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female translators of russian and soviet literature in the twentieth century

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To my ever-patient, amazing husband, sons and parents
for their unstinting support

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Abbreviations

ALTA	American Literary Translators Association
ATA	American Translators Association
BIA	British Intelligence Archive
CCF	Congress for Cultural Freedom
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CPGB	Communist Party of Great Britain
FLPH	Foreign Languages Publishing House
HUA	Hull University Archives
LRA	Leeds Russian Archive
NKVD	Narodnyi Komissariat Vnutrennykh Del (People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs), the Soviet secret police and forerunner of the KGB
PEN	(Organization of) Poets, Playwrights, Editors, Essayists, and Novelists
RBML	Columbia University Rare Book and Manuscript Library
SIS	Secret Intelligence Service

Introduction

The field of literary translation – and specifically women in literary translation – lends itself to diverse strands of inquiry on creativity. It also offers scope in which to explore broader reconfigurations of social meaning-making. My research on female translators of Russian literature in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries relies on an extension of the sociological turn (inspired by Pierre Bourdieu and Pascale Casanova at the end of the 1990s) to the realm of Gender Studies. In this respect, I am bringing gender to Translation Studies and applying it to an era of activity intrinsically connected with the Cold War. My research seeks, like Sherry Simon before me, to resituate women translators and mediators in 'the intellectual and linguistic points of contact between cultures, and make visible the political pressures which activate[d] them'.[1] This historicizing approach, an epistemic intersection that Eleonora Federici and José Santaemilia term a 'gender and translation transdiscipline',[2] feeds into two recent Translation Studies trends. The first is a revisionist interrogation of gender that transcends a strictly feminist, or even feminine, agenda.[3] Hilary Brown's methodology, although directed in her case towards early modern female translators, provides a necessary – and welcome – framework for investigating the female protagonists of my own research whose Cold War career trajectories do not conform to a personal feminist agenda and which were shaped instead by external socio-political forces.

[1] Sherry Simon, *Gender in Translation: Cultural Identity and the Politics of Transmission* (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 1996), p. 136.

[2] *New Perspectives on Gender and Translation: New Voices for Transnational Dialogues*, ed. by E. Federici and J. Santaemilia (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2021), p. 3.

[3] Feminism in translation, associated with scholars like Lori Chamberlain, Barbara Godard, Susanne de Lotbinière-Harwood, foregrounds an awareness of the lexical possibilities for publicizing and reclaiming a feminist dynamic through conscious textual intervention. My methodology, however, favours a *female* rather than feminist-activist dimension. See Hilary Brown, 'Women Translators in Early Modern Europe', in *The Routledge Handbook of Translation, Feminism and Gender*, ed. by L. von Flotow and H. Kamal (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2020), pp. 117–26.

The majority of the female translators in this book had already established themselves in professional translation careers before the birth of the feminist movement in the United States in the late 1960s.[4] They presented themselves not as feminists *per se* but as females with the skills and networks necessary for securing a career in Russian literary translation. If they were conscious of feminist aspirations, there is no evidence of them consciously electing to translate only female authors. Nor is there evidence of them choosing, as Françoise Massardier-Kenney observes about a translator-centred strategy, 'to make explicit the importance of the feminine or of woman/women (either in terms of structural constraints or in terms of women's agency) in the text translated'.[5] The absence of any overt display of feminism by these women does not mean, however, that they carried out their work in a social vacuum. As translators, they often represented male authors; they negotiated commissions, payment and employment terms, usually with male editors, while competing against male peers. Those women who emigrated to a new country, whether to the UK, the United States or the USSR, and became translators there, were busy negotiating new socio-cultural, socio-economic territory in addition to learning the gender landscape. Sometimes their need to survive in that new environment superseded matters of gender balance. These women's careers were shaped by politics and financial need, but also by their commitment to culture and humanitarianism. Their legacy contributes to and influences – directly and indirectly – modern female translators' practice in the United States and the UK today.

The second emergent field to underpin my research is Literary Translator Studies, best exemplified by Klaus Kaindl's, Waltraud Kolb's and Daniela Schlager's edited volume of the same name.[6] This focus on the lives and careers of professional translators and cultural mediators is a theoretical refraction that has appeared over the last two decades following work by Daniel Simeoni and Jeremy Munday.[7] Kaindl, Kolb and Schlager seek to

[4] Luise von Flotow, *Translation and Gender, Translating in the 'Era of Feminism'* (Manchester: St. Jerome Publishing and Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1997), p. 1.

[5] Françoise Massardier-Kenney, 'Towards a Redefinition of Feminist Translation Practice', *The Translator*, Vol. 3:1 (1997), 55–69 (p. 60).

[6] *Literary Translator Studies*, ed. by Klaus Kaindl, Waltraud Kolb and Daniela Schlager (Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2021).

[7] Simeoni's seminal essay was published two decades before Kaindl et al.'s volume and foregrounds the role of the translation practitioner. See Daniel Simeoni, 'The Pivotal Status of the Translator's Habitus', *Target*, Vol. 10:1 (1998), 1–39. Jeremy Munday's microhistorical methodology advocates the deployment of archival sources in order to understand translators, their careers and their translation decisions. See Munday, 'Using Primary Sources to Produce a Microhistory of Translation and Translators: Theoretical and Methodological Concerns', *The Translator*, Vol. 20:1 (2014), 64–80.

consolidate and advance Simeoni's and Munday's work by making 'the potentials, options and meanings of the lives of translators accessible to scholarly investigation'.[8] Translation scholar Reine Meylaerts advocates a similar approach, encouraging researchers to contextualize an agent's multifarious roles in the field of production and to identify translators' self-perceptions.[9] Following Meylaerts's, and Kaindl et al.'s interrogative models, I have selected female translators on the basis of their personal and professional backgrounds (*habitus*), their socio-cultural contexts, their contributions to literary translation and/or cross-cultural mediation, and the existence of supporting archival and paratextual material. In those case studies where archival material (in particular direct publisher/translator correspondence or private papers) lacks,[10] I have turned to translator narratology – 'texts by translators, paratexts, autobiographies, letters, diaries, but also texts about translators, such as portraits, biographies, or even films' – as a means of analysing 'identity constructs'.[11] By extending research resources beyond physical, creative outputs alone, i.e. the translated texts themselves, and by referring in the case of my chosen subjects to letters, memoirs, interviews, even secret intelligence files, it has become possible to situate the individual, as Munday, Kaindl et al. advocate, in broader social, historical, political contexts. Previously invisible agents and their achievements become corporeal once we hold their letters, contracts and manuscript proofs, hear their voices in interview recordings, watch them in video clips, and read their informal manifestos for best practice. In analysing their documents, it has been possible to discover some sort of disconnect in each case study between personal expectations and reality on matters such as gender, professional visibility, ideological loyalty, authorial endorsement and reader appreciation. Literary Translator Studies is not just about the individual, however. As Kaindl argues, 'what makes it worthwhile to explore the individual translator is that the history of a society – and translation is part of society – cannot be understood without the life of the individual. We need to understand both'.[12]

[8] Klaus Kaindl, '(Literary) Translator Studies: Shaping the Field', in Kaindl et al., *Literary Translator Studies*, pp. 1–38 (p. 14).

[9] Reine Meylaerts, 'The Multiple Lives of Translators', *TTR*, Vol. 26:2 (2013), 103–28 (p. 109) <https://doi.org/10.7202/1037134ar>.

[10] The lack of archival material concerns in particular the translators (Manning, Wettlin) who spent considerable time in the USSR and for whom there is no obvious private archive. By contrast, translators who had affiliations with the media (*Daily Worker*) and/or with professional organizations (PEN Translation Committee and the British Communist Party) present alternative routes to sourcing archival information.

[11] Kaindl et al., *Literary Translator Studies*, p. 17.

[12] Ibid., p. 24.

Michelle Milan, whose research focuses on the 'intersection between book history and translation history', celebrates the usefulness of archives in 'helping us recover the material and socio-cultural history of, for the most part, little-known translators' (in her case, of the nineteenth century).[13] For Milan, the identity constructs that emerge from archival research result in '[d]iscussions about translation as a profession and the professionalization of translators and interpreters have focused on the modern era'.[14] To date, there has been little exploration of the women – beyond Constance Garnett – who have contributed to Russian literary translation during the past century. As this book will show, they are numerous, and, though impressive, their collective achievement has largely gone unnoticed.

I will argue that the women translators in this book do not generally conform to typical modes of professionalization. Some (Budberg, Traill) functioned mostly as independent sole agents, picking up commissions in a seemingly random, serendipitous way (unlike Penguin Books's comparatively professionalized, commissioned translators, many of whom enjoyed repeat translation work with advances and contracted royalty terms). Others (Manning, Lansbury, Wettlin) performed professional translator roles within a closed, Soviet employment system, designed around different (non-commercial, Communist) parameters. The majority, if not all, of these women constructed cameo – multipositional – careers where translation constituted just one profession among many in their employment profiles:

> For […] intercultural mediators translating is usually part of an aggregate of partly overlapping, literary (transfer) roles […] in addition to their actual professional life (as a civil servant, a teacher, a publisher, etc.). Such a translator's habitus is therefore the unique integration of his/her cultural socialization in terms of family and social environment, schooling, professional career, contacts with social, political, religious and cultural institutions, etc.[15]

The women translators and mediators who feature in this monograph form the first instance of Literary Translator Studies research on modern female Russo-Anglophone translators. There are other female figures who hail from across Europe, but the timing of my book project (coinciding with the

[13] Michelle Milan, 'Towards a Professional Identity: Translators in the Victorian Publisher's Archive in Translation Archives', *Meta*, Vol. LXVI:1 (Apr., 2021), 48–72 (p. 49) <https://doi.org/10.7202/1079320ar>.

[14] Milan, 'Towards a Professional Identity', p. 52.

[15] Meylaerts, 'The Multiple Lives of Translators', pp. 124–5.

Covid-19 pandemic and accompanying travel restrictions) has prevented me from researching their archives, which are located in Europe and the United States. The women whom I have researched, however, present an unusual gender and Cold War–specific employment paradigm. The synthesis of methodological strands here – archival, microhistorical, sociological and gender-based – forms an interdisciplinary apparatus that lays bare the personal responses of female translators and literary mediators to the 'social structures, cultural traditions and ideological values' of the politically active Cold War years and the post-Soviet years.[16] The outcome is a microhistory (which can be defined as detailed case studies formed from primary archival material) that makes visible the invisible and 'helps to detect the cracks, conflicts, and contradictions in the grand narratives of translation'.[17] My aim in reviving these female translators and mediators through the medium of transdisciplinary archival research is to emphasize 'the agency of individuals or groups that are either exceptional *or* representative in some way, situated within a broader context'.[18]

Constance Garnett

Constance Garnett, considered the matriarch of modern Russian literary translation into English, originates this genealogy of female Russian literary translators. She began learning Russian and translating Russian literature at the suggestion of her circle of émigré Russian friends, with whom she socialized in London. Garnett is praised even now – a century later – for translating over seventy volumes of Russian literature during her lifetime.[19] She has been credited with sustaining the so-called Russian Craze, a phase spanning from the late 1890s through to 1925 when Russian culture transfixed British readers.[20] Sherry Simon names Garnett's 'sympathy for

[16] Kaindl et al, *Literary Translator Studies*, p. 23.

[17] Ibid., p. 18.

[18] Judy Wakabayashi, 'Microhistory', in *A History of Modern Translation Knowledge: Sources, Concepts, Effects*, ed. by Lieven D'Hulst and Yves Gambier (Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2018), pp. 157–9 (p. 157).

[19] Gary Saul Morson describes Garnett as 'magnificent', adding '[h]er greatest virtues were her profound and sympathetic understanding of the works themselves and a literary artist's feel for the English language', see: Morson, 'The Pevearsion of Russian Literature', *Commentary Magazine* (Jul./Aug., 2010). Available at: <https://www.commentary.org/articles/gary-morson/the-pevearsion-of-russian-literature/> [accessed 10 June 2021].

[20] Rachel May, *The Translator in the Text: On Reading Russian Literature in English* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1994).

pre-revolutionary Russian anarchist exiles, her visits to Russia and her support for the Revolution' as catalysts for her translatorial drive.[21] These are motivations which Garnett's grandson Richard, author of his grandmother's memoirs, *Constance Garnett – A Heroic Life*, confirms.[22] Another significant factor is that Garnett effectively became a single mother once she and her husband, Edward, started living separately.[23] This, coupled with her publisher William Heinemann's refusal to pay her royalties and subsequent insistence on implementing a pay cut[24] – might better explain the speed and scope of Garnett's contributions. Garnett's output, arguably, has not faced any serious challenge from other female translators until recently; over a century later, perhaps only Marian Schwartz, the prominent American translator of classic and contemporary Russian literature, offers a translation output which might approach Garnett's.

By Garnett's death in 1946, British interest in Russian authors had waned, mirroring the downturn in Anglo-Russian political relations. During the Cold War, however, from the 1950s onwards, (inter-)cultural curiosity reignited, creating opportunities both for literature and for women translators. Hamish Hamilton, Penguin Books and Hutchinson in the UK, Progress Publishers in Russia, and E.P. Dutton, the Grove Press and New American Library (formerly Penguin USA) in the United States independently commissioned new translations of the Russian classics and Soviet literature. British, émigrée Russian and American women assumed key roles as literary translators, variously commissioned for their cultural, linguistic and literary abilities, or in Bourdieusian terms, their symbolic capital. Literary translation provided them with employment, self-validation and, in some cases, professional respectability.[25]

For some of these translators, like Olga Carlisle and Mirra Ginsburg in America and Edith Bone in the UK, the creative act of translation provided an unexpected platform for activism. For others, such as Moura Budberg and Vera Traill in the UK, and Evelyn Manning and Margaret Wettlin in the

[21] Simon, *Gender in Translation,* p. 71.

[22] Richard Garnett, *Constance Garnett – A Heroic Life* (London: Faber & Faber, 2009).

[23] Garnett, *Constance Garnett*, p. 110.

[24] Cathy McAteer, *Translating Great Russian Literature: The Penguin Russian Classics* (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2021), p. xiii.

[25] Penguin in the UK commissioned female translators (Fen, Edmonds, Jessie Coulson, Jane Kentish, Babette Deutsch) and paid them the same as their male counterparts; they also appointed female staff – Eunice Frost, Tanya Schmoller and Betty Radice – to senior managerial positions. There is no suggestion in archived correspondence that Penguin's female staff were treated any differently to male staff. See: McAteer, *Translating Great Russian Literature*.

USSR, it was a means for earning a living amidst political activity or intrigue. I will argue that, in their cases, any feminist standard-bearing is an unintended consequence of the careers they pursued as wordsmiths endowed with the necessary skillsets and cross-cultural backgrounds. Santaemilia has argued that '[i]n spite of all the dirty tricks inflicted on women and translation through-out history, both disciplines assert themselves as powerful agents of change in the world of culture and thought'.[26] I will endorse his claim in my research and argue that, in spite of restrictions that were imposed upon them, these lesser-known successors to Constance Garnett successfully created a niche for themselves which transcended gender politics in a traditionally male field of the publishing industry.

Cold War women as microhistorical case studies

The female translators whose microhistories I construct in this book each approached the same professional task of literary translation from their own, individual social situation, a vocational reflex to the world in which they found themselves. They are: Moura Budberg, an *émigrée* Ukrainian who eventually lived in Britain and translated for Penguin, amongst other publishers; Budberg's friend Vera Traill, a Russian-born émigrée translator of Russian literature for Hamish Hamilton and Harvill publishers; the British-born Evelyn Manning and Violet Lansbury and the American-born Margaret Wettlin, all of whom emigrated to the USSR because of their political ideologies; the Hungarian-born Edith Bone who converted from propagandizing Communist to activist writer and translator following her illegal imprisonment and several years in solitary confinement in Budapest; the Paris-born Olga Carlisle (née Andreeva) who emigrated to America but turned to translating dissident literature following her visits to the Soviet Union in the 1960s; and Mirra Ginsburg, who emigrated to the United States from Belarus and dedicated decades of her life to decolonizing the Russian literary canon in translation and campaigning for translators' rights.

As these microhistories will show, the act of translation during the early- to mid-twentieth century was not always as straightforward for some practitioners as it was for those regularly commissioned by a commercial publisher like Penguin Books, for example. Penguin's early cohort of Russian classics' translators was appointed with specific texts, terms (payment of an advance and royalties) and deadlines in mind, as well as a long list of titles

[26] Santaemilia in Federici and Santaemilia, *New Perspectives*, p. 15.

for future commissions. Negotiations with living authors did not encumber editors or translators until many years later when Penguin broadened their interests beyond dead authors (such as Fedor Dostoevsky, Lev Tolstoy, Anton Chekhov, Aleksandr Pushkin, Ivan Turgenev) and embarked on pursuing the rights to translate Soviet authors' texts (and even then, not without a certain amount of reluctance).[27] As archived correspondence shows, Penguin editors frequently accommodated translators' needs, exercising flexibility over submission deadlines and payment dates, and would even go to the trouble of sourcing original texts if required.[28]

By contrast, the women who feature in this collective microhistory largely managed their own activity in the literary field – be it as literary agents or translators – in response to their changing life events. Their translation careers were, to a large extent, serendipitous and self-governed, and without the obvious support of the same, regular commissioner. Some of these women were well connected in literary circles: for example, Budberg's (romantic) partner H.G. Wells was president of PEN (the organization for poets, essayists and novelists, between 1932 and 1935).[29] Carlisle's husband Henry was Chairman of the Freedom to Write Committee of PEN American Center in 1973, on the PEN board of trustees between 1973 and 1979, and was elected president of American PEN in 1976. Budberg and Carlisle might have utilized the support this organization offered to translators then (as now) and its advocacy for literary and human rights (in particular regarding safe representation at the time for dissident Soviet authors, as ratified in PEN's 1970 'World of Translation' manifesto clause, 'Translations from Russian').[30] Instead, Budberg and Carlisle – to judge by their correspondence and memoirs – completed commissions without PEN's legal or humanitarian guidance. Rather, judging by the timescale of Henry Carlisle's activity at American PEN, it is possible that he drew on his wife's experience of complex negotiation with Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn and other dissident authors (Boris Pasternak and Il'ia Ehrenburg) to inform his own position.

The Russian Revolution galvanized Budberg and Traill to leave Russia, and Manning, Lansbury, Bone and Wettlin to immigrate to the new Communist State. Budberg, Traill and Wettlin were ultimately forced into

[27] McAteer, *Translating Great Russian Literature*, p. 131.

[28] Ibid., p. 52.

[29] The legacy of Wells's PEN presidency has recently been recognized afresh with the inauguration (in 2014) of an annual PEN/HG Wells Lecture that seeks to showcase 'visionary writing and new thinking' (*EnglishPEN*, 2018).

[30] See PEN American Center's *The World of Translation* (New York: Wickersham Printing Company, 1971/1987), pp. 379–80.

translation work as a means of survival; materially for the first two women but, in the case of the latter, in an attempt to protect her and her family from KGB recriminations. Carlisle's increasingly humanitarian literary activity emerged from her travels into the epicentre of the Soviet literary field, to Moscow, and from her contact with the ultimate symbols of Soviet dissidence, Pasternak and Solzhenitsyn. Carlisle may not have been in a risky position to suffer too personally from her activities (beyond expulsion from the USSR, which she ultimately experienced), but others depended on her to act with discretion and secrecy. She worked, therefore, for the less tangible but no less significant causes of high literature, truth and humanitarianism. Between them, Budberg, Carlisle, Bone and Ginsburg created their literary opportunities out of the possibilities set before them. With the exception of the Progress translators (who faced challenges of their own), these women did not always have regular contractual terms and conditions (neither in the form of a set advance and guaranteed royalty percentages, nor, for some, in terms of reasonable, controllable or negotiable deadlines) with the same commercial publisher. They could not rely on return commissions, which came to nearly all the Penguin translators almost by default (even Elisaveta Fen, whose translations were comparatively few, but whose advisory role facilitated repeat work over many years).[31]

Chapter synopsis

This book comprises four chapters – each with two case studies – which collectively map the movements between nations of female cultural mediators during the Cold War. Chapter 1, 'Out of the fire: Russophone émigrée translator-mediators in the UK', presents the microhistories of Moura Budberg and Vera Traill, female Russian-to-English translator-émigrées who relocated to the UK after the 1917 Russian Revolution (independently of each other). Both were suspected of espionage in each place they settled. I examine how these women turned to literary translation for financial security.

Chapter 2, 'Desperately seeking socialism: Ideological British émigrées in the USSR', shifts the geographical and ideological focus to the USSR of the 1920s and 1930s to analyse why some young, skilled British women emigrated to the newly formed USSR. This chapter includes microhistories – formed from data held in British Intelligence Service files (their own or those of their spouse), translations and paratexts – of UK-born, female Communist

[31] McAteer, *Translating Great Russian Literature*, pp. 20–2.

Party members (Alice) Evelyn Manning and Violet Lansbury. It examines their attempt to pursue world peace through socialism and explores their function as politically active Anglophone translators supporting a Soviet system of cultural soft power.

Chapter 3, 'Shifting ideologies: Translation in testing times', acknowledges the contributions that US-born Margaret Wettlin and Hungarian-born Edith Bone made to Russian literature in Anglophone translation, despite becoming disaffected with communism after many years' support. Wettlin and Bone – whose anti-Soviet epiphanies contrast with Manning's and Lansbury's unwavering ideological positions in the previous chapter – pivoted towards careers in translation because of unpleasant political experiences. This chapter introduces the notion that literary translation can become the breeding ground for activism on both a personal and political level, a theme that segues into the final chapter, dedicated to women and translation activism.

Chapter 4, 'A different ideology: Russophone émigrée translator-mediators in the United States', contains the final two case studies: Olga Carlisle and Mirra Ginsburg. Their microhistories demonstrate the effectiveness of US-based Russophone émigrée translators in the mid-twentieth century in initiating change on three separate levels: personal (gender), professional (translator rights and best practice) and international (including their opposition to oppressive regimes, support for dissident Soviet writers, and their contribution to the process of decolonization of the Russophone literary canon in Anglophone translation). Carlisle's microhistory draws on interviews, memoirs and reviews to analyse the significance, from a humanitarian and gender-oriented perspective, of her involvement in clandestinely mediating Solzhenitsyn's manuscripts. Belarusian émigrée Mirra Ginsburg's microhistory – created from archival correspondence in locations across the United States, paratexts (introductions and reviews) and Ginsburg's lectures on translation – examines and acknowledges her extensive contribution to literary translation, decolonizing the canon *avant la lettre*, and campaigning for the protection of Soviet dissident writers and for professional translators' rights. Both Carlisle and Ginsburg are influential figures in the modern female translator's role; as the last two case studies, they form a fitting point of reference for the final exploration in my overall 'Conclusion' of female translators active in the field of Russophone literature in translation today.

In the case studies presented here, complexities arose less from the texts these women mediated or translated, more in the socio-political challenges that each faced from emigration and cultural integration, personal ideology and financial hardship. With the exception of Ginsburg's publishing fiasco

over her *Master and Margarita* translation, the translated text represents the least of their concerns whilst still being central to their actions. For this reason, and because of a limited wordcount, my book focuses mainly on the social and professional contexts that emerge from these studies. Where I have been able to source both original and target texts, for example, for Budberg, Wettlin, Bone and Ginsburg, I have incorporated discrete text-based analysis in order to assess reviewers' opinions. These reconstructed lives provide an original lens through which to observe how these twentieth-century translators bridged a gap between Garnett – known as 'the patron saint of Russian literature in English translation'[32] – and the female translators of Russian literature who populate the field today. This book, therefore, recovers the extensive and important chapter of modern translator history where, in the absence of recognition to date, Russophone women translators represent another kind of marginalized voice. On the enormity of the task they face, Mirra Ginsburg spoke for them all: 'we do communicate, and we do translate – across enormous barriers of varying perception, values, experience, social and individual differences. The success here is measured by the degree of approximation we achieve in the struggle with impossibility.'[33]

[32] Carol Apollonio, 'Demons of Translation: The Strange Path of Dostoevsky's Novels into the English Tradition', *Dostoevsky Studies*, Vol. ix (2005), 45–52 (p. 45).

[33] Mirra Ginsburg, 'On Translation', n.d., Series III: 6: Talks on Translation (various conferences), Box 22, Folder 10, Columbia University Rare Book and Manuscript Library (RBML).

1

Out of the fire: Russophone émigrée translator-mediators in the UK

This chapter will analyse through original material (from multiple sources) the literary lives of two Russophone émigrées who left the newly formed Soviet Empire for the UK and subsequently experienced decades of close surveillance by the British Secret Intelligence Services: Moura Budberg (1892–1974) and Vera Traill (1906–87). Both women emigrated independently of each other and, suspected of espionage in each place they settled, they turned to literary translation for financial security. My first microhistory focuses on the opaque world of Baroness Moura Budberg, exposing the reach of her literary network and sphere of influence, and demonstrating her financial and reputational reliance on her role as a literary agent, translator and the cultural mediator of Maksim Gorky in particular. It will explore British Intelligence perceptions of her as an intelligent, well-connected female who in their eyes posed a threat to British national security. In addition to archival analysis, Budberg's microhistory draws on reviewers' assessments of her translations and examines her little-known participation in PEN's 1970 World of Translation Congress, where she summarized her theory of translation. This sociologically informed case study (drawing methodological inspiration from Bourdieu (1993/1999), Sela-Sheffy (2005/2008/2014) and Charlston (2014)) positions Budberg – with her many dispositions, life events, personal connections and skills – as an active translator for the first time, refractions of which resonate as common, unifying themes in the book's seven other case studies.

The second half of this chapter constructs the first translation-oriented microhistory of Traill, a Communist, who, like her friend Budberg, was known by a series of different names and identities. The daughter of Aleksandr Guchkov (Minister of War in Russia's Provisional Government prior to the Revolution), Traill arrived in the UK shrouded in intrigue and is described in British Intelligence files as being [of] 'the same kidney as Budberg'.[1]

[1] SIS report, 26 January 1951, KV2/981.

My analysis draws on archival and interview material to demonstrate that Budberg and Traill had a complex, even exploitative relationship (at least on Budberg's part), as seen through the prism of their translation practice. This case study reveals that, prevented by British Intelligence Services from finding suitable work and detached from her extensive connections across the Russophone diaspora of Europe, Traill was less effective at controlling her own career and public image than Budberg. Based for the most part outside of London, Traill failed either to build a salon-style network or to project, as Budberg did, a social profile of intellectual agility and employability. Instead, Traill relied for a time on British Communist Party financial aid, then on piecemeal translation commissions, rejected first by other translators, and part-time jobs, including film reportage. This microhistory includes archival evidence of Traill's critical view of Budberg's translation abilities and of Budberg's damaging claim to the security services that Traill had unswerving loyalty to the Communist Party. It explores Traill's connections with Hamish Hamilton's The Novel Library series (1947–53), where she became a key translator of Lev Tolstoy, published years before the versions produced for Penguin Russian Classics by Rosemary Edmonds. This chapter focusses on literary translation as a reliable (although often last-resort) means of employment. The theme of translation as survival, mirrored in Budberg's and Traill's career stories, underscores other microhistories in this book. Beyond financial survival, translation also gave these women an identity of their own and an opportunity to shape a literary canon in translation. It enabled them to preserve a sense of respectability and social inclusion, and even helped inform intelligence officers' assessments of them. This chapter contributes the first of numerous original examples in this book of female translators theorizing on their practice during the twentieth century.

Moura Budberg (1892–1974): International woman of (literary) mystery

Moura Ignatievna Budberg has attracted both male and female interest ever since she entered Petersburg society in 1909. Her romances and political escapades have been gossiped about in society and her eventful life publicized by an eager press (tabloid and broadsheet), even fictionalized on the silver screen.[2] She has been the subject of three biographies and she features

[2] Michael Curtiz, director of *Casablanca*, produced a film in 1934 about Budberg called *British Agent*, starring Leslie Howard and Kay Francis.

peripherally in others' as a colourful, cameo figure.[3] Budberg was known to British security services, even before arriving in the UK, on account of rumours that she had spied for the Germans at her salon gatherings in the last days of the Tsarist regime.[4] Budberg maintained a broad network of well-connected and useful contacts; she designated different days of the week to hosting each set, one night for grey-suited civil servants, another night for thespians and literati, another for politicians, but never all at the same time. She acquired a reputation for telling friends and acquaintances slightly different versions of events and embellishing personal details.[5] According to Budberg's informal interviewer, the British writer and journalist Christopher Robbins:

> [… H]er life had been amazing but it paled beside the complexities of her character that would perplex and defeat a number of subsequent would-be biographers. A certain mystery was part of her aura and reputation, but she took pains to lay a false trail to confuse and muddle

[3] To date, the popular biographies of Budberg's life are by: her daughter Tania Alexander, *Memories of a Lost World* (Bethesda, MA: Adler & Adler, 1988); Deborah McDonald and Jeremy Dronfield, *A Very Dangerous Woman* (London: Oneworld Publications, 2016) and Nina Berberova, *Moura: The Dangerous Life of the Baroness Budberg*. Translated from Russian by Marian Schwartz and Richard D. Sylvester (New York: New York Review of Books, 2005). Budberg also features in recent publications about her acquaintances: Jonathan Schneer, *The Lockhart Plot: Love, Betrayal, Assassination and Counter-Revolution in Lenin's Russia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020) and Adam Roberts, 'Later Fiction', in *H G Wells. Literary Lives* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019). Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-26421-5_25> [accessed 24 January 2023].

[4] Budberg's SIS files form three tranches (hundreds of sheets of paper) and span the periods 9 December 1921–22 December 1936; 23 December 1936–5 August 1950; and 16 August 1950–19 June 1952. Her archived papers could have been more extensive still had not her most personal documents (believed to be her correspondence with Gorky and her most private correspondence) been destroyed in a fire potentially of Budberg's own doing. According to her biographers, '[T]he cause was a mystery. Equally mystifying was the elderly Baroness's refusal to allow the flames to be extinguished' (McDonald and Dronfield, *A Very Dangerous Woman*, p. 338). Budberg apparently also left instructions to her children that they were 'to destroy all that they had of hers' (McDonald and Dronfield, *A Very Dangerous Woman*, p. 339).

[5] For example, she allowed people to believe she had completed a Cambridge education, when in fact '[s]he was partly* educated at Cambridge', 'IIIx/32a, Free French Organisation in England', 1941, BIA, ref.: KV-2-980, p. 1. Christopher Robbins, who interviewed Budberg on numerous occasions during the 1970s and was acquainted with her socially, also maintains in his recounting of their relationship that 'some of her harmless anecdotes were unreliable'. Christopher Robbins, *The Empress of Ireland* (London: Slightly Foxed Press, 2020), p. 252.

> posterity. There was good reason why she glossed over historic moments, telescoped time and was loath to talk, for after her death it became clear she had much to hide.[6]

Budberg's reputation for mystery and 'spin'[7] risked a more problematic definition in terms of national security: double agency. British Secret Intelligence Services (SIS) reports demonstrate sustained attempts over several decades to gather evidence of Budberg's collusion not just with the Germans, but the Soviets too. Over two decades after her arrival in the UK, Budberg continued to be 'of perennial interest', a person the SIS would 'always be interested to have any information about'.[8] Ultimately, no definitive conclusion was drawn, only that 'she has a man's rather than a woman's mind. She would quickly appreciate the strategic as against the tactical elements in any problem'. The report continues, '[…] she has no particular loyalty except to herself'.[9] In spite of, or perhaps because of this dogged focus over three decades on confirming or formally disproving Budberg's status as a threat to national security,[10] her role as a translator is perhaps the one area of her life that has eluded interrogation, until my own scholarly scrutiny here in this chapter.

The British Intelligence report from August 1950 attempted to define Budberg by three salient factors: 'First, she is an exceptionally intelligent woman. Secondly, she is entirely concerned with the comfort of herself. Thirdly, she is frightened of illness and of losing her income.'[11] The unknown observer continues, 'She speaks several languages, and knows a great

[6] Robbins, *The Empress*, p. 245.

[7] Ibid., p. 241.

[8] Anon., 'Note for PFR.3736, Report B.2.A.', 9 October 1950, BIA, ref.: KV-2-981.

[9] Anon., 'Report B.2.A. Baroness BUDBERG', 28 August 1950, BIA, ref.: KV-2-981, p. 1.

[10] Suspicious of Budberg's loyalties, British Intelligence disregarded information she gave them, even though, on one occasion, some details should have been regarded as of paramount importance. In the words of Christopher Robbins, 'Moura gave a dinner party at her flat on 27 August 1950, where the guests included a publisher, an American diplomat and an MI5 agent. "The most startling story Moura told me was that Anthony Blunt – to whom Guy Burgess was so devoted – is a member of the Communist Party," the MI5 agent reported the following day. […] Nine months after this conversation Moura's friend, Guy Burgess […] defected to Moscow. The security services failed to uncover Blunt's role as a spy until 1964. He was publicly exposed as a traitor in 1979, stripped of his knighthood and disgraced but not prosecuted' (Robbins, *The Empress*, p. 255). By the time British Intelligence exposed Blunt, Budberg had been dead for five years.

[11] Anon., 'Report B.2.A. Baroness BUDBERG', 28 August 1950, BIA, ref.: KV-2-981, p. 1.

number of people at the top of the literary world. Since she was H.G. Wells [*sic*] mistress this was hardly surprising, but there is no doubt that she has fully earned her position by her brains alone.' These basic factors conform to most accounts given about Budberg (Nina Berberova, Deborah McDonald and Jeremy Dronfield, *Vogue*, and even Budberg's own autobiographical comments). However, given the complexity of Budberg's dispositions and behaviours, there is scope for closer examination in order to understand their origins.

Budberg's translation work and literary agency provided more than just a salary. These occupations consolidated her social position (her acceptance by the West's literati, for example) and salvaged her personal prestige (a means to satisfying a keen sense of self, to which intelligence reports allude).[12] They also provided a convenient reason to conduct her business across Europe and the USSR, trips that may or may not have involved espionage. Robbins concluded about her retrospectively that 'it seems obvious she was a spy. She enjoyed easy and constant access to Iron Curtain countries and the Soviet Union during the most frozen period of the Cold War, when all movement internally and externally, even for the highest ranking members of the Communist Party, was tightly controlled by the KGB.'[13] Robbins's evaluation of Budberg's travel habits accords with the accidental discovery by Wells (who declared himself 'wounded, as I had never been wounded by any human being before') that Budberg had not only been in Russia with Gorky when Wells understood her to be in Estonia, but that she had visited Gorky 'three times in the past year'.[14] Budberg's great grand-nephew Dimtrii Collingridge embarked on his own research in the hope of confirming or disproving definitively his great-aunt's reputation as a spy. So opaque has Budberg's life proved to be, he was unable to do so.[15]

SIS files on Budberg, and also on her friend, the Communist sympathizer and fellow émigrée translator Vera Traill, provide evidence that UK job opportunities in areas deemed potentially sensitive or susceptible to

[12] British officials concluded that any method of interrogation should appeal to 'Budberg's self-interest and vanity' if they were to yield useful information. See: M.B. Hanley, 'Note no. 239. B.2. and B.2.a Mr. Whyte', 15 February 1951, BIA, ref KV-2/981.

[13] Robbins, *The Empress*, p. 253.

[14] McDonald and Dronfield, *A Very Dangerous Woman*, p. 265.

[15] Collingridge produced and presented a documentary, *My Secret Agent Auntie* (2008), in which he dispelled only the rumour that his great-aunt had somehow participated in Gorky's death.

propagandist manipulation were denied to both of them. Budberg was known at the BBC and had interviewed successfully for a job in the organization in 1941. She was notified, however, before she could start work, that her services were no longer required (a change instigated at the SIS's instruction).[16] Instead, she found employment through literary translation, both as a literary agent managing her own firm 'Baroness BUDBERG, Authors' Agency',[17] and as a translator. To this aim, she carefully cultivated a network of literati contacts: Gorky, Wells, Somerset Maugham, Robert Graves, Ernest Hemingway, Arthur Koestler, Graham Greene, David Garnett, Virginia Woolf and publishers James MacGibbon, George Weidenfeld and Victor Gollancz. These connections helped her to secure translation commissions and literary agent opportunities. After Wells's death, the émigré Hungarian film director Alexander Korda employed her as his secretary and motion-picture script-writer in London.[18] While working for him, Budberg branched out in her literary role, enjoying success as a script-writer of Anton Chekhov's *The Sea Gull* (1968) and *Three Sisters* (1970), directed by Sidney Lumet and Laurence Olivier respectively. These commissions (and the opportunity they presented for Budberg's self-promotion) may help to explain the warmth with which she described her memories of Chekhov at the 1970 PEN World of Translation Congress in New York, which took place at around the same time. She presented at this international event alongside Gregory Rabassa, George Reavey, Helen Muchnic, Mirra Ginsburg and Isaac Bashevis Singer, all highly regarded figures from academia and the arts who were also acclaimed as translators.

[16] See SIS reports dated 28 June 1941 ('she must not be employed at the B.B.C. in any capacity', reference is also made to a previous application to the J.B.C. which, according to the author of the letter (Young) was 'firmly refused' on 7 May 1940; Budberg's work permit appears to have been retrospectively retracted rather than firmly refused, however. A British Intelligence letter from J.D. Denniston dated 18 June 1941 confirms her employment from September 1939 to June 1940); 8 August 1941; and 25 August 1941, BIA, ref.: KV-2/980.

[17] The British Security Services could not find an entry for the business in the London Telephone Book, which presumably led them to suspect the business name to be a cover for subversive activities. See SIS (MI5) report 8 June 1933, ref.: KV 2/979. A later report filed by the Metropolitan Police on 27 March 194[?] (date obscured through damage) offers the additional information that she 'plac[ed] books with Jonathan Cape, Puttnams, [*sic*] etc.' (p. 2).

[18] When Budberg declined Wells's offer of marriage, she forfeited her rights to the majority share of his estate. Instead, she was left '£3000, free of all duty in her lifetime to put into an annuity, another £1000 in cash, plus two-eighteenths of his total estate, which worked out at £6240', McDonald and Dronfield, *A Very Dangerous Woman*, p. 306.

Love, turmoil and translation

Born Moura (Maria) Ignatievna Zakrevskaia in Poltava, Ukraine, in 1892, she became Moura von Benckendorff by her first marriage, then Moura Budberg by her second – three Mouras in one. She lived through two world wars, the Russian Revolution, Russian Civil War and the Cold War years, dying in Italy in October 1974. She enjoyed a socialite, aristocratic youth spent between the family estate in Poltava and Tsarist St. Petersburg. In an interview with Kathleen Tynan in 1970 for *Vogue* magazine, the elderly Budberg explained that her father had demonstrated liberal sympathies that cost him his position as a Russian senator in St. Petersburg. He had been 'forced to resign […] because of his support for Émile Zola during the Dreyfus affair'.[19] During her first marriage to Count Djon von Benckendorff (which took place on 24 October 1911), Budberg enjoyed a high-level diplomatic life in Berlin, which came to a premature end with the outbreak of the First World War. Russia recalled its diplomatic staff back to Moscow and Benckendorff joined the army. He was billeted to the Russian headquarters on the North West front. Budberg meanwhile split her time between Petrograd and the marital family estate in Yendel, Estonia. Shortly after the Russian Revolution, Budberg worked as a translator and interpreter at the British Embassy in Petrograd.

Here she met the British-appointed intermediary Robert Bruce Lockhart, newly arrived in December 1917 on British Prime Minister David Lloyd George's order (but on an 'unofficial' footing owing to Britain not formally recognizing the new Soviet power). Budberg and Lockhart embarked on an affair that was soon made complicated and eventually extinguished by fast-moving political developments: the so-called Lockhart Plot.[20] Accused of conspiring to overthrow Lenin's new Bolshevik government, Lockhart was first imprisoned by the Bolsheviks, then returned to Britain on 19 October 1918 following a high-profile prisoner exchange with Maksim Litvinov.[21] Separated from Lockhart, Budberg was then also soon widowed. Her first husband, the father of her two children Tania and Pavel, was shot dead (purportedly by local peasants) in Yendel in 1919. Leaving her children to be brought up in Estonia, which she deemed safer than turbulent, post-revolutionary Russia, Budberg then joined the Soviet Socialist Realist writer

[19] Kathleen Tynan, 'The Astonishing History of Moura Budberg: A Flame for Famous Men', *Vogue* (1 October 1970). Available at: <https://archive.vogue.com/article/19701001120/print> [accessed 5 January 2022].

[20] Robbins, *The Empress*, p. 242.

[21] Robert Bruce Lockhart, *Memoirs of a British Agent* (Barnsley: Frontline Books, 2011), p. 11.

Maksim Gorky in Petrograd. She became (at her old friend, the writer and translator Kornei Chukovskii's instigation)[22] a translator, initially into Russian, at Gorky's publishing house, World Literature [*Mirovaia literatura*], established in 1918. The ambitious aim of the series was to produce 'popular editions of the classics of world literature that were published between the French Revolution and the Bolshevik Revolution'.[23] Budberg's connection with Gorky and her multilingual background proved her a natural fit for the series. The role was also beneficial to Budberg at a time of general civil unrest and post-revolutionary hardship. As Robbins explains:

> Twenty-four years his [Gorky's] junior, she [Budberg] became his secretary within weeks of meeting him and moved into her own room in his vast twelve-room apartment. The cream of Russian political and literary life flowed through this colony, a place described by Moura as a refuge for intellectuals and stray dogs. […] at twenty-seven, she found herself a widow without money, and estranged from her children.[24]

Berberova, who lived in the same apartment as Budberg, corroborates Robbins's account.[25] As for Budberg's personal involvement in the literary scene, biographers Deborah McDonald and Jeremy Dronfield maintain that:

> Gorky used her mainly as a translator-secretary, concerned mostly with business matters. Thus she began to acquire the all-round knowledge of the publishing and translating business that would be her principal means of subsistence throughout her life.[26]

In 1921, Moura remarried: a minor Estonian noble, Baron Nikolai Budberg (Robbins cites pursuit of an Estonian passport as her rationale for remarrying). The marriage proved short-lived; the baron was a duellist

[22] McDonald and Dronfield, *A Very Dangerous Woman*, p. 187.

[23] Gorky announced in 1919 that '[T]his series of books will be given the character of a popular scholarly publication and is intended for readers who wish to study the history of literary creation during the interim between the two revolutions; the books will be accompanied by forewords, biographies of the authors, studies of the historical epoch which produced this or that school, group or book, commentaries of an historical-literary character and bibliographical notes. We intend to publish more than 1,500 of these books at a size of 20 printer's sheets, i.e., 320 numbered pages' (Brian Baer and Natasha Olshanskaya, *Russian Writers on Translation* (Manchester: St. Jerome Publishing, 2013), p. 65 and p. 66).

[24] Robbins, *The Empress*, pp. 243–4.

[25] Berberova, *Moura,* p. 92.

[26] McDonald and Dronfield, *A Very Dangerous Woman*, p. 190.

and gambler and Budberg found herself paying off her husband's gambling debts. Two years into the marriage, she (or else Gorky, as Robbins claims)[27] despatched him with a one-way ticket to Rio de Janeiro. She kept the title of Baroness to use to her social advantage, along with her Estonian passport, ensuring her freedom to travel. With a knowledge of English and several other foreign languages (French, German and Italian) and still in Gorky's employ, Budberg, 'was commissioned to translate six books a year from Russian into English at the rate of 4,000 words a day',[28] a figure which seems ambitious, and likely improbable, in an age of non-machine translation. Budberg now became Gorky's literary translator into English. They also embarked on an affair that, according to Robbins, lasted eleven years, until they went their separate ways: Budberg to the UK, and Gorky back to Russia, after spending much of the 1920s living abroad.

Mediating Gorky (and managing Wells)

Budberg's role of translator-secretary and her proximity to Gorky helped her to become his mediator in Europe. While Gorky lived in Sorrento, Budberg acted as his literary agent in Paris and then Berlin, where she ended up being based most of the time up to 1929. By this period, she had secured power of attorney over the foreign rights to Gorky's books, which meant she could negotiate translations, liaise with foreign publishing houses and thus build up her own literary capital in the field.[29] As Gorky grew more inclined to return to Russia (which he eventually did for good in 1933), Budberg opted to stay in Europe – specifically, the UK – partly so that she could continue to travel to her children who were growing up in Estonia. Budberg's application to settle in the UK finally received British SIS clearance in the summer of 1929 and she arrived in September of that year. She rekindled an earlier relationship with H.G. Wells, to whose disappointment she insisted on a common-law rather than formal married status. Tania Alexander attributes her mother's disinclination to marry again to a need for independence, compounded by a twenty-six-year age difference.[30] Budberg continued for years to travel

[27] Robbins, *The Empress*, p. 244.

[28] Ibid.

[29] Budberg's literary focus at this time extended beyond Gorky to Thomas Mann, whom she co-translated into English for the first time, and Bruno Frank. See: Anon., 'Baroness Moura Budberg Dies', *New York Times*, 2 November 1974.

[30] Budberg's rejections prompted Wells to lament, 'She will live with me, dine with me, sleep with me, but she won't marry me!' (Alexander, *Memories*, p. 122).

independently to Europe (including the abovementioned trips, unbeknown to Wells at the time, to and from the USSR until Gorky's death in 1936).[31]

Budberg's first translation of a work by Gorky was *The Judge* [*Starik*], a play in four acts which she co-translated under her maiden name, Marie Zakrevsky, with the American writer, editor, drama scholar and translator Barrett H. Clark. The publisher R.M. McBride, New York, published it as early as 1924. The following year, in 1925, The Dial Press in New York published her translation (as Zakrevsky) of *The Story of a Novel, And Other Stories* by Gorky. In 1939, Citadel Press published a longer collection of Gorky's short stories which Budberg co-produced with the US-based Ukrainian émigré translator Avrahm Yarmolinsky (husband of translator and poet Babette Deutsch). The most visible of Budberg's published translations was Gorky's *Fragments from My Diary*, published by an ascendant Penguin in 1940, four years after the company launched as a stand-alone publisher. There is no specific reference in either Budberg's papers or the Penguin archive stating exactly how Lane and Budberg first became acquainted.[32] One possible explanation

[31] When Budberg and Wells embarked on their relationship, it terminated his ten-year affair with Rebecca West (with whom he had a son, Anthony). West and Wells remained friends until his death in 1946 but her hostility towards Budberg endured; West gave an interview in 1951 to British Intelligence in which she 'recalled that the WELLS family […] had always stated that they considered Baroness BUDBERG as a Soviet agent. Apparently H.G. Wells had been taken in a good deal by this type of person during his latter years' ('Extract from Report on Interview with Rebecca WEST', 30 January 1951, BIA, ref.: KV-2/981).

[32] McAteer, *Translating Great Russian Literature*, p. 34. Lane later authorized Budberg to produce with Count Constantine [Conny] von Benckendorff (no relation to Budberg's first husband) the inaugural issue of the pro-Soviet Penguin periodical, the *Penguin Russian Review* (first published in September 1945). The *Russian Review* included essays on everyday Soviet living, agriculture, economic policy and short-story translations. On paper, Budberg would appear to have been a good choice of editor. During the 1920s, she participated in Gorky's Berlin-based journal of Russian literature *Beseda* (there is little detail about the exact nature of her role) and, from 1940 and throughout the war years, she was employed as an editor of the weekly, French-language magazine *La France libre* (see Metropolitan Police report, 27 March 194[?] (date obscured through damage) (pp. 2–3) BIA, ref.: KV 2/980). The *Review* failed, however, to satisfy the publication's original, cross-cultural aspirations and, dogged by mismanaged budgeting (overspending) and editorial differences, it did not progress beyond four issues (the final edition came out in January 1948). By the third issue (1946), a new editor, Edward Crankshaw replaced Budberg. The wording of Penguin editor Bill Williams's letter to Eunice Frost (Lane's company director) to announce the change of editorship reveals a negative regard for Budberg (and the venture), even inferring a need to stand up to her: 'Dear Eunice, As you are handling the Russian Review – that uncomfortable porcupine – I am sending on the letter I have had from Edward Crankshaw. I am seeing the Budberg on Friday, and I shall tell her that we now want the whole project to be put into Crankshaw's hands and that it is up to him whether or not he wants her to continue as an associate' (14 October 1946).

might be through her relationship with Wells, whose *A Short History of the World* Penguin published in 1936, book number 31 in the Penguin main list. Although her translation belonged in Penguin's biographical titles, Budberg was effectively the first Penguin Russian translator to be commissioned there, predating publication of the first Penguin Russian Classic (Gilbert Gardiner's translation of Ivan Turgenev's *On the Eve*) by a decade.[33] Arguably, Budberg's commission arrived fractionally too early – clashing with a waning British interest in Russia and Penguin's changing foci to accommodate wartime publishing projects – for her to be able to expect the repeat commissions that came later to subsequent Penguin Russian Classic translators.[34]

The timing of Penguin's publication on 28 August 1940 of her Gorky translation is significant. It coincided with Budberg's dismissal from service at the pre-war propaganda organization, the Joint Broadcasting Committee (JBC), after just nine months' work, and her ongoing exclusion from employment at the BBC. She was barred despite an open acknowledgement by JBC co-ordinator Hilda Matheson[35] and a letter of support from her old friend from Petrograd days, Commander Ernest Boyce,[36] attesting that Budberg's fluency in English, Russian, French, German, Italian and Polish could be put to good use. Boyce proposed she be offered 'some sort of job of an official or semi-official nature but about which there is no secrecy'.[37] Matheson's and Boyce's efforts were in vain, but she was at least able to utilize her knowledge of languages in bringing Gorky – who had been dead for only four years – to an Anglophone readership that had yet to read him extensively in translation.

[33] Frank Friedeberg Seeley, the first recorded Penguin Classics Russian translator, was commissioned in 1946 but did not see his project through to completion. See McAteer, *Translating Great Russian Literature*, p. 12.

[34] Budberg's early presence at Penguin and single commission were later superseded by the collective presence of the Penguin Classics translators. In the same way that Budberg managed to move stealthily between different geographical places, often evading detection, she achieved the same elusiveness posthumously. The labyrinthine Penguin archive (all 5+ kilometres of it, and growing all the time) inadvertently conceals archival opportunities, occasionally allowing individual case files to slip out of plain sight. Budberg's employment folders remained undiscovered – even after four years of my own doctoral research of Penguin's Russian Classics files in the archive – because they were filed under biographies, a separate part of the archive and consequently less visible to a researcher devoted to Penguin Russian Classics translators. Given what we know about Budberg's potential for mischief, we may assume that she would have enjoyed giving her researchers the slip.

[35] McDonald and Dronfield, *A Very Dangerous Woman*, p. 291.

[36] Letter of endorsement from Commander Ernest Boyce, Baroness Marie BUDBERG, 28 June 1940, KV2/980.

[37] Ibid.

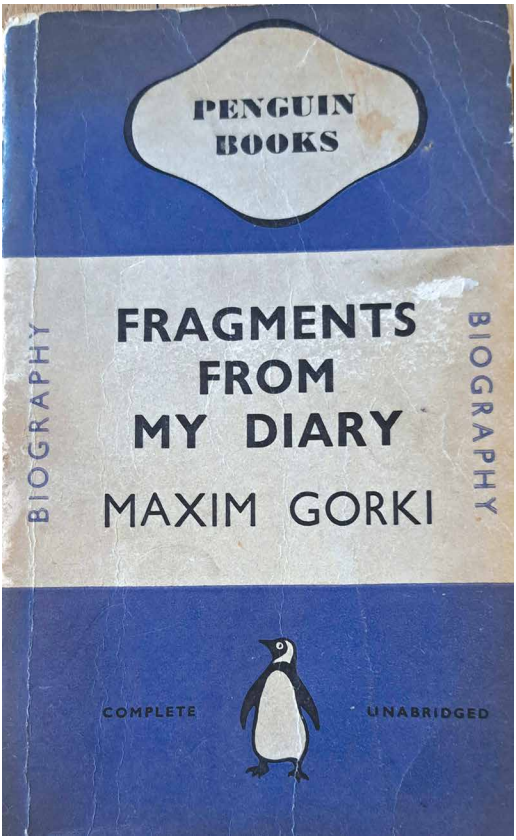


Figure 1.1 Budberg's 1940 translation of Gorky's *Fragments from My Diary* (Author's Copy).

Gatekeeping Gorky

Regarded as the 'founder of socialist realism and originator of Soviet literature' and a political activist in favour of the Russian Revolution, Gorky (the nom de plume of Aleksei Peshkov) used literature as a vehicle for shaping national change.[38] Russia's specifically Soviet literary legitimacy can

[38] Victor Terras, *Handbook of Russian Literature* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1985), p. 180.

be credited to Gorky, a five-time Nobel Prize for Literature nominee and internationally influential figure. In terms of Russian literature, such themes resonate with Casanova's definition of the second stage in the genesis of a world literary space, namely, an 'attempt to nationalize language and literature'.[39] According to Victor Terras, Gorky, along with Knut Hamsen and Jack London, 'introduced a new kind of romanticism to world literature, that of the hobo and drifter'.[40] Gorky's writing encapsulates descriptions (regarded by Terras as among the most meticulous in Russian literature) of his personal experiences as a temporary worker in the Russian provinces, of the Russian landscape, and of Russian people in all their demographic guises (including attempts to replicate their speech). Gorky's Socialist Realist works affirmed the young and experimental Soviet literary space to his national readers first and, later, to Western readers with the help of Budberg (and to international readers with the help of Wettlin, as Chapter 3 will demonstrate). Budberg's role justifies her position among twentieth-century Russian-English cultural 'gatekeepers', a field-specific term which William Marling defines as 'agents who […] take cultural work and move it across borders into new niches in foreign cultures that are differently dimensioned'.[41]

Her relationship with Gorky (conducted latterly across the geographical divide of the Iron Curtain) allowed Budberg to cultivate an identity as ambassador of a new world culture. She alluded explicitly to such a status in the biographical note she penned for her participation in the PEN World of Translation Congress in 1970:

> MOURA BUDBERG got her first job as a translator after the October Revolution in 1917, in the Russian publishing house, World Literature, that Gorky had founded, and she rejoiced in his battle to preserve the cultural life of Russia. An aristocrat, she lost all her possessions in the Revolution except her self-possession, and as a citizen of the world, she has remained a link between Russia and the West.[42]

[39] Pascale Casanova, *The World Republic of Letters*. Translated from French by M. DeBevoise (London and Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), p. 79.

[40] Terras, *Handbook*, p. 180. Rebecca Beasley also includes the input of author William Henry Hudson in contributing to a new style of 'artistic' prose at that time, see: Rebecca Beasley, *Russomania: Russian Culture and the Creation of British Modernism, 1882–1922* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), pp. 183–84.

[41] William Marling, *Gatekeepers: The Emergence of World Literature & the 1960s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 6.

[42] Moura Budberg, 'On Translating from Russian', in *The World of Translation* (New York: Wickersham Printing Company, 1971/1987).

It is important to acknowledge that the above biographical sketch, which appeared thirty years after her Penguin publication of Gorky's *Fragments from My Diary*, takes a retrospective position; the emphasis on Budberg's keen sense of global, cross-cultural citizenship may again be little more than a carefully cultivated back-story designed by Budberg herself to embellish her literary persona. Speculation aside, she rightly draws attention to her skills and contacts in bringing Gorky and, with him, a new genre of Russian (Soviet) literature to an Anglophone audience previously only acquainted with Garnett's translations of Golden-Age Russian heavyweights.

In a similar vein, and only within a year or so of the above bio-note, Budberg wrote a passage which appears in the Penguin archive but was omitted from the introduction to the later, 1972 re-print of Gorky's *Fragments from My Diary*. Here, Budberg once more elevates Gorky's writing to a position of greatness in the hall of Russian literature bridging old (Tsarist/Golden Age) and new (post-revolutionary/Soviet) eras. Foreshadowing Casanova's definition, again, for the 'second stage' genesis of a world literary space,[43] Budberg wrote about Gorky:

> He brought a new language together with a new hero. Most of Russian literature before the Revolution was created by the upper classes and naturally the language was theirs. He was the first to bring in the workman, the peasant, to transfer the whole scene. His hero was different to the Hamlets of the past, he wanted to show a man of strong will, impersonating his idea of a man's dignity. He belonged to the generation of giants in Russian literature and as one of the last of the old traditions of writers and the first of the new – he represented the continuity of Russian culture.[44]

Budberg's PEN Congress speech later amplified her personal contribution to the invention of a new, popular literature, while also attaching significance in general to translators. She described their skills as supporting a post-Babel rescue operation:

> […] we, the translators, came along much later, in an ever-expanding world, to reverse the trend, to make good the damage, to 'un-confound' the language. We became the links, the liaison officers, the treasure

[43] The second stage is associated with the 'invention or reinvention of self-consciously national languages and subsequently, to the creation of "popular" literatures, summoned to serve the national idea' (Casanova, *World Republic*, p. 48).

[44] Moura Budberg, n.d., ref.: DM1107/227, p. 3. Penguin Archive.

> sharers, the reconcilers of the often irreconcilable, the tearers-down of barriers. Fancifully, I see us as a vast army scribbling away all over the globe and over all the years, a network of industrious, often underpaid, much maligned working men and women, holding the world together often against the will of the world.[45]

Like many others endeavouring throughout the history of Translation Studies to define the qualities required of a good translator,[46] Budberg evaluated (in rare paratexts accompanying her translations and in her PEN address) perceptions of the role of the translator, the translator's essential connection with the source author and culture, and the constituent attributes in a translator's skillset. Collectively, these commentaries form a taxonomy of her translatorial best practice. They convey her recognition of translation as a means on a macro scale for enriching a literary canon; but also on a personal, micro scale, for earning a living as a skilled wordsmith and maintaining a reputation as a cultural gatekeeper, in this case for bringing Gorky into English. Naturally, in identifying the good translator's skillset, she could not help but describe herself:

> The tools of the trade – linguistic knowledge and fluency of language – are not the only qualities required. One needs knowledge, endless patience, great scrupulosity, and a capacity for self-denial, a sense of humor [*sic*] and an acute and sensitive ear.[47]

Budberg used her position as translator and promoter of Russian literature to situate Gorky in a very different Russia to the country populated by nineteenth-century aristocrats and presented previously by Garnett (whose own efforts Budberg praised in her PEN World Congress address, saying 'I can never be grateful enough to Constance Garnett').[48] Budberg defined Gorky's idiosyncratic writing style which, as his translator, she was obliged to try her best to render faithfully for Anglophone readers:

[45] PEN American Center, 1971, p. 145.

[46] See for example: Theodore Savory's *The Art of Translation* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1957/1968), Vladimir Nabokov's 1955 essay 'Problems of Translation: Onegin in English', in *The Translation Studies Reader*, 2nd edn, ed. by Lawrence Venuti (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2004), pp. 115–27 and Nabokov's later essay 'The Servile Path', in *On Translation*, ed. by Reuben Brower (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959), pp. 97–110; also in Brower's anthology, see Justin O'Brien's essay 'From French to English' (Brower, *On Translation*, pp. 78–92).

[47] PEN American Center, 1971, p. 146.

[48] Ibid., p. 148.

> His memory was inexhaustible and he never stopped telling his friends about the most unexpected meetings in far-away, desolate places in Russia with people of different classes of society – ship-loaders and rich merchants – and their odd way of life.[49]

> Gorky was a magnificent story-teller of the past. People stand out as if alive in his stories with their movements, words, their smiles and tears. In his memories all events acquire a character of history, of permanence. Artistic truth is more convincing than empiric brand, the truth of a dry fact.[50]

Influenced by the years she spent with Gorky, Budberg seemingly grafted some of his above dispositions onto her own. She too had a reputation for 'artistic truth' (as will be evidenced in her translation practice) – to the extent that Wells and the British SIS could never be sure where she had been or where she was going – and, like her own assessment of Gorky, she also 'loved faking and telling something funny, with a dead-serious look on [her] face'.[51] Budberg presents too complicated and heterodox a biography to facilitate easy use of the often over-simplified term *habitus*, which has been applied in the sociological turn to explain a translator's performance within a certain set of industry norms. Rather, Sela-Sheffy's nuanced definition of translatorial identity – that translators 'are much more dependent, in comparison with established professional sectors, on identity work for producing and maintaining their symbolic capital'[52] – better aids our understanding of a multi-dimensional figure like Budberg. Charlston's focus on *hexis* – the translator's ego-oriented motivations and complex set of personal dispositions – also helps here.[53] Budberg consciously used her symbolic and cultural capital (i.e. intelligence, language knowledge, reputation and contacts) to keep herself socially and professionally afloat. She made an art form of name-dropping, as exemplified in multiple instances

[49] Budberg's preface to the second edition of her translation: Maksim Gorky, *Fragments from My Diary* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972), p. viii.

[50] Budberg's 1972 preface to Gorky, *Fragments*, p. ix.

[51] Ibid.

[52] Rakefet Sela-Sheffy, 'Translators' Identity Work', in *Remapping Habitus in Translation Studies*, ed. by Gisella M. Vorderobermeier (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2014), p. 50. See also: Sela-Sheffy, 'How to Be a (Recognized) Translator, Rethinking Habitus, Norms, and the Field of Translation', *Target*, Vol. 17:1 (2005), 8. Available at: <https://www.tau.ac.il/~rakefet/papers/RS-Target-habitus.pdfr> [accessed 18 January 2023].

[53] David Charlston, 'Textual Embodiments of Bourdieusian Hexis', *The Translator*, Vol. 19:1 (2014), 51–80, pp. 55–7. DOI: 10.1080/13556509.2013.10799519 [accessed 19 January 2023].

in her 1970 PEN address.[54] Budberg, by 'displaying a relation of trust' with her authors, 'significantly elevates her position' as a translator.[55] Yet reviews of her skill vary.

L.P. Hartley's 1939 review ('The Sheep and the Goats') of Budberg's and Yarmolinsky's co-translated collection of Gorky's short stories (published by Cape) provides the earliest appraisal of her abilities.[56] He begins by describing Budberg as 'one of its [the collection's] most felicitous translators' and he recognizes the difficulties of equivalence facing any translator of the abuse in which Gorky's characters specialize. Nevertheless, Hartley concludes that Budberg's renderings – he gives the example of 'son of a scorpion and an earwig' – 'do not sound quite right to the English ear'.[57] A decade later, Budberg's ('excellent') translation of Gorky's short-stories in *Unrequited Love and Other Stories* (published by Weidenfeld and Nicolson in 1949) found more compelling praise in the press:

> A further word should be added about Baroness Budberg's translation, which brings out fully the exactitude of Gorki's [*sic*] style: 'a streak of dusty sky', 'sparrows jumping like small bouncing balls', words clinging to the memory 'like a fish's scale to the skin of a hand'.[58]

Budberg's most well-known work, *Fragments from My Diary*, provides a useful reference point for her translation practice and the evolution of Penguin's Russian texts in translation. As regards the latter, most striking is the absence of the translator's name. By the time the Penguin Classics series began producing Russian literature, nearly a decade later, the translator's name appears on the front cover and in several places in the front matter (including a translator's introduction). All of these elements are missing

[54] In her conference speech, Budberg aligns herself (and therefore shares the same talent pool) with translator greats such as Arthur Waley, Samuel Beckett, and Boris Pasternak (1971, p. 149).

[55] Angela Sanmann, 'Challenging Female Ideals: Marie-Elisabeth de La Fite's Translation of Sophie von La Roche's Geschichte des Fräuleins von Sternheim', in *Writing the Self, Creating Community: German Women Authors and the Literary Sphere, 1750–1850*, ed. by Elisabeth Krimmer and Lauren Nossett (Rochester NY: Camden House, 2020), p. 76. DOI: 10.2307/j.ctvrdf1pv.7

[56] Leslie Poles Hartley, 'The Sheep and the Goats', *The Observer*, 25 June 1939. Available at: <https://uoelibrary.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/sheep-goats/docview/481633306/se-2?accountid=10792> [accessed 6 July 2021].

[57] Ibid.

[58] Julian Maclaren-Ross, 'In and Out of the World', *Times Literary Supplement*, 23 December 1949. Available at: <link.gale.com/apps/doc/EX1200287806/TLSH?u=exeter&sid=bookmark-TLSH&xid=35af4b65> [accessed 27 September 2023].

from Budberg's translation. In contrast with the Penguin Classics, however, *Fragments from My Diary* contains frequent footnotes to explain culture-specific realia, such as proverbs, historical and literary references, and proper names that Budberg chose not to paraphrase.[59] Despite the presence of such a paratextual aid, many references would likely still have eluded a general reader. For example, Chapter 3, Arzamas Characters, opens with a discussion about 'Stenka Rasin's cossacks, […] Morda and Chuvash clans of Emilian Pugacheff' and proceeds to mention in passing, but without a first name, 'Karamsin's *History of the Russian State*', and later still, 'Zemstvo folk' without a gloss explanation.[60] Each of Gorky's many reminiscences contains similar culture-specific content, requiring careful handling by the translator to avoid overwhelming an uninitiated reader. Budberg, generally favouring a more foreignizing experience for her reader, risks alienating them, a factor she compounds by her occasionally stilted syntax and clumsy switching between tenses to convey dialogue. For example, in Chapter 2, Fires:

> А малое время спустя назад маленький огонёчек высунулся около трубы, с долото, не больше, и начал долбить, и пошёл козырять. До чего это интересно, пожар, ах, господи …[61]

> Just a short time ago, there was the tiniest bit of flame near the chimney, the same size as a chisel, no bigger, and it began to chip away, and then it began to show off. How interesting this is, this fire, oh Heavens …. (my translation)

> It's only a few minutes ago that it was just a bit of a flame next to the chimney, a bit no bigger than a chisel. And how it began to lash out and set to work on it! It's great fun, watching a fire, 'pon my word it is! (Budberg)[62]

[59] From the outset of his publishing venture, the Penguin Classics series editor E.V. Rieu explained his preference to use 'the bare minimum of footnotes, if any'. He believed: 'It is the translator's job to make the text explain itself, remembering always that it is not erudition we want to teach but appreciation.' (McAteer, *Translating Great Russian Literature*, p. 7.)

[60] Maxim Gorki, *Fragments from My Diary*, trans. by Moura Budberg (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1940), p. 46, p. 47, and p. 51.

[61] Maksim Gorkii, *Zametki iz dnevnika. Vospominaniia*, *Sobranie sochinenii v tridsati tomakh* (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo khudozhestvennoi literatury, 1949), Tom 15, *Rasskazy, ocherki, zametki 1921–24*. Available at: <http://az.lib.ru/g/gorxkij_m/text_1924_zametki_iz_dnevnika.shtml> [accessed 28 November 2023].

[62] Ibid., p. 18.

And later:

> Это неизменно удаётся ему, он очень лёгок, несмотря на высокий рост и плотное тело.
>
> Вот-вот бревно ударит его, но – ловкий прыжок назад, и опасность миновала:
>
> – Ур-ра-а![63]
>
> He was so agile, he succeeded every time, despite being tall and heavyset.
>
> Just when a beam might hit into him, he'd take a nimble jump back and the danger would pass: 'Hu-rr-ah!' (My translation)
>
> In this he succeeded unerringly. In spite of his height and corpulence he was most agile. Here comes a beam! – It will hit him … but no – a quick spring to one side, and the danger is past. (Budberg)[64]

Budberg compensates with creative lexical choices and punctuation. She restructures sentences, revising the natural phrasing (often to good effect), and adds emotion and emphasis to otherwise neutral statements by inserting exclamation marks. In the opening passage to Fires, Budberg recreates the striking imagery of the original with vibrancy and pace, aided in part by compressing three source-text sentences into one. Only on closer inspection against the original, would a reader become aware of embellishments and a slight mistranslation (shown in italics below), indicating poetic creativity but also a degree of artistic licence on Budberg's part:

> Тёмной ночью февраля вышел я на Ошарскую площадь – вижу: из слухового окна какого-то дома высунулся пышный, лисий хвост огня и машет в воздухе, рябом от множества крупных снежинок, – они падали на землю нехотя, медленно.
>
> Возбуждающе красив был огонь. Как будто в окно, под крышу дома, прыгнул из тепловатой, сырой тьмы красный зверь, изогнулся и грызёт что-то; был слышен сухой треск, так трещат на зубах птичьи кости.[65]

[63] Gorky, *Zametki*.
[64] Ibid., p. 20.
[65] Gorky, *Zametki*.

> One dark February night, I came out onto Osharsk Square and saw, emerging from one of the attic windows of a house, a magnificent foxtail of fire flapping in the air, speckled from the mass of large snowflakes falling slowly, reluctantly to the ground.
>
> The fire was excitingly beautiful. As if some red beast had jumped from the warm, damp darkness into the window under the eaves, and was hunched over, gnawing at something; a dry cracking sound could be heard, like teeth crunching bird bones. (My translation)
>
> Coming, one dark February night, to the Osharsk square, I saw a frisky fox-tail of fire *peep out* of a garret window and *shake itself* in the air, speckling *the night with large fluttering sparks* that fell to earth slowly and as though some red beast had sprung *suddenly* out of the moist, warm darkness into the window under the roof, had arched its back and was gnawing *furiously* at something; one could hear a dry crackling – as bird's bones crack between one's teeth. (Budberg)[66]

Lauren Leighton's evaluation of *Fragments from My Diary* overlooks such text-based intricacies when considering Budberg's translation proficiency, but he attests to her ability to honour the author by transporting him through her translation to the target reader:

> The translation is professional and the Preface and Introduction brief and unpretentious, the whole work conveying the translator's undisguised respect and admiration for Gorky.[67]

Berberova's memoir, *Moura: The Dangerous Life of the Baroness Budberg*, which was published only after Budberg's death, confirms that '[i]t is with good reason that Moura is referred to as Gorky's translator in notes to some of the documents relating to him. Over fifty years she translated several of his plays and several dozen stories, as well as other books, into English.'[68] Her assessment, however, soon takes a more critical turn that puts into question Leighton's above assessment:

> [S]he lacked the professionalism she sought as a translator, both in what she chose to translate and in the quality of the finished product. It

[66] Ibid., p. 17.

[67] Lauren Leighton, 'Review of *Fragments from My Diary*', *The Slavic and East European Journal*, Vol. 17:3 (Autumn 1973), 338. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.2307/306517> [accessed 18 January 2023].

[68] Berberova, *Moura,* p. 284.

> may seem strange, but it is impossible to say with certainty exactly how many volumes she translated after 1924 […]. When things did not work out [– Pasternak, Leskov, Chekhov's letters to Olga Knipper –] it was disappointing, but she did not stay discouraged for long. This perhaps explains why a number of her translations were done in collaboration with a second translator, and others under the editorship of, or with a foreword by, a true professional. There is a certain insecurity in her translations, something amateur and haphazard about them.[69]

Letters in the Penguin archive support Berberova's claim; scribbled, recycled prefaces, on rough-looking scraps of paper, and a cagily maintained lack of transparency over copyright permissions which all point to a haphazard tendency in Budberg's work ethic (corroborated by her handling of the Penguin *Russian Review*). Correspondence between editors arranging for the 1972 Penguin re-print of *Fragments from My Diary* reveals doubts about Budberg's ability to deliver a suitable text for the intended preface.[70] As Budberg's biographers McDonald and Dronfield observe, 'in need of money, Moura would take any commissions she could get, and her heart sometimes wasn't in it; some of her translations of lesser works were skimped (occasionally missing out whole sentences and paragraphs if they were too challenging), and her professional relationship suffered'.[71] Aside from her translations of Gorky (*Life of a Useless Man*, published by Doubleday in 1971, and several collections of short stories), Budberg also translated Turgenev's *On the Eve* for Cresset Press in 1950, and two novels by Soviet prize-winning author Vera Panova (1905–73). Budberg co-translated Panova's *The Train* (1948, Putnam) with Communist sympathizer (Alice) Evelyn Manning,[72] and solo translated *The Factory* in 1949. Publication of these translations went largely unnoticed, with the exception of a very small, Putnam-own advert citing C.P. Snow's opinion that 'Vera Panova, both in *The Train* and her new novel *The Factory*, gives a fresh, human account of Russian everyday life' (*TLS*, 1950).

Budberg's interest in translating Panova suggests keen literary antennae. In his 1954 *TLS* review of Marc Slonim's *Modern Russian Literature*, Erik

[69] Berberova, *Moura,* pp. 284–5.

[70] See: Anon., 'Answers to Praeger's Letter to James Price', Budberg/Gorky *Fragments from My Diary* (Penguin Archive file: DM1107 270, n.d.).

[71] McDonald and Dronfield, *A Very Dangerous Woman*, p. 329.

[72] Manning became the focus of several British Intelligence files before she emigrated to the USSR where she lived and worked, first as a teacher then as a translator. See Chapter 2 in this book.

de Mauny remarked that Slonim 'pays due tribute to such major writers as Fedin, Fadeyev, and Vera Panova'[73] and, in her memoirs, Manya Harari describes spending part of her 1955 trip to Russia in tenacious pursuit of the Stalin Prize-winning author.[74] Budberg's intention to introduce unknown literary entities to the West is also illustrated by an intercepted telephone call – annotated (in the third person) by British Intelligence – to the publisher James MacGibbon (who, as a literary agent for Victor Gollancz, secured the rights to Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* which Ralph Parker translated).[75] According to the report, Budberg told MacGibbon that 'EHRENBURG had written a most remarkable novel which had not yet appeared in book form' and which she 'considered […] very good and […] worthwhile James [MacGibbon] looking at' (7 April 1952). MacGibbon and Kee duly published Ehrenburg's *People and Life Memoirs 1891–1917* in 1961 and *Men, Years – Life* in 1962.

A commitment to personal independence manifests itself in a variety of ways in Budberg's *hexis*.[76] She maintained: an unwillingness to remain in the Soviet Union and the courage to make a life for herself in emigration; a resolve to divorce her second husband but a willingness to keep her socially advantageous title, Estonian citizenship and freedom to travel; and a determination never to marry Wells. But the lifeline first presented to her by translation and literary agency during her difficult experiences in post-revolutionary Russia, and in emigration in Paris and Berlin, and on arrival in the UK, ultimately represents a contrasting degree of dependence, and serves as a reminder of Daniel Simeoni's assessment of translatorial subservience. Her reliance on translation to earn a living was sealed by the employment restrictions imposed on her by the British SIS. She looked to

[73] Erik De Mauny, 'Russian Literary Movements', *Times Literary Supplement*, 26 March 1954. Available at: <https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/EX1200300287/TLSH?u=exeter&sid=bookmark-TLSH&xid=a5e57544> [accessed 19 January 2023].

[74] Harari specifically sought out Panova on a trip to Leningrad in 1955 (see Manya Harari, *Memoirs 1906–1969* (London: Harvill Press, 1972), p. 135); Harvill subsequently published Vera Traill's translation *Span of the Year* in 1957 and in the same year published another Panova novel, *Time Walked* (*Serezha* in the original). The translator of *Time Walked* was anonymized, but Max Hayward (who co-translated Boris Pasternak's *Dr Zhivago* with Harari in 1958 and Solzhenitsyn's *The First Circle* a decade later with Harari and Michael Glenny under the collective pen-name Michael Guybon) wrote the prefatory note and may have translated the story too.

[75] W.L. [Bill] Webb, 'James MacGibbon', *The Guardian*, 4 March 2000. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2000/mar/04/guardianobituaries> [accessed 18 January 2023].

[76] Translation Studies scholar David Charlston defines *hexis* as 'a defiant, honour-seeking attitude in the philosopher-translator with regard to specific oppositions in the surrounding field' (Charlston, 'Textual Embodiments', p. 56).

Figure 1.2 Photographic portrait of Moura Budberg (on the left with the dog) and a performing bear, by Ida Karr, *c.* 1963 (© National Portrait Gallery).

survive by whatever means (as her biographers McDonald and Dronfield assert), accepting commissions and part-time work in the cultural sphere while attempting to maintain visibility.[77] Budberg's complex profile as a translator and cultural mediator, as presented here and in the next case

[77] In 1964, Budberg was caught shoplifting at Harrods, the luxury, central London store. Budberg maintained that in stealing, she was 'pitting my wits against theirs [the authorities, be they the Cheka or the British Secret Intelligence Services]' (McDonald and Dronfield, *A Very Dangerous Woman*, p. 331). Towards the end of her life, Budberg enjoyed renewed visibility, appearing in a six-page photo-interview feature for *Vogue* (October 1970) magazine.

study regarding her work relationship with Vera Traill, demonstrates that Simeoni's notion of translatorial subservience requires a more nuanced understanding. Though living an often reactive rather than proactive life in many ways, Budberg nevertheless sustained a long career (and a public persona) associated with literary gatekeeping, founded on resourcefulness, opportunism and resilience, that ultimately enabled her to work with and around the restrictions imposed on her by the state.

Vera Traill (1906–87): 'The same kidney as Budberg'

In the same way that Budberg acquired a range of names by marriage, so too did her close friend and fellow Slavic émigrée, Vera Traill. During her lifetime, Traill was known variously as: Vera Guchkova, Vera Suvchinskii, Vera Traill and (the self-appointed) Vera T. Mirsky. She is described in British SIS reports as 'believed to be employed in some capacity by the Baroness, and like her, working for the Soviet authorities'.[78] Her legacy of names and personal life events equals those of her Baroness friend, and yet she remains considerably less well known, apparently lacking the same salon-socialite status that Budberg cultivated (and which made her perpetually intriguing). Traill moved in cultural and émigré circles in Berlin and Paris (where she had lived in her youth and early adult life) and in London and finally Cambridge (where she settled and died). She also translated Russian literature for British publishing houses and created sources of revenue by drawing on her multilingual skillset and multicultural background, the significance of which will be explored in this case study. Comparatively little has been written about her beyond cameo appearances[79] and references to her friend, the political and literary historian and promoter of Russian literature in the UK, Dmitrii Sviatopolk-Mirsky. Regarding the latter, Traill appears on the periphery of events,[80] and has yet to afford a character study in her own

[78] SIS report, 2 January 1951, KV2/981.

[79] See, for example, references made to Traill and her father in Jeffrey Todd's self-published *Louisa Wallis Todd, Her Story* (2018). Additionally, the unpublished document 'Vera and Other Russians' (Black, n.d., [unpublished] LRA) gives an account of Traill's latter years in Cambridge and time spent with Svetlana Allilueva's daughter Olga (Chrissie) by friend and language teacher Fay Black who met Traill when Black's daughter Alison began private Russian lessons with Traill.

[80] Gerald Smith, 'Interview with Vera Traill', 9 January 1974 [unpublished] Available at: LRA, MS901-2; and Gerald Smith and Richard Davies, 'D.S. Mirsky: Twenty-Two Letters (1926–1934) to Salomeya Halpern' and 'Seven Letters (1930) to Vera Suvchinskaya (Traill)', *Oxford Slavonic Papers New Series*, Vol. 30 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), pp. 91–122.

Figure 1.3 Passport photo of Vera Traill, née Guchkova (n.d., BIA, ref. KV-2-2390_175).

right, a status compounded perhaps by lingering negative associations with Soviet espionage plots in Europe in the 1930s, which will be discussed in more detail below.

Traill had no lack of impressive networks of literati and cultural contacts, established while living variously in Moscow, the Caucasus (Kislovodsk), Paris, Berlin and London. During her lifetime, she associated with celebrated names such as Isaiah Berlin, Boris Pasternak, the Nabokov children, Il'ia Ehrenburg, Nina Berberova, Marina Tsvetaeva, Sergei Efron, Lilia Brik and her sister Elsa Triolet, Sergei Prokofiev, Igor Stravinsky, Salomé and Aleksandr

Halpern, André Gide, Dame Peggy Ashcroft and Svetlana Allilueva. In one account of Traill's life in Britain, the unpublished biographer Fay Black described her friend's particular enjoyment of name-dropping,[81] and yet these connections were not trivial. These were all people whose paths Traill had crossed at some point in her life, as an émigrée moving around Europe, at a time when momentous events were upending many others' lives too. It is almost inevitable that she should have encountered some of these people on her travels, especially in key intersectional loci of migration such as Paris and Berlin.

Through her first marriage to Piotr Suvchinskii, Traill mixed with Mirsky, Efron, Piotr Arapov, Nikolai Berdiaev, so-called Eurasianists, in Russia and France.[82] When Traill left France and settled in London's Bloomsbury in 1931, her list of intellectual and literati contacts grew further, some on account of her acquaintance with Mirsky, with whom she had lunch every day (and who himself had emigrated to the UK in 1921; he stayed until 1932 when he was granted permission to return to the USSR). She knew John Maynard Keynes and Keynes's Russian ballerina wife Lidia Lopokova. She also persuaded a reluctant Mirsky to introduce her to T.S. Eliot. (Mirsky had maintained that they would not get along – because 'Eliot hates Russians and hates women' [Eliot *nenavidit russkikh i nenavidit zhenshchin*] – but, according to Traill, she 'got on famously' [*strashno podruzhilas*] with him.)[83] We can deduce from her publications that Traill worked with publishers Hamish Hamilton, Cresset and later Manya Harari. Her connection with Hamish Hamilton may have been established through Hamilton's and his wife Yvonne's long-standing friend Budberg, who hosted them regularly at her salon soirées.

Traill's coincidence with the ebb and flow of significant historic events across Europe – the Russian Revolution and war (the Russian Civil War, the Second World War and the Cold War) – complicates the researcher's ability to piece together exact dates, locations and order of events. The task of constructing Traill's microhistory is further impeded by three house fires during her adult life that destroyed material that would ordinarily

[81] Black, 'Vera and Other Russians', p. 5.

[82] An anti-Soviet organization formed in the 1920s, the Eurasianist movement comprised 'quasi-political and intellectual' followers who celebrated what they perceived as Russia's 'unique blend of Slavic and non-Slavic cultures and ethnic groups […] which makes [Russia] different from the West'. See: Dmitrii Shlapentokh, 'Eurasianism: Past and Present', *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, Vol. 30:2 (June 1997), 129–51 (p. 129).

[83] Gerald Smith's unpublished interview with Traill, 1974 (p. 13); here and later, Traill's comments – in Russian – are reproduced in my translation.

constitute a personal archive.[84] Details about her life and career have had to be sourced by piecing together fragments of information from a range of other resources. Primary material exists in British SIS files dating from 1 January 1928 to 31 December 1955. There are also interviews and letters at the Leeds Russian Archive (LRA), in particular the many transcribed pages (over a hundred) in Cyrillic of her extended interviews with Russian scholar and Mirsky biographer, Gerald S. Smith in January 1974. Cross-references to Traill also appear in Richard Davies's and Smith's 'D.S. Mirsky: Twenty-Two Letters (1926–1934) to Salomeya Halpern' and 'Seven Letters (1930) to Vera Suvchinskaya (Traill)' in *Oxford Slavonic Papers*;[85] in Budberg's archived papers; and in Berberova's biographical account of Budberg's life. Finally, reviews of Traill's translation and cinematographic work, and appearances in publisher and BBC genome listings serve also to corroborate key moments in her timeline, translation activity and the people in her network.

Born Vera Aleksandrovna Guchkova, Traill was the daughter of Russian politician Aleksandr Guchkov, the Minister for War in Aleksandr Kerenskii's short-lived provisional government. Following the October Revolution, Guchkov backed the White army; in Fay Black's unpublished account 'Vera and Other Russians' (n.d.), Traill is described as explaining to her 'with an expansive gesture' that her father had 'created the White Army'.[86] When the Red Army conquered the Whites, Guchkov and his family emigrated to Germany (via an island off Istanbul)[87] and Traill began a course of higher education at the Gymnasium in Berlin. She withdrew (at the age of nineteen and before the start of her second year) to marry the Russian musicologist and Eurasianist Piotr Suvchinskii, who was fourteen years her senior.[88] The couple lived in France but the marriage – 'loveless' [*bez liubvi*],

[84] According to Black's personal account of her friendship with Traill in Cambridge, the second fire 'happened when she was alone without a telephone (cut off because she couldn't pay the bill), without electricity for the same reason, and she had gone to the kitchen in her nightdress to make herself a cup of tea. She caught one sleeve in the gas flame and instead of smothering it, she ran out down the stairs and into the street with the right hand side of her nightdress ablaze. She had third degree burns all down one side from her neck to her hips which required several grafts. Fortunately most of the grafts were under her clothes' (Black, 'Vera and Other Russians', p. 3).

[85] Smith and Davies, 'D.S. Mirsky', pp. 91–122.

[86] Black, 'Vera and Other Russians', p. 2.

[87] Ibid.

[88] Traill is vague in her interview with Smith about the exact year of her marriage; she dated her friendship with Prokofiev back to her marriage to Suvchinskii (a long-standing friend of Prokofiev's) 'starting from when I got married, [19]24–25' ['начиная с моего замужества, 24-ый – 25-ый год'] (p. 37). Later in the interview, she gives 1925 as the date of her marriage, but added that she then tried to be away from Suvchinskii whenever she could. (According to Black, Traill found her husband boring (Black, 'Vera and Other Russians', p. 2).)

according to Traill[89] – did not last. Traill and Suvchinskii divorced when she was twenty-one or twenty-two.[90] In spite of a close friendship with Mirsky, which intensified once Traill emigrated to Britain in 1931, Traill would not agree to marry him.[91] With apparently little to keep him in London, Mirsky returned to Russia in 1932; his Soviet citizenship materialized two days before a British passport was authorized, a turn of events which, according to Traill, helped to make up Mirsky's mind to leave Britain. Traill remained in the UK, but on becoming a member of the Communist party, she visited a now Soviet Russia briefly in 1935, before returning for a longer period towards the end of 1936. During this period, she translated books:

> I can't even remember what, some kinds of children's books, something of that sort. But Mirsky gave me loads of translations, and the majority of that was English-to-Russian, but sometimes the other way round. My husband – before he left, he went to Spain – worked at the *Moscow Daily News* and so I got a lot of translations through him. I was constantly translating, I had enough money.[92]

Traill's second husband affords scarcely a mention in her interviews with Smith, but it was this surname she chose to keep, including for all her subsequent translation work. Davies and Smith revive the assertion (first offered by Tsvetaeva expert Irma Kudrova)[93] that 'Vera Suvchinskaya's marriage to Robert Traill was (at least initially) fictitious, conceived by Mirsky, Emiliya Litauer, and Vera Aleksandrovna herself in order to secure

[89] Smith, 'Interview', p. 94.

[90] Smith, 'Interview', p. 2. On her own admission several times during her interview with Smith, Traill struggled to remember exact dates. The British SIS's attempts to establish fact from rumour and hearsay about Traill's personal details provide additional complications (a date of 7 July 1932 for Traill's divorce from Suvchinskii, filed in Paris, for example (see Inspector Bridges's report, 'G.R.201/FOR/147', 9 November 1938, BIA, ref.: KV-2/2-2390_160, p. 3)), serving to illustrate the difficulties involved with archival research.

[91] Traill lived within short walking distance of Mirsky in Bloomsbury, see: Smith, 'Interview', p. 2.

[92] Smith, 'Interview', pp. 47–8. 'Я переводила книжки. Я даже не помню что, какие-то детские книжки, что-нибудь в этом роде. Но Мирский мне давал массу переводов, а это было большей частью с английского на русский, но иногда и наоборот. Мой муж до того, что он уехал, что поехал в Испанию, он работал в "Moscow Daily News" и, значит, через него было много переводов. Я постоянно переводила, у меня было достаточно денег.'

[93] Irma Kudrova, *Gibel' Mariny Tsvetaevoi*, *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, n. 38 (1999).

the last-named a British passport (for espionage purposes)'.[94] Fictitious or not, the marriage ended before time when Robert Traill was killed in the Spanish Civil War on 7 July 1937, leaving his widow with British citizenship. But Vera was also pregnant with his child. Her husband's death came in the same year that Mirsky was denounced (April 1937) and arrested. Traill was left waiting, uncharacteristically, at the Hotel *Natsional* in Moscow after he failed to show up for their usual lunch date. Unable to obtain news of Mirsky's fate and to appeal successfully for his release, Traill left Moscow for Paris just a week before giving birth to her daughter. The baby's arrival coincided with two events in which Traill became implicated: the NKVD assassinated a former Soviet spy-turned-defector, Ignatz Reiss, near Lausanne, Switzerland,[95] and Russia's White army, anti-Communist General Evgenii Miller, an acquaintance of Traill's pro-White father, was kidnapped in Paris and returned to Russia where he was later executed. When questioned by French police, Traill denied all involvement, citing the simple fact of labour as her alibi:

> Listen to me, messieurs, I don't want to waste your time, and you're wasting mine for nothing because look, I'll give you the address of the clinic where I delivered my daughter. You call my doctor and ask him whether I was in any physical state to kidnap a general taller than 180cms!?[96]

Her alibi satisfied the police, but it was this episode, coupled with Traill's political internment (when her daughter Masha was two years' old) in 1939, that alerted British Secret Intelligence Services to her Communist sympathies and motivated them to regard her for nearly two decades as potentially subversive. In Traill's understated words, 'unfortunately, I ended up in a

[94] Smith and Davies, 'Seven Letters', p. 97. Traill's passport referee was Bernard Pares who declared that he had known the applicant 'from childhood (27 years)' (7 October 1935, BIA, ref. KV-2-2390_177). Traill's other referees for various visas prior to owning a British passport included Prince & Princess Golitzine and Harold Williams (former Foreign Editor of *The Times*) (Passport Control Sub-Committee documentation, BIA, ref.: KV-2-2390_186).

[95] Smith, 'Interview', p. 20. Traill's friend, Marina Tsvetaeva's Eurasianist husband, Sergei Efron was implicated in the assassination, as was Traill by association.

[96] Ibid. 'Ecoutez, messieurs, я не хочу тратить ваше время зря, и вы тратите мое зря, потому что я вот вам даю адрес клиники, где у меня родилась дочь. Вы позвоните доктору и спросите его, была ли я физически в подходящем состоянии похитить генерала, который был больше, чем 1 метр 80 сантиметров?!'

concentration camp' [*k sozhaleniiu, ia propala v kontsentratsionnyi lager*'].[97] According to Black, 'Vera was imprisoned first in Paris then somewhere in the Massif Central as she was a foreigner and a member of the Communist party'.[98] Traill failed in her attempts to draw on her network of contacts to advocate for her release – appealing specifically to André Gide[99] – and she spent two years in captivity until her UK-based émigré friend and lawyer Aleksandr Halpern successfully secured her freedom.[100] On 22 June 1941, Traill and her infant daughter travelled via Spain and Portugal to Liverpool, and from there to Leeds before settling in London. The French police had already alerted their British counterparts that Traill was 'strongly suspected of being an associate'[101] of Paris-based, Russian émigrée and NKVD agent Mireille (Liudvigovna) Abbiate who was complicit in both the assassination of Reiss and the kidnapping of General Miller.[102] Concerns about her potential threat feature in British SIS correspondence from as early as her arrival in Leeds, just two days after landing in Liverpool on 3 August 1941.[103]

[97] Smith, 'Interview', p. 42. Although Traill uses 'концентрационный лагерь', which translates as concentration camp, a more accurate rendering in English for the camps installed under the Vichy regime is detention or internment camp.

[98] Black, 'Vera and Other Russians', p. 2.

[99] Traill's attempt to obtain Gide's help is understandable. He was regarded as 'important because he was the leading intellectual of Paris,' (Katerina Clark, *Moscow, the Fourth Rome: Stalinism, Cosmopolitanism, and the Evolution of Soviet Culture, 1931–1941* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011) Available at: <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb32475.0001.001> [accessed 16 March 2023], p. 140). However, Traill described Gide's reply to her appeal ('Sortez moi d'ici' [get me out of here]) as 'complete brutishness' ['sovershenno khamstvo']: '"Tu l'as voulu, Georges [*sic*] Dandin" – You asked for it' (Smith, 'Interview', p. 43), referencing Molière's 1668 eponymous *comédie-ballet* in which the refrain 'vous l'avez voulu, Dandin' is associated with Dandin's humiliation (*The New Oxford Companion to Literature in French*, ed. by Peter France (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005). Available at: <DOI: 10.1093/acref/9780198661252.001.0001> [accessed 4 August 2021]).

[100] Aleksandr Halpern was the husband of Georgian-born cultural socialite, Salomé Halpern, whose recipe book Traill also later translated.

[101] KV-2/2-2390_160, (Inspector Bridges) Vera TRAILL (ref. letter from Paris Police), 9 November 1938, G.R.201/FOR/147, p. 7.

[102] Nigel West, *Encyclopedia of Political Assassinations* (Lanham MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2017), p. 5.

[103] 'She arrived in Leeds on the 5th August and was sent by the Billeting Officer to a private hotel at Ellerslie Hall, Cavendish Road where she stayed to the 14th August. By this time she had made herself a source of annoyance to the other guests and was asked to leave. The complaint against her was that she manicured her toe nails in the lounge in the presence of other people and that her child, who cannot speak English, was a nuisance. […] During her stay in Leeds she openly expressed herself as a Communist and is in possession of Communist books, etc.' (Abbott, Officer's Report, 15 September 1941, BIA, ref.: KV-2-2390_145). This account is representative of the archived documents reporting on Traill's supposed links with communism.

Her internment (and romantic attachment to a new man, Bruno von Salomon, a fellow Communist stationed in a camp across the road),[104] provided both the impetus and creative material for Traill's first published work. Cresset Press published *The Cup of Astonishment* in 1944 under her pen name, Vera T. Mirsky. Were her story not commemorative of another man, whom she regarded as the love of her life, one could mistake Traill's nom de plume as intimating a formal attachment to Mirsky. Rather, it should be interpreted as a clever act of self-promotion. By adopting 'Mirsky', Traill engineered a form of textual consecration by association with the established author of works such as *Modern Russian Literature* (1925), *Contemporary Russian Literature: From 1881 to 1925* (1926) and *The Intelligentsia of Great Britain* (1935). Mistakenly describing Traill as a 'White Russian', George Orwell reviewed her novel in the *Manchester Evening News* on 28 December 1944. He resisted an inclination to acknowledge elevated connections with her pen name, defined her as an 'anti-Fascist' rather than a Communist, and though complimentary, also avoided outright praise:

> There are tiresome passages in her book, resulting from a too-perfect political orthodoxy, but the description of the physical details of life in the camp, with its boredom, its unbearable overcrowding, and the deterioration of character in enforced idleness, is a valuable addition to prison literature.[105]

As Traill's only novel published in English, this book and reviews like Orwell's did much to publicize and promote her abilities to future commissioning publishers for literary translation projects.

Building a cultural career under British surveillance

For over a decade after her husband's death, Traill was the subject of letters from his extended family to British Intelligence challenging their Russian relative's legal rights to her husband's estate and casting doubt over her

[104] According to Black, Salomon was Traill's 'grand amour' who was 'taken back to Germany and executed. For the rest of her life Vera would drink a glass of red wine, a toast to his memory, to commemorate his birthday' (Black, 'Vera and Other Russians', p. 2).

[105] George Orwell, 'Life … People … and Books by George Orwell', *Manchester Evening News*, 28 December 1944. Available at: <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000272/19441228/008/0002> [accessed 4 August 2021]. Traill's physical and emotional experience of life in the camp influenced her literary career and shaped her *hexis* too. In a British SIS report dated February 1952, Budberg described Traill as 'now anti-Soviet owing to the continued existence of Labour camps in Soviet Russia' (22 February 1952).

national loyalties.[106] Her fellow émigrée friend Budberg also communicated to the SIS that Traill's Communist support was once 'fanatical to such a degree that she would have committed murder for the cause if ordered to do so'.[107] SIS concerns persisted until the last records, filed in 1955. Despite occasional positive appraisals by her surveillants,[108] Traill – like Budberg – found herself repeatedly barred from employment. She held down several jobs to make ends meet.[109] Correspondence from the summer of 1944 indicates that life was sufficiently difficult for Traill that she appealed for outside help. Having met him only once in Moscow in 1937, shortly after her husband's death, Traill subsequently wrote at least twice to 'Comrade [Harry] Pollitt', General Secretary of the British Communist Party, seeking his help. In her first letter in 1944, she requested a meeting because she was 'in bad need of advice'[110] (but gave no indication of what sort). A petty-cash slip in October 1944 indicates a loan of ten pounds from Nan Green, Secretary of the International Brigade Association, the arrival of which Traill described as 'very, very welcome'.[111] When Traill wrote to Pollitt again, in January 1946, she described herself as desperate by now to leave 'this dismal hole […] I must think of some urgent measures to get myself out',[112] but lacked the effective channels to return to the Soviet Union, where she had hoped to find work as an interpreter. This time, she requested access to Pollitt's network of contacts, permission to use his name as a reference, and advice on how to secure employment. At around this time, Traill started working as a literary translator (Russian and French into English) with Hamish Hamilton. It is possible that Pollitt facilitated this route by putting Traill in touch with his network – other Communist-leaning

[106] An uncle, Mr Peter Brown, alerted British Security Services to family concerns about the authenticity of the marriage (Abbott, 'Officer's Report', 15 September 1941, BIA, ref.: KV-2-2390_145, p. 1) and Traill's right to receive her husband's estate (9 November 1938, G.R.201/FOR/147, p. 3). In 1950, Traill's sister-in-law Miss P.M. Traill (sister of Robert) tried to prevent Traill from taking up employment at her own workplace the Institute for Child Psychology in London. See: 'Letter from Institute of Child Psychology to New Scotland Yard', 16 February 1950, BIA, ref: KV-2-2390_054.

[107] Anon., 'Report 139a, Vera TRAILL', 22 February 1952, BIA, ref: KV2-2391_48.

[108] Reminiscent of Budberg's character analyses by the authorities, Traill is described in SIS correspondence as having 'an exceptionally brilliant academic brain, and as you know has been a good deal in this country studying and doing literary work' (Letter to Major Vivian, 28 May 1956, BIA, ref.: KV-2-2390_176). This acknowledgement of Traill's accomplishments offers a rare instance of positive assessment that transcends the usual suspicious regard in which she was officially held.

[109] See BIA reports between 1928 and 1951: KV-2-2390_006, KV-2-2390_008, KV-2-2390_054, KV-2-2390_064, KV-2-2390_076, KV-2-2390_124.

[110] Letter from Traill to Comrade [Harry] Pollitt, 24 July 1944, BIA, ref.: KV-2-2390_133.

[111] Letter from Traill to Comrade Green, n.d., BIA, ref.: KV-2-2390_131.

[112] Letter from Traill to Comrade [Harry] Pollitt, 5 January 1946, BIA, ref.: KV-2-2390_119.

translators (specifically, Eden and Cedar Paul) – who had already published translations with Hamish Hamilton.

Traill as translator: A career founded on cast-off commissions?

British Intelligence reports reveal that Traill was well acquainted – at least as early as 1946 – with Hamilton's Balzac translator Cedar Paul (who, along with her common-law husband Eden Paul was a founder member of the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB) in 1920, hence their likely interaction with Pollitt).[113] A report filed by Dorset Constabulary on 3 July 1946 cites concerns raised by the licensee of the Beehive Hotel in Poole, where Traill and (Cedar) Paul had stayed. These included alarm that copies of *The Soviet News* were delivered to the hotel at Paul's request, and 'Mrs PAUL [was] spending well over £100 per month, […] that she said she was working for the Government, which accounted for her doing so much typing. She […] frequently purchased intoxicants for MRS. TRAILL, who is believed to be Russian'.[114] Traill's friendship and mutual acquaintance with the Pauls and Pollitt may have helped her to gain entry to the literary sphere, but her direct participation in The Novel Library was ultimately secured through Isaiah Berlin, whose acquaintance she made in Oxford. Hamilton wrote to Berlin on 3 May 1946 confiding his plans to launch a new series 'of the world's greatest fiction, the distinguishing features to be excellence of production, compactness, and the fact that we shall print only fiction'.[115] Formally launched in an advertisement in the *London Times* on 28 June 1946, the 6/ Novel Library series promised a starting line-up of 'English and foreign fiction' expected 'during the coming winter'.[116] The inaugural list

[113] Lesley Hall, 'Paul, (Maurice) Eden (1865–1944)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography,* 11 October 2018. Available at: <https://doi-org.uoelibrary.idm.oclc.org/10.1093/odnb/9780198614128.013.56341> [accessed 13 August 2021].

[114] Capitalized as in the original. Mr. Supt. F.W. Carter, 'Mrs. Cedar PAUL and Mrs. Vere [sic] TRAILL', Dorset Constabulary, 3 July, BIA, ref.: KV-2-2390_116.

[115] Hamish Hamilton, 'Letter to Isaiah', 3 May 1946, Hamish Hamilton Collection, Penguin Archive, Bristol: Bristol University Arts Library, Special Collections.

[116] Clive James described the series as 'prettily handy' – each heavyboard-bound book sported a distinctive, repeating pattern, inspired by Curwen Press designers (among whom included Eric Ravilious, and London Transport designers) – and 'catnip for collectors in second-hand bookshops all over the planet'. See: Clive James, *The Meaning of Recognition* (London, Basingstoke & Oxford: Pan Macmillan, 2006), p. 319.

See also John Krygier, 'Novel Library', *A Series of Series; 20th-Century Publishers Book Series* <https://seriesofseries.owu.edu/novel-library/> [accessed 26 February 2023].

anticipated six titles of English fiction and six translated texts by the following translators: George Reavey (Gogol's *Dead Souls*), Cedar Paul (Balzac's *The Fatal Skin*), Gerard Hopkins (Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*), Norman Cameron (Voltaire's *Candide*), Isaiah Berlin (Turgenev's *First Love and Rudin* as a single-volume copy) and Traill (Tolstoy's *Resurrection*). On 1 July 1946, three days after Hamilton's announcement, the founder of the Penguin Classics series, Émile Victor Rieu,[117] announced his own Penguin Classics project in the promotional publication *Penguins Progress*. In both language and sentiment, Rieu's advertisement mirrors that of the Novel Library, expressing 'the editor's intention to […] present the general reader with readable and attractive versions of the great writers' books in good modern English' and concluding with a list of anticipated authors from around the world.[118] The similarities between the publishers' series are not perhaps so surprising since Penguin specifically identified Hamilton's Novel Library as the list they were keen to 'get ahead' of.[119]

Hamilton's particular eagerness to include Tolstoy's *Resurrection* (*Voskresenie*, 1899) in the first set of translations faced legal difficulties: Constance Garnett's and Aylmer Maude's translations still being 'very much in copyright'. By way of a solution, he enquired whether Berlin – or any other person in his sphere who 'writes good English and knows Russian' – might agree 'to put […] into shape' a 'pretty bad' (anonymous) translation from a complete set published by Crowell in New York.[120] For reasons of time, Berlin could not, but offered the following alternative:

> I may have found a suitable person for you: there is, living here a Mrs Traill, a Russian, daughter of pre-Soviet politician called Guchkov, who married an Englishman, killed, I think, in Spain. She has written a novel or two in English and speaks it obviously well. I think that she would undertake this job and do it well.[121]

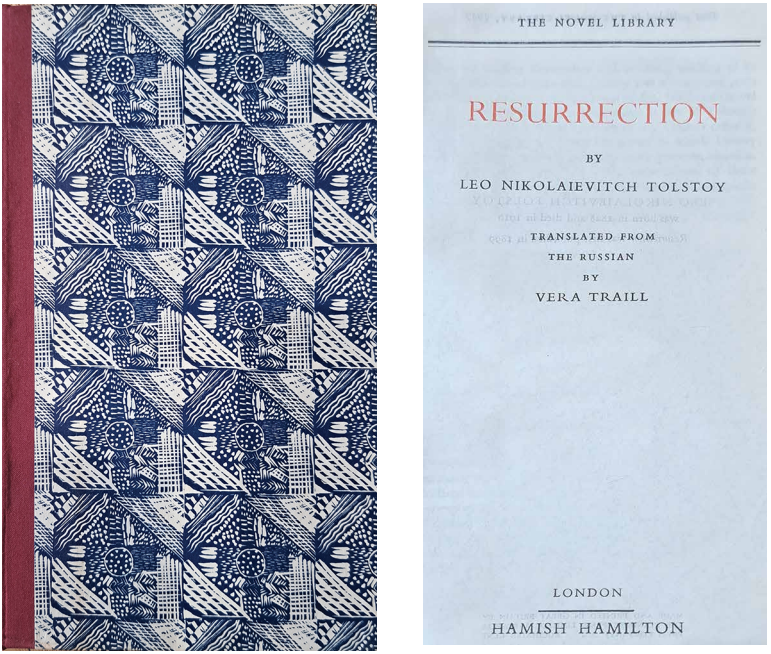
[117] Bryan Platt, 'Founding Father: E.V. Rieu', in *Penguin Classics*, ed. by Russell Edwards, Steve Hare, Jim Robinson, Revised ed. (Exeter: Short Run Press, 2008), pp. 8–15.

[118] Emile V. Rieu, 'The Penguin Classics', *Penguins Progress* (1 July 1946), p. 48.

[119] Letter from Glover to Rieu, 30 July 1946, ref.: DM1107/L4, Penguin Archive, Bristol: Bristol University Arts Library, Special Collections. It is noteworthy that Traill's translations considerably pre-date their Penguin Classic equivalents: Rosemary Edmonds's translation of *Resurrection* was not published until 1966, nineteen years after Traill's, and *The Cossacks* came out in 1960, over a decade after Traill's version.

[120] Ibid.

[121] Berlin, Isaiah, 'Letter to Hamish', n.d., Hamish Hamilton Collection, Penguin Archive, Bristol: Bristol University Arts Library, Special Collections.



a b

Figure 1.4a, b Hamish Hamilton's The Novel Library, Vera Traill's translation of Tolstoy's *Resurrection* (1947).

Commissioned on account of this recommendation, therefore, Traill's first formal translation was *Resurrection* for the Novel Library, published in 1947 and quickly followed in 1949 by *The Cossacks* (*Kazaki*, 1863).

Traill described the Novel Library episode of her life during her interview with Smith. The passage merits citing in full for the insight it gives into her evaluation of literary translation as a craft and a source of income. It also sheds light on her fellow translators, the importance of translator networks, and infers that translation commissions come from contacts, but not necessarily from skill:

> V.T.: […] If you know technology and you know the English vocabulary then it's wonderfully paid. Literary translations pay very poorly. I translated Tolstoy […]
> G.S.: What of Tolstoy's did you translate?
> V.T.: 'Resurrection' – it was, I think, my first translation. Very well reviewed.

G.S.: Where did you do this? In Moscow?

V.T.: In Oxford. […] it was in Oxford. Isaiah Berlin. I saw him at the Randolph in Oxford. He said, 'Vera, I have […] a translation and no time. If you want it, you can do it.' I replied: 'I've never translated.' He said: 'I'm sure you can do it.' I translated it. […] I earned, I reckon, more than £200 […] I worked on it for more than a year. […] I am a perfectionist and English is so-so. Even though I think I speak it very well, it's not my mother tongue. And I really don't like translating, I always feel as if I've missed the mark. Tolstoy isn't that difficult, because Tolstoy doesn't have a distinctive style […] It was easy to translate Tolstoy because [he] gave absolutely no thought to style […]. [T]o convey exactly the meaning […], that's your job, to translate it. But nevertheless, I found this hard. I translated an awful lot […] Yes, *The Cossacks*! Now that was really difficult, because they didn't speak in everyday Russian, but …

G.S.: Broken.

V.T.: … in Cossack. And it was really difficult just to arrive at the conclusion that it would be an error to translate it into the Queen's English! And to present it as some sort of jargon, either Yorkshire or Cockney […] – well, that would also be an error! I needed to find some kind of compromise.[122]

[122] В.Т.: […] Если вы знаете технику и знаете английскую терминологию, то это чудно оплачивается. Литературные переводы оплачиваются очень плохо. Я переводила Толстого […].
Дж. С.: Что вы переводили Толстого?
В.Т.: 'Воскресение'- это, кажется, был мой первый перевод. […]
Дж. С.: Это вы сделали где? В Москве?
В.Т.: В Оксфорде. […]
В.Т.: Нет–нет, это было в Оксфорде. Isaiah Berlin. Я его видела в Randolph в Оксфорде. Он сказал: "Вера, у меня […] просто перевод, у меня нет времени. Хотите – сделайте." Я говорила: "Я никогда не переводила." Он говорит: 'Я уверен, что вы можете.' Я перевела. […] Я заработала, кажется, больше 200 фунтов, […]. Я проработала больше года. […] I am a perfectionist и английский все-таки … Хотя я считаю, что я говорю очень хорошо, но это не мой язык. И я вообще не люблю перевода, мне всегда кажется, что это неадекватно. Толстого не так трудно, потому что у Толстого не было особенного стиля. […] А переводить Толстого было легко, потому что Толстой совершенно не думал о стиле, о н думал о … to convey exactly the meaning […], так что ваше дело – это перевести. Но все-таки мне это было трудно. Я очень много переводила, я не помню что … Да, 'Казаки'! Вот это было очень трудно. […], потому что они говорили не по-настоящему русским языкота, а таким вот.
Дж.С.: Ломанным.
В.Т.: … казацким. И очень трудно просто решить, что переводить это into the Queen's English, – неправильно! Переводить это на какой-то жаргон either Yorkshire or Cockney or … – тоже фальшиво! Какой-то компромисс надо было найти.

Most revealing in the above exchange is Traill's account of her interaction with Berlin, an episode she then juxtaposes with her views on Budberg's translation skills and handling of commissions:

> V.T.: Moura Budberg translates a huge amount, and dreadfully!
> G.S.: Yes.
> V.T.: Absolutely dreadfully. But she has connections, so she receives [work] … Which she then sends to me so that I can correct it, and there's no way you can; it's so bad there's absolutely no way you can salvage it so you have to start translating it all over again, right from the beginning. And she'll give you, let's say, a fifth of what she's getting paid to do it […]. I stopped doing it. She translated a lot of Gorky … Do you remember a story by Gorky called 'The Blue House'?
> G.S.: No.
> V.T.: It's about a man in the provinces. Well, I had to completely re-write it, from the first word right to the last.[123]

This candid account captures Traill's dissatisfaction at receiving just a fifth of the commission fee, effectively, to produce a new translation. Her assessment of Budberg's ability recalls Berberova's comments, that she 'lacked the professionalism she sought as a translator […]. This perhaps explains why a number of her translations were done in collaboration with a second translator'.[124] Whereas some of Budberg's publications make reference to a co-translator, Traill's name never features. Budberg's first Panova publication *The Train* in 1948 was a co-translation with Eve Manning for Putnam publishers; her next Panova publication, *The Factory* (also Putnam) appeared just one year later in 1949 but as a solo translation. The suggestion that Budberg – according to Berberova – preferred co-translating and Traill had received a rejection letter for temporary translation work from the Ministry

[123] В.Т.: Мурра Будберг очень много переводит, и отвратительно!
Дж.С.: Да.
В.Т.: Совершенно ужасно! Но у нее такие связи, что она получает. Притом она посылает мне, чтобы я поправляла, и править невозможно; потому что так плохо, что это совершенно нельзя поправить, так что надо переводить все сначала. И она вам дает, скажем, пятую часть того, что ей плотят [sic] […]. Я бросила это делать. Она переводила Горького очень много … Вы не помните такую историю Горького 'Голубой дом'?
Дж.С.: Нет.
В.Т.: Это было про человека в провинции. Вот это я должна была переписать, ну с первого до последнего слова! (Smith, 'Interview', pp. 87–8).

[124] Berberova, *Moura,* pp. 284–5.

of Defence during 1948, might suffice to indicate that Traill participated in the translation of *The Factory*.[125] Even if this were not the case, Traill's description of their arrangement conveys an imbalance of power within their collaborations, favouring Budberg and disadvantaging Traill. Budberg's individualistic strategies functioned at Traill's reputational and financial expense; the former harnessed her friend's financial insecurity as a means to sustaining her own social visibility and status as a translator.[126] Traill's phase of collaboration with Budberg re-affirms Simeoni's view of translators serving 'a higher function' better placed in the publishing hierarchy than themselves.[127] When Traill returned in 1957 to translate Panova's *Span of the Year* for Manya Harari's Harvill Press, she regained some visibility. The *TLS* published a positive verdict in November that year, 'Vera Panova is a writer of high talent […] *Span of the Year* is an unaffected, artless, and for those very reasons impressive portrait of a way of life'. The reviewer, Julian Gustave Symons, albeit stopping short of commenting about the quality of the translation, cited Traill as the sole translator.[128]

Aside from the occasional barbed comments that each woman used – independently – to describe the other in British Intelligence reports, Traill and Budberg generally referred to each other as friends, shared mutual acquaintances in the literary sphere, and as evidenced in SIS records, they regularly socialized together in London. Berberova even cites a joint trip they took to Moscow in 1960. According to Pasternak's lover, Olga Ivinskaya:

> […] two Russian ladies who had long been living abroad wanted to visit BL [Boris Leonidovich Pasternak]. They had arrived in Moscow either as tourists or as correspondents of some big newspaper or other. One of them, Vera Trail [*sic*], was the grand-daughter of Guchkov, […], and the other was the no less celebrated Maria Ignatyevna Zakrevskaya (otherwise known as Countess Benckendorff, and also Baroness Budberg).[129]

[125] A. Ring, 'Traill (nee Guchkov) Vera', Ministry of Defence memo, 31 August 1948, BIA, ref.: KV-2-2390_075.

[126] The circumstances of Traill's invisibility and Budberg's apparent dominance complicate Rakefet Sela-Sheffy's optimistic assessment that the literary translator hones individualistic strategies to ensure a status of prestige and even equality with the original author. See: Rakefet Sela-Sheffy, 'The Translators' Personae: Marketing Translatorial Images as Pursuit of Capital', *Meta: Translators' Journal*, Vol. 53:3 (Nov. 2008), 609–22 (p. 610 and p. 617). Available at: <http://id.erudit.org/iderudit/019242ar> [accessed 12 August 2021].

[127] Simeoni, 'The Pivotal Status', p. 8.

[128] Juliane G. Symons, 'European Backwaters', *Times Literary Supplement*, 22 November 1957. Available at: link.gale.com/apps/doc/EX1200110138/TLSH?u=exeter&sid=bookmark-TLSH&xid=943cb3c6 [accessed 23 July 2021].

[129] Berberova, *Moura,* p. 292.

Ivinskaya describes Pasternak as being 'particularly thrilled by the prospect of a visit from Maria Ignatyevna Zakrevskaya'[130] but Traill is scarcely mentioned, an understudy to the main act. Similarly, Traill did not present a paper on literary translation at PEN, or any other such conference dedicated to translation. She was not without strategies and ideas about translation, however, as expressed in the above quotation regarding the difficulty of translating Tolstoy (a view reiterated years later in a letter to Penguin editors by Rosemary Edmonds, who confessed that she too did not 'like tidying Tolstoy up too much').[131] Traill divulged further views on translation while reminiscing to Smith about the poet Marina Tsvetaeva, with whom she spent time in Paris. On Tsvetaeva's likely capability as a translator of Russian revolutionary songs into French, Traill mused:

> I think her French was … She spoke badly, but whether she was capable of translating poetry, I strongly doubt … .
>
> Well, she might have translated but it can't have been any good because translating poetry is incredibly difficult. I am generally opposed to it: I don't think it's at all necessary. Of course, Marina didn't have a good enough command of French for them to be good translations. […] For it to be even half decent, you need to have an amazing knowledge of the language, which she did not have.[132]

Traill's subsequent evaluation of Tsvetaeva's deteriorating material conditions while in exile in France defines the actions, skillsets and dispositions (aspects of *habitus* and *hexis*) that a wordsmith émigré Russian, in her opinion, should (and should not) channel when trying to make a living from creative work. Despite her own financial difficulties, Traill recognized a glaring lack of resourcefulness, survival instinct, and employability about Tsvetaeva:

> We all collected whatever money we could, because Marina couldn't do anything except write poetry and write poetry in Russian in Paris! At that time, this was no way to support two children …[133]

[130] Ibid.

[131] Rosemary Edmonds, 'Letter to Duguid', 3 June 1960, ref.: DM1107/L109.

[132] 'Я думаю, что ее французский был … Она плохо говорила, но чтоб она могла переводить поэзию, сильно сомневаюсь …' and 'Ну может быть она переводила, но это не могло быть хорошо потому что, переводить поэзию страшно трудно. Я вообще против: я это считаю совершенно не нужно. Марина конечно недостаточно владела французским языком, чтобы это были хорошие переводы. […] А чтоб это был б хотя приемлемо надо чтобы было замечательное знание языка, которого у нее не было.' (Smith, 'Interview', p. 24).

[133] 'Мы все собирали по копейке, что могли а Марине ничего не умела делать кроме как писать стихи и писать стихи по-русски в Париже! В то время, на это нельзя воспитать двух детей …' (Smith, 'Interview', p. 19).

By contrast, Traill continued to reinvent herself, trying to secure employment (often prevented by British SIS interference) or a self-generated means of income that would optimize her cultural, literary and linguistic capital.[134] In order to stay financially afloat, Traill engaged in a variety of legitimate work opportunities that played to her skillset, especially those involving cross-cultural mediation. Archived correspondence shows that, unlike Budberg (who never openly confronted British Intelligence over suspicions they were determining her employment possibilities), Traill communicated to the British authorities a desire to clear her former reputation as a Communist in the expressed hope that she would then be permitted to secure permanent and fulfilling employment suited to her expertise:

> She says that she has applied for many situations as an interpreter and administrative officer, and on most occasions been told verbally that she would be offered employment. Subsequently, however, she has received curt notes saying that there were no vacancies. She feels that this is due to her previous interest in communism.
>
> Mrs. Traill felt that if a report could be submitted 'through the proper channels,' her past mistakes might be forgotten, since she has had no contact with any Communist since 1941, and is now very opposed to the Communist point of view.[135]

Traill was told 'that she was undoubtedly mistaken as to the reasons for her failing to obtain other work', but in practice, employment restrictions (certainly with regard to the BBC) remained until she was in her fifties.[136] She worked simultaneously as a secretary to John Lawrence at the Christian News-Letter (additionally assisting him in the preparation of his 1960 book *A History of Russia*) and as a secretary at the Educational Touring Service.[137]

[134] Report 172a dated 11 May 1955 quoted Traill during an evening at Budberg's when she announced she had applied for a job with the BBC's Woman's Hour: 'I am sure that I shall be refused on the grounds of having been a Communist in the past. Though I have given up communism it is always held against me and prevents me getting employment'. When the surveillant expressed doubt at the extent of Traill's vetting, Traill replied: 'You are wrong – my files are there and are always consulted before applications on my part are answered' (BIA, ref.: KV-2-2391_07).

[135] Chief Superintendent Williams, 'Vera TRAILL née GOUTCHKOFF', Metropolitan Police report 167b, 21 April 1955, BIA, ref.: KV-2-2391_12.

[136] Ibid.

[137] Ibid.

Traill sustained her passion for film by creating a small (but enduring) niche for herself in mainstream media broadcasting (from which we can conclude that her bar at the BBC was eventually lifted). She wrote film reviews for *The Observer* and appeared in the arts and cultural feature 'Comment' on the BBC Third Programme. Her first appearance was in June 1957, talking about the French film *Un condamné a mort s'est échappé*; later that year, and again in 1960 and 1961, she reported on the London Film Festival. She featured regularly throughout 1959 in talks about film generally,[138] and in February 1960, reported on the season of Czech films at the National Film Theatre.[139]

Traill supplemented her income by working as a Russian-language tutor, which is how she and her friend Fay Black became acquainted (although according to Black, her daughter's lessons were not a 'success as V. was rather formidable and enjoyed talking herself rather than encouraging her pupil to contribute').[140] Her role as a language tutor led her to identify gaps in Russian-language learning materials and Traill discussed in several letters to Smith the possibility of writing a good Russian grammar for beginners.[141] She also proposed exporting to Russia the Pitman-shorthand skills she learned in London in 1928 with the idea of initiating 'crash-courses attached to a Moscow short-hand & typing school, to teach the Russian girls the other skills & graces we, the degenerate Westerners, expect from a Secretary'.[142] Traill's various cameo roles cannot have amounted to much financially, however. According to Black, she tried to generate a regular income by taking in lodgers, one of whom was 'a psychopath who ended up in a home for delinquents', to whom Traill also refers in her correspondence with Smith.[143] Evidence suggests, therefore, that Traill acted 'only within a micro-sociological environment' and did not maximize her symbolic capital to the fullest potential,[144] not at least to the same extent as Budberg's management

[138] The films Traill reviewed include: 'Renoir's *La Grande Illusion*' (February); the film version *The Diary of Anne Frank* (June); 'Andrzej Wajda's *Ashes and Diamonds* and J. G. Weightman on Jacques Tati's *My Uncle*' (July); in French about Vittorio de Sica's films (August).

[139] Traill also featured in a special one-off BBC Third Programme called 'Conversations in Moscow', first broadcast on 10 October 1959, and listed as '[A] talk by Vera Traill, who has recently returned after spending two months in the U.S.S.R.', <https://genome.ch.bbc.co.uk/2a95e794af884b4fb747c48b65d18835> [accessed 4 August 2021].

[140] Black, 'Vera and Other Russians', p. 2.

[141] Traill, 'Letter to Gerry', 4 November 1974, LRA, MS901/45.

[142] Traill, 'Letter to Gerry', 7 January 1975, LRA, MS901/48.

[143] Black, 'Vera and Other Russians', p. 2.

[144] Kaindl et al., *Literary Translator Studies*, p. 6.

of a varied and lucrative network, perhaps made all the more complicated for Traill once she lived outside of London.[145]

The most consistent entry for occupation on Traill's official documentation is either writer or translator, suggesting that this role appealed to her and occupied the majority of her time and/or generated the greatest income.[146] There is no record in her various archived papers of the royalties she earned from translation, but she put her name to six publications in her own right and there may have been more undisclosed works which bear Budberg's name instead of hers.[147] Undercut by the sixpenny-price of a Penguin Classic title, compared to Hamilton's six-shillings, and the speed with which Penguin was selling books,[148] The Novel Library produced its last new title in 1951: their forty-first and final publication was Daudet's *Sappho*. By extension, this meant that Traill's work for Hamilton dried up too. Had Penguin not launched such a robust response to its rivals, or alternatively, had The Novel Library capitalized on its early lead and marched ahead of Penguin's translated texts, Traill's career may have continued on a more positive trajectory. As it is, she did not transfer her skills to Hamilton's competitors, where she could have translated other Tolstoy novels.[149] Her life was marked instead by a catalogue of missed or unfulfilled cross-cultural opportunities and financial difficulty, shaped variously by SIS intervention, her own inability to optimize a reliable and beneficial network of contacts, and a lingering reputation as

[145] British Intelligence reports and Traill's own correspondence with Smith show that she lived variously in London, Oxford, Birmingham and Cambridge during her life in the UK.

[146] Even as early as August 1932, Traill's application to the Home Office for an extended stay in the UK cited the reason of 'translating a theological work for the Rev. Thomas of St. Stephens Rectory, Clifton Hill, Bristol, which necessitated reference to documents in the British Museum' (9 November 1938, G.R.201/FOR/147, Ref.: KV-2-2390_164, p. 4).

[147] Tolstoy's *Resurrection* (1947) and *The Cossacks* (1949) published by Hamish Hamilton; Bunin's *Memories and Portraits* (1951) published by John Lehmann; Jean Rounault's *My Friend Vassia* (1952) translated from the French and published by Rupert Hart-Davies; Panova's *Span of the Year* (1957) published by Harvill; André Fraigneau's *Cocteau on the Film* (1972) translated from French and published by Dover. Traill also wrote the preface to her friend Salomé Andronikova Halpern's cookery book, *Good Food from Abroad, from the Caucasus to London via Moscow and Paris* (1953) published by Harvill, and contributed 'On Chukovsky' to Emma Tennant's *Saturday Night Reader* (1979).

[148] According to Allen Lane's biographer Jeremy Lewis, an advertisement placed by Penguin in *The Bookseller* from July 1936 claimed that 'a Penguin was being bought every ten seconds […] and "placed end to end they would reach from London to Cologne"'. (See: Lewis, *Penguin Special: The Life and Times of Allen Lane* (London: Penguin, 2006), p. 92 and p. 102.)

[149] Rieu and Glover did not issue a contract agreement to Rosemary Edmonds for their first Tolstoy translation, *Anna Karenin*, until 24 July 1950 (see McAteer, *Translating Great Russian Literature*, p. xxvi).

Budberg's adjunct. Linked as Budberg and Traill are – both Russian-speaking émigrées from privileged backgrounds, arriving in the UK with nothing but multicultural skillsets and networks at their disposal – their key unifying trait is that of the consummate survivor. Whereas translation theory traditionally focuses on the ability of translation to rescue a text or an author for the sake of posterity,[150] Budberg's and Traill's microhistories make a case for translation as a tangible means of survival for the translator herself.

[150] See Walter Benjamin, 'The Task of the Translator', trans. by Harry Zohn. In: Venuti, *The Translation Studies Reader*, pp. 75–85.

2

Desperately seeking socialism: Ideological British émigrées in the USSR

In contrast to Chapter 1, which featured case studies for women who extricated themselves from the evolving, fledgling Soviet State, this chapter shifts the geographical and ideological focus to the USSR of the 1920s and 1930s. Chapter 2 analyses UK-born, female Communist Party sympathizers who actively pursued lives and careers in the new USSR: (Alice) Evelyn Manning and Violet Lansbury (Dutt). In this dyad of case studies, I examine why they decided at a young age to emigrate from Britain to the Soviet Union, like 'hundreds of communist intellectuals and thousands of worker immigrants […] eager to join the "new world" in Russia'.[1] Manning and Lansbury are two names in a large, post-revolutionary cohort of Westerners who emigrated to the USSR on the strength of their interest in the Communist International (Comintern).[2] On arrival in Russia, they and fellow émigrés – like George Hanna, John Gibbons, Julius Katzer, Ivy Litvinov (née Lowe) and Daisy Mackin (who will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 3) – found work at the Foreign Languages Publishing House (FLPH) in Moscow.[3]

[1] Yuri Felshtinsky, 'The Legal Foundations of the Immigration and Emigration Policy of the USSR, 1917–27', *Soviet Studies*, Vol. 34:3 (1982), 327–48, (p. 327) <DOI: 10.1080/09668138208411422> [accessed 1 March 2023].

[2] The majority of research into post-revolutionary resettlement concerns emigration from or forced resettlement within the Soviet Union, not migration from the West to the USSR. Felshtinsky's research provides detail on both migratory directions – to and from the USSR – and Andrea Graziosi focuses on a discrete period when foreigners relocated to Russia in 'Foreign Workers in Soviet Russia, 1920–40: Their Experience and Their Legacy', *International Labour and Working-Class History*, Vol. 33 (Spring 1988), 38–59. Available at: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/27671737> [accessed 1 March 2023]. Felshtinsky described the issue of post-revolutionary movement as 'almost wholly unexplored' (Felshtinsky, 'The Legal Foundations', p. 328) and beyond Graziosi's essay, little additional research has appeared.

[3] In November 2019, I interviewed Katherine Judelson, a former Progress translator based in Moscow in the 1960–70s. A friend of George Hanna's daughter, Judelson was able to provide details on Hanna, some of which are borne out in Michael Durham's article 'Russians Wrong about Briton Who "Died in Stalin Camp"', *The Independent*, 5 September 1992. Available at: <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/russians-wrong-about-briton-who-died-in-stalin-camp-1549690.html> [accessed 1 March 2023]. (Contrary to Durham's estimation that Hanna died around 1962, Judelson was directly employed by Hanna in 1964 and his name appears as an editor for *About Lenin* (Moscow: Progress) in 1969.)

Hanna emigrated to the USSR in the 1930s and worked in Progress's English department (of which he was Head). His translations included Lenin's *Complete Works* (1962) and Nikolai Leskov's *The Enchanted Wanderer* (1965). British Communist Party member John Gibbons went to the Soviet Union as a *Daily Worker* correspondent in 1939 and worked with Hanna at Progress as an editor (of political-science texts and Mikhail Saltykov-Shchedrin's *Collection of Short Stories* (n.d.)). Katzer had a long career at Progress co-editing texts with Hanna and translating a wide range of works from political science (Georgi Plekhanov, Lenin and Vadim Zagladin) to classic Russian literature (Dostoevsky, Leskov and Gorky). Litvinov, the British wife of Maksim Litvinov, the First Deputy People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs (exchanged for Robert Bruce Lockhart shortly after the Revolution), moved to the Soviet Union in 1923 and was employed for decades as a translator for Progress. She counted among her friends Margaret Wettlin (see Chapter 3) and, like Wettlin, produced a prodigious number of texts.[4] Litvinov was joined later by her co-translating daughter Tatiana, who subsequently spent years corresponding with another prolific translator featured in this book, Mirra Ginsburg (see Chapter 4). This cohort consists of many more names, but scant information exists about them; in cases where FLPH publications display a translator's identity (not included by default), they typically offer no biographical information about the translator or their professional career.

This chapter aims to enhance scholarly understanding 'of the social context'[5] of politically active, immigrant Anglophone translators in the early years of the Soviet Union. Left-leaning men and women dedicated themselves to promoting Communist ideals internationally through a programme of cultural influence, or 'soft power'. Joseph Nye defines soft power as 'intangible power resources such as culture, ideology, and institutions' that are:

> just as important as hard command power. If a state can make its power seem legitimate in the eyes of others, it will encounter less resistance to its wishes. If its culture and ideology are attractive, others will more

[4] Brigid O'Keeffe has researched Litvinov's archives and written about her life in 'The Peoples' Ambassadress: The Forgotten Diplomacy of Ivy Litvinov', *Aeon*, 29 March 2021. Available at: <https://aeon.co/essays/the-peoples-ambassadress-the-forgotten-diplomacy-of-ivy-litvinov> [accessed 1 March 2023]. For a comprehensive, but not exhaustive list of Litvinov's translations, see Sarah Young's blog post: 'Works by Ivy Low Litvinov', *Dr Sarah J. Young, Russian Literature, History and Culture*. Available at: <http://sarahjyoung.com/site/reading-lists/works-by-ivy-low-litvinov/> [accessed 1 March 2023].

[5] Anthony Pym, *Method in Translation History* (London and New York: Routledge), pp. ix–x.

> willingly follow. If it can establish international norms consistent with its society, it is less likely to have to change. If it can support institutions that make other states wish to channel or limit their activities in ways the dominant state prefers, it may be spared the costly exercise of coercive or hard power.[6]

Manning's and Lansbury's archival material and publications provide rare supporting evidence of the usefulness of translation for propaganda purposes, as executed by Party faithful operatives. I will argue that, during the years they spent as Soviet translators, both women conformed to this role, albeit in an altruistic capacity initially as they attempted to promote world peace, about which both translators were passionate. Their case studies demonstrate the extent however to which they ultimately became official voices for the Soviet regime (or so-called 'useful idiots', to adopt the term popularly attributed to Lenin to describe naïve devotees to bolshevism and the Communist Party). Archival content suggests that Manning and Lansbury never deviated from this position, even when the latter returned to the UK towards the end of her career and believed herself too old to cope with life in Russia.

A microhistorical study of their publications helps to identify, as Munday's methodology permits, a broader understanding of their socio-historical context. By analysing the functions of and contributions by these translators to popular media genres – magazine (*Soviet Woman*, *Soviet Literature*), newspaper (*Daily Worker*) and travelogue – it becomes possible to situate them in 'the wider social and cultural conditions in which [they] lived'.[7] This chapter will explore the collective identity of Manning's and Lansbury's likely target audiences, the reception of their works, and their success (and therefore, the Soviet Union's too) in achieving a political aim, namely, disseminating the Soviet message and encouraging ideological support among Anglophone readers. The first case study examines the life events and local concerns that led Manning, a young woman originally from the small market town of Hebden Bridge in the north of England, to move to London where she became a political agitator, before leaving the UK in 1931 for the Soviet Union. Her microhistory draws on primary archival material held in British Intelligence files spanning two decades (including intercepted correspondence following her arrival in the USSR). It explores the translations she produced for Progress Publishers and *Soviet Woman*

[6] See Joseph S. Nye, 'Soft Power', *Foreign Policy*, Vol. 80 (Autumn 1990), 153–71, pp. 166–67.

[7] Jeremy Munday, 'Using Primary Sources to Produce a Microhistory of Translation and Translators: Theoretical and Methodological Concerns', *The Translator*, Vol. 20:1 (2014), 64–80 (p. 77).

magazine in the USSR and one novel published by Putnam Press. Where it is available and appropriate, I have also consulted the paratextual material accompanying Manning's translated texts, namely reviews and prefaces, to ascertain the extent to which she engaged with translation as a craft in its own right, rather than simply a propaganda tool, and to gauge her target audience's appreciation of her contributions.

The second case study – Violet Lansbury, daughter of once Labour Party leader, George Lansbury, and wife of British Communist Party co-founder Clemens Palme Dutt – examines the phenomenon of the overtly propagandizing translator-mediator. Lansbury's archival correspondence is scarce compared to sources of information for others in this book. She appears only peripherally in her Communist Party husband's SIS files and in several preserved letters and newspaper cuttings at the Labour History Archive & Study Centre, Manchester. Her translation portfolio (predominantly Soviet science fiction, political-science texts, and Socialist Realist authors Aleksandr Fadeev, Aleksei Tolstoy, Pavlo Beilin) is also relatively limited and less available to Western readers compared to Manning's *Soviet Woman* texts, which have been digitally preserved. Manning's promotion of Soviet life and politics manifested themselves in the occasional private letter, in her affiliation with Progress publishers, and through overtly patriotic translations in *Soviet Woman* magazine. By contrast, Lansbury produced and circulated her own story (punctuated with propaganda) in the memoir, *An Englishwoman in the USSR* (1940). Sales of her story were sufficient to warrant two reprints. At around the same time, Lansbury ran a regular column, Violet Lansbury's Weekly Chat, in the *Daily Worker* newspaper, in which she revisited themes salient to her book and her views on Soviet ideology.[8]

An Englishwoman in the USSR states clearly the author's political beliefs and explains how she used translation as a means not only of contributing to the Communist cause, but also of promoting, as she saw it, a cross-cultural understanding of it in the Anglophone West. As my analysis will demonstrate, however, her promulgation of ideology also included enthusiastic justification of Stalinist show trials and dekulakization while Lansbury herself enjoyed a privileged life as a foreigner living in Soviet Russia. My exploration of Lansbury's *habitus* (her career, family influences, especially her father's expressed admiration for the new Soviet Union, and socio-political milieu) reveals a woman with a conflicted *hexis* (dispositions, beliefs and emotional responses), at times even to the point of hypocrisy, as

[8] Violet Lansbury, *An Englishwoman in the USSR* (London: Putnam Press, 1940; repr. 1941, 1942).

she tried to embody Soviet Socialist values in her lifestyle. She is one of the few subjects in this book to recount first-hand experiences of chauvinism in the aspiringly egalitarian USSR, and to declare her feminist views on a discrete example from classic Russian literature.

(Alice) Evelyn Manning (1903–?): From Hebden Bridge to Mozhaisk and Moscow

Evelyn (or Eve) Manning had already spent nearly two decades in the Soviet Union when she co-translated Panova's *The Train* with Budberg. How the translators knew each other and how Manning secured this commission remain a mystery. Unlike other figures in this monograph (Wettlin, Lansbury and Carlisle) whose life stories have been preserved in autobiographical, if not archival form, Manning did not publish an account of her life, and material regarding her life in Russia is limited, another casualty perhaps of the missing Progress Publisher archive.[9] I have had, therefore, to make her the 'object of investigation' and use her 'translations and translation processes [as] sources of information'.[10] I have pieced together a cameo of her life and work – which spans decades of Soviet literary translation and national radio broadcasting – by following a complex paper trail. I have analysed British Intelligence reports (from 1931 to 1951) containing Manning's own, intercepted letters. These express a youthful, ideological excitement at arriving in the Soviet Union. I have accessed her short-story translations by searching the digital archive for *Soviet Woman* magazine, scrutinized paratextual references (reviews, bibliographies, advertisements), and constructed a chronology of her translated texts from bibliographies and the WorldCat online resource. Compared to Budberg, Traill, Carlisle and Ginsburg, who found outlets for personal expression about their careers in interviews and public lectures, Manning eventually slipped from British visibility on an outbound ship, the 'M/V Co-Operatzia' to Leningrad – 'on the a.m. tide of 31.10.31'[11] – to become mostly hidden behind the Iron Curtain thereafter. In the absence of an obituary (in English or Russian), uncertainty remains over when, where

[9] According to editors and translators who worked at Progress, the publisher's archives were either destroyed or, at the very least, dispersed after the collapse of communism. If the papers – an undoubtedly rich seam of archival primary material – were indeed misplaced, they have yet to be rediscovered, despite the best efforts of microhistorical researchers to track them down.

[10] Kaindl et al., *Literary Translator Studies*, p. 12.

[11] J. Stephenson, Report 'Manning, Alice Evelyn. London Docks', 27 November 1931, BIA, ref.: KV-2-3735_36.

or even if Manning died (although it seems reasonable, given her birth date, to assume that she is most likely deceased by now).

In Manning's microhistory, however, we witness the different stages of her personal development: a subtle but seemingly organic trajectory from UK-based Socialist, ideologist and political activist to émigrée; from non-Russian-speaking visitor to national translator and general cultural mediator in the Soviet Union. Manning's transition is from state rabble-rouser (UK) to mouthpiece of the state (USSR). When played out on an individual level, the position of Party-faithful Soviet literary translator satisfies Simeoni's definition of translatorial subservience, where in this case, the practitioner is bound to the State.[12] On a broader, societal plane, this relationship exemplifies Casanova's interpretation of politics intertwining with literature:

> […] individual concerns rapidly become collective: every text has a political character, since one seeks to politicize (which is to say nationalize), to shrink the frontier that separates the subjective – the domain reserved for literature in large countries – from the collective.[13]

In Manning's example, all the evidence indicates that she became a willing servant of the collective. She was born on 19 August 1903[14] in Hebden Bridge in Yorkshire[15] but moved with her parents to South London (there is no date for when this move took place). Manning came to the attention of British Intelligence because of her publicly expressed political sympathies; in one of the earliest letters in her file, she is described as '23 and a prominent Communist of Preston. Lancs. and who visits th [*sic*] "Rusoilprod" whwn [*sic*] the ship is at Preston'.[16] Although not overtly stated in archived intelligence reports, it would be reasonable to assume that British Intelligence interest in Manning's visits to this tanker originated in the fact that 'Rusoilprod was an acronym of Russian Oil Products Ltd of London, UK, distributors of petroleum products originating in the territories of Soviet Russia'.[17] The

[12] According to Judelson, a sense of loyalty to communism existed among translators that transcended their own personal situations: '[s]everal translators had done time in the camps. I would say at least a third of the Brit/US translators had done time there in Russia [during the 1940s-50s]' (interview Judelson and McAteer, November 2019).

[13] Casanova, *World Republic*, p. 201.

[14] BIA, ref.: KV-2-3735_21.

[15] BIA, ref: KV-2-3735_29.

[16] 20 November 1931, BIA, ref.: KV-2-3735_37.

[17] Roy Fenton, *Coasters: An Illustrated History* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword Books Ltd., 2011). Available at: <https://www.google.co.uk/books/edition/Coasters/5nXgAwAAQBAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&dq=Rusoilprod&pg=PT241&printsec=frontcover> [accessed 27 August 2021].

identity of the ship's owners was only confirmed when 'RusoilProd was transferred to the Russian flag in 1936 and was subsequently renamed *Mikhail Gromov*'.[18] With no other obvious reason for her to visit a tanker, Manning – as the above report infers – was suspected of fraternizing with Communists.

She emigrated to the USSR – like her foreign-translator peers Margaret Wettlin and Daisy Mackin (see Chapter 3) – in search of socialism. According to Andrea Graziosi's article 'Foreign Workers in Soviet Russia, 1920–40: Their Experience and Their Legacy' (1988), Manning was not alone:

> […] by early 1931, the number of foreigners engaged in the Soviet industrialization drive had reached ten thousand. By the second quarter of 1932, when the peak was probably reached, 42,230 foreign workers and specialists – mostly men and mostly skilled – were working in the yards.[19]

Of the immigrant nationalities cited, '[a]bout 50 percent were Germans or Austrians. Americans […] made up another 25 percent; Finns, Czechs, Italians, the French, Spaniards, Swedes, and Japanese […] accounted for the remaining 25 percent'.[20] Graziosi identifies the significance of these foreigners to the success of the Soviet experiment, without whose graft and specialisms 'the new giants of Soviet industry "could not have been built and put into operation"'.[21] The absence of British émigrés in the list is noticeable and, coupled with the fact that Manning, a woman, emigrated to the USSR, her relocation there is all the more unusual.

Manning's British Intelligence file reveals the different stages and manifestations of her support for communism both in Russia and in the UK, when she came back and participated as a guest speaker in Communist rallies around the country. One of the most striking confessions of political zeal appears in her letter dated 9 May 1932, which was forwarded to the Friends of the Soviet Union (FSU) organization, and subsequently intercepted by the SIS.[22] Penned in the town of Mozhaisk in the Moscow oblast' (region), roughly 100 kilometres from Moscow, where Manning had taken up work as a teacher,[23] the letter describes her experience of the Moscow May Day

[18] Ibid.
[19] Graziosi, 'Foreign Workers in Soviet Russia', p. 40.
[20] Ibid.
[21] Ibid.
[22] BIA, ref: KV-2-3735_32.
[23] See: 'Letter to Major Vivian', 21 October 1938, BIA, ref.: KV-2-3735_16.

celebrations. Manning's account brims with admiration for the Communist regime and the meteoric expansion of Soviet industry. The following extract provides a clear sense of elation:

> In every square were decorations on a large scale. Nothing frippery about these. Modern in design, with clear colours and a fine sweep of outline, they struck and riveted the attention; they also conveyed information of progress made. A tall model blast furnace, gay with paint and [bun?]ting, symbolised Kuznetsk, whose blast furnaces are now working. Behind it, a curved buttressed wall – the Dnieper Dam, a tremendous construction, just completed, for the production of electrical energy. A little way off, the new ball-bearing plant, opened in Moscow a week or two ago, was symbolised by a couple of white spheres set in a mighty wheel.[24]

Manning's enthusiasm for the Soviet system served only to consolidate concerns that were already circulating among British Intelligence officers. Early correspondence about her initially only noted perfunctory details regarding Manning's movement to and from the USSR. However, once she began to use her visits, specifically in June 1933 and August 1934, to address publicly British audiences on her experiences of and support for Communist Russia, officers began reporting more expansively. In June 1933, she was described as having given 'a short speech dealing with the conditions of workers in Russia at a meeting held at Clerkenwell to welcome home the delegates from the Internationale Olympiade of Workers' Theatres, held in the Soviet Union'.[25] A year later, a much longer and more detailed report was filed under the heading: 'COMMUNIST ACTIVITIES – EVA MANNIN' [*sic*].[26] It recounts a lengthy address in Wigan market place before an audience of 'about 300 working-class men':

> The speaker stated that she was an Englishwoman and that she was employed by the Russian Government in Moscow as a teacher, where she had been living during the past two years. She stated that she had been recalled to England on a private matter, but that her salary was still being paid by the Russian Government […]. She gave an address on the Red Army of Russia, and stated that it was the only Army of its kind in the world that existed to protect the working class and their possessions from invasion by the capitalists.[27]

[24] BIA, ref.: KV-2-3735_33.
[25] 17 June 1933, BIA, ref.: KV-2-3735_28.
[26] 6 August 1934, BIA, ref: KV-2-3735_23.
[27] Ibid.

According to the two-page report, Manning's agitational, pro-Communist address concluded with an appeal to her audience 'to refuse to take part in any war preparations'. She is reported as saying, in such a way as to pique SIS interest, that 'although this is reputed to be a country of free speech, [she] must be careful what she said and not ask them to take any line of action, but to draw their own conclusion'.[28] The penultimate paragraph includes a physical description of Manning – 'aged 25–30 years, 5'3", medium build, pale complexion, dark hair and eyes, speaks with a cultured voice'. This description corroborates with the image below:

Figure 2.1 Alice Evelyn Manning (n.d., BIA, ref.: KV-2-3735_07).

[28] Ibid.

Although Manning gave her profession as teacher on official documentation, this label does not satisfy the full scope of her activity in Russia. According to a letter from Moscow dated 14 February 1933 'to A.F. ROTHSTEIN from "NATHALIE I."',[29] which British Intelligence intercepted, Manning had already begun employment at foreign-language publishing in Moscow. 'Nathalie I' describes 'Com. Manning' as a:

> healthy energetic girl […] and probably very capable. She is working at the Cooperative Publishing House (for which I did work last year). She is apparently quite sympathetic, though from what I can see from her conversation, she is not very 'pagbumas',[30] – however, her stay here will probably do her a lot of good as far as that is concerned. She is quite unaffected, which is why I like her more than Com. SETON …. It seems to me that M is genuine, and will always work loyally.[31]

Further correspondence in Manning's file points towards the possibility that she later performed more of a covert agitational service in Russia, perhaps of the ilk suspected of her connection with RusoilProd. Reports from October 1938 describe an attempt by the Russians to recruit a British sea-captain:

> It appears that on a recent voyage to Leningrad, CAPTAIN MADSEN [*sic*] was approached by representatives of the G.P.U.[32] who endeavoured to enlist him into their service […]. MADSEN stated that the spokesman of the G.P.U. representatives who interviewed him in Leningrad was a woman.[33]

[29] The letter gives no further indication of the recipient's identity, but one can reasonably assume it is Andrew F. Rothstein, founder member of the Communist Party of Great Britain, and himself a translator of Marxist books for Foreign Languages Publishing, Moscow. He also translated *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, which Herbert Charles Rudman included in an appendix of Selected Readings in his U.S. Government produced *Structure and Decision-Making in Soviet Education*. Rothstein also wrote *The History of the Soviet Union*, published as a Pelican book for Penguin in 1950.

[30] After consultation with Slavic scholars, a consensus was reached that 'pagbumas' is most likely a typed attempt to recreate Cyrillic letters on a Roman keyboard, in this case (given the context) aspiring to reproduce the (handwritten Cyrillic) word '*razvitaia*' [развитая] meaning in this context (intellectually) mature. BIA, ref.: KV-2-3735_26.

[31] The full name of the publishing house was the Cooperative Publishing Society of Foreign Workers in the USSR; a chronological bibliography of publications can be found here: <https://www.marxists.org/history/usa/eam/cpa/cpapubs-stalmol.html> [accessed 1 September 2021].

[32] 'G.P.U.', in full the *Gosudarstvennoe politicheskoe upravlenie* – the State Political Directorate – was the name for the Soviet secret police during 1922 and 1923, after which it became OGPU until 1934.

[33] See letter: 24 October 1938, BIA, ref.: KV-2-3735_19.

The next report in the file states that, after subsequent attempts to identify the woman in question from a range of possible photo-fits:

> The nearest one [likeness] approaching her was the photograph of A.E. MANNING; MADSEN was of the opinion that this woman was very like the one he met in Leningrad.[34]

The Madsen case remained unsolved and no further reports were filed on the matter under Manning's name; her potential involvement amounted to nothing more than suspicion. In the decade after her activities promoting communism in the UK and (unofficially) among British naval officers abroad, Manning appears to have begun translating in a professional capacity for a range of literary outlets in the USSR. Archival uncertainty, however, surrounds how and when exactly she moved from her teaching position in Mozhaisk to become actively involved in translation and based in Moscow, as Nathalie I's letter implies. The last British Intelligence report on Manning's potential political threat is dated 24 August 1951.[35] The absence of any further obvious surveillance might reasonably suggest that her social and professional positions stabilized in the Soviet Union as literary (rather than cross-border political) entities and she was no longer deemed a direct threat to the UK. The literary version of Manning is described below in a rare biographical account by Mary M. Leder, one of her American colleagues in Moscow:

> Eve Manning, an assistant editor, seemed to me the very image of English womanhood – fresh faced with pink cheeks, violet eyes, dark wavy hair, and a cheery manner. Despite her friendliness, we knew very little about her. […] Eve Manning eventually married someone from the Soviet Republic of Georgia, had two sons, and lived in Moscow where she was a leading translator from Russian. I do not recall […] Manning expressing any political opinions. [Her] interest in the work seemed to be chiefly literary.[36]

The contents of her archived papers do not generally expand on details about her personal – marital and family – life in the UK or the USSR, with the

[34] See letter: 24 October 1938, BIA, ref.: KV-2-3735_18.

[35] BIA, ref: KV-2-3735_09.

[36] Mary M. Leder, *My Life in Stalinist Russia, An American Woman Looks Back* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), pp. 90–1.

exception of a final intelligence report from 17 September 1951. Information here suggests a more complex past than that described in Leder's account:

> Her [Manning's] parents still live in South London. She went to the U.S.S.R. with her husband, a British Communist, shortly before the war. Some years ago Mr. MANNING was arrested and has since disappeared. Mrs. MANNING, with her two young children, lives a very privileged life, having her own flat and maid, etc., and is regarded as an 'ace' announcer.[37]

Despite the uncertainty about her married life, sources confirm that Manning's professional career included years as a radio broadcaster for Russia's official world-facing radio-station *Voice of Russia* (launched as *Radio Moscow* in 1929).[38] According to radio announcer Joe Adamov, Manning worked there 'before, during, and after the war', a job which may well have led to an amount of material comfort such as a maid and comfortable accommodation, and which, as Manning's publication dates suggest, she juggled alongside translation commissions.[39] Manning's Panova collaboration with Budberg of *The Train* amounts to her only UK-published novel in translation.[40] Citing Pamela Hansford-Johnson, an advert for Putnam's new books describes *The Train* as '[t]he best novel from Soviet Russia for a long time past. It is so very human',[41] but again, as with all the other Panova translations, no credit is given to either of the translators. The commission was presumably organized and choreographed by Budberg, already long established in UK literary circles. There is no indication how the two women became acquainted with each other but, given Budberg's frequent visits to Moscow,

[37] BIA, ref: KV-2-3735_09.

[38] Anna Eddy and others, 'Mass Media', in *Russian English: History, Functions, and Features*, ed. by Zoya Proshina and Anna A. Eddy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), pp. 161–80 (p. 165). <DOI:10.1017/CBO9781139683623.010> [accessed 14 February 2022].

[39] Manning was succeeded at *Voice of Russia* by one of her sons who, according to reporter Joe Adamov, is now a correspondent on Russian television. Adamov – himself an announcer for *Voice of Russia* – has since died and it has so far been impossible to establish the identity of Manning's son(s) despite thorough online searches and requests of research staff at *The Moscow Times* (the source of the Adamov article) for information. See: Joe Adamov, 'MOSCOW MAILBAG: Voice of Russia's Voices that Came from Afar', *The Moscow Times*, 8 April 2000. Available at: <https://www.themoscowtimes.com/archive/moscow-mailbag-voice-of-russias-voices-that-came-from-afar> [accessed 17 January 2022].

[40] Published by Putnam in 1948.

[41] Anon., 'PUTNAM', *Times Literary Supplement*, 19 March 1949. Available at: <link.gale.com/apps/doc/EX1200080382/TLSH?u=exeter&sid=bookmark-TLSH&xid=5a87736b> [accessed 14 January 2022].

her contact with and integration in the Soviet literary milieu, it seems likely that their paths crossed in Russia rather than in London. Manning was also long established as a translator in the Soviet Union by this time. Her career spanned many years in Russia as a regular translator of short stories for the long-running Soviet magazine *Soviet Woman*, science fiction stories for the journal *Soviet Literature*,[42] and an array of novels and children's stories for the Moscow-based Foreign Languages Publishing House. Manning's earliest FLPH translations appeared in English in the mid-1940s: Pavel Bazhov's *The Malachite Casket: Tales from the Urals* (*Malakhitovaia shkatulka*, 1939) was published in 1945, followed by *Soviet Short Stories* (1947).

The authors who comprise her list of book-length translations can be placed into three categories. First are those who acquired literary significance and/or popularity within the Soviet Union. These include the award-winning Panova, but also Panova's fellow Stalin-prize winner, the war correspondent and writer Boris Polevoi, author of *Story of a Real Man* (1947) (*Povest' o nastoiashchem cheloveke*, 1946). Manning translated Boris Vasiliev's novella *The Dawns Here Are Quiet* (1978) (*A zori zdes' tikhie*, 1969), 'perceived as a requiem for all women who perished in the Second World War' and which became the basis for an Oscar-nominated film of the same name in 1972,[43] re-made as recently as 2015.[44] Second, Manning translated ethnic authors who only reached a level of recognition outside of Russia towards the end or after the collapse of the Soviet Union, and years after Manning's translations first

[42] The now discontinued *Soviet Literature* (*Sovetskaia literatura*) magazine was founded in 1946 and dedicated to the dissemination abroad of contemporary Russian/Soviet literature. Like *Soviet Woman*, it was also produced in multiple languages: English, French, German, Hungarian, Spanish, Polish, Czech and Slovak. Savva Dangulov (1912–89) was editor-in-chief for many years from 1969 (armawir.ru, 2022); the last editor-in-chief was Natasha Perova who, after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1990 and the magazine's subsequent closure, founded the post-Soviet literary journal *Glas* and publishing house of the same name (1990–2014). A Moscow-based company, Glas continued in the same outward-facing mission – dedicated to publishing Russian literature in Anglophone translation – as its *Soviet Literature* predecessor. For more information, see: Natasha Perova, 'The Story of Glas: Publishing New Russian. Writing in English Translation', *Riveting Russian Writing, The Riveter* (2) (Aug. 2017) Available at: <https://www.eurolitnetwork.com/the-story-of-glas-publishing-new-russian-writing-in-english-translation-by-natasha-perova/> [accessed 13 January 2022].

[43] The Russian-language film adaptation of Vasiliev's novella received a nomination for the Best Foreign Language Film award at the 1973 Oscars, see: Anon., 'The 45th Academy Awards, 1973'. Available at: <https://www.oscars.org/oscars/ceremonies/1973> [accessed 3 March 2023].

[44] By contrast, the 2015 re-make received critical rather than appreciative acclaim, especially in Ukraine, where its release prompted 'public outrage' and resulted in refusals to show it in cinemas across the country. See: Alexey Kovalov, 'Ukrainian Theatres Refuse to Screen "The Dawns Here Are Quiet"', *The Calvert Journal*, 28 April 2015. Available at: <https://www.calvertjournal.com/articles/show/4025/ukrainian-theatres-refuse-to-screen-the-dawns-are-quiet-here-remake> [accessed 3 March 2023].

appeared (in particular, the Kirghiz writer Chingiz Aitmatov, and Chukchi writer Iuri Rytkheu). Finally, she translated authors whose reputation and works remain on the periphery and have yet to penetrate – if they ever will – an Anglophone audience's consciousness (the Central Asian writer Fazliddin Muhammadiev,[45] Georgian writer Aleksandr Ebanoidze and the children's writer from the Urals, Pavel Bazhov). The following sections will explore in more depth some of the key points in Manning's career as a translator.

Translating *Soviet Woman*

Manning published regular translations in *Soviet Woman* magazine. A newly available digital archive features issues dating from the magazine's inauguration in 1945 to its closure in 1991. Here, its soft-power intentions are described as:

> countering anti-Soviet propaganda by introducing Western audiences to the lifestyle of Soviet women, their role in the post-WWII rebuilding of the Soviet economy, praising their achievements in the arts and the sciences. Originally published simultaneously in Russian, English, German and French, the magazine went on to add more foreign language editions aiming to reach even wider audiences both in the West and elsewhere to balance the Western narrative about the Soviet Union in these countries with a pro-Soviet ideological counterweight.[46]

Manning's magazine translations therefore form a small but not insignificant part of a broader and concerted post-Second World War effort by the Soviet Women's Anti-Fascist Committee (*Antifashistskii Komitet Sovetskikh Zhenshchin*, AKSZh).[47] Their aim was to introduce via a State-supported publication a carefully constructed Soviet woman into the drawing rooms of a sympathetic, international female readership, an audience that hailed initially

[45] Keith Hitchins, 'Muhammadiev, Fazliddin', *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, 20 July 2004. Available at: <https://iranicaonline.org/articles/muhammadiev-fazliddin> [accessed 3 March 2023].

[46] *Soviet Woman* [*Sovetskaia zhenshchina*] Digital Archive, *East View Information Services*. Available at: <https://dlib.eastview.com/browse/publication/99106> [accessed 6 January 2022].

[47] Alexis Peri, 'New *Soviet Woman*: The Post-World War II Feminine Ideal at Home and Abroad', *The Russian Review*, Vol. 77 (Oct. 2018), 621–44 (p. 621). Available at: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1111/russ.12202> [accessed 7 January 2022].

from the Allied countries of the Second World War.[48] AKSZh set out to construct a positive image in readers' minds about Slavic womanhood by addressing universal preoccupations such as 'balancing work and motherhood, feminine beauty, and the peace movement'.[49] The fact that Manning should support a magazine resolutely dedicated to peace and disarmament comes as no surprise in light of the anti-war rhetoric she offered at rallies in 1930s Britain. Detailing her address to Communist sympathizers by the war memorial in Wigan market square, the SIS report (dated 6 August 1934) quotes Manning – 'an Englishwoman […] employed by the Russian Government in Moscow, where she had been living during the past two years' as referring:

> to the League of Nations and said that the Soviet Union was the only country whose delegate had suggested total disarmament and who went there with a real desire for World Peace. This desire for peace in which to go on building socialism, contrasted with the war aims of the Tsarist regime, and the capitalist powers are now knocking at the Soviet door begging help to keep the peace.[50]

Soviet Woman's founding manifesto, as set out in 1945, pronounced similar sentiments, stating that the magazine 'will make every effort to facilitate the cooperation of the women of all freedom-loving countries. It will foster solidarity and friendship among democratic-minded women in the interests of peace, democracy and the progress of mankind'.[51] According to Peri, *Soviet Woman* 'provided a platform for AKSZh to campaign for Soviet women to lead the global movements for peace and gender equality', a goal which Manning again shared and herself promoted.[52]

A detailed archive search indicates no fewer than twenty *Soviet Woman* translations by Manning between 1955 and 1958, with most of her

[48] In the 1930s, as 'part of the popular front against fascism', the AKSZh dispatched copies of the Soviet periodical *Rabotnitsa* to the Women's British-Soviet Committee. According to Peri, the Committee declined the Russian-language publication, with regret, on account of having 'only one or two members who read Russian' (Peri, 'New *Soviet Woman*', p. 626). In its post-war incarnation, the AKSZh used that expression of regret as encouragement to create an entirely new foreign-language publication – *Soviet Woman* – (and Russian counterpart, *Sovetskaia zhenshchina*) to tap into conversations exchanged in wartime correspondence between Soviet and Allied women and to be used to strengthen relations.

[49] Peri, 'New *Soviet Woman*', p. 628.

[50] D.P.C. 1254 Lakin at Higher Ince, 'Communist Activities – Eva Mannin' [*sic*], 6 August 1934, BIA, ref.: KV-2-3735_23.

[51] Anon., 'Our Magazine', *Soviet Woman* [*Sovetskaia zhenshchina*] Digital Archive, *East View Information Services*, 1945:1 (Dec.), p. 2. Available at: <https://dlib.eastview.com/browse/doc/53962753> [accessed 26 January 2022].

[52] Peri, 'New *Soviet Woman*', p. 623.

contributions enjoying a repeat publication in later editions after the space of some years. At this stage in the publication's life, circulation increased (from 20,000 between 1945 and 1950) to 100,000 in 1950, and 250,000 by 1955.[53] According to Christine Varga-Harris:

> Recipients [of *Soviet Woman*] included public libraries, educational institutions, friendship societies, leisure clubs, labor and women's organizations, and individuals who had learned about it while hosting Soviet visitors, travelling in the Soviet Union, or through word of mouth. While publication data is sporadic and incomplete, anecdotal accounts indicate that this would, at any rate, be an inaccurate gauge of readership because the reach of *Soviet Woman* extended beyond its direct subscribers. Telling of this, libraries abroad informed the Committee that they did not always have enough copies to meet demand, and individual women writing its members revealed that they talked about and shared the magazine with others.[54]

The magazine produced features on Soviet economics and political policies, industrial and engineering achievements by women (a celebration of women in STEM vocations), life abroad in developing Socialist nations and in Soviet republics, women's fashion, beauty tips, pedagogy and cooking/domestic tips, as well as broader coverage of culture and the arts. Each issue included frequent, often colour, photos, sewing patterns and eye-catching front (and back) covers. Yet among the many refractions of Soviet life, *Soviet Woman* placed particular emphasis on the significance of translated literature for constructing an ideological counterweight to the West's anti-Communist narrative.

> One of its most popular features was the translations of Soviet literary works, making available in English, (and other languages) works of Russian and Soviet writers that were previously unavailable, allowing readers worldwide a peek inside the hitherto insular Soviet literary world.[55]

Manning's portfolio of translations (and Wettlin's *Soviet Woman* poetry translations from 1953 to 1960) helped to shape a publication intended

[53] Peri, 'New *Soviet Woman*', p. 623–4.

[54] Christine Varga-Harris, 'Between National Tradition and Western Modernization: Soviet Woman and Representations of Socialist Gender Equality as a "Third Way" for Developing Countries, 1956–1964', *Slavic Review*, Vol. 78:3 (2019), 758–81 (p. 764) <DOI:10.1017/slr.2019.233>.

[55] *Soviet Woman* [*Sovetskaia zhenshchina*] Digital Archive, *East View Information Services* Available at: <https://dlib.eastview.com/browse/publication/99106> [accessed 6 January 2022].

'not merely as an instrument of persuasion', but also as a gesture of 'socialist outreach'.[56] In doing so, Manning satisfies Kaindl's notion that 'the individual [translator] shapes society and culture'.[57] *Soviet Woman* fostered post-Second World War moral support and projected through literature a vivid vision of female emancipation, in line with Soviet aspirations. English readers were based not just in the Anglophone West, but in former British colonies in Africa and Asia too. In the 1950s, when Manning began producing translations for the magazine, the front matter of the publication also confirmed translations into 'Russian, Chinese, Korean, English, French, German and Spanish'.[58] By 1985, the magazine enjoyed circulation in 148 countries and was translated into 'over a dozen languages, including in its native Russian (as *Sovetskaia zhenshchina*), German, Hindi, Hungarian, Japanese, and Spanish'.[59] In this respect, *Soviet Woman* (and its translators) succeeded in contributing to and sustaining a soft-power programme embodying three core elements: (1) the geopolitical transfer of (2) Soviet ideology to (3) a female audience.

Manning's literary contributions are prose pieces, mostly short stories, spanning a range of Soviet regions and authors. Her translations include stories that take place in Moscow, Bulgaria, Feodosia (Crimea), Odessa and Soviet Lithuania. She translated stories by a range of authors, from Soviet/Warsaw Pact short-story writers (L.[Lev] Yuschenko,[60] F[edor Fedorovich] Knorre,[61] Jiří Marek,[62] Wanda Wasilewska)[63] to the well-known author

[56] Varga-Harris, 'Between National Tradition and Western Modernization', p. 765.

[57] Kaindl et al, *Literary Translator Studies*, p. 23.

[58] Anon., Front Matter, *Soviet Woman* [*Sovetskaia zhenshchina*], 1955:12 (Dec.), *East View Information Services*. Available at: <https://dlib-eastview-com.uoelibrary.idm.oclc.org/browse/doc/56104893/front-matter> [accessed 21 January 2022], p. 2.

[59] Varga-Harris, 'Between National Tradition and Western Modernization', p. 763.

[60] 'L. Yuschenko' likely refers to the Krasnoiarsk ex-soldier turned author, Lev Andreevich Yushchenko (1921–), who published short stories in State newspapers. Yushchenko's story *Commander* (*Komandir*, 1966) formed the basis for the 1969 film *Undecided* (*Nepodsuden*). It is unlikely that an Anglophone reader of *Soviet Woman* would be aware of Yushchenko's reputation at home and there is no indication in the magazine itself.

[61] Soviet actor, novelist, short-story and sci-fi writer, Fedor Knorre (1903–87) was well acquainted with Vsevolod Meierhold, Sergei Eisenstein and Mikhail Bulgakov. 'Fedor Knorre', *Laboratoriia Fantastiki* (2005–2022). Available at: <https://fantlab.ru/autor9747> [accessed 12 January 2022].

[62] Jiří Marek (1914–94) was a Prague-born Czech writer, journalist, screenwriter and jury member of the fourth Moscow International Film Festival, see: 'Jiří Marek', *Livelib* (2006–2022) Available at: <https://www.livelib.ru/author/312634-irzhimarek?utm_source=livelib&utm_campaign=viewed&utm_medium=bottom&utm_content=author> [accessed 12 January 2022].

[63] Polish novelist and Communist activist Wanda Wasilewska (1905–64) was one of the first Polish writers to follow the rules of Socialist Realism and thrice received the Stalin Prize for literature (1943, 1946 and 1952). See: 'Wanda Wasilewska', *Timenote* (2011–2022). Available at: <https://timenote.info/en/Wanda-Wasilewska> [accessed 12 January 2022].

Konstantin Paustovskii.[64] Familiar literary names in the Soviet bloc, these writers' stories in *Soviet Woman* satisfied, like the geographical diversity of their stories' settings, a conscious decision by the magazine editors to showcase the USSR's expansive literary scene – 'socialist outreach' – at the same time as elevating the magazine's international kudos. Manning's short-story translations reinforced the journal's more nuanced aims, explained here by Varga-Harris:

> Alongside featuring individual women and the impact that socialist policies had had on various facets of their lives, *Soviet Woman* illuminated the diversity of the Soviet Union and presented the socialist state as a champion of tradition as much as of modernization and a new gender order. The abundant photographs it published alone would have imparted to readers a sense of the vastness of the country. At the same time, accounts of unfamiliar locales and customs—from a state fur farm in the Karelian ASSR to a lavish Georgian wedding—might have stirred readers to imagine life in the Soviet Union. Meanwhile, patterns and recipes afforded them means to immerse themselves in the traditions of the USSR by offering instructions, for example, for replicating Kazakh needlework or preparing Azerbaijani lyula-kebabs.[65]

Whereas authors of articles and reports in each issue mostly remained anonymous, Manning's contribution received printed acknowledgment, proving her a significant feature, if only to publicize an obviously Western-named translator openly supporting the Soviet system. That the majority of issues generally contained only one short story (earlier issues tended to have pro-Soviet, anti-war poetry pages, often translated by Wettlin, in lieu of a story) further enhances Manning's status. Progress may have chosen Wettlin – not Manning – to translate the Golden Age, classic Russian authors (a rare privilege further discussed in Chapter 3), but Manning's regular, outward-facing magazine commissions throughout the 1950s suggest that she too was trusted (above other translator colleagues) to produce translations to the required standard and with the appropriate amount of political commitment.

[64] Konstantin Paustovskii, 'The Wind Rose', trans. by Eve Manning in *Soviet Woman*, 1962:7 (Jul.). Available at: <https://dlib-eastview-com.uoelibrary.idm.oclc.org/browse/doc/56132876> [accessed 5 March 2023], pp. 15–18.

[65] Varga-Harris, 'Between National Tradition and Western Modernization', p. 772.

Her shared space with Wettlin, the only other regular translator for *Soviet Woman*, puts Manning in good company.

There are no data to indicate translators' salaries for producing *Soviet Woman* feature pieces, but Manning's translations enjoyed global circulation reaching sympathetic, politicized readers in the mould of the young, Communist Manning herself. The magazine's regular mailbag column included (apparently genuine) letters from readers all around the world.[66] Women wrote, offering: praise of Soviet life, politics and suffrage; their own stories for publication; bewilderment at home-grown disinterest; and expressions of optimism about a change of mood with the advent of *perestroika*. Kay Thomas was one such correspondent whose exchanges with *Soviet Woman* included such topics of discussion. UK-based Thomas submitted a short story ('The First Round') in 1953[67] and continued to send correspondence from England until as late as 1989, when she admitted (in a letter occupying a full column) that '[i]t would be splendid if I could write that the average British citizen is interested in participating in the historic times we, especially the Soviet people, are living in. […] but that time is yet to come'.[68] Despite her pessimism, some Western organizations were paying attention to *Soviet Woman*'s soft-power message. As Peri observes, '[b]y the early 1950s, *Soviet Woman* could count members of foreign security and law-enforcement agencies among its international readers, a sign of the magazine's perceived influence over women abroad'.[69]

[66] In a modern climate of fake news, a cynic might suspect the magazine's international mailbag to be little more than an office in Moscow generating its own correspondence. Peri's research, however, traces decades of archived correspondence between pen pals (an arrangement introduced to help stay abreast of the influx of letters). Peri attests to the authenticity of readers' letters in her remark that 'AKSZh staff read and translated all the letters, marking sections of them to use in Soviet Woman. Atop one batch of American questions from 1947, for instance, AKSZh's Executive Secretary Lidiia Petrova ordered, "Send all this material to those organizing the magazine's translations and reviews"' (Peri, 'New *Soviet Woman*', p. 626). Letters exchanged between readers and *Soviet Woman*'s mailbag form the basis for Peri's forthcoming publication, *Dear Unknown Friend: Soviet and American Women Discover the Power of the Personal* (Harvard University Press).

[67] Kay Thomas, 'The First Round', *Soviet Woman*, 1956:6 (Dec.). Available at: <https://dlib-eastview-com.uoelibrary.idm.oclc.org/browse/doc/56104230/the-first-round> [accessed 5 March 2023], pp. 54–7.

[68] 'Our Mailbag' (letter from Kay Thomas), *Soviet Woman*, 1989:5 (May). Available at: <https://dlib-eastview-com.uoelibrary.idm.oclc.org/browse/doc/78666581/our-mailbag> [accessed 5 March 2023], p. 5.

[69] Peri, 'New *Soviet Woman*', p. 639.

Foreign Languages Publishing House (FLPH) and literary journals

Between 1945 and the early 1980s, Manning's translation career included works of all sizes for *Soviet Literature* and *Russian Science Fiction* literary journals and for the Moscow-based FLPH (renamed Progress, and later Raduga from 1970). Leder provides a useful description of professional life for the editors and translators at the publishing house in which she captures the vibrant atmosphere and youthful aspirations of an outfit shaping literature for what they perceived to be the common good. It is not hard to imagine an ideologically minded Westerner like Manning working there:

> The publishing house was a lively, interesting place. Most of the people who worked there were young; the 'oldsters' were in their forties, and thirty was practically middle-aged. The intermingling of many people from different countries and cultures was exhilarating. And, yes, that all these so different people believed in the same ideals and goals – at the very least in social justice and the possibility of achieving it – established a special bond among us. The bonds were further strengthened by the peculiar situation of so many of the foreigners, particularly those who could not or did not plan to go home. They were cut off from their families and did not have a circle of old friends in Moscow. Consequently, the publishing house became a surrogate family.[70]

Manning's earliest known FLPH translation was of Pavel Bazhov's *Malakhitovaia shkatulka* (*The Malachite Casket)*, for which Bazhov (1879–1950) was awarded the Stalin Prize in 1943.[71] According to Mark Lipovetsky, Bazhov's success in the USSR was rooted in his tales 'belong[ing] to a rare category of folklore or quasifolklore dealing with workers' lives and supposedly coming from a proletarian past'.[72] Lipovetsky likens the Communist Party journalist Bazhov's writing to Maksim Gorky's, but

[70] Leder, *My Life in Stalinist Russia*, p. 94.

[71] Mark Lipovetsky recounts the evolution of Bazhov's tales, from serialization in a local Sverdlovsk newspaper (*Na smenu!*) to Stalin Prize: 'Although the first version of the collection was published […] in 1939, the Stalin's Prize was awarded to an expanded edition (nineteen tales instead of fourteen), which was published by *Sovetskii pisatel'* in early 1942 (when the battle for Moscow was not over yet)', see: Mark Lipovetsky, 'Pavel Bazhov's Skazy, Discovering the Soviet Uncanny', in *Russian Children's Literature and Culture*, ed. by Marina Balina and Larissa Rudova (London and New York: Routledge, 2010), p. 281.

[72] Lipovetsky, 'Pavel Bazhov's Skazy', p. 264.

intended, in the former's case, for children. Lipovetsky summarizes the extent of Bazhov's Soviet appeal thus:

> Although Bazhov was more experienced in party journalism than in fiction writing, in his tales he managed to present the prerevolutionary Urals as a mythological world with mountain spirits and dark forces controlling the hidden riches. This vision was unexpectedly accepted by the authorities and became enormously popular among both the general populace and the more sophisticated Soviet intelligentsia. The wide cultural resonance of Bazhov's writing is illustrated in Alexander Ptusko's film Kamennyi Tsvetok (The Stone Flower, 1946), which is based on several [*sic*] Bazhov's texts, and Sergei Prokofiev's eponymous ballet (1950) staged in the Bolshoi Theatre in 1959, along with many other theatrical, cinematic, visual, and musical interpretations as well as numerous new editions of his works.[73]

The metaphorical and cultural transferability of Bazhov's 'fantastic narratives' (or *skazy*)[74] failed to find comparable appreciation in English translation, not apparently because of the quality of Manning's translation, but because of a socio-cultural incompatibility. In her unpublished thesis, Rebecca Hurst makes a text-based analysis of *The Malachite Casket*'s different Anglophone translators. Of the three translations that she compares – the earliest version Alan Moray Williams's (1944),[75] Manning's (1945) and the most recent rendering of a scaled-down four out of fourteen tales by Anna Gunin for Penguin's *Russian Magic Tales from Pushkin to Platonov* in 2012[76] – Hurst rates Manning's and Gunin's creations. She asserts that Manning – the Bazhov translator who, at Hurst's own admission, fascinates her the most[77] – improved on her predecessor because she 'captures the poetics of Bazhov's

[73] Ibid., p. 263.

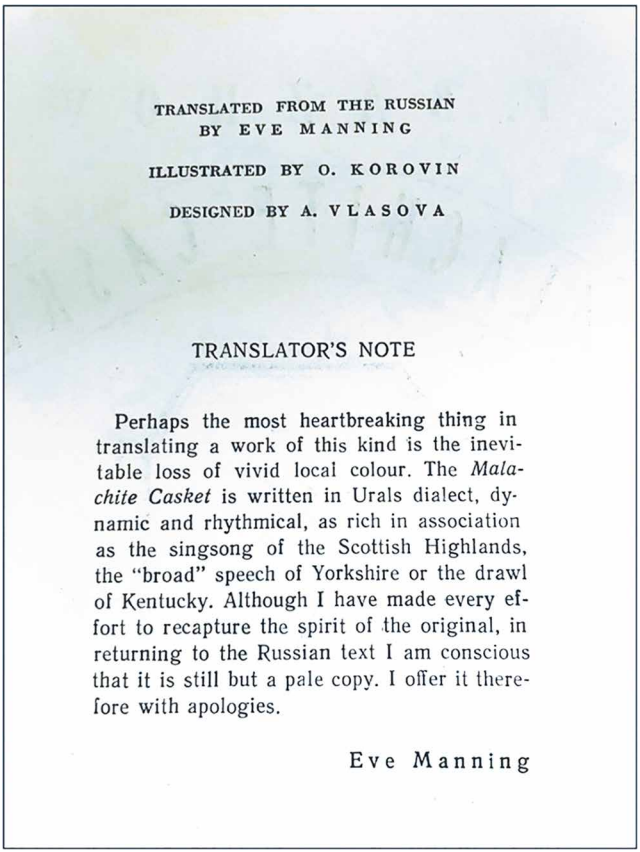
[74] Ibid.

[75] Williams, 'a British-born translator, poet (publishing under the nom de plume Robert the Rhymer) and journalist' (Hurst, 'The Iron Bridge and Digging Deep', p. 141) produced the first translation in English, published by Hutchinson.

[76] Pavel Bazhov, 'The Mistress of the Copper Mountain'; 'The Stone Flower'; The Mountain Master'; 'Golden Hair', trans. by A. Gunin in *Russian Magic Tales from Pushkin to Platonov*, ed. by Robert Chandler (London: Penguin Books, 2012), Part Five.

[77] Hurst admits of Manning that 'although her translation credits are numerous, there is almost no biographical information available that I have been able to uncover […] Manning has all but vanished from history', see: Rebecca Hurst, 'The Iron Bridge and Digging Deep: The Enchanted Underground in Pavel Bazhov's 1939 Collection of Magic Tales, The Malachite Casket' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Manchester, 2018), pp. 143–4.

language without resorting to the repetitious and folksy quaintness of Williams' version'.[78] In Manning's Translator's Note at the start of the book, however, the translator laments her failure to capture Bazhov's distinctive 'use of regional dialect', leading to 'an inevitable loss of vivid local colour'.[79] The note is reproduced in full below on account of its rarity, not just in terms of paratextual content in an FLPH text, but also for its insight into Manning's translatorial 'set of values'.[80]



TRANSLATED FROM THE RUSSIAN
BY EVE MANNING

ILLUSTRATED BY O. KOROVIN

DESIGNED BY A. VLASOVA

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

Perhaps the most heartbreaking thing in translating a work of this kind is the inevitable loss of vivid local colour. The *Malachite Casket* is written in Urals dialect, dynamic and rhythmical, as rich in association as the singsong of the Scottish Highlands, the "broad" speech of Yorkshire or the drawl of Kentucky. Although I have made every effort to recapture the spirit of the original, in returning to the Russian text I am conscious that it is still but a pale copy. I offer it therefore with apologies.

Eve Manning

Figure 2.2 Translator's Note to Eve Manning's 1945 Foreign Languages Publishing House translation of Pavel Bazhov's *The Malachite Casket* (image courtesy of Rebecca Hurst).

[78] Hurst, 'The Iron Bridge and Digging Deep', p. 143.
[79] Ibid.
[80] Kaindl et al., *Literary Translator Studies*, p. 21.

An extensive search of FLPH and Progress copies (including books available for digital access on Internet Archive) confirms that the majority of titles have the scarcest number of prelim pages, rarely an introduction and practically never a Translator's Note. Manning's note above, dedicated to a discussion of text-based translatorial challenges, is significant, therefore. At the same time, it provides valuable microhistorical insight too.[81] From Manning's single, twelve-line paragraph, we gain a glimpse into the processes and considerations driving her practice and deduce two professional indicators that are absent from her biographical information. First, that Manning strove for artistry in her translations and that she was sensitive to matters of equivalence. We learn that she at least aimed to produce renderings that would match the lyrical local cadence and rich character of the original, even though she – on her own admission – did not succeed as well as she might. Her perceived shortcoming prompted sufficient concern for her to want to offer an apology to her readers. Secondly, the tone of Manning's note errs on the side of the confessional, effectively alerting the reader from the outset to specific textual flaws. Such a declaration transports Manning into the future, to a favourite debate among Soviet translation theorists on the issue of translatability.[82] In the 1960s–70s, translatability became, as the Soviet translator and translation theorist Vladimir Mikhailovich Rossel's (1914–2000) declared, the first principle of the Soviet school.[83] Rossel's maintained that 'there are no insurmountable barriers to the translation of any work from any language' but he noted exceptions in practice, as if to underline Manning's own experience, 'stemming from national realia, the character of the work, the author's manner, and finally from the specific relationships between two given

[81] Munday, 'Using Primary Sources', p. 77.

[82] The Soviet school of translation initially emerged out of Maksim Gorky's post-revolutionary World Literature [*Vsemirnaya literatura*] project when Gorky invited the translator, poet, journalist and theorist, Kornei Chukovskii to oversee translation quality by producing a handbook benchmarking best translatorial practice. Over the next five decades (1919–68), Chukovskii refined this guide numerous times and he, along with other Soviet translation theorists (Samuil Marshak, Valery Briusov, Ivan Kashkin, Mikhail Lozinskii), attempted to define their core tenets. These can be summarized as: 'the rejection of literalism (*bukvalizm*) and "blandscript" (*gladkopis*'); the pursuit of precision, balance, and translatorial self-control; commitment to the source author; acceptance of translatability; and the principle of equivalent effect' (McAteer, *Translating Great Russian Literature*, p. 55).

[83] Lauren Leighton, *Two Worlds, One Art* (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 1991), p. 13.

languages'.[84] Soviet optimism led its theorists to believe that the translator should and could overcome textual challenges.[85] Lauren Leighton quotes the Ukrainian translator Viktor Koptilov as insisting in 1971 that '[t]he virtuoso translator does not know the word "untranslatable"'.[86] Soviet translators were expected, therefore, to persevere, to find a practical solution for preserving the fabric and features of the text, not to publish an apology for failure. As Brian James Baer puts it, the view that there were 'limits to translatability, […] was anathema in Soviet culture of the time'.[87] Given the careful choreography of Manning's other public-facing publication, *Soviet Woman*, we may reasonably assume that, like publishers anywhere, FLPH/Progress would not wish to draw undue attention to translatorial shortcomings, even if part of the translator's intention had been to celebrate the artistic skill of the original author. Manning's Translator's Note stands out, therefore, for its recognition and admiration of the author's idiosyncratic style and for its candour (whether publishers would agree to print a translator's confession of poor workmanship today is debatable).

Manning, though realistic and self-critical, is perhaps excessively harsh in her assessment. As Hurst notes, even the Russian original contained for the benefit of the source reader a 'glossary of words used in the dialect of the Ural mountain region'.[88] Hurst cites Gunin's summary of the challenges facing any translator of Bazhov: 'the pleasure in working with his "gems" is complicated by not only his use of dialect, but also by differences of history and dissemination of folklore in Russia and northern Europe'.[89] Now, over half a century since Manning's efforts, Gunin's renderings receive Hurst's praise for their 'lyric simplicity that chimes well with the vital energy of Bazhov's language'.[90] Gunin's modern assessment of Bazhov's written style substantiates the view that even a tonally perfect translation by Manning would likely have failed to resonate thematically with an uninitiated Anglophone readership, only familiar at this stage (if at all) with Garnett's translations of nineteenth-century (Golden-Age) Russian classics.

[84] Leighton, *Two Worlds*, p. 118.
[85] Ibid., p. 208.
[86] Ibid., p. 207.
[87] Brian Baer, *Translation and the Making of Modern Russian Literature* (New York and London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016), p. 130.
[88] Hurst, 'The Iron Bridge and Digging Deep', p. 140.
[89] Ibid., pp. 145–6.
[90] Ibid., p. 145.

After the Thaw: Soviet science fiction and decolonization in translation

Where Manning's career in the 1940–50s centred on Bazhov and Panova translations, *Soviet Woman* short stories and co-translations,[91] she spent the 1960s producing translations of Soviet science fiction, which was flourishing at that time.[92] Sibelan Forrester remarks of the genre that '[T]he science component also fit with the theoretical/philosophical framework of scientific communism, and it could often advance technical knowledge'.[93] The translation of science fiction represented an opportunity, therefore, for the Soviets to publicize their scientific advancement to the Anglophone world. Manning's works are cited in 'Russian and Soviet Science Fiction: A Bibliography', which featured in the leading academic journal *Science Fiction Studies*.[94] The span of her science fiction authors includes Aleksandr Beliaev – the so-called Jules Verne of Russia – and Vladimir Tendriakov, Viacheslav Rybakov, the husband-and-wife duo, Evgenii and Liubov Lukin, and, among others, *Literaturnaia gazeta* journalist Nikita Razgovorov. Her name appears eight times in Richard Terra's and Robert Philmus's bibliography alongside fellow science-fiction translators who have since come to greater prominence, such as Mirra Ginsburg, Antonia W. Bouis, co-translators Carl and Ellendea Proffer, Max Hayward and Ronald Hingley, Manya Harari and Natasha Perova. With one exception (a story published in the 1969 anthology *Russian Science Fiction*, ed. by Robert Magidoff),[95] Manning's science-fiction translations appeared in *Soviet Literature*, another Soviet-produced Western-facing journal published by the Union of Writers

[91] Co-translated titles include Iuri Nagibin's *Dreams* (Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1955) which Manning co-translated with Robert Daglish (who worked for FLPH/Progress and translated Mikhail Sholokhov's *Virgin Soil Upturned* (*Podniataia tselina*)) and Ralph Parker (another occasional translator for *Soviet Woman* but better known for his 1962 translation of Solzhenitsyn's *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*). Manning additionally co-translated Valentin Kataev's novel *A Country House in the Steppe* (Foreign Languages Publishing House, 195-?) with Fainna Solasko (who also produced short translations for *Soviet Woman*).

[92] Sibelan Forrester, 'Science Fiction (nauchnaia fantastika)', in *Encyclopedia of Contemporary Russian Culture,* ed. by Tatiana Smorodinskaya, Karen Evans-Romaine and Helena Goscilo (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2014), pp. 547–8.

[93] Forrester, 'Science Fiction', p. 547.

[94] Richard Terra and Robert Philmus, 'Russian and Soviet Science Fiction: A Bibliography', *Science Fiction Studies*, Vol. 18:2 (Jul. 1991), 210–29.

[95] Vadim Shefner, 'A Modest Genius: A Fairy-Tale for Grown-Ups', trans. by Eve Manning in *Russian Science Fiction,* ed. by Robert Magidoff (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1969), pp. 83–100.

of the USSR between 1946 and 1991 and aimed at bringing Soviet literature to a foreign audience.[96]

In what we may assume to be the twilight years in Manning's translation career (from the 1960s to the mid-1980s), she expanded her repertoire to include non-metropolitan writers too. *Farewell, Gul'sary* Manning's translation of Chingiz Aitmatov's *Proshchai, Gul'sary!* (1966) appeared in 1967 – three years before Hodder and Stoughton published John French's translation in the UK – in *Soviet Literature* (issue number 1); and *The Cranes Fly Early* (*Rannye zhuravli*, 1975) was published by Raduga in 1983 and has yet to be translated afresh by an Anglophone publisher. Manning's translation of the Chukchi writer Iuri Rytkheu's novella *When the Whales Leave: A Modern Legend* (*Kogda kity ukhodiat*, 1975) was also published in *Soviet Literature* (issue number 12) in 1977 and has been retranslated into English only as recently as 2019 by Ilona Yazhbin Chavasse. The front matter of Chavasse's translation acknowledges the original Russian and a German translation published by Unionsverlag, but makes no mention of Manning's translation, the existence of which, like its translator, has gone undetected but considerably pre-dates the latest version. Other translated titles to Manning's name include Mikhailo Stelmakh's *Let the Blood of Man Not Flow* (*Krov' liudskaia – ne voditsa*, Progress, 1968); and a selection of children's stories and Lappish fairy tales in *The Daughter of the Moon and the Son of the Sun* (1976).

There is no obituary for Manning (in Russian or English) but it seems unlikely she could still be alive.[97] Unlike some of the other female translators (Wettlin, Lansbury, Carlisle) in this monograph, Manning did not – to our knowledge – produce an account of her life in the USSR, from which it might be possible to glean the extent of her devotion to Communist principles by the end of her career.[98] We have no way of knowing whether she remained

[96] According to WorldCat, the magazine over its lifespan was published in Russian, French, German, English and Spanish. The Russian-language website for science-fiction literature, <fantlab.ru> cites as additional language publications: Polish, Czech and Slovakian. The journal's remit, it states, was to 'familiarise foreign readers with new works from a multinational Soviet literature' (my translation) [*znakomit' zarubezhnykh chitatelei s novymi proizvedeniami mnogonatsional'noi sovetskoi literatury*]. The website also singles out a special issue of the journal in 1988 (no. 12) dedicated to modern Soviet science fiction.

[97] A web-search in Cyrillic of Manning's name produces no result; however, if the British Intelligence report from 1951 is correct, we may assume she likely exchanged her British surname for a Georgian married name instead, thus further complicating the search for information.

[98] In another departure from Wettlin, Lansbury and Carlisle, who spent years in or undertook frequent trips to the USSR but did not end their days there, Manning, to the best of our knowledge, did not return to her homeland at the end of her career.

as ardently in favour of the politically and industrially progressive USSR on whose account she emigrated at the age of twenty-eight. There are no means by which to corroborate SIS detail about her husband's alleged disappearance and whether it affected her loyalty to communism or led to complicated repercussions than Manning could openly reveal at the time. To the outsider, her position looks as consistently pro-Soviet as her fellow *Soviet Woman* translator Wettlin's but, as the latter's microhistory will demonstrate in the next chapter, outward impressions can be misleading.

Violet Dutt née Lansbury (1900–72): *An Englishwoman in the USSR*

The existence of extensive British Intelligence files over several decades – as for Budberg, Traill and Manning – does not apply to Violet Dutt (née Lansbury),[99] for whom there are no directly traceable archived papers at the UK's National Archive at Kew. The correspondence that exists is generally scarce – Lansbury is a ghostly character in the intelligence files that concern her Communist second husband, Clemens Palme Dutt – and her translation output is not as sizeable as Manning's. However, unlike Manning, whose promotion of Soviet life and politics found expression in the occasional private letter and, by association, primarily through the inclusion of her translations in the propagandizing *Soviet Woman* magazine, Lansbury managed her own propaganda. She set down in a memoir her Socialist aims, experience of living in the Soviet Union, and also that she used translation during her time in Russia as a means of contributing to Communist life. For her, translation was a way of encouraging political interest and cultural understanding in the Anglophone West. Her autobiographical intention mirrors that of her father, the Labour Party leader (1931–5) George Lansbury: to evangelize left-wing politics and pitch the Soviet experiment to an Anglophone readership. Sidonie Smith's and Julia Watson's research identifies autobiography as a site for complex authorial rationales through which society, history and politics can be contextualized. They define the 'politics of remembering, what is recollected and what is obscured' as:

> central to the cultural production of knowledge about the past, and thus to the terms of an individual's self knowledge. Autobiographical

[99] To avoid confusion when also referencing Clemens Palme Dutt, I will refer to Violet Dutt by her maiden name, Lansbury.

> narratives […] signal and invite reading in terms of larger cultural issues and may also be productively read against the ideological grain.[100]

Lansbury's memoir provides valuable insight into her self-perception as a political and cultural mediator and an active (unquestioning and explicit) promoter of Soviet values. Ideologically, her case study complements that of her peers' (Manning and Wettlin in particular, but also Edith Bone), but Lansbury stands out on account of her stalwart Socialist conviction. The sociological profile that emerges from analysing Lansbury's *habitus* (her career, family influences and socio-political milieu), and *hexis* (dispositions, beliefs and emotional responses), reveals a woman of contrasting priorities, someone who promulgated communism and enthusiastically justified show trials and dekulakization while enjoying a privileged life as a foreigner in Soviet Russia. As this microhistory will show, her autobiography, letters, passing references in her husband's intelligence files, and *Daily Worker* column repeatedly demonstrate political naivety, or the sort of 'idiotic attachment to Communist ideals' usually associated with 'useful idiots'.[101]

Though narrow in her creative output compared to Manning and Wettlin, Lansbury's publications encompassed short novels by Soviet authors, science-fiction stories and Marxist-Leninist translations, perhaps most notably *Lenin: A Biography*.[102] The socio-political context of her translations and journalism, the key moments cited in her memoir, and the Socialist emphasis in her personal correspondence give insight into Lansbury's self-perception as a Soviet Russian-English translator, her views on world order, and the close network of contacts she inhabited. More broadly, Lansbury's documents contextualize her perception of British Russophobia and Western misinterpretation of Russian culture, as well as a keen awareness of feminism and women's rights, seldom discussed so transparently by the other female translators in this book. In this regard, Lansbury justifies her place in this study.

[100] Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson, *Reading Autobiography: A Guide for Interpreting Life Narratives*, Second Edition (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), p. 25. Available at: <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/exeter/detail.action?docID=557527> [accessed 31 May 2022].

[101] Apocryphally attributed to Vladimir Lenin, the term denotes Western individuals whose Communist zeal, according to historian Richard Landes, 'made them highly useful allies in deceiving the West and preventing it from opposing the Soviet Union at a time when the new Soviet state was still particularly vulnerable'. Richard Landes, 'From Useful Idiot to Useful Infidel: Meditations on the Folly of 21st Century 'Intellectuals', *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 25:4 (2013), 621–34, DOI: 10.1080/09546553.2013.814504 (p. 621).

[102] Vladimir Il'ich Lenin, *Lenin: A Biography*, trans. by Violet Dutt (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1955).

British-Socialist birthright and the inevitability of *habitus*

Given her political pedigree and sympathies, Lansbury's apparent absence of British Intelligence scrutiny is surprising. Her connection with the Soviet Union, like Manning's, lies in ideology. Three years older than Manning, she emigrated earlier, by eight years. The motivations can be found, first, in her family background – Lansbury's *habitus* – and secondly, in the political state of Britain during her formative years. In terms of the former, Lansbury was the daughter of George Lansbury, editor of the Socialist *Daily Herald* newspaper (which put him in contact with left-wing intellectuals, including the young H.G. Wells),[103] and also a social reformer and campaigner for the women's suffrage movement. He led the Labour Party between 1931 and 1935. The last of George Lansbury's twelve children, Violet grew up in the Seven Kings area of London immersed in socialism,[104] in a home described as 'a haven for all and the centre of his [George Lansbury's] political activities'.[105] She occupied a milieu of high-level politics where her socially visible father circulated in elevated left-wing circles. Lansbury himself is described as having been a 'charismatic figure, with a booming voice, equally at home addressing a crowd on the Mile End waste ground or a mass rally from the platform of the opulent Albert Hall'.[106]

According to John Carswell, the biographer of Violet Lansbury's fellow Progress translator Ivy Litvinov, George Lansbury (whose Anglo-Russian Democratic Alliance brought him into contact with the Litvinovs)[107] visited Russia with Wells and Bertrand Russell in 1920, during which visit they all three had interviews with Lenin.[108] Carswell describes the future Labour Party leader as a keen advocate of bolshevism, who apparently:

> 'almost shouted for joy' on seeing the Red Flag over the Soviet border post, and considered 'that if there is such a thing embodied in humanity

[103] Lansbury was a co-founder of the paper in 1911; the *Herald* 'opposed World War I and supported the Russian Revolution', its focus remained anti-war and pro-Socialist (Anon., 'George Lansbury, Editor of the Daily Herald', *Marx Memorial Library* [n.d.] Available at: <https://www.marx-memorial-library.org.uk/project/russian-revolution/george-lansbury-editor-daily-herald-east-end> [accessed 10 March 2023]). See also John Shepherd, 'A Life on the Left: George Lansbury (1859–1940): A Case Study in Recent Labour Biography', *Labour History*, Vol. 87 (Nov. 2004), 147–65 (p. 155). Available at: <https://doi.org/10.2307/27516003>.

[104] See Graham Stevenson, 'Lansbury Violet (Dutt)', *Encyclopedia of Communism* (2009). Available at: <https://grahamstevenson.me.uk/2009/12/22/lansbury-violet-dutt/> [accessed 11 May 2022].

[105] Shepherd, 'A Life on the Left', p. 153.

[106] Ibid., p. 152.

[107] John Carswell, *The Exile: A Life of Ivy Litvinov* (London: Faber and Faber, 1983), p. 97.

[108] Carswell, *The Exile*, p. 94.

> as the spirit of religion, then Lenin has got it to a larger extent than any man I ever met'. He was sure the Labour Party should join the Third International.[109]

Carswell's account of Lansbury's opinion is borne out in *What I Saw in Russia* (1920), a 169-page account written by the politician on returning from his nine-week trip, 'every day of which brought me knowledge, understanding and experience'.[110] In the Preface to his memoir, Lansbury appealed for a Workers' International which 'should make one of the first objects of its propaganda the entire sweeping away, root and branch, of this [Capitalist Governments'] system of international mischief-making and spying'.[111] Lansbury's narrative maintains a tone of Socialist idealism throughout, constantly comparing the state of the new Soviet society with the flaws of his own political system and praising the impact of revolution at every turn. His account of the over two-hour wait on arrival in Moscow, which afforded him an opportunity to survey the general atmosphere, concludes:

> Here, if anywhere, there should have been signs of dejection, yet it would be quite wrong to write of this as a crowd of physical or mental wrecks. […] I looked for signs of revolution, of battle and murder, but saw none […].[112]

Of meeting Lenin, Lansbury again reports only the positive:

> While talking with him it was impossible to imagine that such a man would love or care for violence or butchery, torture or any of the other horrors which are laid to his charge. He is too big in his outlook and much too wide in his sympathies to want to kill anyone.[113]

Carswell observed that Lansbury 'typifie[s] more clearly than any other figure the profound yearning in Britain that was for a time satisfied by the revolutionary transformation in Russia'.[114] He added that Lansbury 'crowded out of his mind any awareness that the sacrifices called for by the Bolsheviks were and would be no less fearful than those of Passchendaele and Verdun'.[115] Contrast Lansbury's vision of post-revolutionary Moscow

[109] Ibid.
[110] George Lansbury, *What I Saw in Russia* (London: Leonard Parsons, 1920), p. viii.
[111] Lansbury, *What I Saw*, p. x.
[112] Ibid., p. 16.
[113] Ibid., p. 26.
[114] Carswell, *The Exile*, p. 97.
[115] Ibid.

with that of another experienced and popular travel-writer (and biographer, historian, editor, journalist, photographer and illustrator) of the day, Mrs Ethel Brilliana Tweedie, 'author of 20 books and several picture exhibitions', who wrote under the pen-name Mrs Alec Tweedie.[116] Tweedie travelled to Russia en route to China in the 1920s and wrote a retrospective account published in 1928. Entitled 'Russia as I Saw It: Russia, Siberia, China, 1925–6', Tweedie's description of Moscow (admittedly a few years after Lansbury's but coinciding with the period described in Violet's account, to which I will turn attention below) differs starkly, as does her apparent awareness and appraisal of Soviet propaganda:

> Russia is a veritable hell of misery and the Soviets wisely allow no-one to see its workings except at their own invitation, and after they have prepared the scene for view, and carefully organised escorts. […]
>
> Men, women and children lay huddled on doorsteps asleep at night. They slept in hundreds under the walls for shelter. Old men and women with newspapers across their shoulders for warmth. Homeless – tens of thousands of ill-clad beings – think of it! And foodless, too. And all the time their Government was screwing taxes out of everyone and spending the money upon its own laudation in foreign lands. Taking food from the mouths of its own people for a propaganda of lies. Soviet distribution of untruth is simply marvellous. She ladles out daily the most amazing bluff to the whole world.[117]

Lansbury's strength of pro-Soviet political feeling cannot have eluded his daughter's notice, who would in her own career further aid Russia's distribution of Tweedie's so-called 'bluff'. Violet Lansbury's dispositions and subsequent life trajectory may reasonably be attributed to her growing up in a politically active family environment.[118] According to her father's autobiography, six members of his family in 1913 'were in prison, or in

[116] Ethel B. Tweedie, 'Russia as I Saw It: Russia, Siberia, China, 1925–6' (Hastings: F.J. Parsons Ltd, 1928). Available at: Warwick Digital Collections, <https://wdc.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/russian/id/3644> [accessed 10 March 2023].

[117] Ibid.

[118] Meylaerts defines *habitus* as a set of dispositions that 'engender practices, perceptions, and attitudes […]. Under the influence of its social position and its individual and collective past, every cultural actor thus develops (and continues to develop) a social identity: a certain representation of the world and of his position therein'. (See Reine Meylaerts, 'Conceptualizing the Translator as a Historical Subject in Multilingual Environments, A Challenge for Descriptive Translation Studies?', in *Charting the Future of Translation History*, ed. by Paul Bandia and Georges. L. Bastin (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2006), pp. 59–79 (p. 60).)

danger of going there, owing to their involvement in women's suffrage' and eight of their twelve children who survived into adulthood 'contributed immeasurably to [George] Lansbury's activities in municipal and national politics'.[119] His youngest child could not help, therefore, but be influenced to some degree by her father's interest in and prolonged visit to the Soviet Union in 1920, and the publication of his book. Lansbury emulated her father by producing a literary response to her own Soviet experiences; comparing the format, Socialist observations and zealous tone, the parallels with *What I Saw in Russia* are clear.[120]

The state of political instability in the UK during the 1920s, reaching a peak with the General Strike in 1926, suggests the second *habitus*-forming


£2,021!
YOUR PAPER
BREAKS ALL RECORDS
Daily Worker
No. 3128
REGISTERED AT THE G.P.O. AS A NEWSPAPER
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 1940
Fighting Policy Wins New Readers
By WILLIAM RUST
YES, WE'VE DONE IT! OVER £2,000 IN THE FIGHTING FUND THIS MONTH AND ALL RECORDS BROKEN. IT SEEMED IMPOSSIBLE, BUT ONCE AGAIN THE DAILY WORKER HAS SURPRISED EVERYBODY AND THIS TIME PULLED OFF ITS MOST AMAZING ACHIEVEMENT. MOST HEARTY THANKS TO ALL OUR GENEROUS SUPPORTERS. CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL OUR READERS AND A SPECIAL WORD OF PRAISE TO VIOLET LANSBURY WHO HAS LED THE FIGHTING FUND THROUGH JANUARY WITH SUCH FLYING COLOURS.
During January, 1940, the Daily Worker has made newspaper history, working-class history. The Fighting Fund is the barometer of the paper's worth, the test of the readers' support and the proof of its punch and power.
We asked for £2,000 because wartime conditions made it impossible to continue on the old financial basis. Our readers have given us the money. Without the extra money we could not carry on. Thus the control of the paper is in the hands of the readers.
This £2,000 is a magnificent demonstration of our readers'
Nomination Today
Violet Lansbury gives
WARMEST THANKS!
Mannerhe
Recruitin
In Londo
IT was stated in London yesterday on the best pu
that the London representatives of the White
" Government " has received official permission t
for General Mannerheim in London.
MINIST
SON A'
ADMIR

Figure 2.3 A rare photograph of Violet Lansbury, *Daily Worker* newspaper, 1 February 1940 (front page).[121]

[119] Shepherd, 'A Life on the Left', p. 150.

[120] Similarly, when Lansbury returned from Russia and arrived for work in 1940 at the Socialist newspaper *Daily Worker*, she invoked her father's memory: 'I have been inspired by the warm welcome given to me personally by a large number of *Daily Worker* supporters who over 20 years ago, when there was no *Daily Worker*, helped my father with the pre-Odhams *Daily Herald*.' *Daily Worker*, 1 February 1940, available at: *UKPressOnline,* <https://www.ukpressonline.co.uk/ukpressonline/database/search/preview.jsp?fileName=DWMS_1st_1940_02_01_001&sr=1> [accessed 10 March 2023].

[121] Ibid.

event in Lansbury's life. This instability likely prompted her decision to leave. Politically active British citizens, as we have already seen with Manning (and Wettlin – in Chapter 3 – who left an impoverished United States around the time of the Great Depression), became motivated by the social failings around them to consider a new life elsewhere, ideally in a political system working towards a Socialist future. Graziosi refers to such political optimists who left for the USSR by a Soviet stump compound: *politemigranty* (literally, political emigrants, or as Graziosi defines it, 'political refugees').[122] Lansbury fits into this category. Her departure from England in 1925, at the age of twenty-five, positions her among the earliest *politemigranty*.[123] According to Graziosi's research, most of the 5,503 *politemigranty* who were allowed into the USSR in 1922 'asked to work in agriculture'.[124] Lansbury never worked in such a setting. Differing from the majority of *politemigranty* and even her fellow émigrée translators Manning and Wettlin (who worked respectively as a teacher in Mozhaisk and at the car assembly site for the Ford Motor Company in Nizhnii Novgorod),[125] Lansbury enrolled as a student at Sverdlovsk University before becoming a translator and interpreter in Moscow. Contravening another trend from 1926 when 'the influx of foreigners sharply decreased' and *politemigranty* began to abandon the USSR,[126] she stayed for at least a decade – 1921–35 – before deciding to leave. In her memoirs, she indicates that the decision in 1935 to return to the UK came 'many years before I finally made the break'.[127] She elucidates neither exact reasons for leaving, nor the precise date, but her arrival at the *Daily Worker* in February 1940 offers a helpful marker. Her departure – which, according to her memoir, almost certainly took place after the Stalinist show trials and the Great Purge – would have coincided with the climate of renewed suspicion towards foreigners, described as a key development in Soviet life in Wettlin's autobiography too.[128] Whatever the reason, Lansbury's commitment to socialism back in the UK remained intact. In the final chapter of her book, she even projects apparent blame at her departure back on herself:

[122] Graziosi, 'Foreign Workers in Soviet Russia', p. 38.

[123] Ibid.

[124] Graziosi, 'Foreign Workers in Soviet Russia', p. 39.

[125] The Nizhnii Novgorod Ford Motor Company factory was established in February 1930. See Boris M. Shpotov, 'The Case of US Companies in Russia-USSR: Ford in 1920s–1930s', in *American Firms in Europe (1880–1980. Strategy, Identity, Perception and Performance*, ed. by Hubert Bonin (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 2008) [excerpt online] Available at: <https://doi.org/10.3917/droz.bonin.2008.01.0435> [accessed 11 May 2022].

[126] Ibid.

[127] Lansbury, *An Englishwoman*, p. 324.

[128] Margaret Wettlin, *Fifty Russian Winters* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1994), p. 121.

> […] why did I leave it?
>
> It is not easy to explain. For one thing, I am conscious that many who pick this book and turn its pages will shrug their shoulders and say that if I left the Soviet Union, there must be something wrong with it. I would prefer them to indulge in the shrug, if they must, and seek the wrong, if wrong there has to be, not in the Soviet Union, or the system of government there, but rather in me, myself.[129]

On re-prints alone, *An Englishwoman in the USSR* can be regarded a publishing success, representative of the target readership's curiosity about the newly formed Soviet Union. Dedicated to her children – Lev, George and Anna Elizabeth – it was first published by Putnam in October 1940 and reprinted twice: in January 1941 and March 1942. The book consists of thirteen chapters, beginning with her introduction in 1920 to Russian employment, as a typist for five years at the first Russian Trade Delegation (which later became the Soviet Embassy) in London, and to British ignorance, in particular regarding Anglo-Soviet relations:

> I call to mind recently a working woman who, surprised, said: 'But all Russians are Jews, aren't they?' And I asked myself, where is the education, the culture, all these good things, which the civilised people of Britain are supposed to possess? How can one hope to get people to understand what is going on in the Soviet Union, when they do not even know what a vast country it is, what a variety of nationalities are to be found there? And holding the views I do, is it surprising that I should then ask myself: is all this ignorance deliberately fostered? And, turning to the newspapers of the last few months and seeing the sort of news one finds in them about the Soviet Union, am I to be blamed for believing that this ignorance is the result of a calculated policy?[130]

[129] Lansbury, *An Englishwoman*, p. 324. It is surprising, given her determined ideological support, that Lansbury (and her father and politically active older sister, Daisy Postgate) does not have a British Intelligence file of her own, but rather features as a bit part in her British Communist Party husband Clemens Dutt's more copious files (three batches spanning activities from 1942 to 1954). Hundreds of indirectly related documents generated through SIS surveillance of Clemens have informed my research on Lansbury, alongside her memoir and archived copies of *Daily Worker* newspaper. I have also drawn on archived correspondence scattered across two locations (the Labour History Archive & Study Centre at Spinningfields in Manchester and Hull University Archives (HUA)); reviews; and the scant surviving texts of Lansbury's translation work for Progress.

[130] Lansbury, *An Englishwoman*, pp. 4–5.

Lansbury's memoir proceeds in the same vein as an autobiographical Bildungsroman, in which she effectively produced her own 'narrative of education, apprenticeship, and incorporation into society', as per Smith's and Watson's definition of the genre.[131] *An Englishwoman in the USSR* progresses through the author's acquaintance with Russian, Latvian and Ukrainian colleagues at the Embassy, her efforts to learn and speak Russian, emigration to the Soviet Union in October 1925 and desire 'to fathom' the 'great October Revolution and the Soviet Government'.[132] She describes the period (November 1925–early 1926) spent at Sverdlovsk University, where she attended a typical, local university student's Communist curriculum but, in her case, with a view to immersing herself in and learning the Russian language and Marxist-Leninist dialectics. On completion of her course, she returned to Moscow and, in November 1926, married the Moscow-based Professor of Eastern History at the Sun Yat Sen University, Igor Mikhailovich Reissner. Lansbury and Reissner had two sons, but the couple later separated. In 1933, she met Clemens Palme Dutt, a fellow Moscow-based translator of Russian ideological texts and founder member with his younger brother Rajani of the British Communist Party (the CPGB).[133] Dutt and Lansbury started living together in 1936, married in 1938, and had a daughter, Anna Elizabeth. Lansbury's memoir makes no mention of these events. She does not include references to her and Reissner divorcing or her new relationship with Dutt beginning, but the memoir concludes with her return to Britain around 1940, where the Dutts continued to dedicate their lives to communism.[134]

[131] Smith and Watson, *Reading Autobiography*, p. 128.

[132] Lansbury, *An Englishwoman*, p. 22.

[133] During his career (1934–68[?]) as a translator and editor for FLPH/Progress, Clemens Palme Dutt produced a range of political-science texts in English translation, including key works by Friedrich Engels and Karl Marx.

[134] Dutt was publicly thanked in *Daily Worker* on the occasion of his sixtieth birthday by CPGB General Secretary Harry Pollitt. Pollitt wrote that '[N]ot only the members of our Party but the English-reading public has to thank you for the translation or editing of Marxist classics that were previously untranslated or were available only in imperfect versions' (15 April 1953, cutting from *Daily Worker*, BIA, ref.: KV-2-2505_1, p. 53/104). The Dutts shared these same professional pursuits, a mutual camaraderie and scrutiny by British Intelligence with Ralph Parker, *Daily Worker*'s Moscow correspondent from 1941, and also the Penguin Modern Classics translator of *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* (1963). See Dutt's letter to Margaret Mynatt, Central Books, Ltd., (the Communist Party Bookshop) dated 4 April 1953, BIA, ref.: KV-2-2505_1, p. 55/104.

Agent of plurality, contradictory *habitus*

Conscious of the need to work in 'a land where there is no unemployment',[135] Lansbury translated 'short letters, written by young pioneers in Russian to young Communist pioneers in England'.[136] A more extensive period of employment followed (both during and beyond her residence in the USSR) at the Foreign Workers' Co-operative Publishing House (later the Foreign Languages' Publishing House and then Progress).[137] Lansbury is typical of the many 'who came to work at the Foreign Workers' Co-operative Publishing House [who] had originally come to the Soviet Union as tourists, and, having looked around, had seen an opportunity of staying in Moscow, provided they found work. Their interest in the country urged them to seek work'.[138] She spent her time translating and editing Soviet science-fiction anthologies,[139] novels by Socialist Realist authors (including Aleksandr Fadeev's *The Young Guard*,[140] and Ukrainian author Pavlo [Pavel] Beilin's *A Story about One Big Family*),[141] political-science textbooks and biographies (of Lenin, Soviet scientists and Aleksei Tolstoy's *Nikita's Childhood*).[142] Lansbury believed that the translation work she accomplished was her 'contribution to the work of the country; and at the same time it brought me in a sufficiently good income'.[143] Her role at the Foreign Workers' Co-operative Publishing House also facilitated her route to prized language-related positions, usually only entrusted to unwavering supporters of the system. The All-Union

[135] Lansbury, *An Englishwoman*, p. 262.

[136] Ibid., p. 153.

[137] Ibid., p. 238.

[138] Ibid.

[139] *A Visitor from Outer Space: Science-Fiction Stories by Soviet Writers*, originally published by FLPH in 1961 but reissued by Fredonia Books (Amsterdam) in 2001. The anthology contains stories by Aleksandr Beliaev, the Strugatskii brothers, Aleksandr Kazantsev, Georgi Gurevich and Volodymyr Savchenko. Lansbury also edited and co-translated an anthology of Konstantin Tsiolkovskii's fiction and articles, *Call of the Cosmos* (Moscow: FLPH, 1960) – described on Goodreads as 'still the definitive collection of Tsiolkovsky's writings in English translation' (see: <https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/4859322-the-call-of-the-cosmos> [accessed 11 March 2023]) – and Sergei Mstislavskii's novel *Rook-Herald of Spring*: *A Story about N. Bauman* (Moscow: FLPH, 1955) (*Grach, ptitsa vesenniaia*, 1937).

[140] Aleksandr Fadeev *The Young Guard*, trans. by Violet Dutt (Moscow: FLPH, 195?) (*Molodaia gvardiia*, 1946).

[141] Pavlo [Pavel] Beilin, *A Story about One Big Family*, trans. by Violet Dutt (Moscow: FLPH, 1954) (*Povest' odnoi bol'shoi rodne*, 1953).

[142] Aleksei Tolstoi, *Nikita's Childhood*, trans. by Violet Dutt (Moscow: FLPH, 195-?/ and London: Hutchinson's International Authors, 1945) [*Detstvo Nikity*, 1920].

[143] Lansbury, *An Englishwoman*, p. 239.

Council of Trade Unions invited Lansbury in 1932, for example, to work as a Russian-English interpreter accompanying a visiting trade delegation (from Britain and Australia) across key sites of industrial interest in the Soviet Union.[144] Lansbury tempered her initial surprise at the invitation once she realized that:

> I had lived in the Soviet Union long enough to understand the language sufficiently well for interpreting purposes; moreover I was working on translations, true not independently, and my translations always had to be carefully edited. But I had had sufficient time to arrive at some understanding of what was going on in the country; in addition, there was every reason to believe that I would understand my own fellow-countrymen.[145]

Lansbury's account does not always favour her fellow-countrymen, however, and her 'understanding of what was going on in the country' raised questions among her reviewers. Throughout her autobiography, she offers eager observations about the Soviet nation's bright future, condemning traitors and kulaks threatening its success as well as foreign spies conspiring against it. She singled out the 1933 trial of Metropolitan-Vickers British engineers, who were convicted of wrecking and espionage,[146] as an event that made her feel 'ashamed to be English'.[147] Her narrative mutates from mainstream ideological enthusiasm to extreme endorsement of show trials and oppression on a macro scale.[148] Of the kulaks, 'rich peasants exploiting

[144] Ibid., pp. 265–308.

[145] Ibid., p. 263.

[146] The trial triggered 'a crisis in Anglo-Soviet relations […] more profound than appearances at the time suggested or historical studies since indicate, not only between the two countries but also within the murky realm of Soviet internal affairs, a crisis also perhaps symbolic of the entire Western world's diplomatic conflict with the Soviet Union between the world wars' (from G. L. Owen, 'The Metro-Vickers Crisis: Anglo-Soviet Relations between Trade Agreements, 1932–1934', *The Slavonic and East European Review*, Vol. 49:114 (1971), 92–112. Available at: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4206324> [accessed 15 June 2022], (p. 92)).

[147] Lansbury, *An Englishwoman*, p. 224.

[148] Lansbury describes as 'ridiculous' the Bolshevik politician, Nikolai Bukharin's theory that 'rich peasants should be encouraged to make the most of their individual enterprises, to grow rich, and that they would naturally gradually grow towards the Socialist system' (Lansbury, *An Englishwoman*, p. 101). It is worth noting that her criticism is retrospective. Lansbury would have been aware at the time of writing that Bukharin had already been found guilty in the third (and most publicized) of the show trials and executed in the Great Purge of March 1938 (see *Soviet Culture and Power: A History in Documents, 1917–1953*, ed. by Katerina Clark et al. (New Haven and London: Yale University 2007),

the labour of poor peasants and enriching themselves at their expense',[149] she volunteers that:

> A kulak, moreover, getting richer and richer every day, has no incentive whatsoever to 'grow towards Socialism'. […] It would be contrary to the nature of the beast to expect kulaks, enriched, to change their spots.[150]

The solution, she professed, was to sweep away the feudal system, to deprive the kulaks of any measure of power to use 'against the Soviet Workers' Government'. She also relays micro instances where individuals suffer for their free-thinking: that of a neighbour, the Soviet agrarian economist and 'gifted literary amateur' Aleksandr Chaianov,[151] and a so-called Red Professor (Lansbury's train companion to Sverdlovsk University), referred to by first name only as Mischa [*sic*]. The latter, we are told, 'had formed part of the network which had been laid to undermine the Soviet Government'; resorting to metaphors (which proliferate her narrative), Lansbury explains that Mischa 'climbed the wrong tree, a tree which inevitably had to be cut down by those who were honestly leading the people to Socialism'.[152] She concludes that his 'career ended badly. He was convicted with many another to a number of years [*sic*] work, where his brilliant, misguided brain could have rest and time to think over things from a different angle'.[153] Chaianov suffered a different fate. Tried for expressing agrarian theories in favour of non-collectivized farming, he was sentenced to five years in a Kazakhstan

pp. 146–7). Lansbury's conversion to communism appears to have been sufficient by this point for her to be supportive of, even oblivious to the anti-foreigner climate gathering around her. Wettlin also acknowledged the seriousness of this changing situation and was forced by her own circumstances to recognize the likely repercussions. According to Alastair Kocho-Williams, '[b]y the end of 1938, the foreign diplomatic community was restricted to Moscow, and the NKVD did its best to isolate foreign diplomats from the Soviet people. The Soviet Union adopted a policy of containment in order to keep its citizens away from contact with foreigners and to prevent foreign surveillance of the Soviet Union'. (Alastair Kocho-Williams, 'The Soviet Diplomatic Corps and Stalin's Purges', *Slavonic and East European Review*, Vol. 86:1 (Jan. 2008), 90–110 (p. 93).)

[149] Lansbury, *An Englishwoman*, p. 101.

[150] Ibid.

[151] For more about Chaianov's cultural contributions between 1918 and 1928, see Muireann Maguire, 'Reflecting on Jeffrey Brooks', *The Firebird and the Fox*: The Unusual but True Adventures of a Soviet Agronomist', 2nd Contribution to the Forum about *The Firebird and the Fox: Russian Culture under Tsars and Bolsheviks* by Jeffrey Brooks, *Russian History*, 47:4, 254–64. https://doi.org/10.30965/18763316-12340009

[152] Lansbury, *An Englishwoman*, p. 99.

[153] Ibid.

labour camp and shot in 1937.[154] His wife, Olga Emmanuilovna, was also subsequently arrested and spent eighteen years in labour camps. In both Mischa's and Chaianov's cases, Lansbury's relief at the State's intervention is undisguised but, regarding Chaianov, she conveys discomfort at having 'accepted hospitality from those who afterwards turn traitor to all the principles one holds dear'.[155]

Lansbury's memoir satisfies Smith's and Watson's definition of the Bildungsroman as 'incorporating contemporary readers into a global imaginary of universal rights and responsibilities'.[156] *An Englishwoman in Russia* preaches to the converted within Britain's left-wing camp – appealing to readers like Eve Manning – but also strives to indoctrinate new readers into the Socialist ideology and furthering the cause of universal rights by her rhetoric. Her ability, however, to move seamlessly from Soviet eulogy to unquestioning condemnation of wreckers, kulaks and enemies of the State neither eludes nor convinces the observant or critical reader. Richard Derek (R.D.) Charques, a literary critic, himself an author of non-fiction texts on Russia,[157] and reviewer of Lansbury's book for *The Times* and *Times Literary Supplement*, homed in on the contradictory qualities of her life as a foreigner in the Soviet Union, with accusations not just of naivety but also of hypocrisy:

> This account of a period of 10 years, from 1925–1935, spent in Russia, principally in Moscow, is well-intentioned, somewhat scrappy, blameless in adherence to a code of pious enthusiasm and very naïve.

[154] According to Günther Schmitt, 'Chayanov's insistence on th[e] definition of peasant farms as family farms that did not hire outside labor was motivated by his "political" attempt to prevent the expropriation and collectivization of the peasant farms'. He concludes that 'it is not surprising that he was heavily attacked by Stalin and finally arrested and executed'. (Günther Schmitt, 'The Rediscovery of Alexander Chayanov', in *History of Political Economy* (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 1992), 24:4, 925–65, (p. 960).) Schmitt maintains that Chaianov was imprisoned in 1930, sentenced in 1937, and executed in (then) Alma-Ata in 1939. Maguire cites two Russian sources that confirm, however, 1937 as the year of death, while economist Mark Harrison, writing in the 1975 *Journal of Peasant Studies*, notes Solzhenitsyn's claim 'that Chayanov was in Alma-Ata at the time of his re-arrest and final disappearance in 1948' (see: <https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/economics/staff/mharrison/public/1975_jps_postprint.pdf>).

[155] Lansbury, *An Englishwoman*, p. 173.

[156] Smith and Watson, *Reading Autobiography*, p. 129.

[157] Charques wrote several texts on Russia and the Soviet Union during his career: *The Soviets and the Next War: the Present Case for Disarmament* (1932); *Soviet Education: Some Aspects of Cultural Revolution* (1932); *A Short History of Russia* (1956); *Between East and West: The Origins of Modern Russia, 862–1953* (1956); *Twilight of Imperial Russia* (1974).

> […] Violet Lansbury's life in Russia, it is stated on the wrapper, was 'that of an ordinary Soviet citizen'. This is precisely what it was not. There seems no need to make any bones about the fact that she lived the life of the spoilt and petted foreign Communist colony in Moscow – a highly privileged caste, at any rate until about 1935, when she returned to England, or just a little later, when the tribulations of foreign Communists throughout the U.S.S.R. began in earnest. Even after her marriage to a not quite ordinary Soviet citizen, a Professor of Oriental History in Moscow, she chose to retain her British nationality and such advantages as it might confer upon her. She describes 'a successful supper', in her early days in the capital, of ham, caviare, salted cucumbers, Russian-made gruyere cheese, and a Georgian wine. […] would the author maintain that this was the fare of the ordinary Soviet citizen of the time?[158]

Charques's review notes Lansbury's contributions as a translator and interpreter to Soviet life. But, when returning to her sense of shame at being English during the Metro-Vickers trial, he concludes (with barely disguised scorn) that '[a]ll things considered, it is possibly an advantage that her narrative stops short in time where it does'.[159] Five years later, in 1945, he also reviewed her translation of Aleksei Tolstoy's *Nikita's Childhood*, published by Hutchinson in their International Author series. Charques's critical assessment – the only review for this work – is perhaps still coloured by his previous observations of Lansbury's memoir:

> The conventional colloquialism of the English translation, it should be said, offers less than Alexei Tolstoy's quality here; indeed, it offers something rather different from the racy simplicity and ease of his narrative style, something altogether more self-conscious. Simplicity of word and phrase in Russian speech is easily lost in a translation into English, which in the ordinary way requires a quarter or a third more words than the Russian original, and which too often substitutes for such simplicity a mere turn of hackneyed conversational idiom.[160]

[158] Richard D. Charques, 'In Soviet Russia, *An Englishwoman in the USSR*', *Times Literary Supplement*, 30 November 1940. Available at: <https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/EX1200055278/TLSH?u=exeter&sid=bookmark-TLSH&xid=962f79d7> [accessed 16 June 2022].

[159] Ibid.

[160] Richard D. Charques, 'Russian Childhood', *Times Literary Supplement*, 5 May 1945. Available at: <https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/EX1200063729/TLSH?u=exeter&sid=bookmark-TLSH&xid=5095f7a0> [accessed 16 June 2022].

Reviewers of Lansbury's other translations also rarely define the quality of her agency beyond 'matter-of-fact and adequate' or 'faulty but [the] general standard is good'.[161] Even if Lansbury's translations merited such tepid criticism, the placement for her Tolstoy translation – in the Hutchinson International Author series – is significant: it positions the translator among a network of promising and creditable company in the British literary translation milieu of the time. The series became home to a rich selection of translated Russian texts. Published in 1945, Lansbury's translation was one of the earliest. *Nikita's Childhood* was preceded only by *Russians Tell the Story: Sketches of the War* (1944), an anthology of personal narratives (including Il'ia Ehrenburg's), and two of Wanda Wasilewska's novels, *Rainbow: A Novel* (1943) and *Just Love* (1945), both translated by Edith Bone (see Chapter 3). The Hutchinson list included works by Russophone authors who would not feature in the Penguin list for many more years, if at all, such as the classic Golden-Age writers Nikolai Leskov and Vladimir Korolenko, and also contemporary Soviet authors: Valentin Kataev, Vasily Grossman, Mikhail Sholokhov, Mikhail Prishvin, Aleksei Novikov-Priboi, Leonid Leonov and Vladimir Dudintsev. Other translators who joined Lansbury at Hutchinson and went on to have successful careers in translation-publishing include David Magarshack, Rosemary Edmonds and Cedar Paul.[162] Hutchinson might justifiably be regarded as an effective springboard at that time to a career in translation.

Where a number of Lansbury's fellow Hutchinson translators went on to work for more than one UK-based publishing house, with repeat

[161] E. H. Carr's review in February 1956 of Lansbury's 1955 translation *Lenin: A Biography* describes the new publication as containing 'a large number of apparently meaningless variants, as well as some significant omissions and insertions'. He remarks that the 'personal cult [of Lenin] remains virtually undiminished' and 'nor has there been any alleviation of the treatment accorded to the defeated and condemned oppositionists'. In line with Lansbury's condemnation of Bukharin in her memoir, he especially is 'hounded rather more often than before'. Carr concludes that Lansbury's translation is 'matter-of-fact and adequate' (*TLS*, 10 February 1956). In 1966, F.M. Borras reviewed her translation of *Maxim Gorky: Letters* (1966, Progress Publishers) in the *Times Literary Supplement*. Borras singles out the book's inclusion of more than a hundred of Gorky's archived letters, many appearing in English for the first time thanks to Lansbury's work. Echoing Carr's view a decade earlier, he concludes that '[g]enerally speaking the letters in this book are those one would expect to find in a Soviet collection. In places the English of the translation is faulty but their general standard is good.'

[162] Magarshack translated Nikolai Leskov's *The Enchanted Pilgrim* (1946) and Mikhail Prishvin's *The Black Arab and Other Stories* (1947) for Hutchinson, and Edmonds translated Vasily Grossman's *Kolchugin's Youth*, published in 1946, four years before her Penguin commission to translate *Anna Karenin*. Communist and friend of Vera Traill, Cedar Paul translated Novikov-Priboi's *The Captain* for Hutchinson, published in 1946.

commissions and cameo careers in a variety of literary pursuits, Lansbury confined herself to only occasional science-fiction and political-science translations for Progress-Raduga. She resisted pursuing a similar career trajectory to her UK-based translator peers.[163] From the 1940s, following their departure from Russia, the Dutts found themselves – at times together, often apart – moving variously (first to Paris, then back to Moscow in the 1960s, Caversham, and finally, in Lansbury's case, Folkestone) on account of Dutt's frequent relocations as both a journalist and a Communist activist, and also often as a result of job precarity. Lansbury's only consistent employment during this period appears to be her *Daily Worker* column – 'Vi Lansbury's Weekly Chat'[164] – and managing the paper's Fighting Fund, a campaign aimed at raising money to fund the ongoing publication of the newspaper.[165]

According to a British Intelligence report dated 8 February 1952, both Dutts worked during the 1940s at 'The Lodge' in Whetstone, used by the TASS Agency as a radio listening station and base for the Soviet Monitor.[166] They lost their jobs, however, when the British authorities closed the monitoring station towards the end of 1951, after which, the report notes, they 'faced considerable difficulty in getting fresh employment and at one point he [Dutt] was considering buying a newspaper and tobacco shop'.[167] Dutt did not put this plan into practice and records show that he subsequently struggled to find a permanent stretch of work, barred as he

[163] Lansbury's version of *Nikita's Childhood* was reprinted three times by Raduga in Moscow, in 1957, 1977 and 1983.

[164] For an example, see page 6 of the 22 November 1940 issue of *Daily Worker* newspaper: <https://www.ukpressonline.co.uk/ukpressonline/database/search/preview.jsp?fileName=DWMS_1940_11_22_006&sr=1> [accessed 21 June 2022].

[165] Lansbury's regular Fighting Fund appeal enjoyed front-page visibility from May 1940 until the paper, first founded in 1930, 'was suppressed by the (Labour) British Government between January 1941 and September 1942, resuming publication when Russia became an ally against Nazi Germany' (*Daily Worker*, <https://digitorial.co.uk/publications/entry/daily-worker> [accessed 21 June 2022]). Lansbury's response to the City of London MP Sir George Broadbridge, who called for the paper to be suppressed, appeared – in vain – on the front page of the newspaper on 6 December 1940 (*Daily Worker* archive, *UK Press Online*, available at: <https://www.ukpressonline.co.uk/ukpressonline/view/pagview/DWMS_1940_12_06_001> [accessed 21 June 2022]). In the last edition of the paper prior to its temporary closure, Lansbury's Fighting Fund message channelled Lenin in an attempt to encourage funds: 'Tomorrow will be the anniversary of the death of Lenin. Can I appeal to all readers to commemorate this day by giving their support to the paper which is allied to the great cause the name of Lenin represents – the liberation of mankind' (20 January 1941).

[166] BIA, ref.: PF.41,956, KV-2-2505_3, p. 53/101 (8 February 1952).

[167] BIA, ref.: PF.41,956, KV-2-2505_1, p. 66/104.

was – like Traill and Budberg – from employment 'in the Government Service in any capacity'.[168] One near exception occurred after an intelligence report mused that 'it might be a good idea to employ him […] to extract from him certain scientific intelligence behind the Iron Curtain'.[169] Dutt successfully interviewed for a job as a translator at the (semi-governmental) Electrical Research Association, with a not inconsiderable salary of £650 and a start date of 'a week on Monday' but, following further scrutiny by the Director of Scientific Intelligence, the job offer was withdrawn. An intercepted telephone-call on 13 February 1952 confirmed that 'Clemens is feeling very low because he has been turned down for a job he thought he had got'. When asked about his prospects, Dutt replied: 'absolutely nothing'.[170]

The same call reveals that Lansbury 'has not got a job either', nor any intention of working until Dutt found himself a job. A fortnight later, another intercepted call between Dutt and Margaret Mynatt of the Communist bookshop Central Books confirmed Lansbury's stance. Asked whether 'Vi' might be persuaded to act as an interpreter for visiting Russian women during a three-week IWD [International Women's Delegation] visit, Dutt expressed doubt, adding that Vi is doing 'housework, she says she won't get a job until [I have] one'.[171] The evangelical Socialist rhetoric in Lansbury's memoir forms a stark (and curious) contrast with the work apathy presented in these reports, embodying what Meylaerts describes as 'an unstable interplay of a fragmented, plural and sometimes even contradictory habitus'.[172]

Conflicting factors in Lansbury's *habitus* manifest themselves to insightful effect in her memoir and SIS reports. On arrival in Russia, she honed the Lansbury-distilled, British sense of socialism to the point of Soviet entrenchment (presumably out of a desire first, then later out of a necessity to conform to her surroundings). Yet she was unable in practice to relinquish fully her upbringing. Like her parents, George and Bessie, who were married many years and had twelve children together, Lansbury had no objection to the institution of marriage. She described a female Embassy colleague in her book as 'something of a crank' for choosing to 'live alone, refusing to have her husband in the same house' despite the couple having a young son. ("'But why, Valentina? […] Don't you need your husband's companionship? And

[168] The British Government retained Dutt's particulars on a 'Warning list'. BIA, ref.: PF.41,956, KV-2-2505_2, p. 21/123 and p. 24/123.
[169] BIA, ref.: PF.41,956, KV-2-2505_2, p. 18/123 (24 January 1952).
[170] BIA, ref.: PF.41,956, KV-2-2505_2, p. 14/123.
[171] BIA, ref.: PF.41,956, KV-2-2505_2, p. 11/123 (27 February 1952).
[172] Meylaerts, 'The Multiple Lives of Translators', p. 107.

what does the boy think about having no father?'")[173] In a volte-face at the end of her memoir, however, Lansbury explains that she left her own sons in Russia – first in a boarding school near Moscow and then with her husband, Igor – in the belief that they were 'happier there […] than anywhere else in the world. It would have been nothing short of cruelty to bring two young Russian-speaking, Russian-bred boys here to England, where feeling against "foreigners" runs so high even in peace time'.[174] She maintained that:

> There is more safety in the Soviet Union against wars than anywhere else in the world. My sons are living in a land that will for ever strive to live in peace and prosperity, in a land which offers golden opportunities to the growing generation.[175]

SIS records and personal letters indicate that, with the passing of time, the political zeal Lansbury expressed in her coming-of-(Communist)-age memoir diminished. Instead, a similar energy manifested itself in matters of personal belief, as demonstrated in a letter of feminist agitation in 1954. The letter is to a 'Comrade –' (the surname has been blacked out in the correspondence) who sent Lansbury a copy of Lev Tolstoy's story *The Devil* (*D'iavol*, 1889) requesting her opinion.[176] The novella centres on the relationship between Evgenii Irtenev (a young landowner who inherits a failing, out-of-town, family estate) and a married village-girl, Stepanida, for whose sexual encounters Evgenii pays money over a period of several months while her husband is away. Evgenii breaks off relations after falling in love with the middle-class Liza Annenskaia, whom he marries. A year later, Stepanida re-renters his life when Liza employs her as a cleaner. Evgenii notices her but, despite feelings that he still has, he focuses instead on tending to his wife, who is pregnant, and to his estate. Liza gives birth to a daughter and, at around the same time, Evgenii learns that his estate is beginning to flourish. His happiness seems complete, until he sees Stepanida at a village dance. There, she returns his glances, and his feelings race out of control. Tormented over whether to resume an affair with her, Evgenii realizes the scandal such a decision will bring. He declares her a devil and, unable to quell his desire, commits suicide.

[173] Lansbury, *An Englishwoman*, p. 16.
[174] Ibid., pp. 324–5.
[175] Ibid., p. 325.
[176] Tolstoy wrote an alternative ending to *The Devil* in 1909, which was published in 1911. Lansbury's correspondence does not specify the version she read.

After briefly admiring the quality of the writing ('beautifully written, with no exaggerations or superfluous emotion'), Lansbury assesses the story's moral attributes and, in doing so, reveals the extent of her feminist ideals, also hinting at the state of her relationship with Dutt:

> it presents the colossal egoism of the male in a way I have not before encountered. You may be surprised, but this egoism of the male has been something that has surprised and angered me all my adult life. An attempt to discuss the story with my Communist husband over the breakfast table ended disastrously. […]
>
> Perhaps I am the last woman you should have introduced the story to, because these problems arise even in our present society, though perhaps you would want to deny it. The difference between the risk-all, care-free, generous disposition (Stepanida's not a prostitute, but an all too healthy wild animal) and the inhibited, society-ridden humbug Yevgeny still exists in England and, I feel sure, in Socialist society as well.[177]

Her letter concludes:

> By now you will have realised what I am about to admit: that in my old age I am a bit of a feminist and that I strongly believe in equality of the sexes and abolition of male egoism.[178]

Lansbury's feminist sentiments align with a family background steeped in the pursuit of women's suffrage. Yet, as she aged, she identified chauvinistic norms in both England and the USSR (despite a political agenda to address equal rights, as showcased in *Soviet Woman*), while expressing an increasing sense of powerlessness. She resigned herself to having 'no-one at all to talk to', both within her marriage and in Russia. In letters sent from Moscow in 1963, she describes her isolation in a place still as 'stimulating as nowhere else for me',[179] but not a place where she could end her years:

> I spend days and hours here with no-one at all to talk to. If I do meet people I am forced to talk Russian; no-one seems to want to listen to my English, alas! Clemens doesn't talk; if I talk, I continue as of old to make him angry and our conversations inevitably end in a thorough-going row![180]

[177] Letter from Lansbury to 'Comrade –', 9 July 1954, HUA.
[178] Ibid.
[179] Letter from Lansbury to 'Robin' [Page Arnot], 11 March 1963, HUA.
[180] Ibid.

The same detachment, or disengagement, applies to her work. Whereas others in this monograph found through translation a means for survival, for boosting self-esteem and acquiring visibility – a constant in times of flux and life uncertainty – Lansbury withdrew from the profession. Had she capitalized on her early opportunity at Hutchinson and progressed to other commercial publishers, Lansbury might have successfully built a career to carry her through her later years, while still accommodating her political interests. (Left-leaning publishers like Victor Gollancz, and even Allen Lane, for example, might have commissioned her for any number of politically oriented publications in the UK.) Instead, she pursued political priorities at the expense of personal productivity, development and, it seems, happiness, until ultimately reaching a point of stagnation. Lansbury, in this regard, is the antithesis of the subject of my next-but-one case study, Edith Bone.

3

Shifting ideologies: Translation in testing times

This chapter aims to demonstrate that despite sharing social similarities (such as economic, linguistic and political backgrounds; travel experiences; and historical moments), the translators Margaret Wettlin and Edith Bone diverge from their peers, Manning and Lansbury, on account of their dispositions, or *hexis*, and disaffection with communism. The first case study analyses Wettlin's progression from Communist sympathizer to victim of the regime. In the absence of a personal archive, Wettlin's microhistory has been constructed through a range of sources including her translations; paratexts; literary reviews; and her memoir, *Fifty Russian Winters*, in which she wrote about her life experience in Russia. Under Stalinist foreign policy, Wettlin opted to relinquish her US citizenship and become a Russian citizen. Her support for the regime wavered, however, when she was instructed to spy on her colleagues, although she did consent to do this for several years. When she ultimately stopped cooperating, Wettlin turned to translation at Progress Publishers to make a living and, in the process, became the globally recognized translator of Maksim Gorky's most famous work, *Mother* (*Mat'*). Despite an expansive list of publications (a bibliographical search indicates more than seventy translations of authors as diverse as Gorky, Nosov, Ostrovskii, Rasputin, Tolstoy, Trifonov, Uspenskaia), Wettlin earns no mention in Rachel May's *The Translator in the Text*, whereas her American forebear Isabel Hapgood, whose output by comparison fell far short, occupies at least some page space in her capacity as Garnett's peer.[1] This microhistory will form the first comprehensive exploration of Wettlin's life, career and translatorial persona, and of how her works have been received around the world.

The second case study, that of Hungarian-born Russian-English translator Edith Bone, utilizes archival records – nearly three decades of British Intelligence files and publishing correspondence about her translations – her

[1] May, *The Translator in the Text*, p. 25.

English-language memoir, *Seven Years Solitary*;[2] newspaper articles and reviews; extracts from letters in the Tate archive; BBC genome listings and British Pathé newsreel, to explain the role that translation and cultural mediation played in her much-publicized volte-face, from ardent Communist to anti-Soviet campaigner at the age of sixty-eight. Having spent her adult career as a translator-mediator producing works to support her ideological aspirations, Bone used the same means (i.e. literary translation) and public platforming to promulgate a very different message following her illegal imprisonment in a Hungarian jail: abhorrence of the Soviet regime. She translated Vladimir Dudintsev's *Not by Bread Alone* (*Ne khlebom edinym*, 1956) for Dutton/Hutchinson, published in 1957.[3] Described by Katerina Clark as 'the 1956 bombshell',[4] Dudintsev's novel was originally serialized in the Soviet journal *Novyi mir* (six years before Solzhenitsyn's *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* (*Odin den' Ivana Denisovicha*, 1962) appeared in the same literary journal). Bone's translation spent five weeks on the *New York Times* best-seller list and was hailed in reviews as a book to 'encourage publishers to bring out translations of other contemporary Soviet works'.[5] This microhistory details her trajectory – from young linguist with a humanitarian conscience, to Communist, prisoner and finally humanitarian activist – and explores the life events and dispositions that ultimately led her to anti-Soviet activism. Crucially, then, Bone's case study introduces the notion that literary translation can become the breeding ground for (personal and political) activism, a theme that segues into the final two case studies, dedicated specifically to women and translation activism.

Margaret (Peg) Wettlin (1907–2003): Survival by translation

From Great Depression to Great Terror …

Aged just twenty-five, New Jersey-born Wettlin left for Russia in September 1932, a full year before America formally recognized the USSR (on

[2] Edith Bone, *Seven Years Solitary* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1957).

[3] Vladimir Dudintsev, *Not by Bread Alone* (New York: E.P. Dutton; London: Hutchinson, 1957).

[4] Clark, *Moscow, the Fourth Rome*, p. 349.

[5] Walter Vickery, 'Review Vladimir Dudintsev, *Not by Bread Alone*', *The Slavic and East European Journal*, Vol. 2:1 (Spring 1958), 75–6 Available at: <https://doi.org/10.2307/304709>

16 November 1933). She did not return to live in the United States until 1980, aged seventy-three. The young woman was propelled towards the Soviet national experiment by events such as her family's bankruptcy and forced eviction, the country's general impoverishment during the Great Depression,[6] and a curiosity to find out 'Who were these Russians who had taken upon themselves the task of building a new society?'[7] Wettlin obtained permission from her high school principal (in Media, Pennsylvania, where she was working) to have one year's leave of absence to study in Russia. When he asked, 'How do I know you will not come back a Communist?', she reportedly cited the pursuit of an answer to this question as the very reason for wanting to go. She was posted to the American village attached to the Ford car-factory site in Nizhnii Novgorod (named Gorky at the time) to teach English to factory workers' children. Wettlin 'had no intention of making [teaching] her profession'; she regarded her post as a five-month stop-gap placement while the man she had met on her arrival and who later became her husband, the theatre director Andrei Efremov, was posted to work in Mongolia.[8] Wettlin eventually joined him in Mongolia and soon became pregnant. Her pregnancy coincided with turbulent political developments in Russia, sparked by the assassination of the politician and rival to Joseph Stalin, Sergei Kirov, in Leningrad in December 1934. Efremov and a pregnant Wettlin returned to Moscow in May 1935, where he taught at the Theatre Institute and she at the Foreign Languages Institute, right up until giving birth to their son.[9]

Eager to return to the United States for a visit with her new baby, Wettlin spent the summer of 1936 there, during which time she also gave a series of lectures in and around Philadelphia about her experiences of life in the USSR.

[6] Wettlin, *Fifty Russian Winters*, pp. 30–1.

[7] Ibid., p. 37.

[8] Ibid., p. 66.

[9] She described delivery as a 'no nonsense' affair, a system where 'they just slapped you down on a table with five other expectant mothers on five other tables […] There were no painkillers, […] not a whiff of ether, not a shot in the arm, not even when they sewed up your rents' (Wettlin, *Fifty Russian Winters*, p. 111). Lansbury, who also gave birth in Russia at around the same time and described the experience in her memoir, corroborates Wettlin's description. Of her own labour, Lansbury wrote with her trademark, Sovietized optimism and markedly different to Wettlin's tone: 'No chloroform in whiffs were offered to me; I did not even think of anything of the sort. Actually I learned from the women in the wards that chloroform and instruments are only used in special cases. […] But for many years Soviet doctors have been experimenting on painless childbirth, and in the year 1937 methods began to be used to mitigate the suffering of women during childbirth and even to eliminate all suffering. I cannot go into them here, for a good description of these experiments could only be given by a professional. Suffice it to say that problems of this sort are ever foremost in the Soviet medical world' (Lansbury, *An Englishwoman*, p. 194).

So successful were her talks that she was invited to return there the following summer (1937) for a lecture tour of the whole country. Wettlin was conscious of acting as a Russo-American mediator, a gatekeeping position which was short-lived, but which motivation returned in her subsequent service as a language-teacher and translator. As Wettlin remarked (with imagery that anticipates Olga Carlisle's evaluation of US-Soviet relations in the 1960s, see Chapter 4):

> My life, it seemed, was taking purposeful shape. I was in the unique position of being an integral part of two entirely different worlds, worlds that not only had no understanding of each other but had the most distorted conceptions, Americans seeing Russians as bearded Bolsheviks bristling with bombs, and Russians seeing Americans as bloated capitalists sucking the workers' blood.[10]

Wettlin's 1936 visit was cut short by the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War. Shortly after she returned to the USSR, Stalin's foreign policy changed. All foreigners (except accredited newspaper correspondents and diplomats) now had to take Soviet citizenship or leave the country. Wettlin stayed, declaring (in a style not dissimilar to Manning's or Lansbury's ideological rhetoric) her wish to become 'part of this courageous country and [live] in it on an equal footing with Andrei'.[11] Wettlin was aware of and impressed by the Soviet drive for equal opportunities compared to back home in the United States. When quizzed on the matter by her Soviet female friends, Wettlin replied (to her friends' amusement):

> Most Americans still think a woman's place is in the home. I don't think I'd have much chance of keeping my job in the conservative town where I taught if I got married. The chances would be less if I had children, and absolutely nil if I had a child out of wedlock.[12]

Wettlin's aspirations, however, to bring Russian insight to an American audience – the cross-cultural calling she had referred to as a 'meaningful pattern' – needed reassessment. Now stuck in the USSR, Wettlin relied on her languages for employment. Towards the end of the 1930s, parasitism in the Soviet Union – summarized by Lenin's slogan 'whoever does not work, shall not eat!' (*kto ne rabotaet, tot ne est!*) – became a criminal offence punishable

[10] Wettlin, *Fifty Russian Winters*, p. 114.
[11] Ibid., p. 122.
[12] Ibid., p. 109.

by prison.[13] Amidst rising anti-foreigner sentiment, Wettlin had extra reason to be seen to be working at least as hard as the rest of the nation. Between 1936 and the Soviet Union's entry into the Second World War, Wettlin taught English to Russian students who, to her satisfaction, and in keeping with her own advocacy for language-learning and cultural immersion as a means for political engagement, 'were not to be language teachers. They were to work with Soviet statesmen engaged in international affairs at a time when international affairs were at a boil'.[14]

In 1940, unbeknown to Efremov, the KGB took Wettlin to the secret-police headquarters in Moscow's Lubianka, where they proposed that she root out 'the most treacherous of all enemies' by spying on her foreign-language students and colleagues to establish '[i]f they are honest citizens' and if not, then 'we've got to know that, too'.[15] She describes herself in her memoir as being 'dumbstruck' on learning of the subsequent arrest of an acquaintance's wife and she blamed herself.[16] Russia's Great Patriotic War offered Wettlin some reprieve; she, her husband and their two young children spent nomadic months travelling from Moscow to the Caucasus, to Tbilisi, Siberia and back to Moscow in spring 1943. When the war finished, Wettlin faced the same issue of employment, she 'could not just sit at home and write a book, [she] had to work somewhere in order to get ration cards'.[17]

Tipped off by a friend, Wettlin obtained work as a translator at the Press Department at the All-Union Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries (*Vsesoiuznoe Obshchestvo Kultur'noi Sviazi s Zagranitsei*, known by the acronym VOKS). Office-based translation work was still not enough to satisfy Wettlin, though.[18] Now living in Latvia, she accepted an invitation to teach a course in English at Riga's State Pedagogical Institute, which put her in the path of the social contacts she craved. These people, however, were also of interest to the security services, and her espionage duties were reinstated, a task she described as 'sordid'.[19] Whereas she had felt like 'a medal had been

[13] Golfo Alexopoulos, 'Food: Whoever Does Not Work, Shall Not Eat', in *Illness and Inhumanity in Stalin's Gulag* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017), pp. 19–43, p. 19. Available at: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1n2tvrh.7> [accessed 16 March 2023]. Joseph Brodsky is an example of Soviet literary intelligentsia tried for parasitism and found guilty in 1962, see: Emily Lygo, 'Translation and the Cold War', in *Handbook of Translation and Politics* (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2018), p. 446.

[14] Wettlin, *Fifty Russian Winters*, p. 141.

[15] Ibid., p. 145.

[16] Ibid., p. 147.

[17] Ibid., p. 258.

[18] Ibid., p. 266.

[19] Ibid.

pinned to [her] chest' when first asked in 1940 to report on colleagues,[20] Wettlin realized now, in the words of Harrison Salisbury, author of the preface to her memoir, that 'like millions, they were trapped in the cage of lies that Russia had become'.[21] When the KGB arrested the two colleagues on whom Wettlin had specifically been asked to report,[22] she finally refused to assist them. She turned solely to translation and, in doing so, to the business of soft power. Wettlin worked as a literary translator for Progress Publishers in Moscow where, as Emily Lygo has observed:

> The translators employed by Progress were often native English speakers who were living in the USSR or other Soviet bloc countries because of their political convictions, or marriage, or both. These publications, as much as domestic ones, formed part of the USSR's Cold War cultural diplomacy, shaping the image of the USSR abroad through its cultural exports.[23]

… to prodigious translator

Wettlin's tenure at Progress put her in contact with fellow literary translator, British-born Ivy Litvinov, with whom she became close friends. Litvinov tackled Pushkin and Wettlin tackled Gorky, to Litvinov's amusement, who declared 'Oh, Peg, if I was on a desert island and had my choice of two books, Gorky or the telephone directory, I'd take the directory, you bet!'[24] Sometimes they worked together (for example on Iurii Trifonov's *Students* (*Studenty*, 1952) in 1953, Elena Uspenskaia's *Our Summer: A Novel* (*Nashe leto: Roman*, 1953) published in 1954, and other texts) during the 'bad times' of the post-war years.[25] The Stalinist clampdown – so-called *Zhdanovshchina*,

[20] Ibid.

[21] Harrison Salisbury, 'Introduction', in Margaret Wettlin, *Fifty Russian Winters* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1994), p. vii.

[22] A fellow American English teacher Mrs Davis and Tamara (no surname provided), a Latvian-born teacher who subsequently became a professor of European literature.

[23] Lygo, 'Translation and the Cold War', p. 446.

[24] Wettlin, *Fifty Russian Winters*, p. 275.

[25] Litvinov was referring to the era in which she and Wettlin found themselves trying to survive in Stalinist Russia. Wettlin herself described the time as 'never worse. […] With maniacal ferocity Stalin attacked everything vibrant and viable in Soviet culture' (Wettlin, *Fifty Russian Winters*, p. 277). Striking as different a tone again from Lansbury's appraisal of Soviet science, Wettlin continued 'Besides the irreparable damage he [Stalin] did to Soviet science by denying the validity and prohibiting the practice of such branches as genetics and cybernetics, he rang the death knell of Soviet art […]. Original literary talent was squelched by newspaper denunciations' (ibid.).

initiated by Soviet culture ideologist and politician Andrei Zhdanov in 1946 – on science, the arts, music and literature affected Wettlin and her husband directly. Efremov fell victim to an accusation of 'cosmopolitanism', which was at that time tantamount to becoming a non-person. Katerina Clark offers the following insight into a label of this kind:

> In the thirties it [the term 'cosmopolitan'] was rarely used in the Soviet press and did not have particularly positive connotations; in the late 1940s, the term emerged to prominence as the pejorative in the official campaign against things Western in general and Jews in particular […].[26]

Clark identifies post-1937 as the era when 'a spate of books […] warned about how foreign governments were sending "spies and diversants" to the Soviet Union, including some "in the guise of actors, directors and other cultural workers"'.[27] In this atmosphere, Efremov was repeatedly rejected from job applications and, in the late 1940s, he found himself unemployed. Wettlin (unaware of the full extent of her husband's situation) was required to do 'swaths and swaths of translation to support [their] family'.[28] Unlike Litvinov who, as a Kremlin wife and at her own admission, 'pursued her translation work solely for the sake of pin money' (but arguably had her husband's serious political concerns to consider too),[29] Wettlin 'lay awake at nights wondering what would become of the children if anything happened' to her.[30] Through the kindness of a friend, Efremov eventually found work in Tashkent. Until then, Wettlin's translation work supported them, which may explain the volume of works attributed to her.

Reviews of her translations are few (mostly appearing in the Western press towards the end of her career) and mixed. One of the longer commentaries appeared in 1972 in the *Times Literary Supplement* regarding Wettlin's 1971 translation of village-prose writer Vladimir Soloukhin's (1924–97) short-story collection *White Grass* (*Belaia trava*, 1961), borrowing the title from one of the sixteen comprising stories. Her anonymous reviewer wrote that:

> the English of *White Grass* is full of ineptitudes. The use of 'pal' for instance might pass if the whole book were to be thought of as in American

[26] Clark, *Moscow, the Fourth Rome*, p. 5.
[27] Ibid., p. 349.
[28] Wettlin, *Fifty Russian Winters,* p. 279.
[29] Brigid O'Keeffe, 'The Woman Always Pays: The Lives of Ivy Litvinov', *Slavonic and East European Review*, Vol. 97:3 (Jul. 2019), 501–28, p. 513 <https://doi.org/10.5699/slaveasteurorev2.97.3.0501>
[30] Wettlin, *Fifty Russian Winters,* p. 279.

> English, but it isn't; the translator drags out of her reading the phrase 'fess up' which surely died out soon after the publication of Little Women. She uses 'a permanent' instead of 'a perm', 'the Armenian radio' instead of 'Radio Armenia' (a complete change of meaning), and we have the phrase 'lessons in math and draughting'. Worst of all is 'white grass' itself; the title piece is an idyllic little sketch about some sweet-scented, feathery white flower whose name no-one seems to know – perhaps meadowsweet or an umbellifer, but certainly not grass. The translator has fallen into the old trap of *trava*, which means sometimes "grass" and sometimes "plant". Progress Publishers ought to make up their minds whether they want their translations in American English or English English, and it would probably help if they had their work checked by natives who are either still resident in their country or have only very recently left.[31]

The reviewer's criticism is harsh, but misplaced. The occasional Americanisms, which would have been noticeable to mid-twentieth-century British-English readers, are not so many as to affect a reader's overall enjoyment. Similarly, the reviewer attributes too much error to Wettlin's apparent mistranslation of the title. The plot of the story hinges around each character's inability to identify the plant by its proper name. In this context, Wettlin's use of grass instead of plant supports the story's repeated motif of botanical misidentification. It is likely the translator thought she was amplifying this dramatic effect by her lexical choice. Where Wettlin's translation suffers, however, is in replicating Soloukhin's idiosyncratic style, which in Russian manages to be economic, yet still imbued with feeling. The following source passage, for example, embodies an elegance which Wettlin's rendering fails to recreate by her unadorned repetition of 'green' and absence of the source text's emotive verb '*vosklitsat'*', 'to exclaim'. Solukhin's use of the verb introduces a rare and, therefore, arresting moment of human appreciation of nature's 'wondrous beauty':

> В следующую долю внимания мы уже различим, что то, что казалось нам просто зеленью, вовсе не просто зелень, а нечто подробное и сложное. И в самом деле, натянуть бы около воды ровную зеленую парусину, то-то была дивная красота, то-то восклицали бы мы: "Земная благодать!" – глядя на ровную зеленую парусину.
>
> (Soloukhin, 1961)

[31] Anon., 'Fields of Russia, Vladimir Soloukhin *White Grass*', *Times Literary Supplement*, 5 May 1972. Available at: <link.gale.com/apps/doc/EX1200380663/TLSH?u=exeter&sid=bookmark-TLSH&xid=c107c226> [accessed 5 January 2022].

> On further examination, we discern that what had simply looked green to us, is not simply green at all, but something intricate and complex. If, just supposing, you could stretch it out alongside the water, a solid-green sheet of canvas, then it would have a wondrous beauty about it, we would exclaim: 'Earthly Grace!' just to glimpse this solid-green canvas.
>
> (My literal translation)

> A further focusing of attention reveals that what had first been accepted as simply green is not at all simply green; it is an intricate and composite green. If we were to spread a tarpaulin painted solid green beside the water – that would be something!
>
> Rare Beauty! Divine loveliness!
>
> (Wettlin, 1971, p. 183)

In a review of another translation by Wettlin – Lydiia Lotman's *Afanasy Fet* – published in 1976, Richard Gustafson identifies a different flaw. He concludes that '[t]hose who read Russian […] should use their Russian texts of the poems while reading this study, because unfortunately the translations are less than accurate'.[32] Nortrud Pande's review of Wettlin's 1982 co-translation with Kevin Windle of Valentin Rasputin's *Money for Maria* and *Borrowed Time* makes a more nuanced evaluation of her practice that draws on contemporary translation theory:

> A comparison of a few translated passages with their original texts reveals the translators' easy command of both languages involved. It also shows their standpoint in the controversy over the theories of translation. A translator can either render the original text meticulously faithfully in the target language, or he can alter the original, add to or omit from it in order to turn out an attractive, marketable product. Considering some of the discrepancies between the originals and their translations it appears that Margaret Wettlin and, to some extent, Kevin Windle favour the second alternative.[33]

Pande cites general examples where Wettlin has paraphrased culture-specific realia, toned down obscenities, and omitted words of dialectal

[32] Richard Gustafson, 'Review Lydiia M. Lotman, Afanasy Fet. Tr. Margaret Wettlin', *Slavic and East European Journal*, Vol. 21:3 (Autumn 1977). Available at: <https://doi.org/10.2307/306597>, p. 409.

[33] Nortrud Pande, 'Reviewed Work(s): Money for Maria and Borrowed Time by Valentin Rasputin, Margaret Wettlin and Kevin Windle', *New Zealand Slavonic Journal*, Vol. 2 (1981), 97–8, p. 97. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40921574>.

origin, but concludes with a crucial observation that concerns the target audience: '*For a reader not too deeply involved with Soviet Russian life and language* [my italics] […] the two stories *Money for Maria and Borrowed Time* offer smooth and pleasurable reading'.[34] Herein lies, perhaps, the nub of Wettlin's translation agency. She spent most of her career at institutions (*Soviet Woman*, Progress Publishers and later Raduga) promulgating Soviet soft power, working primarily to meet the ideological needs of a global audience, and often at the expense of quality editing.[35] Wettlin's default *skopos* would have been to make texts accessible to international and perhaps uninitiated readers, rather than scholars, as intimated by Gustafson. It is to this endeavour, and specifically to Progress Publishers, that Wettlin owes her fame, and perhaps her survival. At around the same time that her husband lost his work, Progress commissioned her to translate Gorky's *Mother* (*Mat'*, 1906). First published in 1949, Wettlin's translation was eventually re-printed fourteen times, such was its global appeal.

By contrast with her awkward rendering of Soloukhin, Wettlin deftly recreates Gorky's distinctive descriptive style. Seemingly unfazed by the author's use of adjectives, vivid characterization, low-register and colloquialisms, and culture-specific realia, Wettlin produced a *Mother* that transports the target reader to a grinding, pre-revolutionary working-class source culture. In the opening scenes in particular, her lexical choices ('mercilessly', 'thrashed', 'turbid', 'deep-rooted') capture the sense of despair that Gorky powerfully conveys in the original, a mood which she enhances by her use of punctuation as a device to control tempo:

> Ругали и били детей тяжело, но пьянство и драки молодежи казались старикам вполне законным явлением, – когда отцы были молоды, они тоже пили и дрались, их тоже били матери и отцы. Жизнь всегда была такова, – она ровно и медленно текла куда-то мутным потоком годы и годы и вся была связана крепкими, давними привычками думать и делать одно и то же, изо дня в день.

[34] Pande, 'Reviewed', p. 98.

[35] Scholar Sarah Young, who has dedicated a blog post to Litvinov's translations, describes Progress translations as 'ranging from the merely laboured to the grossly inaccurate', qualities that Young describes as having earned them the label 'translationese' (characterized by word-for-word, syntactically awkward translations). Sarah Young, 'Discovering Ivy Litvinov', *Dr. Sarah J. Young, Russian Literature, History and Culture*, 3 March 2014 [blog] <http://sarahjyoung.com/site/2014/03/03/discovering-ivy-litvinov/> [accessed 18 June 2021].

> They cursed their children and beat them mercilessly, but the fighting and drinking of young people was taken as a matter of course; when the fathers had been young they too had fought and drunk, been thrashed in their turn by their mothers and fathers, life had always been like that. It flowed on in a turbid stream, slowly and evenly, year after year, and everything was bound together by deep-rooted habits of thinking and doing the same thing day after day.[36]

Wettlin completes the reader's immersion in the source culture by incorporating references to Russian culture-specific realia, such as 'samovar', 'muzhik', 'verst', 'dessiatine', the meanings of which – in the absence of footnotes – rely on context, but are not so frequent as to alienate the reader. Where Wettlin excels in recreating Gorky's narrative, transporting the reader to turn-of-the-century Russian turmoil (social and political), she occasionally breaks the spell when she allows slight incongruities to infuse the dialogue. This is a similar criticism to that raised by her *White Grass* reviewer, but here the effect is more obviously at odds with Gorky's style. In part two, for example, Mikhail Vlassov shouts at his wife, Pelageia: 'Не твое дело, сволочь! Я любовницу заведу …', which translates literally as 'That's none of your business, you bastard! I'm going to take a lover …'. Wettlin's version makes skilful, interchangeable use of 'bitch' and 'son of a bitch' to capture the Russian (unisex) *svoloch*' (bastard), but she then softens the final impact: 'That's none of your business, you bitch! I'll go get myself a girl if I like!'[37] Her repeated use of 'sons of bitches' as a catch-all obscenity, despite its convenience, risks breaking the reader's suspension of disbelief through the lack of variation. Similarly, in Part Three, Wettlin tries to render the affection encapsulated in the Russian diminutive 'Mamasha', which Pelageia's now adult son, Pavel, a trainee revolutionary, uses for the first time to address his mother. Here, she introduces 'Mummy' where Ma would probably be more age-appropriate (for all concerned). Wettlin relies on this endearment at tender moments throughout the story, jarring the modern reader every time.

But such criticisms are inconsequential compared to the astonishing longevity and geographical reach of Wettlin's translation, both of which suggest her rendering was suited 'for a reader not too deeply involved with

[36] Maksim Gorky, *Mat'; Vospominaniia* (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1985), part 1 available at: <https://www.litres.ru/book/maksim-gorkiy/mat-635805/chitat-onlayn/>; Maxim Gorky, *Mother*, trans. by Margaret Wettlin (Moscow: Progress, 1980) available at: <https://archive.org/details/in.ernet.dli.2015.61395/page/n1/mode/2up?view=theater> [accessed 14 November 2023], p. 17.

[37] Maxim Gorky, *Mother*, trans. by Margaret Wettlin, p. 18.

Soviet Russian life and language'.[38] Of *Mother*, regarded as Gorky's most famous work, Terras states, 'it is difficult to name a work of Russian literature which has had more influence, political as well as literary'.[39] Thanks to the propagandizing aim of Progress Publishers, Wettlin's English translation was sold not only in the Anglophone West, but also across Asia and Africa, enjoying the same kind of global destinations as the *Soviet Woman* and *Soviet Literature* magazines (see also Manning, Chapter 2).[40] Her *Mother* was used as the pivot translation for versions produced in Ethiopia (from English into Amharic), for example, and in India (from English into regional languages).[41] The scale of distribution and international influence of the Gorky-Wettlin brand cannot, therefore, be emphasized enough: it is possible that Wettlin's *Mother* is one of the most-read, most-translated Progress novels ever.

It is significant that Progress commissioned Wettlin to translate key Russian and Soviet authors. According to Katherine Judelson, who translated Iulian Semionov's popular *Seventeen Moments of Spring* (*Semnadsat' mgnovenii vesny*, 1972), editorial staff at Progress would start translators on easy texts for journals and magazines, then fiction and then allow them to progress to Marxist teenage poetry. Thereafter, commissions would reflect the level of ability shown in a translator's work.[42] Wettlin's Progress career was

[38] In terms of reprints and distribution, Wettlin's translation surpasses Budberg's (earlier) translation of *Fragments from My Diary* (1940). I have been unable to obtain any Gorky titles translated by both Wettlin and Budberg. The opportunity to make direct textual comparison would yield valuable insight into how they each tackled the same subject. One of the few texts that may have elicited some overlap is Budberg's *The Collected Short Stories of Maxim Gorky* (n.d.) which she co-edited with US-based fellow Slavic émigré Avrahm Yarmolinsky. However, closer examination of the stories and the Note on the Translations (p. 404) that constitutes the very last page of the anthology confirms that Budberg was not heavily involved in collating and producing the publication. Three out of the fifteen stories are cited as having been translated by Budberg, but the concluding note qualifies that '[M]uch of the text has been revised by Avrahm Yarmolinsky, who is responsible for the translation of the remaining pieces'. Here, again, we detect from such tactful wording the inference that Yarmolinsky had a hand in producing every submitted story.

[39] Terras, *Handbook*, p. 181.

[40] Drawing a comparison with another – Western – publisher producing Gorky translations, it was only when Ronald Wilks translated *My Childhood*, *My University*, *My Apprenticeship* for Penguin during the late 1960s, early 1970s that Penguin's Gorky sales' figures began to flourish. Wilks expressed surprised delight when he found out that 100,000 copies of *My Childhood* had been sold in the space of six years (McAteer, 2021).

[41] See more in the volume *Translating Russian Literature in a Global Context*, ed. by Muireann Maguire and Cathy McAteer (Cambridge: Open Book Publisher, 2024), <https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0340>.

[42] Judelson in interview with McAteer, 2019.

book-ended with Gorky translations: *Selected Works in Two Volumes* in 1948 and *The Life of Matvei Kozhemyakin* in 1980.[43] We can assume from the fact that she was commissioned to translate works by authors who were either canonized classics or regular contributors to Soviet bookshelves (in the first category, writers like Gorky, Tolstoy and the playwright A.N. Ostrovskii; in the second, Samuil Marshak and Iurii Trifonov), that she satisfied certain in-house criteria at Progress. These criteria may have been applied to political orthodoxy as well as creative ability. Her commission to translate Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*, for example, should be regarded as a particularly honourable task – Progress would not have entrusted such a key Russian classic with a novice translator – which places Wettlin in a long tradition of female *Karenina* translators. Wettlin also followed a succession of predecessors in translating the nineteenth-century playwright Ostrovskii (Garnett's *The Storm* (1899); George Rapall Noyes's 1917 anthology; David Magarshack's *Easy Money*, *Every Wise Man Stumbles*, and *Wolves and Sheep* (1944); Eugene Bristow's 1969 anthology). Published in 1974 and in a departure from the usual Progress model, this text includes the translator's own critical introduction, translator's notes and bibliography. For her to occupy such foregrounded paratextual presence and wield such influence over a Progress publication also confirms prestige on Wettlin's part, where countless other publications do not even carry the name of a translator.[44]

After Efremov accepted work at the Tashkent Theatre Institute, Wettlin divided her time between visiting him and living and working in Moscow. They endured years of long-distance relationship, which Wettlin wryly described as 'an antidote for the humdrum-sickness that infects many an extended marriage'. The final chapters of her memoir focus on the strain of this arrangement, but also on the deep friendship she enjoyed with Ivy Litvinov in Efremov's absence. In the summer of 1953, the two women

[43] For a list of Wettlin's *Progress* translations, see *Zotero* <https://www.zotero.org/groups/330265/zubovsky_boulevard/search/wettlin/titleCreatorYear/items/9WPPKDJ4/item-list> [accessed 25 August 2021]. Wettlin also, like Eve Manning, supplemented her work during the early 1950s with (mainly poetry) translations for *Soviet Woman* journal. Over two decades later, both women occupied the same professional space again when they (and other Progress translators) co-produced two anthologies of short stories: *They Found Their Voice: Stories from Soviet Nationalities with No Written Language before the 1917 October Revolution*, ed. by Evgenia Imbovitz (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1977), described on WorldCat as including 'Stories from 18 peoples including Chukchi, Mansi, and Yukagiry', and *Soviet Russian Stories of the 1960s and 1970s*, ed. by Iuri Bochkarev (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1977).

[44] For another rare exception, see Manning in Chapter 2 regarding her Translator's Note for the Progress translation of Pavel Bazhov's *The Malachite Casket*.

went on a seaside holiday together to Sudak in Crimea. By this time, Litvinov's husband, Maksim, had been dead for two years and Wettlin's husband was still living and working in Tashkent. Wettlin describes their holiday as taking place in 'the good times' for the reason that 'Stalin was dead, Khrushchev had come to power and told the truth about Stalin. This indicated we were really on the threshold of a new era in Soviet history'.[45] Reminiscent of the youthful excitement she expressed about the ideological promise of the USSR, Wettlin again captures a mood of giddy optimism. On the cultural revival, known as the period of Thaw, which saw 'honest works of art [spring] up like flowers in spring',[46] she wrote: 'The public threw themselves ravenously on this heretofore forbidden fare. But the most delectable dish, the richest and rarest, was the work of Solzhenitsyn.'[47] Such flowering proved short-lived, however. When Khrushchev was deposed in 1964, Wettlin found herself facing another bleak era, this time under Leonid Brezhnev. She equates his regime, which lasted until 1982, to 'a noisome swamp', awash with cynicism and apathy.[48] Her memoir ends with her husband's death in 1968. Wettlin's postscript reveals love for her husband as the reason for staying in Russia during such 'dark times'; yet, in no hurry to leave, she continued to live there for just over a decade after his death. She had her first taste of the West in almost fifty years on a visit to America in 1973–4, and in 1980, she returned for good, settling in the same district of Philadelphia where she had lived as a girl.

The challenges that beset Wettlin's career and her relationship with Efremov illustrate that her greatest achievement was survival – her own and her family's – during the Stalinist and post-Stalinist years. It is possible, given the coincidence of dates, that some of this survival can be ascribed to the unprecedented success of her *Mother*. But Wettlin was not alone in experiencing first-hand the dangers facing foreign translators living and working in an anti-cosmopolitan Soviet Union. Muireann Maguire has conducted research into the Donegal-born, Russian-to-Irish literary translator Maighréad Nic Mhaicín (1899–1983). According to Maguire, Nic Mhaicín, also known as Daisy Mackin (the name by which I will refer to her here), 'discovered the Russian language by befriending a Russian émigré' in

[45] Wettlin, *Fifty Russian Winters*, p. 291.
[46] Ibid.
[47] Wettlin, *Fifty Russian Winters*, p. 292.
[48] Ibid., p. 293.

Dublin and a 'love of Russian literature and culture eventually brought her to Moscow, where she found work as a translator for several years in the 1930s'.[49] Her first literary translation from Russian into Irish was *An Silín-Ghort* (Mackin's version of Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard*), which she finally placed for publication – after protracted correspondence – with An Gúm, the Irish Free State's official publishing organization.[50] In their professional capacity as Moscow-based translators, it is possible that Wettlin and Mackin were acquainted with or at least knew of each other, especially once Wettlin and Efremov returned to a dwindling foreign community in the Russian capital in 1935.

Mackin met fellow Communist sympathizer Padraic (Patrick) Breslin (1907–42), London-born of Irish (Donegal) descent, in Moscow, where he too worked as a translator (*International Literature*) and journalist (*Moscow Daily News*).[51] After divorcing his first wife (Katia Kreitser, with whom Breslin had two children) in 1936, Breslin married Mackin that same year. A pregnant Mackin returned to Ireland in November 1937 to give birth the following year to their daughter.[52] When Mackin tried to return to Russia, she was barred entry (the scenario that Wettlin feared might also happen to her had she not adopted Russian citizenship). Having already taken Russian citizenship, Breslin was refused an exit visa enabling him to join Mackin and his new daughter in Ireland;[53] his request for Irish citizenship was also denied. Now essentially trapped in Russia (as was Wettlin), Breslin was arrested in Moscow in December 1940 on suspicion of being a foreign agent. He died in Volgolag labour camp in Kazan in June 1942, never having seen his Irish-born daughter, Mairéad Breslin Kelly, nor having been reunited with Mackin. The real and potential parallels between Wettlin's and the Breslins' lives in the Soviet Union are evident, therefore, and reinforce the hypothesis that Wettlin's impressive translatorial output equates less perhaps to a natural love of the craft, as to a pressured act of self-preservation.

[49] Muireann Maguire, 'From Dostoevsky to Yeltsin: Unsuccessful Translations and Russian literary Landings in the Irish Language', *RUS* (São Paulo: Universidade de São Paulo, 2020) Available at: <https://doi.org/10.11606/issn.2317-4765.rus.2020.178520>, p. 32.

[50] Ibid.

[51] Lawrence William White, 'Breslin, Padraic', *Dictionary of Irish Biography* (Oct., 2009) Available at: <https://doi.org/10.3318/dib.000946.v1>.

[52] Lesa Ní Mhunghaile, 'Nic Mhaicín, Maighréad', *Dictionary of Irish Biography* (Oct., 2009) Available at: <https://doi.org/10.3318/dib.006203.v1>.

[53] White, 'Breslin, Padraic'.

Propaganda, translation and prison: The political epiphany of Edith Bone (1889–1975)

Edith Bone dramatically changed career direction late in life. In this, despite their shared Leftism, she differed from Violet Lansbury.[54] Challenging claims that Bone died 'in almost total obscurity',[55] I will use this microhistorical case study to argue that her impact as a cultural mediator intensified from the 1950s onwards, far exceeding any previous influence Bone may have exercised. Bone features in two discrete strands of scholarly research to date. Merilyn Moos offers a concise biographical essay that draws on British Intelligence files to investigate Bone's anti-Fascist position between 1930 and 1945. Erica Carter, studying the archive of Bone's first husband, the Hungarian film critic Béla Balázs, throws light on Bone's personal and professional life as her husband's English-language mediator. Neither Moos nor Carter explores in detail – as I intend to do in this case study – Bone's lifelong political and humanitarian commitments, the expression of such motivations in her choice of translations, and their collective social relevance.

Moos's thumbnail-biography of Bone (one of over fifty featured in her book on predominantly German exiles in the UK, each cameo constituting no more than a few pages) alludes only to her experiencing 'many adventures after the defeat of Nazi Germany in 1945';[56] as Moos admits, this period exceeds her timeframe of interest. Carter's exploration of Bone's influence on Balázs's Anglophone reception and Moos's passing references to Bone's work as a photographer eschew detailed analysis of her experience as a translator and memoirist. Nor do they explore her subsequent involvement in television and radio (from the late 1950s through to the 1970s) and sustained interest in humanitarian activism. In my case study, I will draw on a wide variety of sources to fill these gaps in understanding and to build a more forensic representation of the political exile hinted at in Moos's mini-biography and

[54] Lansbury and Bone both worked for the *Daily Worker* during the 1940s, and in 1941, they occupied the same public-speaking circuit at Finchley People's Vigilance Committee. According to a British Intelligence report from 22 November 1941, on Finchley meeting proceedings, 'Mrs Carthway closed the meeting with an expression of thanks to the speaker. No mention was made of Doctor Edith Bone, who was advertised to speak. Mrs Vathway [*sic*], when calling for contributions to the "Aid to Russia Fund" also said, "It may interest you to know that Miss Violet LANSBURY, who spoke here last week, has two children who are being educated in Moscow and her husband is now fighting against the Nazis"' (BIA, ref.: KV2/2012_1, p. 81/105).

[55] Moos implies a gradual departure by Bone from public awareness until disappearance altogether. See: Merilyn Moos, *Anti-Nazi Exiles: German Socialists in Britain and Their Shifting Alliances 1933–1945* (London: Community Languages, 2021), p. 35.

[56] Ibid.

Carter's film-specific enquiry. The three life events that inform my analysis are: Bone's early adulthood, where she formed key relationships, political opinions and career decisions (especially her first translation commissions) that influenced the rest of her life; the ongoing relevance of translation to Bone during the years she spent in solitary confinement; and finally, her post-imprisonment years, where she turned translation and cultural mediation into a means by which to promote a now anti-Soviet stance. Just as *Mother* represents the highlight of Wettlin's professional career, Vladimir Dudintsev's Thaw novel, *Not by Bread Alone* is Bone's signature translation. Both women share a significant common bond, therefore: *Mother* and *Not by Bread Alone* can be similarly regarded as pivotal in changing the World's perceptions of Soviet Russia.

Budapest to London, and back: Bone's early years

The range of names that Bone acquired during her lifetime illustrates, as for Budberg and Traill, the extent of her migration across Europe and changing circumstances. She began as Edit Olga Hajós, born in 1889 to purportedly well-to-do parents in Budapest, Hungary.[57] One report suggests they were aristocrats.[58] According to her obituary in *The Times*, she learned 'English from an English governess, and qualified as a [medical] doctor, studying in Germany and in France'.[59] At the age of twenty-nine, in 1918, Bone had her first experience of Russia and first exposure to the Russian language on a trip that subsequently influenced her future career, shaping her political aspirations and humanitarian conscience. She travelled as part of a Red Cross delegation helping with the repatriation of Hungarian soldiers following the armistice. This trip to Moscow and Petrograd presented an opportunity for Bone, already fluent in four languages, to learn Russian.[60] It also awakened a 'passionate concern for the oppressed', which led her to join the Communist

[57] Anon., 'Dr Edith Bone', *The Times*, 17 February 1975. Available at: <link.gale.com/apps/doc/CS237599825/TTDA?u=exeter&sid=bookmark-TTDA&xid=3f73686d> [accessed 2 August 2022], p. 14.

[58] Graham Stevenson, 'Bone Edith', *Encyclopedia of Communist Biographies*, 15 February 2010. Available at: <https://grahamstevenson.me.uk/2010/02/15/bone-edith/> [accessed 12 March 2023].

[59] Anon., 'Dr Edith Bone', p. 14.

[60] During her life, Bone mastered eight languages in addition to her native Hungarian: English, Russian, French, German, Dutch, Spanish and Italian, with additional Greek that she taught herself while imprisoned.

Party there.[61] With her new-found political interest, she assumed the job of editing the English-language version of the Comintern newspaper.[62] Archived correspondence offers no confirmed start or end date for this role; similarly, no single record of Bone's life gives a full and definitive account of her early youth, or of her marriages. Researchers must piece together numerous biographical refractions (and also acknowledge that, over half a century later, dates are unlikely now to become any clearer). Adding further complications for any future biographers, Bone moved around considerably during her early adult life. In her autobiography she attributed this to her knowledge of languages:

> […] this absence of language barriers […] made me a wanderer, if not on the face of the earth, certainly on the face of Europe. I lived in Hungary, Austria, Russia, Italy, Switzerland, France and Germany, until I finally settled in England […].[63]

I have extrapolated from across a range of sources that Bone was married at least three times. Each of these relationships changed her *habitus* and disposition, preparing the way for her later acts of resistance. Her first husband was the Hungarian film specialist, writer and Symbolist poet Béla Balázs (1884–1949), whom Bone wed in 1913. Although primarily interested in Balázs's archive for information about his film career, the film historian Erica Carter has produced research which is revealing about Bone's social position, gender awareness and *Weltanschauung* in *fin-de-siècle* Hungary. Bone's youth coincided with a period of progressive female-education provision in Hungary. As Carter explains, '[b]y the early 1880s, Hungarian feminist calls for educational equality had been answered with girls' schools, teacher-training colleges and, from 1895, with access for women to university education in medicine and the arts'.[64] Despite training as a medical doctor during this era of equal opportunities, Bone shelved this profession at an early stage. Instead, she pursued in her marriage to Balázs her 'greater passion for a social emancipation that she saw as realized not only in revolutionary politics, but also in a libertarian sexuality […] actualized in her toleration

[61] Ibid.

[62] Comintern stands for Communist International, the international branch of the Communist Party from 1919 until it was dissolved in 1943.

[63] Bone, *Seven*, p. 23.

[64] Erica Carter, 'The Visible Woman in and against Béla Balázs', in *The Emergence of Film Culture: Knowledge Production, Institution Building, and the Fate of the Avant-garde in Europe, 1919–1945*, ed. by Malte Hagener (Oxford and New York: Berghahn Books, 2014), pp. 46–71 (p. 53).

of a ménage-à-trois with Anna Hamvassy'.[65] In 1915, Balázs, Bone and Hamvassy (and others, including the writer and artist, Anna Lesznai) co-founded the intellectual 'Sunday Circle' salon in Budapest, to which '[o]nly serious people who are metaphysically disposed are invited'.[66] In the same way that Budberg's salons attracted prominent figures from all sections of society, so too the Sunday Circle attracted an exclusive clientele, including Marxist philosopher and literary historian György Lukács, sociologist Karl Mannheim and Marxist art-historian Arnold Hauser.[67] The 'Sunday Circle' provided a milieu, with Bone at its heart, 'in which feminist activists rubbed shoulders with writers, artists, and cultural intellectuals'.[68] In this regard, Carter equates Bone to that 'most resonant "icon" of early-twentieth-century emancipation, the New Woman'.[69]

Nevertheless, Bone found herself hampered by the antithesis of New Woman ideals: social 'expectations of feminine subservience, including in the liberal-bohemian circles to which Lukács and Balázs belonged'.[70] Carter isolates Balazs's views on women from a diary entry found in his archive. He wrote on 28 December 1915 that 'Woman is stupid … her original instinct is, in contrast to the rootless intellect of men, stubborn and limited, generating nothing but trouble'.[71] The exact dates and circumstances in which Bone's marriage to Balázs ended have not surfaced, but when he fled to Vienna after the failure of the Hungarian uprising in 1919, his second wife, Anna Hamvassy, accompanied him, not Bone. This was not the end of Bone's contact with Balázs, however. They resumed relations after the war when, according to Carter, Bone started translating *Filmkultura*. They

[65] Carter, 'The Visible Woman', p. 47. Little is known about Hamvassy except that she had become Balázs's second wife by 1919.

[66] Balázs's diary entry from 23 December 1915 in Lee Congdon, 'The Making of a Hungarian Revolutionary: The Unpublished Diary of Béla Balázs', *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 8:3 (Jul. 1973), 57–74 (p. 69).

[67] Carter, 'The Visible Woman', p. 46.

[68] Ibid., p. 54.

[69] 'New Woman' is a reference coined at the end of the nineteenth, turn of the twentieth centuries to a woman defined as 'different from previous generations; *esp.* one who challenges or rejects the traditional roles of wife, mother, or homemaker, and advocates independence for women and equality with men' (*OED*). Carter also recognizes in Bone the dangers of an emancipated modern age: the fact that Bone suffered years of depression because of her relationship with Balázs (who included his first wife in a 'complex double sexual and intellectual pairing' between her and Balázs, and between Lukács and the young artist Irma Seidler), her 'political engagement, her writing, her extraordinary courage in the face of persecution, imprisonment, and seven years of mental and physical abuse'. (Carter, 'The Visible Woman', pp. 47–50.)

[70] Ibid.

[71] Carter, 'The Visible Woman', p. 68.

were sufficiently close for Bone to attend his funeral in Budapest in May 1949.[72] Bone's return to Budapest proved fateful, as I will explain below. Her translation of *Filmkultura* is now regarded as the 'text to which Anglophone readers owe their first acquaintance with Balázs'.[73]

From 1927 to 1931, Bone was married to a German, Hermann Bone, during which short time they lived together in Berlin. He died in 1933 and, according to British Intelligence reports, Bone – now a 'rabid member of the Communist Party' – left for England that same year, at which point she 'did translations from Russian to English for Collett's Bookshop'.[74] On 19 February 1934,[75] she married '[A]s a result of her association with the Communist Party […] a well-known British Communist employed at ARCOS', Gerald Hargrave Martin.[76] Not only is her third husband's identity as a 'keen and clever Communist' noted as significant here, but Martin's place of employment is too: ARCOS, the acronym for the All-Russian Co-operative Society, based in London. British SIS officers associated ARCOS Ltd with the Russian Trade Delegation, espionage and the scene of a counter-intelligence raid by British police in May 1927.[77] By association, Bone too came under suspicion. Her SIS file – actively maintained between 1936 and 1957 – is catalogued under the name Edith Martin, even though the surname applied to but a short period in her life and, seemingly, only ever as a formality.[78]

[72] Ibid., p. 47.

[73] *Theory of the Film* was first published in English by Dennis Dobson in 1932 and, according to Carter, this translation secured Bone 'a place in the pantheon of twentieth-century film theory'. (Carter, 'The Visible Woman', p. 66.)

[74] See: 'Extract from B2a note for file re. Janos EROS. Mrs Martin BONE/Mrs Hayos', 13 August 1957, BIA, ref.: KV-2-2012_1, p. 18.

[75] See: 'Cross Reference', 13 April 1937, BIA, ref.: KV2_2066_1, p. 12.

[76] See: 9 August 1946, BIA, ref.: KV-2-2012_1.

[77] The raid was conducted as part of a search for top-secret documents alleged to have been stolen from the British Government's War Office. In breach of the 1921 trade agreement between Russia and Britain, the raid led to the breakdown of Anglo-Russian diplomatic relations. British security forces regarded Martin as a potential threat on several levels. He first became known to them after his name was found on a list of 'special addresses' following a raid on British Communist Party founder member, Rajani Palme Dutt, brother of Clemens Dutt (see Lansbury, Chapter 2), in 1925. Sixteen names were cited as being 'engaged in underground or espionage activities on behalf of the Soviet [*sic*]', including the Hutchinson translator Emile Burns. The SIS also suspected Martin, in his job as a metallurgical chemist, of providing the Soviets with information about the chemical industry. See: 'Minute Note', n.d., BIA, ref.: KV2_2066_1, p. 6.

[78] Martin died from bronco-pneumonia on 23 December 1937, less than four years after their marriage. According to the special branch report on his death, '[h]e was known to the hospital authorities as a single man, and as far as can be ascertained, EDITH MARTIN never attended there'; a cousin of the deceased, and not Bone, notified the registrar of Martin's death ('Cross-Reference, G.H. Martin', 27 January 1938, BIA, ref.: KV2_2066_1, p. 9). An earlier report, from 19 November 1934, anticipated the hospital's

Speculation about their marriage aside, Bone and Martin shared a common and active aversion to fascism, thought to be the catalyst for their interest in promoting communism.[79] In her capacity as union member, Bone persuaded the National Union of Journalists (NUJ) to campaign for the release of Carl von Ossietzky (editor-in-chief of *The World Stage* (*Die Weltbühne*)), imprisoned for exposing Germany's rearmament efforts in violation of the Treaty of Versaille.[80] The NUJ also supported Ossietzky's nomination for the Nobel Peace Prize, which he was awarded in 1936 for his 'burning love for freedom of thought and expression and his valuable contribution to the cause of peace'.[81] He was, however, prevented from travelling to Norway to collect it and died in 1938. Bone's keen involvement in this campaign offers early insight into the justice-seeking, humanitarian *hexis* that aided her during her own imprisonment, eventually leading her to denounce communism and to translate Dudintsev's *Not by Bread Alone*.

Between her arrival in the UK in 1933 and her departure for Hungary in 1949, SIS speculation over Bone and her sources of income intensified.[82] British Intelligence focused, in particular, on the extent of her travel and political activities.[83] Like Manning before her, she too was committed to political canvassing, which included addressing 'public meetings sponsored by the Communist Party and [she] lectured to refugee organisations such as the

assessment of Martin's marital status, noting, 'from discreet enquiry at the lodgings of Gerald Hargrave Martin, who has occupied one room at 13 Wakefield Street, W.C. for several years, it is obvious that his wife has never lived with him at that address'. ('Extract from H.O. File', 19 December 1934, BIA, ref.: KV2_2066_1, p. 20.)

79 Martin used his position as a metallurgical chemist visiting Hamburg to obtain evidence of German rearmament.

80 'Special branch report', 22 September 1939, BIA, ref.: KV2_2012_2, p. 1.

81 *Nobel Prize Outreach AB*, 'Carl von Ossietzky – Biographical' (2022). Available at: <https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/peace/1935/ossietzky/biographical/> [accessed 9 September 2022].

82 Letters from various sources cite a lack of employability. A report about Bone's employment from the end of 1939 to September 1940 explains that she 'was regarded as a very able linguist, but proved to be rather unsatisfactory in the particular type of which she was engaged on […]. Her frequent absences from work gave her employer a feeling of uneasiness regarding her, and the deputy director is believed to have communicated with the local police […] with a view to some enquiries being made about her'. (Sergeant Brown, Metropolitan Police special branch, 19 February 1941, BIA, ref.: KV-2-2012_1, p. 92.) A report from 27 December 1941 cites three further episodes of unsuccessful employment. (P.C. D. Shaw, 'With further reference to Dr. Edith MARTIN or BONE', 27 December 1941, BIA, ref.: KV-2-2012_1, p. 79.)

83 For example, she left in 1936 to report (sympathetically) on the Spanish Civil War and, while there, was involved in founding the Unified Socialist Party of Catalonia (PSUC). (Carter, 'The Visible Woman', p. 47.)

Austrian Centre'.[84] The SIS relayed doubts about Bone's trustworthiness to the BBC, who wished to employ her in the capacity of 'Hungarian Translator/ Announcer'.[85] SIS correspondence to BBC recruitment explained that:

> reports were continually received of her activities, particularly in view of her frequent visits to the continent including Russia. During the Spanish Civil War she spent a considerable time in Spain reporting on the Spanish Government forces on behalf on [*sic*] the 'Daily Worker' and its French counterpart 'L'Humanite'.
>
> It is clear that Mrs. MARTIN holds strong communist views but we could raise no objection to her employment as Hungarian Translator/ Announcer. I take it that 'Overseas Recruitment' means that she will be used on the Foreign News Service and not that she will be sent abroad, as we do not feel she would be a suitable person to work overseas as a representative of the B.B.C.[86]

Freelance translation and journalism therefore became the constants in a portfolio career. As she later explained in her autobiography *Seven Years Solitary*, from as early as 1923 she had 'earned [my] living as a translator, an occupation at which I came to be quite competent, or at least a practised hand, and at which I could always make a living anywhere'.[87] Special branch correspondence correctly identifies some of her publications, but still manages to overlook many. The first mention of her occupation appears in a report from 7 July 1945:

> It has been ascertained MARTIN still uses her former name Edith BONE, for translations and in this name, has translated the following books by Alexei Tolstoi:-
>
> 'Darkness and Dawn' (with co-operation of Emile Vincent BURNS (301/MR/1590) published 1935).[88]
> 'Peter the Great' published 1936.

[84] Towndrow, M.B., 'Letter to Mr. Philby', 29 August 1946, BIA, ref.: KV-2-2012_1 (p. 3/3).
[85] 'Applicant for Employment in the B.B.C.', 5 January 1943, BIA, ref.: KV_2_2012_1, p. 77.
[86] Letter from D.L.R. Osborn to Miss E. Shelmerdine B.B.C., 'Edith MARTIN nee Hajos', 13 January 1943, BIA, ref.: KV_2_2012_1, p. 76.
[87] Bone, *Seven*, p. 23.
[88] The in-citation reference in parentheses is the British Intelligence file reference for Emile Burns, also under surveillance.

'Alexander the Great' published 1944.
'The Road to Calvary' published 1944.
also, 'Rainbow' by Vanda Vassilevska (347/43/20) 1943.[89]

With the exception of *Alexander the Great*,[90] the above titles (and Bone's 1946 translation of Gorky's *Literature and Life*) all feature in the same Hutchinson International Author series as Lansbury's translation of Aleksei Tolstoy's, *Nikita's Childhood*. Hutchinson's dedication to this author's novels indicates a keen publisher awareness of Soviet-endorsed writers, not seen in any Penguin Books series.[91] Emile Vincent Burns, with whom Bone collaborated on her translation of Tolstoy's *Darkness and Dawn* (and, seemingly unbeknown to report-writer E. Eades, on *Peter the Great* too), is the same co-translator who worked on texts by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels in English translation with Lansbury's husband, Clemens.[92] This example of triangulation – between Bone, Burns and the Dutts – illustrates the close-knit and ideological (if not always comradely) nature of the translation community operating in proximity to the British Communist Party at this time.[93] Burns's opinion of Bone (which echoes many of those provided elsewhere) features in a report extracted from a conversation between Burns and fellow CPGB member, Bill Wainwright, on 8 April 1949:

> She is as queer a fish as they make – but I don't think there is the slightest doubt that she is absolutely sincere with the Party and with Russia … I've known her for 15 years or so and collaborated with her in translating books … She gets on my nerves – but she is really all right.[94]

[89] 'Report' from E. Eades, 7 July 1945, BIA, ref.: KV_2_2012_1, p. 70.

[90] A WorldCat search does not produce a result for this text in Bone's translation.

[91] Despite aristocratic origins, A.N. Tolstoy (1883–1945) was described as 'the most authoritative apologist for the Stalin regime' and referred to as the Red Count. He worked on *Road to Calvary* from 1921–40 and was awarded the Stalin Prize for Literature for *Peter I* [*the Great*]. According to Terras, 'In the USSR at least one edition of *Peter I* has appeared every year since 1945. […] *Peter I* is a "Soviet classic"'. (Terras, *Handbook*, pp. 475–76.)

[92] Regarded as another founder figure of the British Communist Party, Burns was, therefore, another source of interest to British Intelligence.

[93] During the late 1930s, Burns and Pollitt (the latter of whom features in Traill's, Manning's, Lansbury's and Bone's archived correspondence) collaborated with the left-wing publisher Victor Gollancz to establish the Left Book Club.

[94] Report, 'Intercepted conversation between Burns and Wainwright', 8 April 1949, BIA, ref.: KV_2_2012_1, p. 43.

Bone's translations – from Russian, German and Hungarian – published before her imprisonment consist of twelve works, chronologically.[95] These translations received little attention and mixed reviews. W. Alison Phillips concluded in *The Times* that Bone's 1936 co-translation with Burns of Tolstoy's *Peter the Great* 'is on the whole excellent and very readable',[96] whereas Charques takes a more typically measured estimation of their *Road to Calvary* co-translation in the *TLS*'s Novel of the Week column nearly a decade later:

> The first two parts appeared in translation here in 1935, under the title of 'Darkness and Dawn', but these two parts have since been extensively re-written and bear here and there a distinctly modified emphasis. The whole work, now given in a competent if somewhat unpolished translation, is most ambitiously conceived and, in spite of a too discursive construction, is rendered with genuine and sustained imaginative power.[97]

Bone's return to Hungary in 1949 was not simply to attend Balázs's funeral. With waning commissions, she could no longer rely on translations to provide her with work in the UK. According to her autobiography, her affairs:

> at that time were in no flourishing state. The great book boom was over; so was the Russian trend in international relations which had begun after the defeat of the Germans near Moscow. Nobody wanted translations. I had done a few books from the Hungarian, but the high

[95] Aleksei Tolstoy's *Darkness and Dawn* (1935) and *Peter the Great* (1936); *Rainbow: A Novel* (1943) and *Just Love* (1945) by the Polish-Soviet novelist, journalist and left-wing activist Wanda Wasilewska; *Alexander Suvorov, A Biography*, by K. Osipov (1944); *The Enemy under the Microscope: A Story of the Life of Pasteur*, O. Kuznetsova (1945); *Death of a Poet: A Novel of the Last Years of Alexander Pushkin*, L. [Leonid] P. Grossman (1945); Maksim Gorky's *Literature and Life; A Selection from the Writings of Maksim Gor'kiĭ* with an introduction by V. V. Mikhailovskii and *Orphan Paul: A Novel* (1946); *Road to Calvary* by Aleksei Tolstoy (1946); *Tales from Seven Ghettos*, by Egon Erwin Kisch (1948); *The Two Eagles*, by Béla Illés (1949). A further, thirteenth work, *Studies in European Realism: A Sociological Survey of the Writings of Balzac, Stendhal, Zola, Tolstoy, Gorki [and Others]* by György Lukács was presumably already in process at the time of her arrest. It was published in 1950 by Hillway Publishers.

[96] Alison Phillips, 'The Russian Antichrist', *Times Literary Supplement*, 15 August 1936. Available at: <link.gale.com/apps/doc/EX1200254185/TLSH?u=exeter&sid=bookmark-TLSH&xid=8421fd20> [accessed 14 March 2023].

[97] Richard D. Charques, 'Crash to Recovery', *Times Literary Supplement*, 3 March 1945. Availableat:<link.gale.com/apps/doc/EX1200277043/TLSH?u=exeter&sid=bookmark-TLSH&xid=dc9cbe2c> [accessed 14 March 2023].

> cost of publishing foreign books, which had to include a royalty to the author and a fee for the translator, discouraged publishers from this type of business, and there was a promise of seven lean years for me as a translator. So when in the spring of 1949 I received an invitation from a Hungarian publisher to translate an English scientific book into Hungarian, I did not feel like rejecting the offer.[98]

One of Bone's London public-speaking events in January 1949, as advertised in *The Times* and perhaps her last such event before leaving for Hungary, was a lecture at North Western Polytechnic in Kentish Town on 'Books and writers in Russia to-day'.[99] Bone may have had inside knowledge on this subject, as the title suggests, but she was seemingly unaware of developments at this time at the London publisher Penguin – Hutchinson's rival – to commission the Penguin Classics series, producing quality novels from around the world in English translation. (One wonders if Bone might have stayed had she appreciated the full commission potential at Rieu's Penguin Classics venture.) Instead, enticed by the surplus of food in Hungary (unlike in ration-book Britain, as her reports were keen to point out), the prospect of seeing her brother, and the *Daily Worker*'s additional blessing for her to write and send articles about her time there, Bone returned to Budapest. She hoped to send two short wires a week to the *Daily Worker* because:

> I am like a sponge bursting with news items of all sorts, from a prodigious new kind of football invented here which needs no lacing to the story of the vast sums paid back to shock workers in the factories in acknowledgement of over-fulfilled norms.[100]

Bone submitted her first piece of Budapest-based journalism – 'Hungary, Land of Plenty, Builds for Peace' – that same month to Derek Kartun, the *Daily Worker*'s then foreign editor.[101] She intended the propagandist tone in her account of plentiful foodstuffs under the new, Communist arrangement

[98] Bone, *Seven*, p. 36.

[99] Anon., 'To-Day's Arrangements', *The Times*, 22 January 1949. Available at: <link.gale.com/apps/doc/CS84101174/TTDA?u=exeter&sid=bookmark-TTDA&xid=b794cdf8> [accessed 14 March 2023].

[100] Edith Bone to Derek Kartun, 'Hungary, Land of Plenty, Builds for Peace', 16 May 1949, BIA, ref.: KV_2_2012_1, p. 33.

[101] See: Graham Stevenson, 'Kartun Derek', *Encyclopedia of Communist Biographies*, 27 December 2011. Available at: <https://grahamstevenson.me.uk/2011/12/27/kartun-derek/> [accessed 19 August 2022].

to amplify the British worker's sense of disadvantage, imposed from the top down, at still having a rationed diet in a Capitalist system:

> Budapest certainly seems to have forgotten the lean years fast enough. The butcher's shops are crammed with beef, veal, and pork. Hungarians shudder at the idea of eating mutton. The food shops, many of them municipal trading centres, are full of bacon, eggs, cheese, sausages made of meat and not breadcrumbs, tinned stuff of every kind, jars of jam and honey, luscious pastries bursting with whipped cream and an endless array of wines and spirits.[102]

She was later asked to report on 'the [Lázsló] Rajk trial for the D.W. [Daily Worker]', but neither this article nor the above account from Budapest features in her name in the *Daily Worker*.[103] Instead, Kartun published an article in his name in November later that year, 'How the New Hungary Is Living', summarizing many of the key points and observations made in Bone's May report.[104] It adopts the same exuberant tone, 'Here is the new Hungary – cheerful workers, bonny babies, shops full of food at low prices, and a Government led by the working class'.[105] By the time this article was published, Bone was already captive in Hungary, reported missing in the UK, and awaiting a closed trial that finally took place on 1 December 1950.

Bone was arrested on 1 October 1949 at Budapest airport on suspicion of spying for the British. She was kept in solitary confinement until her release in 1957, during which time she produced and published nothing. Reports in the British Intelligence archives (BIA) also become less frequent, mostly reduced to newspaper cuttings about Bone's disappearance and then a period of intermittent enquiries attempting to establish her whereabouts and welfare. (The last intelligence update was filed in June 1955, preceded by the penultimate report in June 1951.) Her arrest became a life event that changed Bone's professional trajectory and political allegiance.[106] Having entered

[102] Edith Bone to Derek Kartun, 'Hungary, Land of Plenty, Builds for Peace', 16 May 1949, BIA, ref.: KV_2_2012_1, p. 34.

[103] Edith Bone, 'Letter to Derek Kartun', 13 September 1949, BIA, ref.: KV_2_2012_1, p. 32.

[104] Derek Kartun, 'How the New Hungary Is Living', *The Daily Worker*, 4 November 1949. Available at: <https://www.ukpressonline.co.uk/ukpressonline/getDocument/DWMS_3rd_1949_11_04_003?fileType=pdf> [accessed 22 August 2022].

[105] Ibid.

[106] British Intelligence reports vary in their certainty over which day Bone went missing however, according to Bone's friends who raised the initial alarm about her absence, she wired them on 30 September 1949 telling them to expect her return to London via Prague the next day. Later SIS reports have 5 October 1949 as Bone's anticipated return date to London.

imprisonment a 'rabid' Communist, she left the opposite, but throughout her detention, literature and translation remained her salvation.

Solitary confinement: The power and portability of cultural capital

Bone spent the first five months of her sentence in darkness, during which time she recited poetry and drew inspiration from her previous readings of prison memoirs, in particular a story by Tolstoy (she specifies neither which Tolstoy, nor which short story):

> in which a man is kept in solitary confinement for, as it happened, seven years […]. Tolstoi describes how this man occupied his mind, among other things, by taking imaginary walks in the cities, which he had known. I was very fortunate in this because I had been to most of the great cities of Europe. So I tried going for walks – in London, in Paris, in Rome, in Florence and Milan, in various Swiss cities, in Berlin and Heidelberg, in Vienna and St. Petersburg.[107]

When memory exercises lost their appeal (one of which involved taking 'an inventory of my vocabulary in the six languages I speak fluently' – her list of English vocabulary reached 27,369 words),[108] Bone focused her attention on translating poems. She was presented by one of her guards with a volume containing more than twelve hundred poems by the Hungarian, turn-of-the-century poet-publicist Endre Ady (1877–1919), regarded as a 'moving spirit' in a counter-culture to Magyar's stagnant gentry, and whose 'revolutionary tone' had appealed to Bone's first husband, Balázs.[109] Bone translated Ady into English, committing thirty-two translations to memory through daily repetition and fashioning four thousand letters out of breadcrumbs to aid her.[110] After a successful language strike that lasted four and a half months

[107] Bone, *Seven*, p. 106.

[108] Bone, *Seven*, pp. 110–11.

[109] Congdon, 'The Making of a Hungarian', p. 61.

[110] In this feat, Bone draws parallels with her peer, Tatiana Gnedich (1907–76) who, from 1944, while serving ten years in a Soviet labour camp, translated into Russian without pen or paper Lord Byron's *Don Juan*, having already memorized the epic source text of more than 16,000 lines. See: Efim Etkind, 'The Translator', trans. by Jane Bugaeva, *The Massachusetts Review*, Vol. 56:1 (2015), 139–47, pp. 142–45.

(in which Bone refused to speak to her captors in any language they could understand), she was able to negotiate improvements to her daily life. She received pencil, paper and books.

Even in a prison setting, Bone gave thought to her translation strategy. Her view that 'most of the poems would have required a whole forest of footnotes and I do not like footnotes' anticipated (and refuted) the approach that Vladimir Nabokov would go on to adopt nearly a decade later when translating Aleksandr Pushkin's *Eugene Onegin*.[111] Bone was then asked by the prison governor and doctor to translate into Hungarian a Russian scientific textbook on 'forensic psychiatry, intended for the use of police and judiciary officers'.[112] The book's case studies, used to illustrate instances where a person 'might be of unsound mind', shocked Bone.[113] Rather than judge, as the book did, the relevance of each individual's mental state, Bone reflected on the context of their circumstances and concluded that the Russian evaluation revealed 'so inhuman and callous an attitude to human suffering that it would be inconceivable in capitalist-imperialist-colonialist England'.[114] To her surprise, the cases all had one thing in common:

> inhumanity, a callous disregard, not only of people's feelings, but even of their most vital interests. 'Communist humanity?' Where was it? No-where but in the propaganda literature distributed among the well-meaning credulous, and in the Potemkin villages shown to gullible tourists.[115]

Bone's pre-translation reading of what she called 'that odious book' prompted a political epiphany. She wrote that:

> the wheel had come full circle – my revolt against inhumanity had brought me into the Communist Party, and the deeply rooted inhumanity that cried aloud from every page of that horrible book put an end at last to my infatuation, destroyed the last traces of illusion, and lifted off my back the incubus I had carried for thirty bitter years full of doubt and unconscious inner resistance to what I was doing and saying.[116]

[111] Bone, *Seven*, pp. 128–9.
[112] Ibid., p. 132.
[113] Ibid.
[114] Bone, *Seven*, p. 134.
[115] Ibid., p. 137.
[116] Ibid., p. 138.

She describes her translation commission as the price (worth paying) of being allowed access to the truths concealed within this book and radically to reform her ideas.

Bone's prison reading was not restricted to this sole text. She was eventually allowed access to books in the prison library, the best of which, to her mind, were the English-language texts (many of them 'confiscated in the flats and houses of people who had been arrested or who had fled abroad') and, in particular the 'sixty English titles in the German Tauchnitz editions'.[117] There were other (mainly Soviet Russian and Hungarian) books, however, that informed her of events in the outside world that she had missed during her imprisonment (the Korean war, Stalin's death and the Thaw, for example) and that she would otherwise have had no way of discovering from her prison-cell. At the same time, she noticed that many of the Soviet texts revealed far-fetched Russian claims to important inventions of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (the steam engine, for example) designed to deceive Soviet readers. The combination of physical privations and intellectual revelations gained from her library-reading reinforced in Bone a new-found disgust at communism and Stalinism.[118] Her prolonged detention also led to Bone later renouncing her colleagues at the *Daily Worker*, whom she accused of deliberately having done nothing – in sharp and shameful contrast to her own vocal efforts twenty years earlier to free the imprisoned Ossietzky – to fight for her release lest the news story reflect badly on Hungarian communism. She wrote in her autobiography:

> Only on my return to England did I find out that an enquiry had been made by Rákosi's secretary, directed to the Daily Worker office through the Hungarian Legation in London asking whether it was true that I was their correspondent. The Daily Worker replied in the negative, thus making me out an imposter and my credentials forgeries […].[119]

[117] Ibid., p. 140.

[118] British Pathé footage of an interview conducted with Bone following her release reveals the extent of her ideological volte-face. On whether communism could bring any happiness to the human race, Bone declared, 'Alas no! I have seen it bring advantages to a small section, but certainly not to the vast majority of those whom Communism claims to service – the working population!' See: 'London, Dr Bone Released after 7 Years in Gaol' (1956), *British Pathé*. Available at: <https://www.britishpathe.com/video/london-dr-bone-released-after-7-years-in-gaol> [accessed 8 September 2022].

[119] Bone, *Seven*, p. 53.

FROM THE PRESS SECTION.

BIA

Date 16. 12. 49

Standard

Church[illegible]

Foreign Office probing Budapest airport mystery

Evening Standard Reporter

The Foreign Office are investigating the disappearance of a London woman writer and free lance journalist at Budapest Airport. Her friends here fear she has been arrested.

She is Dr. Edith Bone, aged 60, whose flat is at Wilmington Square, Finsbury, W.C., and she went to Hungary in April this year, intending to stay six months.

On September 30 she wired to friends in London asking them to meet her next day at London Airport.

She was not on any airplane coming in from Budapest, and when the friends made further inquiries, it was found her ticket had not been given up.

Did not board 'plane

To-day, one of her friends, Miss Hebe Spaull, of Elm Grove, Hendon, N.W., who has asked the Foreign Office to start inquiries, said: "Our own inquiries made it clear she never boarded the airplane at Budapest.

DR. EDITH BONE

Figure 3.1 SIS cutting of article 'Foreign Office Probing Budapest Airport Mystery', *The Evening Standard*.[120]

[120] Anon., 'Foreign Office Probing Budapest Airport Mystery', *The Evening Standard* (16 December 1949) [newspaper cutting] BIA, ref.: KV_2_2012_1, p. 21.

Bone as anti-Soviet campaigner

After she was finally released (by rioting students during the Hungarian Revolution),[121] Bone dedicated herself once again to literature but now also drew on media interest to publicize her new, anti-propagandist and humanitarian agenda. In 1957, aged sixty-eight, she achieved two feats. She produced her own autobiography, *Seven Years Solitary*. This was published by Hamish Hamilton, who, quick to seize the opportunity, sent Bone a telegram in Vienna immediately on her release, much to her surprise.[122] She also produced the first translation in English of Ukrainian-born, Moscow-educated novelist Vladimir Dudintsev's 1956 Thaw sensation, *Not by Bread Alone* (*Ne khlebom edinym*), published in the UK by Hutchinson/Dutton. Dudintsev's novel, 'which dramatizes an inventor's struggle with the Soviet bureaucracy for acceptance of his metallurgical invention, caused a sensation' in the USSR when it was serialized in the Soviet literary journal *Novyi mir*.[123] Each of these literary contributions by Bone promoted the other, bringing to the fore the plight of the individual facing wrongful imprisonment in a Communist state. *The Times* described Bone's autobiography as 'a remarkable witness to the power of the human spirit in adversity, and is part of the literature which deals with man's unconquerable mind'.[124] In a similar way, *Not by Bread Alone*, as spelled out in its accompanying, paratextual Publisher's Note, appealed to the human rights' activist of the day for providing the 'clearest and strongest' voice of Russian humanity 'of the last century'.[125] Preparing the ground for *Doctor Zhivago*, which would not appear in English for another year, and *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*, which would take another five years to come out in the same Soviet journal, the anonymous author of the Publisher's Note (we may reasonably presume Bone) wrote:

> No one can doubt why *Not By Bread Alone* has caused a political sensation. In it, the voice of Russian humanity has spoken once again, in all its strength

[121] According to Bone's obituary in *The Times* on 17 February 1975, 'she was released by the Hungarian Revolution in 1956, and still wearing prison clothes, reached the British Legation and left for Austria on the last available transport before the frontier was closed'.

[122] Bone, *Seven*, p. 209.

[123] Helen Goscilo, 'Dudintsev, Vladimir Dmitrievich', in *Encyclopedia of Contemporary Russian Culture* ed. by Tatiana Smorodinskaya, Karen Evans-Romaine, and Helena Goscilo (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2014), p. 155.

[124] Anon., 'Dr Edith Bone', *The Times*, 17 February 1975. Available at: <link.gale.com/apps/doc/CS237599825/TTDA?u=exeter&sid=bookmark-TTDA&xid=3f73686d> [accessed 2 August 2022].

[125] Dudintsev, *Not by Bread Alone*, p. v.

> and honesty and, moreover, it has spoken with the accents of a novelist. Dudintsev's work is rich in all those qualities which raised the classic Russian novel to heights of influence and achievement – in narrative, in character, in satire and seriousness of purpose. *Not By Bread Alone* will inevitably occupy a place of historical importance, but it will live more enduringly as a novel which illuminates a universal human predicament.[126]

Framed at either end with a Publisher's Note and her translation of the author's Epilogue, Bone's translation establishes a link between her, the author, the novel's protagonist Lopatkin (who also finds himself imprisoned in a Soviet labour camp for eight years) and their shared political positions. Her careful, text-based decisions transport the Western reader to the bleak world that Lopatkin inhabits in Dudintsev's original text. Bone achieves this aim by domesticating idioms (that feature with frequency in Dudintsev's dialogue) and balancing a blend of domestication and subtle foreignization of culture-specific realia. In a text devoid of footnotes, her method relies on switching between light-touch paraphrase (e.g., for items of clothing: 'felt boots' for *valenki*, 'military cap with ear-flaps' for *soldatskaia ushanka*, 'sandals out of birch bark' for *lopatki*) and loan words (calques) straight from the source text (such as: Sovietisms like *kombinat* and *komsomol*; proper names like Lomonossov [*sic*], regions and rivers; patronymics and diminutives) that serve collectively to remind the reader of the source-culture setting.

Through the act of bringing *Not by Bread Alone* to an Anglophone readership, Bone performed a personal duty but, to her mind, a public one too. First, her translation alerted the West to the notion of dissent in the USSR. Regarded as a 'banner of the Thaw', the Soviet polemic around Dudintsev's book 'quickly developed into a collective examination of the economic and administrative problems, political changes, past legacies, and ethical dilemmas that confronted the country at the time'.[127] Bone and Hutchinson jointly facilitated the journey into English of a text to which Soviet reader responses, according to Denis Kozlov, 'reached phenomenal proportions'; significantly, *Novyi mir*'s serialization of Dudintsev's novel prompted 'the single largest body of readers' responses to anything the journal published from the late 1940s through the late 1960s'.[128] There are no archived sales'

[126] Given its tone and reference to 1956 rioting in Hungary, the three-page Publisher's Note, which functions as a preface, bears the likelihood of having been penned by Bone. (Dudintsev, *Not by Bread Alone*, p. v and p. vii.)

[127] Denis Kozlov, *The Readers of Novyi Mir* (Cambridge MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2013), p. 89.

[128] Kozlov, *The Readers*, p. 92.

data to prove the extent of the Anglophone response to Dudintsev's novel in translation; reviews which appeared at the time of publication, however, point to the symbolic importance of the book's message. Walter Vickery's review in *The Slavic and East European Journal* is one of the few that alludes both to the book's commercial success and political significance, and to its potential to change the course of translation publishing:

> It is hoped that the fact that Not By Bread Alone has appeared five weeks on the New York Times best-seller list will encourage publishers to bring out translations of other contemporary Soviet works. Much of what is being written would have little appeal for the Western reader, but there is also much that not only gives an insight into Soviet life but, like Dudincev's novel, though not epoch-making, does just make plain good reading.[129]

He is more muted in his evaluation of Bone's contribution to the venture, offering in the opening line a comparatively half-hearted endorsement of her work as 'a thoroughly adequate translation'.[130]

In terms of Bone's personal duty, she was able to use her mediation and promotion of this text to endorse her newly formed anti-Communist position and draw an official line under her previous political reputation. She achieved this aim with media-savvy aplomb, despite having just spent seven years in solitary confinement. Contrary to Moos's assertion that Bone died in obscurity, publication of *Seven Years Solitary* and *Not by Bread Alone* propelled Bone into the public eye, and also created multiple opportunities for her to advertise her anti-Soviet agenda.[131] Programmes about both books were aired on British radio. One discussing *Seven Years Solitary* and Bone's prison experience was broadcast on 15 June 1958 (and later repeated) on the BBC Home Service and included recordings of Bone speaking.

[129] Walter Vickery, 'Vladimir Dudintsev, Not by Bread Alone. Tr. Dr. Edith Bone', *The Slavic and East European Journal*, Vol. 2:1 (Spring, 1958), 74–6 <https://www.jstor.org/stable/304709> [accessed 1 August 2022], pp. 75–6.

[130] Vickery, 'Vladimir Dudintsev', p. 74.

[131] Bone's autobiography and her experience in prison continue to inspire in the twenty-first century. Aang San SuuKyi began her 2011 BBC Reith Lecture with: 'The first autobiography I ever read […] was … perhaps prophetically … *Seven Years Solitary* … the autobiography of a Hungarian woman [caught up in] the Communist Party purges of the early 1950s' (Carter, 'The Visible Woman', p. 46). In March 2020, psychologist Marc Smith cited Bone as an exemplar of psychological endurance for those coping with the self-isolation and lockdown experiences of Covid-19, see: <https://psychologymarc.medium.com/lockdown-isolation-coping-2dcaf775dcbb> [accessed 29 September 2022].

Thirty-five years after its initial publication, *Seven Years Solitary* appeared as an hour-long BBC Radio 4 dramatization on 19 March 1992. A radio discussion (*Soviet Affairs*) broadcast in April 1957, about the significance of Dudintsev's novel to the changing tide of Soviet politics, paved the way for a follow-up, seventeen-cast radio play adaption on 18 November 1957 of Bone's translation. In a full reversal of her disbarring from the broadcasting corporation in 1943, Bone herself featured – both in person and as a focal case study – in a variety of television and radio programmes dedicated to discussing her prison experience and analysing the psychological impact of her privations.[132]

The number of media appearances and lack of further publications in the post-imprisonment period of Bone's life until her death in 1975 mark a shift in her career: a preference for broadcasting rather than literary translation. Her Dudintsev translation and autobiography were the only works that she produced after 1949. When she died, her obituary in *The Times* credited Bone with:

> disciplin[ing] herself to ignore thoughts of self pity or hopes for the future, and with the help of an iron will, a strong constitution, an unusual sense of humour, and a well stocked mind, fought back […] authorities in every way she could.[133]

Such an assessment validates the extent to which Bone recovered her bearing as a New Woman and succeeded, albeit at the end of her life and somewhat ironically in a prison setting, in consigning to the past the detrimental sense of subservience associated with her involvement with the Sunday Circle. Bone's friend, the British journalist and Colditz prison-camp survivor, Michael Burn,[134] wrote a response to her obituary in which he offered his

[132] These include *Woman's Hour* in 1966; an episode of a Radio 4 series called *The Women* publicizing the achievements of women deemed to have 'help[ed] to change the world in which they lived' (BBC Genome). In June 1958, she appeared in a televised programme called *Brainwashing*, which examined 'the power of the mind to withstand solitary confinement, brutality, and the ceaseless psychological attacks of trained Communist interrogators' (ibid.). Bone also wrote and introduced her own radio play, *The Impostor*, broadcast on 2 April 1964 and featuring Prunella Scales, about the nineteenth-/twentieth-century Hungarian confidence trickster, Ignace Strassnoff. (See: 'Le roi des escrocs', *Police Magazine*, 206 (1934), p. 4.)

[133] Anon., 'Dr Edith Bone'.

[134] William Grimes, 'Michael Burn, Writer, Adventurer, Dies at 97', *New York Times*, 14 October 2010. Available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2010/09/15/world/europe/15burn.html> [accessed 5 October 2022].

own, personal assessment of her many contributions and insight into her New Woman attributes:

> I saw her […] a few days after her release and, apart from being communist no more, she was just the same, as combative as ever. I think of her as the original 'Bolshie'. How many husbands she had, how many were for passports to get across forbidden frontiers, does not matter. Years ago, she had composed her own epitaph:
>
> Here lies the body of Edith Bone.
> All her life she lived alone,
> Until Death added the final S
> And put an end to her
> loneliness.
>
> She has in fact left her body (I am sure she would have called it her carcass) to a hospital; her book to posterity; and her spirit to the brave.[135]

[135] Michael Burn, 'Dr Edith Bone', *The Times*, 22 February 1975. Available at *The Times Digital Archive*: <link.gale.com/apps/doc/CS237599830/TTDA?u=exeter&sid=bookmark-TTDA&xid=4823ffb3> [accessed 5 October 2022].

4

A different ideology: Russophone émigrée translator-mediators in the United States

The arrival in the West of *Not by Bread Alone*, as explored in the previous chapter, holds significance as the (often overlooked) starting point for a new phase of dissident Russian – Soviet – literature in translation (more usually eclipsed by Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, whose publications succeeded Dudintsev's chronologically). Bone's platforming – both of her own first-hand experience of Soviet injustice, and of Dudintsev's novel – paved the way for Western activism in the Russian literary translation scene over the next two decades. My final two case studies exemplify a period when translation assumed new potency as a subtle but effective form of cultural and intellectual combat:

> The chief battle of the Cold War was fought over the hearts and minds of citizens on both sides of the Iron Curtain. While the Cold War is generally characterised as a conflict between capitalist and communist powers, the cultural Cold War was a battle fought not only between these opposing sides, but also, even primarily, on the home front: governments in the USSR and the West were preoccupied with persuading their own citizens of both the merits of their own political systems and the evils of the opposing side's. Translation, a key way in which a foreign 'other' can be represented to a domestic audience, was intimately bound up with cultural policies and propaganda in the West and East.[1]

Lygo describes these cultural policies and propaganda campaigns as taking place across a 'constellation of countries united in their opposition to Soviet communism, the cooperation between governments and intelligence agencies created an organized alliance with defined policies and objectives, and which collaborated on specific projects'.[2] In the same way that the Soviet

[1] Lygo, 'Translation and the Cold War', p. 442.
[2] Ibid.

Union sponsored on-message publications at home (like *Ogonek*) and abroad (*Soviet Woman* and *Soviet Literature*), the American Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) also influenced or directly sponsored journals around the world (such as Stephen Spender's *Encounter* in the UK, *Der Monat* in Germany, *Partisan Review* in the United States, *Mundo Nuevo* in Cuba and Latin America, and the *Paris Review* headquartered in France). It procured propagandized content for its own use from, for example, George Plimpton, Harold Humes and (CIA operative) Peter Matthiessen's *Paris Review* (as Carlisle's microhistory will evidence) and also inaugurated the so-called Congress for Cultural Freedom (CCF).

Established in West Berlin in 1950, the CCF was initially a clandestine organization, 'conceived as an answer to Soviet tactics: an umbrella for many front organizations'.[3] Its birth came from a growing desire to counter headline-grabbing Soviet-supported events held in Western locations. Three such events were the 1948 'World Congress of Intellectuals in Defence of Peace' in Warsaw; the 'World Congress of Peace Partisans' in Paris (April 1949); and the 'Cultural and Scientific Conference for World Peace', held at the Waldorf-Astoria hotel in New York in March 1949 (perhaps the most contentious of the events for taking place on American soil). Key cultural figures of left-leaning, liberal persuasion attended the Waldorf-Astoria conference. Delegates from the West included, for example, the Socialist and pan-African civil rights activist W.E.B. Dubois, and US composer of 'Fanfare for the Common Man', Aaron Copland.[4] From the USSR, participants included the Socialist Realist novelist and Secretary-General (at that time) of the Union of Soviet Writers, Aleksandr Fadeev and the composer and musician Dmitrii Shostakovich.[5] The CCF (backed by the CIA) hosted its own conferences and established outlets for like-minded intellectuals to present a soft-power rebuff of the Soviet regime. The CIA/CCF funded and encouraged 'intellectuals, translators and academics' to pursue cultural

[3] Lygo, 'Translation and the Cold War', p. 447.

[4] See the CIA report, 'Cultural and Scientific Conference for World Peace', *Freedom of Information Act Electronic Reading Room*. Available at: <https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/document/cia-rdp80-00926a001100030004-4> [accessed 21 March 2023].

[5] Lygo, 'Translation and the Cold War', p. 447. The CCF was clandestine in its operations until the *New York Times* exposed its work in 1966 (ibid.). For a list of participants at the 'Cultural and Scientific Conference for World Peace', see: 'Cultural and Scientific Conference for World Peace Program' (27 March 1949), *National Council of Arts, Sciences and Professions*, W.E.B. Du Bois Papers (MS 312), Special Collections and University Archives. Available at University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries: <https://credo.library.umass.edu/view/pageturn/mums312-b283-i001/#page/1/mode/1up> [accessed 21 March 2023].

projects, including the translation of dissident texts (perhaps most famously Boris Pasternak's *Doctor Zhivago*) to project repressed, non-Party sentiments clandestinely expressed inside the USSR:

> While Western literature translated in the USSR was almost always published at home, literature from the USSR translated and published in the West was often unpublished in the USSR. The desire of Western translators, publishers and readers to discover suppressed voices of the Stalinist period, and in particular of the Gulag, was a genuine and understandable response to the propaganda, censorship, distortion of history, and human rights abuses of the USSR.[6]

The publishing industry additionally saw in anti-Soviet literature an opportunity to inject new life and zeitgeist into the Russian literary canon which, until then, had largely centred on the same nineteenth-century classics waiting to be retranslated (or already had been, perhaps more than once).[7] Source manuscripts critical of the Soviet regime began changing hands through covert *samizdat* channels.[8] Publishers and authors' representatives began negotiating high financial stakes, with an emphasis on urgent production deadlines. Translators worked round the clock to enable publishers to land their anti-Soviet literary sensation before a competitor.

The *samizdat* literature produced – in original and translated form – during the 1960s and 1970s marks a watershed moment in Russophone literary translation history. The key prose authors to emerge from beyond the Iron Curtain through such means were Boris Pasternak, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn and Mikhail Bulgakov; others (like Isaac Babel, for example)

[6] Lygo, 'Translation and the Cold War', p. 450.

[7] Some publishers (Allen Lane in the UK, for example) were slower than their translators at realizing the potential of Soviet literature. Lane initially placed commercial concerns on the likely short shelf life and dubious literary merit of Solzhenitsyn's *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*, rather than recognize it as a genre-changing political sensation. See: McAteer, *Translating Great Russian Literature*, p. 131.

[8] In Ann Komaromi's detailed history of *samizdat*, she attributes (as does historian, Gordon Johnston, before her, see: 'What Is the History of Samizdat?', *Social History*, Vol. 24:2 (May, 1999), 115–33, p. 122) the origins of the term to a Moscow poet, Nikolai Glazkov, who 'coined the term (or its forerunner *samsebiaizdat*) for his homemade collections of poetry beginning in the 1940s. Historian Aleksandr Daniel' […] described the use of the term *samizdat* in the late 1950s or early 1960s among limited groups of Moscow literati' (Ann Komaromi, 'Samizdat and Soviet Dissident Publics', *Slavic Review*, Vol. 71:1 (Spring, 2012), 70–91. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.5612/slavicreview.71.1.0070> [accessed 18 March 2023] (p. 77).)

featured in literary journals.[9] In the microhistories that follow, I examine the responses to this exciting period of Russian cultural mediation by the translators Olga Carlisle and Mirra Ginsburg. The first case study – for Olga Carlisle – explores the influence of Boris Pasternak and Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn on her in becoming an advocate for humanitarian change in the Soviet Union and the unintended consequences to her personally of such activism. It draws on archived papers, interviews, memoirs and reviews. Now ninety-three years old, Carlisle is the Paris-born daughter of the Russian poet, novelist and memoirist, Vadim Andreev, and the granddaughter of the famous Russian writer Leonid Andreev, author of short stories and plays. She spent her childhood and youth surrounded by émigré Russian intellectuals and artists. She travelled to the United States to pursue her studies, where she stayed and married the Alfred Knopf editor, Henry Carlisle, with whom she co-translated Russian poetry and Dostoevsky.

Her multilingual, multicultural background secured a major commission – defying contemporary gender norms – to interview for the *Paris Review*'s 'Writers at Work' feature, the Nobel Prize winner (and decliner) Boris Pasternak. As her microhistory shows, the CIA afforded considerable optimism from a soft-power perspective on this and the other interviews that Carlisle conducted with Soviet intelligentsia.[10] She returned to Russia several times to interview Pasternak and his fellow Russian writers; her encounters with them and especially with Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn proved pivotal to her career. She agreed at Solzhenitsyn's request to ensure safe passage to the West of the manuscript for his novel *The First Circle* (*V kruge pervom*, 1955–8), and its subsequent publication in English. Under Carlisle's clandestine mediation, a team of specialists translated, published and promoted Solzhenitsyn's work in the United States.

[9] Mirra Ginsburg's translation of Babel's short story 'The Sin of Jesus' ('Iisusov grekh', 1922) appeared in the January 1949 issue of *Partisan Review*. By now anti-Stalinist in its outlook and remit, the journal described Babel as 'one of the best known Russian writers of the nineteen-twenties who disappeared during the purge of the nineteen-thirties'. Cultural historian Duncan White notes about this particular issue that the *Review*'s decision to publish 'a brilliant modernist short story by a Russian writer who was a victim of the Stalinist Terror gave the effort the character of a preemptive strike against the Scientific and Cultural Conference for World Peace. To McCarthy and her group of infiltrators, stories like Babel's were the key issue. They wanted to confront the Soviet sympathisers with the names of those who had "disappeared". At an anti-fascist conference arranged by André Malraux in Paris in 1936, Babel had been among the star speakers. Nothing had been heard from him in the West since. Where had he gone?' (White, *Cold Warrior*, p. 239).

[10] Many of Carlisle's interviews can be sourced in her compilation *Poets on Street Corners* (New York and Toronto: Random House, 1968).

My case study analyses the significance of her involvement in this project from an American humanitarian and gender-oriented perspective, as well as Carlisle's furtherance of American soft-power strategies. It assesses the impact of her work, its usefulness in terms of the US campaign against communism, and the role of translation in publicizing and opposing the oppression of writers by the Soviet regime. At the same time, it exposes a point of conflict between Carlisle's naïve enthusiasm as a well-meaning cultural mediator and Solzhenitsyn's uncompromising gloom concerning his personal situation in Russia and the handling abroad of his novels. This tension, which results in the law case discussed in more detail in this case study, arises from an expectation gap between the translator-as-mediator (best demonstrated by Carlisle's European peers, Elisabeth Markstein and Mariia Olsuf'eva) and the translator-as-'trouble-maker' who is perceived by the author to have distorted or mistranslated the source text's message, albeit inadvertently in Carlisle's case. From a gendered perspective, this microhistory also challenges Carlisle's own opinion that she had damaged her career by spending a decade focused on mediating Solzhenitsyn.

The career and translatorial achievements of Belarusian émigrée Mirra Ginsburg form the second microhistory in this chapter. Constructed from archival correspondence in various locations across the United States, PEN America minutes, translation paratexts (introductions and reviews) and Ginsburg's lectures on translation, this is the first case study to examine Ginsburg's extensive contribution to literary translation, her decolonizing effect on the Russophone canon *avant la lettre*, and her campaign to protect Soviet dissident writers and professional translators' rights. She dedicated her career in the United States to translating Soviet science-fiction (Mikhail Bulgakov, Evgenii Zamiatin); the authors Andrei Platonov and Iurii Tynianov; and ethnic folk tales from across the Soviet space (remote Northern Russia, the Caucasus and Georgia, Western Urals and Udmurtia, Central Asia). Ginsburg is best known, however, for her US translation of Bulgakov's *Master and Margarita*, published contemporaneously with Michael Glenny's UK translation. This clash led to a public spat over the question of what constitutes best translatorial practice.

Ginsburg worked as a freelance consultant for Carl Proffer at Ardis Publishers and for decades on the PEN America Translation Committee to formalize a manifesto clause supporting dissident writers in the Soviet Union. She was also instrumental in drawing up a definitive code for literary translators' rights, the first of its kind in International PEN and the basis for translators' rights today. Ginsburg can be credited with spearheading the campaign within PEN for translators to receive

a respectable, competitive minimum rate per thousand words, to put translators' names on the cover of books, and to ensure that translators receive a minimum number of free copies of every text they translate. Both Carlisle and Ginsburg are, therefore, influential figures in modern female translation agency and activism, in particular regarding translators' visibility and rights, literary and humanitarian advocacy, and Ginsburg's desire to decolonize the canon.

Olga (Andreeva) Carlisle (1930–): The best of three worlds[11]

> *I realised that as future scholars assembled the story of Solzhenitsyn and his emergence into world fame, I would appear in history in a footnote, as a dry mercenary who was responsible for Alexander Solzhenitsyn's expulsion from the Soviet Union.*[12]

The significance of Olga Carlisle's cultural pedigree cannot be gleaned simply from her married name. Olga (Andreeva) Carlisle was the daughter of the Russian poet, novelist and memoirist, Vadim Andreev and the granddaughter of the Russian writer Leonid Andreev. Well known and widely translated in the early twentieth century, Leonid Andreev was the author of short stories (including, in particular, *The Seven Who Were Hanged* [*Rasskazi o semi poveshennykh*, 1908]) and plays. Her mother, Olga Chernova, was the stepdaughter of Viktor Chernov (1873–1952), a founder of the Russian Socialist-Revolutionary Party. Olga Chernova met and married Vadim Andreev in Paris, where both families had fled after the Revolution. Carlisle was born in Paris in 1930 and spent her childhood and youth surrounded by prominent émigré Russian intellectuals and artists. Their Parisian circle of friends included the poets Marina Tsvetaeva (before Tsvetaeva's return to Russia), Boris Poplavskii (who died of a drug overdose in 1935); the prose writers Aleksei Remizov (his wife Seraphima Remizova was Carlisle's godmother), Nikolai Berdiaev and Isaac Babel; and the painters

[11] This case study first appeared in slightly altered form as an article in MHRA's *Modern Language Review* under the title, 'The Voice in the Snow: Rediscovering Olga Carlisle as a Mediator of Russian Culture', *Modern Language Review*, Vol. 118:4 (2023), 559–79, <https://doi.org/10.1353/mlr.2023.a907837>.

[12] Olga Carlisle, *Solzhenitsyn and the Secret Circle* (London and Henley: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978), p. 192.

Mikhail Larionov, Natalia Goncharova and Chaïm Soutine. Reine Meylaerts would consider Carlisle's multicultural upbringing a perfect fulfilment of her definition of *habitus* – an internalized system of dispositions that:

> engender practices, perceptions, and attitudes […]. Under the influence of its social position and its individual and collective past, every cultural actor thus develops (and continues to develop) a social identity: a certain representation of the world and of his position therein.[13]

With a social context like this, Olga Carlisle was destined to become a painter, writer, translator and cultural mediator. As it transpired, she chose all four pathways. In her memoir *Voices in the Snow* (1962), Carlisle described the extent of her childhood connection with Russian creativity from a Parisian remove, thus enabling us to understand how, in spite of her French birthplace, she became imbued with a strong sense of Russian identity:

> During the thirties, the majority of my parents' friends were Russians living in Paris. Not that France was inhospitable; we had French friends too […]. Yet I grew up in an essentially Russian atmosphere. On Sundays, many of my parents' friends came for the day to Le Plessis – poets and painters who often travelled from Paris on their bicycles. We took long walks in the countryside. In the fall we went mushroom-gathering; in the summer we became berry pickers. There was afternoon tea-drinking, conversations that lasted late into the night, and poetry readings which I could overhear from my room after I had been put to bed.[14]

This combination of Carlisle's cultural upbringing, a childhood immersion in diasporic Russianness, and her wide reading of Russian classics and poetry[15] – in short, her *habitus* – provided the necessary skills and social positioning for her to move with ease and eligibility between cultures, languages and

[13] Meylaerts, 'Conceptualizing the Translator', p. 60.

[14] Olga Carlisle, *Voices in the Snow* (New York: Random House, 1963). Available at: <https://archive.org/details/voicesinsnowenco00carl> [accessed 5 January 2022], pp. 16–17.

[15] Carlisle attributed her knowledge – as an exile – of Russia to Russian literature, 'It was to Dostoevsky, for example, one of the less descriptive of Russian novelists, that I owed many of my flashes of recognition – of houses, of streets, of people. All that I had read made Leningrad in particular immediately understandable' (Carlisle, *Voices*, p. 23). Carlisle took a four-year art course (painting and artistic media) at Bard College in New York between 1949 and 1953, where she met her San Francisco-born husband Henry Coffin Carlisle (no known relative of the Devon Pine-Coffins).

nations. In 1993, a *Los Angeles Times* journalist described her as being of three cultures: Russian, French and American. According to Carlisle, she was 'given the best of three worlds'.[16]

Transcending gender norms and Soviet censors

It was this rare mix that secured her a major commission – contrary, by her own admission, to gender norms of the time – to provide a 'journalistic scoop' in the late 1950s for the *Paris Review*'s 'Writers at Work' regular feature.[17] Carlisle was living in the United States by now. Not a writer – she was a painter by training – it was through contacts of her husband, a junior editor for publisher Alfred Knopf, that Carlisle was asked to go to the USSR for the first time in her life. *Paris Review* editors Harold Humes (an acquaintance of Carlisle's parents) and George Plimpton believed that Carlisle's Russian connections and language proficiency would enable her to circumvent the Soviet order for its citizens to 'avoid contacts with visiting foreigners' and to interview the literary sensation of the moment, Boris Pasternak.[18] Her visit was proposed immediately after Pasternak had been awarded the 1958 Nobel Prize for Literature for his anti-Soviet, Kremlin-banned novel *Doctor Zhivago* (published in Italy from a *samizdat* copy in 1957). When Pasternak was forced to decline his prize at the behest of the Soviet authorities, he entered the Western public's consciousness. The *Paris Review* hoped to optimize such an opportunity to publicize the moment, as did others in the literary sphere. As Joel Whitney writes in his study of the relationship between the CIA and writers at this time:

> Carlisle's interview with Pasternak was timed with new interest in Russian writers in the West. AEDINOSAUR, the CIA's covert operation to smuggle a Russian edition of *Doctor Zhivago* back into Soviet territory, had been expanded by the end of 1958. With this operation, a cottage industry cropped up within American book publishing to

[16] John Boudreau, 'A Soviet Reunion: Literature: Olga Andreyev Carlisle's Memoirs Track the History of her Literary Family in a Nation of Change', *Los Angeles Times*, 22 August 1993. Available at: <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1993-08-22-vw-26221-story.html> [accessed 16 March 2023].

[17] Carlisle recounted the background details to her appointment in a later interview; see Olga Carlisle, 'On Being a Literary Intermediary', *The North American Review*, Vol. 270:4 (Dec. 1985), 71–4 (p. 71). Available at: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/25124685> [accessed 5 January 2022].

[18] Carlisle, 'On Being a Literary Intermediary', p. 71.

> launch translations of Russian writers previously unknown in the West while (more secretly) working to smuggle dissident writers back into the territory and distribute them as samizdat, or forbidden texts. This was the invisibly guided ebb and flow of relevance in the literary Cold War.[19]

According to Whitney, the *Paris Review* literary journal maintained ties with representatives of the CIA who took a controlling interest in the commissioning of interview content. The Pasternak interview conformed to their journalistic aspirations.[20] The journal's editors – one of whom was Peter Matthiessen, whose previous role as a CIA agent prompted people to suspect the publication of receiving CIA funding – were eager to match other publications' coverage of the Pasternak story.[21] They anticipated that their own Pasternak feature would form the basis for a pamphlet published by the CCF that would reflect well on the *Paris Review*. In a letter about the journal's aspirations to fellow editor Nelson Aldrich (who later left the journal to work for the CCF), Plimpton wrote that 'a pamphlet would undoubtedly be the result (financed by such a group as the Congress for Cultural Freedom) with credit for the compilation going to the Review'.[22] Whitney notes that Plimpton, conscious that the Americans should be championing authors such as Pasternak who irked the Soviets, also suggested 'that the CCF be approached to fund brochures to publicize the [Pasternak] issue'.[23] The fact that Aldrich then joined the staff of the CCF, Whitney asserts, linked the two organizations and took '*Paris Review* deeper into the world of covert propaganda'.[24]

From its inception, the Pasternak soft-power endeavour centred on Carlisle as a key participant. It is unclear if, when first commissioned, she was aware of the *Review*'s propagandistic intentions and the CCF's involvement in the journal. Whitney's archival research reveals that on her return from the USSR, however, Carlisle expressed concerns about her parents' safety (given that they were still Soviet citizens) and about the outlets where her

[19] Joel Whitney, *Finks, How the CIA Tricked the World's Best Writers* (New York and London: OR Books, 2016), p. 71.

[20] Whitney, *Finks*, p. 6.

[21] Joel Whitney notes that '*Tempo Presente*, the Congress's [CCF's] monthly publication in Italy, […] printed a piece called "The Pasternak Case"'. The same magazine also translated a discussion between Lionel Abel and Nicola Chiaromonte on the literary merits of *Doctor Zhivago*. The UK-based CCF-supported journal, *Encounter*, ran features on Pasternak prior to him winning the Nobel Prize, and in May 1958, the British translator Max Hayward 'recounted the whispers of ideological ire that the book was already anticipating inside the Soviet Union'. Whitney, *Finks*, p. 71.

[22] Whitney, *Finks*, p. 70.

[23] Ibid., p. 55.

[24] Ibid., p. 70.

interview(s) would appear. An archived letter sent from Plimpton to Aldrich suggests that she later became aware of her role and its potential risks:

> [Carlisle] is delighted to think that her work will be read by as many as will through Congress publications, but in this present turmoil of the Olga Ivinskaya [Pasternak's partner] imprisonment she's been spooked: the point is that her parents are Soviet citizens, and she worries that things might not go well with them if her piece on an author the Soviets are obviously extremely sensitive about appears in such politically engaged magazines as the Congress publications.[25]

It was agreed that Carlisle and the *Paris Review* would 'split the proceeds of her interview […] fifty-fifty' and the CCF achieved its goal of mainstream publicity with a one-hour CBS television show featuring Carlisle in discussion with Congress for Cultural Freedom exponents Mary McCarthy, McCarthy's husband Edmund Wilson and T.S. Eliot.[26]

In addition to giving the *Paris Review* its scoop, Carlisle's role as interviewer also represented a break with societal norms and expectations of women in the work place. It is worth citing Carlisle's description of the moment she was asked to go. The example reveals not only her epiphany on realizing the value of her cultural capital, but also the extent of gender expectations at that time, 1958:

> It had never occurred to me that I could one day visit the distant, inaccessible country from which my parents had been swept away by the revolution. Or visit a poet I admired above all others. Indeed, the *Paris Review*'s offer was in the nature of a miracle: in those years, the *Review* was decidedly male-oriented. […] It seldom gave assignments of consequence to women – at the *Review*, women were for the most part employed as typists or volunteer readers of manuscripts.[27]

[25] Ibid., pp. 80–1.

[26] Ibid., p. 82.

[27] Ibid. Carlisle's awareness of gender disparity in the workplace and societally resurfaced five years later in a special feature entitled 'The Russian Woman', produced for the *Saturday Evening Post*. Allotted fifteen pages for her article with quality, colour photographs of women in Russia, Georgia and Ukraine, Carlisle used material from her trips to present a detailed commentary of Soviet women's lives – from jobs and cosmetics to premarital sex and accommodation options – frequently drawing comparisons with the lives of their American female counterparts. (See: Olga Carlisle, 'The Russian Woman', *Saturday Evening Post* (19 June 1965), 28–43 Available at: <https://www.saturdayeveningpost.com/subscribe-to-issue/?issue=1965-06-19>.) The author would like to thank Carol Apollonio at Duke University for help in obtaining a copy of this article.

To be able to travel, Carlisle left her young son with her parents; accepted the $1000 (a considerable sum at the time) for expenses; and spent five weeks in Russia during the winter of 1960.[28] Carlisle used her opportunity to meet intellectuals who had been friends of her family before they emigrated to France, especially the writer and translator Kornei Chukovskii. She described Chukovskii in her introduction to *Visions* (1987) as having 'a touch of the magician about him',[29] able to recreate her grandfather's 'great house built in the Scandinavian style in Finland, the blazing fireplaces and huge tiled stoves throughout the house, the polar bear rugs on the floors, the massive carved furniture'.[30] Carlisle visited Chukovskii often but also conducted interviews with Mikhail Sholokhov, Il'ia Ehrenburg, Evgenii Evtushenko and Nadezhda Mandelshtam, and had not one but several meetings with Pasternak.[31] The *Paris Review* editors were pleased with her Pasternak interview, an experience that she herself described as 'the most exhilarating'.[32] A humanitarian sense of intercultural mission (which may at first have been inspired by her grandfather's legacy, but which motivated Carlisle for over a decade after her first trip to Russia) found poignancy during her final meeting with Pasternak and seemingly became a catalyst for action later in her life:

> Speaking in his austere, airy study decorated with picture postcards evocative of the religious scenes in *Dr Zhivago*, Pasternak had entrusted me with a mission consistent with my Russian family's legacy of political and social involvement. I was to join in the liberal intelligentsia's common cause against a repressive government: 'A visitor like you must tell the truth about us. Remember that one of the goals of the Terror was to make us forget what Truth is. Always hard to recognise, Truth is especially elusive in a totalitarian world … Of course, you'll also have to

[28] Whitney, *Finks*, p. 82.

[29] Olga Carlisle, 'Introduction', in *Visions, Stories and Photographs by Leonid Andreyev*, ed. by Olga Carlisle (Orlando FL: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1987), p. 10.

[30] Ibid.

[31] On reading of Carlisle's visits to Chukovskii in particular, Ginsburg – who regularly corresponded with the latter, from 1965 until his death in 1969 – wrote to him saying, 'I hear and read about you all the time. I read Olga Carlisle's article in *The Times* and envied her for having visited you' ('Все время слышу и читаю о Вас. Читала в Таймс статью Ольги Карлайл и завидовала ей что она была у Вас'), 'Letter from Ginsburg to Kornei Chukovskii', 4 July 1968, Series I: Arranged Correspondence: Box 1, Folder 10, RBML, p. 1.

[32] Carlisle, 'On Being a Literary Intermediary', p. 72.

> be careful about how you speak of us. We live in a police state, we are open to retaliations, but if you listen to your inner voice, you will be able to do it'.[33]

Carlisle heeded Pasternak's words which, as she herself makes clear in the above passage, reminded her of her own family's political links, not to mention her grandfather's foreshortened life. As Carlisle remarked of Leonid Andreev in *Visions*, 'He and Alexander Blok […] were the two charismatic literary figures of that era, foretelling as they did the ominous future for Russia and for all Europe. Andreyev died at the age of forty-eight in 1919, at the time of the civil war, the Red Terror, and the famine – at the time of the collapse of a whole culture.'[34] Even in the opening paragraph of Carlisle's introduction to *Visions*, she describes spending her childhood in Paris absorbing the past, her family's genealogical behaviours and dispositions, 'leafing through [her grandfather's] albums and holding up the glass plates to the light. They opened for me the world my father had known when he was a child'.[35] Carlisle's cultural and political disposition, no matter how deeply buried or diluted over time or detached by geography, offers some explanation for the attributes later manifested in her *habitus* and in her actions as a cultural mediator with a humanitarian, anti-totalitarian conscience.

In the same way that Wettlin had felt compelled to educate her fellow Americans about the Russians, so too did Carlisle, energized by her first trip to the USSR. But in Carlisle's case, she offered insight specifically into Russia's cultural elite, the intelligentsia. She published a full account in early 1963 of her visit to Russia. Through *Voices in the Snow: Encounters with Russian Writers*, she hoped 'to give a voice to each among my Soviet acquaintances who had wanted to be heard in the West'.[36] Little did she realize that her

[33] Ibid.

[34] Carlisle, 'Introduction', p. 6.

[35] Ibid., p. 3.

[36] Carlisle, 'On Being a Literary Intermediary', p. 72. Aside from *Voices in the Snow* (1963), Carlisle also wrote *Island in Time* (1980), *Under a New Sky: A Reunion with Russia* (1993), *Far From Russia* (2000); she co-translated Dostoevsky's *The Idiot* with her husband; edited anthologies of translated Russian poetry, *Poets on Street Corners* (1968), *Modern Russian Poetry* (1972); and published numerous multiple-page culture features, not just in *the Paris Review*, but also *Vogue* magazine covering the lives of famous literati. Her subjects and/or interviewees included: Andrei Sinyavsky, literary critic for the journal *Novyi mir* and Soviet dissident writer who was a defendant at the Sinyavsky-Daniel trial in 1965 and wrote under the pseudonym Abram Tertz; the Nobel-shortlisted poetess Anna Akhmatova (1889–1966); Nadezhda Mandelshtam, author of the memoir *Hope against Hope* about her poet husband Osip's exile and death in a transit camp en route to a Siberian GULag; and the apolitical Soviet poet and writer Bella Akhmadulina

book would also be translated into Russian and circulated within Russia via a rare and hybrid *tamizdat-samizdat* phenomenon: Anglophone source texts highlighting dissident Russian voices rarely penetrated the Iron Curtain in Russian translation. This is a feat that calls to mind translation scholar Pascale Casanova's claim that '[l]iterary space translates political and national issues into its own terms – aesthetic, formal, narrative, poetic – and at once affirms and denies them'.[37] Carlisle described the unusual *tamizdat-samizdat* issue of her book as 'the highest reward' and Chukovskii feted it as 'our equivalent of your National Book Award'. The multidirectional circulation, East and West, of *Voices in the Snow* heightened Carlisle's awareness of the possibilities for cross-cultural mediation through literature. Her sense of calling gained momentum the more she visited Russia. It began with her early conversations with Ehrenburg and Pasternak, and dramatically increased during the late 1960s and early 1970s, when she began liaising with Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, the giant among dissident writers described by his biographers, David Burg and George Feifer, as 'not only Russia's most important living writer, but also […] "the mind and conscience of our nation" […] a unique figure in Russia and the world'.[38]

Managing Solzhenitsyn: An act of translation activism and self-sacrifice

During her first trip to the USSR, Carlisle engaged Ehrenburg and Pasternak independently in discussions about literature and translation. When asked which authors most deserved to be translated, Ehrenburg replied, 'I can't give you any advice there. It is like telling a shopper in a department store which fabric to buy. It is a matter of taste, the shopper should follow his own inclinations'.[39] Pasternak, himself a translator, however, 'plunged right away into an absorbing discussion of the art of translating'.[40] When pressed by

(1937–2010), whom Joseph Brodsky described as 'a treasure of Russian poetry' (Marcus Williamson, 'Obituary', *The Independent*, 3 December 2010, available at: <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/obituaries/bella-akhmadulina-poet-who-helped-liberate-russian-literary-consciousness-following-the-end-of-stalin-s-rule-2149822.html> [accessed 4 April 2023]).

37 Casanova, *World Republic*, p. 86.

38 David Burg and George Feifer, *Solzhenitsyn, A Biography* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1972), p. 1.

39 Carlisle, *Voices*, pp. 126–7.

40 Ibid., p. 189.

Carlisle to comment on the fact that the English translation of *Dr Zhivago* (by Manya Harari and Max Hayward, published in 1958) had not done justice to the original, Pasternak replied:

> [D]o not blame them [the translators] too much. It is not their fault. Like translators everywhere, they tend to reproduce the literal sense rather than the tone of what is said: in translating, it is the tone that is important. Actually, the only challenging translations are those of classics. It is rarely rewarding to translate modern works, although it might be easy. You said you were a painter. Well, translation is very much like copying paintings. Imagine yourself copying a Malevich. Wouldn't it be boring?[41]

Carlisle travelled several more times to Russia, in 1962, 1964–5 and twice in 1967.[42] It was specifically during her visits in 1967, when she met Solzhenitsyn, that Carlisle began to realize the power and legitimacy of 'fight[ing] bolshevism through literature',[43] and also the significance of Pasternak's advice to follow her inner voice. During the first of her trips in 1967, Carlisle's close-knit network of intellectual friends in Moscow choreographed a meeting between Carlisle and Solzhenitsyn – apparently at the latter's request – just before she was due to return home. The meeting took place at a point when Carlisle was beginning to question the efficacy of her role as a mediator between Russia and the West.[44] Solzhenitsyn had become aware of Carlisle while he stayed as a political outcast at their mutual friend, Kornei Chukovskii's house in the writer's commune in Peredelkino, where Pasternak too had lived in exile. The well-connected Chukovskii (who, as we recall, had introduced Budberg to Gorky many years earlier) had also been a friend of Carlisle's grandfather and had kept a photograph of her in his study. Solzhenitsyn, on meeting Carlisle, made reference to the photograph, saying it had helped him to write. "'You looked so serious, so stern," he said, adding with a trace of regret, "You're not as stern as I'd imagined'", a comment that she found puzzling.[45] It was during this meeting that Solzhenitsyn called

[41] Ibid., p. 191.

[42] She was finally refused an entry visa on account of her assistance to personal friends Arthur and Inge Miller in gathering material in Russia for an unadulterated, at times critical account of Soviet life.

[43] Carlisle, *Solzhenitsyn*, p. 64.

[44] During one of her Moscow soirees, Carlisle experienced an awkward exchange with Joseph Brodsky, who voiced his support of the Vietnam War and left her believing that her 'efforts at opening lines of communication between Russian and Western intellectuals seemed ridiculous, presumptuous, a delusion' (Carlisle, *Solzhenitsyn*, p. 5).

[45] Carlisle, *Solzhenitsyn*, p. 15.

on her to use all means possible, even if they placed her in peril, to bring his anti-Soviet novel *The First Circle* into print in the West and 'strike at the core of the Soviet leadership'.[46] Carlisle agreed and, on realizing the magnitude of what Solzhenitsyn was asking her to do, she reinterpreted his regret at her less than stern demeanour as concern that she might succumb to feminine weakness at some point in the task before her. What mattered to him was 'the enlightenment of an entire generation of Russians'; he would not, as she perceived it, 'welcome a show of sentimentality from the "stern" woman he had chosen to act for him'.[47]

In spite of Chukovskii's fleeting warning to Carlisle not to get involved – 'you are a fine journalist, keep yourself free to move between Russia and the West – what you have to contribute in the realm of East-West contacts cannot be duplicated'[48] – and Solzhenitsyn's own admission that 'we are involved together in an unheard of adventure. You may not be able to return to Russia – it could be dangerous for you and for me', Carlisle chose to help Solzhenitsyn.[49] She dedicated a decade of her life to his cause. Carlisle's commitment to Russian literature and her now politicized position as a bilingual cultural mediator between the totalitarian USSR and the Anglophone West exhibits parallels with her translator predecessor Constance Garnett, whose commitment Simon describes as hardly being 'limited to its ideological content'.[50] Simon remarks that Garnett's 'sympathy for pre-revolutionary Russian anarchist exiles, her visits to Russia and her support for the Revolution provided the initial impulsion and the ongoing grounds on which her work was built'.[51] On her first trip to Russia at the start of 1894, Garnett served as a courier of anti-Tsarist messages from her network of Russian friends in London to political activists in Russia. Carlisle was similarly required to act as a courier and to operate with absolute secrecy, both at home and on her visits to Russia. She adopted Soviet-style tactics in both settings to counter the possibility of her conversations and plans being intercepted.[52] As Solzhenitsyn pointed out to her, 'You can imagine

[46] Ibid., p. 18.
[47] Ibid., p. 19.
[48] Ibid., p. 80.
[49] Ibid., p. 73.
[50] Simon, *Gender in Translation,* p. 71.
[51] Ibid.
[52] She wrote, 'In our redwood and glass house deep in a birch forest in rural Connecticut we immediately adopted modified Moscow rules for conversation. We knew that a telephone could be bugged to act as a microphone, which could relay our conversation anywhere in the world, even with the receiver cradled. We began putting the telephone in the bread drawer or covering it with a big, soft cushion whenever we spoke of sensitive matters' (Carlisle, *Solzhenitsyn*, p. 27).

what would happen to me if you were found out',[53] the implication here being confiscation (and certain destruction of) his manuscripts, his trial and arrest, or worse, and similar attacks on any of his Russia-based network.[54] She therefore became exiled from friends and relatives in Russia and trod a precarious path at home in the United States too:

> In all my years of living in and out of different cultural worlds, of doing my best to interpret one to another, I had never before had to build such a fine-spun bridge on which so much depended.[55]

This chimes with both Casanova's notion that 'literature has its own ways and means of asserting a measure of independence',[56] and Lygo's assertion that Western translators had a genuine desire to liberate suppressed Soviet voices;[57] Carlisle acknowledged that '[w]hat was needed was a literature at once truthful and bold enough to carry the message of Russian liberals outside the USSR. Solzhenitsyn was regarded as the one person who might, through his art, make the Russian experience known to the world.'[58] Carlisle saw herself as a vital facilitator in bringing Solzhenitsyn's Russia to the West. For the sake of literature and in an attempt to make a worthwhile contribution to anti-Soviet humanitarian efforts, Carlisle transported at her own risk manuscripts, messages and letters out of the USSR, across Europe and into the United States, not just on Solzhenitsyn's behalf, but also for both Chukovskii and the sculptor Ernst Neizvestnii too. The political situation in Moscow – trials in 1968 'of the dissidents [Aleksandr] Ginsburg and [Iurii] Galanskov, Brezhnev's warning in March that intellectuals would be punished if they fell into the "net of Western ideologies", the military invasion

[53] Carlisle, *Solzhenitsyn*, p. 19.

[54] Once *The Gulag Archipelago* had been committed to microfilm and safely despatched to Carlisle and Solzhenitsyn's lawyer in Switzerland Dr Heeb, Solzhenitsyn instructed his assistant Elizaveta Denisovna Voronianskaia to destroy the copy he had entrusted to her for safekeeping. Voronianskaia failed to do so. When Soviet authorities became aware of *The Gulag Archipelago*, she was arrested, interrogated and, according to Carlisle, 'forced to reveal the location of the hidden copy' (Carlisle, *Solzhenitsyn*, p. 177). Released, after having 'divulged that a copy of Gulag Archipelago was buried in the garden of a former *zek* in Luga', Voronianskaia hanged herself in her Leningrad apartment (see: Duncan White, *Cold Warriors: Writers Who Waged the Literary Cold War* (London: Little, Brown, 2019), p. 544).

[55] Carlisle, *Solzhenitsyn*, p. 69.

[56] Casanova, *World Republic*, p. 86.

[57] Lygo, 'Translation and the Cold War', p. 450.

[58] Carlisle, *Solzhenitsyn*, pp. 7–8.

of Czechoslovakia following the brief springtime there'[59] – demanded the utmost care and precision on the part of any cultural mediator crossing borders. To ensure success, the courier of this ilk must embody a blend of dispositions and capabilities, a special combination of *habitus*, social position and network. Anticipating the sociology of translation associated with Pierre Bourdieu, Carlisle highlighted the significance of all these elements in setting Solzhenitsyn's wishes in motion.[60] She wrote:

> Rarely in a lifetime does one discover a purpose which, even in a minor way, transcends one's private world of family, friends, work, daily life, but such was our discovery then. It seemed that all our past, my Russian background and experience, Henry's seven years as an editor for New York book publishers had been a preparation for the task of aiding Solzhenitsyn in the West.

And, 'What had once seemed to be merely accidents of our professional and personal lives now appeared as preparations for the job ahead'.[61]

The job ahead, as Carlisle perceived it, was to manage an intricate translation project of international scale. It was, as her reviewer Anthony Kerrigan described it, 'a fine example of a multilingual, multicultural literary transaction'[62] which was 'complicated in Russia by the state and the police'[63] – requiring the sort of involvement which Simon identifies here:

> To see translation as a project is to understand the emotional and intellectual commitment which translators make, and the esthetic they imprint upon the work. It is to be able to trace out the networks of solidarity which bring translations into existence.[64]

[59] Carlisle, *Solzhenitsyn*, p. 125.

[60] Bourdieu's discourse on the field of cultural production makes visible the agents who drive the process of translation. His article 'Une révolution conservatrice dans l'édition', *Actes de la Recherche en Sciences Sociales*, Vol. 126–27 (Mar. 1999), 3–28 <https://doi.org/10.3406/arss.1999.3278>, assesses the state of contemporary translation publishing in France. In a special issue of *The Translator* (11:2, 2005), scholar Moira Inghilleri applied Bourdieu's sociology to the field of translation, heralding a new way of thinking about translation production. This edition marks a key developmental moment in modern Translation Studies.

[61] Carlisle, *Solzhenitsyn*, p. 26 and p. 36.

[62] Anthony Kerrigan, 'Historian and Moral Witness', *Modern Age*, Vol. 24:3 (Summer) (1980), 325–8 (p. 328).

[63] Kerrigan, 'Historian and Moral Witness', p. 325.

[64] Simon, *Gender in Translation,* p. 162.

Carlisle realized the level of engagement and expertise that the translation and publication of Solzhenitsyn's *The First Circle* would require. She promised Solzhenitsyn that she would secure its timely translation and production, taking sole responsibility, as a Russian speaker with useful connections in the Soviet Union and the United States, for liaising with the author and the publisher, while maintaining an essential level of confidentiality. According to Carlisle, Solzhenitsyn resolved to bring his novel 'to the world's attention not through the back alleys of Western publishing but through the main doors' using a major publisher.[65] Carlisle acted on Solzhenitsyn's desire, therefore, for his novel to be translated and released in the Western book market amidst maximum exposure and publicity, which meant harnessing the power and position of the 'commercial pole', in this instance, the US commercial publishing industry.[66]

Although Carlisle and her husband had experience of translating poetry and Dostoevsky together and could themselves have volunteered as co-translators of Solzhenitsyn's novel, they did not, recognizing the commitment which translation of the novel would require if they were to meet the time pressures for completion.[67] Instead, Carlisle co-opted a 'network of solidarity' made up of the most able and trustworthy of her available contacts, who, between them, coordinated the necessary processes to ensure the Russian source text's safe passage into the target language and on to publication. This almost self-sufficient network, operating to an extent outside of the usual publishing structures and modes of business, represents a unique, autonomous 'institutional mechanism' propelled by high aspirations.[68] The network consisted of Carlisle at the centre of all proceedings; Carlisle's husband, Henry, with his knowledge of publishing and connections; Cass Canfield, Sr., of Harper & Row publishers; Harrison Salisbury, former head of Moscow's United Press International bureau and Russia correspondent for the *New York Times* (and the author too of the foreword to Margaret Wettlin's book *Fifty Russian Winters*); and the Russophile former head of economics at the US Embassy in Moscow, Tom Whitney, as translator. A later addition to the so-called 'secret circle' was the American lawyer Tony Curto, whose

[65] Carlisle, *Solzhenitsyn*, p. 44.

[66] Pierre Bourdieu, 'A Conservative Revolution in Publishing', trans. by Mieranda Vlot and Anthony Pym. Available at: <https://www.academia.edu/32257217/Pierre_Bourdieu_A_conservative_revolution_in_French_publishing> [accessed 3 March 2022], p. 17.

[67] With deadlines frequently changing in order to accommodate Solzhenitsyn's wishes, Tom Whitney 'would spend ten or twelve hours at his desk translating' (Carlisle, *Solzhenitsyn*, p. 89).

[68] Bourdieu, 'A Conservative Revolution', p. 2.

arrival also served as a reminder of the everyday gender norms operating in parallel to Carlisle's unusual position:

> He [Curto] apparently knew nothing about literature, little about the Soviet Union. He had had no experience of dealing with women at a professional level, certainly he had never had anything to do with a Russian woman whose Slavic emotionalism was only partially tamed by a French education.[69]

For all that Carlisle frequently struggled with the notion of operating between two worlds – which she christened 'antiworlds'[70] – she was as much at the centre of the network, a puppeteer making all the necessary connections, as Solzhenitsyn was himself as author. Solzhenitsyn, however, was impotent to take action at his own Soviet remove and relied on Carlisle to create his 'public existence', a state which, according to Bourdieu, 'can be even more significant than the author's own creativity, and also more highly consecrated'.[71] Solzhenitsyn's public existence rested on Carlisle's shoulders as facilitator (of the translation schedule, finances, legal processes), mediator between nations, protector and editor of his novel. She described the nature of this devolved power in imagery worthy of Soviet science-fiction:

> I remember thinking that we – with our secret organisation based in the United States, and with others in Moscow, Paris, and elsewhere – were the body, the bones, muscles, and nerves, of an organism whose head was in the USSR. The body, receiving directions from the head, was enabling it to live.[72]

Carlisle expressed her collective organism's priorities in clear terms, which were as relevant to their handling of Solzhenitsyn's next book *The Gulag Archipelago* as they were to *The First Circle*, 'We agreed […] that secrecy was the first and absolute priority. Quality of the translation and speed of securing its publication followed in importance.'[73] On paper, the so-called secret circle achieved all three aims for *The First Circle*. However, according to Carlisle's account of the translation and publishing process for *The Gulag Archipelago*, Solzhenitsyn himself compromised the unity of

[69] Carlisle, *Solzhenitsyn*, p. 49.
[70] Ibid., p. 69.
[71] Bourdieu, 'A Conservative Revolution', p. 1.
[72] Carlisle, *Solzhenitsyn*, p. 119.
[73] Ibid., p. 26.

the US production team for the latter novel. He began introducing his own representatives in different European locations, figures referred to by Carlisle as the 'triangle of authority': the triangle consisted of Dr Heeb, Carlisle and the Paris-based Russian-language publisher YMCA Press, and was managed by a French friend of Carlisle's, to whom she mysteriously referred by his first name only: Marcel.[74] The conflict of interests and confusion caused by transatlantic miscommunication (and Solzhenitsyn's 'zest in setting up his personal bureaucracy abroad, with splendidly byzantine ins and outs')[75] led to a poorly timed launch of *The Gulag Archipelago* in the United States in 1974, and, as Solzhenitsyn claimed, his expulsion from the USSR, a development he wished had never happened. He complained emphatically in his literary memoir *Bodalsia telenok s dubom* (1975) (in English, *The Oak and the Calf*).[76] Solzhenitsyn cited his main criticisms of the Carlisles in a detailed, half-page footnote. His opening praise for the many 'selfless Western people' whom he credited[77] with facilitating 'the steady flow of my publications in the West, and who secretly brought out my large archive after my expulsion from my country'[78] pointedly omitted Carlisle. Instead, he described her role in the handling of his works as 'consistently negative', implying that it was only 'confidence in the Andreyev family'[79] that had led him initially to entrust Carlisle with manuscripts already safely transported with the help of Vadim Andreev, Carlisle's father, out of the Soviet Union.[80] Here, Solzhenitsyn's criticism flows:

[74] Aside from Carlisle's brief description of 'Marcel' as 'a young man with a strong interest in Russian art who could speak some Russian' (*Solzhenitsyn*, p. 139), it has not been possible to obtain any other details about this participant's identity. We may also assume by her omission from the triangle that Solzhenitsyn's German-language translator and European coordinator Elisabeth Markstein, known by the codename 'Betta' and regarded subsequently as Carlisle's counterpart in Europe, worked independently of Carlisle. According to Markstein's archive at the University of Notre Dame, she 'played a critical part in the triangle of contacts formed by herself, Dr Heeb ("Iura"), Nikita Struve ("Kolya"), as well as Stepan Tatischeff ("Emile") to translate and publish Solzhenitsyn' (n.d., <https://archivesspace.library.nd.edu/repositories/3/resources/1599> [accessed 24 October 2023]).

[75] Carlisle, *Solzhenitsyn*, p. 143.

[76] *The Oak and the Calf* appeared in Harry Willetts's English translation in 1979, published by Harper and Row.

[77] Consider, for example, Elisabeth Markstein, Solzhenitsyn's Austria-based Russian-to-German translator and mediator, and Mariia Olsuf'eva, his Russian-to-Italian translator and mediator, both of whom received Solzhenitsyn's gratitude for rendering his works into their respective languages.

[78] Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, *The Oak and the Calf*, trans. by Harry Willetts (New York: Harper and Row, 1979), p. 320.

[79] Ibid.

[80] White, *Cold Warriors*, p. 532.

> At no point did she herself risk anything whatsoever. The American translation was peremptorily edited by her husband Henry Carlisle, who knows no Russian, with the result that considerable further editorial work was necessary. The translation was rejected by the British publisher. She permitted other translations of *The First Circle* to be produced in perfunctory ways: many are inferior in quality, the French especially so. This was the extent of Olga Carlisle's labors, labors that she now claims took six years of her life, involved 'huge risks', disrupted her journalistic career, the life of a free painter. On these grounds, probably, she appraised her own services, expenses, sacrifices, losses, sleepless nights and those of her husband and their lawyer to be worth about half the royalties from the worldwide sale of the novel during the time she directed it.[81]

Following years of soured mutual relations, which included barbed exchanges of opinion about the other's failings, Carlisle defended her position in her 1978 book, *Solzhenitsyn and the Secret Circle*. When *The Oak and the Calf* appeared in Willett's English translation the following year, she went further, filing a libel lawsuit for $2 million against Solzhenitsyn for defamation of her and her husband.[82] The Carlisle vs. Harper & Row trial took place on 23 July 1981 and Solzhenitsyn won. According to the *Entertainment Law Report*, in which the trial proceedings were summarized:

> Solzhenitsyn and the Carlisles were engaged in an ongoing argument concerning the importance of the Carlisles' role as publication intermediaries. The footnote reference offered Solzhenitsyn's response to the Carlisles' account of the parties' relationship. Solzhenitsyn's comments were responses 'in the course of a debate,' and concerned a matter of 'great international interest, involving enormous political and social implications.' In one statement, Solzhenitsyn discounted Olga Carlisle's sacrifice and risk. The court noted that the statement was sarcastic and critical and, at most, suggested that the Carlisles were greedy. But this was a protected opinion. And even if it were a statement of fact, it was not defamatory, because a reasonable person would not conclude that the Carlisles were incompetent, or that they had engaged in unlawful conduct or had committed a breach of trust.[83]

[81] Solzhenitsyn, *The Oak and the Calf*, p. 320.

[82] The value today is approximately $6.7m according to a CPI inflation calculator.

[83] Anon., 'Alexander Solzhenitsyn's published statements regarding former associates were opinions not libelous' (Carlisle v. Harper & Row, Case. No. 80-3975, 23 July 1981), *Entertainment Law Reporter*, 13:1 (Dec., 1981). Available at: <https://heinonline.org/HOL/Page?collection=journals&handle=hein.journals/enterml3&id=101&men_tab=srchresults> [accessed 23 March 2023].

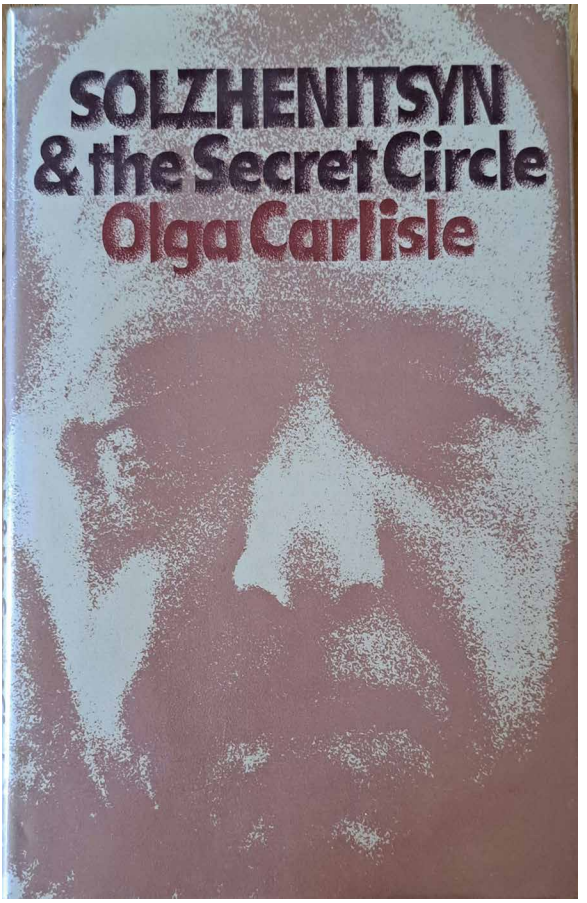


Figure 4.1 Front cover of Carlisle's *Solzhenitsyn and the Secret Circle*, 1978 (Author's Copy).

The court's findings in 1981 echoed to some extent Kerrigan's opinions in his 1980 review of Carlisle's book. Rather than find a defiant message of self-justification, Kerrigan instead found:

> a woman of superb good faith. She [Carlisle] is also most naïve. […] her book celebrates the very man, and his world, which grieved her sorely (and which made it impossible perhaps for her to go back in her lifetime to the Russia of her friends and relatives).[84]

[84] Kerrigan, 'Historian and Moral Witness', p. 327.

Kerrigan defused as 'false tension' Carlisle's notion 'that she – and her husband as well – sacrificed (did they have something more fascinating in mind?) seven years of their lives'.[85] At Kerrigan's suggestion, Carlisle should have regarded her first-hand experience of Solzhenitsyn's demands as a privilege:

> Is seven years spent dealing with Solzhenitsyn and his world a loss? There must be many who would exchange their literary success for a rough time with Solzhenitsyn and his world.[86]

A closer, and perhaps more modern reading of Carlisle's response to her years of commitment to an apparently unrewarded task reveals a more convincing and unmistakably gendered sense of sacrifice than Kerrigan implies. She wrote:

> Unlike my husband, who had published two novels between 1970 and 1975 and had served as Chairman of the Freedom to Write Committee of American P.E.N., I had little to show for those years. I had helped him with his work on behalf of emprisoned [*sic*] writers, but, except for the exhibit of paintings in Paris and some magazine articles, my professional life had come to a standstill. Ever since the unwieldy triangle of authority had been created in 1970, my energies had been spent on fruitless, time-consuming efforts on behalf of Solzhenitsyn's trust.[87]

Carlisle's comment – even taking into account the creative activities she pursued in parallel with her Solzhenitsyn projects – intimates a disproportionate division of labour and rate of achievement between her and her husband during their 'joint' venture. Her language plays into the same submissive qualities that Simeoni first attributes to the role of the (stereotypical) translator: 'prominent translators have […] readily claimed to be the servants of a higher function or of another agent (usually the author), invariably better placed or positioned in the social sphere, to whom they claimed deference'.[88] Carlisle extends the metaphor beyond the translator's remit to include the role of a woman and of an editor/mediator. Deference for the author aside – there is no doubt as regards Carlisle's initial high opinion of her author – the balance of power between Carlisle (agent) and Solzhenitsyn (author) is the reverse. For much of their period

[85] Ibid.
[86] Ibid.
[87] Carlisle, *Solzhenitsyn*, p. 196.
[88] Simeoni, 'The Pivotal Status', p. 8.

of detached involvement, Carlisle's power outweighed his. Solzhenitsyn was dependent on Carlisle as his mediator and editor, his only means for bringing manuscripts to a global Anglophone audience via the United States, and yet her account is a lament about the pointlessness of a decade's agency. The heightened emotions that ensued from the Carlisle-Solzhenitsyn lawsuit point to a conflict between well-meaning (perhaps naïve) agency on the mediator's part and failed expectations on the author's. There remains, however, one other person in the US team who would be justified in feeling perhaps even more disadvantaged had he not been motivated by a keen sense of literary and humanitarian altruism: the US translator himself, Tom Whitney. On Carlisle's admission:

> Tom's immense labour in bringing forth the highly acclaimed translation of volumes one and two of the Gulag Archipelago was a contribution to Solzhenitsyn's mission. He received no remuneration for it.[89]

It cannot go unnoticed, therefore, that the agents who facilitated as altruistic and humanitarian an act as producing forbidden, dissident literature in translation put themselves at political risk and in financial deficit over a sustained period. These personal costs could be seen as a small return for those who 'created, reinvented, or reappropriated the various means at their disposal for changing the order of the literary world and its existing power relations'.[90] For all the naivety that Kerrigan accused her of, Carlisle nevertheless succeeded in motivating others to pursue her cause. She intertwined (and sustained) a loyalty to Solzhenitsyn with her revulsion for the Soviet regime, which had impacted on the lives and fortunes of many of her own creative and literary friends and family in Russia.

It remains mystifying in Carlisle's case, however, that her proximity to PEN appears to have had little obvious, or practical, bearing on her overall management of the Solzhenitsyn translations, her author's delicate humanitarian situation, or even on the treatment of the US translator, Whitney. Beyond the above quotation, her husband's involvement in the Freedom to Write Committee of American PEN receives no other mention in her account of that heady period of Solzhenitsyn activity, a span of time that overlapped both Henry Carlisle's committee leadership and the 1970 PEN World of Translation conference. In readiness for this conference, the PEN Translation Committee in New York City inaugurated a PEN Manifesto on Translation in

[89] Carlisle, *Solzhenitsyn*, p. 180.
[90] Casanova, *World Republic*, p. 176.

September 1969, including a clause specifically identifying the problematic state of Russian/Soviet-Anglophone literary translation relations in the mid to late twentieth century. Rather than drawing on or highlighting PEN's commitment to helping dissident Soviet authors – and utilizing the legal and professional resources publicized in the manifesto which would have been at her disposal[91] – Carlisle honoured her commitment to Solzhenitsyn, driving for change by herself and through her own closed circle of contacts. Possible reasons behind Carlisle's self-sufficiency are numerous, if unconfirmed. One could suggest a lack of faith in PEN's effectiveness or a belief that she could better serve Solzhenitsyn by consulting her own contacts; there was also her insistence on absolute secrecy and awareness of her family's politically proactive past. The opportunity to assist Solzhenitsyn represented a chance for Carlisle not only to connect with the emotional and cultural part of her *habitus* through her grandfather's side, but also to use it to play a meaningful part in big-picture politics and on a moral plane too, bringing the truth behind the Soviet Union's treatment of dissidents into the open 'in its white-hot-hour of trial'.[92] As she wrote in the Conclusion to *Solzhenitsyn and the Secret Circle*:

> Only the guardians of Soviet repression could be outraged by the story of dedicated people on both sides of the Iron Curtain working for his

[91] The Manifesto clause reads as follows: 'Like writers everywhere, Russian writers want to be read, they want to be known, they want their emotions to be shared and their ideas to be understood. They will go to almost any lengths to see that their books are read abroad if they cannot be read in Russia. Translators who receive their manuscripts then find themselves attempting to resolve intensely difficult moral problems, for they know that the publication of their translations will inevitably place the author in jeopardy and they will bear a moral responsibility for his fate. There are no simple solutions. We cannot say: "Let us publish and be damned. We know that the author wanted his works to appear in translation and his intention outweighs all other considerations". Many imponderables have to be weighed, for no one has the right to sentence a man to a prison camp, which may be a sentence of death. The P.E.N. Translation Committee believes that there is need to re-examine the situation and to establish certain guide-lines [*sic*] in consultation with as many experts as possible. This is also a question to be discussed at the forthcoming Conference, at which time it is hoped to invite a representative of the Soviet and other government and any writers who have been heavily censored' (*The World of Translation* (New York: Wickersham, 1971), pp. 379–80). The Manifesto does not reveal the identities of contributors to this co-authored statement but – given her active role on the P.E.N. Translation Committee, the theme of her Congress paper ('The Politics of Translation', specifically on Russia and the Soviet Union), and archival evidence that she composed, with Thomas Lask, PEN's 'Guidelines for Translators' – it is reasonable to assume that the Belarusian-born émigrée translator Mirra Ginsburg was a key author.

[92] Olga Carlisle, Amherst 'Literature against Violence', lecture (1972), Amherst Digital Collections, Amherst Center for Russian Culture.

> [Solzhenitsyn's] original mission – truth. Perhaps this story even contains some slight promise that our divided world can in time become one.[93]

Carlisle did not mediate any other of Solzhenitsyn's novels in translation, but produced three memoirs: *Island in Time* (Henry Holt & Co., 1980) about her childhood; *Under a New Sky* (Ticknor & Fields, 1993) about her return to Russia following the collapse of communism; and *Far from Russia* (St Martin's Press, 2000) about her experiences of post-war Paris and New York. She and her husband Henry also co-wrote a novel, *The Idealists: A Novel of Revolutionary Russia* (St Martin's Press, 1999). For many years, the Carlisles taught creative writing together at the Squaw Valley Community of Writers, San Francisco, where they moved from New York in 1975.[94] Henry Carlisle died in 2011, but Olga, now in her nineties, continues to live there. According to her local friend, the Russian-American émigrée writer Olga Zilberbourg,[95] Carlisle's latest publication is a translation into Russian by Liubov Shenderova-Fok of *Island in Time*, which came out as recently as 2021.[96] Funded by a Carlisle-family scholarship, Zilberbourg first met her sponsor at a week-long writer's conference in 2009; since then, Carlisle has supported Zilberbourg as a mentor and a friend. On frequent walks before the pandemic, Carlisle would share stories – like Chukovskii did with her in the 1960s – 'about meeting Pasternak, how Tsvetaeva was a friend of her parents' in Paris, and […] about the Parisian Russian community of her childhood'.[97] Similarly, in the same way that Carlisle once discussed translation with Pasternak and Ehrenburg, she has touched on the topic with Zilberbourg too. Carlisle's advice, however, still hints at her negative experience of mediating Solzhenitsyn: 'Never translate! It's a thankless task!'[98]

[93] Carlisle, *Solzhenitsyn*, p. 201.

[94] Marcia Schneider, 'Olga Carlisle, Life in the Path of History', *640 Heritage Preservation Foundation* available at: <https://640hpf.org/stories/authors/olga-carlisle/> [accessed 17 November 2023].

[95] Olga Zilberbourg has written a collection of short fiction, *Like Water and Other Stories* (Santa Rosa CA: WTAW Press, 2019). She is also the co-founder with fellow Russian-Jewish immigrant Yelena Furman of *Punctured Lines*, a feminist blog about literature of the former Soviet Union and diaspora, see: <https://puncturedlines.wordpress.com/>.

[96] *Ostrov na vsiu zhizn': vospominaniia detstva. Oleron vo vremia Natsiskoi okkupatsii*. See: <https://ast.ru/book/ostrov-na-vsyu-zhizn-vospominaniya-detstva-oleron-vo-vremya-natsistskoy-okkupatsii-854893/> [accessed 17 November 2023].

[97] Private email correspondence, Olga Zilberbourg and Cathy McAteer, 16 November 2023.

[98] Ibid.

Mirra Ginsburg (1909–2000): Translator, translation activist, decolonizer[99]

Belarusian-born Mirra Ginsburg had a career that embodies many of the major themes exemplified in this book. Like Carlisle, Ginsburg had a multilingual and multicultural *habitus* and *hexis* partially formed through the act of migration: her family left Ginsburg's birth place, Bobruysk, Belarus in 1923 for the coastal town of Liepāja, Latvia; in 1926 they moved to Montréal in Canada; and at the start of 1930, they settled in New York.[100] During the fifty years or so that she dedicated to translation, she produced scores of texts in English from Russian and Yiddish and sought to decolonize the Russian literary canon in translation with anti-Soviet and ethnic Russophone literature. She theorized on and presented to interested audiences the processes behind her translation practice, attempting also to offer her own definition of what she felt constitutes a 'good' translation. Finally, using the professional channels available to her, she campaigned for translators' rights and advocated to protect dissident Soviet writers. The aim of this case study, which goes behind the scenes of Ginsburg's highly productive career, is to analyse these facets in order to reveal her lesser-known achievements, her vision for the profession, and her ideas on canon formation. Collectively, Ginsburg's qualities, dispositions and farsightedness form a valuable link connecting mid-twentieth- and early-twenty-first-century female translators.

Archives at the University of Columbia and University of Minnesota hold the correspondence for her professional life and reflect the two foci of her literary career. Correspondence residing at Columbia relates to Ginsburg's literary translation of and interest in promoting Russian science-fiction and Soviet literature, her campaigning for translators' rights through organizations like PEN America, and her advocacy for Soviet dissident and ethnic writers. This archive, from which I draw most of my primary

[99] The author is grateful to the staff at Columbia University Rare Book and Manuscript Library (RBML) for generously scanning pages from Ginsburg's archive on my behalf during the pandemic and in particular to Tat'iana Chebotareva, archivist at Columbia's Bakhmeteff collection, who kindly shared her own research on Ginsburg's epistolary friendship with Kornei Chukovskii. Without their help, it would have been impossible to create such a detailed case study. I am also grateful to my colleague Muireann Maguire, for her generosity of time extracting archival material on my behalf during her own research field trip.

[100] See Tat'iana Chebotareva, 'Correspondence between Kornei Chukovskii and Mirra Ginsburg – "You Are A Master, Not A Pupil"' ['Perepiska Korneia Ivanovicha Chukovskogo i Mirry Ginzburg – "Vy – khudozhnik, ne remesslenik"]', in *Arkhiv evreiskoi istorii* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2007), pp. 248–318, available at: <https://sovietjewry.hosting.nyu.edu/items/show/264> [accessed 25 October 2023].

sources, consists of thirty-eight boxes of material in English and Russian. I have been fortunate to access letters, postcards, minutes from meetings, lectures and PEN roundtable discussions held here. The smaller archive – dedicated specifically to Ginsburg's career (1968–81) translating children's literature from across the Eurasian territory, which she used as a platform for promoting ethnic Russian, Central Asian and Caucasian folk tales – resides in Minnesota. I have been unable to access this archive owing to time constraints and pandemic-related travel disruption. A third, non-university-based and briefer online archival biography – the online Jewish Women's Archive[101] – illustrates another important aspect of her family life: Ginsburg was born to poor, but politically and culturally interested Jewish parents, Joseph and Bronia, and grew up in Bobruysk, a 'once typical Belarusian shtetl' in the Mogilev region of Belarus.[102] My analysis of Ginsburg's literary life draws on her correspondence with publishers, editors, Russian friends (in particular Kornei Chukovskii and the translator Tatiana Litvinov, daughter of the English-born Russian literary translator Ivy Litvinov) and with translation organizations (PEN, ATA, ALTA), in which Ginsburg was an active member for many decades of her life. I have also examined the paratexts that accompany some of her key works, for example reviews, prefaces and letters in the press, specifically regarding her 1967 translation of Mikhail Bulgakov's *The Master and Margarita* published by Grove Press in the United States, which coincided with the release of Michael Glenny's translation of the same book for Harper & Row in the UK.

Ginsburg's impressively long and sustaining career in literary translation began in 1938, according to Tat'iana Chebotareva (archivist of Ginsburg's papers at Columbia). Rita Berman Frischer of the *Jewish Women's Archive* remarks on Ginsburg's preference for this type of translation above other forms: '[A]lthough offered employment as a full-time translator in various organizations, working 9:00–5:00, she preferred the independence of literary translation and often decided what she would translate on issues of principle.'[103] Macro and micro 'issues of principle' – especially the anti-Soviet kind and those concerning the literary translator's welfare and employment rights – manifest themselves repeatedly in Ginsburg's correspondence. As I will show

[101] Rita Berman Frischer, 'Mirra Ginsburg, 10 June 1909–2000', *Jewish Women's Archive*. Available at: <https://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/ginsburg-mirra> [accessed 7 February 2023].

[102] Anon., 'Bobruysk', *The Cultural Guide to Jewish Europe* [n.d.], Available at: <https://jguideeurope.org/en/region/belarus/central-belarus/bobruysk/> [accessed 2 February 2023].

[103] Frischer, 'Mirra Ginsburg', *Jewish Women's Archive*.

in this case study, Ginsburg used her position as a board member of the PEN Translation Committee to pursue improvements for dissident writers and freelance translators working in the mid- to late-twentieth-century translation-publishing industry.

Earliest evidence of her desire to raise the Anglophone West's awareness of the Soviet Union's darker side and her attempt to effect change through literature can be seen in Ginsburg's first commercially published translation, Vladimir Petrov's *Soviet Gold: My Life as a Slave Laborer in the Siberian Mines* (NY: Farrar Straus & Giroux, 1949).[104] The memoir appeared in the UK in Ginsburg's translation two years later under the title, *It Happens in Russia* (Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1951) but failed fully to convince British reviewers of its import.[105] *Soviet Gold* follows Petrov's fall from grace, from student at the Leningrad Engineering Institute, to his arrest then sentencing to seven years' forced labour. J.M. Pringle, reviewing it in the *Times Literary Supplement*, described it as a book that 'reads more like a picaresque eighteenth-century novel than a personal account of a terrible experience. There is nothing, perhaps, which is incredible and most of it is plainly true, yet it lacks […] overwhelming conviction. […] It is too obviously written up in the rather dangerous tranquillity of Harvard University, where Mr. Petrov is now a lecturer.'[106] He conceded, however: 'Even so it is a remarkable book. Quite apart from its description of conditions in the gold mines, which, if anything, exceed in horror even the lumber camps in the Arctic forests, it contains an extraordinary number of characters, often vividly drawn, that help the reader to obtain a clearer idea of what the Russian "masses" are really like.' Published just three years after Constance Garnett's death and coinciding with the first Russian novel to appear in the Penguin Classic series, Petrov's and Ginsburg's book managed to capture what their peers and predecessors had failed to do: the portrayal of the Russian masses in a new and critical Soviet light. Pringle's closing remarks hint at the book's socio-political, if not overtly literary, value:

> After his seven years' imprisonment, Mr Petrov, very naturally, was cured of any sentimental loyalty to the Soviet regime and took advantage of the German occupation to escape to the West. His conclusion – that

[104] The original title is: *Sovetskoe zoloto ili moia zhizn' v zakliuchenii na sibirskikh priiskakh*.

[105] Anon., 'Books to Come', *Times Literary Supplement*, 31 August 1951. Available at: <link.gale.com/apps/doc/EX1200088901/TLSH?u=exeter&sid=bookmark-TLSH&xid=d8f6db90> [accessed 7 February 2023].

[106] J. M. D. Pringle, 'Forced Labour in Russia', *Times Literary Supplement*, 19 October 1951. Available at: <link.gale.com/apps/doc/EX1200089527/TLSH?u=exeter&sid=bookmark-TLSH&xid=0eaaa193> [accessed 1 February 2023].

> Russian citizens react to injustice and maltreatment very much as other men – is a comforting one. Perhaps, if we can afford to be patient, the Communist regime may be found to contain within itself the seeds of its own destruction.[107]

Although not a resounding success with its reviewers, this earliest of Ginsburg's published texts anticipates not only her career as a translator and campaigner, but also, by critiquing the Soviet system, the *samizdat* era-defining work with which she has most widely been associated: Bulgakov's *The Master and Margarita*.

The Bulgakov debacle

Mikhail Bulgakov – who died in March 1940 – did not live long enough to see his manuscript, *Master i Margarita* appear in print: it was published in the wake of Khrushchev's Thaw, nearly three decades after the author's death. The Russian journal *Moskva* published the first part of the novel in November 1966, the second in mid-February 1967,[108] but the text had been subjected to countless cuts – an estimated 23,000 words in total[109] – in order to get the publication past the Soviet censors. In Julie Curtis's summary, many of the cuts were made:

> with political and ideological considerations in mind: they concerned references to the secret police and their investigations and arrests, attacks on the Soviet literary establishment, Margarita's nakedness, and so on. [Irina] Belobrovtsova has calculated that these cuts constituted 12 % of the total text, and involved 159 excisions, 138 of which related to Part II of the novel.[110]

The arrival in English of what is largely regarded as Bulgakov's signature work and which occupied twelve years of the author's life before his premature

[107] Ibid.

[108] Mikhail Bulgakov, *Master i Margarita*, *Moskva*, Vol. 11 (1966), 6–130 and 1 (1967): 56–144. See also Julie Curtis, *A Reader's Companion to Mikhail Bulgakov's The Master and Margarita* (Brookline, MA: Academic Studies Press, 2019), p. 46.

[109] Henry Raymont, 'Soviet Novel Due in 2 U.S. Versions: Bulgakov Work Will Appear In "Cut" and "Uncut" Editions', *New York Times*, Vol. 13 (September 1967). Available at: <https://uoelibrary.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/soviet-novel-due-2-u-s-versions/docview/117671054/se-2> [accessed 13 February 2023].

[110] Curtis, *A Reader's Companion*, p. 46.

death at the age of forty-nine, would (and should) have been a professional coup for the translator concerned. Grove Press in the United States commissioned Ginsburg to produce in record time a translation of the novel that same year, 1967, based on the *Moskva* instalments, which she duly did. What Ginsburg and Grove did not realize, however, at least not until their own publication day, was that another translator-publisher collaboration – British-born Michael Glenny, working for the publisher Harper & Row – had also produced a translation. Glenny and Harper & Row based their target text on an unexpurgated version of the original. By presenting the censors' cuts to her husband's novel merely as 'editorial choices',[111] Bulgakov's widow, Elena, successfully sidestepped Soviet authorities (first the Union of Writers, which then applied on her behalf to the Central Committee of the Communist Party) to obtain permission for the full version to leave the Soviet Union for publication abroad. Unbeknown to Ginsburg and Grove, the uncensored form reached the Italian publisher Einaudi (of *Doctor Zhivago* fame) and from there, direct to Glenny.

Unaware (seemingly until the last moment) of a competing translation – which development must have come as a severe blow – Ginsburg had her literary limelight stolen when Harper & Row, able to turn around Glenny's fully restored version of the novel in a matter of months, released their *Master and Margarita* on the same day. The hint of sensation in press-reports announcing the publication of this 'controversial and long-suppressed novel'[112] recalls the atmosphere that accompanied Harvill's publication nearly a decade earlier of Hayward's and Harari's *Doctor Zhivago* translation, and Ralph Parker's 1963 Penguin translation of Solzhenitsyn's *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*.[113] Glenny's and Ginsburg's competing translations, however, also prompted a sense that publishing norms had been broken. The surprise twist in the emergence not only of an unexpurgated original text, but of a hastily produced rival translation too, generated a level of publicity that ultimately worked in Glenny's favour, and to Ginsburg's detriment:

> Grove Press, which had been working on a translation directly from the Soviet magazine in the hope of coming out with the first version of the Bulgakov work in the United States, was taken by surprise when it was informed that Harper & Row had obtained a more expanded manuscript.

[111] Ibid., p. 47.
[112] Raymont, 'Soviet Novel', 1967.
[113] Curtis, *A Reader's Companion*, p. 132.

> 'It's one of those things that can happen with a country that has no international copyright,' a Grove representative said yesterday. 'The articles in *Moskva* were brought to our attention and we immediately got Mirra Ginsburg to translate them for us in the hope that may the best translation win.'[114]

Subsequent reviews carried out the inevitable direct comparison between the two translations. One published in *Newsday* on 4 November 1967 concluded that 'The translations vary only slightly and it is hard for a reviewer who has not read the original to choose between them. However, the Harper & Row book has an extra 20,000 words that were cut in the Russian edition'.[115] Eliot Fremont-Smith, writing for the *New York Times*, went further:

> On the matter of the two […] editions, both translations are excellent, though I find Mirra Ginsburg's (Grove) slightly more relaxed in style. The Grove edition is also by far the more readably and (excepting jacket) handsomely designed. Yet the Harper & Row edition is slightly to be preferred because it contains approximately 23,000 words that were deleted in the Moskva printing. […] the complete novel, as Bulgakov wrote it and as it appears in the Harper & Row edition, is preferable to a version we know was tampered with for at least bureaucratic reasons.[116]

Fremont-Smith strives for fairness in his appraisal of the two translations and he is right to do so: both translators display their skills to good effect and there is merit in each of the target texts. Glenny's strategy can be summarized by three apparent aims: to honour Bulgakov's authorial style and wit; satisfy Harper & Row's tight deadline; and ensure the reader's enjoyment and appreciation of a long-awaited literary masterpiece. He incorporates Bulgakovian satire and creates storytelling appeal through his characterization of a loquacious narrator, colourful lexis, smooth syntax and occasional textual embellishment. With its abounding Soviet-, culinary- and culture-specific references, acronyms, patronymics and diminutives, proper nouns and subtle irony, Chapter 5 ('The Affair at Griboedov') provides

[114] Raymont, 'Soviet Novel', 1967.

[115] Anon., 'Critic's Corner', *Newsday*, 4 November 1967. Available at: <https://uoelibrary.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/critics-corner/docview/915106546/se-2> [accessed 13 February 2023].

[116] Eliot Fremont-Smith, 'Books of the Times: The Devil in Moscow, Plus Gremlins', *New York Times*, 20 October 1967. Available at: <https://uoelibrary.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/books-times/docview/117861293/se-2> [accessed 13 February 2023].

suitable material with which to illustrate many of these devices. Glenny's deliberate choice of verb and slight embellishment in the following passage, for example, skilfully capture the source text's satirical reference to Soviet-oppressed authors in the Union of Writers (here MASSOLIT):

> а также индивидуальными фотографиями членов МАССОЛИТа, коими (фотографиями) были увешаны стены лестницы[117]
>
> but also by the individual photographs of the members of MASSOLIT, who (the photographs) covered the walls of the stairs
>
> (my translation)
>
> then, with the photographs of every individual member of MASSOLIT, who were strung up (their photographs, of course) along the walls of the stairs
>
> (Glenny)[118]

The creative rendering of 'uveshat" as 'were strung up', with the jocular insertion, 'of course', provides comparable wit to that of the original. This subtlety is less obviously achieved in Ginsburg's: 'as well as individual photographs of members of MASSOLIT, which (photographs) covered the walls of the staircase'.[119]

Glenny's general strategy to help the reader with paraphrase and cultural substitution for culture-specific references eliminates the need for footnotes or a glossary (which neither translator provides). What he sometimes sacrifices instead is concision. He expands the succinct, Soviet-specific 'communal kitchen' ('obshchaia kukhnia') to 'the kitchen you share with half a dozen other people'.[120] Ginsburg stays close to the source text – offering a direct translation with no explicitation – therefore matching the pace of the Russian while assuming a certain amount of knowledge on her reader's part. In Glenny's version, the kitchen discussion takes place between characters called Vanya and Ambrose (Amvrosii). Vanya, however, is called Foka in the original (and in Ginsburg's too). There is no explanation for Glenny's

[117] Bulgakov, *Master i Margarita* (Moscow: Eksmo-Press, 2000), p. 56.
[118] Mikhail Bulgakov, *The Master and Margarita*, trans. by Michael Glenny (London: Vintage, 2003), p. 51.
[119] Mikhail Bulgakov, *The Master and Margarita*, trans. by Mirra Ginsburg (New York: Grove, 1987), p. 60.
[120] Bulgakov, *Master i Margarita*, p. 58; *The Master and Margarita*, trans. by Glenny, pp. 52–3.

substitution here, but his decision offers measured foreignization: enough to whet the reader's appetite, but not disorientate them. This is not a consistent strategy, however. Glenny keeps the character Bezdomnyi's name as in the Russian and, when he uses it for the first time in Chapter 1, there is no accompanying explanation, thus alienating the reader. Here, Ginsburg opts for 'Homeless', admitting the reader to the name's meaning. Faced with a decision to domesticate or foreignize, Ginsburg favoured the latter in her bid for accuracy; she declared in a letter to Bulgakov's wife, Elena Sergeevna, 'one [the translator] must stay very close to the [source] text'.[121] Like Glenny, she also recreates Bulgakov's humour and storytelling ease, but places her emphasis on staying close to the source text. With the exception of 'Homeless', Ginsburg retains most proper nouns and culture-specific references, rarely offering an explanation. Where, for example, Glenny opts for 'lemonade' and 'sparkling wine', Ginsburg consistently keeps the original 'Narzan' (Georgian sparkling water), relying on context for understanding. Glenny offers a gloss for the Southern-Russian spa town 'Kislovodsk', which Ginsburg does not, assuming reader knowledge. She keeps the diminutive 'Annushka' – the character in Chapter 1 whose spillage of sunflower oil (rather laboriously termed 'sunflower-seed oil' by Glenny) results in Berlioz's death – where Glenny chooses 'Anna'.

Ginsburg's desire for a faithful rendering occasionally leads to stilted phrasing, as seen with source-text phrases in Chapter 1 (and throughout) like 'nado zametit" and 'neobkhodimo dobavit", both of which she translates in the passive voice: 'it must be added'. To create an impression of conversational ease, Glenny either omits or reverts these common rhetorical devices in the source language to an active voice in English: 'I should add', reinforcing again the narrator's presence. Glenny's preference is to domesticate, which he uses to create equivalent effect, but which occasionally takes artistic licence too far. In making the text his own, Glenny risks eclipsing Bulgakov. Fixated as they were on the missing 12 per cent of Ginsburg's translation, the reviewers at the time passed little comment about her faithfulness to the original.[122]

[121] 'Letter to Elena Bulgakova', 5 September 1969, Series II: Arranged Correspondence, Box 1, Folder 6, RBML.

[122] Ginsburg received positive comments for this translation and for her debut Bulgakov translation *The Fatal Eggs,* published in an anthology in 1965. See Edward J. Czerwinski's review in which he praises Ginsburg's translation: 'It is unfortunate that Grove Press chose to publish the expurgated version of *The Master and Margarita*, for Ginsburg's translation is as able as Glenny's. […] Ginsburg follows the Russian syntax more closely than does Glenny' (*Books Abroad*, 43:2 (Spring, 1969), 208–09) and Gleb Struve's review in which he described the appearance of two translations in English as 'almost too good to be true. One can imagine Bulgakov himself enjoying it immensely', see: *The Russian Review*, 27:3 (July 1968), 338–43, p. 341. Struve acknowledged that 'while the

Instead, they embraced Glenny's accessible style and Harper & Row's full version with little pause to question its authenticity as a translation.

No matter how well translated and produced her *Master and Margarita*, Ginsburg's censored, incomplete text could not compete with Glenny's unexpurgated version.[123] A detailed and combative reply to one reviewer in particular, Patricia Blake who was Moscow correspondent and regular contributor to the *New York Times*, serves as Ginsburg's first, public comment on her understanding of translation as a profession and an art. This letter synchronizes the translator's *habitus* and *hexis*, unveiling to the *New York Times* readership the sorts of 'issues of principles' which she later articulated in her lectures and especially publicized during her prolonged tenure on the PEN Translation Committee.

Blake was an unusual juror in the Glenny-Ginsburg quality debate. In the first place, she was not a writer or professional literary critic; she was a socialite and had a number of high-profile liaisons. She was a former partner of Albert Camus and former wife of Vladimir Nabokov's anti-Communist cousin, the musical composer Nicolas Nabokov. Her second and final marriage was to fellow journalist Ronnie Dugger.[124] With her connections

British version has the indisputable advantage of being unexcised and reads quite well, (perhaps a trifle too smoothly), Mirra Ginsburg's charge of gross mistranslations in it is well substantiated' (p. 342). Ginsburg's archive includes correspondence praising her translation of *The Fatal Eggs* from one of the strictest of Russian literary translation reviewers, Kornei Chukovskii. He wrote, 'I know your name very well. I read your translations of I.B. Singer's stories and I place you without hesitation in the ranks of such masters as my favourite, Saul Bellow, who translated "Gimpel the Fool". … I am reading your book (The Fatal Eggs) with pleasure. Your short introductions to each author and the general foreword are exact, laconic, based on verified facts, irrefutable. … I have not yet finished reading all the translations, but I hold precious the fact that they do not contain one iota of hack work, which we find so often in the work of American translators. At all times, you are an artist, not an artisan.' Peredelkino, 12 September 1965. And again, 'Both your choice of material and the translation are superb, and I am glad that I have come to know your work.' (Moscow, 4 October 1965).

[123] This translation-publishing scenario provides insight into reviewers' (and the general readership's) expectations in the 1960s regarding texts in translation, and also explains why Ginsburg's contribution as an Anglophone translator of Bulgakov has since gone largely undiscussed. She merits just one sentence (in Chapter 11) of Curtis's comprehensive reader's companion to *The Master and Margarita*. Ginsburg's version is described as having 'undoubted stylistic merits' but 'was based solely on the truncated 1966–7 *Moskva* publications, so as an incomplete text with significant omissions it really cannot be recommended to the reader' (Curtis, *A Reader's Companion*, p. 133).

[124] See Lygo, 'Translation and the Cold War', p. 450, where Blake is described as 'certainly no stranger to the CCF and its CIA contacts, having been married to Nicolas Nabokov, general secretary of the CCF from 1951 to 1967'. For more information about Nabokov's infiltration of the Communist-backed 'Scientific and Cultural Conference for World Peace', held at The Waldorf-Astoria hotel in New York on 25–27 March 1949, which led to the founding of the CCF, see: White, *Cold Warriors*, pp. 240–1.

and particular interest in reading, reviewing and promoting Russian literature in translation, US-born Blake (1925–2010) gained the reputation as an authority. Her career included (co-)editing a number of books with the British-born translator Max Hayward,[125] her tutor at the Russian Institute at Columbia during the mid-1960s and whom she described in his obituary as 'the custodian of Russian literature in the West'.[126] Her proximity to Hayward and, through him, an association with Glenny – Hayward, Glenny and Harari co-translated Solzhenitsyn's *The First Circle* (published in 1968, again by Harper & Row) – might explain a ready inclination on Blake's part to favour Glenny's translation, even though Blake had first reviewed Ginsburg's work as early as 1960.[127] Her extensive *Master and Margarita* review, in which she evaluated both translations, would have been regarded by her readership as a reliable guide, therefore, to which of the two versions readers should buy. Significantly, her comparison states:

> Now, after three decades of oblivion, two editions of *The Master and Margarita* have been published in America. But how unfortunate that of these two, only one has been translated (by Michael Glenny for Harper & Row) from the text as it was written by Bulgakov, which was obtained by unofficial sources in Russia. The other translation (by Mirra Ginsburg for Grove Press) was made by the expurgated text published in Russia last year. This is all the more distressing because both translations are excellent.[128]

Blake, in proceeding to cite in detail the detrimental nature of the cuts inflicted on Ginsburg's version and the advantage gained by their reinstatement in Glenny's, inadvertently damns the former by virtue of its impoverishment.

[125] *Dissonant Voices in Soviet Literature* (1962); *Half-Way to the Moon: New Writing from Russia* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1963); *Writers in Russia 1917–1978* (London: Harvill Press, 1983), and poetry collections *The Bedbug and Selected Poetry* (New York: Meridian Books, 1960); *Antiworlds, and the Fifth Ace: Poems* (New York: Basic Books, 1966).

[126] Herbert Niitgang, 'Max Hayward, A British Scholar on Modern Literature of Russia', *New York Times*, 20 March 1979. Available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/1979/03/20/archives/max-hayward-a-british-scholar-on-modern-literature-of-russia-more.html> [accessed 14 February 2023].

[127] Blake and Hayward edited Ginsburg's translation of Isaac Babel's short story 'The Journey' for *Partisan Review* (see: 'Letter Blake to Ginsburg', 11 January 1960, Series II:1: Arranged Correspondence, Box 2, Folder 3, RBML).

[128] Patricia Blake, 'A Bargain with the Devil', *New York Times*, 22 October 1967. Available at: <https://uoelibrary.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/bargain-with-devil/docview/117696028/se-2> [accessed 14 February 2023].

Her verdict leaves no room for ambiguity: 'And 29 years was too long to wait for this novel; readers should not be satisfied with anything but the full text.'[129] Unleashing a spat à trois, Ginsburg's lengthy and vociferous response (printed in full in the *New York Times* on 14 January 1968) began with sharp criticism of Blake for substandard reviewing: 'Your review says that "both translations are excellent." At this point, praise almost becomes dispraise. Miss Blake, who has a knowledge of Russian, gives no evidence of having compared the two versions or of having checked them against the original.'[130] Ginsburg then moved from criticizing the reviewer to the heart of the matter, her own assessment of the difference between the two translations:

> As a 'competitor,' I find it awkward to offer criticism of Mr. Glenny (translator for Harper & Row), with whose general method of 'smoothing out' and 'editing' the original by substitution of the trite and familiar for the vivid, grotesque and unusual I thoroughly disagree. But it is not only a question of choice between translation and paraphrase. Mr. Glenny frequently betrays a lack of knowledge of Russian.[131]

A detailed checklist of Glenny's errors follows in what can be interpreted as an act of self-justification and a surface manifestation of Ginsburg's emotions, suggesting that any awkwardness she may profess to have felt about exposing Glenny's faults (as she perceived them) came second to her own bruised pride and sense of injustice:

> Evidently unaware of Russian declensions, he transforms males into females: Antony becomes Antonia, Fulminatus, Fulminata, etc. 'Figuratively' (figuralno) is translated as 'numerically' (p. 8). 'Subtle smile' (tonkaya ulybka) as 'a thin smile' (p. 9). 'Cancer of the lung' (sarkoma legkovo) as 'a slight heart attack' (p. 10). 'Filched' (stashchili) as 'pulled off' (p. 222). 'Ingratiatingly' (vkradchivo) as 'cunningly' (p. 42). 'Spray the room with holy water' (okropi) as 'surround the building' (p. 158). 'Ushers' (kapeldinery) as 'backstage crew' and 'ticket speculators' (baryshniki) as 'the leading lights of the Moscow theatrical world' (p. 181). 'Exterminating fluid' (zhidkost ot parasitov) becomes

[129] Ibid.

[130] Mirra Ginsburg, Patricia Blake, and Michael Glenny, 'Translation', *New York Times*, 14 January 1968. Available at: <https://uoelibrary.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/translation/docview/118214959/se-2> [accessed 14 February 2023].

[131] Ibid.

> 'the juice of parasites' (p. 234). 'Cracked' (tresnuvsheye, referring to pince-nez) is rendered variously as 'rattling in its frame,' 'wobbling,' 'shaky,' and 'unsteady' (pp. 46, 190, 148, etc.). 'Conceded' (sdalsya – in a chess game) is rendered as 'gone over to the enemy' (p. 254). 'Famous' (znamenit) is 'busy' (p. 302).
>
> 'A good luck sign' (k schastyu) is transformed, with shockingly bad taste, into 'mazel tov' (p. 284).
>
> 'Bozhedomka,' a street in Moscow, becomes an 'orphanage' (p. 75). 'Baikal,' a famous song about a fugitive from penal exile (especially meaningful in the context of the novel and its time) inexplicably turns into 'The Volga Boatman' (p. 189), and 'Solovki,' a notorious penal colony, becomes 'asylum' (p. 9, etc.).
>
> Occasional misreadings are almost inevitable in any translation, but such blatant errors and liberties with the text have no place in the translation of a masterpiece, and it is the responsible reviewer's duty to point this out.[132]

Reluctant, on his own admission, to be drawn into unseemly public bickering, Glenny's response is short, moralistic, but not without wit:

> To judge from her detailed criticism of my version of Bulgakov's 'The Master and Margarita' she has also devoted a gratifying amount of attention to my work. It was therefore the more saddening to discover that she felt obliged to attack a fellow-translator. However much one may deplore the ultimately fruitless game of literary mudslinging, I was relieved to find that she could only specify a dozen-odd instances of error in my translation – a modest count, on reflection, in a novel of 137,000 words. Some of her points are in fact so fine, not to say hair-splitting, that she must have had to work hard to find them. I was aware of most of those she named and am grateful to her for pointing out a few others. I should be glad to perform a similar service for her by correspondence, should she feel the need; and after a careful study of her version, she should. Unlike her, however, I do not believe in swapping technicalities in public and certainly not in a spirit of rancor.[133]

[132] Ibid.
[133] Ibid.

Other reviewers have also since observed the tendency for errors in Glenny's translation, which may be explained by his haste,[134] but his and Harper & Row's gamble paid off: their version was lauded as the official text and Ginsburg's effectively written off. Ginsburg herself must have recognized this *fait accompli* but her considered and candid response reveals her forthright nature. I have cited this triangular debate between Ginsburg, Blake and Glenny here at length because of its rarity and also because of what it reveals about expectations of translation on the part of critics and the public. Like the disparity Carlisle experienced when mediating a dissatisfied Solzhenitsyn, Ginsburg too fell foul of her own expectation gap: between what she thought she could provide and what the reading public were told to expect, i.e. an accessible, unexpurgated text. Her apparently superior (faithful) translation counted for nothing once Blake declared to the world its perceived deficiencies.

As evidenced by the narrative of her lectures, Ginsburg spent the rest of her career trying to put behind her what she called an 'unpleasant situation' (*nepriiatnoe polozhenie*).[135] Her retaliatory attack on a reviewer and fellow translator broke reviewing norms and brought into public view the sort of theoretical reflections more often associated with academic articles (at that time, by contemporary translation practitioners and scholars such as Chukovskii and Nabokov). Archived letters reveal, however, that even as the unpleasantness unfolded, Ginsburg sent Blake an advance copy of her letter to the *New York Times*, explaining that she 'did not want to embarrass you and hesitated for a long time. However, I feel very strongly that the record must be set straight'.[136] The publication in full of their positions made real to a wide, general audience the pitfalls and industry nuances that accompany the translator's job. Glenny and Ginsburg found themselves competing once

[134] See for example Michael Falchikov's summary of Glenny's contributions to Russian literary translation in 'Twentieth-Century Fiction', in *The Oxford Guide to Literature in English Translation*, ed. by Peter France (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 608–9. Curtis, though inclined to deselect Ginsburg's translation from evaluation, refers to Glenny's achievements with equanimity, judging him as 'one of the most respected British translators of Russian literature, with an exceptionally long and distinguished list of publications of canonical twentieth-century Russian texts in English. His version has tremendous verve. But the haste with which the task had to be completed does unfortunately show, and although it remains one of the most readable versions available in English, it would be good if a few really unfortunate slips and omissions could be remedied' (Curtis, *A Reader's Companion*, p. 132).

[135] 'Letter to Kornei Chukovskii', 21 September 1967, Series I: Catalogued Correspondence, Box 1, Folder 10.

[136] 'Letter to Blake', 2 December 1967, Series II:1: Arranged Correspondence, Prominent Individuals, Box 2, Folder 3, RBML. Despite their differences, Ginsburg and Blake were able subsequently to restore good relations.

more in 1968 over their simultaneous translations of Bulgakov's *Heart of a Dog* (*Sobach'e serdtse* (1925)), which had still to be released in the Soviet Union.[137] The closing sentence of the *New York Times* review, not by Blake this time but Peter Sourian, again falls on the side of Glenny: 'Apart from a slight difference in chapter arrangement, the two versions are the same, but Michael Glenny's translation seems generally more graceful, less literal minded, more fun.'[138] Subsequent comparisons of other titles also featured in the press, but none prompted such a public outpouring of opinion from Ginsburg as her clash with Glenny.[139] The long-term effect of this episode – in terms of Ginsburg's ongoing attempt to define in her own words the act and art of translation and pursuing publisher transparency and translator rights – becomes evident from her frequent later allusions and references to it in her lectures to university departments and professional translation organizations in America. The inadvertent gain, therefore, to the professional translation community is that the debacle provided ample material (and impetus) for her to set down in writing her thoughts on translation, to identify areas for vocational improvement, and to instruct PEN America on its attempt to draw up a document setting out 'The Rights of the Translator'. The next section will examine this phase in Ginsburg's life, drawing on correspondence and lectures held in her Columbia archive.

[137] Ginsburg published her translation with Grove Press again and Glenny with Collins-Harvill. She confided in Chukovskii her apprehension at encountering the same misfortune ('Letter to Chukovskii', 4 July 1968, Series I: Catalogued Correspondence, Box 1, Folder 10, RBML).

[138] Peter Sourian, 'Bureaucratic Brute', *New York Times*, 28 July 1968. Available at: <https://uoelibrary.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/bureaucratic-brute/docview/118154905/se-2> [accessed 15 February 2023].

[139] For example, Ginsburg's translation of Andrei Platonov's *The Foundation Pit* (*Kotlovan* (1930)), published by E.P. Dutton, which came two years after Thomas Whitney's 1973 release by Ardis publisher, also drew the attention of reviewers. Priscilla Meyer in *Slavic Review* acknowledged Ginsburg's accomplishments as a translator of Bulgakov, Zamiatin and other Soviet authors, but concluded that 'in this case I prefer T.P. Whitney's version (Ardis, 1973). Platonov's awkward language is designed to make the reader clamber over each phrase painfully but, perhaps because of a commercial publisher, Ginsburg smooths it out, shortening the sentences (which causes some choppiness), and emphasizing the formality of the bureaucratic jargon rather than its absurdity'. (See: Priscilla Meyer, 'THE FOUNDATION PIT', *Slavic Review*, Vol. 35:1 (March 1976), 181–2, <DOI: https://doi.org/10.2307/2494886>)

On translation and PEN: Protecting the translator

> *Some people speak of translation as an agonizing process. I don't find it agonizing. Requiring intense concentration, yes. But also creating an intense sense of aliveness and delight in seeing, hearing, and giving shape. Translating a work is a marvellous way of getting to know it. Things that escape attention even on close reading are suddenly revealed in all their richness and subtlety. And becoming intimately involved with it, creating it anew, is a wonderfully joyous and exhilarating experience.*[140]

The comparatively small section of Ginsburg's archive that informs this case study contains an impressive number of lectures, diligently re-worked and developed over time for a range of audiences. Her love of the profession repeatedly penetrates the narrative, along with careful scrutiny of her fellow translators and the significance of their collective agency. These lectures serve as an insightful record for her evolving ideas and observations about the craft and industry, as do her archived letters. The 1970s represent a decade of particular translatorial action and reflection for Ginsburg. In addition to her commissions (science-fiction translations, including Zamiatin's *We*; Platonov and Aitmatov publications; and ethnic tales from across the former Soviet republics), she maintained frequent correspondence over several years with Tatiana Litvinov. They exchanged views in Russian and English on translation, updates on their respective translation projects and mutual literary acquaintances, and also swapped names of the latest promising newcomers to fiction in the West and the Soviet Union. Over the same period, Ginsburg acted as an ad hoc reader and advisor for Dick Seaver at Grove Press (publisher of her *Master and Margarita* translation) and informally for Carl Proffer at Ardis too. To the latter, she not only relayed commercial and ethical views on the publishing industry, but also followed Ardis's campaign to challenge the arrest of Leningrad prose writer Vladimir Maramzin in 1975.

She became an active member of the PEN Translation Committee, to which she contributed her opinions on translation while co-compiling a PEN handbook for translators. The fact that she never committed her lectures and observations to a handbook of her own – and yet was so full of praise for Chukovskii's *A High Art*[141]– is a missed opportunity in translation history,

[140] Ginsburg, 'On Translation', p. 15.

[141] In her first letter to Chukovskii, Ginsburg declared herself thrilled ('*v vostorge*') about his publications, in particular *A High Art*: 'we do not have such reflections on translations and translators in America' ('Letter to Chukovskii', 1 August 1965, Series I: Catalogued Correspondence, Box 1, Folder 10, RBML).

considering the extent of her practical and philosophical involvement in the profession. Hence the appropriateness now – as a new branch of scholarship, Literary Translator Studies, turns its attention to documenting the lives of translators, analysing their roles and recognizing their contributions in a socio-political context[142] – of including Ginsburg's microhistory here. What emerges from her papers is a love of the craft; sheer enjoyment at tackling a text and its complexities in translation; a belief in the importance of translation socially, culturally and politically; and considered suggestions on how to improve the translator's standing in the literary workplace. She, similarly, had few reservations about publicizing the social as well as the lexical failings resulting from poor craftsmanship.

An undated lecture entitled 'On Translation' attends to all of these points. These ideas recur in her other, subsequent talks, but the content of these fifteen pages exemplifies Ginsburg's foremost impressions on translators and translation. Invoking Hamish Hamilton's and E.V. Rieu's beliefs in the perennial value of world culture, and echoing sentiments from Budberg's PEN World of Translation Congress speech (at which Ginsburg was also present), she sets out the fundamental gains to humanity from translation as a vehicle for inculcating social refinement and intellectual enrichment:

> Imagine what our world would be like is [*sic*] there were no communication among various peoples, if each were locked within its own original language, whatever that may have been, and knew nothing of the literature, thought, and achievements of other cultures. In fact, what would these achievements be without cultural interchange? Perhaps we would still be living in caves and knocking every stranger on the head with a club. (Although, heaven knows, we are not too far from it with all our achievements, except that the club has been promoted to the atom or the neutron.)
>
> Well, atom or not, we still have Homer, and Aeschylus, and the Bible, and Cervantes, and Dante, and Tolstoy, and Dostoevsky, and even Chaucer. And for these, we must thank the translators, the people who have served

[142] This sub-field, which focuses on the lives and careers of professional translators and cultural mediators, has emerged from Daniel Simeoni's seminal essay 'The Pivotal Status of the Translator's Habitus' (1998). Advanced by Jeremy Munday's microhistorical approach (2013/14), which endorses the use of archival material to reconstruct translators' lives and careers, this area of Translation Studies has been consolidated by Klaus Kaindl's, Waltraud Kolb's and Daniela Schlager's edited volume *Literary Translator Studies* (2021).

> as links, the unifiers, who have cut across time and space, and have made the richest diversities of mind and experience common heritage.[143]

Her adamance that translation is an art, imposing disciplines and demands on the practitioner, gives way to the lament – shared at the same time, unbeknown to her, by British-based Penguin Classic translator David Magarshack[144] – that the translator is an under-rated, overlooked artisan in the literary field. Likening translators to performing artists, Ginsburg confesses to having been asked 'time and again, "Do you write too, or only translate?" Would anyone dream of asking a violinist "Do you compose too, or only play?" Or an actor, "Do you write plays too, or only act?"'[145] She further illustrates this point with a reference to the public misperception of the translator's task:

> Readers and reviewers still seem to think that a translated work has come into being out of the air, by immaculate conception. Even publishers often seem to regard translators as mere technicians, little more than typists of the work in another language. (PEN efforts to overcome this.) And, it seems to me that one of the reasons why we have so many rotten translations is that the translators themselves often fail to recognize that they are, or must be, creative artists, with all the responsibilities this entails.[146]

Ginsburg – in private letters and public lectures – acknowledged the difficulties associated with the work of a literary translator. In her correspondence with Litvinov, for example, she elucidates the challenge of translating Zamiatin's play *The Flea* (*Blokha*, 1926), reiterating again her emphasis on honouring the source author's style:

> I'm working lots and am very tired. Z[amiatin]'s *Flea* has been torturing me – how to render the Tula parlance into English? (I'm finishing a collection of his plays). The play is full of jokes and humorous

[143] Ginsburg, 'On Translation', p. 1.

[144] Like Ginsburg, Magarshack was a Russian-speaking émigré who was aware of and subscribed to the Soviet school of translation's high regard for the role played by literary translators. For more information on his theorizing about translation, see: McAteer, *Translating Great Russian Literature*, pp. 43–87.

[145] Ginsburg, 'On Translation', p. 2. (Underlining as in the original.)

[146] Ibid.

> catch-phrases. Capturing speech, for me, is the devil's own impossible task. How can you stay faithful to the author and not deceive the reader?[147]
>
> (my translation)

Expanding further in her lecture, Ginsburg endorsed Zamiatin's belief that 'not only the dialogue, but also the narrative itself must reflect the social milieu, the thinking, the perceptions, the speech and rhythms of the characters and situations'.[148] For her too, the need to satisfy the author's 'concept, approach, style' is paramount and she called on the translator to submit to these elements.[149] Ginsburg's ideal translator strives to overcome text-based problems of equivalence between Russian and English by seeking out 'English approximations […] even where the English or American experience provides no equivalent'.[150] Her own strategy for handling non-equivalence, from the earliest point in her professional career – when she realized to her constant surprise 'the absence of certain English words denoting simple, common values and experiences […] in Russian'[151] – was to draw up lists of untranslatable words and find approximations. These lexical options must still come as close as possible to capturing 'the tones of the original, even if they seem strange', and not reflect the translator's own zeal or impulse, 'tempting as it often is'.[152] She again echoed Magarshack's theorizing on best translatorial practice when she added that 'if he [the translator] is truly expert and experienced, he will be able, on rare occasions, to make up for something lost in one place by a word or turn of phrase in another. This too is very dangerous and requires an excellent ear and extreme discretion.'[153] Following her 1972 translation of Zamiatin's *We*, a review in the *Times Literary Supplement* specifically praised such lexical care:

[147] 'Много работаю, очень устала. Замучила меня Блоха З'а [Замятина] – как передать Тульский говор по-английски? (Заканчиваю сборище его пьес) Пьеса полна шуток и прибауток – Бы ведь черть про меня попутало дать речь невозможным делом. Как-бы не предать автора и не обмануть читателя?' Letter Ginsburg to Litvinov, 22 September 1970, Series II: Arranged Correspondence, Box 4, Folder 4, RBML, p. 3.

[148] Ginsburg, 'On Translation', p. 3.

[149] Ibid., p. 6.

[150] Ibid., p. 11.

[151] Ibid., p. 10.

[152] Ibid., p. 6.

[153] There is no evidence that Ginsburg and Magarshack ever met or corresponded. However, the fact that they shared the same views is indicative of the harmony of opinion in translation circles at that time. Magarshack maintained in a note-form taxonomy of best practice that 'Deviations from original sources sometimes harmful, sometimes acceptable but sometimes Excellent' (capitalization as in the original). See: McAteer, *Translating Great Russian Literature*, p. 158.

> her decisions over and over again reveal careful thought and sure judgment, and when she departs – as she often does – from a literal reading of the Russian text it is almost always to get a better idea of the original in English. In general, the result is impressive and makes it possible for the first time to read the novel without being checked by stylistic obstructions – other than those deliberately placed by Zamyatin, that is.[154]

The reviewer also acknowledged, however, Ginsburg's habit of occasionally omitting key words and phrases, a tendency that may seem ironic following the Bulgakov debacle, but which she readily discussed in her lectures. On her own admission, and aligning with Mona Baker's view on translation by omission,[155] Ginsburg believed that some degree of loss is frequently inevitable; invoking Friedrich Schleiermacher's domestication v. foreignization debate,[156] she maintained that 'the burden is on the translator'.[157] She cites specific examples of her most taxing text-based challenges when translating Zamiatin, Remizov and Dostoevsky, and candidly admitted less than successful decisions.[158]

Translator peers who, to her mind, failed to assume their responsibilities received harsh criticism, especially those who 'maul' a canonical work through poor skills and unscrupulous process.[159] (She accused Garnett of having 'mercilessly manhandled' the Russian classics 'with bumbling Victorian style' and Magarshack of using 'ten words where three would do and has the Russian peasants talk Cockney'.[160]) Without distinguishing between the 'five or six' available versions of Solzhenitsyn's *One Day in the Life of Ivan*

[154] Anon., 'Commentary', *Times Literary Supplement*, 25 May 1973.

[155] See Mona Baker, *In Other Words* (London and New York: Routledge, 2008), p. 40.

[156] Friedrich Schleiermacher, 'On the Different Methods of Translating', trans. by Susan Bernofsky in Venuti, *The Translation Studies Reader*, pp. 43–63.

[157] According to Ginsburg, dictionaries are 'limited, sometimes wrong, and certainly unable to provide the needed connotation'. Ginsburg, 'On Translation', p. 5.

[158] Ginsburg cites a 'loss of resonance' in her English translation of *Notes from Underground* (Toronto: Bantam, 1974), which original title, *Zapiski iz podpol'ia* (1864), she describes as 'impossible to render in English'. Her use of 'spiteful' to describe the protagonist is a compromise that attempts to convey the Russian adjective 'zloi'. She confessed, however, that 'a very important element was hopelessly shaded out' (see Series III 6: Singer Book Project, Talks on Translations, Box 22, Folder 10, RBML, p. 2). She declared in her lecture that this text was 'one of the most difficult books I have ever done' (Ginsburg, 'On Translation', p. 5).

[159] Ginsburg, 'On Translation', p. 7.

[160] 'Letter to Natasha Wilkinson', 14 February 1972, Series II: Arranged Correspondence, Box 12, Folder 2, RBML.

Denisovich, she condemned collectively the translators' 'inevitable failure' when handling dialogue and slang, concluding that this 'great masterpiece, a work of extraordinary stylistic virtuosity and profound humanity, […] is a total loss in English'.[161] Her lecture condenses the translator's 'prime essentials' to the following five points, without which they are destined for failure:

1. Talent. He must be a good writer, and a flexible, versatile one.
2. A good ear, and a good critical sense. The translator must be a critic. He must feel and know what the author of the original is doing, and why, if he is to do his work justice.
3. Affinity with the work they're translating. If the author does not identify intuitively with the author and the work, the result will inevitably show it. No translation can be good unless the translator loves the work.
4. Thorough familiarity with the culture that produced the author and his work.
5. Excellent knowledge of both languages. It is not enough for a translator into English to command the resources of his language and rely on a smattering or a half-knowledge of the language he is working from. Too many translators have done this, with disastrous results.[162]

She proceeds to examine in detail the 'howlers achieved by a well-known translator from Russian'.[163] The examples that follow replicate verbatim those in her response to Blake's *Master and Margarita* review, which means that the 'well-known translator' can only be Glenny. In the setting of a private lecture, however, she vents her feelings more emotionally than in her newspaper reply. With unconcealed scorn, she claims that Glenny's mistranslation of '*zhidkost ot parazitov*' as 'the bottled juice of parasites' leads 'the reader to wonder at the peculiar tastes of these savage Russians. Do they drink it at breakfast?'[164] Ginsburg capitalized on this example to reveal her low opinion of Glenny's agency, claiming that his perceived errors are 'the result not only of ignorance, but of a lack of integrity and of failure to know (or trying to know) the culture or the situation the work deals with'.[165] Her evaluation of Glenny's mistranslation makes a serious point about the distortions that

[161] Ginsburg, 'On Translation', p. 7.
[162] Ibid., p. 3.
[163] Ibid.
[164] Ginsburg, 'On Translation', p. 4.
[165] Ibid.

result from inaccurate cultural and linguistic transfer.[166] Her critical tone continues when she unpicks a scene from Glenny's version of *Heart of a Dog*:

> In another book, a dog transformed into a man gets himself a job as a cat-catcher. When asked what is done with the cats he kills, he answers, in the original text, 'They'll be used for coats (polta – a corrupt form used by illiterates and not to be found in any dictionary. In this case it defines the speaker.) They'll be made into squirrels (bélki) and sold to workers on credit'. The translator, however, renders this as: 'They go to a laboratory where they make them into proteins (belkí) for the workers'. Where he got the 'laboratory' is anybody's guess, just as it was his.[167]

Ginsburg used this public platform – safe from Glenny's rebuff – to regain the upper hand, salvaging her own reputation and tarnishing her rival's. She again exposes Glenny's flaws, and in doing so, also reveals the target reader's own tendency to accept as faithful the celebrity translator's work. In anticipation of Simeoni's remark, nearly three decades later, that translations are surface manifestations of 'both mental and social products',[168] Ginsburg makes no excuse for her own personality influencing and infusing a translation:

> I would like to say that every translator, no matter how faithful he attempts to be to the original, inevitably has his own handwriting. No two translations will be alike. What you do will bear your own personal stamp; it will express your style, your rhythm, your feeling toward the original work. And the end result will be, not a carbon copy and not a photograph, but the work as seen through the prism of the translator's mind, emotions, and sensibilities.[169]

The humour glimpsed in Ginsburg's lectures similarly reappears in her agency and choice of texts for translation, used with deliberate effect to dispel the stereotypes traditionally associated with Russian literature. In compiling her anthology *The Fatal Eggs and Other Soviet Satire* (which included the first

[166] Magarshack directed the same accusation at his peer Elisaveta Fen (McAteer, *Translating Great Russian Literature*, p. 64) and his predecessor Constance Garnett, whom he particularly felt was responsible for creating a distorted image of Russians as 'incompetent, gloom-sodden, bizarre, and even grotesque' (p. 91).

[167] Ginsburg, 'On Translation', p. 4.

[168] Simeoni, 'The Pivotal Status', p. 5.

[169] Ginsburg, 'On Translation', p. 15.

translation into English of Bulgakov's titular novella [*Rokovye iaitsa*, 1925]), she explains the rationale for her story selection thus:

> I was completely unobjective. I chose stories primarily because I liked them. Beyond that, my criteria were: essential value as literature; good writing; genuine wit; independence of official policy (this, of necessity, had to be modified for the later period); and contemporary reference. I chose stories dealing only with the current scene in Russia, omitting historical satire or satire directed at the 'capitalist West' or America, particularly since the latter bears the heaviest stamp of official policy.
>
> I hope that the reader will have as much fun reading the stories as I did translating them.[170]

In this respect, her reviewers appreciated the focus on literary fun and acknowledged her anthology's potential not only to dilute Golden-Age tropes of Russian literature, but also to connect with and appeal to an American readership.[171] One reviewer went further still, declaring:

> Here is a book to shatter the stereotype of the mystical, moody Russian. Some 30 pieces, ranging from urbanely witty to sledgehammer-heavy, poke fun at aspects of Soviet life from the inside from 1917 to 1963. Most lampoon the momentum of inertia that leads bureaucracy into non-decision and will not seem too strange to Americans.[172]

A review in the *Rocky Mountain News* claimed that 'Some (of the stories) evoke belly laughs, like Valentin Katayev's'. It continues that the stories 'give humorous insight into the problems faced by post-revolution Russians', justifying the value of Ginsburg's intentions.[173] Robert Magidoff from New York University sent a letter of gratitude to Macmillan, stating that Ginsburg's *The Fatal Eggs* translation now featured in a lecture as part of his 'Sunrise Semester' course on Russian literature, and that he intended to promote it during his 'Soviet Humour and Satire' lecture on the CBS Network.[174]

[170] Mikhail Bulgakov et al., *The Fatal Eggs and Other Soviet Satire*, trans. and ed. by Mirra Ginsburg (New York: Macmillan, 1965), p. x.

[171] See Marilynn Leathers, 'What Makes Ivan Laugh', *Arizona Republic,* 16 May 1965.

[172] Richard F. Shepard, 'End Papers: The Fatal Eggs and Other Soviet Satire', *New York Times*, 19 June 1965.

[173] T. F. R. *Rocky Mountain News*, n.d., in 'Comments on The Fatal Eggs and Other Stories', *Grove Press Books* Book Files, Syracuse Special Collections.

[174] Letter from Magidoff to Macmillan, in 'Comments on The Fatal Eggs and Other Stories', *Grove Press Books* Book Files, Syracuse Special Collections.

Further afield, in the Soviet Union, Chukovskii – notoriously critical of the quality of Russian-to-English literary translation – also wrote to praise her achievement:

> I am reading your book with pleasure. […] I have not yet finished reading all the translations, but I hold precious the fact that they do not contain one iota of hack work, which we find so often in the work of American translators. At all times, you are an artist, not an artisan.[175]

Magidoff's and Chukovskii's endorsements must have brought great satisfaction to Ginsburg (especially considering the tortured opinion she privately had of herself).[176] She shared Chukovskii's generally low estimation of the literary translation produced in the West at that time and singled out translator-academics for bringing the craft into disrepute. In a letter to Carl Proffer, she confided that she was tasked, in her role as one of the National Book Award (NBA) translation judges in 1973, with the job of reviewing 'innumerable books, most of them wretchedly done'.[177] She described it as 'rather depressing' owing to the 'abundance of tone deaf, talentless translators from all languages, merrily mutilating excellent works'. Again echoing Magarshack's opinion of translator-academics,[178] she declared:

> It's something truly to marvel at and so many of the 'translators' [*sic*] teachers of literature, who ought to know better, or they must be awful in both capacities. The [Burton] Raffel Mandelstam is a scandal. Medieval punishment isn't enough for such a crime.[179]

Ginsburg's hope of improving the quality of translation for the Anglophone reader merged with a further aspiration: to elevate the translator's public and professional standing (reputationally and materially). She served

[175] Letter from Chukovskii, Peredelkino, 12 September 1965, in 'Comments on The Fatal Eggs and Other Stories', *Grove Press Books* Book Files, Syracuse Special Collections.

[176] Ginsburg suffered from acute loneliness, low self-esteem and depression. In April 1984, she wrote 'All my notes would be an interesting commentary shedding light perhaps on accomplishment (if there were accomplishments) […]. As it is, they [the accomplishments] are as irrelevant and useless as all my life'. Four years later, she declared: 'I must get to work. That is my only salvation.' (Series III: Writings, Box 23, Folder 2, RBML.)

[177] Letter from Ginsburg to Proffer, 23 January 1974, Series II:2: Organisations (Ardis Publishers), Box 1, Folder 21, RBML.

[178] McAteer, *Translating Great Russian Literature*, p. 76.

[179] Letter from Ginsburg to Proffer, 23 January 1974.

with dedication for several decades on the American PEN Translation Committee, bringing together her practical knowledge and experience in the field to drive for change. Ginsburg used her position in the industry – a respected and established liaison between publishers, editors and readers – to target industry changes. Archived letters and minutes from PEN Translation Committee meetings (made up of fellow translators, including Robert Payne, Thomas Lask and Emile Capouya, and publishing representatives, including Helen Wolff) make clear Ginsburg's main aims, all of which she strove for inclusion in PEN's *New Handbook* for translators.

With nearly a fifty-year lead on the recently launched #namethetranslator Twitter/X campaign, Ginsburg called for the translator to be acknowledged on the jacket of their book.[180] She petitioned for translators to receive a regular contract specifying the time limit for the copyright on their translation, which must be attributed to the translator and revert to the translator on expiry. Regarding remuneration, she argued forcefully for a respectable, standard rate of pay for translators, between $25 and 45 per 1000 words, depending on the difficulty of the language and text. She stipulated terms for royalties, for the translator to have an ongoing share in all subsidiary rights and on any translations subsequently made from their target text. Finally, she lobbied for publishers to issue the translator with ten free copies of their translation and for changes to be made to a translation only with the translator's full knowledge and consent (an industry-wide gesture which UK-based fellow translator, Rosemary Edmonds, would have supported, having sought a similar clause, with much persistence, in her own contract with Penguin).[181] Most of Ginsburg's suggestions were approved and incorporated into the three-page, 1974 document 'The Rights of the Translator'. (Clause 4 of this document, however, set the pay range at between $25 and $30 per thousand words, indicating a climb-down from Ginsburg's top rate of $45.[182]) Some

[180] The '#namethetranslator' Twitter/X campaign was created by Helen Wang in order 'to ensure [that] the contribution of translators is recognised' (The Society of Authors, 2008–19). The cause has gained further recognition thanks to the recent efforts of author, advocate and Polish-/Spanish-English literary translator, Jennifer Croft, whose commissions include novels by the Nobel Prize-winning author Olga Tokarczuk. In an article for the *New York Times* ('Shining a Spotlight on the Art of Translation', 11 February 2022), Croft announced that she will 'no longer work with publishers who don't put her name on the cover. Readers "should know who chose the words they're going to read"' (see: <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/11/books/literary-translation-translators-jennifer-croft.html> [accessed 20 November 2023]).

[181] McAteer, *Translating Great Russian Literature*, p. 24.

[182] 'The Rights of the Translator', *PEN American Center*, 24 May 1974, Series VI: PEN Translation Committee, Box 29, Folder 6, Columbia University RBML.

members of the Translation Committee were resistant to her suggestions, however. In a letter to Michalski, publisher Helen Wolff wrote:

> I still don't agree with the statement that we can stipulate minimum rates. The translator's fee will always have to be based on the type of work involved. I also question the demand that the translator's name should appear on the jacket. Not even the publisher's name appears on the jacket. This, to me, is not a realistic demand, I also feel that ten free copies is excessive. Six seems to be more in line.[183]

Ginsburg protested a compromise of seven free copies and opted for careful wording instead: that translators should *state an expectation* to their publishers of receiving ten free copies.[184] The Committee adopted her suggestion, but she spent the next years defending her position on this and other material matters. A letter from Ginsburg to the Committee in 1977 (now consisting of eighteen members including Gregory Rabassa) records her objection – and for the purposes of this study, her passionate defence of the translator's rights – to updated guidelines in the Handbook setting the minimum pay guide too low in her estimation and eroding clauses previously approved by PEN. Her response merits expansive citation for the insight it gives into the nuances of translation industry norms at that time and Ginsburg's attempt to provoke a challenge:

> I regret that illness prevented me from attending the meeting at which this statement was discussed. But I was quite distressed to learn of the picayune arguments (such as the attempt to reduce the number of copies the author should get), and the whittling down of the points regarding royalty rates suggested by PEN and accepted by the Translation Committee more than three years ago. Indeed, if the Committee had not collapsed at the time […], the statement which has now been revised down, would have been printed and distributed to translators and editors during the past three years. Frankly, I find the return to the $25 as a suggested minimum per thousand words an *embarrassment*, to PEN as well as to me as a member of PEN and of its Translation Committee. I think that the lowest acceptable limit should be $30, and, at that, the translator will work hard and earn very little.

[183] 'Letter from Helen Wolff to Kirsten Michalski', 10 April 1973, Series VI: PEN Translation Committee, Box 29, Folder 6, Columbia University RBML.

[184] My italics.

> The introductory sentences added during our discussions help a little, but not enough. I do feel very strongly about this. I feel that we should do our utmost to urge real improvement in the translator's situation, instead of bargaining in committee and pulling down the rates and royalties that we should be urging as the norm.
>
> In closing, I feel that the argument of fear, the argument that says 'the publisher will turn elsewhere, or the publisher will not be able to publish if he pays higher rates' is not really valid. The publisher pays his staff, his rent, his printers, his salesmen, his advertisers (when he deigns to advertise), etc., etc. Now, the translator's fee, at best, is such a minor part of the general cost of the book that it is both absurd and deplorable to try to save at his expense, simply because he is individual and can be exploited, as the landlord or the supplier of paper cannot.
>
> Of course, it is as difficult, or in some cases more difficult to convince the translator of his rights than it is to convince a publisher. This, too, seems to have been demonstrated at the meeting. So. Very sad. But the need to pursue this is still there.[185]

Politics, dissidents and decolonization

Ginsburg did not limit herself to pursuing the interests of American translators. She used her position at PEN to forge closer links with Soviet writers (and their translators) living both in the US diaspora and in the USSR, with a special focus on supporting dissidents and representing ethnic writers. She spoke at length at the 1970 PEN World of Translation Congress on the historic tradition of literary translation in the Russian empire and its dramatic evolution under communism.[186] Anticipating Casanova (and resonating with renewed relevance today in an era of anti-foreign agent (*inoagent*) legislation under President Vladimir Putin), Ginsburg identified Russia as being afflicted with 'the psychology of a small nation'.[187] She defined

[185] 'Letter from Mirra Ginsburg to Joy [Chute]', PEN Translation Committee, 21 September 1977, Series VI: PEN Translation Committee, Box 29, Folder 6, Columbia University RBML.

[186] Mirra Ginsburg, 'Translation in Russia: The Politics of Translation', PEN American Center, in *The World of Translation* (New York: Wickersham Printing Company 1971/1987), p. 351.

[187] Ibid.

the country's regard for the West as a 'constant interplay of arrogance and a sense of inferiority, admiration and hate, attraction and fear: constant attempts to compare and compete, and a constant struggle between those who would turn West and bring the West home and those who would turn inward and develop Russia's own uniqueness, often preached with a mystical sense of messianic mission'.[188] Ginsburg's evaluation of post-revolutionary translation under the auspices of Gorky's World Literature programme concurs with Budberg's and Berberova's accounts, namely that the project was 'besieged by hungry ladies and gentlemen, members of the dispossessed gentry who knew foreign languages and thought this was enough to qualify them'.[189] Knowledge alone was not enough, however, and by Ginsburg's estimation, 'the results were invariably disastrous'.[190] Her paper offers additional insight into a recurring theme in this book: translation as a means of survival. Ginsburg's observation that translation in Russia has historically provided 'a refuge' traces a line to Budberg and Traill,[191] explaining their instinctive re-engagement with the profession when faced with unemployment and financial hardship in the UK. It also relates to Wettlin, faced with the dangers of living as a foreigner in Stalinist Russia and compelled to earn a living by translation to support her family.

Ginsburg strove throughout her career to maintain working relations with Soviet writers (starting with Petrov) and their translators. Even into her eighties, Ginsburg was actively seeking opportunities for East and West to unite in translation. When she attended the Hunter College's New York conference on literary translation in October 1991, she met a collective of twelve Moscow-based, native-Russian translators of English literature. Moved by the possibility that 'such a dedicated and experienced group, and one dealing with such abstract matters, could emerge out of the chaos of the Soviet Union',[192] Ginsburg began work to create a collective in the United States that could form a Russian-English network with their Moscow counterparts. The minutes from an 'International Translation Group' meeting held on 5 November that same year confirm that Ginsburg was instrumental in consolidating these links. While some of those present were tasked with pursuing the possibility of producing joint publications, and others were to arrange official Hunter College seals to ratify the new union, Ginsburg was

[188] Ginsburg, 'Translation in Russia', pp. 351–2.
[189] Ibid., p. 354.
[190] Ibid.
[191] Ginsburg, 'Translation in Russia', p. 357.
[192] 'Translation Committee Meeting', PEN Translation Committee, 9 December 1991, Series VI: PEN Translation Committee, Box 29, Folder 6, RBML.

tasked (with two of her colleagues) with encouraging their new contacts to 'establish closer ties with the Moscow branch of PEN', where the PEN American Center hoped they would be able to form a translator's section.[193] The disbarring of PEN in Moscow following Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, and the increased censorship laws in Russia and Ginsburg's native Belarus too, would no doubt prove a source of concern for her. Given her expressed faith in translating 'for the drawer', however, it is likely she would now be looking to the translator to become once again 'an important factor in helping Russian literature find its way back to itself'.[194]

Ginsburg's interest in multi-ethnic translation connects to politics too. Her 1970 PEN World of Translation paper celebrates the diversity of the Russian 'multi-national state' – home to between 100 and 200 different ethnic groups, by her estimation – with ethnicities 'like the Georgians, Armenians, Tadzhiks and others', boasting a rich cultural and literary heritage.[195] The introduction of literacy to these groups as a means for embedding Soviet ideology resulted in settled – non-nomadic – lifestyles, collectivization of the 'native fishermen and hunters of remote areas',[196] and the destruction by the written word of traditional oral literatures. Her alarm at this 'loss of enormous literary wealth, which ethnologists and folklorists today are hurriedly trying to minimize by recording what is still remembered by the old',[197] explains her own eagerness (sustained during the last three decades of her life), to capture in translation the cultural diversity of Russia's remote regions and further afield too. She produced translations and adaptations of traditional folktales – most often pitched as children's literature in the West – from Altai, Siberia, Georgia and the Caucasus, and the western Urals. She produced an anthology, *The Lazies: Tales of the Peoples of Russia*, which included tales from Russia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Latvia, Armenia, Moldova, Karelia, Central Asia, and featured among others, the Uyghur, Evenk, Nanai and Avar peoples.[198] In 1972, she translated Kirghiz writer Chingiz Aitmatov's novella *The White Ship* (*Belyi parokhod*, 1970),[199] and in the 1980s, building

[193] 'Results of 5 November 1991 Meeting of the International Translation Group', PEN Translation Committee, 5 November 1991, Series VI: PEN Translation Committee, Box 29, Folder 6, RBML.

[194] Ginsburg, 'Translation in Russia', p. 360.

[195] Ibid., p. 358.

[196] Ibid.

[197] Ibid.

[198] Mirra Ginsburg, *The Lazies: Tales of the Peoples of Russia* (New York: Macmillan, 1973).

[199] Chingiz Aitmatov, *The White Ship*, trans. by Mirra Ginsburg (NY: Crown Publishers, 1972).

on a single short-story commission in the 1960s, she returned to her own Jewish background to produce more translations of her great friend, Polish-American Nobel Prize winner Isaac Bashevis Singer's works from Yiddish into English.[200]

In lectures that promoted her diversifying role to professional translation organizations, Ginsburg presented a celebration of the countless ethnicities dwelling in the Soviet empire. With detailed ethnographic knowledge, she animatedly described the lives, literatures, and cultural characteristics of each group represented in her translations: the Finno-Ugric peoples (Samoyedes and Nentsy) north of the Arctic circle, and west of the Volga (the Udmurts and Mordvinians); Mongolian and Turkic peoples of Russian Central Asia; European Russia's Turkic-speakers (Chuvashes, Tatars, Bashkirs and Kazakhs); and the Mongolic-speaking Kalmyks of the Caucasus. There is an underlying sense in Ginsburg's devotion to literary diversity that the translation of such tales has the ability to cultivate respect and universal wisdom among readers, to break down barriers at the same time as honouring uniqueness. She wrote with as much relevance then as now about the value of translation:

> The humor and mockery, magic and adventure, transformations and heroic deeds […] mirror the lives, the values, the history and the beliefs of the people who tell them.
>
> Like all great literature, folk tales are not, cannot be 'invented' or 'made up'. They speak, each in its own way, with infinite variety and freshness, from the depths of man's experience. Whatever the cultures that produced them, and however different the events they describe, they speak a universal language – the clear and direct language of truth

[200] Isaac Bashevis Singer, 'Zietl and Reitel', trans. by Mirra Ginsburg, in: 'A Conversation with Isaac Bashevis Singer', *Chicago Review*, Vol. 31:4 (Spring 1980), <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3849538?seq=11> and *Short Friday and Other Stories*, trans. by Mirra Ginsburg (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1983). Ginsburg's first translation of a Singer short story came out in Singer's anthology: *The Séance and Other Stories* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1964/Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1974). In a review for *New York Times*, Thomas Lask, Ginsburg's fellow PEN Translation Committee member and co-compiler of the 'Rights of the Translator' guidelines, wrote: '[T]he translations are by various people, including the author. Mr. Singer thinks enough of his position as a writer in English to supervise all the translations, whether he works on them or not. They all read effortlessly, although those by Mirra Ginsburg seemed slightly superior. Running through her English versions I could hear the idiomatic racing of the original' (Thomas Lask, 'Master of the Art', *New York Times*, 9 November 1968, <https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/books/98/01/25/home/singer-seance.html> [accessed 5 April 2023]).

> and poetry, wisdom and self-knowledge. Their fears, their laughter, their monsters and their lovers, their victories and defeats, their joy and their sadness are our own. And this is why, if we read well, if we listen well, our own response – inevitably – is the delighted shock both of discovery and recognition.

Such a defence of diversity foreshadows the aspirations and motivations encompassed in the English PEN Translates bibliodiversity programme, inaugurated in 2012.[201] This financial award (the average grant awarded during the past four years has been £2,750, but some proposals have received up to £4,750) seeks to encourage 'the variety and diversity of literature available in a region or country. The books supported by PEN Translates enhance the UK's bibliodiversity in a number of ways.'[202] English PEN considers a broad remit of applications from fiction – including children's literature, prose, poetry and plays – and non-fiction, and must represent a genre, culture, language and country, theme and/or perspective currently under-represented in Anglophone publishing. Many of these criteria were already reflected before the turn of the twenty-first century in Ginsburg's portfolio of publications. In this respect, she can justifiably be credited as an early practitioner and champion of bibliodiversity.

[201] Anon., 'PEN Translates', *English PEN*, 1921–2023, <https://www.englishpen.org/translation/pen-translates/> [accessed 5 April 2023].
[202] Ibid.

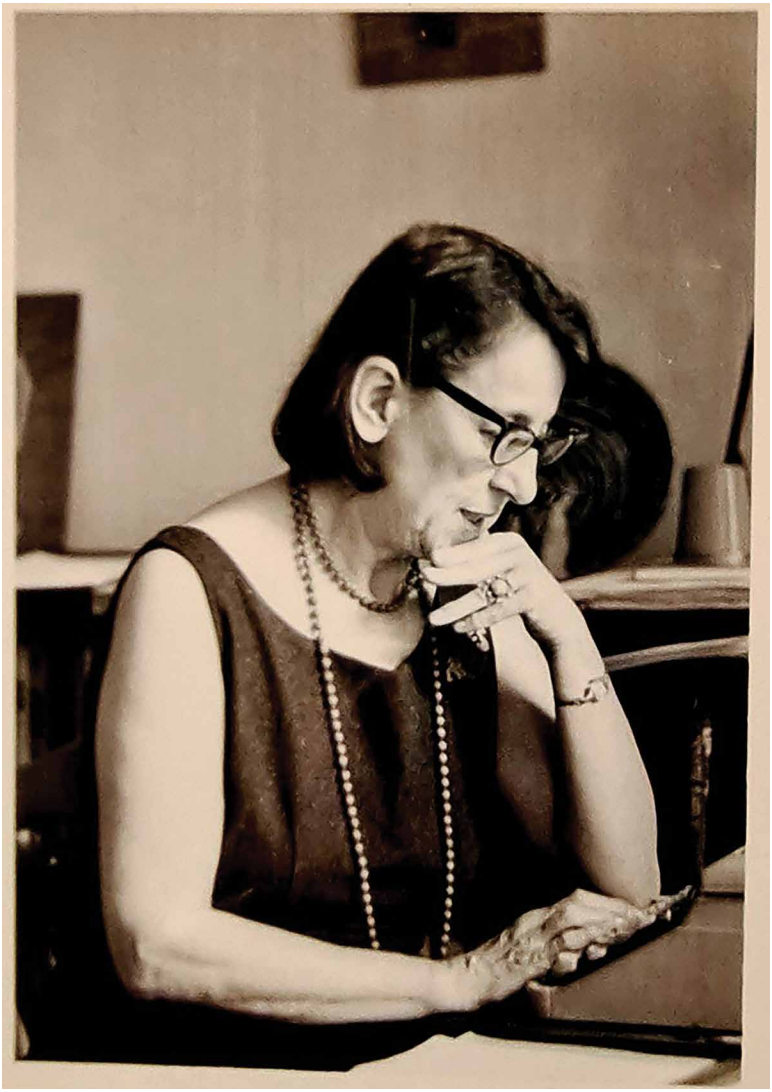


Figure 4.2 Mirra Ginsburg [n.d.] (courtesy of Columbia RBML).

Conclusion: From Cold War women to today

The women in these eight case studies found themselves involved in and reliant on translation for a range of complex reasons, beyond simply literary interest. Translation provided several of these women with a means of promoting a political (ideological) aspiration, of securing an income according to their skillset and connections while they were spied upon by national intelligence agencies and while attempting to build or reinforce their own symbolic capital (reputation, prestige and visibility). Wettlin used translation to deflect attention from hostile authorities. Carlisle's relationship with translation assumed a humanitarian dimension, as did Ginsburg's. Budberg's rationale was more self-serving; it was seemingly as much about satisfying personal prestige and reputation as about earning an income, as seen in her professional relationship with Traill. The latter needed translation work as a means of earning an income (a simpler task in Russia in the 1930s than during her life in the UK). Wettlin's, Manning's and Lansbury's case studies demonstrate that they were all (initially) motivated by political ideology, especially a desire to promote world peace and Socialist values, but for Wettlin, such activity was eventually underpinned by political intimidation. Bone, who began with a desire to challenge fascism, experienced a similar political epiphany to Wettlin and ended her career with anti-Communist loathing.

For all eight women, migration provided multilingual and multicultural insight and awareness that proved crucial to their careers. Transnational life events and dispositions influenced their abilities to mediate other literatures, as seen with Carlisle in her interactions with Soviet intelligentsia and Ginsburg's eagerness to introduce Western readers not just to anti-Soviet authors with a political message such as Bulgakov, Zamiatin and Platonov, but also to ethnic Russophone literatures. The personal situations (*habitus* and *hexis*) of all these women are fused with the Cold War politics of the time, determining the routes by which they chose or were compelled to carry out their literary work. Their situations are era-bound and, for that reason, so too is their translatorial practice. It would be anachronistic to ascribe contemporary feminist attitudes to them; decades have gone by, Soviet communism has collapsed, and women's career opportunities are

different. However, we can and should conjecture which legacies these female translators have inadvertently left for translators in the twenty-first century. I will briefly focus in this conclusion on five female Russian-to-English literary translators whose careers also straddle aspects of bibliodiversity and translation activism: Marian Schwartz, Katherine E. Young, Carol Apollonio, Bela Shayevich and Anna Gunin. It is noteworthy, however, that for the same reasons (of restricted wordcount, time and access to archives in the pandemic) that I have been unable to include in this book more historical translators and cultural mediators from across Europe and further afield, of which there are many, so too are there innumerable female translators and advocates currently mediating Russophone literature into global languages whom I am also unable to include.[1]

The transitional figures with whom we can most readily identify in the modern context are Ginsburg, whose translator-oriented activism continues to shape the profession, and Carlisle, who is still alive and whose hope that 'our divided world can in time become one' still finds resonance. It is perhaps appropriate that Marian Schwartz, the most recent translator of Solzhenitsyn's *March 1917: The Red Wheel*, Node III, Books 1 and 2, began her career as a literary translator in America in 1978, the same year that Carlisle brought out *Solzhenitsyn and the Secret Circle*.[2] As one of the most experienced Russian-English literary translators in the field today and recipient of countless prizes, Schwartz is unlikely to experience the same overwhelming sense of disillusionment that Carlisle suffered from her extended advocacy of one author, Solzhenitsyn, nor need she now endure Whitney's lack of financial compensation for many hours' labour. The Cold War political intrigue that surrounded Carlisle's handling of Solzhenitsyn's works in translation continues to evolve: a new iteration of Soviet-style political tyranny has emerged (as played out in the current Russia-Ukraine conflict), reigniting a global awareness of Solzhenitsyn's humanitarian significance. According to the Solzhenitsyn Center website:

> For all those who truly share […] Solzhenitsyn's desire to comprehend the underlying meaning of 1917, for those who have the discipline to

[1] The following female translators are just some among many currently active in the field: Seung Joo-Yeoun and Bora Chung (Russian-to-Korean), Hülya Arslan (Russian-to-Turkish), Zsuzsa Hetényi (Russian-to-Hungarian), Sophie Benech (Russian-to-French), Daisy Gibbons and Annie O. Fisher (Ukrainian- and Russian-to-English), Hanna Komar and Valzhyna Mort (Belarusian-to-English), Deanna Cachoian-Schanz (Armenian-to-English), Shelley Fairweather-Vega (Uzbek- and Kazakh-to-English) and Sabrina Jazsi (Russian-, Ukrainian-, Uzbek-to-English).

[2] According to Schwartz's website, Books 3 and 4 will be forthcoming over the next few years <https://www.marianschwartz.com/about> [accessed 19 May 2021].

> encounter and engage with an artful mixture of history, philosophy, and literature in the pursuit of a truth that goes beyond narrowly nationalistic limits and concerns, Solzhenitsyn's masterwork [*The Red Wheel*] will delight and instruct.
>
> *The Red Wheel*, a quintessentially 'Russian' book, reminds us that the searching exploration of certain pregnant particulars provides the best access to universal truth. It shows us quite palpably that the destinies of Russia and the West have and will inexorably continue to intertwine.[3]

In translating *The Red Wheel*, Schwartz has picked up the same metaphorical baton of truth about which Carlisle spoke and will be fully cognizant of the role her translations play in intertwining Russia and the West.

Like Ginsburg, Schwartz has been an active member in professional translator organizations. She has been president of The American Literary Translators Association (ALTA) twice, where she has also performed a supervisory role to emerging translators under ALTA's mentor fellowship programme.[4] A member of PEN America, she participated in several key panels in Russian Literature Week in New York in December 2014,[5] and contributed to PEN America's 2015 Banned Books Week, a feature where PEN members were invited to 'celebrate the freedom to read by reflecting on the banned books that matter most to them'.[6] Schwartz chose Daria Wilke's young adult novel *Playing a Part*, in her translation, in order to highlight the social and literary impact of Russia's 2013 gay propaganda law. Her translatorial activity extends beyond the literary to the humanitarian in her work as a volunteer for the independent, non-profit, non-governmental organization Rights in Russia.[7] Similarly, Schwartz's website now states that

[3] Cited on the Solzhenitsyn Center website: <https://www.solzhenitsyncenter.org/his-writings/large-works-and-novels/the-red-wheel> [accessed 19 May 2021].

[4] 'Meet the Mentors of the ALTA 2022 Mentor Fellowship Programme', *American Literary Translators Association*, 2015 <https://www.literarytranslators.org/blog/meet-mentors-2022-alta-emerging-translator-mentorship-program> [accessed 10 April 2023].

[5] Ronald Meyer, 'PEN Members Participate in Russian Literature Week', *PEN America*, 26 November 2014, <https://pen.org/pen-members-participate-in-russian-literature-week-december-1-5-in-nyc/> [accessed 10 April 2023].

[6] Marian Schwartz, 'Sacrifice and Self-Censorship before Russia's "Gay Propaganda" Law', *PEN America*, 28 September 2015, <https://pen.org/sacrifice-and-self-censorship-before-russias-gay-propaganda-law/> [accessed 10 April 2023].

[7] 'Our Translators: Marian Schwartz', *Rights in Russia*, n.d. <https://www.rightsinrussia.org/marian-schwartz/> [accessed 10 April 2023]. The organization was 'established on 19 January 2010 in the UK to mark the tragic murder of human rights lawyer Stanislav Markelov and journalist Anastasia Baburova who that day in 2009 were shot dead in Moscow' (*Rights in Russia*).

'in the wake of Russia's genocidal invasion of Ukraine, she has refocused her efforts on the work of Russian writers who oppose the war'.[8] Schwartz is not alone in her advocacy for dissident writers. Her fellow female translators – Katherine E. Young, Carol Apollonio, Bela Shayevich, all in the United States, and Anna Gunin in the UK – have all translated contemporary Russophone literature which challenges or exposes in some way potentially controversial aspects of the post-Soviet order. Most reminiscent of Carlisle the advocate is the US-based poet and Russian literary translator Katherine E. Young, who has become the self-appointed advocate for Azerbaijani political prisoner and Nobel Peace Prize nominee Akram Aylisli. Young was named a National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) Translation Fellow[9] for her project to translate Aylisli's trilogy of novellas, *Farewell, Aylis*, published in 2018. On the personal joy and privilege of translating Aylisli's work, and striking a contrasting tone to Carlisle's lament, Young told online journal *Words without Borders*:

> [N]ot once have I regretted the three years spent translating [these novellas] and advocating for their author. And while it is unquestionably a rare and unique honor to work with an author who has literally put his art and his *life* on the line to call for tolerance, empathy, and understanding, what keeps me going is the beauty of the work, the humanity of the characters, and the joy of discovery on each and every reading.[10]

Young's advocacy extends beyond the creativity of translation, however; echoing Ginsburg's actions, she works alongside PEN International, Human Rights Watch and PEN America to raise awareness of Aylisli's de facto house arrest in Baku and to appeal for 'the full restoration of his rights'.[11] Again, in doing so, she has harnessed the help at her disposal, in a way that Carlisle did not, but which Ginsburg used to good effect. Young's website – a technological advancement which could have aided Carlisle had it been available in the 1960s and 1970s – presents Aylisli's situation for all to see and

[8] 'About', Marian Schwartz, <https://www.marianschwartz.com/about> [accessed 10 April 2023].

[9] According to her website, Schwartz has also received the National Endowment for the Arts translation awards (twice).

[10] Katherine Young, 'Akram Aylisli's Literary Odyssey', *Words without Borders*, 3 December 2018, <https://www.wordswithoutborders.org/dispatches/article/akram-aylislis-literary-odyssey-katherine-e-young> [accessed 20 May 2021].

[11] Katherine E. Young's website, n.d., <https://katherine-young-poet.com/akram-aylisli/> [accessed 19 May 2021].

maximizes exposure with its links for supporters to sign an online petition in Aylisli's support; a link to purchase a copy of *Farewell, Aylis*; an online form to request a speaking engagement and readings by Young; PEN International's Statement on Harassment of Aylisli; YouTube clips; reviews of and accolades for Aylisli's trilogy and Young's translation; and regular updates on his situation. One of the reviews cited on Young's website resonates in particular with Carlisle's words:

> We can only benefit from attuning increasingly to narratives that, by aspects of scope, design, and mastery, attempt some step of reconciliation as we continue to work toward more open and peaceful relations among cultures and nations. If a novelist caught between hostile cultural narratives can manage such reconciliation in his own work, it may bode well for many others … eventually.[12]

Ginsburg's literary focus on representing the diversity of Caucasian ethnicities continues in US-academic and translator Carol Apollonio's ongoing collaboration with Dagestani author, Alisa Ganieva. To date, Apollonio has translated Ganieva's first novel *The Mountain and the Wall* (*Prazdnichnaia gora*, 2012) in 2015, *Bride and Groom* (*Zhenikh i nevesta*, 2015) in 2017, and the most recent, released in November 2022, *Offended Sensibilities* (*Oskorblennye chuvstva*, 2018), all published by Texas-based independent publisher, Deep Vellum in the United States. Ganieva won the prestigious Russian Literary Debut Prize in 2009 for her novella, *Salaam Dalgat!*, written controversially under the male nom-de-plume Gulla Khirachev. According to Ganieva, local Dagestani journalists and writers suspected a pseudonym – Ganieva used Avar-influenced names, Gulla (meaning 'bullet') and Khirachev (from the root for 'darling') – but maintained that the author must be 'a young man, who lives in Makhachkala, since he knows it so well'.[13] As if to confirm Ganieva's recurring theme of Dagestan's remove from Russia (geographically and ethnographically), the Russian critics were less aware, '[i]t is all the same for Russians – Magomedov, Khirachev – they don't know the difference at all between all these strange surnames'.[14] In 'Climbing the

[12] Lawrence Halvin, 'Farewell Aylis: A Non-Traditional Novel in Three Works by Akram Aylisli', *World Literature Today* (Autumn 2019), available at: <https://www.worldliteraturetoday.org/2019/autumn/farewell-aylis-non-traditional-novel-three-works-akram-aylisli> [accessed 19 May 2021].

[13] Genevieve Arlie, 'Bullet in my Mother Tongue: An Interview with Alisa Ganieva', *Asymptote*, 30 July 2015, <https://www.asymptotejournal.com/blog/2015/07/30/bullet-in-my-mother-tongue-an-interview-with-alisa-ganieva/> [accessed 5 April 2023].

[14] Ibid.

Mountain and Crossing the Wall: Politically Sensitive Post-Soviet Women's Literature in Translation', Maguire describes Ganieva's use of a fictitious name as 'a gambit intentionally highlighting the disproportionately male influence over both literature and politics in Russia'.[15]

Ganieva is the first Dagestani novelist to be published in English. Her works, the majority set in modern Dagestan, have received positive reviews in the mainstream Western press (*The Guardian* and *The Washington Post*),[16] coverage which may have been helped by Ganieva's 'early connection with well-known translators such as Schwartz (who translated one of her short stories, and recommended her to Deep Vellum) and Apollonio'.[17] Ganieva's novels represent less a challenge to the post-Soviet order, but rather address the diversity of Caucasian ethnicities and religious fundamentalism on Russia's border, which might otherwise remain undisclosed. The story hinges around local responses to a rumour that a wall is being constructed by the Russians on the Dagestan border. The apparent intention of such a move – vague and never categorically confirmed in the novel – is to leave the Dagestanis to resolve their own interracial, interreligious differences, but instead, as Maguire summarizes, 'within days, an extremist Islamist faction takes over Dagestan, introducing sharia law and forcing moderate Muslims into hiding or exile'.[18] Ganieva uses everyday images and occurrences as the vehicle for weaving social complexities and ethnic friction through her story:

> The characters in each are extremely realistic: women get their hair set for wedding parties, young men work out in basement gyms and go to nightclubs, mothers scheme to marry off adult offspring, mosques become radicalized, and local power-brokers enforce corrupt systems.[19]

Reflecting the polyphony of Ganieva's original text, Apollonio's translation combines complex layers of intercultural dialogue suffused with indigenous culture-specific references. In line with Deep Vellum's mission

[15] Muireann Maguire, 'Climbing the Mountain and Crossing the Wall: Politically Sensitive Post-Soviet Women's Literature in Translation', 2019. Available at: <https://ore.exeter.ac.uk/repository/bitstream/handle/10871/124533/5_Maguire_paper_with_images_3607w.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y> [accessed 7 July 2021], p. 2.

[16] *The Guardian* featured Ganieva's *Bride and Groom* in Viv Groskop's list of 'Best Books to Understand Contemporary Russia', *The Guardian*, 13 February 2021, <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2021/feb/13/the-best-books-to-understand-contemporary-russia> [accessed 7 July 2021].

[17] Maguire, 'Climbing the Mountain', p. 3.

[18] Ibid., pp. 2–3.

[19] Ibid.

statement – 'We are dedicated to publishing socially engaged literature that fosters cross-cultural dialogue, breaks down barriers between communities, and promotes empathy'[20] – *The Mountain and the Wall* combines 'mythological realities of ancient Dagestan' with Muslim culture and consumerism,[21] and relies on Apollonio's creativity to convey this blended world to the reader. The skill of the translation lies in Apollonio's ability to recreate in lexical form the novel's metaphorical otherness, the wall at the heart of the story; applying the same sort of strategy as Ginsburg in honouring the author, Apollonio foreignizes the reader with local, ethnic terms preserved in the body of the text but explained (in her case) in an appended glossary. Her strategy has received mixed praise, but even those who might have publicized to good effect the metaphorical power of semantic alienation have failed to recognize Apollonio's device. In an extensive review on the Open Democracy website (dedicated to educating 'citizens to challenge power and encourage democratic debate across the world'),[22] reviewer Robert Chenciner describes Ganieva as 'very courageous to write about what is happening in Dagestan, thinly veiled in the traditional Russian literary use of fiction'.[23] He explores the broader, global resonances of Ganieva's wall motif, and the fine refractions separating the different religious factions in the region (even taking the author to task for blurring Salafi and Wahhabi Muslims), but Chenciner does not apply the same fine-tuned appraisal to the text itself. He fails to spot the significance and semantic symbolism of Apollonio's, also courageous, translation decisions:

> Translated by Carol Apollonio, the laudable policy was to translate the Russian into English and to preserve the local language terms, written in italics, and explained in the large glossary at the end. Such mixed language is indeed spoken locally, but it is perplexing for the reader to constantly need to look up words, which for me broke up the flow of the talented writing. If the majority were simply translated into English, it would be just as effective.[24]

[20] 'Our History', *Deep Vellum*, n.d. <https://www.deepvellum.org/history#:~:text=We%20are%20dedicated%20to%20publishing,how%20to%20support%20Deep%20Vellum> [accessed 10 April 2023].

[21] Arlie, 'Bullet in My Mother Tongue'.

[22] See *Open Democracy* <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/about/> [accessed 5 April 2023].

[23] Robert Chenciner, 'Book Review: Alisa Ganieva, "The Mountain and the Wall"', *Open Democracy*, 7 July 2015 <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/odr/book-review-alisa-ganieva-mountain-and-wall/> [accessed 20 May 2021].

[24] Ibid.

By contrast, Canadian writer J.R. Patterson's review of Ganieva's *Offended Sensibilities* identifies specifically that Apollonio's strategy 'is allowed in an effort to catch readers up on Russian norms, practices, and traditions. While these instances slow down the reading of an otherwise fluid text, they also serve to show how foreign this country is to most readers.'[25]

Another example is Bela Shayevich, the Soviet-American student-protégé of the late US translator Jamey Gambrell. Shayevich's experiences resonate with those of several women featured in these case studies. Her creative roles according to PEN include 'visual artist, writer, and translator';[26] she was awarded the 2017 Society of Authors' Translation Award for *Second-hand Time*. Her translation of the Russophone novel *Vremia sekond-hend* (2015), by Belarusian Nobel Prize-winning author Svetlana Alexievich, was published by Fitzcarraldo Editions in 2016. In an interview for the Society of Authors, Shayevich describes her activist motivations for translating thus:

> As an immigrant, I have always translated. When I was a teenager, it was to share the Russian rock lyrics I loved, then, in my early 20s, it was the experimental poetry from the former Soviet Union that I thought would blow the minds of my peers.
>
> Eventually, this grew into an interest in translating texts written by Russian activists, which I thought could inspire the people around me and spur them to action.[27]

In these short passages, she channels the émigré literary nostalgia and politicized translation rationale personified by Carlisle and Ginsburg; her lyrical activism resonates with Bone's prison poetry and betrays a similar determination to translate Russian activists for a ready audience. Shayevich joins Ginsburg in having been commissioned to re-translate *We*

[25] J. R. Patterson, 'Offended Sensibilities by Alisa Ganieva', *World Literature Today*, January 2023, available at: <https://www.worldliteraturetoday.org/2023/january/offended-sensibilities-alisa-ganieva> [accessed 27 October 2023].

[26] See: <https://pen.org/just-press-play-with-bela-shayevich/> [accessed 19 May 2021].

[27] Porter Anderson, 'Bela Shayevich's Translation of "Second-Hand Time" Wins Inaugural TA First Translation Prize', *Publishing Perspectives*, March 2018, available at: <https://publishingperspectives.com/2018/03/ta-first-translation-prize-winner-2018-bela-shayevich/#:~:text=Bela%20Shayevich's%20Translation%20of%20'Second,Inaugural%20TA%20First%20Translation%20Prize&text=The%20new%20TA%20First%20Translation> [accessed 19 May 2021].

(2020, Canongate press),[28] and shares an interest in modern dissident authors (in addition to Alexievich, Shayevich also translated Liudmila Ulitskaia's *The Big Green Tent* [*Zelenyi shater*, 2010] published by Farrar, Straus & Giroux in 2015).

Combining dissidence with decolonization, UK-based translator Anna Gunin has attracted attention for translating texts that pose a problematic, critical view of society, conflict and politics in the post-Soviet landscape. She co-translated (with Arch Tait) Alexievich's *Chernobyl Prayer* (*Chernobyl'skaia molitva*, 1997) and is the solo translator of works by Oleg Pavlov (*Requiem for a Soldier*, 2015; third volume in *Karagandskie deviatiny, ili Povest' poslednykh dnei*, 2002), German Sadulaev (*I Am A Chechen!*, 2011; *Ia – Chechenets*, 2006) and Mikhail Eldin's *The Sky Wept Fire*, 2013 (*Nebo plakalo ognem*), for which she won an English PEN award. Her translations and their original Russophone texts present a critical version of modern historical events (the explosion at the Chernobyl nuclear reactor and the Chechen war). In an extension of the emotion Ginsburg expressed about translatorial agency, Gunin has written insightfully about the creative, almost visceral, nature of translation, despite the often troubling subject matter, which enables her to relate to the author:

> A profoundly moving work I translated was the war memoir of Chechen poet and journalist Mikail Eldin, *The Sky Wept Fire*. In any translation, you enter the reality experienced or envisioned by the author; in this book, I was re-experiencing scenes of horrific torture, pain and destruction. Yet Mikail expressed his story with such poetry and told such moving tales that the book felt ultimately uplifting rather than grim. Translating these true stories built a bond with the author.[29]

Gunin has tackled challenging content but, in the case of her Eldin and Sadulaev translations (both of which trace Russia's combative presence in Chechnya), the war-saturated motifs, which are worthy of both Solzhenitsyn

[28] Now the twenty-fourth translator of this anti-utopian text, Shayevich's translation is, according to Maguire, 'both more accurate and more stylish than its predecessors. At its worst, one quibbles with occasional anachronisms' (Muireann Maguire, 'Yevgeny Zamyatin: *We*, translated by Bela Shayevich; Vasily Grossman: *Stalingrad*, translated by Robert Chandler and Elizabeth Chandler', *Translation and Literature*, Vol. 30:3 (Nov. 2021), 396–405, <https://doi.org/10.3366/tal.2021.0486>).

[29] Cristina Vezzaro, Anna Gunin and her Authors, *Authors and Translators Blogspot*, 2 October 2015, [blog] <http://authors-translators.blogspot.com/2015/10/anna-gunin-and-her-authors.html> [accessed 19 May 2021].

and Vasily Grossman, locate the novels in the realms of political controversy. Gunin has not shied away from this dimension. In the acknowledgement at the end of Sadulaev's *I Am a Chechen!*, Gunin expresses gratitude to the Russian publisher Ilya Kormiltsev, without whose 'courage and vision' the novel – described as an 'intensely personal journey through the carnage of war, exploring the pain, the challenge, and above all the meaning of being a Chechen' (2010) – would never have been published.

Where Carlisle's and Ginsburg's comments on translation inspire a sense of optimism about countering the Soviet regime, first in word, then deed, Gunin's translations and the description of her emotional engagement with text-based scenes of post-Soviet violence and destruction, reflect the current pessimism of the early twenty-first century. Gunin's translations detailing the Chechen wars serve as a precursor to texts now emerging (Andrey Kurkov's *Diary of an Invasion* and *Grey Bees*, for example, the latter translated into English by Boris Dralyuk) that capture the devastation wrought by Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Translation organizations, beyond the work of PEN International, have also acknowledged the need to support displaced and dissident writers (and their translators) in the war. The European Writers' Council has launched the #FreeAllWords campaign, described as a 'joint support initiative for first and foremost Belarusian and Ukrainian writers'. It strives to ensure 'that more and more European democratic, war-critical and human rights-defending writers' voices, who are condemned to silence in their countries, are given an opportunity to be read and heard'.[30] Headed by exiled Belarusian literary and humanitarian activists Alena Makouskaya and Aliaksandra Dvaretskaya, the project heralds a new chapter of translation activism for the twenty-first century, from which a new, decolonized Slavic canon is emerging, along with new names in translation.

[30] Anon., '1 Million Words for Peace and Freedom of Speech', *#FreeAllWords*, n.d. <https://freeallwords.org/about/> [accessed 13 April 2023].

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