

# TRANSLATION POLICIES IN LATVIA DURING THE GERMAN OCCUPATION

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The period of German occupation in Latvia came after twenty years of Latvian independence and a year of Soviet occupation. The shifts in the translation policies at these critical junctions were incredibly fast. The independence period was marked by a developed translation industry, a variety of the source languages, a variety of kinds of literature, with a broad scope in the quality of the translations. When the Soviets came, they quickly nationalized the publishers, ideologised the system and reshaped the pattern of what was translated. Russian was made the main source language, and other languages were minimized. The share of ideological literature grew exponentially, reaching one third of all books.

Soon after the German invasion, the publishers regained their printing houses and publishing was renewed. The percentage of translations was similar to that of the independence period, with German literature making up 70% of the source texts. Most of the other source texts were Nordic and Estonian. Translation quality of fiction was generally high and the print runs grew. There are surprisingly few ideologically motivated translations.

The official policies of the regime as regards publishing in Latvia appear to be uncoordinated and vague, with occasional decisions taken by “gate-keepers” in the *Ostministerium* and other authorities according to their own preferences. There was a nominal pre-censorship, but the publishers were expected to know and sense what was acceptable. In turn the latter played it safe, sticking to classical and serious works to translate and publish. Some high class translations of Latvian classics into German were also published during the period.

## INTRODUCTION

Translation policies under totalitarian regimes constitute an as-yet largely unexplored area in studies of both fascism and translatology. The collection “Translation under Fascism” (Rundle 2010) started plugging this gap by comparing four fascist states and aspects of

their often diverging and contradictory translation policies. However, next to nothing exists on policies in occupied territories, where the situation is even more complex, as they involve extra players and changing political interests, both those of the occupiers and the locals. These issues fall under the sociological side of translation studies: translations actively intervene in the textual and political world of the receiving language because there are multiple agents with various interests (Wolf 2007), with reality both quantitatively and qualitatively testifying to this.

The translation scene during the German occupation is an untouched area in Latvian translation history. There are some general, mostly statistical studies of the literary scene in Latvia in this period, mostly focusing on original literature created and published during the Second World War. There are also some serious studies of the German propaganda machine, which was involved in book publications, although newspapers, films, posters and exhibitions bore the brunt of the propaganda effort (Zellis 2012). It must be pointed out that the German period was totally ignored during the Soviet period; it simply did not exist in Latvia's cultural domain.

The German occupation of Latvia followed twenty years of Latvian independence and the first Soviet occupation, which lasted one year. The translation scene must be seen in this changing political context, as well as in the context of the political prescripts of the ruling powers. Translation policies changed extremely fast at these critical junctures.

## THE INDEPENDENCE PERIOD

Latvia's brief period of independence (1918/20–1940) saw book publishing grow to a massive scale (Latvia ranked second in Europe in terms of books per capita) and the development of the translation industry (around 20–30% of fiction). The range of source languages was growing, with English slightly ahead of German in the pre-war years (German was also used as the main intermediary language), with French and Russian following. This was a change from the total dominance of German as the primary source and intermediary language that lasted until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (which continued even after the National Awakening in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, whose ideology was to a large extent anti-German). The literature translated was also extremely varied, as was the quality of translations (Veisbergs 2014a, 2014b). The average print runs were not very large: 2793 in 1938 when 1601 books were produced. The percentage of translations seems to vary considerably with a tendency to fall, for example, it stood at 17.8% in 1938 (Karulis 1967, 143). German and Russian occasionally functioned as intermediary languages. There was liberal post-censorship, which focused mostly on moral issues, for example, the banning of sales of D.H. Lawrence's "Lady Chatterley's Lover". Extremist literature was banned as well, but was imported by Soviet or Nazi bootleggers.

## THE SOVIET PERIOD

The Communist system was quick to nationalise publishers: Soviet Latvia was declared on 21 July 1940, and nationalisation took place the next day. On 5 August Latvia was incorporated in the USSR, and on 6 August a single publisher, VAPP, was set up and publishing became a state monopoly (Briedis 2010, 49). A total of 134 publishers were nationalised (Zelmenis 2007, 21). On 10 August the LGLP, a Latvian version of the Soviet censor *Glavlit*, was established (Valdības 1940), USSR censorship (precensorship) was introduced on 3 September (Strods 2010, 11). There was eliminatory censorship at three levels: manuscript, typesetting, and release for sale (Tēvija 22, 1941). Around 90 publishers, authors and translators were deported to Siberia or killed (Unāms 1969, 22).

The proscription and destruction of ideologically unacceptable books started. Religious books were removed from public and school libraries, as were books deemed bourgeois, as well as books on the history and politics of the Republic of Latvia, which reminded their readers of the existence of the independent state. Altogether, it is estimated that around a half a million to one and a half million books were withdrawn and destroyed (Zelmenis 2007, 33–34; Strods 2010, 180). A newspaper from the German period provides the following figures: 740,954 titles are documented as banned, but the real figure is around 1½ million, including many innocuous ones withdrawn by overzealous, often semi-illiterate overachievers, who considered Dante’s “Divine Comedy” religious enough to warrant a ban (Tēvija 21, 1941). The state ideologised the publishing industry and reshaped the pattern of what was translated. Market mechanisms were abolished, ideological reasons determined what was published and in what form, and the state subsidised the publication of whatever the Communist Party considered necessary (Zelmenis 2007, 23). Books about Marxism-Leninism and the new Soviet lifestyle enjoyed huge print runs. The population had to be moulded into Soviet people, and books had to be cheap. The proportion of ideological literature grew exponentially: one third of all books could be called political or socioeconomic (Zanders 2013, 341). As a result there were two books by Lenin in 1940, and 10 in 1941, together with 15 by Stalin (Stalin clocked up a total of 45 books in 1940–45). Print runs for political literature were huge: the History of the Communist Party (*VKP(b) vēsture*) ran to 50,000 copies. New schoolbooks were introduced for geography and history, which were translated from Russian.

Russian immediately became the main source language, and Soviet literature turned into the mainstay of fiction translation: five books by Gorky, three by Mayakovsky, two by Fadeyev (“The Rout” had been translated in the USSR) and Sholokhov’s “And Quiet Flows the Don” had large print runs. The rapid advance of Russian to main source language is obvious in Estonia, too, Russian suddenly occupied the centre of the literary polysystem and provided a matrix for new, original socialist literature (Monticelli 2011, 191).

German was almost completely ousted: only Goethe's "Faust" was republished (in 1941, by VAPP), mostly as a homage to the greatest Latvian poet and translator Rainis, whom the Communists now branded "the great proletarian writer". This is an interesting fact as Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia were nominally allies at the time. Other languages were minimised: Western literature was reduced to progressive authors only: Barbusse's "Under Fire", Steinbeck's "Grapes of Wrath" and Voynich's "The Gadfly" were published in 1941. All in all, the Russian year (mid-1940 to mid-1941) saw approximately 1100 titles published, about two thirds of the previous level. The average print run was 7250 (Karulis 1967, 195), more than double the average for the independence period. This was mostly due to a huge number of schoolbooks and political books that were produced during the period.

## THE GERMAN PERIOD

### *Political currents and ideological issues*

The German occupation came swiftly; within a week the Germans captured Riga, and a week later the army was beyond the borders of Latvia and deep into Russia. After the deportations and violence of the Soviet occupation, the fabled 700-year hatred of Germans was gone, and the Wehrmacht was received as liberators. A radical reversal of feelings had taken place. Though there was terror, a holocaust against the Jewish population and (less severe) oppression of Communist sympathisers, the German occupation was generally seen as more benevolent and certainly more predictable and civilised than the Soviets' Year of Terror. However, early aspirations and hopes of renewed independence were quickly quashed, causing disillusionment; the wartime scarcity of resources caused hardship and the German authorities' arrogant behaviour provoked resentment.

The various Nazi organisations produced many different plans for the future of the Baltic peoples, and the Latvians in particular. The best known (and very much talked about by the Soviet authorities in the post-war period, as it was the most racist) was the "Generalplan Ost" devised by the SS. Though the plan itself has not actually survived, its elements are known. It envisaged a fairly radical Germanisation of the Baltic area, with the forced eastward resettlement of around 50% of the "racially less qualitative population" to occupy the middle ranks of the German government system there, and Germanising the rest. This would not have boded well for local languages and cultures. Other plans existed. For example, Alfred Rosenberg, who was Reich Minister for the Occupied Eastern Territories, suggested cultural autonomy, a Baltic federation, etc. The attribution of racial quality seems to have been haphazard and easily changed. For example, the Lithuanians, who had been at the top of the Nazi quality scale, were later relegated to a lower spot while the Estonians rose to the top, with the Latvians just under them. The realities of

war led to adaptations of these theories and, with the worsening situation in the East, the radical solutions they had devised were watered down to a certain extent. The plans were secret, and the Latvian population generally expected to achieve some sort of national status after the war. The formation of the Latvian legion, the demands of the Latvian civilian authorities and the bargaining games between the occupiers and the locals led to a rise in Latvia's status in 1943–44 (Kangeris 1999, 39). Latvians came to be viewed as pro-German, and of high racial quality together with the Dutch and other Germanic nations, which deserved national existence.

However, the occupying authorities kept a strong grip on the processes. At first there was a military government, which was the Wehrmacht. Then the German civilian occupying authorities (*Deutsche Zivilverwaltung*), of which there were many, took over. Among the more prominent were the Reich Ministry for the Occupied Eastern Territories, the National Education and Propaganda Ministry, the Security Services, the Reich Foreign Ministry and the Nazi Party Press Office. Conflicts and rivalries developed between the various agencies and organisations. The Ministry for the Occupied Eastern Territories, the *Ostministerium*, was so notorious for its internal divisions over its Baltic policies “that it became known as *Chaostministerium*” (Bassler 2003, 79). Some Baltic German repatriates understood local wishes, while others bore ancient grudges and were more anti-Latvian than Germans proper (Marnitz 1991). The German central authorities were aware of the problems and tried to limit the influx of the Balts into the administration over the years (Kangeris 2007, 87–91). The confusion was often exacerbated at the individual level, with frequently the chief and his deputy holding widely different views on the issue of Latvia's present and future (Bassler 2000, 110–113).

In addition to the German authorities, there was a semiautonomous Latvian Self-administration that had two departments, which dealt with cultural matters. Although by decree its official language had to be German, in reality it operated in Latvian (Unāms 1969, 117). This Self-administration both collaborated with the Nazis (Biezais 1986; 1992) and resisted them. The parallel structures controlling educational and cultural issues and the multitude of German agencies naturally led to rivalries, chaos, ignorance and incompetence (Myllyniemi 1973). The Latvian self-administration soon learned to play the agencies off one another (Unāms 1969, 72). As the war proceeded, the Latvian authorities gradually gained more power in cultural matters, and also some leeway in issues pertaining to nationhood. A litmus test was the Latvian National Independence Day on 18 November, which went from being banned in 1941 to being widely and officially celebrated in 1943. The German authorities recognised that “in Latvia more than elsewhere in *Ostland*, the *Generalkommissariat* had largely lost control to the semiautonomous Latvian Self-administration” (Bassler 2003, 82).

Greater study of documents from the German occupation reveals that numerous issues were discussed at length, such as poorly thought-out ideas about the University of

Latvia as a possible engine of Germanisation (Blank 1991) although it actually operated in Latvian. However, there are very few items concerning cultural policy (Kangeris 1999, 38). This compares strikingly with the huge amount of documentation about the 18 November celebrations mentioned above (Reichelt 2004, 186). The cultural sphere must have been very much ruled by general consensus, imitating German practices, or spontaneous decisions and oral directives from local agents.

Like the Soviet authorities, the German regime started purging the libraries of unwelcome books. These included first and foremost the books that had been banned in Germany itself, including Jewish authors, Communist literature, Western left-wing and liberal literature (apart from the classics), and works of Latvian nationalists, among other works. The lists were drawn up as early as September 1941 and sent to libraries and bookshops (Liste 1941). Withdrawals, sorting and destruction took several years and involved various agencies. After a time, some titles were added, others were reclassified as harmless, while certain pages had to be torn out from others (Zellis 2012, 134). Around 750,000 books were destroyed (the Soviets later destroyed more than 16 million books) (Strods 2010, 180). Schoolbooks had to be rewritten, with Soviet-era books replaced by new ones. Where the Soviets had used translations from Russian, however, the new books were written by Latvians.

The Germans tried to limit the attributive use of the words *Latvia*, *Latvian*, *national* and *state*, preferring instead a calque of *Land* (which sounded ridiculous in Latvian), *Riga* and other attributes. Stritzky entered into a prolonged discussion about the spelling and translation of German names in Latvian (such as *Ostland*) with the leading Latvian linguist Endzelīns (Biezais 1987). Karl von Stritzky, Head of the Cultural Department at the General Commissariat, had studied at the University of Latvia, knew Latvian and must have been torn by the variety of German directives, ideas and norms of Latvian. The Germans insisted on abandoning the traditional Latvian system of transcribing foreign proper names, instead using the original spelling and adding Latvian endings after an apostrophe. This caused some alienation, as it defied the rules of Latvian grammar. Towards the end of the war, however, the Latvian spelling norms came back.

In many other cultural fields there was relative freedom compared with the year of Soviet occupation. For example, the Germans did not interfere in the theatre: no play with any Nazi elements was staged, with the general trend leaning towards classical works both Latvian and foreign. In fact there was quite a renaissance in the theatre (Kalna 2014, 93). The proportion of German plays among the imported ones rose, however works of Shakespeare, Molière, Ibsen, Shaw (who was critical of the UK) and other foreign playwrights, even Russian classics, were regularly staged. In addition, the Latvian fine arts flourished in this atmosphere of relative tolerance, occasionally making concessions to the ruling regime. Thus, in contrast to some other fields, there was a “relatively tolerant

cultural policy” (Lumans 2006, 201). The emphasis was on European culture, which was presumed to be first and foremost German culture (Kalnačs 2005, 49).

### *Publishing issues*

Soon after occupying the area, the Germans set about denationalising Soviet nationalised enterprises, the largest being requisitioned for the German army and German industry. As part of this process, publishers regained their printing works and resumed printing. After some weeks, discussions started as regards the publishing houses themselves. This is elucidated upon in the memoirs of Helmars Rudzītis, one of Latvia’s largest publishers, who had miraculously escaped the deportation to Siberia inflicted on many other publishers in 1941. Rudzītis states that the printing works were denationalised soon after the German army arrived, but that the fate of the publishing houses was unclear. The Latvians themselves seemed unable to decide whether to go back to the old ones or keep the single one created by the Soviets. Bureaucratic and personal squabbles were rife. As Rudzītis says, “it took a German to sort it out” (Rudzītis 1997, 155). This German happened to be the *Verantwortlicher für das Verlagswesen im Ostministerium*, Steinert (Garke-Rothbart 2009, 161), who organised an exhibition and a meeting with publishers. The Latvian publishers paraded their pre-war accomplishments, and so did Rudzītis, presenting his many translations from German (although carefully avoiding Remarque) and duly impressing Steinert (Rudzītis 1997, 155). Soon after this, publishers started receiving licences. Rudzītis characterises Steinert as a rich man (Rudzītis 1997, 56). Although Steinert was a Nazi party member, Rudzītis had never noticed any signs of ideological fervour from him. Moreover, Steinert’s right-hand man was his friend Rausch, a total anti-Nazi, whose bold statements made even Rudzītis fearful.

Thus several publishers restarted activities in autumn, among them “Latvju Grāmata”, which specialised in schoolbooks and published a total of 260 titles (Zanders 2013, 341). Schoolbooks were changed again, doing away with the Soviet-period stock. Old Latvian school books were reprinted, with new books generally written by Latvians. All in all, around 30 publishers received licences, with 19 of them operating (Zanders 1999, 115; 2013, 342). Similar uncertainty seems to have existed in Estonia, where only two major publishers were established (Möldre 1999, 157), however later on 19 licences were handed out.

During the German occupation, around 1500 titles were published (Zanders 2013, 342). This was a reduction of 60% in comparison with the pre-war years, which was due to wartime austerity. While the majority of fiction texts were of Latvian literature, translation was renewed in earnest. Print runs were generally larger than during the independence period (perhaps because there were fewer titles). Some books had enormous print runs, such as telephone directories (100,000 copies), hymnbooks, textbooks, dictionaries and photo albums. Books with propaganda

value also had large print runs. For example, a visually grim account of the Soviet year called the “Year of Horror” was published in 20,000 copies in 1942 (*Baigais gads*. Paula Kovaļevska redakcijā. Rīga: Zelta ābele, 1942), and was reprinted in 1943 and translated into German. A children’s book by Milda Grīnfelde, “Tētis karavīrs” (“Daddy the Soldier”), was published by Zelta Ābele in 1943 in 50,000 copies. The real author was the prominent Latvian poet Aleksandrs Čaks, who was not trusted by the German authorities because of his Soviet-period publications. Books in German were produced for soldiers, officials and the general public, as was Latvian fiction translated into German. It should be noted that much of the Latvian population could read German.

The official policies of the regime as regards publishing in Latvia seem to have been uncoordinated and unclear, with decisions often taken by individuals in power according to their own personal views (Handrack 1981, 82). As in Nazi Germany, censorship was implemented or attempted by a whole range of agents, and was neither fully formalised nor very coherent (Sturge 2002). Strange as it may seem, rivalries within the German bureaucracy delayed the publishing of the collected works of Goethe, and it was never published. First-hand sources suggest that the occupying authorities were relatively liberal as regards what was to be published. There was nominal pre-censorship, but the authorities relied on editors and publishers to know what was good and acceptable. They in turn played safe, sticking to classical translations. The verbal guidelines were that “books should not spoil the good relationship between Germans and Latvians, should not contradict Germany’s war aims and should not discredit the German people,” as pointed out by Žanis Unāms, Director of the Latvian Self-administration’s Art and Social Affairs Department (Unāms 1969, 130). After the year of Soviet rule, editors seem to have developed a good sense of what was acceptable, and no conflicts or confiscations were reported. Latvian publishing seemed to suggest a return to a relatively tolerant and bearable system, which fell in line with the feeling of cultural normality that the unthreatened Germans seemed to have felt in Germany as well (Schäfer 1981).

Two thirds of the titles published in Latvian were original works written in Latvian. Apart from the books in Latvian, books in German were also published, both for the army (occasionally huge print runs) and for entertainment. Thus, in the period between 1 July to 31 December 1941, 157 titles were printed, with 80 of them in Latvian and 77 in German (Zemes 1941, 4). Afterwards, the proportion of German books would be considerably smaller.

Unlike Germany, no pulp literature was produced. Censorship, however, existed. For example, a classical Latvian book comprising a hundred childhood observations in its full original edition appeared in two different censored editions (Jānis



Jaunsudrabiņš “*Baltā grāmata. Simts tēlojumi vārdos unlīnijās*” (“The White Book. A Hundred Sketches in Words and Lines”). Six of these stories were let out in the 1942 edition, while five were left out in the 1944 edition. The reason is obvious: these chapters describe Jews in a benevolent, interesting way. Deleting the stories did not render the book *judenfrei*, but its occasional references to Jews elsewhere are largely negative. Interestingly, the 1957 Soviet edition omitted ten stories, including most of the ones that Germans had removed. Both regimes modified the title: the Germans omitted the word *hundred*, while the Soviets removing the extended title altogether, thus hiding the deletion from the uninformed (Reinsch 2003, 276). Censorship, however, seems not to have found anything wrong with the translations published.

The percentage of overtly ideological books was small. Of course, one can see the ideological stance that was taken when one looks at the proportions of German and Nordic literature as well as the choice of predominantly neutral and classical works. Ideological currents were much more visible in the daily press, cinema and posters; it was mostly original work in Latvian that made up a large majority of anti-Semitic texts (though they may have been covert translations and compilations). A new publisher, *Kontinents*, was set up by Latvians in 1943 and proposed to the German authorities a broad programme of propaganda books and brochures in collaboration with the Propaganda Ministry and other agencies (Zellis 2012, 141–142). This was only partially done, but apart from some original works, the list also included a couple of anti-British and anti-American translations. There was a distinct emphasis on art books, and also on artistic design, quality pictures and drawings. Albums had large print runs (8000 copies), with illustrated books even larger (10,000–15,000 copies) (Kalnačs 2005, 68; 229).

Print runs of regular books were growing as well, and often exceeded their independence-period levels. This could be accounted for by the smaller range of titles and the large proportion of text books (schoolbooks had to be changed as the previous ones were Communist editions). The surprisingly robust state of Latvia’s wartime publishing industry in the face of wartime austerity can partly be explained by the need to invest money in something durable in the absence of commodities, by the long curfew hours that could be spent reading, and by the constant presence of death that led people to take at least some comfort in books.

### ***Translations: general trends***

Apart from books (which are in the focus of this paper) there was an enormous amount of translation work in newspapers, films, magazines as well as war/military interpreting. In newspapers, about half of the texts were overt or covert translations from German. The percentage of translations was broadly the same as in the independence period, and print runs rose from 2000 to 5000 at first, and occasionally to 10,000 and more. Several reprints

were published. Another reversal had occurred, with German literature providing around 70% of the source texts. This may be viewed as an ideological imperative or convenience (for example, copyright issues, which were strictly observed, must have been problematic in wartime). Only two translations from Russian were published during the German period, and only one from English: Cronin's "The Stars Look Down" came out in July 1944 when the war was nearly over, shortly before the Russians returned. Cronin was considered anti-capitalist, and was published in Germany even during the war. Amazingly, the same book was published again shortly after the Soviet takeover of Riga.

Most of the other source texts were Nordic and Estonian. Translations from other languages were scarce: there were only occasionally French works translated into Latvian, such as Jules Verne's "Captain Grant's Children" (*Kapteiņa Granta bērni*. Rīga: Zelta ābele, 1943), Cervantes' novels translated from Spanish (Migels de Servantess. *Parauga noveles*. Rīga: K. Rasiņš, 1943), an anthology of Italian prose (*Italiešu prōzas antoloģija*. Rīga: Latvju Grāmata, 1942/1943) and Homer's *Odyssey* from Greek (Homēra *Odiseja*. Rīga: Latvju grāmata, 1943). Two books by the German-Japanese author Wilhelm Komakichi von Nohara were published. He was a mixed-race bilingual, worked as the Japanese press attaché in Berlin, and wrote in German. Similarly, a book on Sven Hedin's travels can be seen as a homage to the Swedish "friend of the Reich".

An interesting case is that of the Finnish writer Frans Eemil Sillanpää. He was popular in Latvia before the war (three translations) and received the Nobel Prize, in part in order to give the Finns a boost as they fought the Soviets. He was also popular in Germany. As global political tension increased, Sillanpää wrote an article in 1938 entitled '*Joulukirje diktaattoreille*' ('Christmas letter to the dictators'), published in the SPD newspaper *Suomen Sosialidemokraatti*, which was directly addressed to Hitler, Stalin and Mussolini. This led, amongst other things, to his German translations being taken off the market. His book was, however, reprinted in Latvian in 1943. Interestingly, he was banned in Latvia after the war until the 1980s. Some Scandinavian books were also translated via German, though this was more an exception than the rule.

Most translated literature, like native publications, was distinctly apolitical. This is similar to what occurred in Estonia (Möldre 2005, 13). It is notable that, in contrast to Soviet practices, none of Hitler's writings were published in book form. There is one semi-biography: Philipp Bouhler's *Adolf Hitler. Das Werden einer Volksbewegung 1932* (Bouhler's Philipp's. *Adolf's Hitler's. Tautas kustības tapšana*. Rīga, 1942). This must have been the result of unofficial policy, since a similar situation occurred in Estonia: "There was no Hitler-cult and books dedicated to the Führer were scarce. When the head of the Estonian Publishing Board J. Libe wanted to name his brochure on the formation of the Greater Germany "Adolf Hitler", it was recommended to him by the German authorities to give it a more neutral name" (Möldre 1999, 158).

There were a couple of anti-Semitic booklets, such as translations of Georg Kahle. One was entitled “The Vampire of Mankind” (*Cilvēces Vampīrs*. Rīga: Pelle, 1943), an 80-page book, with a dedication by Adolf Hitler. It reviews 20th-century European history from the viewpoint of the Third Reich. There is a classical anti-Semitic and anti-Bolshevik caricature on its cover. There was another Kahle book entitled “In the Footsteps of the Global Conflagration” (*Pasaules ugunsgrēka pēdās*. Rīga: Taurētājs, 1944). Most anti-Semitic publications were original works in Latvian, including a whole series by Jānis Dāvis.

Anti-British and anti-American views were to be propagated as well. This was done because most Latvians tended to look toward the UK or the US. This was partly because of traditional pre-war loyalties, and partly because they hoped that, when the war ended, things might go back to the way they had been after the First World War. John Amery published an anti-Bolshevik monograph called “L'Angleterre et l'Europe par John Amery” (England and Europe by John Amery) in Paris in 1943. He was the son of a senior British MP, who was in Churchill's war cabinet. An anti-Communist, he moved from Franco's Spain to France and Germany and was executed after the war. His book was translated and had two editions (Džons Emerijs. *Anglija un Eiropa*. Rīga: Kontinents, 1943; 1944).

The generally apolitical character of the books published, and the publishers' surviving memoirs, seem to suggest they had a relatively free choice in selecting titles and relatively good access to them. This is in line with Rundle's observations that translated literature under fascism in Italy and Germany was not restricted or repressed institutionally and that the fascist states were leaders in translation (Rundle 2011, 36–37). Rundle also notes that this was the case when the state felt itself to be in a position of strength (Rundle 2011, 40) as limitations set in after the war began. Latvian publishing statistics show quite a different situation: while the proportion of ideological translations is indeed remarkably small in comparison with the Soviet period, the distribution of source languages and the topics covered suggest considerable self-restraint on the part of editors, if not unwritten advice or orders. As for the general ranges of topics translated, there was a strikingly high proportion of books on German composers (there could be no safer subject for all concerned), biographies and travel books. Various books on Mozart, Handel and Beethoven were published in quick succession. Biographies of German inventors, scientists, musicians, sportsmen and travel books were popular as well.

Apart from translations into Latvian, there were translations of the Latvian classics into German: works by Blaumanis, Skalbe, Brigadere, Poruks and Plūdons were published by the publisher “Zelta Ābele”. This publisher also issued a remarkable book on the history of Latvian publishing in German for the Leipzig Book Fair in 1942.

### **Minor issues**

As pointed out above, German resumed its place as the main source language (around 67% of translations in 1942 were of German literature). These were generally apolitical,

as the books were mostly classics. They were frequently published with high-quality illustrations by leading Latvian artists. Translators were clearly named both in fiction and nonfiction texts, usually on the title page. This was a return to the pre-Soviet norms. Soviet translators were frequently not identified by name, especially for political texts, although editors or editorial organisations often were. A couple of years after the renewed Soviet occupation, translators' names again tended to be removed from the title page and put on the back of it or in the "technical passport" at the end of the book, or deleted completely. The translator thus enjoyed a high degree of paratextual visibility under the Germans (Veisbergs 2014a, 109). Footnotes and endnotes were rare, but some books had introductions by experts or translators. The translations were precise, in keeping with the German traditional of fidelity to the original, as was the norm for serious literature. Translation quality was high for the classics, while for non-fiction works the quality varied.

## CONCLUSIONS

During World War II, the translation industry carried on in occupied Latvia, with a strong emphasis on German sources, followed by Scandinavian and Estonian writers. Most translations were of classical works and biographies. The choice of source texts is distinctly apolitical. There are no reports of obvious conflicts, interference by censors or confiscations involving translations. Thus in Latvia, as in Germany, it seems that the onus was on the publishers themselves to decide what constituted an alien element and was thus unacceptable. Playing safe, avoiding overtly political themes and withdrawing into apolitical titles was a normal practice (Sturge 2002). This seemed liberal enough to publishers and translators after the year of Soviet repression. Translators were always visible. Wartime austerity, copyright issues and paper shortages naturally constricted the volume of publishing, but high-class translations were produced and published in Latvia under the German occupation.

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## VERTIMO POLITIKA LATVIJOJE VOKIEČIŅŲ OKUPACIJOS METAIS

ANDREJS VEISBERGS

Santrauka

Straipsnyje aptariama vertimo situācija Latvijā vokiečių okupācijas metais, t. y. po 20-ies nepriklausomybės ir vienerių sovietinės okupācijas metų. Vertimo istorijoje visi trys laikotarpiai išsiskiria ypač sparčia politikos ir požiūrių kaita. Nepriklausomybės laikotarpiu buvo verčiama labai įvairi literatūra, iš įvairių kalbų, leidėjams taikant nevienodus kriterijus vertimų kokybei. Sovietinės okupacijos metais buvo skubiai nacionalizuotos leidyklos, ideologizuota sistema, visiškai pakeistas vertimų atrankos modelis, o pagrindinė kalba, iš kurios verčiama, buvo rusų kalba. Ideologinės literatūros dalis išaugo iki trečdaliao visų knygų. Vokiečiams užėmus šalį leidėjai greitai atgavo savo spaustuves, vėl pradėtos leisti knygos. Vokiečių okupacijos metais išleista apie 1500 knygų, tarp jų vertimų buvo beveik tiek pat, kaip ir nepriklausomybės metais, pasikeitė tik jų originalo kalba – vokiečių literatūros vertimai sudarė apie 70 % visų išverstų tekstų. Nemažai versta ir iš šiaurės šalių kalbų ir estų kalbos, daugiausia literatūros kūriniai. Vertimų kokybei keliami labai aukšti reikalavimai, tiražai dideli, o ideologiškai motyvuotų kūrinių išleista palyginti nedaug. Panašu, kad nebuvo ir aiškios politikos leidybos atžvilgiu: ji buvo nesistemiška, nekoordinuota, vykdoma leidėjų nuožiūra. Išankstinės cenzūros taip pat nebuvo, bet leidėjai patys stengėsi apsidrausti, todėl dažniausiai leido grožinę literatūrą, rimtus klasikinius kūrinius. Kai kurie latvių klasikai buvo išversti į vokiečių kalbą.