

erroneous term “gentry” (neither Hellie nor I referred to “minor service men”); reference to the index would have given Miller a list (incomplete) of twenty-three pages on which Hellie applies this term “gentry” to the Russian lesser nobility, who were quite unlike the English gentry and bore no social or political resemblance to that specifically English category.

**TO THE EDITOR:**

Although I have no serious quarrel with Lauren Leighton’s enthusiastic review of *Russian Literature Triquarterly* (*Slavic Review*, September 1972, pp. 737–38), I would like to touch on a few points which Leighton seems to have overlooked, perhaps for lack of space, perhaps because one issue did not provide sufficient perspective.

The journal is entirely an individual enterprise, run by the two editors, without benefit or hindrance of institutional support. They are *free*! They even run their own press themselves. They certainly do it with extraordinary energy and flair, and they seem to have been unprecedentedly successful. They have elicited a resonant response from a readership that is expanding within the profession and extends even beyond it; and the contributions have come pouring in, from quite a number of talented people who did not before think the existing journals were for them. It is a remarkable achievement.

I cannot share Leighton’s enthusiasm for the poetry translations, though. The poems translated are of the greatest interest, and the translations often call attention to otherwise neglected poems or poets of great contemporary interest. But the overall quality of the translations is not high. If one uses as the standard “a poem that is a poem in English, as well as true in meaning to the original,” most of the poems do not hold up. The Brown-Merwin translations of Mandelstam are excellent; Kovitz is very good; George Kline and Walter Arndt certainly know what they are doing. But one must have a tin ear to admire most of the others. The literacy of many of the prose translations is also a little uncertain. More attention might well be paid, both in terms of the actual translations printed, and in terms of sponsoring some ongoing discussion and critique, to the problems involved in literary translation.

By the way, who *is* Alexander Kovitz? Leighton calls him “a rarity; an American poet who knows Russian.” His translations are good. But I haven’t been able to find a single volume of verse by anyone of that name. Has he published anywhere except *RLT*? My question suggests a need for some sort of identification of contributors, especially since a fair number are young and unknown. I know that citizens of Ardis treasure pseudonyms; but the nonpseudonymous at least should be identified.

The journal includes an account—sketchy, but useful—of the more important Soviet literary journals. There are also brief reviews of the latest books in the field, both Russian and English. The “humor” section has an occasional laugh, but tends to be a bit graduate-studentish if not sophomoric. So far only one essay (and some responses to it) has appeared in the “Moot Points” section. I did not find it very provocative, because while it clearly expressed a grievance, it did not give that grievance a sufficiently specific focus. The arguments that followed were not terribly interesting. In general, for all its energy and exuberance, the journal does not seem to have any very strong sense of direction or purpose.

It has nevertheless provided one of the few instances of impressive vitality in a lethargic and demoralized profession.

SIDNEY MONAS  
*University of Texas at Austin*

TO THE EDITOR:

I hope you will grant me space in the *Slavic Review* to correct an unfortunate and regrettable error I made in my article "Laying a Legend to Rest: The Poet Kapnist and Ukraino-German Intrigue," which you published in the *Slavic Review* for September 1971. In that article I expressed by implication my suspicion that an article published by Georg Sacke in the *Zeitschrift für slavische Philologie* in 1941, "V. V. Kapnist und seine Ode 'Na rabstvo,'" was in effect a "patriotic" contribution to the war against the Soviet Union launched by Hitler on June 22 of that year. It turns out that I could scarcely have been more wrong on this point. My good friend and former colleague at Indiana University, Professor F. T. Epstein, the well-known German historian, tells me that Georg Sacke lived and died a convinced Communist, perishing in a concentration camp as one of the many scholarly victims of the Nazi terror.

WILLIAM B. EDGERTON  
*Indiana University*

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