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The Abrupt Turns in Translation Policies in Latvia during the Occupations (1939–1946)

ABSTRACT
Within the period of changing occupations and ideologies, shifts in the translation policies in Latvia were incredibly fast. The independence period saw a developed translation industry with a great variety of source languages, literature and quality. The Soviets nationalized the publishers, ideologised the system and introduced censorship. Russian was made the main source language. After the German invasion the publishers regained their printing houses and a partial return to normality occurred. Most of the source texts now were German or Nordic – classics, travel literature and biographies. There were surprisingly few ideologically motivated translations. Most translators left for the West in 1944 when the soviet system was reinstated. The new occupation regime was even more repressive than in 1940/1941. During these years Latvian translation agents adapted to the ideological dictum of the times and tried to retain their own agendas.
Keywords: translation, Latvian, Russian, German, source language, publishers, visibility

1. Introduction

Latvian national identity, the literary polysystem and even the written language itself are all to a large extent the result of translation. Translations have always constituted the majority of serious literary texts. Translation played a pivotal role in the beginnings of written Latvian in the 16th–18th centuries. Translators (native German speakers) shaped, codified and modified written Latvian. Religious translations applied an approach of rigorous fidelity. Secular translations were localisations of easy-reading, sentimental German stories. Parallel to the rise of native literature in the 19th century, the main approach gradually shifted from adaptation and domestication to foreignisation and fidelity. More ambitious translations of Western classics started, usually done by distinguished Latvian writers. Alongside the traditional, faithful translations, some were freely shortened and otherwise modified.

Secular vernacular translation has often helped to initiate national literary traditions and even nation-building (Chernetsky, 2011; Easlick, 2014; Kumar, 2013; Ožbot, 2021). The Latvian nation emerged late in the 19th century and did so as a cultural nation: the aim of national liberation was to develop the language

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and culture (Levits, 2012, pp. 73–74). Latvian national identity is therefore very language-centred. However, many aspects of Latvian national identity have arisen and developed in contact with other languages and cultures. Many national traditions and artefacts were in fact creatively borrowed from other nations. Because nation-building began late, various elements deemed necessary for nationhood had to be imported, adapted and modified. Two attitudes could be seen working in combination: the *defective* stance against the alien (absorbing everything that is missing) and the *defensive* one (defending and absorbing through transformation) (Robyns, 1994). Usually this was done through the translation and dissemination of new ideas. The various people involved in this process can be viewed as *agents of translation* (Milton & Bandia, 2009). Among them were Latvian writers and poets, most of whom were prolific translators. Generally, they started with translations, where they looked for ideas, for trends to be replicated and adapted to the Latvian scene and necessities of the period. Thus, paradoxically, Latvian identity and language formation have translations at their very core (Veisbergs, 2012).

2. Independence period (1918–1940)

With the establishment of the new state, the above processes acquired new depth and intensity. Latvia's brief period of independence saw book publishing on a massive scale. Latvia ranked second in Europe in terms of book publications per capita and boasted a developed translation industry. The range of source languages was growing, with English slightly ahead of German in the pre-war years (German was also the main intermediary language), and French and Nordic languages following. This was a change from the total dominance of German as source and intermediary language until the end of the 19th century. Print runs were not very long: 2793 in 1938 when 1601 titles were produced. The percentage of translations seems to fluctuate widely, for example it stood at 17.8% in 1938. Yet this figure is much larger when the size of the works translated is considered. Thus, in the domain of novels, translations always numerically surpassed native production. German and Russian occasionally functioned as intermediary languages.

The publishing scene was very liberal. Pre-censorship was abolished after independence, although the authoritarian regime reinstated it for a short period from 1934. Extremist literature was banned, but was still imported by Soviet or Nazi bootleggers. Post-censorship was liberal, focusing mostly on moral issues, for example banning sales of D. H. Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. When *Grāmatu Draugs* was about to publish Remarque's *Three Comrades 1936* [Trīs draugi 1937] Latvian Ministry of Foreign Affairs was willing to stop the book after the protest of the German Ambassador (the author was viewed unfavourable in Nazi Germany as non-aryan/pacifist/anti-German). A compromise was reached: not to advertise the book in newspapers (Rudzītis, 1997, p. 117).

The literature translated was varied, as was quality. Generally the quality of both source texts and translation rose; pulp literature of the 1920s gradually disappeared, to be replaced by semi-sensational and glamourous books. With the advent of the authoritarian system in 1934, the media and the general drift of public thought also moved in the direction of more substantial and classical values. The choice of works to be translated was very much in the hands of translators and publishers, who in turn thought of marketing interests.

Translator visibility grew over time and depended on the status of the work translated. Visibility was high for high-quality texts and lower for the lower end. A large number of translators were also writers in their native Latvian, many were highly notable ones (Ezeriņš, Zālīte, Upīts, Virza), but members of other professions frequently produced specialised translations as well (Švābe, Straubergs, Galenieks, who edited Alfred Brehm's *Tierleben* translation (A. Brems *Dzīvnieku valsts.* Rīga: Grāmatu draugs. 1927–1928, 1935–1936) 6000 pages long). Some individuals gradually become professional translators from the favourite source languages, e. g. Valdemārs Kārkliņš translated over 70 books, mainly from German, English and Russian; Roberts Kroders translated around 80 works: Hamsun, Roland, Maupassant, London, Kellerman, Sienkiewicz and Schnitzler; Emīls Feldmanis translated around 100 works from German and English, including most of Wallace's novels.

Translation criticism remained very limited, mainly focusing on the quality of the Latvian, and lambasting pulp-literature translation in general. While translation criticism adhered to the defensive stance, suggesting that only the best foreign literature had to be translated, the publishers and translators implemented defective stance, translating anything that might have a readership and disseminating ideas and trends as yet unknown to Latvians.

3. Soviet occupation period

The occupation of Latvia and transfer of power in 1940 was swift; it step by step introduced soviet norms in all walks of life including the cultural sphere. The communist system was quick to nationalise publishers: Soviet Latvia was declared on 21 July 1940, nationalisation took place on the 22nd. On 5 August Latvia was incorporated in the USSR, on the 6th a single publisher authority, VAPP *(State publishing and polygraphic enterprises authority),* was set up and publishing became a state monopoly (Briedis, 2010, p. 49). A total of 134 publishers were nationalised (Zelmenis, 2007, p. 21). On 10 August LGLP, a Latvian version of the Soviet censor *Glavlit,* was established envisaging "political editors" (Likums, 1940, p. 1), the USSR precensorship was introduced on 3 September. There was eliminatory censorship at three levels: manuscript, typesetting, and release for sale (Latviešu, 1941b, p. 2). Around 90 publishers, authors and translators were

deported to Siberia or killed (Unāms, 1969, p. 22) or committed suicide.

The proscription and destruction of ideologically unacceptable books started. Religious books were removed from the public and school libraries, as were books deemed bourgeois, and books on the history and politics of the Republic of Latvia, which reminded readers of the existence of the independent state. Altogether, it is estimated that around 0.5 to 1.5 million books were withdrawn and destroyed (Zelmenis, 2007, p. 33–34). A newspaper from the German period provides the following figures: 740,954 titles are documented as banned, but the real figure is around 1.5 million, including many innocuous ones withdrawn by overzealous, often semi-illiterate overachievers, who considered Dante's *Divine Comedy* religious enough to warrant a ban (Latviešu, 1941a, p. 2). Four lists of banned books were published containing 4586 titles (Frazer, 2014, p. 304).

The state ideologised the publishing industry and reshaped the pattern of translation. 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, p. 23). Books about Marxism-Leninism, anti-religious writings and the new 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, p. 341). Thus 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 1940–1945). Print runs for political literature were huge: the History of the Communist Party (*VKP(b) vēsture.* Rīga. Part. Apg. 1941.) ran to 50,000 copies.

As the building of the "New society" called only for books "interwoven with Leninist- Stalinist ideology" (Latvijas, 1940, p. 3) there was little to be expected as regards translation from non-soviet countries. 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. Political literature was translated from Russian, Russian plays for the new menu of the theatres were translated, also translation of Russian classics experienced a boost. The rapid advance of Russian to main source language is obvious in neighbouring Estonia, too: Russian suddenly occupied the centre of the literary polysystem and provided a matrix for the new, original socialist literature (Monticelli, 2011, p. 191).

German was almost completely ousted: a book by Willi Bredel (communist, Moscow based, future GDR statesman) and 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

interesting as Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia were nominally allies at this time. Other languages were minimised: Western literature was reduced to progressive authors only (around a dozen books): 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, p. 195), more than double the average for the independence period. This was mostly due to the huge number of schoolbooks and political books. Transition to new schoolbooks started with translations from Russian. Amazingly it involved even language learners: thus a Russian compiled German study book for secondary schools was revised for Latvians by Šmits (K. M. Pogodilovs un I. V. Rachmanovs *Deutsch = Vācu valoda: māc. grām. vidusskolas 10. kl.* LPSR skolām pārstr. M. Šmits. 1941); an English learner latvianized by the translator Turkina, who used to publish her own English learners (J. I. Godjiņņiks, M. D. Kuzņecs. *Lessons in English: angļu val. māc. vidusskolai un nepilnai vidusskolai*. latviskojusi E. Turkina. Rīga: VAPP. 1941); world geography (G. Ivanovs. *Pasaules daļu un galveno valstu ģeografija (bez PSRS): māc. grām. nepilnas un pilnas vidusskolas 6. kl.;* tulk. T. Priede un M. Bērziņa. Rīga: VAPP. 1941).

Translator's visibility disappeared, especially for non-fiction and political books. A guide for soviet writers – a compilation of Gorky's essays and speeches was translated by the anonymous "translators collective of the Latvian SSR Writers Union" (Maksims Gorkijs. *Par literatūru: apceres un runas: 1928–1935*. Tulkojis LPSR Rakstnieku sav-bas tulkotāju kolektīvs. Rīga: VAPP. 1941).

As the soviet plans envisaged quick mass translation of the standard soviet literature of Marxism-Leninism-Stalinism translators were in great demand. Translation occasionally became the refuge of politically unreliable people who accepted free-lance jobs for translation from Russian (Karule, 2017, p. 144; Unāms, 1969, p. 16; Treiguts-Tāle, 1996, p. 341). Amazingly many prominent Latvian writers out of fear or necessity took to translating politically tinted and literary worthless rubbish, e. g. the ethereal poet Jānis Sudrabkalns translated A. Tolstoy's book on the battle of Tsaritsyn, which was important for Stalin (A. Tolstojs. *Maize.* Rīga: VAPP. 1941). He also translated the letter in verse of The Great Fergana canal diggers to Iosif Vissarionovich Stalin *(Lielā Ferganas kanāla racēju vēstule Josifam Visarionovičam Staļinam* (dzejā izteikuši uzbeku dzejnieki Gafurs Gulams (Gafur Gul-jam) un Chamids Alimdžans (Chamid Alimdžan)) Rīga: VAPP. 1940). The sophisticated essayist Zenta Mauriņa translated a biography of Maxim Gorky (A. Roskins. *Maksims Gorkijs.* Rīga: VAPP. 1941). The brilliant Latvian poet Čaks translated history of Soviet painting (A. Roms. *Padomju gleznie cība: 1917–1940*. Rīga: VAPP. 1940). Kārkliņš, who used to translate Western literature, translated a novel on the prototypical Russian rebel Razin (A. Čapigins. *Stepans Razins.*

Rīga: VAPP. 1940). M. Goppers the former publisher of elitist *Zelta ābele* translated a play on Soviet leader Kirov, whom Stalin had secretly killed as an unwelcome competitor (A. Golubeva. *Sergejs Kostrikovs* [par S. Kirovu] Rīga: VAPP 1941). Mežsēts who had translated Duma, Maupassant, Zola, D. H. Lawrence now did a drab novel on kolkhozs (F. Panferovs. *Brusku kolhozs.* No krievu val. tulk. A. Mežsēts. Rīga: VAPP. 1941).

New translators appeared on the scene specializing in Russian translations: Jēgere, Dobele, Ozols, Krauliņš.

Literary translation criticism was close to a zero, with regular critics reduced to silence and new ones not knowing what to say. One of the rare references to translation by the new bigwig of soviet literary scene Jānis Niedre (the first boss of *Glavlit*) says the following: "Surveying translations, one concludes, that many members of the Writers Union have approached revising of translations of classics of the soviet peoples and foreign nations very formally" (Latvijas, 1941, p. 4.). This sentence actually carries all the landmarks of the new regime – it is impersonal (*one* concludes), it emphasizes the need to *revise* classical translations and it complains that the translators are not enthusiastic enough. Rūdolfs Egle published a few general translation theory papers, abstaining from obsequious following the trends.

Translation policies in this period swung to a peculiar state-imposed form of defective stance, namely, an imposition of the soviet ideas and type of literature little known in Latvia before. This presumed pre-eminence of Russian and soviet literature.

4. The German occupation period

The Nazi occupation came swiftly in June 1941; within a week the Germans captured Riga, and a week later the army was beyond the Latvian borders, deep into Russia. After the deportations and violence of the Soviet occupation, the fabled 700–year hatred of Germans was gone and Wehrmacht were received as liberators. 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 quashed pretty fast, 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. Most of these would not have boded well for local languages and cultures. The realities of war led to adaptations watering down of the radical solutions. However, 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, p. 79). There were some understanding Baltic German repatriates, others bore ancient grudges and were more anti-Latvian than the Germans proper (Marnitz, 1991). Berlin authorities were aware of the problems and tried to limit the influx of Balts into the administration over the years (Kangeris, 2007, pp. 87–91). The confusion was often exacerbated at individual level, with the chief and his deputy holding widely different views on the issue of Latvia's present and future (Bassler, 2000, pp. 110–113).

In addition to the German authorities, there was a semiautonomous Latvian Self-administration with two departments, dealing with cultural matters. Although by decree its official language had to be German, it operated in Latvian in practice (Unāms, 1969, p. 117). The Self-administration both collaborated with the Nazis (Biezais, 1992) and resisted them. It soon learned to play the German agencies off against one another. As the war proceeded, the Latvian authorities gradually gained more power in cultural matters, and also some leeway in nationhood issues. The German authorities themselves recognised that "in Latvia more than elsewhere in *Ostland*, the *Generalkommissariat* had largely lost control to the semiautonomous Latvian Self-administration" (Bassler, 2003, p. 82). As a result the cultural sphere was very much ruled by general consensus, by imitating German practices, or by spontaneous decisions and oral directives from local agents.

Like the Soviet authorities, the German regime purged the libraries of unwelcome books. 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. In time, some titles were added, others were reclassified as harmless, and from some specific pages had to be torn out (Zellis, 2012, p. 134). Around 750,000 books were destroyed.

However, in the cultural field there was relative freedom compared with the Soviet year. For example, the Germans did not interfere in the theatre: no play with any Nazi elements was ever staged, the general drift was towards classical works both Latvian and foreign. The proportion of German plays among the imported ones rose, but works of Shakespeare, Molière, Ibsen, Shaw (who was critical of the UK) and other foreign playwrights, even Russian classics, were regularly staged. Thus, in contrast to some other fields, there was a "relatively tolerant cultural policy" (Lumans, 2006, p. 201). The emphasis was on European culture, which was presumed to be first and foremost German culture (Kalnačs, 2005, p. 49).

Soon after occupying the area, the Germans set about denationalising Soviet nationalised enterprises. As part of this process, publishers regained their printing works and resumed printing. Several publishers restarted activities in autumn, among them *Latvju Grāmata*, specialising in schoolbooks and publishing a total

of 260 titles (Zanders, 2013, p. 341). Schoolbooks were changed again, doing away with the Soviet-period stock. In contrast to the Soviet times, the old Latvian books were reprinted and brought back into use, and the new ones were generally written by Latvians. All in all, around 30 publishers received licences and 19 operated (Zanders, 1999, p. 115). Publishing was a very profitable business. 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. During the German occupation, around 1500 titles were published (Zanders, 2013, p. 342). This was a reduction of 60 per cent in comparison with the pre-war years, due to wartime austerity.. Print runs were generally larger than during the independence period (perhaps because there were fewer titles), some books had huge print runs, such as hymnbooks, textbooks, dictionaries and picture books. Books with propaganda value also had large print runs. Many pre-war reprints were published.

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, p. 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 collected works of Goethe, of all things, and it never got 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 and neutral translations. In 1943 the Germans suggested lifting censorship for translations from German altogether. 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, p. 130). After the year of Soviet rule which had gone before, editors seem to have developed a good sense of what was acceptable, and no conflicts or confiscations are reported. Latvian publishing suggests a return to a relatively tolerant and bearable system, which falls in line with the feeling of cultural normality that the unthreatened Germans seem to have felt in Germany itself (Schaeffer, 1981). Some "unwelcome" writers who had tainted their reputation with active soviet collaboration, were allowed to work as translators, so was Egle, who had served five months in prison after the German takeover.

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 reorientation occurred, with

German literature providing around 70 per cent of the source texts. This may be viewed as an ideological imperative, "soft propaganda" (Solberg, 2020) or convenience (for example, copyright issues, which were strictly observed, must have been problematic in wartime). Only a couple of translations from Russian were published during the German period, and a couple from English, e. g. Cronin's *The Stars Look Down* came out in July 1944, shortly before the Russians returned. Cronin was considered anticapitalist, and was published in Germany even in wartime.

Most other source texts were Nordic and Estonian. Translations from other languages were scarce: only occasionally French, such as Jules Verne's *Captain Grant's Children* (*Kapteiņa Granta bērni.* Rīga: Zelta ābele. 1943), Cervantes' novels 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 Japanese press attaché in Berlin, and wrote in German.

In contrast to Germany no pulp fiction was produced. The general focus was on literary classics, travel literature and biographies (many of German musicians and composers). It seems that, as in Estonia, 'permission to publish was granted only to works, which were suitable for Nazi ideology, to manuscripts, propagating a positive attitude, forbearance, and hard work' (Möldre, 2005, p. 3). Most translated literature was fairly apolitical. Ideological currents were much more visible in the daily press, cinema and posters. It is notable that, in contrast to Soviet practices, none of Hitler's writings were published in book form. There was 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: Kreišmanis. 1942). 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. Another Kahle book was *In the Footsteps of the Global Conflagration* (*Pasaules ugunsgrēka pēdās*. Rīga: Taurētājs. 1944). Most anti-Semitic publications were original, including a whole series by Jānis Dāvis which were, perhaps, covert translations or compilations.

Anti-British and anti-American views were to be propagated as well. This was done because most Latvians tended to look in that direction, partly because of 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, his father 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). Also translation of Heinz Halter's *Ņujorkas polips: Tamani Hola* [Tammany Hall] *vesture.* Rīga: Kontinents. 1944; (Halter, Heinz. *Der polyp von New York.* Dresden: F. Müller. 1942) fell in line of this propaganda drive.

The apolitical character of the books published, and the publishers' surviving memoirs, seem to suggest a relatively free choice of titles and 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, pp. 36–37). Latvian publishing statistics show that while the proportion of ideological translations was 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 of non-fiction 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. Several books on Mozart, Handel and Beethoven were published in quick succession.

German resumed its place as the main source language (around 67 per cent 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. Some non-fiction books had an ideological tinge, dwelling on German submariners, pilots, car racers.

Translators were clearly named both in fiction and nonfiction texts, usually on the title page. This was a return to the pre-Soviet norms. The translator thus enjoyed a high degree of paratextual visibility under the Germans (Veisbergs, 2014, p. 109). Some books had introductions by experts or translators. Translations were precise, in keeping with the German traditional of fidelity to the original, as was the norm for serious literature. Footnotes and endnotes were not usual, in case of use, they focussed on explaining foreign language or linguistic items, e.g. in E.T.A. Hoffmann's *Kater Murr* (E. T. A. Hoffmann's. *Runča Mura dzīves uzskati*. Rīga: Apgāds Zelta ābele. 1943). The quality varied: classics and "serious" works are well translated, while non-fictions is sometimes translated in haste and in a clumsy language.

Translation criticism was limited since there were not many newspapers and journals, but serious translations were discussed reasonably and occasionally the critics launched vitriolic attacks on translators pretending to translate from

"exotic" languages but in fact using the standard German or Russian intermediate translations.

Playing safe, avoiding overtly political themes and withdrawing into apolitical titles was the normal practice (Sturge, 2002). This seemed liberal enough to publishers and translators after the year of Soviet repression. 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. The translation policies swung back to a peculiar mix of defensive and defective stance, the latter focussing on "approved" German writing.

With the soviet army approaching publishing ceased, and many projects collapsed, e.g. only an advance copy of voluminous World Yearbook by Professor Bokalder was published and was lost (Rudzītis, 1997, p. 157).

5. Soviet occupation again

Starting with mid-October 1944 the Soviets were back in control in the capital Rīga, though part of Latvia remained under German rule until the end of the war. The sovietisation routine was again carried out, this time on a larger scale, around 16 million books were destroyed (Strods, 2010, p. 180). The general principle was that anything printed under fascism was to be destroyed: "there was neither time nor workforce/effort to find Goethe or Schiller" (p. 145). From 1933 onwards lists of banned books and authors were published regularly. The publishers and printing plants were again nationalized and the pre-war soviet authority VAPP reinstated, later to be turned into LVI (Latvian State Publisher). Anything composed and typeset in cliches in the printing plants was to be destroyed as well.

A month later Jānis Niedre, again in charge of literature (also deputy head of VAPP), reported that VAPP had published the first book in Riga after the soviet overtake – Stalin's speech book about the Great Patriotic War of the USSR – "the greatest modern book of all" (Niedre, 1944). Less than a year later in a special article dedicated to literary translation Niedre asserted that translations from Russian now were to be the preeminent ones, since only Russian had been of any value to Latvian culture. Conceding that most translators today were not of the visible literati and translations were of poor quality, he expostulated that translators were dunces and editors were slobs who had taken up translation because they had no other jobs. As a result "the ideologically important soviet works have been totally defaced" (Niedre, 1945, p. 935). The new stance is manifest in figures: of the 79 books published in 1944 half were translations, of which 95% were from Russian. Of the 334 books published in 1945 132 were translations (40%). Of these 122 were translations from Russian (92%). The figures for the next year (1946) were similar – a total of 528 books, 214 translations (41%), of these 202 translations from Russian (94%). The end to the former diversity is striking.

Several history books for schools were translated from Russian already in 1944, e.g. the short history of the USSR for the early school forms 3–4 (*Īss PSRS vēstures kurss: mācības grāmata pamatskolas 3. un 4. klasei.* A. V. Šestakova red.; tulk. E. Rūtentāle. Rīga: VAPP. 1944), geography books and again the above mentioned English learner. In 1945 other history and geography books followed, as well course books in algebra, geometry and even physics (I. Sokolovs. *Fizikas kurss: mācības grāmata vidusskolai.* Rīga: VAPP 1945) setting a unified soviet/ Russian education pattern.

In these years apart from numerous translations of Stalin (4 books already in 1944) and Lenin, and translations of Marx and Engels, there were few well-known names: Cronin, Aldridge, Andersens-Nexø, Hašek, Priestley (2), Sholem Aleichem. Cronin's book is a curiosity as in fact it was the same edition as published at the end of German rule, with only the printer's street name changed. Another mystery was publication of the totally alien to the soviet mentality E.T.A. Hofmann's *Devil's Elixirs*. The book had been translated and printed during the German occupation but had not been released waiting for illustrations. The soviets changed the title page and added a communist stalwart to the sole translator Kliene. But the book was never ever commented upon. A gross error had occurred in the ideological mechanism of coordinated translation agents.

The translation scene was totally biased and slanted. Domination of Russian extended even to well-known foreign books, which were now translated from Russian, e. g. Blyton's *The Famous Jimmy (Slavenais pīlēns Tims. E.* Blaitonas teksts. No krievu valodas tulkojusi Ārija Silabriede. Rīga: LVI. 1946); or from modified Russian editions, e.g. Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* from Chukovski's purged Russian translation (Daniels Defo, *Robinsons Kruzo*. Pēc Korneja Čukovska jaunā atstāstījuma tulkojis Ed. Mārēns Rīga: LVI. 1946).

Most of the prolific and professional translators and publishers had emigrated to the West either because they could expect little mercy from the Soviets, or were not ready to compromise their views again (Kārkliņš, Skalbe, Veselis, Švābe, Mauriņa, Raudive, Kroders, H. Rudzītis, Goppers, etc.). These publishers and translators had restarted their activities in the West already in 1945.

New, politically reliable ones appeared on the Soviet Latvian scene: Bauga, Ķempe, Sakse, Lukss, Vanags, who had all been in Russia during the war, or had shown their loyalty to the new regime (Talcis, Vīlips, Šmidre). Some later became established translators. Egle (who had served a German prison term), A. Upīts (who had been evacuated to the USSR) Kliene and E. Zālīte were the most prominent old-school translators who were carrying on, however, Upīts mainly republished old translations, Egle died in 1947. Kliene, and Zālīte, had to do some Russian translations, and could only later return to their traditional Nordic menu. However, this was only after Stalin's death when translation scene acquired some

normality, albeit a soviet one. Many translators were deported to Siberia immediately after the reoccupation. In 1951 a group of translators from French ("the French group") were arrested as anti-Soviet dissidents and deported to Siberia. Their main crime was reading and discussing French literature.

After the renewed Soviet occupation, translators' names again often tended to be removed from the title page to the back of it or to the 'technical passport' at the end of the book, or deleted completely (in case of non-fiction texts).

Translation criticism in these years amounted to nothing, apart from Niedre's party stance lamentations. The only exception was Egle's theoretical research writings which dwelt on general translation issues and carefully escaped utterly ideological platitudes. The translation policies within this period reflect and extremely defective stance, fully subordinated to Russian and soviet writings and isolating Latvian cultural sphere from the Western world.

6. Conclusions

The books translated in these fast-changing periods reflect the political situation and change of ideological stance remarkably well. The succession of totalitarian systems with their dogmas, censorship mechanisms, but also various interests of the translation agents lead to a rapid change of source languages, rapid change of domain proportions, rapid change of translation stances, orientation and translator visibility. Translators and publishers adapted to changes, had their own agendas, collaborated and resisted. During the occupations translation was occasionally a refuge for politically deviant people.

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