The trouble with the translation of political language is that it is an abstraction (rather more than most translation) of an abstraction. Ortega y Gasset wrote "To create a concept is to leave reality behind" - does this mean that translation is going to leave reality even further behind?

Whilst this paper assumes that political utterances are often translated, it should be borne in mind that political speeches are usually summarized and/or put in indirect discourses before they are shortened again and translated by reporters in news agencies, embassies or, in Socialist countries, in government translation offices. Modern political books or even articles are not that frequently translated into English; whilst new translations of some political works of Marx and Engels, as I have previously noted (Newmark 1982) are overdue.

This paper is as much concerned with the comprehension as of the translation of political language. I believe there is not enough straight translation of political texts in the press and elsewhere. The originals are often concealed in the target language versions - for "political" reasons.

I take it as axiomatic that politics pervades every aspect of human thought and activities to a greater or a lesser degree. We are governed by politics and politicians, democracy at one extreme, monarchy or its modern form, dictatorship, at the other - otherwise it's anarchy, which is also politics. I am not claiming that art, science, sport, education are politics; simply maintaining that these fields all have political implications; that everyone who thinks he can exclude say international chess say abstract art from politics or propaganda in the political sense is kidding himself. Politics is the most general and universal aspect and
sphere of human activity and in its reflection in language it often appears in powerful emotive terms, or in impotent jargon.

Because politics by its nature generalizes, it is suspect, it is sometimes all appearance without being. Take the sentence "In the 1980s the IMF will be more effective if it is less political". (The same remark could be made of any public institution) The meaning only becomes clear in the context più efficace se dipende meno dagli atteggiamenti politici dei suoi stati membri più potenti. 'Political' is given a pejorative sense, which may have to be spelt out as above in any translation.

The word 'political' needs some separate consideration. Whilst in its 'proper' use it is related to every branch of administration, it has no 'proper' separate sense and should have no separate existence. No one should be just a politician. In English, if you say "Be careful! He may be taking up your case for political reasons" - it suggests that the person's motives have nothing to do with the rights and wrongs of the matter, he is simply using you for his own ends. This pejorative debased sense of 'political' is well attested in Italian terms like politicanente, petty politician, intriguer, schemer, politicastro, translated by Collins-Sansoni as 'politicaster' (a dictionary word if ever there was one - I define a 'dictionary word' as one that you only find in a dictionary) politicone, 'schemer, sly fox'. Italian's capacity for expressing the various negative or pejorative senses of 'political' - that is 'political' when it is divorced from any other subject - is probably unique. The English journalist Jill Tweedie has recently defined a pure politician as simply 'a liar'. In other languages, this sense of 'political' has to be translated by qualifying it with an adjective such as 'sly, cunning, stealthy'; note ménager quelqu'un par politique, 'dealing with using someone shrewdly, artfully, cunningly'. Or Heseltine of Parkinson: 'He's one of my closest political friends: è uno dei miei amici politici più intimi. What does that mean? Isn't it a contradiction in terms? This
brings us to the English term 'politic' (a politic old scoundrel) an 'untranslatable' word (by componential analysis: avveduto e furbo?).

A further curiosity is that whilst English at least has the sense to distinguish between 'policy' and 'politics' (though we 'lost' polity) most European languages don't; further, the 'study/practice of the art and science of forming directing and administering states' has little to do with 'What are your politics?' Quali sono le tue idee politiche? It's all the same word! and what a distance between 'related to the state' and 'affecting a person's influence or status', 'a political decision' una decisione politica.

The core of political language lies in abstract conceptual terms. In their most powerful form, they are found more often in slogans, catchwords, phrases, refrains, chants, titles, maxims etc., rather than in texts, speeches, treatises, newspaper articles. They tend to be isolated, prominent, apparently extracontextual – even when they are in fact value-laden and culture-bound (some linguists, not me, would say they have no nuclear meaning, no semantic core whatsoever). Paradoxically, they appear to be easily translatable: words like capitalism, communism, socialism, democracy, revolution, collective, tend to look the same in most at least European languages; all they require is a slight change of suffix, say for fascism, -ism, -isme, -ismo, -ismus, -izm, or again, say for revolution, -tion, -tion (F), -zion (G), -zione (It), -ción (Sp), -tsia (R). Because so many of these words have a common ancient Greek or ancient Latin stock, all the translator appears to have to do is to operate a slight conversion, or a virtual transference (bourgeois, borghese, burgues, burshuaznji) – there are exceptions like 'society', Gesellschaft, obshchestvo).

However, it will be a main thesis of this paper to claim that such quick conversions are deceptive; that translators in particular have not done enough to distinguish the real cultural meanings of these conceptual words. I tend to support Hjelmslev, one of the
founders of modern linguistics, when he wrote that "understanding between the West and the East" (let alone the Third World) "is in the last analysis largely a problem of translation" (1) and Marx, when he wrote: "The thief, the translator and the seller were necessary for 19th Century European colonial enterprise" (2) rather than T.D. Weldon (a brilliant writer, nevertheless) when he wrote: "the trouble between the USA and the USSR at the moment is not that there is a shortage of competent translators". (3) I need hardly say that this is a relative argument; I am not trying to suggest that competent translation will lead to peace and political harmony in the world; I am merely claiming that if the translators did their job better, there might be better understanding. (Obvious examples are the, according to some, mistranslation of the Japanese Government's word MOKUSATSU literally 'kill with silence' as 'take no notice of' instead of withhold comment prior to the dropping of the atom bomb on Hiroshima - it has been much discussed (4) the truncated translation of Mein Kampf omitting the most pernicious passage which was the only 'official' translation in the United Kingdom prior to the outbreak of the second world War and the UN Resolution 242 concerning Israel's occupied territory.

I want now to look more closely at the nature of many of these key conceptual terms. Note first their tendency to grammatical personification. 'Good' (but also 'bad') positive abstract nouns tend to be feminine: take liberté, liberté, Freiheit, svoboda: they reek of the fraudulent idealization of women that has characterized so much history. You have only to make a person of a positive adjective (equal, just, good, even brotherly!) to make the quality into a woman (in English, this is or used to be semantic rather than grammatical, whilst Russian does alternate -ost, -ina and -ota all feminine with an occasional -ize, -stvo which are neuter. Explicit political theories prefer the masculine -ism (the German -ismus is even more virile). English and Italian can make a distinction between the suffix '-ist' which is objective (e.g. Marxist, capitalist) and -istic which is
negative ('Marxistic capitalistic'). If you now preface these with the deceptive viv{a, vive, long live, es lebe, da zdravstvuet, you get a rather misleading view of these concepts. What does the translator do? Not much here, he has to translate. When it comes however to the personification of countries La France etc., he can, at least when not translating an authoritative statement (see Newmark 1982) encourage the tendency to 'neutralize' them. It is notable that even in French, newlyformed states (Israel, le Zaïre, Le Zimbabwe, le Malawi, Le Botswana, le Tchad) tend to lose their (feminine) articles or at least to acquire a 'neutral' masculine.

From there, it is a dangerous step to further personalization to state that the State, the local authority etc., is 'good', treats 'people well'; again a translator can only intervene in informative texts by diminishing the metaphor: thus 'that State is kind to its citizens': in quello Stato, si prende cura dei cittadini, in authoritative texts, the metaphor has to remain.

However, the four main facts about political concepts are that they are partly culture-bound, mainly value-laden, historically conditioned and like all concepts, abstractions in spite of continuous efforts to concretize them.

A further defect of concept words, outside or inside context, is that they evaluate or appraise without any terms of reference, like a poor English school report or marks. Words of appraisal like 'good' or 'just' are not meaningless but vague unless they represent a value in a scale common to the writer and the reader.

Take 'democracy' now (but not 50 years ago, when it was often used negatively in opposition to order and authority not only by Nazis) a purr-word in the West and East, defined most grandiloquently in Abraham Lincoln's words (but at least by supplying helpful case-partners) "government of the people, by the people and for the people (1863)", which contains its hazy semantic core; democracy's main implication in the West is that it is dependent on the holding of frequent, free and regular elections which offer a real choice and where all but
minors and the incapacitated vote. In the East, 'democracy' is also a poor-word, although the term 'people's democracy' (stage between capitalism and socialism) has gone out of use and only the GDR (the others are 'socialist' or 'popular') officially describes itself as 'democratic'. In the East a sharp distinction is made between bourgeois and socialist democracy (grossly, political and economic democracy). In both forms, democracy is indirect or representative. In South Africa and many Latin American countries, the intellectual hegemony (Gramscian sense) inevitably gives the term a negative connotation.

Clearly the translator translates the internationalism 'democracy' as 'democracy', and though it is a value-laden term, he has, within the limits to be described later, normally to preserve its core-value. However the basic cultural difference, the emphasis on political and legal rights in the West, (free expression, security, choice) and on economic rights (work, health, education) in the East, is an undercurrent in political writing and has to be borne in mind in many translations. See the implication in daß die Demokratie für Erziehung mehr aufwendet als irgendeine andere Staatsform ist geschichtlich erwiesen (N.D. 8.5.48) 'that democracy spends more money on education than any other type of state is historically evident'. This is East German - in contrast to the present tendency in the United Kingdom.

In the official communist jargon, the concept of 'democratic centralism' continues to thrive. In theory, it means that policy is proposed and voted with maximum participation at the base (grass-roots, coal-face, chalk face) whilst the centre is responsible for the unanimous execution of each decision. The theory is fudged by the GDR Kleine Ökonomisches Wörterbuch which defines it as the "unity of central and scientific management on the one hand and democratic codetermination and self-responsibility of the working people on the other" In fact, it is often a cover-word for "monolithic", once, but no longer, a purr word for subordination to the Party centre.
The only other term I wish to discuss under this cultural head is the universal snarl-word 'fascism'. The term, apparently coined by Mussolini in 1919, was already being used by German communists in the late '20s to cover not only National Socialists and right-wing groups, but also "all important bourgeois parties". The communist sense has ever since equated fascism with almost any kind of anti-communist or revisionist movement ("Titoist clique") and has much influenced the Western sense (if there is one) which perhaps identifies fascism with any antidemocratic or authoritarian ideas, usually excluding communist ones, except in the now rare cases where fascism is identified with communism. Fascism is I think the messiest term in the entire world political vocabulary, and the translator in certain contexts should try to resist its extravagant use by a narrower definition.

"I was once an idealist", Mr. Cecil Parkinson recently stated, presumably emphasizing the negative sense of the term. I once wrote to an East German friend, saying I had found more idealism and less materialism in Leipzig than in the West, for the purpose of both pleasing and shocking him. In spite of Marx, political language outside the Socialist countries is concerned with the moral than rather the philosophical senses of idealism and materialism, - the moral and philosophical senses have little connection with each other. In spite of this, 'idealism', the belief in ideals is often patronizingly and illogically associated with youth, immaturity, lack of realism. 'Materialism' is a small word, though most advertising openly panders to it.

I now discuss two political terms which require special translation. The London Wiener Library recently held an exhibition of Nazi memorabilia which included a copy of the main party newspaper, the *Völkischer Beobachter*. This was boldly and rightly translated as 'The Racialist Observer' - titles of newspapers are not normally translated, but this was required to inform the visitors. The term *völkisch* is defined in the standard Wahrig dictionary as 'relating to the people, belonging to the people, emanating from the people', a misleading
definition. In fact, the term was only coined in 1875 by nationalist movements in Germany, was 'Germanized' in the sense of 'national' in 1900, was taken over by the Nazis and can only be appropriately translated as 'racialist' or 'antisemitic'.

Similarly, I regard it as misleading and irresponsible that the South African policy of *apartheid* (literal translation: apartness) should simply be transferred and therefore become a so-called 'loan-word', therefore a component of most European languages vocabulary, although the word's meaning is opaque. As I see it, a minimal translation of the term is 'racial segregation and absolute white domination'; the first noun-group should be omitted in later references. It is partly due to translators' cowardice that *apartheid* can be defined and is still described as 'separate racial development' (see a disgraceful article on Education in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*.)

Further, like Arbutov, the Soviet diplomat, I criticize the transfer of *détente* into English. French no longer dominates the world diplomatic scene, the word is opaque and in English means 'relaxation of tension', and the policy should be known as such. If it is later shortened to 'relaxation' policy, so much the better. Both German and Italian have the good sense to translate the word - *Entspannung, distensione*, - in any event the referent must be W. German in origin, but unfortunately the term has existed in English since 1908, when French dominated much English diplomatic vocabulary.

Political terms are normally value-laden, - terms are either positive or negative, even when referring to objects or activities; the contrast between *Profit* and *Gewinn* (profit), *Wettbewerb* and *Konkurrenz* (competition), *Propaganda* and *Agitation* (propaganda), *Schaumauer* and *Schutzwall* (Berlin Wall), *Flüchtling* und *Sperrbrecher* (East German refugee), *Pankow Régime* - now dated - and *Workers and Peasants State* for GDR being well known (Lewis 1979 Wagner 1981). Weldon has also pointed out (rather inaccurately) that the German sentences *Das ist verbrecherisch! Durchaus nicht, es ist eine ehrenwerte
Tat if translated as 'That is criminal. Certainly not! It's an honourable deed' would have a peculiar meaning if spoken during the Nazi period, and referring to a S.A. gang beating up a Jew. In the hegemonistic culture of that period, the action and the term describing it, eh-renwert, 'honourable' would be positive. In a same culture, it is negative; the definition of sanity which implicates the translator's responsibility will be discussed later.

There is a certain tendency for transferred or loan words to acquire a negative meaning: thus 'régime' in English and German but not in French has an authoritarian, sometimes 'upstart' connotation; Collins gives 'a fascist regime, the regime of Fidel Castro' as citations. The negative senses of 'bourgeois' which are included in French too are well-known. The word 'propaganda' originally deriving in a good sense from a Papal encyclical (propaganda Fide) and retained positively by Goebbels, is always value-laden, but in all languages that have adopted it, except perhaps East German, where it is positive and contrasted with the more practical Agitation (cf. Russian agitacija and 'agitprop'), its positive or negative connotation has to be derived from its context. Bureaucracy came into mid19th Century English in a negative sense (Mill particularly) as a political system dominated by officials or functionaries (which, unlike fonctionnaire, is a pejorative term) and then generalized still negatively to denote any type of anonymous officialdom and red tape such as has been classically and brilliantly analyzed in Kafka's novels. However, it has to be carefully distinguished from its Weberian sociological sense, which is value-free in intention, as the "formal codification of the idea of rational organization characterizes by legal rules, a salaried administratives staff, the specialization of function, the keeping of written records and documents" (Bullock 1981) and distinctively, "the authority of the (non-hereditary) office, not the person". Note that here (Bullock) bureaucracy can be regarded as the necessary and efficient apparatus of any type of political system or
government. Note that in Lexis (1979) the term is given a mainly negative sense (*influence néfaste sur la conduite des affaires*), and that the negative sense can be reinforced by the suffix -ism; in the GDR, Bürokratismus is particularly designated for socialist failings; Ulbricht in particular characterized Stalin as protagonist and Lenin as a bitter enemy of bureaucratism – but that was only in 1964 – eleven years after Stalin's death.

Alec Nove (Guardian 20.10.83) has noted that *struggle* has a negative connotation (vain, desperate, futile struggle) whilst its European counterparts: *borba, lotta, Kampf, lutto* are positive, (certainly politically). However, *struggle* has no one to one equivalent in other languages (to do it translator's justice, you have to do a componental analysis). 'Fight' is the nearest one to one equivalent, and English has the even more positive but less political 'combat' in reserve.

The term 'normalization' is used politically to signify a return to normal friendly relations between states but notoriously attained a negative currency outside the socialist countries in 1968, when it was used by Soviet leaders to justify their intention in Czechoslovakia. Finally, the term 'revisionist', in the Marxist sense is used to denote any deviation from official communist doctrine at any one time. It can be confusing, since it may refer indiscriminately to diametrically opposed policies, e.g. in Hungary or Czechoslovakia, where revisionists may be favouring some kind of return to the Stalinist (therefore Rakosi or Gottwald) system or to the reformist period (Nagy or Dubcek) or somewhere between these poles.

However, a translator's difficulties with value-laden political concepts do not end there. Up to now, I have only been discussing the conventional wisdom to be found in standard monolingual dictionaries, some of which conflict with each other within one language. A further difficulty is idiolectal usage, that is an idiosyncratic even bizarre personal sense given to a term by a particular writer. Take the terms radical, radicalism,
which exist in most European languages, including the Slavonic. When this is standardized to refer say to the 'radicalism' of the French Third Republic, and sometimes identified with the Parti Républicain Radicaux et Socialiste, which was notoriously neither radical nor socialist, but 'radical' means perhaps 'in favour of some timid democratic reforms and anticlerical'. Again 'radical' may refer to the "extreme" (Webster) i.e. democratic wing of the British 19th Century Liberals, or again in American English, 'radical' may refer to left-wing i.e. anticapitalist views, in a more revolutionary sense than 'liberal', which favour social reforms within the capitalist system, but again, parties of the extreme right may be referred to as 'radical'. In the above cases, there may be no difficulty in sorting out the appropriate meaning. However, the term 'radical' can also be used purely as an intensifier, depending on the idiolect of the writer, and here the translator may have to normalize or interpret the word in the case of an informative or 'anonymous' text, where the personality of the writer is of little importance; in an authoritative statement, the term must be translated 'straight'.

My previous example shows that a historical sense is peculiarly important in translating political language. In fact with the dominance of the two mass-media (TV and tabloids in the UK at least there are no others), political language is particularly susceptible to a quick 'accept and reject', and every word as well as every man gets 10 minutes of fame.

'Imperialism' started in English in 1980 as an objective description usually with positive connotations, and was identified with the expansion of civilization. Its criticism was initiated by J.A. Hobson the British economist at the turn of the century and popularized by Lenin as the last stage of monopoly capitalism. But now the term 'imperialism' is absurdly most frequently banded around by the USA against the USSR and the USSR against the USA, Soviet politicians tending to extend it to Britain and West Germany (but not to France or Italy). Again, 'anarchism' needs precise historical placing to
distinguish its 'direct action' from its 'non-violent' component. Finally, contemporary political eponyms are particularly subject to swift change and decay. Whilst place-names to represent opinion as well as occupancy remain constant (e.g. Westminster, Montecitorio) Dalal Street - opinion on the Bombay Stock Exchange used as familiar alternative terms remain fairly steady), eponyms formed from the names of prime-ministers and prominent politicians (in English, Thatcherism, the first one since 'Churchillian', Bennite, the only other, probably reflecting the word-play activities of the mass-media rather than the influence of French, where adjectives formed from proper names are much more common). Note that whilst geographical eponyms are usually replaced by the place name (Dalal Street therefore becomes la Borsa di Bombay) in translation, political eponyms are normally translated by a couplet, viz the transfer of the propername plus a definition, viz Thatcherism, Thatcherismo la politica della Thatcher, che implica il controllo dell'offerta monetaria per regolare l'economia.

Some political concepts, such as 'Marxism' or 'feudalism' are hardly bound to their contexts, and therefore can usually be translated 'straight' or one to one, though marxism has different senses in the areas of economics (surplus value etc.), sociology (alienation etc.) or philosophy (dialectal materialism).

Many concepts, primarily those formed from adjectives (e.g. freedom, justice, truth) and to a lesser extent those formed from verbs but also those from verbs (liberation, exploitation, order, détente, peaceful co-existence) are implicitly bound not only to linguistic and situational contexts, but to implied case-partners, and their dangerousness consists in the fact that the case-partners are missing! In writing on case-grammar and translation, I have suggested that the supplying of these case-partners may be obligatory, implied, optional or supplementary; that the main case-partners are, for the translator, who does what to who for what purpose? but that this can be extended to 'where, when, for what reason, against what, under what condition, etc." If we
now take the political concept 'freedom', T.D. Weldon (1953) has pointed out that generally in the West, it means 'freedom from', say from 'State interference and fear' (with little emphasis on want) — he forgets freedom of speech, whilst in the East, it means 'freedom to' (indeed obligation to) 'work and receive a living wage', and I would add 'to receive education and medical treatment'. thus the radical difference of meaning between the two cultural or conditioned concepts may be said to depend on the omission of the relevant case-partners — not surprisingly, since 'freedom', is the most inflammatory word in the political vocabulary. Margaret Thatcher has rightly pointed out, for instance, that 'free health service' is a catch-phrase shorn of its case-partners. The service is 'free' to patients, but has to be paid for by tax-payers.

An amusing example of missing case-partners incorrecly filled in by a translator is the Malay translation of Churchill's call for sacrifice on the plinth of his statue in Brunei: "I have nothing to offer you but my blood, my sweat, my tears, my toil". Not even the context saved the translator. But other universal terms often need qualification by case-partners, as Orwell qualified 'equality' with 'some animals are more equal than others', 'justice' asks 'justice for who', and social, economic and political justice may each have entirely different case-partners, though used without them.

"Security" which Murray Edelman refers to as 'the primal political symbol' is usually well determined in its 'passive' agent but vague in its active instrument 'against who, against what? The term is bandied around indiscriminately as a reason for increased nuclear weapons and sometimes pre-emptive warfare, for securing 'welfare' (another loaded term) in financial and living conditions, as well as mental and spiritual security, often overlapping with safety (safety, sûreté, narrower than Sicherheit), a term with implications of fear, want and threat, now more explicit in Russian (bezopasnost, without danger, which is clearer than 'care'). Security is not only a political symbol, it is a jargon-word that
requires case-partners if action is to be followed by emotion.

The reverse of security in English politics is 'mob rule' (la legge della plebaglia, governo della plebe, oclocrasia) a time-honoured English upper middle class definition of 'democracy' which is now more carefully applied as a threat of excessive democracy'.

Pronouns

Gill Seidel in her paper "Ambiguity in Political Discourse" has shown how in French political tracts of May 1968, the pronouns vous, nous, and on are skilfully used as 'shifters', that is their referent can only be determined by their use with varying degrees of inclusiveness. In more general political terms, 'we' is the party making the statement, 'you' is the public, 'they' is the opposition, the bureaucracy, those in power, provided 'we' are in opposition. The French on, like the Italian impersonal reflexive, is more flexible than 'they', and can identify with 'we' or 'you'. The purpose of a political statement is to unite, 'we' and 'you' against 'them'. In general terms, there is no translation problem until vous becomes toi as a more personal form of appeal.

Political Jargon

Jiri Levy (1965), a fine translation theorist refers to 'the translators's tendency to choose a general term, whose meaning is broader than that of the original one, and in consequence is devoid of some of its specific semantic traits', this tendency to abstraction/ism! coincides with the present most common sense of jargon, (which however is significantly omitted in English dictionaries). An example from Rinascita 17.6.83: Il partito di De Gasperi si indirizza oggi a tutti gli italiani chiedendone un sostegno che gli assicuri la forza indispensabile perché - al di là di ogni artificiosa distinzione tra destra e sinistra, superata dalle condizioni storiche - l'attività politica possa essere effettivamente indirizzata verso quella rigenerazione
dell'economia e delle istituzioni in difetto della quale il paese non potrà guarire dall'inflazione e dell'ingovernabilità.

Now there are several ways of translating this passage. If it is a 'sacred' text, i.e. authoritative or reproduced to show the author's personality, as is likely, it has to be translated in all its vagueness and pomposity. 'The party of De Gasperi today addresses all Italians seeking support to secure it indispensable strength so that – beyond any artificial distinction between the right and the left, which has been overtaken by historical conditions – political activity may be addressed efficiently to that regeneration of the economy and our institutions for lack of which the country will not be able to recover from inflation and ungovernability'.

(The extract shows that the deadening predictability of political language is not confined to its main genre - Marxist literature in the Socialist countries - the Bruderländer). If however it is an informative text, the translator's task is to reduce it to its information: 'the D.C. is making a broad popular appeal in regenerating the Italian economy and its institutions, and later eliminating inflation'. If the text is vocative, that is, persuasive in intention and 'anonymous' (unsigned, or the authorship is not important) the translator is justified in making it persuasive, though he may want to transplant the culture, as in theory he is translating for English readers. "The DC is making every effort to enlist support for economic and institutional reforms which will certainly include the elimination of inflation".

However, political jargon is usually produced by politicians or political organizations, and it usually has to be translated straight in all its tediousness.

Sometimes language in translation may reveal the true purpose of an action. Thus in Russian the 'Industrial Relations Act' is officially referred to as Antiprofsojuzniji zakon i.e. the anti-trade union act. This is a puzzle I ask someone to solve.

Notoriously, the term drushba ('friendship'), the
'word that needs no translation' (Soviet press) is the most abused in the Soviet political vocabulary.

**Euphemisms**

Already in 1946, Orwell ("Politics and the English Language") was pointing out the political tendency to adopt euphemism: the use of abstract to replace concrete nouns, operators and verbal nouns to replace verbs, Latin and Ancient Greek to replace Anglo-Saxon. Even then 'pacification' was used for violence, 'transfer of population' for driving out ethnic groups, 'rectification of frontiers' for aggression, 'elimination of unreliable elements for murder'. The Nazis had their own set of such words: *Strafexpedition* ('punitive expedition'), *Staatsakt* ('state occasion'), *aufziehen* ('set up') - Viktor Klemperer (1969) chronicled and explained them as they appeared in his *pioneering work* and the Americans (Farb 1974) theirs during the Vietnam war 'resources control program' (defoliation), 'condolence award' (grant for victims), 'navigation misdirection' (bombing error); 'new life hamlet' or 'Open Arms camp' (refugee camp). Most political registers have words to conceal the realities of unemployment: 'redundancy', 'recession' (unemployment) benefits; 'resting' (acting profession); 'industrial action'. Euphemisms allied or identical with generalizing jargon are the politician's most useful weapon for telling lies ('concealing the truth').

Note that political language has cover-words like 'problems' or 'public opinion' (the silent majority) alarm-words like 'crisis', 'chaos', 'anarchy' which translate easily into W. European countries and conceal the truth.

**Metaphors**

Each linguistic culture has its own set of political metaphors. Russian, being proverbially nourished on peasant proverbs more than other languages, once had its hyenas, mad dogs, cannibals, lackeys, flunkeys, (this has been exaggerated) which, given the nature of their usage, may have to be modified by interpreters at international
conferences. It is notorious that Krushchev's "We'll bury you" a metaphor for the end of capitalism, was widely misunderstood as a military threat. But Russian's metaphors have more recently drawn in its political jargon.

English political metaphors are typically tamer and present few translation problems. Carlo Dondolo, following Anthony Burnett, has rightly referred to Mrs. Thatcher's Churchillianism ('resolute approach') but this hardly extends to her language, which tends to centre on the ship of State holding or setting the course.

Hudson (1978) has analyzed the metaphor sets of various politicians. Many of Macmillan's numerous game-metaphors would be reduced to sense in translation: 'it was slow batting, not as good as a run a minute, but safe play. Stumps were drawn at about 5p.m.' ....... I negoziati che si trascinavano, ma senza correre rischi si sono terminati vero le cinque. Such frivolous metaphors could hardly be treated seriously, let alone translated semantically.

Neologisms

Political language is rich in neologism both ephemeral and permanent. The term 'wets', indicating members of Mrs. Thatcher's government opposed to her social and monetarist policy was common a year ago (sometimes Keynesians), but appears to be declining for lack of referents. Therefore, in translation, the meaning has to be spelt out.

On the other hand, English for a long time needed a term for noyantage (1923) that is, political infiltration with the purpose of capturing the top positions in an organization. We now have 'entryism' with this meaning.

Again Massimalismo, in the sense of the largest possible political aims of a party (the original 'direct action' component appears to have been lost) has hardly yet entered English as 'Maximalism' or French as maximalisme.

Italian can make a distinction between progressivo and the political progressista which would be useful in
English, but we only have the vague, usually Left, 'progressive'.

'Populism', another early Russian revolutionary concept, is regaining currency in a new sense: the direct demagogic appeal of a politician at large meetings.

Acronyms and Euphony

Political language's main use of acronymism is for the titles of political parties and organizations, -DC, SPD, SDP etc. The translation is dependent on contextual factors: the motivation, and linguistic and cultural level of the readership, the house style of the setting, the importance in the SL culture (or European culture) of the referent. Thus DC may be translated as Democrazia Cristiana, the Italian Christian Democrats, the governing party, the main right wing party, etc. in an informative or vocative text.

In most political writing, jargon effectively replaces euphony, but any great political texts such as Churchill's or de Gaulle's have to preserve some of their phonaesthetic quality in translation. I have already discussed aspects of the Communist Manifesto's translation. (Newmark 1982). In the rather dated translation of Lenin's State and Revolution, I note that "they omit, obliterate and distort" is a brave attempt to carry over the 'agunt' sounds that terminate the three Russian verbs, which give them powerful rhyming effect.

Collocations

One characteristic of political language is that it tends to collocations that are repeated so often that they become clichés, therefore weaker in force, giving them the same dull thud as many abstractions. (The tendency to compound, noted by Orwell has a similar effect). Thus 'warmly praise', 'loudly applaud', 'stick firmly', 'overriding priority', 'fight hard', 'fundamental truth', 'great tasks', 'reject totally', 'hard choice', 'we face the challenge'. Note that many of these collocations have less force than their pseudo-intensifiers, which a better speaker than Mrs. Thatcher would
have omitted, and that they don't usually bear one to one translation, but they have to be translated in all their banality (not difficult) when they form part of an authoritative statement.

Whatever the local requirements of this or that translating task, the translator must have an ultimate point of reference for all his work. This point of reference is, in my opinion, the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In 1948, the UN decided that everyone is entitled to all rights and freedoms without distinctions such as race, colour, gender, language, religion, political opinion, national or social origin, property or birth. Now in 1984, it is necessary to add mental or physical condition (unless virtually incapacitated), age (over 17) and sexual proclivities - always provided that the persons concerned are not actively challenging these distinctions of which I think the most important is gender rather than race. That is the translator's professional and social responsibility.

Whether it is regarded as objective or subjective is a matter of opinion. In one sense it is a wager, a pari, a personal declaration of faith. In another, there is so much continuously increasing and accumulating evidence that it must be identified with objective human progress, to which there is no alternative. Does this mean that the translator should refuse to translate say Mein Kampf, the most concrete negation of human rights that has ever been composed? No way.

I think a translator has to translate anything he feels competent to translate, but his tasks may include sensitizing his client to misleading or untrue statements in a text. The problem inevitably arises in political texts, since, in principle, politics is an extension of ethics, and political acts are also moral acts.

Political writing is likely to be "sacred", and therefore translators cannot interfere with the text though they can and should reduce the sexism in language by discreetly replacing 'he' or 'his' with 'they' or 'their', 'man' and 'mankind' with 'women and men' compare
De Gaulle's *Francaises, Francais*, or with 'humanity' and 'people' where appropriate. In other cases of concealed prejudice, they can and should only intervene by writing a separate comment, either in detailed notes, or, better, in an introduction, which in any event, they should write whenever they are translating a book or a text of any size which will make it more difficult for reviewers to ignore them, as reviewers often do. (In order to unsex or desex the above sentence, I have had to put the subject in the plural, and to make it unambiguous, to repeat the word 'review'). A 'moral' comment would be superfluous if one were confident that any likely reader were already alerted to the prejudices of a text.

In particular in respect of political texts, the translators' neutrality is a myth. Their aim may be as transparent as glass in the actual translation, but even more than members of other professions, since one of their aims is to promote understanding between nations, they have social and moral responsibilities, to humanity as well as to language. For hundreds of years, translation was a transmission-belt of high culture. Only in this century has it a further task to disseminate knowledge and understanding among all peoples.

*I thank Tom Newmark, Peter Whiteway and Mary Fitzgerald for helpful suggestions.*
NOTE

1) Essays linguistiques

2) Source not known

3) "The Vocabulary of Politics" p. 44

4) See Japan's Decision to surrender by R.J.C. Butow
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N.B. See also: