

Afterword

We have endeavoured to achieve that which is so blatantly obvious, yet so difficult to master, the goal of every translator ever since the first transmission of a text from one language into another: to stay as faithful to the original as possible while producing a text which is as idiomatic and readable as possible in the target language. And we had to experience what every translator has had to experience; that translation is not simply a matter of exchanging one linguistic system for another, but rather the craft of transporting meaning produced within the context of one culture into the context of another. It soon became clear that any translation can only be an approximation of the original and almost every sentence required a decision which was sometimes only arrived at after lengthy discussion.

Very often one encounters institutions, systems and categories which do not exist in the target culture, and consequently there is no terminology for them. Very often the structures within institutions, such as the military for instance, vary slightly from one culture to the next. We have, therefore, chosen to keep the German terms for *Oberleutnant* and *Unteroffizier*. Although the English term "first lieutenant" corresponds to the German *Oberleutnant*, the English term does not convey the connotations of the dashing young officer, which was inherited from the days of the Imperial Army. Similarly the term *Unteroffizier* can be quite adequately translated as "non commissioned officer" but again, it sounds cumbersome and does not have the positive reinforcement the term carries in German.

We kept the titles *Herr*, *Frau* and *Fräulein* in order to maintain the Austrian flavour of Vogel's text, and similar reasoning led us to retain the street and place names in their original form (e. g. *Erlachgasse*, not Erlach street, *Westbahnhof*, not Western Railway Station). Likewise, the German Air Force is referred to throughout as the *Luftwaffe*: this is its proper name and we felt the word had passed into common enough currency in English for it to present few problems for the reader.

The terms *Reich*, *Führer* and *Gestapo* we felt were unnecessary to translate.

We kept the German term *Ravag* (Radio-Verkehrs-Aktiengesellschaft) which was the broadcasting house.

We also kept the German words *Sturmabführer*, *Heimwehr* and *Schutzbund* because they are simply not translatable.

Sturmabführer was an SS-rank, comparable to a major in the army, which has no equivalent in any other language.

The *Heimwehr* was a paramilitary organization which resulted from the voluntary defence units formed after World War I to defend the Austrian border. Later these independent units united, were sponsored by industry and came to be regarded as an instrument of big business and the conservative government, designed to keep the workers in check. In 1934 the *Heimwehr* was used together with the army and the police to quash an insurrection by the Social Democrats. Some *Heimwehr* groupings became openly fascist and in 1936, Chancellor Schuschnigg dissolved the *Heimwehr*.

The *Schutzbund* was founded in 1923/24 as a paramilitary organization for the protection of the Social Democrats. By 1928 it had over 80.000 members. Declared illegal in 1933 by the Dollfuß government, the *Schutzbund* went underground and in February 1934 fought against the combined government forces. This revolution lasted barely three days and caused a total breakdown in political communication as the government forces shelled workers' flats with artillery.

In spite of all the problems, we derived great satisfaction from translating this text. Should we have succeeded in communicating the literary acumen of Alois Vogel and the art of his novel to the reader, we would feel very rewarded indeed.

Dunedin, September 1999

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