

Introduction to the Second Edition (*ASRED 2*)

Fifteen years have passed since the appearance of the first edition of this dictionary in 1992. (In 1994, a corrected reprint came out, and in 1995 a Moscow mirror edition of the book was published.) The author has not concerned himself with any “justification” for the present volume, which he feels speaks for itself and will be found anywhere between the first and the last page of the book.

The time span which separates the two editions of this dictionary (the previous edition, *ASRED*, and the present edition, *ASRED 2*, respectively) was filled with a series of momentous and traumatic events in both the personal and professional life of the author. Nevertheless, work on the book never stopped over this period, although frequently it was delayed; indeed, the vicissitudes of life only stimulated the author further in his goal to produce a substantially updated version of the dictionary.

To a considerable extent, printed sources of the type which were invaluable in the preparation of *ASRED* were relegated to the “back burner” in *ASRED 2*. The reason for this can be summed up in one word: **Internet**. E-mail and the World Wide Web became the author’s lifeline. However, serial publications, but books especially, still continued to play an important role in the making of *ASRED 2*, a fact testified to in the updated Selected Bibliography.

The overall principles outlined in the original **Introduction** to *ASRED* — for a full discussion, see **Introduction to the First Edition** following — have been adhered to also in *ASRED 2*, but there have been some important changes and refinements, chief among these being the following:

- In contrast to *ASRED*, which contained a limited amount of general-technical words and expressions, *ASRED 2* broadens and deepens its scope and includes a certain amount of specialized technical vocabulary in addition to general-technical vocabulary.
- Considerable reduction in the duplication of cross-referenced material has been effected.
- The cross-referencing principle has been extended. In addition to references across entries, additional-

ly there are now cross references within longer entries (with ten or more subentries).

- With few exceptions, British/New Zealand orthography has been rationalized to bring it in line with standard American spelling.
- A decision was taken regarding the listing of longer entries whereby any headword which has ten or more subentries has the numbered entries listed *vertically* and beginning on a new line rather than concatenated horizontally. **This is the most important formatting change between *ASRED* and *ASRED 2*.** Abandoning the policy of stringing together consecutively-numbered entries, a frustrating situation in which the user is forced to wade through many lines of text before finding the desired entry, was felt to be very important in increasing the overall ease of use of the book.

In addition, the following should be noted:

- Although every attempt has been made to comply with an overall strictly alphabetical arrangement of material, logic prevails over pedantry in listings of frequency of usage within entries and cross-referencing at the end of entries, and not infrequently stylistically-colored synonyms or antonyms follow their neutral equivalents.
- Until a word or term is codified and fully accepted in the borrowing language, it is not unusual to find a cluster of competing forms before a clear-cut “winner” emerges, a situation often requiring a considerable amount of time to accomplish. Thus, users of *ASRED 2* should not be overly surprised to find, for example, nine (!) Russian equivalents of “FDA”; seven Russian equivalents of “vasectomy”; six Russian equivalents of “U.S. Food and Drug Administration”; six Russian equivalents of “SIDS”; three Russian equivalents of “Agent Orange”; three Russian equivalents of “State of the Union (address),” etc. In such cases, this book does not see its task as predicting trends or making value judgments. Hence, the conclusion would have to be that, given a multiplicity of competing forms, in some cases there simply *is* no single

Russian equivalent of an English entry. Nevertheless, for purposes of historical completeness, the author cites all competing forms encountered in his research.

- Many aspects of language are in a state of flux until they are able to seek their own level and divest themselves of competing forms in the guise of doublets. A case in point is variant spellings (e.g., **вѣб/вѣб**). *ASRED 2* contains a small number of such variants.
- Taxonomic designations are generally binomial (genus and species), occasionally monomial, and rarely trinomial.
- Many entries have been substantially rewritten (e.g., **расчѣтный час**).
- As a guiding principle, citations are not given which are merely a sum of their parts. Thus, there is no justification to include an entry such as **жѣркая погода** “hot weather.” However, entries which are more than the sum of their parts and whose meaning(s) can only be inferred, are routinely given, which explains why an entry like **боевая раскраска** “war paint” is included.
- By default, nouns ending in a “soft sign” are feminine. Accordingly, there is no indication of their gender. The gender of masculine nouns ending in a “soft sign,” however, is indicated by “(m.)”.
- This book contains a certain number of defined words and expressions which may appear distinctly unusual or even odd to American users. The reason for this is that they are either Briticisms or New Zealandisms. The author has spent over 40% of his life studying, working, and living in England and New Zealand, and thus it was inevitable that certain turns of phrase became part of his “linguistic baggage.” Some of these “non-Americanisms” have been converted into American English, but for the most part they remain “untranslated”.
- In 2000, M. Wheeler’s *The Oxford Russian-English Dictionary* was incorporated as the Russian-English half of the *Oxford Russian Dictionary* (revised and updated by Della Thompson).
- In 2002, a “new” edition of A. Smirnitsky’s *Russian-English Dictionary* appeared. However, apart from a facelift — attractive cover and smaller format — and a name change — **Большой русско-английский словарь** *Comprehensive Russian-English Dictionary*, — there seems to be nothing else of substance which distinguishes this edition from the 1991 edition.

- As an overall principle, no lexical material which is cited in either the Smirnitsky or the Oxford dictionary is contained in *ASRED 2*, the only exceptions being a very small percentage of entries here which, owing to efforts to maintain the integrity of a given entry, partially overlap Smirnitsky’s or Oxford’s lexical material.
- For most of *ASRED 2*’s genesis, entries were checked against the Russian-English half of the 1997 edition of *The Oxford Russian Dictionary*. However, when *ASRED 2* was at an advanced stage of preparation, a new revision and update of the Oxford book appeared in 2000. As a result, all entries in *ASRED 2* had to be re-checked against the Oxford dictionary. Consequently, and in keeping with the overall policy of the original *ASRED*, in particular, that *ASRED* will not contain lexical information which has previously appeared in the Oxford dictionary, *ASRED 2* does not contain material which appeared in the 1972, 1993, 1997 or 2000 editions of the *Oxford Russian Dictionary*. Neither does *ASRED 2* contain material which originally appeared in *ASRED* but which somehow found its way into the 1997 edition of *The Oxford Russian Dictionary*.
- Finally, the author’s intention has not been to offend, shock, or alienate users through his citing of “irreverent” (i.e., low colloquial, slang, racially offensive, anatomically explicit, or obscene) material, but it is inevitable that some people will experience decidedly negative feelings when reading such entries. The only possible justification for including such material is that, like it or not, it is part of life and as such cannot and must not be ignored by the lexicographer. Consciously to exclude entries which could be viewed as “insensitive” is, in this writer’s opinion, professionally dishonest, especially in view of the fact that such “indelicate” material makes up *less than one-half of one percent* of the book’s content, although casual browsers could gain the impression the figure is much higher. Less than one-half of one percent is not felt to be an excessive amount.
- *ASRED 2* contains definitions of approximately 81,000 entries.

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One final note: It is a well-known fact that the interval of time between the point when a dictionary is compiled and the date of its publication

may be considerable, and even the most concerted updating efforts can be thwarted. Over the many years that *ASRED 2* was being created, historical facts as well as political, technological, scientific, space exploration, medical, and other far-reaching societal events which were true at the time they were documented may no longer be valid or otherwise current. For example, an individual referred to as being head of state prior to the publication of *ASRED 2* and recorded as

such in this book may no longer hold that position today. This important consideration should be borne in mind when using *ASRED 2*.

I am very conscious of the many imperfections in this book and patiently await users' (preferably) constructive criticisms and suggestions for improvement. Those wishing to contact the author are encouraged to do so by e-mail.

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