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A Golden Age and a Stone Age of School Libraries in Lithuania

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This article describes two eras of school library work in Lithuania-the last two decades of Soviet times (1970-1990) and the first years of independence (1990-1997). These two periods are very different, but we can learn much from both of them. School libraries in the period of Soviet power could be described by the words communist ideology and censorship, but in the minds of school librarians it seemed like a Golden Age. Since 1990, in some respects, a Stone Age came for school libraries-a time of poverty, of a lack of new books, and of a new kind of censorship.

Introduction

When speaking about the past, one faces the philosophical problem of description-what is this "past," when does it start, and when does it come to an end? If we want to learn something from this past, we have to define what was good in that past (what we would like to repeat) and what was bad (what we would like to avoid), but these definitions of *good* and *bad* can be valid only in some contexts and only from today's point of view.

In writing about what school libraries in Lithuania could learn from the past, I decided not to go deep into the past. Lithuania is a small country that was always in the path of big nations (Germany, Poland, Russia), and its independence was achieved only in 1918. In 1940, the country was occupied by Russia and annexed to the Soviet Union until 1990. The reorganization of the state and the periods of confusion after every change of power and ideology left not much time for the quiet work that is needed for visible results.

Today, it is interesting to look back on two periods of the recent past of school libraries in Lithuania-the period of Soviet stagnancy and the first years of independence. The last two decades of Soviet power (1970-1990) were a "Golden Age" for school libraries from today's point of view, and the first seven years of independence (1990-1997) have been a "Stone Age." In terms of the role of school libraries, their stocks and staff, and the nature of censorship, these periods are very different, and together they differ from today's situation.

Changes in the Library's Place in School and in Society

During the Soviet time, school libraries were like small screws in the big ideological machine of restraint of personality. The 1972 Regulations for the Secondary School Library stated: "One of the main tasks of school library is

to help the teachers to educate pupils in a communist way, to teach them the fundamentals of disciplines, to strengthen the knowledge of polytechnic training, to form the scientific materialistic world outlook and to prepare them for the activity of social utility" (*Mokyklos bibliotekininko vadovas*, 1984, p. 77). As one of the bastions of ideological training, the school library gained the same major attention as did every other cultural or educational institution. The school library was linked with the active promotion of Russian language and literature, of atheism, and of the documents of the Communist party.

More than 2,300 school libraries were part of the system of the Ministry of Education in Soviet Lithuania. School libraries were under the care of the Ministry, the educational departments of the executive committees of the Communist party of the towns and regions, and the State Research Pedagogical Library. One of the main tasks of the State Research Pedagogical Library was to translate and adopt for Lithuania the instructions of the Ministry of Education of the USSR. In spite of deep ideologization, this care of the school libraries was real. The State Research Pedagogical Library was especially active in caring for school libraries. It collected all textbooks and teaching aids and all fiction books for the obligatory reading programs; it prepared methodological materials and bibliographies for school libraries; and it organized courses and seminars for the librarians.

According to the Regulations for the Secondary School Library confirmed by the Minister of Education, every school had to have a library available for the pupils of that school. School libraries were quite active places, almost equivalent to public libraries in their stocks and importance, and they did not create trouble for the system of the state. School libraries, first of all, were considered cultural institutions, like public libraries but connected with the process of education. The position of school libraries in Soviet Lithuania was stable.

This position totally changed in independent Lithuania. In 1991, the State Research Pedagogical Library was closed for its vague work and unclear position (it could not change as fast as it was expected to). There were only a few regional authorities left that had special persons responsible for school libraries. Other authorities entrusted the care of school libraries to people responsible for many other duties, and they had no time to carry out this responsibility and no conception of the activities of school libraries.

In the same year, the Ministry of Education was merged with the Ministry of Culture, and the Library Department of the new Ministry took over school libraries. In 1994, the Ministry of Culture and Education was divided back into two ministries, and this event caused the most serious break in the progress of school libraries. Responsibility for the material side of the libraries (stocks and equipment) was assigned to the Ministry of Education and Science, and responsibility for the library as an institution and for the librarians was assigned to the Ministry of Culture. Librarians became cultural workers in the educational system. There was neither a separate depart-

ment nor any person responsible for 2,247 school libraries in the Ministry of Education and Science until 1997. School librarians were assigned to the Department of Additional Upbringing. This situation was like hanging in space. Double care of two ministries in reality meant virtually no care. Only the Department of Children's Literature in the National Library of Lithuania gave some help for school libraries.

One of the main areas of reorganization at that time was the reform of education. As part of developing a new national school system, everything connected with Soviet ideology and the suppression of critical thinking and self-expression was excluded from the curricula. But there was no place for the school library in the new curricula and programs of education. The train of educational reform ran away and the school library was left far behind. The prestige of the school library started to go down because it seemed more and more distant from the path of progress.

The Lithuanian Library Law was promulgated in 1995, but school libraries were not mentioned in it. New Regulations for the Secondary School Library were prepared in 1994 but, because of the dependence on two ministries, confirmation of the regulations was dragged out until 1998. Until then, the work of school libraries was based on old 1972 Regulations. School libraries are described in the New Regulations as "the centers of culture, education and information that collect, manage and save printed materials and other documents" (*Bendrojo lavinimo mokyklos bibliotekos bendrieji nuostatai*, 1998, p. 1). In 1994, nobody had any idea about changes in school library work, so the New Regulations were already old and conservative in 1998. The Library Department of the Ministry of Culture insisted on emphasizing the cultural side of school libraries because this helped to keep them dependent on the Library Department.

Library Stocks

The regulation entitled *Instruction About Eliminating Books and Other Printed Materials from the Stocks of School Library and Other Educational Institutions*, confirmed in 1984, describes the stocks in this way:

The stocks of books and printed materials in the libraries of the schools and other educational institution have to be valuable in ideological-political, scientific, production, information, and artistic respect, to help to develop knowledge received in the lessons, to bring up schoolchildren in the communist way, to raise up the level of their culture and morality, to quicken the progress of the science and technology. (*Mokyklos bibliotekininko vadovas*, 1986, p. 55)

In Soviet times, the size of school library stocks totally depended on the number of pupils. Town and regional departments of education received means for acquiring library materials from the state budget, and those means were almost unlimited. School libraries received one "program" book for every two pupils and one book for the obligatory out-of-class reading for every three pupils. (Program books were those literary works studied by all

the pupils of the same grade at the same time.) Large schools with 1,500-2,500 pupils had libraries with stocks of 30,000-50,000 books (excluding textbooks) and 20 or more periodical titles. Overall, in the 1970s and 1980s, there were about 15 million books and 14 million textbooks in the libraries of the 2,300 schools under the Ministry of Education in Soviet Lithuania (about 26 books per pupil).

The Instruction About Eliminating Books, mentioned above, stated that the school library collects program books, classical works of Marxism-Leninism, books for obligatory out-of-class reading, methodological, pedagogical, information books, textbooks, and bibliographies. There was almost no difference between the stocks of school and public libraries because of the large number of fiction books on the shelves of both. This did not stimulate cooperation between the two kinds of libraries.

In Soviet times, one publishing house, Sviesa ("Light"), published textbooks and teaching materials and three others published fiction, scientific, and nonfiction literature. They all announced their thematic plans for the coming year, so librarians always knew well in advance about forthcoming books. In the two last decades of the Soviet period, every year 60-115 titles of fiction and nonfiction books for school-aged children were published (Mozuraite, 1993), and school libraries tried to ask for at least one copy of each if the titles were not included in the school programs. There was only one textbook for each subject for every level (some textbooks were used at several levels), so teachers and librarians had no choice and no doubt about what materials to acquire.

The Department of Textbooks of the Ministry of Education, together with the State Research Pedagogical Library, prepared lists of books that school libraries had to acquire. School libraries also were able to order additional books from the plans of publishing houses if librarians could prove that the books were needed. The Pedagogical Library verified these orders. All school libraries had to order books in Lithuanian and Russian from the series *Pupil's Library*, and they also had to acquire the works of the leaders of the Communist party, works about Marxism-Leninism, and some other ideological materials.

Books were cheap and published in huge numbers (25,000-100,000 copies). The number of copies was regulated by special instructions. School libraries also ordered books in Russian published by other publishers of the USSR because all children studied Russian from the second year, and practically all the population spoke and read Russian. The quality and quantity of books available in foreign languages was poor. The only foreign language books that school libraries could acquire were those produced for studying English, German, or French by Raduga, a Russian publisher that edited and adapted books of foreign writers.

Until the middle of the 1970s, all school libraries acquired their stocks through their local bookstores. In the 1975-1976 school year, school libraries started to get books in a more centralized way from the State Library Collec-

tor, which acquired the books from the printers and distributed them to departments of education in towns and regions, which then distributed them to the school libraries. This way of acquiring books took longer and was more expensive and complicated than the previous bookstore system. In 1983, the funding for school libraries, not small before, was increased, and libraries also received some special funds for additional purchase of books from the bookstores. The centralized way of acquiring books for the school library made the life of the school librarian easier because it eliminated the risk of collecting "dangerous" literature unfit for use at school. This kind of literature could not even be published. The weeding of the collection focused on the old and physically (and politically) shabby books. Books removed from the collections were tom up (sometimes even pupils helped the librarian to do this) and delivered for recycling. It was strictly forbidden to sell weeded books or to hand them over to private persons or other libraries. According the *Instructions About Eliminating Books*, the collection of the school library had to be examined once every 7-10 years.

This way of acquiring and evaluating library stocks perfectly fitted the old library culture-the biggest treasure was the big collection, even if it did not satisfy the requirements of the school in the best way. This did not stimulate the librarians to think critically about the suitability of the collection. Everything was decided from "above." New political processes began in Lithuania in 1988. This was the year of bustle about the true facts of history and culture of Lithuania, about challenging its belittling by the Soviet Union, and about pointing out the danger of mancurtism, that is, the danger of being in ignorance of one's past, history, family roots, and relationships. It was impossible to find any books about many events from Lithuania's past in school libraries, but teachers started to talk with pupils about this. Only periodicals were full of the stories and facts, and school librarians spent much time looking through newspapers and magazines and making special sets of materials according to the teachers' requests. This was the first time it became clear that the collections of school libraries did not correspond to the needs of curricula, and this period was exciting and edifying for the school librarians.

The old Soviet-era system of values was overturned in 1990. The curricula and plans of many subjects (especially those connected with the history, policy, and culture of Lithuania and with foreign countries and languages) were considerably changed. But there were no new textbooks in the schools, and the old ones were unfit. The total "cleaning" of the stocks of school libraries started, and sometimes it seemed that a storm had blown over the shelves. The number of books eliminated during three first years of independence increased by 5-6 times compared with Soviet times. Many librarians hesitated-should they discard a fifth of the collection, or should they save books that some day could be interesting for someone? It was especially hard to discard the large numbers of books of Soviet fiction that were collected for the program reading. The new literature that schools

needed so much could not be published quickly enough, and the price of books suddenly increased more than 10 times. Libraries could no longer acquire books in such large numbers. School libraries started to shiver with the fever of death. But by 1992, the fever came down, and quietness settled into the acquisition process. The Ministry of Education felt the lack of money for school needs, and some teachers were not paid their salaries. The Ministry of Education was able to finance only the publishing of new textbooks and the most necessary teaching aids. In 1996, the 2,247 school libraries were funded with 300,000 litas (\$75,000) but that was only enough to buy about eight books for each library. The principals were able to spend school funds according to their own decisions, and most of them seldom thought about the library.

The funding for the replenishment of school libraries was now connected not with a number of books per pupil, but with an amount of money per pupil. The amount was so small that libraries could purchase only one book for every 30-80 pupils or one encyclopedia for every 500 pupils. This meant that a large school could receive about 20 books per year and a small rural school 3-5 per year (and only if the books were not expensive). Small schools could only dream about big colored books or about encyclopedias for younger pupils. Only the large collections inherited from Soviet times helped the libraries to survive. There were 21.3 million books in the stocks of 2,247 libraries (38.2 books per pupil).

After 1990, many new private publishing houses appeared in Lithuania, but the information about forthcoming literature was unavailable to the librarians, so they could not plan to purchase books. Adding to the collections became almost casual. In this period, school librarians had to think not about beautiful books and big collections, but about the possibility of receiving one copy of the most necessary books. At the same time, librarians complained about the lack of space for the new books because they could not agree to remove all books excluded from the teaching plans. Little by little, school libraries started to resemble archives of old Soviet literature. Schools that were opened after 1990 had small collections of 5,000-10,000 books, but their libraries worked much more efficiently in cooperating with public libraries.

Another problem appeared after the fall of the Iron Curtain: donations of books came from abroad. Old books, in great quantities and of many varieties, reached school libraries in Lithuania. Soon, however, the joy of receiving the gifts was replaced by perturbation. School libraries did not need most of the books, but they could not refuse them. The position of the Ministry of Education on this issue was clear: "Take them and be happy, or we will think that you do not need any books at all." In many school libraries those donated books are still like lumber.

Library Staff

It is written in the *Guide for the School Librarian* that only persons with education in library science or pedagogy can work in the school library. In Soviet times, it was possible to earn a degree in library science at Vilnius University and at four culture schools in Vilnius, Marijampole, Telsiai, and Rokiskis. For people already working in libraries, the most common way to obtain this education was by correspondence from Vilnius University. However, no school had a special course for school librarians.

Generally, professional librarians or teachers were employed as school librarians. In most schools, librarians also taught (usually Lithuanian language and literature), so the salaries of librarians and teachers were almost equal. In large schools (over 800 pupils), librarians were also paid for management of textbooks. However, the status of the librarian always was lower than that of the teacher. In many schools, teachers without any idea about the library's work took care of the school library and, especially in the small towns and villages, many librarians had no education beyond secondary school.

In Soviet times, Vilnius University and the culture schools prepared librarians as culture workers. Nobody even thought about "media specialists" -the first computers appeared in big research libraries only in 1993. Teachers educated in pedagogical institutes and schools never studied any aspect of librarianship. Quite often there were specialists with low qualifications in the school libraries. This was one major reason for the low prestige of school libraries. Everyone who wished to work as a teacher had to have a degree in pedagogical studies, but people with no library qualifications could be found working in libraries.

Trying to reduce this shortage of school library specialists, the State Pedagogical Library every year organized two seminars and courses for the improvement of qualifications for school librarians-for the beginners and for the already experienced. Experienced librarians had to complete the courses every five years. Most of the course content concerned the ideological tasks and aims of the Communist party, but the courses also offered librarians the opportunity to develop their knowledge in the library field. However, the knowledge and experience of librarians in foreign countries was not available through these courses.

In the Soviet period, school libraries with stocks of 2,000-20,000 books and 320-1,000 pupils had one full-time librarian. If there were more than 1,000 pupils and 20,000 books, the staff of the library consisted of two persons-the chief and the librarian. If the school library had a separate reading room, it could ask for one more full-time staff person (or a half-time staff person if there were already two librarians in the school). However, a separate reading room could seldom be found because no schools were planned with special rooms for the library. Often the library collection was placed in the classrooms or in a separate part of a corridor. Where there was a separate reading

room often it was used for lessons because of the lack of space in the large schools, or it was locked when the librarian had to go to the classroom to teach.

In 1991, after independence, school librarians fell under the Ministry of Culture, and their salaries became almost the lowest in the country. In the Instructions of the Ministry of Education and Science, school librarians were mentioned as auxiliary workers (together with horsemen, stokers, and cleaning maids). When the payment of pedagogical personnel was increased, the payment of school librarians as culture workers in the educational system was not. Actually, according to the Instructions of the Ministry of Culture, librarians could be paid more, but it was the principal of the school who decided what Instructions were more useful for that school. The number of textbooks increased, but librarians were no longer paid for managing them. Librarians started to escape from the small school libraries, and principals replaced them with nonspecialist persons in order to save money. For some years, no institution was responsible for or interested in the development of the knowledge of school librarians. Many school principals were sure that the already accumulated large library collection was all the school needed. At the same time, the preparation of librarians was reformed: correspondence education was abolished in Vilnius University, and the culture schools also removed librarianship from their curricula.

In 1993, the Open Society Fund-Lithuania (OSF) started a project called the Transformation of Education for Lithuania's Future. One of the tasks of the project was publishing and distributing foreign textbooks and teaching aids that could stimulate critical thinking in teachers and schoolchildren. After donating the materials to schools, OSF observed that many teachers did not know that the school library had those books. Special investigations showed that the books donated by OSF were buried in the stocks of the school libraries, and librarians (working in the old-fashioned way) had not informed teaching personnel about these unique materials. A conservative point of view related to information, public relations, and advertising was one of the most noticeable obstacles to reform of school libraries.

However, when school librarians began to see that nobody was interested in the revival of school libraries, the librarians themselves began to move, and in 1995, they established the Association of School Librarians. The first task of the Association was to clarify the position and conditions of school libraries. However, the attitude of school librarians toward their work remained conservative. When I was speaking at the second conference of the Association about the possible future of school libraries and the need to change services, I met strong opposition from some school librarians and indifference from others. Problems had eclipsed interest in reform.

Library Users

It was not the practice in the Soviet Union to introduce the school library to first-year pupils. Children learned about the library in the later grades when

they needed books for the program reading. (Program books were scarce in the public libraries at certain times in the year because all pupils of the same grade had to read the same book at the same time - *Hamlet* by Shakespeare or *Faust* by Goethe, for example.) The whole teaching process was organized in a didactic way: the teacher told the pupils about the subject; the pupils read the textbook and then retold it to the teacher. Almost no self-initiated or independent work was connected with the teaching process. The textbook was the only truth.

In Soviet times, socialistic competition was important, and libraries were involved in this too. If the data about attendance and number of readers or users decreased, librarians or even the school administration could expect some unpleasant collisions with the "ideological workers." To "win the socialistic competition" and to avoid trouble, librarians included all pupils of the school in the lists of readers, even those who never looked at the library (this also often occurred in the public libraries). So, according to Soviet statistics, more than 90% of pupils were users of the school libraries. Officially, each pupil read about 24 books per year from the school library (these data are not reliable). However, investigations in 1986-1987 showed that most of the schoolchildren aged 12-13 years did find the books they needed at the school library, and the school library also was mentioned as the first place where they searched for books (Mozuraite, 1988). The number of readers increased greatly during 1988-1992. Because pupils and teachers could find the latest information only in periodicals and in the new hastily published political books and memoirs of the resisters and political deportees, they rushed to the library. At that time, libraries stopped adding false numbers to their lists of readers because the real number was large enough and the whole system of Soviet *mania grandiosa* came down. Later, when the stream of new books and information turned into an ordinary event and when school libraries could not acquire books because of high prices, the number of readers considerably decreased. The number of books read per pupil per year also decreased-in 1996, it was just 15.

During Soviet times, almost all school libraries had a group of active readers called Young Librarians, and librarians were encouraged and paid to work with them. The members of the group helped the librarian to put stocks in order, to glue ragged books, and to serve other pupils who rushed in during the break every 45 minutes. In addition, the Young Librarians were on duty when the librarian had to leave the library for a short time. Since independence, the payment for this was abolished, but some librarians still worked with the groups of Young Librarians on a voluntary basis.

Censorship

During last two decades of Soviet power, school libraries encountered direct censorship quite seldom-only when the author of an already published and distributed book escaped to the West. Then all copies of that author's books were removed from the stocks and sent to the special stocks of the big

libraries or sent for recycling. This had to be documented by the library in order to ensure that those books could not get into private hands. However, preliminary censorship was more harmful and affected equally children's and adults' books. This censorship was related to the propaganda of the "right" point of view on various aspects of social life. Even in the textbooks, any controversial opinion was excluded in case it might encourage critical thinking about the Soviet way of life.

Two large institutions, the Committee of the Press and Glavlit (Main Board of Literature), controlled all publishing throughout the Soviet Union. Publishing houses were obliged to produce five-year plans, which were translated into Russian for the Committee of the Press in Moscow. Outlines of the books listed for publication in the five-year plans were checked in Moscow and either approved or rejected. Every book not accepted by the Committee was eliminated, and publishers were prohibited from diverging from the approved plans without the Committee's permission. All books prepared for publishing, including their illustrations and covers, had to receive the approval of the censor, who coordinated his own opinion with that of the KGB and Communist party workers. Publishers sometimes faced funny difficulties in publishing Lithuanian traditional songs, folktales, and even fairytales. The entire history of Lithuania, especially in the textbooks, could be reflected only in one way—almost everything that happened before Soviet times was shown as worthless or even bad, and everything after 1940 was shown as good.

Particular attention was paid by the Committee of the Press to plans for publishing textbooks, national literature, and translations from foreign (Western) countries. The Committee always preferred that foreign books not be translated from the original language. Instead, they wished to retranslate the book from the Russian translation. Usually those foreign books had already been examined by the Committee, Glavlit, or the Institute of Foreign Literature in Moscow and translated into Russian with selective editing. If an "original" book was chosen for translation, the publishers had to receive special permission from Moscow and coordinate their own translation with that done in Russian. Mostly, this applied to contemporary literature, but some classic children's books were published in this way. In the archives of publishing houses, I have found some documents damning such books as *The Heart*¹ or *Sinopa, the Little Indian*² for their religious propaganda and their portrayal of Indians as passive peoples. Books about Tarzan or Winnetou³ were proclaimed as gutter press.

In the Soviet era, in nonfiction books for children, only the achievements of Soviet science were proclaimed. Almost nothing was written about science or technology abroad if it eclipsed Soviet science. Every nonfiction book was censored by two persons from separate institutions—political and scientific. In books about nature, it was necessary to show how Soviet people had tamed their natural environment. In biographies, the undesirable features of personalities were "cleaned," and famous persons looked a bit "sugared" in

them. Some biographies of foreign scientists, writers, and other people were written by Russian writers with the purpose of evaluating them in the only "right" way. Many children's books about Lenin were published in Soviet Lithuania. It was easy to find them in every school library along with his complete works.

Stories based on themes of childhood disability were forbidden, as were books on many other themes that young people would have found relevant such as narcotics, alcohol, sexual or psychological problems, and so on. Great attention was paid to promoting the Soviet way of life and to defaming the West. The American way of life was "bad, not right" and, until the middle of 1970s, most translations for children emphasized the misery, poverty, and hardships endured by children in the West. One more phenomenon was related to censorship-the obligatory out-of-class reading. The State Pedagogical Library, together with the State Pedagogical Research Institute, prepared lists of books for the obligatory out-of-class reading. Of course, all those books were "right." Pupils had to read and to describe them in special reading diaries that were marked by the teachers. Studies at the local and republic level showed that books for obligatory reading comprised the greatest part of children's reading, but only a small number (usually classics) were really enjoyed by the children.

In the Soviet era, this censorship was related mostly to the publishing, marketing, and evaluation of books and only partly to school libraries because they received already "clean" literature. But from the first day of independence, another kind of censorship appeared-librarians' censorship. Of course, after 50 years of Soviet occupation, everything related to the Soviet occupation was painful. Libraries started to "clean" their stocks. School librarians took on this job especially strictly, creating a kind of local censorship. First, works by the leaders of Marxism-Leninism, political books, and literature about the Soviet way of life in Lithuania disappeared from the shelves. However, many librarians hesitated to eliminate books about Lenin's childhood, where he was described as an the ordinary, joyful boy, or the books about pioneers (almost all children in Soviet literature were described as pioneers), or the works of Soviet Lithuanian writers. The elimination of all those books would mean the loss of a large part of the library collection, and the opinion that a large collection was the most important thing for the school library was still alive.

There were also curious examples of overdone "cleaning" when libraries tried to eliminate books of Russian folktales (among them was the fairytale "Beauty and the Beast," which in Russian had the title "The Red Flower," and the color red was disliked), books about children (because they were mostly pioneers), or books about World War 11 (because the Soviet Union won). Right after independence was proclaimed, religious books flooded school libraries, and there were demands from some teachers of religion for excluding all books about atheism, the history of religions, and anti-religious fairytales that were so tolerated during Soviet times. Books about any other

religion but Catholicism were eliminated from the stocks in some schools. Some teachers of literature demanded school libraries eliminate "anti-pedagogical" books by Astrid Lindgren and Mark Twain because they were thought to teach children to be vagabonds, to smoke, to climb roofs, to steal, and to be impudent and rude. In Lithuania, librarians had never been taught to fight against censorship or against the will of officials. Librarians had never ventured to make decisions about the books they could or could not keep on the shelves. The inspectors from the Ministry of Education and Science and the administration of the school made librarians, under the threat of penalty, eliminate some books from the stocks, thereby blocking the way to critical thinking and the possibility to choose. Most local censorship was connected with religious or anti-Soviet attitudes, but in 1991-1996, censorship became strongly politicized. From today's point of view, this censorship was close to the Soviet censorship. Another idea had prevailed over the Soviet one, and any way to blot out the memory of the Soviet past was acceptable.

Today this phenomenon is still alive, but not so strong. In conversations with school librarians, I hear about their hesitation over some books and over the opinions of the school administration or teachers about these books.

Conclusion

The Soviet period for Lithuania came to end in 1990, but only officially. It takes much more time to change ways of thinking. Many school librarians remember that time with nostalgia. They almost never directly faced censorship. Their working day consisted of 45 minutes of quietness every hour interspersed with breaks 15-20 minutes long with the "crowds of Vikings." Everything was dictated "from above" and promised no trouble. Stagnation dominated in the state, head, and works. It seemed to be a real Golden Age for the school librarians.

The first few years of independence broke this quietness and brought misery into the school librarians' life. School librarians were affected by the shock for a long time. They were dissatisfied with their helpless attitude, but not ready for the changes and did not know what to do. Stagnation turned into resignation.

But now, that period is coming to an end. A new period with major changes is coming for school libraries in Lithuania. School librarians are waking up, stimulated to create new projects, plans, and programs, and getting acquainted with new technologies and with foreign knowledge and experience. Not all school librarians want to change, but many do. Just a few days ago, lecturing in the development courses, I watched a reaction opposite to that I would have met few years ago-no heaving of sighs and complaints, just lively interest and questions. The past taught one good lesson-it was so good when someone needed you. And now school librarians in Lithuania have started to move because they want to be indispensable again.

Notes

¹*The Heart* is a well known classical book by the 19th-century Italian writer Edmondo de Amicis. It is the sentimental diary of a little orphan boy. The book is deeply religious. In Soviet Lithuania, it was published with many omissions.

²*Sinopa, the Little Indian*, by James Schulz, is about an Indian tribe's life on the reservation, as told by a little Indian boy. The book tells about the daily life of the Indians, about their work and celebrations, and about the children's playing. It is a peaceful story. In the Soviet Union, books about American Indians had to describe their fight against their white conquerors.

³Winnetou is the Indian hero of the books by German writer Karl May. Although they had been published in the pre-Soviet years and were popular in Europe, these books were generally unknown in Soviet Lithuania and were available to library users only with special permission. Although the books told about the Indians' fight for freedom, these books were considered to be "too rich in adventures."

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