

This document is an electronic post-print of a book review published in *Slavic & East European Information Resources*: Giullian, Jon. Book Review. *The 20th Century Libraries in the Baltic Sea Regions. Transactions of the National Library of Estonia* (TNLE), v. 10. Edited by Piret Lotman and Tiina Vilberg. Tallinn: National Library of Estonia, 2004. *Slavic & East European Information Resources*, 9.1 (2008): 5-11.

http://dx.doi.org/10.1300/J167v08n04_10. Typographical errors have been corrected in this version. NOTE: Cites to this article should be made to the version published in *SEEIR*.

Lotman, Piret and Tiina Vilberg, Eds. *The 20th Century Libraries in the Baltic Sea Regions. Transactions of the National Library of Estonia* (TNLE), v. 10. Tallinn: National Library of Estonia, 2004. 122p. ISBN: 9985942671; ISSN: 14063530.

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The introduction to any collection of articles usually serves to describe each article and to establish the thread that binds them together. In this collection of essays, although editors Piret Lotman (Tartu University Library) and Tiina Vilberg (National Library of Estonia) provide introductory remarks that briefly summarize each article, the correlative thread, beyond close geographical proximity, remains obscured. This is a collection in search of a theme. This review approaches the volume in the same manner.

The late **Boris Volodin's** (National Library of Russia) article, "St. Petersburg Research Libraries as *Forschungsbibliotheken* in the context of the Twentieth Century History," leads off the volume. It establishes a connection between the European tradition of *Forschungsbibliothek*

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and several specialized research libraries in St. Petersburg that serve as workshop or laboratory for researchers in the humanities (5). Volodin's discussion of how the collections in these St. Petersburg libraries escaped destructive Soviet policies is particularly interesting. Of especial note is his description of the St. Petersburg State Theater Library and the Central Navy Library, both of which hold a wealth of collections in the humanities and social sciences, including the rich private collections of several German and Russian nobles (i.e. Count Johann Hartwig Ernst von Bernsdorf, Great Prince Konstantin Nikolaevich Romanov). The article concludes with a description of new directions, trends, and projects at the Russian National Library and the resurgence of specialized research libraries in St. Petersburg. It demonstrates that St. Petersburg, like other major European cities, has preserved the legacy of *Forschungsbibliotheken*.

While Volodin has interesting content to present, a poor translation unfortunately mars his efforts and occasionally misleads the reader.

Rein Ruutsoo contributes the longest article in the volume, "The Cultural Profile of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania between the Two World Wars." Extensive and richly documented, the piece compares the modernization of society in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania during the interwar period. By "cultural profile," Ruutsoo means the roles of the "state and civil society in arranging cultural life" (18), including institutions, organizations, cooperatives, groups, societies, systems, and instruments, etc. that serve as vehicles of cultural development.

Ruutsoo's analysis draws on statistical data from each of the three Baltic countries, as well as from Finland, Europe and Scandinavia, in order to determine whether the Baltic countries form a "cohesive cultural community" (Ruutsoo's term, 13) or belong to other regions. To this end, the article compares the levels of key indicators of modern civil society (politics, ethnicity,

religion, economic resources, human capital, education, book culture, periodical press, urbanization, radio, cinema, the military) that were present in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania during the years under examination. This massive collection of data demonstrate that national independence was a key factor in the modernization of Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian society, and that they reached a comparable level of modernization by 1940. Although labeled Baltic countries, for geo-political convenience, Ruutsoo's analysis also shows that they not a culturally unified community. Estonia and Latvia more closely followed development in Finland, while Lithuania seemed closer to Central European countries (55). In all three cases, their historical roots played the most significant role.

In some instances, the author fails to articulate the connection between data and conclusion. For example, the author mentions the "loss of historically important social and intellectual resources," but fails to identify the specific social or intellectual resources that were lost. He also fails to adequately define his terms – What is an "organic elite"? In spite of these shortcomings, Ruutsoo's treatment of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania is balanced and devoid of nationalistic Jingoism or patriotic bias. His conclusions reflect general patterns in the data, neither overstating nor understating similarities and differences.

Arida Papaurelyte's (Martyno Mazvydo National Library of Lithuania) short contribution, entitled "Censorship in Lithuania between the Two World Wars: Laws Regulating Control over the Press," summarizes censorship policy in Lithuania between 1919 and 1940. Drawing from archival documents, the author offers specific examples that demonstrate how censorship policy was implemented. Comparison of the 1919 and 1935 versions of the Press Law of Independent Lithuania illustrates how changes in 1935 allowed the Ministry of Internal

Affairs to assert greater control over the publishing industry and the dissemination of printed material. The author concludes that “freedom of the press was quite suppressed in Lithuania” because of the “lack of a democratic governing system” (64). A more accurate articulation of this idea would be that freedom of the press in Independent Lithuania could not emerge without a democratic governing system. Censorship in Lithuania, after all, was a state-sponsored activity designed to bolster Lithuanian national culture and to protect against encroaching neighbors from the west (Poland) and the east (Soviet Russia). Why else would Lithuania fight so hard against both communist and Polish propaganda? (62) Following a long discussion on the negative impact of the Press Law on library collections, national culture, and foreign relations, Papaurelyte contradicts her argument with the statement that “...censorship protected libraries and their readers against the publications that lacked serious literary and artistic values” (65), without further context or explanation.

The conclusions aside, this article is a solid and interesting summary of censorship policy in Lithuania during the interwar period.

Anne Ainz (National Library of Estonia) presents a concise history of Estonian national bibliography in the fourth article, “The Preservation of National Printed Heritage in Estonian Libraries.” Written in a lucid and readable style, the article chronicles major events in the development of Estonian national libraries and national bibliography, from the oldest known Estonian-language publication (the catechism by Simon Wanradt and Johan Koell of 1535) to materials of present day. Ainz identifies key figures and documents their respective contributions at each stage of development, emphasizing the contributions of Johan Heinrich Rosenplanter (1782-1846), Oskar Kallas (1868-1946), Richard Antik (1901-1998), Gottlieb Ney

(1881-1973), and Aleksander Sibul (1884-1981). Although she references many important libraries, Ainz chronicles the evolution of four libraries, all of which founded archival collections and functioned, to varying degrees, as *de facto* national libraries. These include the Archival Library of the Estonian National Museum, Tartu University Library, Tallinn Central Library (formerly the Tallinn City Library), and the Estonian State Library.

Ainz painstakingly describes how occupying powers, the Soviets in particular, imposed their own archival policies and procedures in Estonia and how those changes affected Estonia's *de facto* national libraries. Replete with intriguing details of how resourceful Estonians used the Soviet policy of "restricted access collections" to preserve the bulk of Estonian-language collections and other *Baltica*; the narrative also documents how Estonians miraculously continued to acquire Estonian-language materials amid vacillating Soviet acquisition and depository policies. Equally miraculous was the retrospective bibliographic work that went on during Soviet occupation.

Finally, Ainz describes the progress that has been made since Estonian Independence in 1991, including legislation designed to regulate the preservation of the written cultural heritage, advances in the production of retrospective bibliographies, and upgrades of the four libraries that perform the functions of a national library. She also addresses issues of funding and the shared challenge of preserving collections printed on mostly acidic paper.

Piret Lotman's (Tartu University Library) concluding piece, "Estonian Public Libraries in the Twentieth Century" carefully documents the evolution of Estonia's public libraries in the last century, exploring the symbiotic relationship between public libraries and the formation of Estonian national culture. American and British readers will particularly appreciate Lotman's

survey of the organizational and ideological roots of Estonia's public libraries through Finland back to the Anglo-American library movements. Library collections, on the other hand, were heavily didactic and rooted in German culture (109).

Lotman's articulate style and contextualized presentation of the Estonian library movement make it easy to follow the setbacks encountered and strides made in the process of building a network of public libraries; she supplies the names of principal players and their contributions, important legislative milestones, telling statistics, and thoughtful analysis. Lotman also explores how, following Estonian independence (1919-1940), the new democratic government supported public library development. For example, she notes that the Ministry of Education emphasized the building of collections within existing libraries before establishing new libraries and advocated that the main "criterion for judging a book was neither its artistic nor academic value, but whether it was manageable for the ordinary reader" (112).

Lotman provides a balanced description of the fate of Estonian public libraries under the Soviet Regime. She illustrates how Soviet hegemony interfered with the national revival by reducing Estonia's public libraries to the status of Soviet mass libraries in conformity with the ideological line. Although the Soviets preserved the early Estonian library network and produced a corps of professional librarians, Lotman justifiably laments the loss of irreplaceable collections as well as the impact that Estonian public libraries could have had on public awareness of national heritage. While Lotman's viewpoint that public libraries "in the end and the beginning of the century...look amazingly similar," is certainly justified, one cannot but hope that the new century will be one of renewal for Estonian public library culture.

Much of the information in this volume will be new to most American and West European readers, since the libraries of the Baltic were hidden behind the Iron Curtain from the time of World War II to 1991. Because the focus of this collection is on the library culture of the Baltic States (as it should be), the case of St. Petersburg libraries appears out of place. Yet a deeper exploration of themes reveals a common thread that links them together. As Russia's "Window to the West," St. Petersburg has always maintained a cultural affiliation with Europe. Its geographic location certainly puts this "European capital" in the Baltic sphere of influence. Similarly, St. Petersburg's European printed cultural heritage, preserved in pre-revolutionary imperial libraries and archives suffered much the same fate under the Soviets as did Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian printed cultural treasures. Yet, like its Baltic neighbors, many of Petersburg's richest collections miraculously survived. These collections, like those in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, have now come out of hiding. It is high time to tell their story. And so, this volume does have a theme beyond geographical contiguity, after all – its theme is the reclamation of national heritage.

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