

(32) before any grammar has been broached may prove to be a step too far for those who prefer a more incremental approach. Occasionally the italicized words exemplifying the rule under discussion relied on grammar yet to be broached. For instance, in a discussion of impersonal constructions with the dative, the sentence *К вечеру больному стало лучше: он уже не кашлял, и температура спала* (63) uses the dative of the substantive form 'patient' when the adjectival forms are only commenced on page 135. The examples are framed in lively, contemporary and sometimes colloquial language, but there are few concessions made to comprehensibility, even though in all cases English translations are provided. I personally found the material exciting and stimulating but suspect that my Australian students would consider the vocabulary issues insurmountable.

In my view *Modern Russian Grammar* could be useful as a reference work for students in the first two years of their studies, who could then progress to Wade for more advanced work. It cannot easily be used for class work because it is essentially descriptive and the examples are too sophisticated. Each student (and each teacher) has to chart a path between knowledge of grammatical paradigms and an ability to manipulate them. This book fills a useful role for those embarking on the study of Russian who wish to tackle the language through its structures but it would have to be used with a range of other materials in order to achieve a corresponding level of oral communicative skills.

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Robert Horvath, *The Legacy of Soviet Dissent: Dissidents, Democratisation and Radical Nationalism in Russia* (London and New York: Routledge, 2005), 293 pp.

This book is a history of several dimensions of dissident activity in the USSR, largely during the Brezhnev era from the mid-1960s until the early 1980s, complemented by an account of what happened when key dissident figures from that era were allowed to publish old *samizdat* works openly in Russia in the late 1980s and tried to influence Russian politics under both Gorbachev and Yeltsin (during the first half of the 1990s). Thus it is a history of two different levels of dissident activity, first the subterranean level of opposition to a repressive state during a period of stagnation and decline, and second the open engagement of Russian

public intellectuals who initially succeeded in creating a progressive opposition to Gorbachev, and then failed to maintain influence on Yeltsin as a critical lobby group that tried to restrain his growing use of violence. Horvath's analysis is based on very extensive empirical research covering both the closed period of the repressive post-Khrushchev state, and the open period of the late 1980s and early 1990s. He tells a number of impressive tales well, with good attention to the details of what were complex episodes in recent Russian intellectual history. He is optimistic about the legacy of those Soviet dissidents whose works he focuses on. A retrospective quote from Larissa Bogoraz in 1993, recalling a toast in the bad old days to the success of the dissidents' 'hopeless cause', encapsulates Horvath's main claim. He claims the dissidents exceeded their best hopes by heralding democracy in Russia.

Horvath views the dissidents whose influence he highlights as 'a pantheon of heroes' (238), but he counter-poses three main heroes to one anti-hero. The leading hero is Solzhenitsyn, whose composition of *The Gulag Archipelago* created 'a vindication of Russian culture and the pre-revolutionary era' (26) and an influential response to the silences of Khrushchev's secret speech. Horvath shows the strong impact of this 'central text of dissident literature' (29) in *samizdat* circles in the 1970s, then charts the way in which the relaxation of censorship in the late 1980s was incomplete until Gorbachev's associate, Aleksandr Yakovlev, observed 'we have to publish it' (45). The second hero is Sakharov, who was the key dissident politician, first as 'the most consistent advocate' (61) of a practice of *glasnost* until Gorbachev came to power, then as Gorbachev's boldest critic and as the progenitor of an organised opposition. Horvath demonstrates Sakharov's influence at the end of his life, but his suggestion that Yeltsin then took Sakharov's 'rights-defending' path is not proven (118–119). The experience of the third hero, Sergei Kovalyov, suggests otherwise. The dialogue between Gorbachev and Sakharov which became, according to Yuri Karyakin, 'one of the engines of our progress' (5) during *perestroika*, was not matched by such a dialogue between Yeltsin and Kovalyov, even when the latter shifted from a reluctant supporter of Yeltsin's 1993 assault on the Duma to a critic of the first Chechen war. Horvath notes (135) that, in 1996, Kovalyov linked the latter tragedy to the former. This fact is inconsistent with his argument about Kovalyov's 'restraining influence' upon Yeltsin (149). Kovalyov was admirable as Russia's first Ombudsman, but his impact was less than Sakharov's, and perhaps less than Horvath's dissident

anti-hero, the Russian nationalist Shafarevich. Kovalyov exposed the horror of the Chechen war, which Shafarevich tried to obscure (228). Horvath devotes two chapters to assessing the ‘dilettante’ Shafarevich (154), whose allegation of ‘Russophobia’ or self-hatred among Russia’s elite was dismissed as mystical by Aleksandr Tsipko (200). Why an anti-Semitic apologist for a nationalist dictatorship (231) deserved such attention is not clear from Horvath’s conclusion, despite his point about growing divisions among former dissidents under Gorbachev. It is fanciful to see Shafarevich as creating ‘space for the discussion of democratic values in the patriotic milieu’ (237). Sinyavsky did not make such a claim when he defended the nationalists’ freedom of speech (222).

Horvath’s study does not claim to be comprehensive, with some dissident tendencies such as social democracy beyond his focus. His admirable attention to detail has led to an important intuition that transcends old, superficial views of ‘Soviet ideology’. By studying how Soviet dogma responded to dissident ideas, Horvath has noticed that what purported to be an official belief system was something else, a ‘framework of loyalty’ or an ‘axis of permissible public debate’ (153, 161). Vladimir Lukin, who did not become a dissident despite opposing the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, revealed this fact to Aesopian readers of *Voprosy Filosofii* in June 1969, ridiculing the loyalty test as ‘an obligatory, although very tedious ritual’. While Horvath starts with a reference to Aesopian techniques of writing, he does not analyse Aesopian debate in the Brezhnev era. He even quotes a critic of the ‘illusions’ of such debate (163) and simply proclaims that *samizdat* debates were ‘far more profound’ than debates among non-dissident intellectuals (161). Those intellectuals included Viktor Sheinis, whose view of the beneficial impact of the dissident legacy on the 1991 Russian Constitution Horvath quotes (124). Many dissidents foresaw no end to repression, yet Sheinis in 1979 predicted fundamental changes in Soviet society within a decade. Horvath ably contrasts the dissidents’ ‘authority of conviction’ with the rapidly out of date views of Gorbachev’s cheerleaders, but it is misleading to conclude that the dissidents ‘were the only Russians conducting a serious public debate about revolution and reform’ in the Brezhnev era (237). Although the dissidents were the most courageous critics of that era of stagnant decay, they were not *ipso facto* the most profound. To show that would require a comparison of dissident thought with the ideas of those like Sheinis, who should not be disregarded, using Solzhenitsyn’s epithet, as ‘smatterers’ (166). Responding to the denigration of

the dissidents' political impact by Burlatsky (2), Horvath both highlights their influence and exaggerates their profundity as a group. He has written a very informative book which should prove valuable for specialists interested in the renewal of Russian intellectual life after Stalin, even for those who see the fate of democracy in Russia as affected by forces other than the clash of ideas.

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Algimantas P. Taskunas, *Lithuanian Studies in Australia: The case for low-demand language and cultural courses in higher education* (Sandy Bay, Tas.: Tasmania University Union Lithuanian Studies Society, 2005), xiv + 2000 pp.

In its analysis of why 'Lithuanian Studies' has generally failed to find an enduring home in Australian universities, this thoughtful study encompasses far wider issues, such as why languages in general, but especially community languages, tend to struggle in Australian tertiary institutions; why mass education is an impediment to the introduction of highly specialised subjects; and how ethnic studies illuminate and complement multiculturalism in Australia. Algimantas Taskunas' work has relevance for all ethnic communities in Australia and, indeed, for every citizen concerned with the role of market forces in Australian tertiary education.

The core of the book consists of five case studies illustrating the generally disappointing experience of Lithuanian Studies in some of Australia's major universities. At La Trobe its sponsors lacked the necessary insider's knowledge university decision-making processes, while at Monash a promising Baltic-Slavic linguistics course (including Lithuanian) did not survive the departure of its initiator. At the Australian National University attempts were made to include Lithuanian in an existing course in Indo-European linguistics, but in the event ancient Hittite was deemed a more suitable choice. Strong community support for the introduction of a Lithuanian language program proved insufficient to persuade the University of Melbourne (or any other Victorian university) to apply for financial assistance in 1980–81 under the Federal Government's community languages program. As Dr Taskunas sadly observes, Lithuania was considered at the time but a 'tiny speck on the globe'.