

in other countries and took part in the Rodon expedition in Bulgaria in 1964-66. They were represented at the special symposium in Yugoslavia and have supplied information about the Crimean and Caucasian caves to foreign colleagues.

A number of the most beautiful caves in the Soviet Union have been declared State preserves, protected by government order at the initiative of speleological and scientific organisations.

Boris Paton, the President of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences, characterised the activities of Soviet speleologists in the following words: 'Your explorations are a valuable contribution to the study of geological structure and hydro-geological conditions of the karstic development in the Ukraine. The Presidium of the Academy of Sciences will provide the utmost encouragement to your important initiative in promoting the fruitful co-operation of scientists and sportsmen in the exploration of cave formations.'

(This article was supplied by Novosti Press Agency in response to a request by the Society arising out of a note in *Slavonika*, the journal of the University of Nottingham Russian Department, inserted by some caving enthusiasts at the University.)

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# Foreign Language Teaching

RUTH ADLER

Many years ago I was asked to write a short article about the teaching of foreign languages in the school where I used to work in a small town some twenty miles from Moscow. It was duly published in the *Anglo-Soviet Journal*. This year I've had some opportunities of making first-hand observations in England. I hope the readers of this *Journal* may find some of them interesting.

Though I had come to England as a private visitor thanks to my friends' efforts and hospitality, I was able to visit a number of educational establishments in England (mainly in the London area). Wherever I went I was always most interested in the system of teaching foreign languages.

The aims of teaching foreign languages at schools were not similar in both countries some time ago. The English system was more interested in the development of reading and writing capabilities and the emphasis was on a written examination. The pupils were supposed to be able to read a considerable number of literary works in the original and write a dictation, translation and some sort of a literary composition in the native language. An oral examination took place after a written one and its role was not very important.

At the same time the British Council supervised and helped develop the teaching of English as a second language in many parts of the world with the aim of giving the students some command of spoken English for oral communication.

This field of work was fairly well known in the Soviet Union, where the text books by Eckersley, West and Hornby, dictionaries and reference books by Hornby, books on the methodology of teaching English as a foreign language are highly appreciated.

The aim of teaching foreign languages at school in the Soviet Union in the past ten-fifteen years is usually defined as a practical one, with the purpose of giving the pupils the ability to speak a foreign language and read popular science and political literature in the original. The emphasis is made on the oral command of the language and the examination is oral.

There are different types of schools in the USSR, some of them where the pupils begin to study a foreign language in the second form (at the age of eight)—so called special schools—that give a fairly decent command of the spoken language plus the courses of literature, history and possibly some other subjects (their list may differ from school to school) in this foreign language.

Recently in Britain the aim of teaching foreign languages has begun to change, as a foreign language has been introduced into some primary schools, and the problem of teaching English to immigrant children has become very acute for some parts of Great Britain. It is very important for immigrant children to master spoken English, otherwise they are not able to learn at school and their progress there is considerably delayed.

It appeared to be necessary to organize a centre in London which would be able to supply and co-ordinate information on teaching foreign languages; this centre (which is at 72 State House, High Holborn St.), I visited several times, and was very much impressed with its comprehensive library of books, tapes, records, slides, film-strips and other visual aids. The staff of this centre, though not very numerous, is very competent and efficient; they organise lectures, give individual and group consultations to all teachers who come to that centre from different parts of Great Britain and even abroad. I would like to thank them very much for their kindness and a genuine wish to help their Soviet colleague in all respects. The work of this centre seems to a certain extent similar to the work carried out by the Moscow Foreign Languages Library (though it is only a very small portion of the duties of the latter). Besides this library, every republic and city in the USSR has a special Institute for Advanced Studies in various subjects for those teachers who have degrees and are working at a school but who want to refresh their knowledge and teaching skill in their particular subject. Every institute of this kind has its own Foreign Language Department. The latter runs compulsory courses (every five years for teachers of all subjects in the Soviet Union) and optional refresher courses, organises demonstration lessons in their own language laboratories and schools, arranges individual and group consultations, and lectures on various aspects of teaching foreign languages. The difference between Great Britain and the Soviet Union is that in our country some of the refresher courses are compulsory. But, in my opinion, this does no harm.

It was worth learning that some universities in Great Britain have special government grants for various projects in the field of teaching English to immigrant children, e.g., the West Indian language project at the University of Birmingham, and the Schools' Council Project for teaching English to immigrants at the University of Leeds Institute of Education.

In the Soviet Union, the Academy of Pedagogical Sciences of the USSR also has a foreign language department which carries out its own research work on the problems of the methodology of teaching, and co-ordinates the work of numerous teachers' training colleges of the USSR in this field.

# FACILITIES FOR AFFILIATED ORGANISATIONS

Members of affiliated organisations are entitled to services which include the supply of information, visual aids, use of the reference library, recorded and sheet music, as well as the facilities provided by the libraries of the Universities of Essex and Surrey, with which we have special arrangements. The Visual Aids and Information Departments charge according to the time spent on selection or research.

A number of new 16-mm Soviet films, including Russian language teaching, with good quality sound tracks, can be supplied by ETV Films, 2, Doughty Street, London, WC1 (Tel: 01-405 0395), and by Contemporary Films, 55, Greek Street, London, W1 (Tel: 01-437 9392), with whom the Society has special arrangements whereby affiliated organisations receive 20 per cent discount on Soviet films hired. Additional special rates are available for serial bookings. (On booking films, organisations should apply direct to ETV or Contemporary Films stating that they are affiliated). Reduced rates are also available for members wishing to join the Paris Pullman Club, Paris Pullman Cinema, 65, Drayton Gardens, London, SW10 (Tel: FREmantle 5898). Application should be made direct to the Club Secretary.

The Society can arrange for British or Soviet speakers to give lectures or talks. Special assistance is given to visitors to the USSR wishing to visit institutions and meet specialists, either on specialist tours organised by the Society or to supplement independently arranged visits to the Soviet Union. Members of affiliated organisations are given preference for the limited number of places available on Russian language courses (including scholarships) in the Soviet Union. There are facilities for meeting Soviet specialists and lecturers visiting Britain, and special efforts are made to affiliated organisations outside London to receive Soviet visitors.

Priority will be given to affiliated organisations to receive a limited number of invitations to selective functions arranged by the Society, such as special receptions, etc.

We should like to add, however, that the Society exists not only for the benefit of members, but also in the wider context to help to improve cultural and scientific relations between Britain and the Soviet Union, towards which subscriptions can play an important part.

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Due to the multinational structure of the Soviet Union, we share with Great Britain the problem of teaching the main language of the country—the Russian language—as the second language in all Soviet and autonomous republics, regions and territories where the teaching is carried out in the native language. But this may become the subject of another article.

I cannot boast of visiting very many schools in the course of my stay in England, so I will be wrong if I assume that I have the right to pass judgment on the teaching of foreign languages in this country. But the lessons of French, German, Spanish, and Russian which I did visit have revealed how many problems we have in common. In many cases the schools here were able to organise and use language laboratories. However, I also observed that the main problem is not to install the laboratory equipment but to prepare suitable material to make the equipment work with maximum efficiency. And the work in this field is just in the initial stages all over the world.

In both countries considerable attention is being paid to making foreign language lessons more lively, and to giving pupils more opportunities to master the language by means of oral speech exercises, and of practising it in everyday speech units.

And with all due respect to my British colleagues, I must say that though the pupils in the Soviet Union are in a more difficult position, in that they very seldom have any opportunity of going abroad and practising the language with the native speakers of that language, the results are not worse than I could see in this country.

It was very pleasant to see that so many people here are very much interested in the Soviet Union; they want to learn the Russian language, study its literature and social institutions, and understand its people.

Several times I was unexpectedly addressed in Russian by young people who have learned it in Cambridge, Nottingham, and other places. It shows that wider contacts among teachers of both countries would be interesting and fruitful, as they will help to promote mutual understanding and friendship between our nations.

Once I was invited by the publishing firm, Mary Glasgow and Baker Ltd., of 140 Kensington Church Street, to have a look at the books and numerous magazines which they publish to help those who study foreign languages in various countries, at different stages of knowledge. I was very happy to see among their publications the Russian magazine *Kometa*, which is published nine times a year and contains interesting information about life in the USSR in very simple Russian, with authentic Russian photographs and pictures, songs, verses, and a very comprehensive Russian-English vocabulary in each issue. (They have similar publications in English, French, German, etc.) I have seen the catalogues and publications of Longmans, Oxford University Press, and other publishing houses which are well known in the Soviet Union.

In the Soviet Union we also have several publishing houses (Prosveshcheniye—Enlightenment, Vysshaya Shkola—Higher School, and others) that publish textbooks, readers, conversation books, etc. for students of foreign languages. The Prosveshcheniye Publishing House has a special

Audio-Visual Aids department and they supply schools of various types with records and tapes, film strips and slides, wall charts, tables and models, aiming to provide better opportunities for practice in spoken English both at class and at home. A revised edition of the school text book for the fifth form (the beginner's course) is published together with a set of records (or tapes), filmstrips, picture charts, and models. In future, educational films will also be provided together with the textbooks. And we hope that all our school textbooks from now on will follow the same pattern.

As the price of records, film strips, etc., is very moderate in our country, such materials can be bought by all schools that need them. The only trouble is that teachers must be taught how to use them in the best way.

Our weeklies published in English, French and German (Moscow News—English and French editions, Neues Deutschland—New Germany) have special pages for those who study these languages. The stories, jokes, songs and photographs published by these weeklies are very popular, and the teachers use them both for class and club (optional) work.

While I was staying in England, I often followed the BBC lessons of German, French, and other languages broadcast for school pupils and adults on Radio 4. I know that the BBC broadcasts lessons in foreign languages on television as well, but I did not happen to see any of them.

Moscow Radio also has radio programmes to help those who study foreign languages, and gives television lessons. So far, the radio programmes do not satisfy teachers of foreign languages. They are meant to develop mostly listening skills, and though they do give some interesting material about a country, its life, customs and traditions, they are not lessons, but programmes, and that is the trouble; they do not give enough opportunities for practising the language as the BBC lessons do. But they do help to arouse interest in foreign countries in general and in language learning in particular, so they have large audiences.

Our television lessons are mainly for extra-mural students of various technical colleges (one foreign language is a compulsory subject in all higher education establishments of the Soviet Union), and for children of pre-school age. They are regular lessons, and many viewers follow the courses. Some of the viewers who have tape recorders tape the lessons and play the tape afterwards for extra practice. Incidentally, the same is done by many school teachers with our foreign language radio programmes.

In this way, we can say that the teaching of foreign languages in the USSR and England has many similar problems, and that the approach to the solution of these problems reveals that the general trend in both countries is in the same direction. I am sure that teachers of foreign languages in England will be able to find a lot of fruitful and interesting ideas in Soviet publications on the methodology of teaching, and vice-versa.

### **BRITISH MUSEUM EXHIBITIONS ON LENIN**

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# Translating the Criminal Code\*

YURII SDOBNIKOV

(a translator in the Progress Publishing House, specialising in legal literature—who translated “*The Fundamentals of Civil Legislation*”).

In his analysis Professor Berman brings a formidable weight of scholarship to bear and no one who is concerned with this complicated subject could fail to be interested in what he has to say. My own particular interest in the book was as a translator of Soviet legal literature, and since my remarks in this review tend to be mainly critical, I should like to make it clear that they are not intended as an attack but rather as a small contribution to the pioneer work Professor Berman and his colleague are doing in a difficult field.

In his Introduction, Professor Berman says that when in doubt he and his collaborator preferred ‘a more literal translation, despite the awkwardness that this sometimes involves. And when the Soviet style is itself unwieldy and ambiguous, we have not sought to improve it’ (p.132). The translators set out to give the reader not only the meaning but also the flavour of the Russian text, and have, on the whole, I think, succeeded in doing this.

Professor Berman’s statement of principle is highly important, because anyone intent on ‘throwing out all the nonsense’ is liable to end up with very little of the original indeed. Conversely, an effort to convey the flavour of the original may leave the translator in the end with much more than he had bargained for. Because of the differences between two languages like Russian and English, something is inevitably lost, and something else inadvertently gained in the rendering. So ‘no matter how a translator may strive, the Russian text will inevitably have a different “ring”.’ (ibid.).

In translation, as in everything else, the true answer seems to lie somewhere in between the two extremes. However,

this is not in any sense an arithmetical mean. The middle in fact depends, in every instance, on the actual similarities and dissimilarities between the two languages, and seems to run a zigzag, rather than a straight, course between the two extremes. It is tempered at various points by the necessities of idiom and usage, and Professor Berman locates one of these at once by converting the Russian present tense of the code provisions into the future imperative characteristic of American and English law. Thus, ‘Theft . . . shall be punished’ (instead of ‘Theft . . . is punished). There is, of course, a loss of flavour, but it is the kind of flavour that if consistently conveyed would make the translation a shade too exotic.

There is also the importance of attitude. As a legal authority, Professor Berman appears to take rather condescending view of Soviet law, and this inevitably seeps through into the thinking of Professor Berman the translator. Instead of explaining the Russian use of the present tense, and the English of the future imperative, by usage—surely the logical linguistic explanation—we find him saying that the conversion has to be made because ‘Russian is weak in future tenses, and uses the present tense in legal provisions to convey a future imperative’ (ibid). Well, depending on how patriotic you feel at the time you could say with equal reason that ‘English is weak in present tenses, and uses a special future tense to convey the meaning of legal provisions, whereas Russian being terribly strong in present tenses does not need a special tense for that purpose.’

To be more concrete, however, the very laudable intention to convert the present tense of the Russian into the future imperative of the English is forgotten in the translation of the very first article, which reads: ‘The RSFSR Criminal Code has as its task . . . the RSFSR Criminal Code determines . . . and establishes . . .’, instead of ‘shall

\* Soviet Criminal Law and Procedure. The RSFSR Codes. Introduction and Analysis by Harold J. Berman. Translation by Harold J. Berman and James W. Spindler. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1966, pp.501.