Dinner with Stalin and Other Stories: a symposium with David Shrayer-Petrov, Maxim D. Shrayer, and Other Translators

Set in the former USSR, Western Europe, and America, the fourteen stories in Dinner with Stalin feature Soviet Jews grappling with issues of identity, acculturation, and assimilation. Shrayer-Petrov explores aspects of anti-Semitism, persecution, problems of mixed marriages, dilemmas of conversion, and the survival of Jewish memory. Both an author and a physician, Shrayer-Petrov examines his literary subjects through the lenses of medicine and literature. When interviewed recently, Shrayer-Petrov reflected, "Above all else, Dinner with Stalin is about Russian Jews who found themselves abroad, first emigrating and later grafting themselves onto American soil." Consistently in his fiction, Shrayer-Petrov writes about Russian Jews who, although having been persecuted in the former Soviet Union, continue to promote their sense of cultural Russianness, even as they and their children increasingly resemble American Jews. Shrayer-Petrov's stories consider immigrants' complex understanding of their cultural identity: Americans at work, Russians at home, and Jews at worship.

Born in Leningrad in 1936, David Shrayer-Petrov emigrated to the United States in 1987, and has since made New England his home. He is the author of 23 books in his native Russian and of several books in English translation, notably Jonah and Sarah: Jewish Stories of Russia and America, Autumn in Yalta: A Novel and Three Stories. His most recent work is a collection of short stories: Dinner with Stalin and Other Stories. This fall, the Boston College Institute for the Liberal Arts, the English Department, the Jewish Studies Program, and the Department of Slavic and Eastern Languages and Literatures are pleased to cosponsor a symposium honoring the publication of this volume. Attendees of this event will hear selected readings and engage with the cultural and literary topics of the book communally.

This translation was made possible with the support of Boston College's Institute for the Liberal Arts. The symposium will be held on Tuesday, November 11, at 7:00 p.m., in Devlin Hall 101. All are welcome.