over those involved—to frighten or blackmail them. Researching the smallest personal details and connecting even apparently insignificant dots was a common method used by the secret police, one inherited from the political show trial investigations of the 1950s (Šimková 1980, 2010).

Another aim of the ŠtB was to prove that Ginsberg had defamed the Czechoslovak socialist regime. Since he received a writer's grant, defamation would be grounds for disciplinary action against him, as well as against the representatives of the writers' union and all the other writers involved. The regime often used such methods to persecute politically unwelcome opinions within the cultural field (see Marušiak 2001). It is therefore no wonder that Capt. Vodrážka quoted some of Ginsberg's political comments translated from his journal: 'Terror like in Cuba, only better camouflaged. All capitalist myths about communism are true'

(Vodrážka and Lass 1998: 195). Even though they are taken out of context, these words were more than enough for the state to charge him.

The opinions that Ginsberg privately expressed on Czechoslovakia, both in the journal and during night-time discussions, were as critical as his views on American capitalism. However, the participants of a 2015 Ginsberg memorial evening, two of whom knew the poet personally, claimed that he would never have criticized socialism so harshly in public (Blažek, Stárek and Rauwolf 2015), although he disliked ostentatious ideology (Kostelanetz 1965). Given the positive views on Ginsberg's socialist convictions that were reported in the press during his first visit (see Blažek 2012 for an overview), it seems that the secret services exploited Ginsberg's private remarks as evidence of blatant anti-socialist tendencies, which played well for the orchestrated campaign against him.

In Ginsberg's journal, the ŠtB found several remarks related to his homosexuality. Homosexuality had been decriminalized in Czechoslovakia in 1961, so consensual homosexual relationships between adults could no longer be prosecuted. In order to prosecute Ginsberg, the ŠtB had to prove either that he had had homosexual relations with someone who was under 18, or that he had committed homosexual acts that constituted public indecency (Beňová et al. 2007: 12). While they could not prove that he had had relations with someone who was underage, they did pursue him for public indecency.

Šlajchrt (1990) argues that the regime played on the homophobia of ordinary people and built the entire campaign on stereotypes and fear. This is why the anti-Ginsberg campaign invoked public morality and the need to protect it. He also claims that Ginsberg's remarks about erotic experiences were quoted by the ŠtB in such a way as to give the impression that they were just a small portion of a journal teeming with filthy indecencies. In reality, the journal entries were chiefly accounts of (erotic) dreams, lyrical impressions from places Ginsberg had visited, of people he had talked to, and the experiences he had had. More often than not, they seemed like the first sketches of poems.

A thorough analysis of the campaign against Ginsberg is complicated because full surveillance reports have not been found. The only complete account is the summary given in Capt. Vodrážka's final report. However, we get a reasonably accurate picture of what went on when we compare

this to the accounts of several eye-witnesses, other fragments from the journal (Šlajchrt 1990), and the relevant historiography (chiefly Blažek 2012). Even though we do not have access to the full documentation on the case, the way the campaign against the poet played out in the regime's public discourse is very similar to other ideologically motivated smear campaigns.

An important point of comparison is how the State Security put together texts against the people it monitored or investigated. The practice was inherited from the 1950s. Artur London (1998), who was a communist and a political prisoner at that time, remembers how investigation protocols were drawn up. They were basically compilations of several other texts which were intentionally manipulated. This made them not so much reflect reality as adhere to the aims of the investigator.

This is true when we look at the final report on Ginsberg's activities in Czechoslovakia (Vodrážka and Lass 1998). In essence, it is an internally conflicted compilation where the effort to 'infiltrate' and 'overpower' the accused poet is immediately noticeable. To this end, the text contains (assumed) quotes from the translated journal and from the dormitory discussions, as well as paraphrases of information from confidants, collaborators, concerned parents, and from the reports on the interrogation of Ginsberg himself. However, the quotes and references are taken out of their original context. What is also noticeable when reading the report is its rigidly formulaic language. In its tone, the text adheres to the ideology of the era and demonstrates a clear polarization between the 'progressive East' and 'degraded West'. The function of this text, however, is real and sinister: its aim was to warp the facts.

In addition to the quotes from Ginsberg's diary being taken out of context to document his badmouthing of socialism and his sexual delinquency, what made the material on him look even worse was that it was re-contextualized within reports from psychiatrists and concerned citizens who claimed that Ginsberg had corrupted a number of young people. They accused him of inciting young men to take drugs, engage in homosexuality, and drop out of society.

So, was there any truth behind these allegations? According to Blažek (2012: 45), the men indicated in the final report as behaving antisocially due to their contact with Ginsberg had histories of mental instability

which dated back to well before Ginsberg's arrival. Even the reports acquired by the ŠtB from concerned parents need to be treated with caution. It is understandable, and in fact mentioned in the testimonials, that some of the parents had been unable to help their children for some time, and, in desperation, welcomed the police's involvement. Moreover, the secret police's almost Orwellian tendency to ask suggestive questions and elicit appropriate answers is well documented (see London 1998; Repka 1968), as is the misuse by European socialist regimes of psychiatric treatment and institutions to stigmatize and punish their opponents (see Van Voren 2013: 7–12).

The Expulsion of the King of May (and His Works)

Ginsberg was deported from Czechoslovakia on 7 May 1965 on the grounds of public outrage and state defamation. The police escorted him onto a plane to London. While onboard he wrote the famous poem 'Kral Majales' in which he documented his experience and presented his side of the story.

Ginsberg's case did not end with the deportation. The immediate press coverage of the *majáles*, which also mentioned the election of the King of May (see Randuška 2014: 45–6), was relatively positive, but towards the end of May, pro-regime papers started their attacks.

Negative articles appeared only in newspapers and periodicals that were under the direct supervision of the Party: *Mladá fronta*, the official Union of Youth newspaper, and *Rudé právo*, the official Communist Party newspaper. Other important periodicals—including the already mentioned influential literary magazine *Mladá tvorba*—made no mention of Ginsberg and his poetry for several years.

All the evidence suggests a general suppression of information about the poet, partly orchestrated by the regime but also fuelled by a general anxiety about the possible repercussions within the lower ranks of the state apparatus. In the period following Ginsberg's expulsion, both the Czech and Slovak translations of his poems in book format that were being prepared for publication ended up not being published. The Czech

translation had already been announced (see AnonA 1965: 2), but then it was—in the words of the translator—‘halted in production and later discarded from the plan’ (Zábrana 2001: 42). Some Slovak translations of Ginsberg’s poems were publicly presented when the poet attended readings in Bratislava in 1965, but in 1969 the collection was blocked during the proofing stage and it was never published (Buzássy 1990: 99).

It is difficult to fully confirm the link between the abandoning of both translations and Ginsberg’s expulsion. However, as there were several similar cases which occurred on a regular basis, such moves can be seen as examples of the systemic or strategic behaviour of the regime. In the period 1956–68, the regime strategically interfered in the cultural field to silence, or downplay the influence of, voices which it viewed as potentially subversive (see for example Timura 1998; Darovec and Barborík 1996). Even though the methods of intervention varied from case to case, the aims stayed the same.

The first prerequisite of a successful silencing operation was monitoring. The regime had always kept a close eye on potentially problematic individuals and took its time to prepare and develop repressive measures. In fact, in none of the documented cases does the regime appear to have reacted hastily. The secret police started following Ginsberg from the moment he landed in Czechoslovakia after being expelled from Cuba. Although he was accepted by the state and presented favourably in the early spring of 1965, he was viewed as a possible ideological threat by the ŠtB.

Whenever it decided to silence an ideological opponent, the regime first used official channels to communicate its position. Historical research indicates that, in the case of articles in socialist periodicals, the official announcements very often sought to discourage discussion and to stress unity, an important value in socialist discourse (Marušiak 2001; Tyšš 2017a). These articles were often penned by ideologically reliable representatives of the Central Committee or artistic unions. Sometimes, however, such articles remained unsigned and thus everybody in the editorial board took collective responsibility for them (Darovec and Barborík 1996).

By virtue of their intertextual character (mainly references to other sources), the official announcements could seem informative and trustworthy. They also tended to use logical argumentation (superficially, at least). This can be seen in the following quote from an article about Ginsberg which appeared in *Rudé právo*, dated 17 May 1965:

Allen Ginsberg has abused the hospitality of our country and brutally transgressed moral boundaries. The documents presented by the Sunday edition of *Mladá fronta* demonstrate that he is a sexually depraved drug addict. (AnonB 1965: 2)

The text appeals to the public's sense of morality. Discourse of this type often relied on fear and stereotypes, as seen in the paternalistic and ironic tone of the following quote:

Since Ginsberg's moral transgressions are well known now, all those involved can correct their uncritical affections. After all, there's some good in every hangover: a person gets to know their limits. (ibid.)

We see that the motif of good-willed (self)criticism interconnects with the sarcastic interpretation of Ginsberg's visit to Czechoslovakia as alcohol intoxication; an example of the tendency of totalitarian regimes to infantilize (their) people (Mikula 2010).

However, the determination of Czechoslovakia to undermine Ginsberg's reputation extended beyond its borders, and an official memo explaining why he was expelled was sent to the US government via the embassy in Prague. The memo claimed that parents of underage children had complained about Ginsberg 'encouraging bisexuality and drug use, and a variety of other provocative behaviour while in a state of inebriation' (quoted in Vodrážka and Lass 1998: 191, see more commentary in Blažek 2012; Blažek, Stárek and Rauwolf 2015).

Ginsberg recounted the impact of the allegations that found their way from Czechoslovakia to the US. Based on files that he was able to access thanks to the Freedom of Information Act, Ginsberg said that the FBI translated one of the smear articles in *Mladá fronta* and sent it to the narcotics office of the Treasury Department. This office then wrote a

letter to Ginsberg's congressman, advising him not to answer the poet's petitions and public initiatives (Ginsberg and Lass 1998).

The final stage of any silencing campaign was an information embargo which was used to shut down or suppress unwanted information. Since the Czechoslovak regime still had control over all channels of mass communication in the 1960s, it could enforce the embargo very effectively. From after Ginsberg's expulsion in 1965 until 1969, no mention was made of Ginsberg in any of the most widely read periodicals.

Ginsberg's poetry was never published in book format in Czechoslovakia during the socialist period, at least not officially (Zábrana's translations came out in one anthology and two collections in the *samizdat* press, see Svozil 2014). The translators of Ginsberg's poetry were convinced that the trouble Ginsberg had caused made the authorities wary of promoting him—and, even without it being clearly spelled out to them, the management of state-run publishing houses understood the official line. The Slovak translator, Ján Buzássy, for example, has stated that in 1965 Ginsberg's poetry was deported along with him, and that he was thenceforth blacklisted (Štrasser and Buzássy 2013: 175).

From 1969 some Slovak translations were published in fragments in magazines. Even though this was after the reforms of the Prague Spring had been revoked,⁹ the literary field still enjoyed some freedom, since the reinstatement of censorship (just months after it had been abolished) and other measures, such as the monitoring carried out by party commissions, had taken some time to effectively bend it to the party's will (for more on this delayed response see Vilímek 2008). The first Ginsberg poem that came out in Slovak was an abbreviated translation of 'Kaddish' done by Buzássy and Bothová and published in *Mladá tvorba*. The translation was part of a collage of abbreviated texts entitled *Beat Generation* (1969), which included a part of Kenneth Rexroth's oft-cited essay 'Disengagement'. The 'ideologically untrustworthy' editors, as then-chief-editor Ján Buzássy called them (Štrasser and Buzássy 2013), had to deal with an ever-shrinking publication space given that many periodicals had already been shut down following the repression of the Prague Spring and the party's reprisals against critical media: they chose very fitting fragments (from Mailer's 'The White Negro', for example) that no doubt rang a bell with disenchanted readers.

The first extended essay on Ginsberg in Slovak was published in the first 1970 issue of *Revue svetovej literatúry* [Review of World Literature]. This was a translation of a study of the Beat Generation by French literary historian Serge Fauchereau, entitled in Vítazoslav Hečko's translation as 'Beatnická vzbuřa' [Beat revolt] (1970).¹⁰ Fauchereau's essay was followed in the same issue by the first Slovak translation of Ginsberg's poem 'Howl', carried out by Buzássy and Bothová (Ginsberg 1970: 44–9). The study functions as a paratext to the translation. As we have already seen, in Slovak socialist cultural and literary periodicals, potentially problematic translations (mainly of works from Western authors or authors known to be critical towards socialism) tended to be accompanied by critical introductions, side notes, or bio notes which served, ostensibly, to frame the way in which they were read or to camouflage their presence. However, even texts that were not strictly speaking paratexts could serve a similar function by virtue of their placement immediately before or after the translation; this artful positioning of a text was also part of the 'game' the literati had to play with preventive censorship in the 1960s (Darovec and Barborík 1996: 25). Examples of this include placing translations from Soviet or well-known socialist authors in immediate proximity to more problematic translations (see more in Tyšš 2017b). When we consider that a number of Czechoslovak experts had dealt with the Beat Generation (like Ján Vilikovský, Zuzana Bothová, Jozef Kot, or Jan Válek), it is perhaps surprising that an essay by a French critic was chosen to introduce the Slovak translation of 'Howl', but it seems reasonable to view this as an example of paratextual camouflage. It is interesting to note that Fauchereau's essay is the only text from this period which mentions that *something* happened to Ginsberg in Czechoslovakia in 1965. The article even features a translation of the first six lines of the poem 'Kral Majales'.

When the literary field was heavily centralized again with the introduction of the so-called Normalization in 1969, the regime sought to limit possible platforms of dissent by restricting the publication space.¹¹ The translation magazine *Revue svetovej literatúry* (see Jurovská and Passia 2013: 18; Jánošíková 2016) was 'stabilized', with substantial changes being imposed on its editorial staff, and this for several years limited the

amount of attention it could devote to Western literatures.¹² Furthermore, other literary magazines were abolished, including the magazine *Mladá tvorba* (Darovec and Barborík 1996), which in the previous decade published a number of Beat translations and articles on the movement.

The 1969 and 1970 publications of Ginsberg's poems were the last time the poet appeared in Slovak translation before the collapse of socialism in Czechoslovakia in 1989.

The Return of the King of May (in Translation)

The deportation of Allen Ginsberg was not merely a political issue. It was an issue whose significance resonated in Czechoslovak culture. Due to the embargo the regime placed on his poetry and on any information about his work and activities, knowledge of Ginsberg's work remained scarce and fragmentary in Czechoslovakia. More barriers against Ginsberg were put in place when the state blocked some of the pending translation projects and also persecuted the translators. For example, the Czech translator of Beat poetry Jan Zábřana and his Slovak counterpart Ján Buzássy both had personal publication bans inflicted on them at the beginning of the Normalization period (Zábřana 2001; Štrasser and Buzássy 2013). Given these circumstances, we could argue that until the end of socialism in 1989, Czechoslovak readers only had a very superficial and stereotyped knowledge of Ginsberg (and, to a lesser degree, of other Beat authors). In any situation where literary education is limited to a merely informative function, it is almost without exception subject to the interpretations disseminated by the centralized institutions in the literary field (examples include academic literary studies and literary history or literary criticism appearing in specialized periodicals), and the reader is not in a position to arrive at their own interpretation and participate in the establishment of reception values (Popovič 1983: 137). In other words, the readers are unable to form their own opinions of literary works, since these are not made freely available to them.

When Ginsberg became an academic in the 1980s, his poetics and views had shifted significantly since he published his first poetry collection, *Howl*, in 1956. This is the great paradox of the reception of the Beat Generation in Czechoslovakia: when Czechoslovak culture sought to renew its interest in them, they were no longer part of contemporary literature but had become part of literary history.

Commentators who reintroduced Beat literature after 1989 talked about stereotypical ‘Beat myths’ that needed to be overcome by reading the actual texts; about having ‘waited too long’, and about the need to fill in the blank spaces on the Czechoslovak literary map (compare the following afterwords: Hochel 1990; Buzássy 1990; Andričík 1995, 2010). In his 1990 afterword to the long-awaited Slovak book translation of Ginsberg’s selected poems entitled *Výtie* [Howl], Braňo Hochel (1990) claimed that Ginsberg’s deportation had caused a noticeable discontinuity in the reception of his works in Slovak culture, but that Slovak readers had not forgotten about him:

They deported him out of our country, but never out of our cultural consciousness, as many reminiscences of Ginsberg and allusions to him in the works of our older and younger generation of poets demonstrate. (1990: 107)

When Ginsberg returned to Czechoslovakia in 1990 amid great fanfare, he joked that he had come to recover his diary. However, this was impossible, since, following ŠtB protocol for hand-written evidence, the notebook was shredded in the 1970s (Blažek, Stárek and Rauwolf 2015; Blažek 2012). The poet did not live to see the ŠtB reports on him. This was apparently due to a typo in the records: instead of Allen, the poet’s name had been misspelled as Allæn, so the documents on him could not be found for some time.

In 1986 Andrew Lass organized a public interview with Ginsberg during which they discussed how he was deported from Czechoslovakia (Ginsberg and Lass 1998; Czech translation in Lass 2000: 37–46). Lass took an even greater interest in the event after Ginsberg’s death. It would appear that it was Lass who finally managed to obtain Capt. Vodrážka’s *Final Report* from the state archives. He translated the report into English

and commented on it and had it published in *The Massachusetts Review* in the summer of 1998.

This 'return' of the King of May to Czechoslovak cultural consciousness via translation could not have come at a more opportune time. The Beat Generation Festival, which took place in Prague from 22 to 24 April 1998 and was attended by Lawrence Ferlinghetti, sparked the public's interest in what had really happened to Ginsberg in 1965. By helping to reveal this, translation helped to re-establish a cultural dialogue that had been cut off for more than twenty years. Interest in Ginsberg in Prague has remained high ever since, and the poet's time in the city has become part of its folklore. For the fiftieth anniversary of Ginsberg's 1965 visit to Prague, several cultural and educational institutions organized commemorative discussions, poetry readings, and events (see Blažek, Stárek and Rauwolf 2015). This suggests that this obscure episode with a vicious twist has captured the public's imagination.

Conclusion

In the case of Ginsberg's visit to Prague, there was an unbridgeable gap between what was legal in theory and what was legitimate in practice, a contradiction not dissimilar to the one which in 1976 gave rise to the Charter 77 movement. With the Ginsberg expulsion, we see the universal humanistic spirit of the law (represented here by freedom of expressions and right for privacy) stand in contrast to a repressive measure formally within the legal framework of the socialist state (in this case protection against what was viewed as ideological diversion).

When the Czechoslovak state sought to silence and remove Ginsberg, it exploited its near monopoly on public communication. Due to the centralized nature of this system of power, restricting Ginsberg's influence also restricted the Czech and Slovak reception of Beat literature in general. At first, the official embargo on the poet was enforced by means of a press campaign against Ginsberg; but after a while, this simply became one of the many restrictions that Czechoslovak culture was forced to accept. So even though readers wanted to know about

the Beat Generation and Ginsberg, translators were not free to mediate between the two cultural contexts and enrich the target culture.

Let us now sum up the degree and form of direct state intervention in the Ginsberg deportation case:

- the regime used manipulated translations and other paratexts and exploited its media monopoly to taint Ginsberg's reputation;
- the regime used its control of communication channels, exerted via preventive and repressive censorship or work bans, to disrupt the reception of Ginsberg whose work was widely read and was an inspiration to local writers;
- the regime used Ginsberg's name as a negative example in later campaigns against the younger generation in the 1960s, especially in the campaign against long-haired men, the so-called 'máničky' (Pospíšil and Blažek 2010).

One could argue that the state's intervention against Ginsberg was actually counter-productive. If the state had wanted to get rid of the poet due to his perceived bad influence, it could have done so more quickly. In reality, Ginsberg was simply escorted onto a plane which he had already booked (Ginsberg and Lass 1998; Blažek, Stárek and Rauwolf 2015). To all intents and purposes, getting the police to escort him off and making such a fuss was an unnecessary demonstration of force that merely increased the younger generation's contempt for the regime. In its hostility, the regime tried to hinder the reception of Ginsberg's work in Czechoslovakia but, paradoxically, it ended up cementing Ginsberg's cult status and the status of Beat literature in the Czech (Vaughan and Olehla 2015) and Slovak cultural memory.

Historical and eye-witness accounts appear to show that many Czechoslovaks, who generally had a traditional and conservative upbringing, disapproved of Allen Ginsberg's behaviour even when they were interested in his poetry. Aside from his many admirers, a great many people considered him a scruffy vagabond and a drunkard; a drug-user who had been expelled from Cuba because he smoked marijuana. Several Slovak writers witnessed him having to be whisked away from

Budmerice castle, the house of Slovak writers, because he 'got drunk there and behaved like he was a king'.¹³

Viewing the Ginsberg affair as a case of translation (in) history enables us to better understand the inner workings of socialist cultural planning. We have seen that translation served several functions in the Ginsberg affair. Allen Ginsberg became well-known in Czechoslovakia because his poems were translated and circulated among responsive audiences, and he was dependent on several translating mediators when he visited the country in 1965. However, what happened to him after the May Day parade that year and the way the regime treated his work until its collapse in 1989, demonstrates the ambivalence of translation in socialist Czechoslovakia. At that time, translators worked in a confined, centralized system which was highly controlled and regimented. State-run publishing houses were subject to planning, and it took them a long time to respond to the newest literature from abroad. This is where literary periodicals stepped in. The publications like *Mladá tvorba* or *Revue svetovej literatúry*, which we have discussed above, offered publication space for up-and-coming translators and new, *avant-garde* literature. Their periodicity and ephemeral status allowed them to be more open and critical. There was a method to how the literary field operated in this respect: what could not appear in book translation (or could not appear quickly enough), could at least appear in the literary magazines; and the magazines could also publish translations of ideologically problematic authors (like the Beat Generation), provided these were appropriately camouflaged with, for example, critical paratexts. However, when Allen Ginsberg visited Czechoslovakia and drew too much of the state's attention to himself, the subsequent individually targeted restrictions exposed the strict control that was imposed by the system. Despite the brief opening up of the regime and its attempts at reform during the Prague Spring, the socialist translation system was under the centralized direction of the state whose representatives, in the end, always had the final say on which translations could be published.

The events of the Allen Ginsberg affair took place at a time of significant political reshuffling, as the old guard of the Party, faced with economic problems and the moral collapse of Stalinism, was losing the hearts and minds of the younger generation. The period 1956–68 in

Czechoslovakia was a period of gradual opening up, of finding new ground and new forms of expression. However, every attempt at change and reform still happened within the confines of the socialist state. The feeling that many shared, of being hopelessly stuck between wanting to change things and despair at having to live in a state which was unable to change, was best captured by the young poet Peter Repka, borrowing the drawl of Ginsberg's voice:

I saw us honor work in our greetings at school every day, but we taught ourselves not to labor. The best minds of this generation are also misplaced, mad, aching hysterically in the feverish belief that they will find gold in the Klondike of the soul, once again convinced that dying for your convictions is not suicide. Too restless. (1998: 19)

What happened to Allen Ginsberg was a complicated series of actions motivated by personal convictions of members of the state apparatus, politics, and fear of the Other. The state exerted its formal influence with the deportation proceedings and the orchestration of a smear campaign against Ginsberg. The precise causes of other actions (such as the bans on the book publications), however, are more difficult to fully uncover due to a lack of direct documentary evidence. Given the uncertain atmosphere of the era and the self-deceiving nature of its ideology (famously captured in Havel's paradox of the greengrocer),¹⁴ we could argue that the Ginsberg case confirms Pym's finding on the nature of multiple causation: the truly dominant cause is none other than the moment when all other causes work together (2014/1998: 158). Yet sometimes it seems that the effects of such complicated causes in a complicated history can have a lasting impact on the present.

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Notes

1. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are by the author. Discursive camouflage was very often used in Czechoslovak discursive on foreign ideas and values. As a historical category, discursive camouflage lies at the confluence of translation, discourse, and cultural history. Current research on translation criticism and the history of translation theory shows that this kind of discourse was common in Czechoslovakia in the period between 1956 and 1970 (Tyšš 2017a). By using a particular discourse (that is, the language, rhetorical clichés, popular ideas, and allusions as well as appropriate paratexts), an author could present ideas or commentary which ran against the ruling ideology in a more favorable light and allow them to 'pass' as superficially non-problematic. The aim was to defend cultural capital and incrementally expand the possibilities for newer, less orthodox ideas (from Western literature perhaps), but to do so, one had to present them in line with the official ideology. There were three forms of such camouflage: using the tropes and metaphors from political discourse ('progressive', 'popular', the opposition of Self vs. Other, and so on) to gloss over ideas that were potentially problematic to the ideological worldview; placing appropriate paratexts around a potentially problematic translation (translations of Soviet critiques were very often used); and writing a particular kind of review of a foreign work in which some passages were translated and the potentially problematic ones paraphrased in order not to draw too much attention to them, making the final text seem like less of a review than a synopsis. For more on discursive camouflage see Tyšš (2017b).
2. Šiklová has coined the concept after the Zone, a restricted, paranormal area in Andrei Tarkovsky's 1979 film 'Stalker'. She defines this section of Czechoslovak society during socialism as follows: 'The gray zone consists for the most part of good workers, qualified, professionally erudite people. That is precisely why they perceived the errors of the socialist system early on, and also why they didn't have to buttress their careers by means of a party card or by taking on political functions' (Šiklová 1990: 350).

3. The word *majáles* is derived from the name of the Roman goddess Maia, and the tradition dates back to the nineteenth century when raucous spring festivals became popular with high-school students throughout Bohemia and Slovakia (Jancura 2013).
4. To this day there are more Beat literature translations in Czech, which is widely read by Slovaks (see Tyšš 2017a).
5. The names of the Soviet critics were not always fully spelled out in the historical sources. If names are missing in the text or the References, this is because I have been unable to find or confirm them.
6. Lass's film also shows the look of shock on the face of Antonín Novotný, the President of Czechoslovakia, when, from his position on the May Day tribune he saw the long-haired and bearded Ginsberg. According to a Prague urban legend, the president's outrage from this occasion fueled his well-known disdain for long-haired men. Even though this is almost certainly not true, the legend proves the cult interest that surrounds Ginsberg's visit. See more in Blažek, Stárek and Rauwolf (2015). It is worth noting that Andrew Lass and his family were expelled back to the US in 1973.
7. It is still not certain how Ginsberg lost his diary. Blažek claims that ŠtB agents might have forced the poet to get drunk in the Viola on 3 May 1965 and then stolen it. However, he adds that, according to the police protocol, which Ginsberg signed on 5 May, the diary was found by a passerby near the entrance to a bar on Římská Street where Ginsberg attended a concert. Blažek found that the passerby was an ŠtB agent. See Blažek (2012: 44, 46).
8. The full title of the document, in Lass's English translation (1998), is *Final Report on the Activities of the American Poet Allen Ginsberg and His Deportation from Czechoslovakia*. It is dated Prague, 13 May 1965.
9. The Prague Spring was a period of liberalization in Czechoslovakia which some sources date back to the 4th congress of the Union of Czechoslovak writers in June 1967, but is more commonly associated with Alexander Dubček being chosen as the party's First Secretary in January 1968. From then on, the communists tried to implement some free-market oriented economic reforms. The

Dubček leadership also abolished censorship in March 1968, and this led to a hitherto unprecedented expansion of civil society which included people from all professions and all walks of life. The various popular movements and newly emerged clubs and associations pushed for even more reform. This was something the politically weak reformist wing of the party found difficult to accommodate, especially since it also had to face international pressure from other socialist countries of the Warsaw Pact. The reforms collapsed and were revoked after the Warsaw Pact invasion led by the Soviet Union which took place at the end of August 1968. See more in Vilímek (2008).

10. The source of the translated text was not indicated in the magazine, and I was unable to find it.
11. Normalization is the name given by historians to the period after 1969, in the wake of Warsaw Pact invasion. In that year Gustáv Husák replaced Alexander Dubček as First Secretary and the party conducted mass reprisals both within its own ranks and in society at large. Censorship was reintroduced, several civil society organizations were banned, and many newspapers and periodicals were shut down. The name comes from the era's newspeak in which politicians referred to the need to 'normalize' the country after the failed attempt at 'counter-revolution' during the Prague Spring.
12. After its establishment in 1965, *Revue svetovej literatúry* became the primary publication for Slovak translations of contemporary literature. Other poems by Ginsberg were published in it almost twenty years later, in 1988. They were translated into Slovak by Ján Buzássy, Zuzana Hegedúsová (née Bothová), and Braňo Hochel (1988: 4–12); and Hochel also wrote a biographical note about Ginsberg that preceded the translations (1988: 2–3). Until the publication of these translations, the magazine had not published anything about Beat poetry. The archives of the magazine show that it took some interest in W. S. Burroughs and even published a translation by Pavel Vilíkovský of some excerpts from his novel *Junkie* (1981: 69–83). In 1988 the *Revue* also published a translation of Kerouac's prose. See Kerlik (2005).

13. Eye-witness account by the translator Oľga Ruppeldtová from a discussion at the Translation Summer School 2015, Piešťany, 8 November 2015.
14. In his famous essay *The Power of the Powerless* (Moc bezmocných, 1979), the playwright, dissident and future democratic president of Czechoslovakia, Václav Havel, analyzes the peculiar but very real situation of a greengrocer in a socialist country who places in his shop window the slogan: ‘Workers of the world, unite!’ Havel argues that the only message the greengrocer (who, we can assume, is indifferent to the actual content of the slogan) wants to communicate is that he does what is expected of him and wants to be left alone. Havel speculates that if the slogan were closer to the truth and said ‘I am afraid and therefore obedient’, the man would not be so indifferent to its semantics because it would embarrass him. To overcome this embarrassment, such displays of subservience must take the form of a sign which indicates higher ideological convictions while concealing the rather low foundations of power. Thus, ideology for Havel is a paradoxical facade which offers people illusions of morality and at the same time allows them in effect to let go of them. See Havel (1979/2018).

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12

Literary Translation in Communist Bulgaria (1944–89)

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This chapter explores the characteristics of literary translation in communist Bulgaria, through the prism of translations from Russian and French literature. The historical frame includes the period between the coup d'état of 9 September 1944, when the government of the Fatherland Front came to power and ended the country's alliance with the Axis powers, and 10 November 1989, when the communist regime in Bulgaria collapsed. During the communist period, 9 September was considered a symbolic date and became a general cliché in official documents, articles, and speeches as the date marking the beginning of the new 'Socialist revolution', the starting point of a 'new era'. November 10 is the day Todor Zhivkov's regime ended and is now symbolically seen as the end of the old totalitarian regime and the beginning of democratic change.

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Although these dates do not indicate either the beginning or the end of the Communist Party rule—the power of the Communist Party was consolidated only between 1946 and 1948 and continued after 1989, with Petar Mladenov replacing Zhivkov—the historical period between September 1944 and November 1989 in Bulgaria is commonly referred to as the communist/totalitarian period.

The forty-five years of Communist rule are not monolithic and do not represent a uniform timeline. They can be divided into three sub-periods that correspond to the cultural evolution in Bulgaria marking different degrees of liberalization/stagnation and openness/closure to foreign cultural models.

The first period started in 1944 and ended with the April Plenum of the Communist Party in 1956, when the ‘cult of personality’ was denounced. During this period the Communist Party consolidated its power and, following the Soviet model, took control over the political, economic, and cultural life of the country. Political and cultural contact with the Western countries decreased, a censorship mechanism was put in place and socialist realism was the new and only method of artistic creation (Čičovska 2003).

The second period, from 1956 to 1970, is the period when Zhivkov started changing his policy of the ‘stick’ to a policy of the ‘carrot’ (Baeva 2014: 8), with which he kept the intelligentsia under control. This is also the period when cultural contacts with the West and especially France resumed.

During the third period, lasting from 1970 to the collapse of the regime in 1989, cultural contacts with the West diversified and some freedom was granted in the administration of culture (Kalinova and Baeva 2000). Specifically, following a set of policies implemented in the 1970s, members of the administrative body of the Committee of Culture were elected rather than appointed directly.¹

A major role in promoting openness towards Western countries was played by Lyudmila Zhivkova, Todor Zhivkov’s daughter and the leader of Bulgarian cultural life between 1972 and 1981. She was influenced by Eastern philosophy and believed in spiritual harmony and personal development through culture and aesthetics, and her main objective was

to promote Bulgarian culture abroad on the basis of reciprocity and exchange visits.

During the whole communist period, political propaganda in Bulgaria shaped the reception of foreign cultural models by officially promoting or incriminating their creative legacy. In this context, it is important to see the place of literary translations and what they can tell us about the history of this period. Specifically, to what extent did propaganda influence translation? Was it possible to avoid political control, and, if so, what were the consequences? To answer these questions, I will discuss the core of the translation canon, look at which foreign texts and authors were selected or banned from publishing, and at the selection criteria and the mechanisms of control in publishing translated literature.

I will focus on Russian and French literature, as they had a major influence on the formation of Bulgarian literature and on the theory of translation in Bulgaria, and analyse the scope of literary translations in communist Bulgaria through three main themes: (1) the cultural contacts and transmitted images of the Russian and French cultures; (2) the normative organization of the translation process; and (3) the role of the translator in shaping the boundaries of the canon.

Instead of following a linear timeline, I will explore these subjects in separate sections, following the three historical sub-periods mentioned above.

Cultural Contacts and Transmitted Images of Russian and French Cultures

A typical choice of many ‘small’ European literatures is to confront or embrace the models of ‘great’ cultures. This is why, at the outset, Bulgarian literature was constantly compared with two main models: Russian and French. It is important to outline the role these two models played in the Bulgarian culture.

In eighteenth and nineteenth century Bulgaria, the idea of the ‘nation’ was the main concept which shaped Bulgarians’ sense of identity and focused their collective consciousness against foreign domination. The National Revival (1762–1878) represented the period when Bulgaria,

which was still under Ottoman rule, regained its national consciousness. Bulgarian intellectuals were eager to fill the cultural gap and experience new literary models through the translation of Russian and Western writers. During the first years after the liberation from Ottoman rule (1878), the formation of a national identity was linked to the establishment of national institutions and a national administration. Until the end of nineteenth century, Bulgaria's main cultural model was Europe—a concept that was vaguely defined and included different languages and cultures. Importantly, Russian and French were seen in Bulgaria not as separate cultures but as parts of the same European model (Vrinat-Nikolov 2004; 2007).

From the beginning of twentieth century and until the Second World War, the split between the Russian and French/Western European influences became more pronounced. Not all intellectuals could agree on which of the two cultural models was the more progressive. The Europeanization, or Westernization, of Bulgarian literature drew mainly from the French model and translations from French. At the same time, the Russian model (and its influence through literary translations) was seen as a reconciliation between Bulgarian literature and other Slavic literatures (Vrinat-Nikolov 2007: 14). During the communist period, however, the diversity of the European/Russian debate—in terms not only of which model to follow but also what was meant by 'modern', 'national', and 'universal'—was greatly diminished, and the cultural models were shaped by a simple opposition between Western and Socialist.

However, this opposition did not manifest itself straight away. Immediately after the Second World War, Bulgaria sought to overcome its international isolation, which stemmed from being a former ally of the Axis, and resumed its cultural relations with some European countries. (Čičovska 1990: 24). The strong Soviet presence in Bulgaria straight after the war facilitated cultural exchange between some Bulgarian and Russian organizations. In fact, the first cultural exchanges took place in the literary field—through writers and war correspondents in the context of the Third Ukrainian Front (Čičovska 1990: 44).²

Bulgarian readers were equally interested in both Russian and French literature. It was the post-war context rather than an official policy that

made the Bulgarian-Russian exchanges more dynamic and productive compared to Bulgarian-French exchanges.

After the war, the positive image of Russian culture gradually expanded. The press was flooded with articles on the importance of Soviet literature focusing on two aspects: the closeness of the two cultures and the supremacy of Soviet literature. Some of the newspaper titles are revealing: ‘Soviet literature in Bulgaria. To us it is not foreign but familiar’ (‘Săvetskata literatura. Za nas tja ne e čužda, a e blizka’, Angel Todorov in *Literaturen Front* 10, 23/11/1946.), ‘Soviet Socialist literature – a great teacher for Bulgarian literature’ (‘Săvetskata socialističeska literatura – velik učitel na bălgarskata literatura’, Pantelej Zarev in *Novo vreme* 6, 1949, 628–43), ‘Let’s learn from Soviet literature’ (‘Da se učim ot săvetskata literatura’, Penčo Dančev *Literaturen Front*, 28, 16/03/1950). Todor Borov, the editor of a bibliography of Soviet literature in Bulgaria (1944–54) (Borov et al. 1955), acknowledged the crucial role of the Soviet book in all areas of life and its popularity among Bulgarian readers. According to Borov, readers were so familiar with Soviet works that for them ‘the boundary between the Soviet and Bulgarian often disappears’ (Borov 1955: 3).³

Mentioning Soviet literature in any critique or analysis was a way of ensuring one was in line with the official political canon. For example, in 1950 the newspaper *Literaturen Front* published a resumé of a talk that the Bulgarian writer Bogomil Rainov gave at a meeting of the Union of Bulgarian Writers. The talk was entitled ‘The Ideology of capitalism and its remnants in our literature’ (Ideologijata 2001) and its main point was to blame the negative influence of Western capitalist culture on Bulgarian authors. While all discussants welcomed the report, it was also criticized for the fact that it failed to emphasize the positive influence of Soviet literature on Bulgarian writers.

Until the end of the communist period, the reception of Russian literature in Bulgaria followed the official Soviet literary canon. Russian classical authors continued to be received positively and Russian literature was seen as revolutionary, progressive, optimistic, and victorious.

Because of its political instability and the presence of the Soviets, Bulgaria’s cultural links with France started developing only in 1945 (Cesari 2002: 146–54). However, France was the first Western country

with which Bulgaria resumed its diplomatic relationships after the Second World War (Grigorova 2017: 2). The cultural contacts that followed were partly facilitated by the French policy of consolidating its position among the great powers (USA, UK, USSR) by presenting a positive, progressive self-image and expanding its cultural and diplomatic influence through institutions, such as Alliance Française and the French Institute, in East European countries (Grigorova 2017: 4). In the aftermath of the Second World War, the translations of French authors such as Louis Aragon, Henri Barbusse, Romain Gary, Elsa Triolet, and others were published in state and private publishing houses. However, although between 1944 and 1948 there was no formal prohibition against Bulgarian intellectuals and artists coming into contact with Western art, those links were restricted by Article 8 of the Armistice Treaty, which left all importing and distribution of books and other categories of art in Bulgaria under Soviet control (Kalinova 1999: 226–39).

A real change in the attitudes towards French culture came at the end of the 1940s. The first official stigmatization of Western culture was made at 5th Congress of the Bulgarian Workers Party (re-named as Bulgarian Communist Party at the same congress) in December 1948, when a resolution *Za borba na partijata na ideologičeskija front* [On the Party's Fight on the Ideological Front] was voted launching the idea that Bulgarian culture was under threat from 'decadent' Western culture and a program to restrict any access to it was agreed (Kalinova 1999: 230). This opposition in the late 1940s between official socialism and the West was centred around a number of ideological tropes: on the one hand, Western culture was seen as decadent, bourgeois, hostile, formalistic, and individualistic, on the other, socialist culture was seen as revolutionary and progressive.

However, this opposition was not so straightforward when it came to French culture. Up until 1949, before France signed the North Atlantic Treaty, French culture was spoken of in more moderate and less hostile tones by Bulgarian politicians, compared to the those used in reference to USA and Great Britain; but after France joined the North Atlantic Treaty in April 1949, French literature and art also started to be described

with all the negative clichés of official propaganda (Grigorova 2017: 5–6). The following year, France's cultural institutions in Bulgaria, Alliance Française and the French Institute, were closed.

And yet, despite official negative propaganda, France's positive cultural legacy was not forgotten and positive attitudes towards French literature and art persisted among Bulgarian intellectuals. In fact, two distinct visions in favour of French culture coexisted during the communist period and had an impact on its reception. The first perspective was appropriate to the communist milieu and highlighted the revolutionary aspect of French culture—including historical events such as the French Revolution, the French Commune, and its anti-fascist resistance. The second perspective, typical of the milieu of the opposition, emphasized the humanism, creativity, and originality of French culture and literature (Čičovska 1990). To begin with, this distinction was not essential and one image was not valued more than the other, but from 1949 onward and especially in the early 1950s the 'revolutionary' image of French literature was chosen as the most ideologically correct. This influenced the reception of French literature in Bulgaria, shaping the criteria for choosing authors and titles for translation.

The categorization of French writers into acceptable or unacceptable was visible in the early 1940s on the pages of the official newspaper of the Union of the Bulgarian writers, *Literturen Front*. In the article 'Ot Balzac do Prust' [From Balzac to Proust], the talent of Balzac was opposed to Proust, 'the degenerate offspring of several bourgeois generations' (Nejkov 1946). Another article from *Literturen Front*, written by Dimităr B. Mitov, had a revealing title: 'Francija ne ražda samo genii' [France does not produce only genius] (Mitov 1948). The double image of French literature was discussed in more detail in the 1950s by the literary critic Boris Delčev (Delčev 1955). He gave clear indications as to who were the 'good' and 'faulty' writers in French literature. Among the 'exemplary' writers were Guy de Maupassant, Anatole France, Romain Rolland, and Henri Barbusse, but also Paul Verlaine and Arthur Rimbaud for their participation in the French Commune and for being close to the French people and the working class. Delčev (1955: 65–80) appreciated the surrealists such as Louis Aragon and Paul Éluard and the dadaist Tristan Tzara, even though part of their work contradicted

the principles of socialist realism. These authors were favoured because of their allegiance to the Communist Party, their efforts to popularize communist principles in art, and their friendship with the USSR. On the 'negative' side were the names of Charles Maurras, Jules Romains, Paul Claudel, Paul Valéry, André Gide, François Mauriac, Georges Duhamel, Albert Camus, André Malraux, and Marcel Jouhandeau, because they glorified the 'regime of exploitation' of the French people (Delčev 1955: 80). Among other things, they were blamed for promoting 'fascist ideas', for being inspired by an aesthetic that brings only 'academic emptiness' (*akademična pustota*) (Delčev 1955: 39).

New changes in the reception of French culture occurred after 1956. The 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, during which the personality cult and dictatorship of Stalin were denounced, was followed by the Plenum of the Bulgarian Communist Party, in April 1956, which denounced the abuse of power by the prime minister Valko Chervenkov as well as the excessive rigidity of Bulgarian cultural life. This was seen by Bulgarian intellectuals as a step towards a democratisation of culture. The Bulgarian literary canon started widening its boundaries: some writers preferred to focus on characters that were not necessarily socialist (Kalinova and Baeva 2000: 109) and tried to find new ways of expression that were different from the precepts of socialist realism. At the same time, there was an improvement in political relations between the USSR and France when Charles de Gaulle came to power in 1958. Following de Gaulle's policy of reducing the supremacy of the USA and USSR and strengthening the role of France as a mediator with the Eastern bloc, cultural relations between Bulgaria and France increased (Grigorova 2017) and so did the number of translated books from French, which included not only the classic French authors but also some more contemporary ones.

At the beginning of the 1960s—soon after this liberalization of the Bulgarian culture—the ruling party attempted to regain control over the cultural domain. In 1963 Zhivkov, who had been prime minister since 1962, gave a speech blaming artists and writers for moving away from socialist realism and the communist ideology. He emphasized the harmful influence of Western literature which tried to impose upon readers a pessimistic, hopeless view of life (Zhivkov 1981: 77).

However, these attempts to redress the focus of Bulgarian intellectuals did not limit their interest towards Western culture or alter the positive image that French literature had gained as a progressive, humanist, and democratic culture—the image that would remain until the end of the communist period. A 1967 report from the French Embassy found that, despite the Russian influence, Bulgarian people still had a positive image of French culture, seen as a way to spiritual and intellectual freedom (Grigorova 2017: 20).

French literature was never completely banished from the Bulgarian literary scene, and it even ranked at the top of translated Western literatures between the late 1940s and early 1970s in Bulgaria (Djugmendžieva and Ivanov 1973: 25–9). The reasons for this were both historical: French literature had played a major role in establishing and developing Bulgarian literature by introducing new models and tendencies; and the willingness of the French to strengthen their political and cultural power in East European countries in the context of the Cold War.

Thus, during the communist period, the Russian and French literatures were two major pillars shaping the translation horizon in socialist Bulgaria. The different roles that Russian and French cultures played during communism, and the different extent to which these two languages were used in Bulgarian culture, brought different motivations for translating. Socialist political ideology promoted a positive image of the Russian culture by emphasizing historical events, where Russia had a central role in the liberation of Bulgaria from external political domination (in 1878 from Ottomans and in 1944 from the Axis powers). In practice, this meant publishing translations mainly from Russian. Readers and translators also had easy access to original books in Russian, through Russian bookshops located in all the main towns in Bulgaria.

Translations from French had different motivations, and they did not have the same impact and diffusion as Russian literary works. Censorship mechanisms monitored cultural exchange (Čičovska 2003), French cultural institutions closed in the 1950s which affected the teaching of French (Grigorova 2017) and reduced the number of people able to read in French. But, at the same time, the image and importance of French culture through its literary heritage were very stimulating

for Bulgarian intellectuals. Despite the official policy that proclaimed Russian and Soviet literature as a primary model, there was an explicit desire to approach Western culture, especially French culture. In these circumstances the role of publishing houses and especially translators in negotiating the cultural boundaries was decisive.

The Normative Organization of the Translation Process

As part of the publishing industry, translation also became part of state politics in Bulgaria. In a document entitled *Book publishing. Thematic plan, its role and importance for book publishing and book distribution* the author Nikola Petkov claimed that the social goal of translation was to establish a brotherhood between countries and to educate the masses:

the book serves to build within the working class a worldview consistent with scientific Marxism-Leninism, to destroy religious deceptions and to transcend what remains of decadent bourgeois morality, to educate young communists and the working people [...]. (Petkov 1963: 3)

While between 1944 and 1949 private publishing houses and private contacts played an important role in the translation and publishing of foreign books (Čičovska 2003), the nationalization of private publishing houses in 1948, and the creation of new state-owned houses put an end to all private enterprise. In the same year a new organ of control, the Committee of Science, Art and Culture (in Bulgarian *Komitet za Nauka, Izkustvo i Kultura*, or KNIK) took over the control of culture and book publishing. The mechanism of censorship was finally established in 1952 with the creation of the Directorate General of Literature and Publishing (Glavlit in Bulgarian), based on the Soviet model. Glavlit had the power not only to indicate what could be published but also to incriminate people if a published work was considered ‘harmful’. Books were considered harmful that ‘promote bourgeois morality, private entrepreneurship and that refer to god’ (*v koito se vāzxvaljavat buržoaznijat moral, častnata sobstvenost i se spomenava gospoda*) (Čičovska 2003: 144). What was the

impact of Glavlit on literary translation? In 1955 it published a list of book titles to be withdrawn from libraries (only one copy of each book was saved for reference in a special repository and could be consulted only with permission). The list included fiction and non-fiction books from Bulgarian authors, as well as translated books that were considered unacceptable for various reasons. From 1953 library repositories were permanently controlled by censors and from 1954 the importation of foreign books came under the control of Glavlit (Čičovska 2003: 147–9). The more restricted access to Western books made it more difficult to translate them.

Similar to publishing, the translation process was subject to a planning process, which was another form of control. Publishing and literary production were managed and controlled by several organs: Glavlit (1952–6), KNIK (Committee for Science, Art and Culture) from 1948, as well as the Directorate General of Publishing, Printing Industry and Print Trade. The Directorate was created in 1950 as part of the Council of Ministers; it was then re-named Poligrafizdat and integrated into the Ministry of Culture in 1954. It was then re-named the State Agency ‘Bulgarian book’ in 1968, re-named once again as the Committee of the Print Industry and integrated to the Council of Ministers in 1971, and finally re-named the State Agency ‘Bulgarian book and Print Industry’ in 1982 (Gergova 2004: 240). The agency was composed of three departments: Publishing, Print, and Book Trade. Thematic plans were the core of the planned publishing industry. Following the Soviet model, the first thematic plan in Bulgaria was prepared in 1951. Created by the publishing houses, the plans first had to undergo public discussion; they were then further discussed and, if necessary, amended by the Directorate of Publishing, Printing Industry, and Book Trade, before finally being approved by the Ministry of Culture and Education. The thematic plans were the starting point for all books, including translations, and a title that did not fall within these plans simply could not be published. In fact, the process included two types of plans. First, the preparatory plan listed the new titles that would be processed during the current year but not released for publishing (e.g. titles of manuscripts to be written, text for translations, and so on). Second, the proper annual thematic plan included titles that would actually be published during the following

year: it consisted of some manuscripts from the preparatory plans that had been advanced and some titles from the previous annual plan that, for some reason, had not been published.

The documents available in the archives—such as guidelines and reports issued between 1962 and 1967, as well as normative documents from 1971 and 1979 on manuscript publishing—shed some light on the ideological influences that affected publishing during Zhivkov's rule, and they also reveal the strategies that were adopted to create a literary canon in the 1960s and early 1970.

The period following the 1956 April Plenum can be characterized by a relative softening of the regime in the domain of culture: some painters, who were banned in the late 1940s and early 1950s were rehabilitated and some theatres began to include in their repertoires the plays of writers who had been prohibited in previous years (Kalinova, Baeva 2000: 109–10). Moreover, between 1962 and 1963 several literary debates were held, mainly in *Literaturen Front* (a weekly newspaper of the Union of Bulgarian Writers) and *Septemvri* (a monthly literary magazine of the Union of Bulgarian Writers). These debates were on issues such as the use of free verse versus the prescribed versification with regular rhythm and rhymes; or the validity of 'intellectual poetry' (*intelektualnata poezija*) versus revolutionary poetry (Slavov 1994: 116–7). These themes were new to Bulgarian poets and writers and the discussions introduced new views on writing that were completely different from the known methods of socialist realism and its prescriptive character. The softening of the regime also resulted in increased cultural relations with Western countries and especially France (Grigorova 2017).

However, cultural liberalization was soon perceived as a threat and, in a speech in 1963, Zhivkov openly criticized artists for deviating from the Party line and publicly blamed some of them (Zhivkov 1981). The mistrust of the government towards Western culture was still evident. Not surprisingly, threats of *ideologiceska diversija* [ideological sabotage] were emphasized in the official documents. Comparing the planned publishing of Socialist countries to book publishing in Western countries, Petkov (1963) stated that, for the sake of profit, Western publishers were flooding their markets with 'light books' (*leki četiva*), books with

‘criminal content’ (*kriminalno šadăržanie*), and ‘pornographic pictures’ (*pornografski kartini*), that.

awake low instincts in people and especially in youth, make them morally depraved, create a perverse taste and an inclination towards decadence in art and in life. (Petkov 1963: 3).

Publishing in the West was presented in Bulgaria as an ideological weapon, the aim of which was to ‘suppress the consciousness of the proletariat’ (*potiška sážnaniето na proletariata*), ‘reinforce religious misconceptions’ (*zatvărždavane religiozni zabludi*), and instigate ‘war instincts’ (*voennopodpalvačeski instinkti*) (Petkov 1963: 3). The tone of the 1967 guidelines of the Committee of Art and Culture was inculpatory and explicitly pointed to the ‘ideological sabotage’ used by ‘imperialism’ (Komitet za izkustvoto i kulturata 1967: 53). This shows that long after the closure of Glavlit in 1956, and the claims of a new course and the softening of the regime after the Party’s April plenum in the same year, the old clichés of the 1950s propaganda were still actively used. Similar to the 1950s, Western literature was not completely banned but rather controlled: only ‘the progressive revelations of today’s Western literature’ (*progresivnite projavi na sávremennite zapadni literaturi*) (Osnovni tematični nasoki 1964: 24) could be considered for publication.

The 1970s were a time when Bulgaria expanded its international cultural relations (Grigorova 2017) and followed a more open cultural policy under Zhivkov’s daughter Lyudmila Zhivkova (Kalinova and Baeva 2000). However, the official documents regulating the publishing of translations from Western languages still had a restrictive character. The guidelines for preparing the thematic plans for the period 1971–5 formulated the following limits for the selection of foreign books:

The criteria for selecting contemporary Western books for publishing must be a high mastery of the literature, a progressive vision, a critique of capitalist reality. They must reveal the weaknesses of bourgeois society and the reactionary character of bourgeois morals. (Komitet za izkustvo i kultura 1971: 57)

This normative text reveals the strict process for selecting works for translation and shows the grounds on which foreign literature was received. The propaganda tropes that had been used in the past to juxtapose progressive socialist and decadent bourgeois cultures were still there. Another level of control that each translated book underwent is revealed in a document from 1979, 'Guidelines for Preparing Manuscripts for Publishing', Part I. In the *General Terms*, we find the following provisions of Article 7:

Art. 7 /1/ The books for translation are included in the thematic plan after being provided with at least two reports from competent organisations or specialists.

/2/ Well-known books, books that have won the Dimitrov, Lenin or the USSR State Prize or books strongly recommended by the leading publishing bodies of other Socialist brother countries are exempted from any preliminary reports. (*Komitet za pečata* 1979: 18)

As we can see, the process of filtering Western texts was still closely tied to Soviet practice: the Lenin Prize and the USSR State Prize ensured that a text could be translated without any necessary reports.

The last level of control for a translation was an editorial review. Another normative document clarifies what the content of an editorial review should be and how to write it:

1. The fundamental requirements for an editorial review are: an active political orientation, an authoritative judgement and the motivation for this judgement, analysis of the essential elements of literary works, simplicity, accuracy, and expressive language. (*Komitet za pečata* 1979: 32)

All potential levels of control are included here, expressed in a prescriptive way: the themes, the quality of translation, and the critique of a translated text (we can consider the editorial review as such).

We can see that the strong mechanism of control over publishing established in the 1940s and 1950s made it possible to translate only carefully selected texts and writers from French and Russian—mainly poets and writers whose writing was close to the party line or who shared

socialist views. Despite the strict normative documents regulating the selection of foreign texts and authors for translation, after 1956 there was a greater openness towards foreign cultures and the number of translations from French increased. Poets and writers whose modes of writing were different from socialist realism were gradually introduced, especially from the mid-1960s.⁴ This was possible because translators became key figures shaping the way foreign books were received: they wrote prefaces, introduced authors, selected texts/authors for translation, evaluated translations, and discussed their value; in contrast, at the beginning of the communist period, translators were only anonymous ‘navigators’ between cultures. As translators became more active and took part in different stages of the publishing process, especially after the mid-1960s, they were able (not without the help of editors) to modulate the reception of foreign authors and find ways to circumvent the strict normative prescriptions of the thematic plans. This was a gradual process, also enabled by the politics of Zhivkov, who knew how to harness the intelligentsia by softening the rules and giving them privileges, on the one hand, while disciplining them whenever there was a danger of excessive freedom being taken, on the other (Kalinova and Baeva 2000: 111). Disciplining here included public blaming, administrative action, or the prohibition of some of their works; all of which did not have the repressive character of the 1950s, however. In other words, from the mid-1960s until the 1980s, the Party did not directly interfere in the creative process but controlled it by ‘criticising and/or banning’ (Kalinova, Baeva 2000: 111).

In the 1970s, criticism of Western cultural influence in Bulgaria became more subtle and less incriminatory compared to the official texts of the 1950s. For example, the official committee report presented by the President of the Committee of Culture and Art, Pavel Matev, at the Second Congress of Bulgarian Culture in December 1972 expressed concerns regarding the lack of professionals who can ‘truly understand’ the cultural processes of the West; consequently, Bulgarian readers were running the risk of misinterpreting foreign cultures (Vtori Kongress 1973: 53–4). The committee therefore advocated different initiatives to ‘instil an independent Marxist interpretation of art’ (Vtori Kongress 1973: 54).

Despite the ideological rhetoric in the official documents, the translation domain thrived in the 1970s and 1980s, with an increased number and quality of translated texts from Western languages (Tchilingirova-Ivleva 2011). This was made possible thanks to the way in which Bulgarian culture was opened to foreign influence under the cultural leadership of Lyudmila Zhivkova, and as a consequence of the institutionalization in 1974 of the Union of Translators which strengthened the position of translators.

Negotiating/renegotiating the Canon. The Translator and the Boundaries of the Canon.

Translators, their social position and the choices they could (or could not) make were central to the perception of translation in communist Bulgaria. During communism, translators were part of the intelligentsia, with whom political authorities maintained an ambivalent relationship: the intelligentsia could be flattered or persecuted depending on the political climate of the moment.

The Figure of the Translator

Translation during the communist period represented a way for writers who were prohibited from publishing their own work to express themselves. This practice was well known in the USSR of the 1920s and 1930s, when some of the greatest poets such as Boris Pasternak, Marina Tsvetaeva, Osip Mandel'stam, Nikolay Zabolotsky, and Maria Petrovykh translated masterpieces of world literature.⁵ The American critic Lauren Leighton describes the decision of some Russian poets, shackled by censorship, to continue expressing themselves through translation:

it means that Russian poets, unable or afraid to speak unpopular truths during the Stalinist period, looked to foreign poets to express their own thoughts and beliefs. It means that a whole generation of Soviet poets turned to translation as a “safe” art, a way to express dangerous ideas in

perilous times and to survive the terrors of Stalinism. (Leighton 1991: 37)

This practice was not as prevalent in Bulgaria as it was in the USSR. However, some of the most famous Bulgarian authors, mainly poets, such as Atanas Dalčev (1904–78), Georgi Mickov (1921–2002), and Nikolaj Kănčev (1936–2007), whose literary work clashed with the politics of their time, were at times prevented from publishing their own works and had to survive by publishing translations. Atanas Dalčev stopped writing between 1944 and 1956 due to political pressure. His poetry was criticized for being too ‘bourgeois’, or too focussed on inanimate objects, far from the requirements of socialist realism. From 1950 he devoted himself to translation. His translations included a wide range of cultural areas and authors: French, Russian, Spanish, and German. Atanas Dalčev translated French writers such as Pierre de Ronsard, Jean de Lafontaine, Victor Hugo, and the poetry of Louis Aragon and Paul Éluard, as well as Honoré de Balzac’s *Cousin Bette* and Stendhal’s *The Red and the Black*, and the works by Blaise Pascal and Michel de Montaigne. Between 1950 and 1960, when officially approved Russian writers were published in Bulgaria in a series of volumes, he took part in this project by translating texts by Anton Chekhov and Ivan Turgenev. He also translated Konstantin Paustovsky and Isaac Babel, among others. Even after being reintroduced into the literary community and regaining the right to publish his own poetry, Atanas Dalčev continued translating as his main profession.

When he was unable to publish his own poetry, translations became a compromise: Atanas Dalčev was able to survive on an everyday basis and stay close to literature, he was not some passive ‘clerk’ of letters, but an active creator—a translator.

Another voice of dissent from the communist period is the poet Nikolaj Kănčev (1936–2007). He appeared on the Bulgarian literary scene in 1965 with a collection of poems entitled *Prisăstvie* [Presence]. After his second collection, *Kolkoto sinapenoto zărno* [As big as a grain of mustard], was published in 1968, he was banned from publishing his own work until 1980. After being refused a permit to live in Sofia, he

retreated to the countryside in 1970 and dedicated his time to translation. Compared to the wide range of poets and cultural areas of Atanas Dalčev's translation work, Nikolaj Kănčev was more selective. He started learning French in order to translate poets such as Henri Michaux, Eugène Guillevic, Yves Bonnefoy, Michel Deguy, Bertrand Noël, and Claude Esteban—poets whose works were not in line with socialist realism.⁶ He translated from French some of the works of Kenneth White, and became known as White's translator in Bulgaria.⁷ These choices show that Nikolaj Kănčev was in search of new poetics and new poetic expressions that broke away from the poetic conventions of Bulgaria, and the thriving translation practice and political climate of the 1980s made it possible to publish these translations.

Georgi Mickov (1921–2002) is another example of a poet whose original work was banned during the communist period and who started publishing only after 1989. He studied Romance languages and literatures and Philosophy at the University of Sofia. He was arrested after his father emigrated. After being imprisoned and staying in a forced labour camp, he too was denied a permit to live in Sofia. Translating was a way of surviving. He worked from several languages: German, French, Portuguese, and Russian among others, and translated authors such as Rainer Maria Rilke, Fernando Pessoa, Constantine Cavafy, Pierre-Jean de Béranger, Alain Bosquet, Saint-John Perse, and René Char. Some of his translations were included in different anthologies by the Narodna kultura and Narodna mladež publishing houses.⁸

Nevena Stefanova (1923–2012), a Bulgarian poet, translator, and painter, was publicly criticized by Todor Zhivkov for writing poetry that was too 'intellectual'. Her book *Novi stixove* [New stances], published in 1963, was withdrawn from bookstores by the censors. However, three years later, in 1966, she edited the first Bulgarian anthology of contemporary French poetry.⁹ This anthology included poets such as Paul Claudel, Paul Valéry, Guillaume Apollinaire, Jean Cocteau, André Breton, Louis Aragon, Blaise Cendrars, Yves Bonnefoy, and others, whose poetry is far removed from the aesthetics of socialist realism.

Other poets and translators, without being directly singled out by the state, tried to help foreign literature rise above ideological critiques. One of them was Veselin Xančev (1919–66), who translated and wrote

a literary critique on Guillaume Apollinaire. He defended the idea that the reception of foreign writers should not be affected by any ideological interpretation but established solely upon the writer's literary merits (Slavov 1994: 168).

We can see that translation became the only means of survival for some writers and poets who were banned from publishing their own works. Some even found a way to go beyond the prescriptions of socialist realism and introduce foreign writers and poets with different styles and expressions. Different factors could explain the widening of the translation horizon. While the restrictive prescriptions of the normative documents on translation were not openly debated, there was a tacit understanding that translation could allow more space and opportunity for negotiation, especially through the reception of Western writers. It is certain that to go against the official aesthetic and to circumvent state censorship was an enterprise which would not have been possible without the strong support of the editors and other progressive intellectuals.

The Evolving Canon

Just as literature was used in the totalitarian era for other purposes (to educate the masses, for example), at certain moments in the cultural history of Bulgarian communism, translation became a cultural activity that had an impact on the dynamics of liberalization and cultural openness. While in the 1950s it was the ideological elite who determined the reception of foreign works, over time the taste of the public became more important. This taste was influenced by the work of translators, critics, and editors who enriched and diversified Bulgarian literary heritage and values through translation.

Thus, translation in Bulgaria during the communist period was a site of tension between the desire of men of letters to revive the literary field and the restrictions of the official canon. In this sense, translators were aware of their double-sided mission. On the one hand, translators were assigned an official social mission: to educate 'the masses' by guiding the reception of works and modulating the image of foreign literatures. On the other hand, their unofficial mission was to bring in new writing

and ideas through translation (Tchilingirova-Ivleva 2011). The first task was controlled by the mechanisms of propaganda and censorship which involved imposing official criteria on the selection of the text to be translated, and was also carried out with critical judgements in the paratexts of translated books which modulated their reception according to the concepts and values established by the official aesthetics. The second, more unofficial, mission was motivated by the desire of Bulgarian intellectuals to widen the borders of the canon by guiding the reception of some new and unconventional works and authors.

To shed more light on how the reception was modulated, we can examine some prefaces to the translations of French and Russian authors that were published at different times during the communist period. Unsurprisingly, the propaganda clichés of the 1940s and 1950s are more striking. Thus, the preface to Paul Eluard's collection, *Pesni za vsički* [Songs for everyone],¹⁰ portrays the author in a narrow way, presenting him as a poet who abandoned surrealism for more engaged poetry and social themes (Muratov 1953).

This gradually changed towards a tendency to write prefaces and afterwards with a less political and more literary focus. To see this difference, we can take as an example the paratexts accompanying two translations of Anna Akhmatova's poetry, one from 1967 and the other from 1974. The collection of poems *Izbrani stixotvorenija* [Selected poems], translated in 1967 and published by Narodna kultura, included a preface written by the Russian writer Alexey Surkov, entitled 'Anna Akhmatova'. This preface, with its revolutionary emphasis, was designed to guide the readers. Thus, Alexey Surkov notes, not without regret, that the first three collections of poems written by Anna Akhmatova did not reflect the great historical events of the First World War and the October Revolution. Moreover, he focuses on Akhmatova's social origins and says it is impossible for a woman educated in the 'atmosphere of a bourgeois family' to understand the needs of a new Russia. However, Alexey Surkov acknowledges Anna Akhmatova's decision not to leave her country but to stay and live there.

Less categorical and more nuanced is the afterword to the translation of Anna Akhmatova's poems by Ivan Nikolov (Nikolov 1974), written in the 1970s with the title 'In my memory live three epochs' (*Živejat v moja*

spomen tri epoxi). The translator draws a thematic outline, analysing the characteristics of Akhmatova's lyrical poetry without falling into revolutionary pathos, and avoiding clichés on social themes. This is an example of how changes in the paratexts of translations modulated the reception of foreign writers beyond the usual political rhetoric.

In the mid-1970s and 1980s, the style of these paratexts became even more subtle despite some ideological notes. For instance, two editions of *Swann's Way* by Marcel Proust were published by Narodna kultura and translated by Liljana Staleva in 1975 and (with some corrections) in 1984. Each volume includes a preface: the first is titled 'Marsel Prust' (in Bulgarian) and is written by Angelina Terzieva (Terzieva 1975), an academic and translator from French, the second one is titled 'Epopeja na subektivnostta' [An Epic of Subjectivity], written by Bogdan Bogdanov, Professor of Classical Languages and Literatures. The two critics tried to extract Proust's work from the frame of ideological criticism. On the other hand, if they wanted *Swann's Way*, written by an author who was controversial for the regime, to be published, they had to explain the text in the light of socialist ideology and suggest its merits. The strategy of the critics was first to denounce its 'faults' and then to highlight the qualities of the novel. Thus, Angelina Terzieva made several critical comments in her analysis: she stated that Proust's work was distant from ordinary people, she criticized him for rejecting the idea that a writer's supreme purpose was to serve society and she denounced his subjectivity. On the other hand, Terzieva attributed some realistic values to the novel, such as Proust's choice to place man at the centre of his work (even if the emphasis is on the 'inner self', an individualism that goes against the socialist canon), and his ability to create a constellation of characters through which to display a realistic picture of the social and political life of the time (Terzieva 1975).

The preface to the second edition, written nearly ten years later, was more nuanced and the tone less accusatory. However, Bogdanov did not forget to note that like 'many other works of contemporary Western prose, the reception of this book is bound to cause difficulties' (Bogdanov 1984: 5).

These examples show how the paratexts accompanying translated books and written by translators, critics, and editors were a way to guide

the reader and modulate the reception of foreign authors. The prefaces of the 1950s and 1960s emphasize political aspects of the foreign authors' works, intentionally aligning them with the political ideology and socialist realism, even if it was not a core feature of their writing. It is likely that with this practice translators, critics, and editors prepared the ground for introducing new, contemporary foreign authors and therefore widened the translation canon (Tchilingirova-Ivleva 2011). With more authors being introduced and a gradual opening of cultural life in Bulgaria, from the mid-1970s the prefaces became more nuanced, focusing less on the ideological aspects and more on the content and quality of the work.

Conclusion

The history of translations from Russian and French literature helps us to understand the changing image and cultural values of communist Bulgaria, as well as provides a more detailed picture of cultural changes during this period.

The images of Russian and French literature tell us a great deal about the status of these cultures in Bulgaria and the dynamics of cultural exchange at the time. We have seen that at the beginning of the communist period, Russian and French culture represented two opposing camps: progressive, socialist Russian culture against decadent Western French culture. However, French literature was 'saved' on the Bulgarian literary scene, because it had been a literary model in the past and because of its revolutionary image. This is how the canon modulated the reception of foreign authors and how all Russian and French authors were selected through the prism of socialist realism. However, Bulgarian intellectuals preserved another image, one that was restricted by the official regime and nurtured their desire to discover new ideas and writings. After 1956, the canon started gradually opening up to works that were previously restricted.

The analysis of the history of translation provides us with a more detailed picture of the state of culture during communism. The mechanisms of control and censorship in Bulgaria were established in the 1940s

and 1950s. It is interesting to note that the official documents which regulated the translation process in the 1960s and 1970s still retained the clichés of the 1950s representing Western cultures as ‘decadent’ and warning about their ‘ideological sabotage’. And yet the translation horizon was widening its boundaries by including contemporary Western texts, as well as authors that had been considered controversial in the 1950s. The relative softening of the regime in the 1960s (with the rehabilitation of artists, and new discussions in the literary field), the opening to foreign cultures in the 1970s and 1980s with the policies of Lyudmila Zhivkova, the increasingly important role of translators (who wrote critiques of translation, and selected texts to be translated) are some of the factors that enabled translators and publishers to circumvent state control and introduce an increasingly diverse selection of foreign authors.

Notes

1. However, the elected members had to be approved by the National Assembly and the Council of State. See Popov (1972).
2. The third Ukrainian front was a front of the Red Army, which in the last year of the war included some Bulgarian troops.
3. Unless otherwise indicated all translations are by the author.
4. Most of the contemporary French poets and writers, as well as some previously controversial Russian poets and writers, such as Marina Tsvetaeva, Vladimir Khlebnikov, Osip Mandelstam, Vladimir Nabokov, and so on, were translated in the 1970s and 1980s.
5. Bagno, Vsevolod and Kazanskij, Nikolaj (2000) «Perevodčeskaja niša v sovetSKUju epoxu i fenomen stixotvornogo perevoda v XX veke» [The translation niche during the soviet era and the phenomenon of poetry translation in the XX century], in Levin, Jurij and Bagno, Vsevolod. (eds.) *Res Traductonica. Perevod i sravnitel'noe izučenie literatur* [Res Traductonica. The translation and comparative literature studies], Saint-Petersbourg, Nauka: 50–63.
6. These authors are included in poetry books such as *Petima sãvremenni frennski poeti* (1983) [Five contemporary French poets],

- Sofia, Narodna kultura, translated by N. Kănčev; *Kato pette prăsta na răkata* (1988) [As the five fingers of the hand], Sofia, Narodna kultura, translated by N. Kănčev.
7. White, K. *Golemija brjag* (1985) (original title *Le Grand Rivage*), Varna, G. Bakalov, translated by N. Kănčev, White, K. *Sinijat păt* (1988) (original title: *La Route bleue*), Sofia, Profizdat, translated by N. Kănčev.
 8. *Antologija na săvremennata frenska poezija* (1966) [Anthology of the contemporary French poetry], Sofia, Narodna kultura; *Antologija na svetovnata ljubovna lirika* (1967) [Anthology of the World Love Poetry], Narodna mladež, Sofia; *Sto šedjovăra na svetovnata ljubovna lirika* (1981) [Hundred masterpieces of the World Love Poetry], Sofia, Narodna kultura.
 9. *Antologija na săvremennata frenska poezija*, (1966) [Antology of the contemporary French Poetry], Sofia, Narodna Kultura.
 10. Muratov, Aleksandăr (1953) «*Pol Eljuar*» [preface], in *Pesni za vsički* (Songs for everyone), Sofia, Narodna kultura: 5–9.

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13

Underground Fiction Translation in People's Poland, 1976–89

Robert Looby

Spoiled for Choice

What did Poles, caught on the wrong side of the Iron Curtain, have to read from world literature? In the first place, there were plenty of Russian books, including the fondly remembered socialist realist *How the Steel was Tempered* by Nikolai Ostrovsky (eight editions, 1950–77) as well as Yuri Krymov's *The Tanker 'Derbent'* (three editions, 1949–53) and Fyodor Gladkov's *Cement* (two editions, 1951–53). From Czechoslovakia, there was Ivan Olbracht's *Anna the Proletarian* (four editions, 1948–53), and from Germany Anna Seghers's *The Comrades* (three editions, 1950–53). From further afield came the work of Howard Fast, the American communist, Carlos Fuentes (*The Death of Artemio Cruz*, 1968), and Louis Aragon, whose *Bells of Basel* had at least six editions in People's Poland from 1947 to 1975.

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However, this procession of books by communists, socialists, sympathizers, and fellow travellers was not all there was to read in translation through the years of the People's Republic of Poland. Most of the examples given above quietly withdrew with the end of Stalinism in 1956, and even before then classics of world literature were available in good translations at low prices. Despite the preventive censorship that was enforced at the time, People's Poland was not a cultural wasteland and the Iron Curtain permitted much literary traffic. After 1956 Poles could enjoy a range of foreign books from East and West too wide to detail here but including Vasily Grossman's *For a Just Cause* (1959), Milan Kundera's *Laughable Loves* (1967 and 1971), Bohumil Hrabal's *Closely Watched Trains* (1969), Vladimir Voinovich's *Friends* (1968 and 1974) and various books by Andrey Platonov and Boris Pilnyak. Meanwhile the pages of theatre periodical *Dialog* carried plays by Mikhail Bulgakov (four in the 1960s), Friedrich Dürrenmatt (over a dozen from 1957 to 1978), Yevgeny Zamyatin (*The Flea*, in 1959), Tom Stoppard (*Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*, in 1969), and Václav Havel (*The Memorandum*, in 1966). There were also books by Frederick Forsyth, Vladimir Nabokov, Philip Roth, Jozef Škvorecký, and even—as early as 1962, serialized in *Polityka* magazine—Alexander Solzhenitsyn.

And yet, with all these literary riches, Poles took to the underground—the 'second circulation' as it came to be known—from 1976 onwards to publish what they wanted to read without the permission of the state or the interference of the censor. Works such as: Vasily Grossman's *Everything Flows*, Milan Kundera's *Unbearable Lightness of Being*, Bohumil Hrabal's *Too Loud a Solitude*, Vladimir Voinovich's *The Life and Extraordinary Adventures of Private Chonkin*, Andrey Platonov's *The Foundation Pit*, Boris Pilnyak's *The Tale of the Unextinguished Moon*, Mikhail Bulgakov's *Crimson Island*, Friedrich Dürrenmatt's *Der Sturz* [*The Coup*], and Yevgeny Zamyatin's *We*, as well as plays by Tom Stoppard, such as *Every Good Boy Deserves Favour* and *Professional Foul*, and by Václav Havel, such as *Temptation* and *Mountain Hotel*. There were also books by Frederick Forsyth, Vladimir Nabokov, Philip Roth, Jozef Škvorecký, and of course Alexander Solzhenitsyn.

From *Samizdat* to Industry

When we think of *samizdat* publishing we tend to think of people getting hold of a book from a person they can trust, typing it out overnight, using carbon paper and strong fingers to produce several copies at once, and then returning the book and distributing the typed-out copies to other trustworthy people, preferably also with typewriters and strong fingers. This happened in Poland too, and some of the illegal books were of poor quality, obviously home-made, and difficult to read, with faded and blurred print. There were also complaints about the quality of proofreading, for example of Nabokov's *Speak, Memory* (Społeczna Rada Wydawnictw Niezależnych 1987: 171). However, despite some reservations, Poland's underground publishing sector deserves to be called an industry: one printer for Krąg publishers claimed they had over a hundred people doing editorial work and they often hired specialists for just one book ('Lasting Cultural Values...' 2016: 340). Books were often printed on state-owned printing presses and sometimes had print runs in the low thousands. Polish readers of underground translations—especially in books, as opposed to periodicals—were usually presented with 'stable' texts. Many translations were reprints of texts that had been published abroad, years earlier, especially by Jerzy Giedroyc's Instytut Literacki in Paris but also in London—for example, Orwell's *1984* and *Animal Farm*, and Kundera's *Life is Elsewhere*—and a few were reprinted from earlier days in People's Poland (Solzhenitsyn's *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* was serialized in *Polityka* magazine in 1962, and Pilnyak's *The Tale of the Unextinguished Moon*, published in *Po Prostu* magazine in 1956). This means they were not (or not necessarily) rushed, produced in an excess of enthusiasm in order to strike a blow against the communists, and with an attendant sloppiness. Given the evident thirst for forbidden literature, it seems unlikely that readers paid much attention to the identity of the (frequently pseudonymous) translators. If they did, they would probably not have perceived the translators' work as inaccurate, amateur efforts, especially since at least some of the translators' names (like Irena Lewandowska and Lech Jęczmyk) were well known from their work 'above ground'. As for quality, one underground publisher, Nowa, even

set up a fund to aid smaller independent publishers. It paid for translations, which did not necessarily appear at once but rather were stored up for future publication. It also advanced credit to smaller publishers to pay their translators ('Mniej wpadek...' 1984: 23).

Samizdat in the 'classic' sense described at the start of this section was not unknown in Poland in the first two decades after the Second World War: in Warsaw typed copies of Koestler's *Darkness at Noon* circulated in this way in the 1950s, as did Khrushchev's Secret Speech, published legally but for internal party use only (Sowiński 2011: 76). In addition, America sent books east to libraries and individuals for 20 years in a CIA-funded programme started in 1956 and called variously the Press and Special Projects Division (headed by George Minden from 1963), the International Advisory Council, and the International Literary Centre, which Minden directed from 1975 on (Reisch 2013: x, 41–2). In 1956 these books included Huxley's *Brave New World* and Orwell's *1984*; in 1971–73 they included works by Solzhenitsyn, Koestler, and Pavel Kohout (Reisch 2013: 27, 124). In the years 1956–59, for example, Poland received 194,400 books (Reisch 2013: 309). The West also helped out with direct injections of cash to already functioning second circulation publishers. Timothy Garton Ash recalls handing money to long-time dissident Adam Michnik in Paris on behalf of the Central and East European Publishing Project to fund the quarterly *Krytyka* (Garton Ash 1995: 23).¹ Another form of help, particularly relevant to translated literature, was the waiving by some authors of royalties for underground publication in Poland. Jerzy Kosiński, for example, asked for just one second circulation copy of his book as payment (Sowiński 2011: 152).

Various reasons have been advanced to explain why Poland's second circulation grew so big and why it took off in 1976. This was the year of the strikes in Radom and Ursus and elsewhere in Poland as workers protested against sharp increases in the price of food. The strikes and riots were put down violently but the price increases were withdrawn and the Workers' Protection Committee (KOR) was founded and became a centre of opposition. 1976 was also the year, Przemysław Czapliński points out, in which an amendment to the constitution was passed that named the Polish United Workers' Party as the leading power of the nation and mandated friendship with the Soviet Union. Protests, appeals,

and petitions accompanied the amendment. The Censorship Office blacklisted many signatories of one of the protests, the 'Letter of 59' (Czapliński 2006: 5–6). The signatories included Stanisław Barańczak, who was to become active in underground publishing, Adam Michnik, who was to play an important part in choosing which foreign texts to translate underground, and Andrzej Drawicz, who became an underground translator of Russian literature. Jacek Bocheński claims the increase in blacklisting spurred the development of the second circulation (Bocheński 1995: 63).

The year 1976, then, ended the illusion that First Secretary Edward Gierek, who had come to power in 1970, was a real change for the better. In 1977 came the *Black Book of Censorship*, a collection of the Censorship Office's rules and regulations smuggled out of Poland by a censor and published in London. Tadeusz Drewnowski observes that earlier censorship policy had had some logic but that the *Black Book* showed the policy had degenerated into the absurd (Drewnowski 1998: 16).

Public dissatisfaction with Polish cultural life had been noted even earlier, by the Censorship Office. A 1974 internal report drew attention to self-censorship and a perception that art had been politicized (Looby 2015: 89–90). Barańczak also describes the growing stultification after an initial, short-lived thaw associated with Gierek (Barańczak 1981: 129), while Bogusław Sułkowski notes that in the 1970s, libraries had long lists of writers who were not to be invited to give public readings (Sułkowski 1992, vol. 2: 276).

Another factor in the growth of the second circulation was the weakness of the state (Siekierski 1998: 37), or at any rate its reluctance to use force on the cultural front,³ even under Stalinism (Jarosiński 1999: 5). There is something of a paradox here. Relative to the rest of the Eastern Bloc, Polish censorship was so mild, its repression so weak, and individual freedom so strong, that there was no burning need for *samizdat*, which developed later in Poland than in the USSR and Czechoslovakia, for example; and yet this very reluctance of the state to use force meant that when underground publishing did finally start, it grew to far greater proportions than in more repressive neighbouring countries—to the point where it cannot really be called *samizdat*. Polish writers and publishers faced far milder punishment than in the Soviet Union. The

editors of *Duplicator Underground* describe a move 'from harsh repression to (primarily financial) harassment' of those involved in the production and distribution of second circulation texts (Zlatkes, Sowiński and Frenkel 2016: 16). A 1978 Ministry of the Interior document explicitly calls for less repression and more politics in the fight against the second circulation (Bertram 2013: 78). Andrzej Friszke suggests that this leniency was caused by First Secretary Gierek's desire to obtain loans from the West in the 1970s ('Znaczenie drugiego obiegu...' 2016: 579). Piotr Szwejcer, who was an underground publisher, subscribes to the theory that the authorities tolerated the second circulation in the 1980s because they saw it as a safety valve (Bertram 2013: 166).⁴

Output

Given the illegal nature of the enterprise, it is difficult to provide exact figures for the number of periodicals, books, editions, or print runs that were published in the second circulation. Books published officially had to state how many copies had been printed and how many editions but this was not the case for underground publishers, who sometimes introduced deliberate misinformation—especially in periodicals—to suggest that they were printed somewhere else (Knoch and Rybicki 2016: 108) or that there were more people on the editorial board than was really the case.

Poland's National Library online database of underground books, *Książki polskie podziemne (1976–1989)*, gives a figure of 6513 editions of books in the second circulation from 1976 to 1989; information which is correct as of 28 November 2007.⁵ This is very close to the figure given in *Bibliografia podziemnych druków zwartych z lat 1976–1989* in 1995. When multiple editions are discounted the number of titles is probably closer to 4000 (Federowicz, Gromadzińska and Kaczyńska 1995). Fałkowski estimates the number of periodicals at 5800 (Fałkowski 2016: 267). It should be borne in mind that some of the titles listed are not what we would normally call books. For example, although they are listed as stand-alone publications, Singer's *The Last Demon* and Solzhenitsyn's

Matryona's House are short stories, while Pilnyak's *The Tale of the Unextinguished Moon* and Dürrenmatt's *The Coup* are no more than 50 pages of text each.

In addition, there was a lively market in science fiction and horror novels, produced in so-called 'club editions' in the 1980s. These were editions published in no more than 100 copies and not subject to authorization from the Censorship Office, in line with the general liberalization of the censorship law in 1981 after the successes of the Solidarity movement.⁶ A number of Harry Harrison's 'Stainless Steel Rat' books appeared in these club editions, as well as books by Ray Bradbury and James Blish and stories by Philip K. Dick. Some of these books can be found in the National Library's online catalogue but they are not in its underground publishing database.

Print runs could be as high as 70,000 for newspapers and 40,000 for books (Zlatkes, Sowiński and Frenkel 2016: 6), though Sowiński elsewhere writes that the average print run of an edition of a second circulation book was probably only 500 (Sowiński 2011: 194). Siekierski, after Kamińska's 1988 bibliography, published in Paris, gives an average print run of 400–2000 (Siekierski 1990: 23). One underground printer claimed that in February 1985, 80,000 copies of the weekly newspaper *Tygodnik Mazowsze* were printed ('Fifty Thousand...' 2016: 369). Grzegorz Wołk, drawing on secret police files, suggests that in 1982—if the police had, as they estimated, seized '30% of the current production'—then 'more than one million copies of independent publications were produced (not including incidental leaflets)'. For comparison, he adds, 178 million copies of official books were produced that year (Wołk 2016: 239). Adam Mielczarek has conducted quantitative and qualitative research into the reach of underground publications. With a representative sample of 1000 Poles (584 of whom were over 15 in 1982), he found that 72 per cent had no contact with the second circulation. Better educated people from larger towns had a greater chance of contact: in the countryside, 87 per cent had no contact but only 37 per cent of respondents from towns with populations over 500,000 reported no contact (Mielczarek 2006: 23).

Using the Polish National Library's database, various authors have produced tables showing the most frequently published authors and

books (no distinction is made here between fiction, non-fiction, and poetry), but their figures need to be treated with caution. The very high figures for Czesław Miłosz may be thanks to a large number of short collections of poetry. Witold Gombrowicz's diaries and Kołakowski's philosophy were often published in fragmentary form, pushing up the number of editions (Sowiński 2011: 301). Also, the number of editions gives us no information about how many copies were printed.

Nevertheless, it is possible to draw conclusions about who and what was published.⁷ In first place is Czesław Miłosz, with 132 editions of his books. Next is Leszek Kołakowski with a little over half that number. The next most frequently published author is Witold Gombrowicz (71 editions) and it is not until we reach eighth place that we find a foreign writer: Solzhenitsyn (53–4 editions), followed immediately by George Orwell (45–7 editions). The next most popular authors in translation were Vladimir Bukovsky (30–3 editions), Alain Besançon (22), Alexander Zinoviev (20), Abdurakhman Avtorkhanov (16), Milton Friedman (15), Dürrenmatt (15), Sándor Kopácsi (15), Friedrich von Hayek (12), and Milan Kundera (12). Table 13.1 shows the number of

Table 13.1 Most frequently translated foreign works in the second circulation

Nr	Author	Title	Editions
1	Alexander Solzhenitsyn	<i>The Gulag Archipelago</i>	18–22
2	George Orwell	<i>Animal Farm</i>	16–18
3	George Orwell	<i>1984</i>	13–18
4	Friedrich Dürrenmatt	<i>The Coup</i>	15
5	Vladimir Bukovsky	<i>Pacifists Against Peace</i>	13
6	Abdurakhman Avtorkhanov	<i>The Riddle of Stalin's Death</i>	12
7	George Orwell	Essays	10
8	Sándor Kopácsi	<i>Thirteen Days of Hope</i>	9
9	Arthur Koestler	<i>Darkness at Noon</i>	8
10	Varlam Shalamov	<i>Kolyma Tales</i>	8
11	Viktor Suvorov	<i>Aquarium</i>	8
12	Vladimir Bukovsky	<i>To Build a Castle: my Life as a Dissenter</i>	8
13	Venedikt Yerofeev	<i>Moscow Stations</i>	8
14	Alexander Zinoviev	<i>We and the West</i>	7
15	Milton and Rose Friedman	<i>Free to Choose: a Personal Statement</i>	7

editions of the most frequently translated works published in the second circulation.

Siekierski estimated in 1990 that 16 per cent of the second circulation (up to 1986) was given over to literature. This is the same proportion as official publishing but, he points out, the second circulation did not publish geography books, instruction manuals (except guides for underground printers), and the like. 'Contrary to popular opinion', he writes, literature was not especially favoured in the second circulation (Siekierski 1990: 28, 29). Sowiński, using the National Library database's classification, arrives at a similarly unimposing figure of 567 titles for literature, compared to 1697 for history, 736 for politics, and 475 for memoirs in the years 1976–1989 (2011: 262). In literature, Polish émigré writers were much in demand. If we remove non-fiction from the translations (and much of what was translated was not fiction) we are left with multiple editions of Solzhenitsyn, Orwell, Dürrenmatt's *The Coup*, Koestler's *Darkness at Noon*, Varlam Shalamov's short stories, and Milan Kundera. In Federowicz, Gromadzińska, and Kaczyńska's bibliography, I counted roughly 100 foreign fiction titles. The exact figure would depend on whether one classifies, for example, some prison camp literature as fiction or non-fiction. If one includes 'club editions' this number would be doubled, or even tripled.⁸ What can be gleaned from these statistics is that literature was not that important and translated literature even less so.

Politics and Policy

With over 300 titles (fiction and non-fiction), Nowa was the biggest single underground publisher (Bertram 2013: 254–64). Other large publishers included Krąg and CDN but they published mostly on history and politics, respectively (Jarska and Olszek 2016: 147). Nowa's editorial policy was printed in its books in the late 1970s and early 1980s ('NOWA Mission Statement' 2016: 311) and included the statement: 'NOWA does not represent any political orientation'. Its stated aim was to fill in the blanks left by official publishing (Siekierski 1990: 23). Mirosław Chojecki of Nowa says of the selection process:

In most cases the printers could choose what they wanted to print. I would ask, what would you like to do? There were sometimes problems. Because they mostly wanted to print stuff against the communists, and we drifted more and more, in terms of books, towards intellectual and artistic content. So the printer would protest, 'Are we risking jail for flowers and birds?' (Grochola 2016: 419–20)

Jacek Bocheński, editor of *Zapis*, one of the first underground literary periodicals, also recalls being pressured by the printers to criticize the communists (Bertram 2013: 72). In Nowa, apart from the printers, Adam Michnik played a big part in choosing what books to translate, especially from Russian and French. It was he who took the initiative in having Václav Havel translated, encouraging Andrzej Jagodziński to carry out the translation. Also on the editorial board was Jan Kofman, instrumental in having Karl Popper and Hannah Arendt translated. Translators also approached Nowa themselves with ideas for what to translate and publish, for example Andrzej Jagodziński (who also translated Milan Kundera), Paweł Heartman (real name Piotr Godlewski, translator of Hrabal), Andrzej Drawicz (Platonov), and Irena Lewandowska (Sorokin, Solzhenitsyn). Polish writers like Wiktor Woroszyński and Stanisław Barańczak (who were also translators) made suggestions too and it was such people who brought about the translation of Shalamov's *Kolyma Tales* (Grzegorz Boguta, personal communication).⁹ Ryszard Knauff maintains that Nowa's selection criteria were at first very simple: if the book was banned and had intellectual value it was acceptable, although they could not, in the early days, print very long books (Grochola 2016: 407–8).¹⁰ Boguta recalls being impressed by Michnik's ambition to take on even such a lengthy book as *The Gulag Archipelago*, although it was not Nowa that eventually published it. Boguta claims that in later years Nowa ceased to be merely an outlet for books that were banned (Bertram 2013: 73). Around 40 of Nowa's books were translated fiction (Bertram 2013: 254–64).

This concern to avoid being narrowly anti-communist may be compared with the tactics of the CIA's book programme: books sent East included works by Isaiah Berlin, Albert Camus, Howard Fast, William Faulkner, Graham Greene, and Franz Kafka, as well as dictionaries and

books on architecture, music (especially jazz), and linguistics (Reisch 2013: 34). In 1987 the secret police could find no political programme in the second circulation apart from anti-communism and opposition to the Polish government (Sowiński 2011: 41).

Nowa's policy of being non-ideological while publishing only (or mainly) books that were banned by the censor could not be entirely successful since the books were generally banned precisely because of their ideological content. Since ideology determined what was present in the mainstream, it also to some extent determined what was present in the underground. In any case, not all publishers tried as hard as Nowa to escape definition as being merely anti-communist. For example, Oficyna Liberałów's edition of Bunin's *Cursed Days* included an ideological addition. The editor's note is clearly anti-communist and states: 'Oficyna Liberałów, as a political publisher, does not assess literary value and is not interested in it' (Bunin 1983: 2). The same people published *Brave New World* with an afterword written by Janusz Korwin-Mikke, which contains the following political (not literary) statement:

A hundred or so years ago – especially before women were given the vote – the majority of people could be mobilised to defend their freedoms. It is harder now and getting harder every year.

The cause, he states, lies in people's genes: more and more people are born and live with defects and demand social welfare. Healthy people breed with other healthy people causing a caste system to develop (Korwin-Mikke 1985: 191).

Selection

Underground translation, naturally, avoided socialist realist novels, which had been plentiful in the mainstream until the thaw of 1955–56 which ended the doctrine of socialist realism in Polish letters. Instead, it attempted to fill the gap caused by the effective banning of the harshest, most unambiguous criticism of communist totalitarianism. And so, works like Yevgeny Zamyatin's *We*, Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*,

Horst Bienek's *The Cell*, Danilo Kiš's *A Tomb for Boris Davidovich*, and Vlastimil Třešňák's *The Most Important Things About Mr Moritz* were available in the second circulation.

Underground translators also made some small attempt to supply a demand for popular literature that was not being met by the state. Among such books was Frederick Forsyth's *The Devil's Alternative*, which, according to Boguta, sold faster than anything else when it appeared in two consecutive numbers of *Vacat* magazine (Bertram 2013: 223). John Le Carré's *The Spy Who Came in From the Cold* was also in the second circulation, as was some Russian spy fiction, such as Boris Vinokur's *Inside the Kremlin Walls* and a number of books purporting to lift the lid on Soviet military intelligence (e.g. Viktor Suvorov's *Aquarium*). However, popular, or low-brow, foreign writers are very weakly represented in catalogues of underground fiction, as they are in the mainstream. Both above and below ground the emphasis was on serious fiction. Above ground, 1986 saw the publication of Philip Roth's *Portnoy's Complaint*, while below ground his more political but still salacious *Prague Orgy* was published, in 1988. The same year, Jerzy Kosiński's prurient *Steps* was published in the underground, complete with rape and bestiality. An 'official' version, by a different translator but just as explicit, followed in 1989. Also in the underground, one edition, at least, of *Brave New World*, makes much of the sex in the novel, adorning the cover with erotic pictures and interleaving the text itself with erotic cartoons.

Resources were limited and this may explain why the underground did not do a great deal to correct censored translations that were published in the mainstream. The Censorship Office applied cuts sparingly to foreign literature (Looby 2015: 90–1, 167, 177; Mojsak 2014: 114–15). They often consisted of a few incidental words whose absence did not seriously distort the sense of the text so it may have been thought uneconomical to put out corrected underground versions that would of necessity have been very close to the official versions. A (non-fiction) exception is Alvin Toffler's *The Third Wave*, published in the mainstream with four missing chapters, which were supplied (on their own) in the second circulation.¹¹ This is the exception that proves the rule: the cut material was extensive enough (50 pages or so) to warrant its reproduction in the underground.

Another partial exception to this rule is the case of Günter Grass's *The Tin Drum*. This book was with the (official) publishers for ten years. Grass apparently lost patience when the censors demanded that a reference to a flea in a Soviet soldier's collar be cut, reasoning that they had known about this flea for ten years (*Zaczęło się w Lublinie* 2016–17). The book appeared in the underground in 1979 and the 'official' version came out in 1983, in Sławomir Błaut's translation.¹²

The underground press occasionally printed readers' letters pointing out cuts that censors had made to 'official' books. The *Biuletyn Międzywydawniczy* printed such letters under the heading: 'Warning: censorship'. One reader, Filip M, draws attention to a cut made to Raymond Chandler's *Speaking* but is unable to say what words were missing ('Uwaga: Cenzura! Listy czytelników' 1984: 20–1). Other readers evidently worked in the publishing industry: a Wojciech Wierzynek wrote in to say that Orwell's *Keep the Aspidistra Flying* had been shelved 'after Molek' (Wierzynek 1985: 39), apparently a reference to a speech made by Kazimierz Molek of the Culture Section of the party's Central Committee in February 1984 in which he said publication of books by opposition writers should be restricted. *Keep the Aspidistra Flying* did eventually appear, above ground, in 1985.

The selection of fiction in the underground was, perhaps inevitably, heavily influenced by the policy of the state. Younger Polish writers tried to break out of the ideological framework, especially in the late 80s, in a movement sometimes called the 'third circulation'. Though not keen on communism, third circulation writers also took aim at the sacred cows of the opposition (Dunin-Wąsowicz and Varga 1995: 93). There were also fanzines, anarchist publications, and ecological magazines (see Doucette 2016).

Crisis

The publishing environment in Poland did not remain static in the 1970s and 1980s. In particular, the state eased censorship in the late 1980s, cutting the ground from underneath the second circulation. The émigré Gombrowicz's novels and diaries started appearing in officially authorized

editions in 1986, an excerpt from *Brave New World* appeared in the same year, and 1988 even saw the publication of Orwell's *1984* and *Animal Farm* (in new translations). In a 1987 interview, Grzegorz Boguta said the censors were far more permissive than in previous years: 'apart from openly anti-Soviet material you can publish anything' (Bertram 2013: 223). Books which would have been passed by the censor appeared in the second circulation, to the irritation of some underground printers, for whom publishing politically neutral work was not worth the risk of imprisonment (Mielczarek 2006: 56). By the late 1980s, readers had become more discerning. A 1988 survey among distributors revealed that it was no longer enough for a book to be second circulation: the title was important too (Bertram 2013: 227). In the underground press talk of a crisis in second circulation, publishing became more urgent in the mid-1980s. As Krzysztof Okoński puts it, 'independent publishers, despite their noble intentions, were also guilty of a certain schematism, simplification and preferential treatment in their choice of texts for distribution' (Okoński 2010: 476): sins for which 'official' publishers were also criticized. In an interview in *Vacat*, an underground magazine, in 1984, a representative of Nowa, 'N', defended the publisher against charges of being political (specifically, of being pro-KOR) and of publishing a wide variety of books with no clear guiding policy. N admitted that a few books had been published despite being of little literary merit but argued that the lack of a clear policy proved that Nowa was successful in avoiding Agitprop for its own sake ('Mniej wpadek...' 1984: 25).

Speaking at some time in the late 1990s or early 2000s, Konrad Bieliński of Nowa resisted the idea that Nowa had 'any consistent publishing profile' (Grochola 2016: 409). Nonetheless, there were complaints that the books chosen for publication in second circulation (and not just by Nowa) were too serious, too dogmatic, and too political—in a kind of mirror image of what the Censorship Office had observed in the mid-1970s. There was discussion on the pages of the underground press about ideology in underground publishing as early as 1983, when one contributor to the debate claimed that a reverse socialist realism was coming into being (Dabert 2014: 105). Czapliński writes that there was strong criticism of the second circulation by 1985: there were suggestions that some of Marek Nowakowski's work, for example,

was a new kind of socialist realism (2006: 21). Nowakowski was an oppositional writer and co-founder of *Zapis* whose stories about life under martial law were published underground in Poland and abroad in English (while still illegal in Poland) under the title of *The Canary and Other Tales of Martial Law*. There was also concern about a reluctance to innovate in literature (Dabert 2014: 105). Tellingly, one 1985 review in the second circulation magazine *Kultura Niezależna* of Kurt Vonnegut's *Mother Night* starts by complimenting the publishers (Nowa) for departing from their usual policy of publishing 'Very Serious Books', books about history, and 'Dreadfully Anti-Communist Books' ('Matka noc Kurta Vonneguta' 1985: 50).

Did the underground publishing industry push second-rate foreign writers simply because of their ideological positions? Being politically correct (i.e. anti-Soviet) was certainly a way to get published and some works of dubious quality were translated, such as Ayn Rand's science fiction paean to individualism, *Anthem* (her massive *Fountainhead* may have been too much to handle). However, concerns that publishing policy was being driven by a crude anti-communist political agenda that ignored literary merit apply more to Polish literature than to translations. Many of the foreign books we see in the second circulation are worthy additions to any canon of literature: books absent from the mainstream only or mainly because of their politics or the politics of their authors. Günter Grass, Milan Kundera, Vasily Grossman, Reiner Kunze, Tom Stoppard, and Kurt Vonnegut—all available in the underground—have stood the test of time. It is true that some others have not lasted as well. Alistair MacLean's spy thriller *Circus* looks like it was translated mainly because of its anti-Soviet message: even his fans find it hard to defend the book, a kind of 'MacLean for juveniles' (alistairmaclean.com 2018)—although it was also translated into French, German, Dutch, Danish, Hebrew, Greek and Italian. Second circulation subjects such as prison camps, the life of Red Army conscripts, and cold war spying may seem dated now but the underground publishers can hardly be blamed for failing to forecast taste in books after the fall of communism.

Foreign books that were published underground in Poland but do not appear to have been published since 1989 (whether in the existing or in a new translation) include Vladimir Maximov's play *Where Nothing Matters*

Anymore (though his *To Look into the Abyss* did come out in 1993), Grigory Pomerantsev's *Man from Nowhere*, Boris Vinokur's *Inside the Kremlin Walls*, and Mikołaj Arzak's (i.e. Yuli Daniel) *Moscow Speaking*, as well as, perhaps more surprisingly, Zamyatin's *We*. Koestler's *Darkness at Noon* has only been renewed once, in 1990, and Boris Pilnyak does not enjoy a very strong presence in the Polish book market (there are no post-1988 entries for him in the National Library's catalogue).

Even if being anti-communist opened doors for writers in underground publishing, a perusal of the reviews in the underground press of these books shows that they were not fulsomely or automatically praised. One reviewer criticized *The Prague Orgy*, writing that its narrative consisted of 'a bit of sex, a bit of philosophy, a bit of luxury' repeated over and over. Kosiński (the author of *Steps*), the same anonymous reviewer wrote, was guilty of the same kind of crowd-pleasing ('Wśród nowych książek' 1988: 49). Even Kundera, surely one of the most appreciated writers in the second circulation, got the occasional bad review: Marian Miszański, for example, in his review of *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, claimed Kundera did not know enough about theology or even Christian doctrine to tackle these subjects (Miszański 1987: 30). Jerzy Pilch gave a bad review of the satirical short story 'Pay No Attention, Maestro' by Georgi Vladimov, author of *Faithful Ruslan*, writing that literature that raises questions is more highly prized than literature that gives answers (Dabert 2014: 280).

Practice

Underground translators were free of the constraints of the mainstream, which was known for its prudishness, and, as we saw earlier, this resulted in second circulation editions of *The Prague Orgy* as well as an extract from Hubert Selby's *Last Exit to Brooklyn* in the underground journal *Czas Kultury* in 1988. But this freedom did not result in much greater daring in the translation (as opposed to the selection) of texts. For example, the translator of Forsyth's *The Devil's Alternative* follows the same practice as official translations of toning down English swear words: 'stupid bastards' (Forsyth 1979: 275) becomes 'idiots' (1987: 134) and

‘drań’ (blackguard) is also used (1987: 135). Pownall’s *Master Class* features Stalin and Zhdanov, the latter of whom, in particular, is a crude and foul-mouthed character, in contrast to the cultured Shostakovich and Prokofiev. However, the translator, Elżbieta Jasińska (using the name Maria Wirska) resisted the temptation to paint them blacker than the original and even toned down their coarse language. For example, the original has Zhdanov say ‘...use the bastards for target practice. I’d strap the sods over a cannon’s mouth and blow their balls to Berlin and back!’ (Pownall 1983: 36); but in the translation, he says: ‘...use them for target practice or stick the sons of bitches in a cannon and let them fly to Berlin and back’ (Pownall 1987: 23).¹³ The language in Harold Pinter’s *One For the Road*, published in 1985 in a second circulation periodical (*Obecność*), is also toned down, with ‘fuck’ translated as ‘pieprzyć’, a euphemism which literally means ‘pepper’ (Pinter 1985: 27; 2005: 230). However, the translation does contain at least some of the original’s obscenities: ‘Fuckpig’ is translated as ‘Ty pierdolona świnió’ [roughly: you fucking pig], which is just as obscene in Polish (Pinter 1985: 30; Pinter 2005: 240).

Some underground translations were more adventurous. Irena Lewandowska uses ‘czarnuch’, a taboo word for a Black person, in her translation of Sorokin’s *The Queue* (1988: 21). The original has the derogatory ‘черножопые’ [black ass] (1985: 17). It was not unheard of for Polish translators to use the taboo word but it was less common than in, for example, English source texts (Looby 2015: 151–4). Elsewhere in the translation, Lewandowska uses ‘zapierdalać’ (Sorokin 1988: 89), another taboo word, meaning to hit, and another indication that this particular translation, at least, is a little more daring than would have been usual ‘above ground’. Another example is the translation of a line from Georgi Vladimov’s *Faithful Ruslan*. The Russian text runs “‘Им же, стервям’” [roughly: for those scum] (Vladimov 1978: 16) while the Polish is “‘Dla nich, kurwa’” [roughly: for those fuckers] (Vladimov 1984: 11). The Polish translation uses a stronger swear word, ‘kurwa’, than the original ‘стерва’ which could have been translated into Polish with its cognate, ‘ścierwo’ (as Lewandowska does in *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*), which means ‘carcass’. The most obscene underground translation I have found is Andrzej Jagodziński’s version of an

excerpt from Škvorecký's *Tankový prapor* (*The Republic of Whores*), a tale of soldiers in the Czechoslovakian army with appropriately strong language.¹⁴ And so, “Kurva vole, poser se!” [roughly: fuck you, go shit yourself] (Škvorecký 1976: 60) is rendered “Kurwa, spierdalaj, baranie!” [roughly: Fuck off you fucking dope] (Škvorecký 1988: 52). Although Polish translators (at least of English language fiction), operating above ground, usually toned down swear words and almost never made the language stronger, they became more daring in the late 1980s, aided—or at any rate not obstructed as they once had been—by the censors. *Literatura na Świecie*, an above-ground periodical, published substantial excerpts from Henry Miller's *Tropic of Cancer* in 1987 (nr. 5/6), complete with vulgar language and erotic drawings. The translation of Miller does, however, avoid using similarly derogatory words for Chinese people and Black people that are present in the original (Miller 1962: 83, 109).¹⁵ It may certainly be argued that the existence of underground translation encouraged the official censors to be more permissive in their treatment of taboo language but underground translators themselves did not have a uniform ‘policy’ and it would be difficult to separate the influence on official discourse of underground translated fiction from that of the general political climate in the late 1980s.

An indicator of viewpoint is the translator's approach to the word ‘Soviet’. In Polish this is ‘radziecki’. The pejorative version, though it may seem counter-intuitive, was the loanword ‘sowiecki’. In Kunze's *Die wunderbaren Jahre* [*The Lovely Years*], where the German original has ‘neben den Polen Sowjets’ (Kunze 1976: 95–6) (‘Soviets beside the Poles’), the Polish uses ‘Sowieci’ (Kunze 1988: 50), although where Kunze refers to the Soviet Army as ‘die Sowjetarmee’ (1976: 106) his translator uses the neutral ‘Armia Radziecka’ (1988: 53). Drawicz uses ‘sowiecki’ in his translation of *Faithful Ruslan* (Vladimov 1984: 58). However, not all translators used the words ‘soviet’ or ‘sowiecki’. For instance, Elżbieta Jasińska used ‘radziecki’ in her translations of Pownall's *Master Class* and of Stoppard's *Every Good Boy Deserves Favour*, and ‘radziecki’ also appears in Lewandowska's translation of *The Queue*. In Robert Stiller's translation of *The Spy Who Came in From the Cold*, we find both words used (Le Carré 1986: 8, 65). Frederick Forsyth's *The Devil's Alternative* makes an interesting test case because it came out in

the underground in 1987 and again, in a revised version apparently by the same translator, in 1990. The underground version uses 'sowiecki' twice (Forsyth 1987: 6, 9), while the post-1989 version in both cases has 'radziecki' (Forsyth 1990: 12, 14).

An example of a translator revelling in the freedom to be politically incorrect can be seen in the Polish version of Dürrenmatt's *The Coup*, the tale of a coup in the central committee of an unnamed country that is presumably the Soviet Union. Like many writers, Dürrenmatt does not narrow his focus to a particular time and place. Although it is perfectly obvious that Stalin is the model for the character in the story known as 'A', this is not made explicit (only letters and nicknames are used to refer to the characters in the story). However, the Polish translation leaves us with no doubt that we are dealing with current affairs in the Eastern Bloc. For example, 'Politische Sekretariat' is translated 'Biuro Polityczne' (Dürrenmatt 1984: 5; Dürrenmatt 1996: 351), although 'Politische Sekretariat' is not a markedly communist term. The Polish 'Biuro Polityczne' corresponds to Russia's Политбюро, or Politburo (English) or 'Das Politbüro' (German)—and of course to Poland's own 'Biuro Polityczne', modelled on the USSR. In the original, the character 'L' stinks of schnapps, but in the translation, he stinks of vodka (Dürrenmatt 1984: 8; Dürrenmatt 1996: 359). 'K' is the 'Staatspräsident' ('President of the State') in the original; in the translation, he is the 'Przewodniczący Rady Państwa' ('Chair of the State Council'), a People's Poland post held by Henryk Jabłoński in 1976, when the story was translated (Dürrenmatt 1984: 7; Dürrenmatt 1996: 356); a reference to a 'Grossbauer' is translated not as 'large farmer' but as 'kułak' (i.e. kulak) (Dürrenmatt 1984: 16; Dürrenmatt 1996: 378–9); and, most pointedly of all, the words "Donnerwetter, das sei ein Kleid" ('Good God, what a dress') are rendered obscenely and partly in Russian: "Job twoju mać! To jest strój..." ('Fuck your mother! What a get-up') (Dürrenmatt 1984: 10; Dürrenmatt 1996: 362). Most Polish readers of the time would have understood the Russian—but it is not what is written in the original. In this respect too, we can see a mirror image of the mainstream. The censors usually cut superficially: Błoński writes that censors rarely went after ideas, going instead for individual words and sentences that might offend (Błoński 1995: 271; see also Mojsak 2014: 114–15). Here we

have a translator intervening in a similarly superficial way. That is, the insertion of an obscenity does not really affect our image of the speaker ('F'), who is shown to be a crude person anyway, with or without the Russian swearing.

The translator of *The Coup* is a relative unknown: Stanisław Owsianko has only one other translation to his credit in the Polish National Library's online catalogue (of Bruno Cabernard's *Brevier für Demokratie: Funktionsweise eines demokratischen Staates am Beispiel der Schweiz*, that is *A Breviary of Democracy: the functioning of a democratic state. The example of Switzerland* in 1994), and *Kto był kim w drugim obiegu* [Who's Who in the Second Circulation] does not list his name as an alias. Owsianko's translation of *The Coup* is exceptional in several ways: it has more or less disappeared from Polish letters since 1989, although it is not substandard political Agitprop. Secondly, this attempt to bring the source text closer to Poland's orbit is unique in the translations I have read. Thirdly, the use of language more obscene than in the source text is unusual—especially given that it was translated in 1976, not in the more liberal 1980s.

Conclusion

In 1981 Stanisław Barańczak had expressed the hope that he could now, after five years of the second circulation, write 'normally', that is, not 'against' censorship but rather without any thought of it at all (Barańczak 1981: 132). Siobhan Doucette argues that the publication in 1979 of Tadeusz Konwicki's *A Minor Apocalypse*, written especially for Nowa, was indicative of the publishers' desire not 'to create an anticommunist press but an excellent free press that would allow authors to break away from the self-censorship that they imposed on themselves to prevent confrontations with the state censors' (Doucette 2017: 37). Similarly with another underground publisher, Przedświt, whose editors 'insisted that they sought to create a high-quality publishing house rather than just an anticommunist venture' (Doucette 2017: 192). However, it seems that in the 1980s, no doubt in response to the declaration of martial

law in December 1981, much underground Polish literature was created 'against' censorship.

The practice of underground fiction translation seems largely to have avoided this trap. I have compared about 25 stand-alone translations to their source texts and on that basis can tentatively conclude that they did not compromise on quality or fidelity in favour of ideology. Translators did not, with few exceptions, skew or distort their texts for political ends. The selection of texts to translate is a different matter. As seen, there was resistance among printers to publishing politically neutral work that would have been acceptable to the state authorities, and the most frequently translated foreign works in the second circulation had a decidedly anti-communist bent. *Przedświt* may well have succeeded in being a high-quality publishing house but they published many anti-communist works, including Milan Kundera's *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting* (1984), Martin Harniček's *Meat* (1984), and Vladimir Voinovich's *Tribunal* (1988).

The more modern view of censorship, summarized clearly in Helen Freshwater's 'Towards a Redefinition of Censorship' (2004), is that it is integral to any system of literary production. It is no longer seen simply as a government clerk in an office somewhere banning some books and cutting words, sentences, or chapters out of others after the writer has freely expressed him or herself. Rather, it is an unavoidable and even productive force, to be found both in the mainstream and outside of it: John Bates has noted the existence of taboo subjects, such as Solidarity Trade Union activists, who were above criticism, in the second circulation (Bates 2004: 152) and independent publishers were not above banning and cutting (Knoch and Rybicki 2016: 107). In addition, Grzegorz Boguta referred to censorship imposed by Solidarity and the church in a panel discussion in 1995 (Boguta 1999: 133) but I have found little interference in the translated literature I have studied. In the case of translations, we see a mirror image of 'official' publishing. The reaction to a censorship regime that treated translated literature leniently was a similarly 'lenient' treatment of 'unofficial' literature. The result is that, leaving amateurish 'club editions' aside and once the selection of texts has been accounted for, translation practices in the underground do not differ greatly from practices over ground.

Notes

1. Sometimes this could spoil the market. In 1985 a small publisher came into money from the West and outbid others for paper on the black market, pushing the prices high enough to cause some other publishers to stop publishing (Sowiński 2011: 117).
2. A 1978 internal report in the Censorship Office notes that a part of the 1976 *Polish Literary Bibliography* entitled 'Participation of Writers in Political Campaigns' and containing a list of protest letters and their signatories was 'questioned' (which usually means cut) (collection 1102, call nr. 1342, file 229/21: 19, Central Archives of Modern Records, Warsaw). It was, in the event, cut.
3. Siekierski also suggests that books were not taken very seriously as a means of influence and that the emphasis was on control of the mass media (1998: 37).
4. It might be worth noting, however, that the 'safety valve' theory has also been advanced as an explanation for the boom in Polish rock of the first half of the 1980s (see Głowacki 2010), the more liberal approach of censors to sex in the 1980s (Świstak 2010: 116) and tolerance of political sketches in live comedy in the 1970s (Jabłońska 2010).
5. <http://mak.bn.org.pl/cgi-bin/makwww.exe?BM=02&IM> (accessed 31 October 2017).
6. Pre-1918 Polish literature could also be published without prior authorisation.
7. The following statistics are based on Federowicz, Gromadzińska and Kaczyńska (1995), Sowiński (2011: 299–303), Kuta (2010: 286–295), and Jarska and Ołaszek (2016: 159–61) with my own adjustments based on Poland's National Library online database, *Książki polskie podziemne (1976–1989)* <http://mak.bn.org.pl/cgi-bin/makwww.exe?BM=02&IM> (accessed 2 November 2017). In addition, Nowa brought out books on cassette tape in the 1980s. Orwell's *1984*, Venedikt Yerofeev's *Moscow Stations*, and a collection of texts by Osip Mandelstam and Shalamov were brought out in this form, from 1984 to 1986. Nowa also circulated on VHS

cassettes the film of *1984* directed by Michael Radford (Bertram 2013: 263–4).

8. Club editions, surely worth a separate study, are not considered here because they were not illegal—at least not strictly speaking: Dorota Gutfeld claims they sometimes exceeded the 100 copy limit, beyond which they should have been authorised by the Censorship Office (2008: 81).
9. Boguta was a senior figure in Nowa right up to 1990.
10. *The Devil's Alternative* is the only novel I have come across that was abridged in the underground. Its chapters become increasingly truncated as the book progresses.
11. The parts missing (chapters 7, 8, 18 and 22) from the 'over ground' version contain remarks on the USSR. Toffler, for example, accuses the Soviet Union of imperialism in a sub-chapter entitled 'Socialist Imperialism' (Toffler 1980: 111).
12. One reader wrote to an underground periodical to report that the 1983 'official' version did in fact leave out the reference to the flea that is present in the underground version ('Uwaga: Cenzura! Listy czytelników' 1984: 20).
13. 'Najchętniej użyłbym ich jako celu na strzelnicy albo wsadził sukinyńców do lufy armatniej. Niech lecą do Berlina i z powrotem'.
14. Some of the original Russian prison camp literature, by contrast, uses euphemisms, e.g. *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*.
15. This was common practice in translations of English language fiction in People's Poland (see Looby 2015, especially chapter 5).

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Part IV

Response



14

A Battle for Translation

Vitaly Chernetsky

The Soviet Union and other communist-ruled regimes had a penchant for applying military rhetoric to many different social activities. In perhaps the best-known case, Soviet citizens got used to the annual harvest time always being discussed in the official media as the ‘battle for the harvest’ (*bitva za urozhai*), but such ‘battles’ could be focused on any sphere of human activity, from making quality steel to improving personal hygiene. The traditions of this rhetoric go back to the earliest years after the Bolshevik revolution, when the young Soviet state viewed itself as fully encircled by hostile adversaries and domestic conditions were also dire. Since it viewed itself as the fulfiller of the goal of building an ideally just society on Earth and as the force implementing what, in its

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understanding of Marxism, it thought were the scientifically proven laws of historical progress, early Soviet leadership was determined to succeed in this project, to ignite world revolution and help bring about a utopian future.

The cultural sphere was seen as essential for succeeding in this task. No effort was spared in a range of initiatives, from a massive literacy campaign to the methodical efforts at introducing new practices of everyday life (the so-called *novyi byt*). For the dictatorship of the proletariat to reach its intended goals, a project of consciousness raising was deemed necessary, so that the working class—the revolution's proclaimed hegemon—was educated and prepared for its leadership role. For this purpose, the Soviet state viewed itself as conducting a 'judgment day for world culture':

The attitude of the Bolshevik leaders toward the bourgeois heritage and world culture in general can be summarized as follows: take from this heritage that which is 'best' and 'useful to the proletariat' and use it in the socialist revolution and the construction of the new world. Whatever their differences in other respects, on this point all Bolshevik ideologists agreed. (Groys 1992: 37–8)

This implied a monumental campaign of sorting both contemporary culture and the entire global cultural heritage into 'progressive' (usable) and 'reactionary' (not usable). Cultural products deemed reactionary were to be either ignored or made unavailable to anyone but a small group of experts; conversely, the ones deemed progressive were to be popularized and made widely available. Insofar this included numerous texts written in foreign languages, translation thus was an essential aspect of this long-term project.

Another reason translation was one of the core foci of communist-ruled societies is that the canonical writings of Marx, Engels, and Lenin, and for a period, also those of Stalin, were to be made available in translation into the widest variety of world languages. This goal explains why the Soviets rivalled Christian missionaries in describing and studying languages from all over the globe and developing writing systems for those languages that previously did not have one: just like the Bible, the

Communist Manifesto, and other canonical texts of Marxism-Leninism were meant to be brought to the furthest corners of the earth.¹

Given these contexts, communist rulers placed two demands on translators working in their societies: the translations they produced had to be of high quality—that is, effective at the intended task of raising the consciousness of the working masses and of spreading the gospel of Marxism-Leninism worldwide; they also had to be unambiguous: the message being delivered had to be a correct and precise rendition of its formulation in the original language. Therefore, the practice of translation was in sharp focus, but to achieve these goals, a theory of translation was also viewed as necessary. For the party and the state, it implied a prescriptive theory: a set of rules to follow is what was of interest. However, coming up with this set of rules also meant investigating how translation actually works and why some translations were more effective than others, and from this empirical study, a descriptive theory of translation would then follow. This also meant that translators and their works were a focus of substantial state and party scrutiny, which resulted in various forms of hard and soft censorship, including self-censorship, but at the same time, translation work was held in high regard and received fairly substantial support.

And this also meant internal struggles. As in other branches of intellectual and creative work, rival factions would claim that theirs was the only true revolutionary method and that their rivals were deluded, or worse, were deliberate saboteurs. Careers were thus often ruined, and lives destroyed. On the other hand, in a widespread phenomenon all over the Soviet bloc, authors unable to publish their original writing because of political pressures often found an outlet in publishing translations; frequently this became their only means of subsistence. Similar to other cultural spheres, translation also benefited from periods of relative political openness and relaxation of pressures that occurred several times during the years of communist rule. Indeed, translation often became the first venue for saying in print what had earlier been unsayable (see Friedberg 1977). As with other types of literary activity, the coexistence of lavishly paid official commissions and secret work on forbidden texts and topics kept hidden in a desk drawer was widespread. In a number of countries, this would eventually lead to the emergence of underground

dissemination of texts, including translations—retyped, mimeographed, or even printed by underground presses—a phenomenon known internationally by the Russian term *samizdat* or by the Polish one, *drugi obiegi* [second circulation].

It is fitting that Brian James Baer's chapter deals with the story of an ultimate survivor of this tumultuous history in the Russian context. Through focusing on Kornei Chukovsky, Baer is able to explore the twists and turns of the development of Soviet practices and theories of translation. Chukovsky was truly a protean talent, best remembered now by the non-specialists for his innovative and memorable poetry for children, making him something like a Russian Dr. Seuss. But Chukovsky's rich creative career also included many other types of writing, crucial among them being translation criticism and translation practice. Some Russian readers would thus point to his championing of Walt Whitman and Oscar Wilde. Many of them would also remember his book about translation, titled *Vysokoe iskusstvo* [A High Art], which has tended to be viewed as an engaging, informal presentation of literary translation, its values, and what he saw as its best practices in the Russian and Soviet contexts, and date this book to the 1960s, towards the end of his long life. However, few would be aware of the twists and turns of that book's complex history, and its metamorphoses from a co-authored brochure from 1919 to the final lifetime edition of 1968. It is through those twists and turns that Baer builds up a revealing view of translation's complex history in the Soviet Union.

Chukovsky, as Baer notes, was regarded as an ultimate survivor, able to 'defly balanc[e] between permitted dissent and censorable speech', engaging in notable acts of resistance balanced by a veritable 'catalogue of self-censorship techniques and practices'. His translation book's dawn, however, appears largely to predate that tightrope walking. It emerged as a part of the massive project of making translations of global cultural heritage available to the mass readership of the new Soviet state. The publishing venture *Vsemirnaia literatura* [World Literature], organized by Maxim Gorky in 1918, had an ambitious plan of publishing several thousand volumes but succeeded, before being closed down in 1924, to produce only a small fraction of that, about 200 titles.² Typically for early Soviet projects, the intended scale was awe-inspiring, but the

material conditions were abysmal, given the severe shortages in the middle of Russia's civil war. Another challenge that Vsemirnaia literatura project shared with many others was staffing. People fluent in foreign languages were mostly members of the old elite, former aristocrats and others whom the Soviet regime would view with suspicion as dangerous counter-revolutionaries, whether or not they were actually politically active. Moreover, very few translators active at the time could be seen as professionals. Most were amateurs who, as Chukovsky noted, were guided 'not so much by scientific principles as by intuition' (quoted in Baer: 77). Hence this brochure intended as an in-house educational guide.

Even within this brochure, the two co-authors had disagreements. Chukovsky's co-author, the poet Nikolai Gumilev, a leader of the influential Acmeist school of poetry, which famously emphasized a poetics of precision and restraint (see Painter 2006) contributed an essay on poetic translation. Unsurprisingly, given his own poetics, Gumilev wanted to title the brochure *The Rules of Literary Translation*, while Chukovsky strongly objected to that. In his own text, he emphasized, on the one hand, the value of the translator's creative autonomy and personal identity, and compared the talent of a translator with that of an actor, able to transform into many different characters; on the other, he highlighted the need to study hard both the original culture and the lexical riches of the target language (in this case, Russian). He acknowledged that the standards for translation differed greatly across time, but concluded by calling for 'scientific, objectively determined precision' (Chukovsky 1919: 23), although in the opening paragraph of the essay he argued that the translator 'does not photograph the original, but creatively recreates it' (7). Contradictions aside, the text is refreshingly free of political jargon and is remarkable in its open-mindedness. This reflected both the early utopian 'revolutionary dreams' (Stites 1989) and the fair degree of autonomy then enjoyed by the cultural sphere.

The later metamorphoses of Chukovsky's book(s) on translation—while its title changed several times, Baer convincingly presents this as one continuously evolving project—serve as telling illustrations of balancing and reinvention in the face of political pressures, while trying to stay true to one's core beliefs. Thus the 1930 version contains a chapter

ominously titled ‘The Translator as Enemy’; it introduces the militant rhetoric of hate and struggle, and instead of the earlier advocated creative merging of the personalities of the author and the translator, calls for the suppression of the translator’s creative self, a kind of self-censorship. In typical Soviet formulation, this is presented as something ‘demanded by our age’ [quoted in Baer: 86].³ Still, it retains the ambiguity of the attitude towards precision, or ‘exactness’, of translation—at some point calling for it; at others, problematizing the very notion. This book is still a product of a pluralistic era of the 1920s when a relatively free competition of ideas was still possible, even if it appeared at that era’s very end.

In literature and the arts, the period from 1917 to the end of the 1920s was characterized by the continuing pursuit of a utopian impulse to create new revolutionary art (and rival visions of what that would look like) and a free-spirited discussion of possible schools and approaches. Formal experimentation was at least tolerated, if not encouraged, as long as its creators advocated revolutionary goals that appeared to follow the officially proclaimed course. In the 1930s, however, this came to an abrupt end, beginning with literature, as the Party’s Central Committee ordered on 23 April 1932 that all different literary associations and groups existing in the USSR had to be dissolved and the writers supporting the goals of socialist construction had to join a new organization to be created, the Union of Soviet Writers, which was officially launched in 1934 and included a literary translation section from the very beginning. The dissolution of individual associations and groups also meant the end of official tolerance of diversity in literary and artistic methods and styles. Instead, ‘socialist realism’, a term first publicly proposed in 1932, was officially proclaimed in the statute of the Soviet Writers’ Union in 1934 as the main method of Soviet literature. Analogous decisions soon followed in other art forms.

Over the years, socialist realism has been a subject of insightful critical analysis by a number of scholars. The past several decades in particular have witnessed many excellent works by, among others, Katerina Clark, Evgeny Dobrenko, Boris Groys, Hans Günther, Thomas Lahusen, and Régine Robin. Abram Tertz (Andrei Sinyavsky) pioneered this critical discourse back in 1957 with his *samizdat* work ‘What Is Socialist

Realism?’ (Tertz 1982). He argued convincingly that this is an art system that is neoclassical in its essence, as other types of imperial art, and teleological in its form (determined by a belief in the goal of building communism on earth, and peopled with positive heroes whose main virtue is their focus on this purpose above all else). Realism in its name implies verisimilitude and a fair degree of transparency to the readers/viewers/listeners. However, the use of the word ‘realism’ also links it, confusingly, with nineteenth-century art forms and intellectual trends. As a result, classicist tendencies are eclectically mixed with superficial signs of realism, creating ‘half-classicist half-art, which is none too socialist and not at all realist’ (215).

It is this unspoken but deeply ingrained principle of eclecticism that migrated from the ‘socialist realism’ in literature and the arts to the struggles to determine, name, and uphold the analogously dominant, officially favoured principle of Soviet literary translation. It was formulated by its chief proponent, Ivan Kashkin, as the theory of realist translation, which he began formulating in the 1930s and continued refining into the early 1950s, as he waged war against rivals whom he labeled ‘literalists’ (*bukvalisty*). During the 1920s, as in some previous periods, translation was a source of thematic expansion and vocabulary enrichment for literatures of the USSR. On the ascent at that time were those approaches to translation that sought to do justice to the original by seeking out and introducing new forms; in other words, a foreignizing strategy of translation was on the ascent, as Andrei Azov has argued in his fascinating, informative book *The Vanquished Literalists* (*Poverzhennye bukvality*) (Azov 2013). By the 1930s, the trend shifted towards producing translations that ‘should not offend the sensibilities of the Soviet reader’, which implied making the language as ‘easy’ and ‘palatable’ as possible—in other words, opting for extreme domestication (103). Kashkin’s ‘realist translation’ remained largely a floating signifier, defined primarily in opposition to translations he did not like: ‘naturalist’, ‘formalist’, or ‘impressionist’ ones. The task of the translator, for Kashkin, is not to ‘translate words’ but to ‘see’ the reality the original author depicted and to reproduce that reality. This allowed considerable license in dealing both with the original author’s style and the content of the work translated:

the translator had to emphasize the 'progressive' qualities of the original and to dismiss or smooth out the 'obsolete' ones (Azov 2013: 96–104).

As Baer shows in his chapter, the 1936 and 1941 versions of Chukovsky's book on translation also pay heed to this tendency, as Chukovsky attacked either those translators who in Soviet eyes were from the wrong class background (or who, conveniently for him, had emigrated and thus were safe targets) or those who tried to follow the original too closely. With 'formalism' having become in the 1930s, in the eyes of Soviet official discourse, a major sin in all creative practice, Chukovsky included in the 1941 variant of his book a chapter on 'the sterility of formalism'. With time, Chukovsky's book focused more on the need for translators, like other highly skilled workers, to be the 'bearers of expertise or specialized knowledge'. This allowed him to gradually distance himself from the propagandistic language of the 1930 book and shift to more academic formulations. In other notable shifts reflecting the changes in Soviet cultural policies, his emphasis increasingly moved from translations of foreign texts to translations between the languages of the USSR, in particular by adding in 1941 a large chapter on the Russian translations of the canonical nineteenth-century Ukrainian poet, Taras Shevchenko. A highly complex poet, Shevchenko, like other pre-revolutionary classics, was given a reductive interpretation in the Soviet Union; in his chapter on him, Chukovsky criticized especially harshly those who in his opinion failed to render 'not only [his poetry's] militant thematics but also its innovative, revolutionary and democratic style' [quoted in Baer: 90]. This way, Chukovsky simultaneously signals loyalty to the Soviet principle of 'friendship of the peoples' and adherence to official interpretations of canonical writers, yet also successfully pushes for more nuance and mounts a rather daring critique of the problematic, superficial, and often condescending treatments of Shevchenko by his Russian translators, who missed both his anti-colonial pathos and his complex use of Ukrainian folklore and history. Chukovsky was himself of partly Ukrainian background, and through his case study of Shevchenko, he performs an interesting hybridization of his own identity vis-à-vis Russian culture.

In the post-Stalin era versions of his book, published in the 1960s, however, Chukovsky returned to his original ideals, focusing again on the

translator's creative personality and malleability, privileging individual talent, and contributing to making translation, as Baer convincingly argues, 'a privileged site for discussion of ethical concerns facing the Soviet intelligentsia [...] with the relationship of translator and original author often serving as a convenient allegory for the artist's relationship to the state' (95). In this way, Chukovsky's book remains an essential contribution to the construction of the Soviet myth of the translator, analyzed by Baer in detail in an earlier work (see Baer 2010).

The echoes of the translation battles of seven decades ago proved to be long-lasting in the Russian and other post-Soviet traditions of translation. To this day, the dominant approach is one that allows considerable laxity in rendering the original, as long as this is necessary to deliver it in a domesticated form. In poetry translation practices, this manifests itself in the tendency to focus primarily on the original's formal qualities (especially meter and rhyme), to the detriment of vocabulary and message. The resulting translations were, indeed, often very popular with the Soviet readership and contributed to the establishment of the myth that came to be well entrenched in the final decades of the Soviet Union's existence and that persists in post-Soviet Russia, namely, that the Soviet translations were supposedly the best in the world, and that the Russian-language versions of many literary works might be even better than the originals they rendered. In his informative and accessible book *Literary Translation in Russia: A Cultural History*, Maurice Friedberg quotes a particularly strident formulation of this attitude by the Soviet translator from German Lev Ginzburg:

In such circumstances the Soviet school of literary translation acquires truly global significance. Its healthy [*ozdorovlialnushchee*] impact is beginning to leave its mark on the world literary process. [...] The authority of our school of translation is unquestioned; it is universally recognized, and is acquiring ever more followers. One may state without exaggeration that the Soviet art of literary translation is no less unique, and no less a cause for pride in our culture than, say, the art of ballet. (Friedberg 1997: 6)⁴

Susanna Witt, another contributor to this volume, has produced several excellent studies of the discourse around the ‘Soviet school of translation’ and the battles against the ‘literalists’ (see Witt 2013, Witt 2016a, b). In her contribution here, she explores the Soviet myth of the translator through the figure of Mikhail Lozinskii, and in particular his translations of Dante. She is focused on the paradox of Lozinskii and his translations successfully achieving canonical status, even though they were ‘actually based on principles that were quite alien to the then emerging ‘Soviet school of translation’ which was to promulgate adaptive translation practices that affected both style and ‘ideological content’ of the translated work’.

In his youth, Lozinskii was a member of the earlier-mentioned Acmeist poetry school, led by Nikolai Gumilev. He began working with *Vsemirnaia literatura* in the 1920s and became one of the most prolific and highly respected Soviet-era translators, especially for poetry. Witt draws attention to his 1936 speech at the First All-Union Conference of Soviet Translators, entitled ‘The Art of Poetic Translation’. Remarkably for that period of strident attacks on ‘formalism’, Lozinskii’s emphasis is on accuracy and equilinearity, and he employs architectural metaphors to lay them out, reaching back to the earlier principles of Acmeist poetics. That same year, in the midst of escalating Stalinist terror, Lozinskii began his translation of *The Divine Comedy*, completing it a decade later.

In her informative close reading, Witt demonstrates how Lozinskii employs his principles of both seeking maximum fidelity, including to the sound patterns of the original, but also his emphasis on the key messages from Dante that resonated in the context of the time when Lozinskii worked on it—the appeal to bear witness. This provides a direct linkage of Lozinskii’s work with the writing of a fellow Acmeist, Anna Akhmatova, in particular her *Requiem* (1935–61), a poem of witnessing and paying tribute to the victims of the terror. Witt boldly but convincingly draws parallels between Lozinskii’s work and its political contexts: his translating the *Inferno* during the peak years of the terror, *Purgatorio* during the early years of World War II (here she draws linkages between the depiction of famine in Dante and the horrors of the siege of Leningrad), and *Paradiso* at the end of the war, associated with short-lived hopes for a better future. Drawing on Lev Loseff’s study of the

Aesopian language in modern Russian literature, she convincingly argues that ‘Lozinskii’s translation took on functions of an Aesopian work in the sense described by Loseff, when it is the “cathartic effect” brought about by publicly mentioning a taboo subject that is the ultimate goal’ (126). This translation can thus be seen as leading a double life: officially praised and garnering Lozinskii a Stalin prize in 1946, it outwardly contributed to the official Soviet goals for translating ‘progressive’ world literature; at the same time, its appearance came in stark contrast to the vapid socialist realist output of contemporary authors and thus inspired its readers to engage in an educational task with cognitive, moral, and emotional aspects. In doing so, it strengthened the myth of the heroic Soviet translator and of the translator’s work as a feat (*podvig*). While this aspect of Lozinskii’s story is without dispute, I wish Witt had also mentioned here, at least briefly, Lozinskii’s translations of Shakespeare, as in their case the legacy is much less straightforward. Also produced in the dark years of terror, these translations competed for canonical status with those by Boris Pasternak (see Semenenko 2007 with the focus on *Hamlet* as the case study). Was Lozinskii’s work on Dante and on Shakespeare guided by the same principles? If so, what accounts for the diverging paths of their canonical reception?

Given the by now extensive corpus of scholarly studies on Soviet practices and theories of translation,⁵ it makes perfect sense for this volume to seek to introduce the conditions in which translation and translation theory operated in Russian contexts during communist rule through two individual case studies: of Chukovsky, primarily a critic of translations and eventually an autodidact—yet highly influential, in the domestic context—theorist of translation; and of Lozinskii as a talented practitioner who tackled some of the key, and challenging, texts in the global literary canon. But the volume also includes a chapter that provides a helpful bird’s-eye view of Soviet translation practices and their role in the formation of the Soviet canon of world literature, by Nataliia Rudnytska. Her historical overview, importantly, is focused not only on Russian but also on other languages used in the USSR, and addresses the role of Russian as either a pass-through for translations of foreign texts into

other languages of the USSR or as a litmus test for checking that translations into other languages ‘reproduce the same ideologically correct interpretations’ (12).

Rudnytska’s chapter provides fascinating insights, including statistical data, into the patterns of choice and emphasis of foreign authors to translate across different periods and the ways those choices fluctuated along with the priorities of Soviet foreign policy, with the spotlight often shifting from one nation or region to another. She also details the shifting strategies translators employed to bring the work of different authors into print (using Hermann Hesse as one such compelling example), as well as the sometimes-paradoxical consequences of official endorsement of a particular author as ideologically appropriate—as in the case of Brecht, where such labeling actually led to him to be *less* read and less influential in intelligentsia circles. One leaves with a greater appreciation of this complex system, but it also left me wanting to learn more about anomalies within it, as in cases when occasionally foreign works were translated into other Soviet languages before Russian (Ukraine provided several such cases in the 1960s–80s, for example). Another interesting phenomenon worth considering here might be the Soviet intelligentsia practice of signaling one’s identity through the prominent display of certain books—primarily translated ones—in one’s apartment (and, of course, the content of those books as a shared cultural background). This has been studied especially effectively in the case of the ‘Soviet Jewish bookshelf’ (see Grinberg 2019), but similar explorations for other minority group identities would likewise be instructive.

In their chapter for the volume, Oleksandr Kalnychenko and Lada Kolomiyets provide a comprehensive overview of the policies and practices of literary translation in Ukraine during the period of the highest communist repression, the Stalin era. The crucial role of translation in the making of modern Ukrainian national identity has been discussed elsewhere (see Strikha 2006; Chernetsky 2011). As the largest nation besides Russia, and as a highly economically and politically important part of the Soviet Union, Ukraine was subjected to particularly close scrutiny. It was largely in response to the strong pro-independence mood in Ukraine that the Soviet leadership adopted in the 1920s a policy which Terry Martin later fittingly dubbed ‘the affirmative action

empire' (Martin 2001): for over a decade, in the 1920s and early 1930s, non-Russian cultures in the USSR, nearly all of whom had been stateless for most of their modern history, were given unique and unprecedented opportunities for development and institutionalization. However, as Kalnychenko and Kolomiyets point out, the 1930s brought about a rapid reversal, with the rise of the campaign against so-called 'wreckers' (Rus. *vrediteli*), which were described in the Stalinist propaganda discourse as highly skilled specialists in their respective fields who, however, were supposedly driven by an irrational hatred of the Soviet project to commit acts of sabotage. In the case of literature and the arts, any emphasis on national specificity, for example on the unique resources of a language like Ukrainian—something that was actually encouraged in the 1920s—was now denounced as wrecking by 'bourgeois nationalists'. Kalnychenko and Kolomiyets focus in particular on the policy of deliberate impoverishment of Ukrainian vocabulary, purging it of 'archaisms' and other 'alien' elements. Similar purges were taking place in Russian as well—as Azov notes, there was a general trend of 'shifting from polyphony, stylistic diversity, interest in things foreign, unusual, and unfamiliar (characteristic for the 1920s) to univocality and establishment of one aesthetic system, of a single acceptable style. This tendency grew in the 1930s and in translation studies peaked by the 1950s'. Gradually, colloquialisms, vulgarisms, foreign borrowings all came to be discouraged. Language had to be simple, accessible, and neutral (Azov 59–60), in correspondence with the educational/propagandistic demands placed on socialist realist art. In the case of non-Russian languages of the USSR, and of fellow Slavic languages in particular, like Ukrainian and Belarusian, this also implied following Russian-language conventions and vocabulary as closely as possible. The result was an impression of transparency and full comprehensibility not only for audiences fluent in both languages, but also for those fluent in Russian only, reinforcing a false belief that the Ukrainian (or Belarusian) language is a redundant system where every element has a direct one-to-one correspondence in standard Russian and thus could be easily understood by anyone who knows Russian. Predictably, this led to catastrophic consequences for national culture. In the field of translation, this produced a bifurcation

of principles: for all languages other than Russian, Soviet-style domesticating 'realist' translation was preferred; for Russian, as Kalnychenko and Kolomiyets demonstrate, superficial literalism became the enforced norm. A specific type of censorship practice came to be widespread in Ukraine: translations into Ukrainian from languages other than Russian were obligatorily checked against the translations into Russian and had to follow the same choices as those in the published Russian analogues. Local colonial censors generally found it easier and safer to follow this practice to avoid the ire of their administrative supervisors. Only with a few exceptions, such as major poets with assured elite status who were also active as translators (like Maksym Ryl's'kyi and Mykola Bazhan), was any deviation from this principle tolerated. Against this bleak landscape, Ukrainian translation did see several talented translators challenge the status quo in the post-Stalin years, most notably Hryhorii Kochur and Mykola Lukash, but the political troubles both of them suffered, especially in the 1970s, only confirms the degree of pressure literary translation was under in Soviet Ukraine.

The chapters by Hannah Blum and Krasimira Ivleva provide insightful overviews of translation policies and practices in two communist-ruled East European countries with particularly strict regimes, the German Democratic Republic (GDR) and Bulgaria. Blum's emphasis is on state influence on the work of writers and translators not just through legal pressure and various types of censorship, but also the ways in which it shaped their thinking and discourse. As in other Soviet bloc countries, there were alternating periods of liberalization and repression. In East Germany's case, its existence in close proximity to West Berlin and the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG), and the combination of shared language and history and the strictly monitored boundaries (both in the sense of physical border and the limits of what was permitted), was a determining influence on writers and translators to a much higher degree than the interaction with diasporic/émigré communities for most other communist-ruled countries. Blum comes to the conclusion that 'it is difficult to define where the freedom of East German writers began and ended' (303) and argues for a more nuanced view, rather than the binary opposition between a dictatorial government and a suppressed individual. The patterns she uncovers have a lot of similarities to the Soviet

model: the approach to translation followed the Soviet understanding of adequacy, requiring the translations to be modified in line with the expectations of the target East German audience and the principles of state cultural policy; predictably, ‘formalism’ and ‘naturalism’ were the things to avoid. At the same time, the prestige and remuneration of translators’ work were fairly high by local standards; their access to specialized places for creative retreats and other social safety net benefits were on par with arrangements for other groups included in the state creative elite. The institution of state prizes was well developed, and winning one of these prizes had lasting consequences for one’s career and economic well-being. In sum, in many ways, especially in terms of everyday stability, the working conditions enjoyed by translators in the GDR, as in many other countries of the Soviet bloc, were quite favorable compared to their Western counterparts. A precondition for this, however, was actively supporting the GDR project and striving for ‘absolute ideological clarity and artistic quality’, as one of the translators Blum considers, Liselotte Ramané, put it in a 1961 speech. Translations of Soviet literature and that from other countries of the Socialist Camp were also prioritized as aiding in the de-Nazification of Germany. Approaches to translation over the years, especially of literature from non-communist-ruled countries, emphasized an ever increasing need for intrusion and modification of the content to make it acceptable for the local authorities (who claimed to be voicing the opinions of the mass readership). The paratext came to be as important as the text, as the prefaces and the afterwords, as well as the very selection of texts for translation, acquired particular ideological significance.

In the Bulgarian case, Krasimira Ivleva looks at the translations from Russian and French as case studies for policies and practices during communist rule. In the Bulgarian case, the importance of Russian as the primary language of the Soviet Union is overlaid on the symbolic role of Russia as the country that helped Bulgaria achieve independence from the Ottoman Empire in the nineteenth century. The role of French as a major western culture is accepted, but with different emphases—from the official perspective, it was the historical legacy of the French Revolution and the Paris Commune, as well as the anti-Nazi resistance that were important, as was France’s relatively independent foreign policy during

the Cold War, and it was this 'progressive' aspect that was emphasized, in full accordance with the Soviet-style binary sorting of world culture.

The structure of state organs of control over culture in Bulgaria was carbon copied from the USSR; in fact, even the abbreviated version of the name of main censorship organ, Glavlit, was the same. Even after its closure in 1956, on the wave of post-Stalin liberalization, the insistence that only 'the progressive manifestations of contemporary Western literature' merited translation was maintained; often it was a Western writer winning a prize in the USSR that ensured permission to translate that writer's work. In general, Bulgaria's policies in terms of translating Western literatures followed Soviet principles so closely that they were almost indistinguishable from those in the union republics of the USSR. Similarly to the Soviet practices, for several prominent Bulgarian writers, especially poets, translation became a permitted outlet and a means of survival when their own original work was not deemed suitable for publication; it also became a means for making certain themes and ideas discussable in Bulgarian, and thus was often a signal of new horizons of openness during periods of liberalization. Also, similarly to the Soviet practices, individual persons working in censor positions were often personally sympathetic to the plight and ideas of the writers and translators they were intended to police, which led to them actually aid these writers in shepherding their works through publication. Finally, Lyudmila Zhivkova, the liberal daughter of Bulgaria's communist ruler who encouraged greater openness to international influences in the 1970s and 1980s, played an important and unusual role within the system that could be compared to that of Cuba's Mariela Castro in the more recent years.

Yugoslavia's special status among the communist-ruled countries always bears emphasizing, and Maria Rita Leto's chapter on the politics of translation in Yugoslavia in the late 1940s–early 1950s is a case in point. This was the time when communists first consolidated power and then, following Tito's break with Stalin, Yugoslavia sought to affirm its adherence to the principles of communism while simultaneously criticizing and distancing itself from many Soviet positions. Thus, after copying the Soviet system and practices for the first few years after World War II, after 1948 Yugoslavia's translation practice, Leto argues, 'rose to become

an emblem of the cultural and ideological experimentalism in Yugoslavia in those years' (174).

At first, the authorities primarily focused on specific authors or individual books that were banned and had their distribution blocked. Literature for children and youth was subject to particularly close scrutiny. Censorship was effective, even though it officially did not exist: it was largely carried out through decisions deliberated and communicated orally, or through the procedure of dispensing or refusing permissions for certain works to be published. Often, it led to anticipatory self-censorship as a strategy of adaptation. Ultimately, as long as literature successfully contributed to the programme of consciousness raising and the creation of new socialist individuals, it could continue to operate with relative freedom. In translation, the selection of authors and texts to be translated was the most revealing part, as here too we see in the first post-war years the copying of Soviet policies and author lists. Thus, Russian classics and leading Soviet authors dominated in Yugoslavia, as they clearly satisfied the prerequisite for ideological correctness; there were calls to translate more from the fellow communist-ruled countries of Eastern Europe; American literature was represented by the few officially approved writers, like Theodore Dreiser, or individual works, like Upton Sinclair's *King Coal*. In some libraries, as Leto notes, up to 80 per cent of titles were Russian books or translations from the Russian (186). In a unique local trend, translation was seen as a vehicle for uniting the Serbo-Croatian literary market, so if a translation of a foreign title was published in Croatia, it was seen as inadvisable to publish a different Serbian translation of the same work, and vice versa.

By 1950, however, things were very different. Soviet writers who supported Stalin's position in his quarrel with Tito were not to be published; Russian-authored prefaces to books were to be replaced with those written by local Yugoslav authors. The priority shifted from translating Soviet texts to those from other literatures. While this period was characterized by harsh repressions against real or would-be Stalin sympathizers, with many of them dispatched to the Goli Otok prison camp, the series of consequential speeches by party leaders and prominent intellectuals, like the one by the writer Miroslav Krleža in 1952, which rejected the principles of socialist realism and called for autonomous

and independent art, soon led to major changes. Yugoslavia's acceptance of the Marshall Plan led to its opening to Western, especially American, culture. In contrast to all other East European countries, previously banned Western authors, especially major modernist and avant-garde writers, were now published openly, while there was a strong turn away from translating Russian texts. Leto considers in greater detail the examples of Ivan Slamning and Antun Šoljan, two young Croatian authors who became influential translators of modern American poetry. As she emphasizes, translation became an emblem of Yugoslavia's self-positioning as a free country that sought a third way between the West and the Soviet bloc, one that was communist-controlled but open to a free exchange of ideas. The only area where the state was clamping down had to do with ethnic nationalism—and its failure to develop an effective policy in that respect, in effect making nationalism an attractive forbidden fruit, is what ultimately led to Yugoslavia's violent end in the 1990s.

In her chapter for this volume, Nike Pokorn picks up Leto's emphasis on the strategic importance placed on the literature for children and young adults, taking as her case study the Slovenian publishing house Mladinska Knjiga and arguing convincingly that translation policy in children's literature can offer a particularly instructive view into mechanisms of social control and targets of ideological focus. Within Yugoslavia, Slovenia's place was unique due to its westernmost geographical location and its historical ties outside the Slavic world; also, the status of the Slovene language was not questioned, and like Macedonian, it was granted full rights of existence alongside the Serbo-Croatian continuum.

As Pokorn points out, censorship in communist-ruled Slovenia mostly manifested itself in the form of self-censorship, with translators conforming to ideological pressures by internalizing the state's censorship agenda. Using both archival research and oral interviews, she shows how this system came to function 'like a well-oiled machine without the need for any formal censorship office' (220). Pokorn notes that retranslations of children's classics, such as the tales by the Brothers Grimm and by Hans Christian Andersen, played an important role in the ideological indoctrination of children in communist-ruled Yugoslavia, in particular through the modification of the text to tone down, or

preferably remove completely, any references to Christianity. In general, anti-religious education and efforts to displace organized religion from a prominent position in public life were an important part of the party's goals in Yugoslavia. While Pokorn was not able to find archival sources which document this practice, she did find an archival document from 1983 that confirms the decision to end the practice of eliminating religious expression from literary translations and film and television subtitling.

The interviews provided Pokorn with further corroborating material. Thus, the Slovene translator of *Bambi* removed the book's only but highly significant religious reference. However, by means of this act of self-censorship, the translator ensured the publication of the work, making a conscious compromise with the ruling ideological directives. Another interviewee, a former press editor, confirmed to Pokorn that he instructed the translator of Karl May's *Winnetou* to 'tone down or simply leave out' anything in the book that could be considered elements of Pan-Germanism or sentimental Catholicism. Thus in the absence of an official censorship office, the combination of self-censorship and editors' directives to the translators combined to serve as a satisfactory censorship system for the state's needs.

However, the Yugoslav system was still broad-minded enough to allow fairly wide room for dissent. Pokorn singles out the case of Saint-Exupéry's *The Little Prince*, published in 1964 after years of opposition, allegedly due to its religious symbolism. However, the difficulties that the publication of this book faced seem rather surprising, considering that by then it had been published in many other communist-ruled countries, including in Russia and Czechoslovakia, both in 1959; and a translation had been available in Poland since 1947. A much more daring feat discussed by Pokorn was the publication by Mladinska Knjiga of the Slovene translation of Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* in 1967, making it the first translation of this book published in communist-ruled Eastern Europe. This, Pokorn notes, was made possible thanks to the efforts of one of the editors at Mladinska Knjiga who was close to the party elite; the institution of publishing editors thus played an ambivalent role, as both the carriers of the party's imperatives and as enablers of occasional challenges to its ideological hegemony.

Anikó Sohár's chapter for this book continues Pokorn's line of research, as she offers a similarly granular historical inquiry into the practices of translation of science fiction in Hungary during the rule of Janos Kádár, 1956–89. Science fiction offers a fascinating case study; a half-forbidden genre during the Stalin era, it underwent a boom in the Soviet Union and other communist-ruled countries in the late 1950s and 1960s, in the context of the space race. In addition to local science fiction writing and the republication of old classics like the works of H. G. Wells, this meant new translations of many works of contemporary English-language science fiction, which posed an interesting dilemma for communist-ruled regimes.

Like in several other cases considered here, post-1956 Hungary did not have an official censorship office; however, as Sohár argues, the situation was controlled through a form of Bourdieusian structural censorship, whereby 'the structure of the field where discourse circulates [...] constitutes censorship in the form of control on discourse exercised without explicit laws' (245). Within it, there are 'dominating positions whose authorized position-holders have a dominant visible and audible discourse, and dominated positions in which people are silenced or relegated to non-normative rebellious discourse' (Brownlie 2014; quoted in Sohár: 245). Of course, overt censorship, such as the withdrawal and pulping of a book's print run, was also possible, if rare.

As elsewhere in communist-ruled Eastern Europe, the censorship system was based on two main premises: belief in the edificatory, consciousness-raising effect of literature and the taboo on the discussion of certain topics, such as overt criticism of the Soviet Union and the one-party system. In each country, there were also forbidden topics related to national history; in Hungary, these included the uprising of 1956, but also Hungary's loss of territories after the Treaty of Trianon at the end of World War I. Another element of restriction concerned language and style: following the dominant principles established in the Soviet Union and discussed above, use of vulgarisms or slang was strongly discouraged; the language had to be smooth, feel easily accessible and stylistically neutral. Overall, the system rested on three principles: promotion (of socialist realism and other orthodox work), permission

(for other cultural products as long as they were deemed not to be antagonistic to the communist cause), and prohibition (of anything that was seen as potentially undermining the state and its social order).

Sohár offers an in-depth account of the role of one particular official, Péter Kuczka, in introducing and popularizing science fiction in Hungary. Himself a victim of political pressures, a poet who could not publish his own work after 1956, Kuczka instead worked as the editor of a science fiction book series and of the popular science fiction magazine *Galaktika*.

While overall Kuczka is viewed positively, as a tireless promoter of the genre of science fiction and as someone who helped elevate its status within the general literary realm, Sohár emphasizes that he too played by the rules. Many science fiction writers were blacklisted, for reasons ranging from their criticism of the Soviet Union or communist ideology to being openly gay. Any negative mention of the Soviet bloc countries was edited out; and character names were changed so that they would not look Slavic or Hungarian. Sohár's analysis of the texts translated and published and their respective print runs paints a fascinating picture of science fiction's development in the Hungarian literary market. The prominent role of one person meant that in this case, his particular tastes and biases exercised an outsized influence; for instance, British writers were preferred to American, and only two women writers were included: Mary Shelley and Ursula Le Guin. Sohár also notes the unusually high level of normalization and simplification of the language of the translated texts, fully following the Soviet-favoured principles of extreme domestication of translated texts. Given the absence of overt censorship organs at that time, it is often impossible to determine which actor or combination of actors was responsible for particular sets of changes introduced in the text. Still, Sohár argues that even in this muffled, domesticated form, translated science fiction played a very powerful role, as it was able to raise many otherwise suppressed questions; this partial openness was an important contributing factor that helped hasten the collapse of the regime.

While Sohár explores the reception in communist-ruled Hungary of a particular genre of writing where Anglo-American authors were dominant, Igor Týšš explores the case of Czechoslovakia through the prism

of the translation of, and the personal visits to Czechoslovakia by, a cult American poet, Allen Ginsberg. While the central event is Ginsberg's deportation from Czechoslovakia just days after students elected him the King of May in 1965, Tyšš uses this episode to make a broader argument about the period between 1956 and 1968 in Czechoslovakia as 'an interstitial period of compromises and precedents' (317). As elsewhere in the Soviet bloc, after 1956 there was a relative liberalization in cultural practices; ideological criteria were no longer seen as overriding aesthetic and intellectual ones, and in translation, the exclusive orientation towards the official Soviet literary canon (including not only Soviet, but also Soviet-approved Western authors, mostly classics from earlier eras) was replaced by increasing coverage of authors from all over the world, including contemporary ones. Still, as Tyšš notes, the dominant literary institutions—the writers' union, the publishing industry, and party and state structures involved in cultural politics—were all resistant to change and opened up very slowly.

In the decade between the beginning of de-Stalinization and Ginsberg's ill-fated visit, readers in Czechoslovakia had access to a steadily growing selection of translations of Beat authors in periodicals, and even a few book collections. Their main Czech translator was Jan Zábřana. Often, they were accompanied by camouflaging paratexts, namely, by critical articles denouncing these translated authors on ideological and aesthetic grounds. These critical articles were often printed in a much smaller font than translations themselves and served, as Tyšš points out, as a cover-up.

Tyšš presents a fascinating and detailed account of Ginsberg's two visits to Prague, in February–March and then in April–May 1965. If the first visit passed without trouble, the second was tumultuous. His election by students as the King of May (*král majálesu*) in the Prague May carnival, that had just been permitted again by the authorities that year, came to be perceived by the Czechoslovak secret police as a sign of losing face and losing control—hence the harsh crackdown, the confiscation of Ginsberg's diary, and its use in a campaign of harassment and persecution of those who had helped to organize the various events during his visit. We still do not have access to original documents from the secret police, thus

Tyšš relies on the published official reports, which, as he notes, are ‘very similar to other ideologically motivated smear campaigns’ (327).

After Ginsberg’s expulsion, negative comments were made in leading party-controlled periodicals, while others fell completely silent. In this, Tyšš notes, the general suppression of information about the poet combined with anxiety about the possible repercussions among the lower ranks of state bureaucracy. The numerous already prepared translations of Ginsberg’s works into Czech and Slovak were withdrawn from publication. The strategic suppression exemplified by this case, as Tyšš argues, was part of a larger pattern of the regime’s selective strategic interference in the cultural field, which was meant to eliminate from public discourse the voices it viewed as potentially subversive. The embargo on any mention of Ginsberg was briefly broken in 1969–70 as final post-‘stabilization’ echoes of the short-lived Prague Spring of 1968, when a couple of publications appeared on the Beat Generation and a Slovak translation of ‘Howl’ was published in a literary journal. After that, complete silence until 1989. Ultimately, Tyšš argues, the story of Ginsberg’s visit and expulsion reveals ‘an unbridgeable gap between what was legal in theory and what was legitimate in practice’ (335) even during a time and in a place that is considered one of the most liberal in the history of communist Europe. Even after the negative press campaign against Ginsberg faded, the official embargo on the poet endured as one of many restrictions on the Czechoslovak cultural sphere. Paradoxically, it also ended up ensuring Ginsberg’s cult status in the Czech and Slovak cultural memory.

The Ginsberg affair also gives us insight into the workings of the translation system in communist-ruled Czechoslovakia, and specifically the dynamic between the state publishing houses, who were subject to strict rules of advance planning and were therefore slow to respond to the latest literary developments, and the more nimble literary periodicals, which could experiment with more avant-garde writing and be generally more open, as long as publications of ideologically problematic authors were accompanied by camouflaging paratexts in the form of negative critical articles about them. The Ginsberg case served as a flashlight exposing the many interlacing elements of the state machinery of management and

control of the cultural sphere, whose official representatives ultimately had the final say on what translations could be published.

That is, what could be published in the official state media. The years 1968–89 were the years when underground handmade books and journals circulated underground in Czechoslovakia. Just like in the Soviet Union, where the practice began a few years earlier but also boomed in the same period, it came to be known by the Russian term *samizdat* [self-published]. Within Soviet and Czechoslovak *samizdat*, translations occupied a noticeable role, but their percentage was relatively small. Technologically, it was also a precarious enterprise, dominated by typescripts that were carbon copied or by photographs of typescripts and manuscripts. However, the Polish system that came to be known as *drugi obiegi* [second circulation] was vastly more organized and powerful. From the mid-1970s to the fall of communist rule, this was a vast, impressive system; at its peak in 1980–81, associated with the Solidarity movement, it included about 160 active presses which published about two and a half thousand titles of books and nearly two thousand issues of periodicals; the circulations averaged about 4–5 thousand copies, but occasionally reached tens of thousands. In his contribution to this volume, Robert Looby considers the place of translated fiction within Poland's *drugi obiegi*. Its selections, he notes, were quite rich, and included both dissident writers from the Soviet bloc itself and a number of texts by Western authors. There was also a high level of professionalization in the work of translators, editors, and proofreaders.

Outwardly, the situation in the official literary sphere in Poland was quite similarly to its neighbours: there was a lot of self-censorship; lists of authors that could not be invited to give public readings were circulated to public libraries and similar institutions; blacklisting generally was on the increase. Poland did have an official Censorship Office, and in 1977 a smuggled collection of its rules and regulations was published in London, to considerable embarrassment. But as Looby notes, there was a paradox: Polish censorship was fairly mild, its repression relatively weak, and individual freedom comparatively strong. The state's reluctance to use force meant that there seemed to be less of a need for *samizdat* than in the USSR or Czechoslovakia, but it ended up growing into a far more vigorous system than in those countries.

In his chapter, Looby uses the database at the Polish National Library, which provides impressively rich detail on the publications produced in *drugi obiegi* in 1976–89. As in other publishing systems, literature comprised only about 16 per cent of the titles; much larger numbers were claimed by publications on history and politics, as well as memoirs. As expected, in the top places in terms of who and what was published were Polish émigré writers. Ultimately, out of this vast mass of texts, foreign fiction accounted for only about one hundred titles. However, there was also a separate market in science fiction and horror novels that were known as ‘club editions’, which have usually been considered separately from the politically focused *drugi obiegi*; and as such, still await detailed further study.

Looking at the practices of leading *drugi obiegi* presses, Looby notes that their general criteria were quite simple: ‘if a book was banned and had intellectual value it was acceptable’ (386). For technical reasons, shorter books were preferred to longer ones. While some presses sought to avoid being labeled as narrowly ideological (‘anything banned is good for us’), others, conversely, openly proclaimed their political status and emphasized that literary value was not a reason they considered when selecting books for publication. Overall, books that were critical of communist totalitarianism, from Zamyatin’s *We* to Danilo Kiš’s *A Tomb for Boris Davidovich*, were prominent among them. In terms of Western authors, it appears that the combination of politics and sex was especially appealing, as in the cases of Philip Roth and Jerzy Kosinski; even one edition of *Brave New World* apparently emphasized the sexual content in the novel.

Looby considers the possible limitations of underground publishing and weighs the question of whether it pushed second-rate writers simply because of their ideological positions. However, he argues that this charge applies to a far greater extent to the Polish rather than the translated authors included in *drugi obiegi*. The overwhelming majority of the latter editions stood the test of time. Among the lesser-known titles are dissident works translated from the Russian that still retain their historical value.

Drugi obieg also had its internal literary criticism, and Looby considers the fascinating case of critical reviews within it—being published underground did not guarantee automatic praise. Perhaps the most intriguing aspect of his study is the look at the practices of underground translators. Paradoxically, he remarks, ‘freedom did not result in much greater daring in the translation (as opposed to the selection) of texts’ (392). They still often followed the common Soviet bloc practices of normalizing, toning down the language (for instance, softening the curse words). Looby does note a few exceptions, as in Irena Lewandowska’s translation of Vladimir Sorokin’s *The Queue*, and especially Stanisław Owsianko’s translation of Friedrich Dürrenmatt’s *The Coup*, where the translator ‘revels in the freedom to be politically incorrect’ (395). Overall, though, his conclusion is that literary translators in *drugi obieg* ‘did not compromise on quality or fidelity in favor of ideology’ (397). Yet ultimately, given the relative leniency of the Polish censorship system, with the exception of the selection of texts, Looby argues that the translation practices underground did not differ greatly from those above ground.

Looking back at the panoramic view of translation practices in countries under communist rule offered by the contributors to this volume, one gets a sense of both the genesis of the Soviet system of handling translation and the ways in which its influence spread to other East European countries in the Soviet orbit. The insights contained here could be helpful in future projects with a different geographic focus; for instance, given the new wave of innovative research on the legacies of the Soviet-Third World cultural engagement (see especially Djagalov 2020), it would be intriguing to consider how these practices reverberated and metamorphosed elsewhere, for instance in East and South Asia or in Cuba, or in the Soviet-influenced countries in Africa. Further research on practices and theoretical debates in other regions would likewise add other welcome details.

For now, I would like to conclude by pondering some echoes of the era of communist rule in the status and practices of translation in the countries considered in this volume after the fall of communism. Undoubtedly one of the major consequences is the loss of the system of privileges and the safety net guaranteed by communist-era creative unions. While many of them have endured in some form in

the post-communist days, these institutions declined and lost any serious influence. What gets translated came to be driven primarily by market forces, but with a series of notable exceptions, most importantly through the grant systems set up by individual countries, primarily in the EU, for supporting translations of their national literatures. Thus we have, for example, Ukrainian translations of Dutch or Franco-Belgian literature in quantities that would be unimaginable without such support—and this is a good thing. English-language countries are conspicuously absent from such programmes, and thus it is in translations from English that the impact of the market is felt in its full unregulated force. Much has been said about the deteriorating working conditions of translators—like many freelance workers, their income can often be precarious, and their lives far from stable. Thus, one commonly sees authors multitasking now, and trying to build several sources of income—from fiction writing, literary translations, newsmedia columns, and so on.

An interesting and still not sufficiently studied question is the endurance of Soviet-established practices of translation through the continuous teaching of their principles in the translation programmes at universities in post-communist countries. One should not generalize here, but it would certainly be hard to argue that the myth of the superiority of the ‘Soviet school of translation’ has been sufficiently challenged, and the most important critical work problematizing this idea is still coming from outside the former Soviet Union, including from several contributors to this volume. The pernicious Soviet practice of poetic translation that privileges smooth-sounding meter and rhyme but gives a very cavalier treatment to all other aspects of the original texts remains stubbornly persistent, especially in Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus, as does the no less problematic practice of translating from Western languages into other languages of the post-Soviet region via Russian, still common in many post-Soviet countries (Ukraine is conspicuous in this respect as in Ukraine there is at least a vigorous public debate taking place on the disadvantages and pitfalls of this practice).

One of the most encouraging trends is the rediscovery, with the digitization of archives, of the suppressed or outright banned translations from the 1920s, early 1930s, Soviet Union, before the imposition of the dogmas of socialist realism and of translations that ‘do not offend the

sensibilities of Soviet readers' (Azov 2013: 103). One therefore hopes that there will be more historical research on the practices of innovative translators from those years, as well as from the later part of the communist period, like Ukraine's Mykola Lukash, in whose work political dissidence stood side-by-side with virtuoso linguistic artistry. It is in these instances of bold innovation and enthusiastic discovery of the riches of global culture and the utopian project of sharing them with new audiences in the hope of making one's home country—and thus, perhaps, the world—a better place that we can find inspiration for future generations to continue tackling the noble and elusive task of the translator.

Notes

1. As Lenore Grenoble, among others, has noted (see Grenoble 2003), Soviet language planning policy built upon and competed with Christian missionary efforts aimed at reaching the speakers of languages that did not have writing systems. Efforts at spreading Soviet ideology and the ideas Marxism-Leninism kicked into higher gear in the late 1950s, with the decolonization processes across Africa and Asia. For a comprehensive study of Soviet book publishing for the Indian market, the largest such project by volume and variety, see Jessica Bachman's Ph.D. dissertation in progress, University of Washington.
2. For more on this project, see Khotimsky (2013).
3. This echoes the famous lines about *vek* (this Russian world can be translated as 'age,' 'era,' or 'century') and its demands from 'TBC' [i.e., Tuberculosis], a poem by Eduard Bagritskii first published in 1929 and widely circulated at the time. The lyrical hero encounters the ghost of Feliks Dzerzhinsky, the founder of Soviet secret police, who tells him:

А век поджидает на мостовой,
 Сосредоточен, как часовой.
 Иди — и не бойся с ним рядом встать.
 Твоё одиночество веку под стать.
 Оглянешься — а вокруг враги;
 Руки протянешь — и нет друзей;

Но если он скажет: „Солги“, — солги,
 Но если он скажет: „Убей“, — убей.

[And the era waits for you in the street, it's all concentration, like a sentry. Go, don't be afraid to stand next to it/him [era/sentry]. Your loneliness matches the era's own. You look back—and all around you are enemies; you spread your hands—but no friends are nearby. But if the age tells you, 'Lie!'—you lie. And if it tells you, 'Kill!'—you kill.].

4. For the persistence of this view, see the following opening statement at the 2008 online roundtable 'Perevod na perelome' [Translation at a Turning Point] conducted by the website polit.ru, <https://polit.ru/article/2008/05/22/seminar/>:

В советское время уровень художественного перевода был настолько высок, что переводческая школа была предметом национальной гордости – наряду с классическим балетом и баллистическими ракетами. До сих пор часто приходится слышать, что многие художественные произведения сильно выигрывали в переводе.

[In the Soviet era, the level of literary translation was so high that the school of translation was an object of national pride, alongside classical ballet and ballistic missiles. To this day one can often hear that many works of literature improved significantly in translation.].

5. See, among others, Baer (2010), Borisenko (1999), Dmitrienko (2019), Kamovnikova (2019), Leighton (2008), Witt (2016a).

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