

Journal des traducteurs Translators' Journal

Un confrère nous écrit de Washington

Volume 7, Number 3, 3e Trimestre 1962

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1061309ar>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7202/1061309ar>

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Publisher(s)

Les Presses de l'Université de Montréal

ISSN

0316-3024 (print)

2562-2994 (digital)

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Cite this document

(1962). Un confrère nous écrit de Washington. *Journal des traducteurs / Translators' Journal*, 7(3), 106–106. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1061309ar>

LE COIN DU LECTEUR

¶ Un confrère nous écrit de Washington :

Monsieur Robert Assa, membre de la STM et collaborateur actif du *J. des T.*, siégeant à la fois au *Comité de direction* et au *Comité de rédaction*, nous a quitté récemment pour des cieux plus cléments. Il nous écrit de Washington pour nous donner sa nouvelle adresse (917 West Greenwich Street, Falls Church, Va. USA) et nous annoncer qu'il a servi à deux reprises d'interprète lors de conférences internationales. Notre confrère nous promet des textes pour le Journal et notre Comité de rédaction l'a nommé à l'unanimité membre correspondant pour la capitale fédérale américaine.

Nous souhaitons bonne chance à M. Assa dans ses nouvelles fonctions et attendons impatiemment les textes promis.



¶ What about German ? Russian ? A letter to the Editor :

A very constructive letter was sent us some months ago about what should be done in order to promote the *Journal* and secure a wider interest in it among translators and linguists. The following are extracts from Dr. Stearns' letter, which was accompanied with a handsome *abonnement de soutien*, a practice which always makes the cockles of an Editor's heart pleasantly warm.

Dr. Stearns first points out

(a) that instead of occasional *digressions* into the realm of other languages, one might draw German & Russian into being regular features of the Journal;

(b) that we should include essays of more didactic character than up to now, a proposal which received a good deal of attention from the Committee. It would be interesting indeed to publish extracts from assignments given in translation courses or seminars, together with their rendering in a target language and comments thereon;

(c) specialists in different fields sufficiently conversant with one or two other languages besides their own, could inform the would-be translator of the shortcomings of published translations in their fields and suggest ways to improve them :

We quote below the last part of Dr. Stearn's letter dealing with the controversial subject of machine translation :

"Succumbing once again to my innate desire to *share* casual findings, with regard to one or the other of my pet subjects, I am sending you the Literary Supplement of the *London Times* (April 20, 1962) where I found "The Future of Machine Translation" by Yehoshua Bar-Hillel highly gratifying. It is the fifth essay in the series "Freeing the Mind" ...

Two passages in the paper of Mr. Bar-Hillel struck me as being a subject for further discussion, viz (a) 'Translation is an activity that requires, in general, a good amount of intelligence, in addition, of course, to a good knowledge of both languages involved, the source and the target language'... (b) Expert human translators use their *background knowledge, mostly subconsciously* in order to resolve syntactical and semantical ambiguities" ... [Italics are mine].

The author of "The Future of Machine Translation" makes two "Gedankenfehler" in this passage which is introductory to his presentation and opinions on the subject title : a) the highest I. Q. and a reasonably good linguistic knowledge will quite often prove insufficient to produce a both reliable and readable translation on a theme for which the translator has no *educational* background; b) he overlooks the circumstance that electronic computers solving intricate mathematical or algebraic problems pro-