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KGB Censorship and Surveillance of Publications by Lithuanian Émigrés in North America During Five Decades of the Cold War

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ABSTRACT

Silvija Vėlavičienė, head of the Lituania Section at the National Mažvydas Library in Vilnius, writing from personal experience, tackles a topic which has received very little attention so far: KGB surveillance of publications produced by post-World-War II Lithuanian émigrés in North America, and the various illegal ways this press reached Soviet Lithuania during the 50-year-long occupation. The author discusses the extraordinary measures taken by Soviet Lithuanian authorities to keep these publications out of reach of readers in Soviet Lithuania by sequestering them in Special Collections Departments, strategies used by groups of émigrés to circumvent this prohibition, and the overall reaction of the émigré community at large toward cooperation with the occupied country. She also assesses the effect of the forbidden literature on the recipients in the home country and draws parallels with illegal book smuggling operations during the equally long-lasting press ban imposed and enforced by Tsarist authorities in the nineteenth century.

The second Soviet occupation (1944–1990) at the end of World War II resulted in an unprecedented exodus of Lithuanian intelligentsia to the West, where, by its very existence, it constituted an ideological enemy of the totalitarian Soviet regime imposed upon Lithuania. Viewing themselves as political refugees, the refugees formed a strong anti-Communist bloc that was of special interest to the Soviet authorities.

Congregating in the Displaced Persons (DP) camps in Germany, the refugees resumed cultural activities as soon as circumstances allowed and began publishing Lithuanian newspapers, magazines and books as early as 1945. Soviet authorities had already labeled them as “enemies of the people” even before they had printed anything, so the first publishing activities in the camps created true alarm as “weapons of hostile ideology.” From the very beginning, each publication was watched, collected, and scrutinized. Since it was a main source of information about the life and activities of the refugees, the Soviet government used various strategies to make these publications inaccessible to the Lithuanian public back home. Thus began the nearly fifty-year-long press ban that, to some extent, parallels the infamous press ban imposed by the Tsarist authorities upon Lithuanian publishing a hundred years earlier.

During the first postwar years, the Soviet authorities developed an enormous propaganda effort to return the refugees to Soviet Lithuania. One strategy was to convince the allied British, French and American military authorities that the refugees were fascists and Nazi collaborators and should be returned to Soviet Lithuania by force, which actually happened in a number of camps. In the immediate postwar period, Soviet authorities were also engaged in the political kidnapping of more important personalities, their forcible repatriation to the Russian zone, and from there to Soviet Lithuania. Refugee memoirs about the DP period in Germany contain countless references to the fact that people did not feel safe in the British, American, and French zones because of the frequent arrivals of Soviet security agents with demands that refugees be extradited. We know of instances where forcible repatriation led to suicide.

This first phase was followed by major efforts to effect voluntary return through skillful agitation in the camps, personal contacts, and promises. Assiduous research by Remigijus Misiūnas discloses that special editions of the newspaper Tiesa (Truth) were published specifically for the consumption of the refugees and dissemination in the camps.¹

In addition, the State Political Publishing House in Vilnius published booklets explaining to the refugees the advantages of returning home. In 1947, the book *Kelias į Lietuvą atviras* (The road to Lithuania is open) by Justas Paleckis was published in an edition of 10,200 copies. A second edition followed in the following year. Justas Paleckis accused the émigré press of publishing unsubstantiated slander against the Soviet system.² The fourth chapter, for example, called “Neužkirskite sau kelio grįžti į Tėvynę” (Don’t block your road homeward), was very explicit: „Fascists and reactionaries try to keep refugees under their control and to involve them in anti-Soviet activities in order to sabotage their return to Lithuania.”³ Also in 1947, Soviet agents distributed a brochure titled *Repatrijuotųjų tarybinių piliečių teisės* (The rights of repatriated Soviet citizens) outlining the civil rights of returning Soviet citizens.

All these efforts and appeals fell on deaf ears in the camps. People who had witnessed the deportations and political terror during the first Soviet occupation were not willing to believe these promises. Incidents of voluntary return were very few and isolated. These were always followed by public statements of repentance, denunciations, and apologies, visible illustrations that the repatriate had become a tool for the regime. Soviet authorities also engaged in recruitment. Their success (or lack of it) among the refugees in the camps or during immigration is less known.

The best-known example of a successful recruitment of a well-known personality is the case of the journalist Vytautas Alseika. Alseika left Lithuania with the bulk of other refugees in 1944, emigrated to the United States, but returned to Soviet Lithuania in 1972. In emigration, he served on the board of VLIK, the premier political organization established by the exiles for the purpose of liberating Soviet Lithuania, an organization that was of special interest to Soviet authorities. Upon his return, he authored two books: *Trys dešimtmečiai emigracijoje : Nuo Roitlingeno iki Niujorko*. (Three decades in emigration: From Reutlingen to New York) and *Amerika: Tikrovė ir mitas* (America: reality and myth).

An introduction by Julius Būtėnas illustrates that Alseika was expected to expose the political leadership of the above agency as corrupt and fraudulent. Būtėnas writes:

V. Alseika’s book paints a broad picture of postwar exiles and their community. It provides sufficient proof that the political activities of the bourgeois and religious leadership is hostile to the interests of the Lithuanian nation. The author provides documentary evidence to support his statements and conclusions and unmasks persons who call themselves leaders as nothing but self-serving demagogues.⁴

A recent publication by Juozas Banionis, *Lietuvos laisvės byla Vakaruose: 1975–1990* (The case of Lithuania’s independence in the West, 1975–1990) provides documentary evidence that Alseika’s books were written on orders from the Lithuanian KGB.⁵ Alseika’s return and exposure as a Soviet agent deeply shocked the émigré community and encouraged renewed vigilance. Moreover, it solidified the negative attitude toward any kind of cooperation.

Not mentioned in any Soviet Lithuanian bibliography and not accessible to Soviet readers was the weekly *Tėvynės balsas* (Voice of the homeland), designed specifically for the refugees residing abroad. It was launched in 1947 by the Board of the Soviet Lithuanian Writers Association (*Lietuvos tarybinių rašytojų sąjungos valdyba*), printed in Soviet Lithuania, but distributed only abroad. The publisher and first editor was Jonas Šimkus. It eventually followed the refugees into emigration to North America, and carefully monitored the communities founded by the “political exiles” (as the refugees preferred to be called to distinguish themselves from previous economic immigrants). It was not an independent Soviet Lithuanian publication but rather an exact replica of the Russian *Golos rodiny* (Voice of the homeland), and for another decade or so continued to publish glowing reports about progress in Soviet Lithuania and to invite the exiles to return to a blossoming Soviet Lithuania.

After 1967, *Tėvynės balsas* was replaced by a new weekly called *Gimtasis kraštas*, which attempted to remove unproductive propaganda and to pattern itself after a model more readily acceptable to a readership in the West. Moreover, following a similar Western model, Soviet authorities established an agency, operating under strict control of Soviet Lithuanian security and under orders from Moscow, for the purpose of fostering relations with the diaspora. This agency, known as *Tėviškės draugija* (Homeland society), from that time on was the only way for the émigrés to have legal contacts with the homeland.

The leading figure in this entire scenario was Vytautas Kazakevičius, onetime Head of the Press and Information Division of the Foreign Ministry, who for more than two decades (1976–1989) held the post of top diaspora expert. According to *Lietuvių literatūros enciklopedija* (Encyclopedia of Lithuanian literature):

[he was an] important functionary of the Soviet government whose responsibilities consisted of gathering information about the activities of the exiles and their national communities, establishing contacts with authors, assisting them in having their works published in Soviet Lithuania, and writing reviews for the Soviet Lithuanian press about exiled authors and their cultural activities.⁶

Similar biographical information exists about Laurynas Kapočius, Povilas Rotomskis, and others. In fact, every “emigrantologist” of the period also served in some capacity at a Soviet embassy, consulate, or legation, presumably to gain a better insight into the organization and activities of the exiles they monitored but also perhaps to perform other functions.

There is by now ample evidence to prove that the publications of the postwar exiles were of utmost importance to the Soviet Lithuanian authorities as the best source of information about the community and its activities. They were collected, read and analyzed in great detail. One need look no further than the following articles by Jonas Aničas: "Socialiniai politiniai klerikalizmo įtakos lietuvių buržuazinei emigracijai veiksniai 1945–1973 m." (Social-political factors of clericalism on Lithuanian bourgeois emigration 1945–1973) or "Klerikalinis visuomenės sekularizacijos proceso interpretavimas lietuvių emigracijos spaudoje 1945–1972" (The clericalistic interpretation of society's process of secularization in the Lithuanian émigré press 1945–1972) to see that the author had at his disposal an impressive number of émigré books and was able to list almost the entire periodical press in the United States. In other words, all these sources were readily available to him. The importance of a publication was determined by the effort needed to combat the "bourgeois exiles" and their "outdated nationalism", for "distorting the reality of our lives, inventing facts or events as they please, and maximizing negative incidents to show our reality in a crooked mirror."⁷ In retrospect, one can only wonder why Aničas was so eager to denigrate books that at that time were not accessible to anyone except a handful of secret service functionaries.

The literature in question was housed in Special Collections sections (*Specfondai*), i.e. high-security sections in selected libraries that stored and collected publications sent to libraries from abroad as gifts or exchanges, confiscated en route by Soviet customs officials, or obtained through the party. During the first decade after the war, the Special Collections section at the Mažvydas National Library contained only books published in the prewar Lithuanian republic. The author of this article can vouch from personal experience that in the Mažvydas Library, postwar émigré publications were not available until the sixties, not even in the Special Collections section.

No émigré publications could enter the libraries without having passed the Glavlit censors, and not all were passed on to libraries. It might be pointed out in this connection that even during the first postwar decade no publication escaped the notice of Glavlit.⁸

Publications that reached the Special Collections were marked by a special code to determine their level of confidentiality. Publications considered most threatening ideologically were marked with a special code (two hexagons) and remained under the control of the security agencies or were entrusted to the Library of the Party History Institute, but not all of them. The Lithuanian Communist Party (LKP) History Institute was considered politically most reliable. The most "dangerous" subjects were history, politics, and publications by political organizations. Volume XXXVII of the *Lithuanian Encyclopedia* (Boston) was labeled as "top secret." To determine the specific locations of all émigré publications during the Soviet period and to analyze their final destination will not be an easy task.

Access to these collections was strictly limited to institutions or individuals with special permits. Average citizens were not admitted. Patrons armed with special permits had to establish the purpose of their visit and submit an official request for specific articles or books, providing complete bibliographical data. For example, if the patron wanted to read a certain entry in the *Lithuanian Encyclopedia* published in Boston, the library official would bring only that particular volume with the page opened at the requested entry. No other browsing was allowed. A patron asking for an article in a journal had to supply exact bibliographical data. An article in *Akiračiai* points out a curious paradox of the totalitarian system: the patron was expected to provide bibliographical data about a publication that officially was not supposed to exist and yet was never questioned on how this information became available to him!⁹

In the National Mažvydas Library, the Lituanica Section and the Special Collections Section were separated from each other by a virtual Iron Curtain, a heavy chain link curtain. Through it one could see orderly sets of *Lietuvos Aidas* or some other prewar periodical publication. But the passage connecting the two areas was locked with special locks that were seldom used, usually only to accommodate a special visitor. Sometimes the need arose to show the collection to some important delegation from abroad as proof that the publications were collected and available. In reality, few Lithuanian patrons had access, and their use was severely restricted. The poet Jonas Juškaitis describes his own experience as follows:

...In the Academy's Special Collections section I encountered an official of steel. While I was sitting reading in an empty hall for two hours, during this entire time he sat across from me watching. I was not allowed to copy anything. I have never met another man of such total dedication. I had to memorize the text sentence by sentence in order to write it all down at home.¹⁰

Every Lithuanian who had used the services of the library or had worked there during the Soviet period has his own experiences and memories about these secret collections. There were only six of them in Lithuanian libraries.

It might be mentioned at this point that not every Lithuanian in the U.S was treated as an ideological enemy of the regime. There was still the pro-Communist old guard of the prewar emigration who were members of the American Lithuanian Workers Literary Society (*Amerikos lietuvių darbininkų literatūros draugija*) and other pro-Communist organizations such as the Lithuanian Workers Alliance (*Lietuvių darbininkų susivienijimas*), the Lithuanian Art Association, (*Lietuvių meno sąjunga*), and a few more. They were called "progressives" (*pažangieji*), a term widely used in Soviet Lithuania as well as in the West. One of the leading figures in this group was Antanas Petrika, who describes their activities in his book *Lietuvių literatūros draugija ir pažangieji Amerikos lietuviai*.¹¹

Other “progressive” authors who published their books in Soviet Lithuania were Antanas Bimba, Rojus Mizara, Ieva Mizarienė, Leonas Prūseika, etc. Ksavera Karosienė, in her book *Pasirinkimas visam gyvenimu* (Choice for life), describes the position of the progressives as follows:

We progressive American-Lithuanians, following our class principles, were always in disagreement with our countrymen who wanted to see Lithuania under the rule of an exploitative government.¹²

The postwar political émigrés here referred to, the former refugees, responded by characterizing the “progressives” as a small group of “pre-World-War-Two Stalinists” whose weekly *Laisvė* (Freedom) was filled with articles supplied by the Vilnius nomenklatura and Agitprop agents Lukoševičius, Kazakevičius, and Bagdonavičius; their intended audience was “not so much the so-called progressive readers of *Laisvė* as the nationalistic exiles.”¹³

As a result, “progressive” publications were not locked up in special departments. The newspapers *Vilnis* and *Laisvė*, the journal *Šviesa*, and the above-mentioned books were easily accessible to every reader during the entire period.

The émigré community was well aware of the restrictions placed on their publications. An unsigned article “Lietuviškos knygos ir specfondai” (Lithuanian books and the Special Collections), published in *Akiračiai*, illustrates that the Soviet government’s secret efforts to restrict access as well as the mechanism of censorship were quite well known on the other side of the Iron Curtain.¹⁴ The article is filled with details that could only be written by someone who had first-hand knowledge about the Special Collections in Soviet Lithuanian libraries.

Despite these Herculean efforts by the authorities, it proved impossible to keep them out completely. The first mention of an émigré publication having reached private hands through some illegal method dates to 1958. The poet Jonas Juškaitis, in his book *Lyra ant gluosnio* (Lyre on a Willow), describes his own experiences as a young student, later as author and editor:

Émigré books were much more widely available than was admitted. One could find them in Special Collections, or through contacts with Romas Šarmaitis at the Party History Institute, or among the population at large.¹⁵ By 1957, I had complete sets of *Aidai* for 1949, 1950, 1951, and 1952. *Metmenys* was not yet in print then. I also read the 1951 *Lietuvių poezijos antologija* edited by Vaičiulaitis and Aistis soon after its publication, the first attempt to provide an overview of Lithuanian poetry.¹⁶

Jonas Juškaitis also provides very concrete examples of how books were circulated: „Every book was shared.” As an example, he describes his experience with a copy of Antanas Maceina’s *Saulės giesmė* (The Sun’s Hymn), which he loaned to Father Algirdas Mockus. When he returned from Vilnius to pick it up, he was told: “Brother, do what you want, but you will not see this book again until it has been read by every priest in this region.”¹⁷

Liūtas Mockūnas, editor of *Akiračiai*, discusses the mailing of books to Soviet Lithuania and describes strategies used to circumvent censorship:

In those days we always included in a package with books one or two books that were not offensive to the censors and added one that appeared innocent on the surface, yet contained passages which were ideologically unacceptable. We expected that one or two would somehow succeed in slipping through the sleepy eyes of the censor and reach broader circulation.¹⁸

An author from Lithuania illustrates how Lithuanian readers succeeded in getting the forbidden literature:

There always existed the practice of sending books to selected addresses in Poland, Armenia, Moscow, or even Central Asia, where we had trustworthy contacts who would then mail them on to us. Or books would disappear from the railroad postal stations from where they were to be sent to the library after having passed Glavlit censors or some party big shot.¹⁹

The initiative to provide Soviet Lithuanian intellectuals with Western publications on a larger, more organized scale belongs to the *Santara–Šviesa* association, the then young liberal wing of the postwar émigré community. During the first two decades in emigration, the vast majority of the organizations and institutions founded by the émigrés were hard-line conservative and stood in solid opposition to establishing and maintaining any relationship with any organization or institution in Soviet-occupied Lithuania. By the mid-sixties, however, the liberal wing, represented by *Santara–Šviesa*, decided on a diametrically opposed stand. It developed the slogan “Facing Lithuania” (*Veidu į Lietuvą*) and urged the community to extend official contacts with Soviet Lithuania through the above-mentioned *Tėviškė* organization, however watched and restricted.

Also in the mid-sixties, the generation of the above-mentioned “progressive” pro-Communist prewar immigrants in North America was beginning to die out. Kazakevičius was facing the danger of losing not just his contacts but also his very reason for existence. Thus he was eager to find and establish new contacts for his new agency *Tėviškės draugija*. Members of *Santara–Šviesa* seemed a perfect target. The *Santara–Šviesa* leadership, in turn, was well aware of

Kazakevičius's motives, but was equally aware of the fact that there was no other legal way to enter into communication with their countrymen except through the services of the functionaries of *Tėviškės draugija*. We know now that they were not naïve, or misguided, or even "traitors to the community" (as they were sometimes referred to), but very well informed about the functions and real intentions of *Tėviškė*. In a paper titled "Tėviškės slenkstis" and presented at the Conference of *Lituanistų bendrija* in Vilnius in 1996, Liūtas Mockūnas, one of the initiators, characterized *Tėviškės draugija* as

...a large bureaucratic institution with good salaries, seniority categories, easy working conditions, and occasional trips abroad. Anyone who had contacts with this organization could not but notice the hand of the KGB behind its back.²⁰

We now know that Mockūnas and other like-minded intellectuals, desirous of establishing better and legally approved relationships with the homeland, devised a strategy on how to use *Tėviškė* for their own purposes. Incidentally, Lithuania's two-term president Valdas Adamkus was also a member of *Santara–Šviesa*.

The leadership of *Santara–Šviesa* began to make concrete plans to get émigré books into Soviet Lithuania. Utilizing their new relationship with *Tėviškės draugija*, they proceeded to make arrangements for an official visit of an American-Lithuanian basketball team to Lithuania. We now know that the proposed trip caused enormous anxiety to Soviet Lithuanian security agencies, which had to mount a special effort to monitor the activities and whereabouts of every member of the fifteen-man sports team. It also deeply and irreparably split the émigré community, which continued to discuss this issue for years to come. For our purposes, this trip is important as a book smuggling operation. The reference to book smuggling was also used in the émigré press: "As we were going to Lithuania, we felt like the old-time book smugglers secretly carrying bundles of illegal publications," writes Valdas Adamkus.²¹

The circumstances surrounding the basketball game, which was the first historic large-scale visit after the war, are provided by Liūtas Mockūnas in a long article in *Akiračiai*, "Kultūrinės infiltracijos pradžia – išeivijos krepšininų išvyka į Lietuvą 1967 m." (The beginning of cultural infiltration – the visit of the diaspora basketball team in 1967.)

According to Mockūnas, the basketball game was a carefully planned "cultural invasion" that aimed to bring in and distribute among the Soviet Lithuanian intelligentsia a much greater number of publications than had hitherto been possible. As soon as the athletes arrived at the Gintaras Hotel, where they were assigned accommodations, the publications they had brought with them were collected by Raimundas Mieželis and others, who served as escorts for the team, and then delivered to prearranged meeting places with Lithuanian artists, authors, and other intellectuals at designated secret locations. The number of people contacted was remarkably high.²²

The significance of establishing personal contacts with artists and scientists was also emphasized by Valdas Adamkus, who writes about it in his book *Likimo vardas – Lietuva* (The Name of my destiny—Lithuania):

No less important, I feel, was the personal contact with academics and artists – as much as we could, we tried to strengthen their efforts to work for the good of the country even in agencies controlled by the state.²³

The *Santara–Šviesa* decision was almost unanimously condemned by other émigré organizations and influential community leaders, who held the position that absolutely no contact with an occupying agency was possible. According to research by Daiva Dapkutė, most émigré newspapers subscribed to the principle of 'national solidarity' (*tautinė drausmė*) and refused to print articles by authors who were known to support dialogue with the homeland. Such hard-line organizations as *Lietuvių frontas* and *Amerikos lietuvių tautinė Sąjunga* (*ALTas*) began in fact to remove from their ranks members who deviated from the hard line.²⁴

Many individual authors and intellectuals were equally critical. Poet Kazys Bradūnas, long-time editor of "Mokslas. Menas. Kultūra" (Science. Art. Culture), the influential Saturday supplement of *Draugas*, draws a parallel with the nineteenth-century Tsarist ban on Lithuanian books and categorically rejects any contact with Soviet Lithuania:

It is a sad joke to talk about cooperation when at every border, post office and customs office the works of émigré authors are cordoned off and confiscated more efficiently than was ever done during the Press Ban. They talk about a cultural exchange while at the same time not a single normal review of our books can be published in the cultural magazines of occupied Lithuania. In scholarly publications our literature is ignored as if it did not exist.²⁵

The cultural magazine *Aidai* (Echoes) assumed a more neutral position, devoting an editorial to this matter:

It is futile to talk about cultural contact while forgetting that it is not up to us but to the occupier to decide how much contact will be allowed and of what kind. ... how can they talk about "cultural contact" when they will not allow even a single book or publication from the Free World? ²⁶

Despite public and official condemnations, we now know that a considerable number of émigré intellectuals, regardless of their affiliations, began sending books and periodicals, mostly medical and scientific, to Soviet Lithuanian libraries on an individual basis.

In the sixties, Kazakevičius and other professional “emigrantologists” began publishing critical reviews of émigré publications in the Soviet Lithuanian periodicals *Literatūra ir menas*, *Pergalė*, and *Gimtasis kraštas*. Regardless of how biased and inaccurate, their readers in Lithuania welcomed them as the only chance to find out anything about publications and authors abroad, and knew how to read between the lines to extract the needed information. The reviews demonstrate that Soviet authorities were informed about every single publication. Bronys Raila, the long-time reporter for The Voice of America, himself better informed than most, made the observation that he knew less about émigré publishing than the offices of V. Kazakevičius.²⁷

At about the same time, *Metmenys*, *Akiračiai*, and, to some extent, *Aidai*, were also publishing reviews of books by Soviet Lithuanian authors. The reviews, often resorting to Aesopian language in order to protect the authors, were especially responsive to works which deviated from the established norms of socialist realism.²⁸

We know now that these reviews were eagerly read and understood by Soviet Lithuanian authors. According to the poet Marcelijus Martinaitis, especially valued among Soviet Lithuanian intellectuals was the journal *Metmenys*, edited by Vytautas Kavolis, whose historical impact on Soviet Lithuanian cultural life still awaits evaluation. In Martinaitis's words, the journal provided cultural guidelines, discovered independent-thinking creative people, set goals for creativity, discovered fertile ground for intellectual thought:

It was our life-line. It spread like rings of water that reach the farthest shore and no one knows who threw the original stone.²⁹

It might be mentioned that the émigré authors of the reviews used pseudonyms. The literary critic Vytautas Aleksandras Jonynas (using a pseudonym!) offers an explanation:

We live and write in circumstances not ordinary. ... Take my case. I have relatives in Lithuania and have not seen them, yet hope that I will be able to soon. We cannot forget that V. Kazakevičius and Company in Vilnius, as befits such bureaucrats, will file my name in an appropriate folder. And the result: My visa application will be denied.³⁰

In the later seventies, Kazakevičius, Lukoševičius and their associates found a new outlet for their zeal: the newest arrivals from Soviet Lithuania in the United States, the so-called dissident like Tomas Venclova, Aušra Sluckaitė, Jonas Jurašas and some others. After 1977, a special target for their ire was Tomas Venclova, whose Soviet Lithuanian passport was revoked and who was beginning a new life in the United States. An especially vociferous article by Jonas Lukoševičius appeared in *Pergalė*, including mean-spirited details about the new immigrant's efforts to establish himself.³¹ Venclova responded with an interesting observation:

What is important is the fact that such an article can be published. The fate of the new émigrés is of great interest to many people in Lithuania, and public pressure for information is apparently strong enough for the party to respond to it, which it does in the only way it knows: to repeat a slander often enough and hope that someone will believe it.³²

In 1985, encouraged by the changes set in motion by Perestroika and Glasnost, Soviet Lithuanian literary critic Kęstutis Nastopka published an article in *Pergalė* discussing émigré reviews of Soviet Lithuanian literature.³³ An editorial in the American-Lithuanian cultural supplement of *Draugas* was quick to react:

Is this a historical first step? For the first time in forty years, we hear the voice of a professional literary critic. Until then, this was reserved for journalistic apparatchiks.³⁴

These literary exchanges illustrate the intensity with which every publication was read on both sides of the Iron Curtain.

Nastopka's article appeared two years before the momentous events set in motion by the Sąjūdis Reform Movement, which led to the abolition of press censorship on publications from abroad. The ideological institutions, however, were still in no hurry to adopt any changes. In fact, the publications of the postwar exiles were the last to be released from the Special Collections.

In 1988, the first books to be moved to the general sections were Russian publications and those published in the prewar independent Lithuanian republic. In 1989, emboldened by the changing climate, the Sąjūdis group at the National Martynas Mažvydas library prepared an open letter to A. Brazaitis, the head of Glavlit, about the need to speed up the release of émigré publications from the Special Collections. The initiative was supported by other major Vilnius libraries: Vilnius University, the Academy of Sciences, and others. The signatories of said letter were library directors – Vladas Bulavas, Birutė Butkevičienė, Juozas Marcinkevičius, as well as Kristina Remeikienė, Alma Braziūnienė and Silvija Vélavičienė, the author of the present article. The letter was published in *Literatūra ir menas*.³⁵

The first response, after several weeks, was a reminder that other previously adopted laws were still intact and “incompatible with the new policy of transparency.”³⁶ However, one month later, Glavlit's reply No. 59 (13 July 1989)

allowed the lifting of all bans and restrictions on the use of the Lithuanian émigré press, thus ending the almost five-decades-long press ban.³⁷

After forty years of battling the “ideologically hostile” publications in the West, Soviet ideologues found it hard to watch power slip from their hands. Yet, even here, they managed to reorient themselves and quickly found a new purpose for their existence. In 1989, the *Politinio švietimo namų ir Vilniaus aukštosios partinės mokyklos* (House of Political Education and the Vilnius Higher Party Schools) published a booklet by Algirdas Kavaliauskas with the mystifying title *Lietuvių išėjimo gyvenamųjų kraštų nacijų konsolidacijos procese (1945–1988)*, (The Lithuanian diaspora and the process of consolidation of nationalities in their countries of residence). This booklet was meant for use in a course called *Aktualūs Lietuvos istorijos ir kultūros klausimai* (Current questions of Lithuanian history and culture).³⁸ It is important for our purposes because it contains more or less exact numbers of publications appearing abroad, albeit without ever mentioning the censorship ban or the effort expended by secret structures to monitor and malign these publications and their authors in the Soviet Lithuanian press. The book also provides an exact number (as emphasized by the author) of publications held in the Special Collections sections of Lithuanian libraries:

As of July 1, 1988, the major libraries of the Republic, the Party History Institute, the LTSR Academy of Sciences, Vilnius State University, National Mažvydas Library, Kaunas Public Library and LTSR Palace of Books held 340 publications by the Lithuanian postwar émigré community, beginning with daily newspapers and ending with single copies of one-at-a-time bulletins and brochures. Additionally, Special Collections held 18 titles of periodical publications in Lithuanian and foreign languages.³⁹

Equally concrete numbers are given about books:

...Until July 1, 1988, the above mentioned six major libraries of the Republic held 3,300 titles... Another 218 books were held in Special Collections.⁴⁰

These numbers, made public for the first time, present the researcher with a dilemma. Why did so few émigré publications reach the Special Collections, and where are all the other publications mentioned in the book or cited by Soviet emigrantologists in their writings? We have not had enough time so far to solve this and other pressing questions. One can only hope that a detailed analysis of the documents in the Special Collections will disclose more than one still unknown fact that will help us understand the effects of censorship imposed by the totalitarian regime, which was not shorter than the infamous Tsarist press ban of the nineteenth century. Nor have we had enough time to study and analyze the wide variety of publications produced in exile, although it is a significant part of our national heritage that was kept secret from us and is responsible for many “blank spots” in our cultural and literary history that will be with us for many a decade to come.

Adapted and translated by M.G. Slavėnas

EDITORIAL COMMENT

Birutė Butkevičienė, the then-director of the Vilnius University Science Library, published in *Mokslas ir Gyvenimas* (Life and science) names some individuals who sent books and periodicals as one-time donations or on a permanent basis. According to this article, the library received substantial donations from Antanas Mažiulis, Valdas Adamkus, V.O. Virkau, Bronius Kviklys, K. Kliorys, K. Bobelis, R. Misiūnas, J. Gimbutas, J. Vaišnys, P. Rabikauskas and numerous others. Of the permanent supporters she mentions Liūtas Mockūnas, Ramunė Plioplytė, A. Gustainis, M. Stankuvienė, K. Varnelis, Violeta Kelertienė. Birutė Butkevičienė. “Dovanos Vilniaus Universiteto Mokslinei Bibliotekai” *Mokslas ir Gyvenimas*. 1990. No. 6 (June), 30-31.

1. Misiūnas, *Barakų kultūros knygos*, 26.

2. Paleckis, *Kelias į Lietuvą*, 11.

3. *Ibid.*, 18.

4. Alseika, *Trys dešimtmečiai*, 8.

5. Banionis, *Lietuvos laisvės byla*, 63.

6. Lietuvių literatūros enciklopedija, 229.

7. Aničas, “Klerikalinis visuomenės,” 39.

8. “Kultūros ministerijos, Glavlito, kitų organizacijų raštai dėl specsaugojimo skyriaus darbo.” LNB, RKRS, F 178–10. GLAVLIT stands for: Supreme office of security for state secrets in the press within the Soviet Lithuanian Council of Ministers.

9. “Lietuviškos knygos ir specfondai,” *Akiračiai*.

10. Juškaitis, *Lyra ant gluosnio*, 266.

11. Petrika, *Lietuvių literatūros draugija*, 363.

12. Karosienė, *Pasirinkimas visam gyvenimui*, 265.

13. "Ar Bradūnas ir Brazdžionis populiarūs Lietuvoje." *Draugas*.
14. "Lietuviškos knygos ir specfondai." *Akiračiai*.
15. Juškaitis, *Lyra ant gluosnio*, 184.
16. *Ibid.*, 246.
17. *Ibid.*, 236.
18. Mockūnas, "Komentaras."
19. Juškaitis, *Lyra ant gluosnio*, 185.
20. Mockūnas, "Tėviškės slenkstis," 143.
21. Adamkus, *Likimo vardas*, 73.
22. Mockūnas, "Kultūrinės infiltracijos."
23. Adamkus, *Likimo vardas*, 73.
24. Dapkutė, *Lietuvių išėivijos*, 266.
25. Bradūnas, „Kas integruoja, o kas meluoja?“
26. "Žvilgsnis į 1968 metus," *Aidai*.
27. Raila, *Dialogas su lietuviais*, 185.
28. Mockūnas, "Kultūrinės infiltracijos pradžia."
29. Martinaitis, "Vienos nakties trajektorijos."
30. Jonynas, "Pasiteisinimas."
31. Lukoševičius, "Anapus jūrų marių."
32. Venclova, "O gal kas nors ir patikės."
33. N N astopka, "Pro iliuzijų langą."
34. "Kertinė paraštė," *Draugas*.
35. "Atviras laiškas drg. A. Bazaičiui." *Literatūra ir menas*.
36. Brazaitis, "Kėsinimosi į viešumą nėra ir nebus."
37. "Kultūros ministerijos, Glavlito, kitų organizacijų raštai dėl specsaugojimo skyriaus darbo." LNB, RKRS, F 178-10.
38. Kavaliauskas, *Lietuvių išėivija*, 24.
39. *Ibid.*, 31.
40. *Ibid.*

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