

ESTONIAN PRINTED HERITAGE IN EXILE: THE CENTRE OF ESTONIAN EXILE LITERATURE AT ACADEMIC LIBRARY OF TALLINN UNIVERSITY

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For almost a half-century creative works by Estonians abroad were unknown and inaccessible in the homeland. Exile literature was stored away in the special collections departments of libraries. In 1972, it was decided to set up a special collections department at the ESSR Academy of Sciences Library of the time, which from 1974 onwards could be accessed by a limited group of readers on the basis of special permits. The situation changed in 1988–1989, when the use of the special collections was freed of restrictions. From that time on, the collections were rapidly increased due to book donations by the Estonians abroad. As a result of the steady effort of Academic Library of Tallinn University, the collection of expatriate Estonian literature has become the most complete one of its kind in Estonia, containing over 5000 book titles and over 600 journal titles. The collection contains over 31 thousand published items.

The databases have been instrumental to reference activities, conducted by the Centre of Estonian Exile Literature. They are regularly used in the day-to-day work and provide information on the content of the collections. The referred databases are available on the web site of Academic Library of Tallinn University. Collections of expatriate Estonian literature are available in the archives of expatriate Estonians throughout the world as well as in Estonian libraries. In the interests of better preservation, microfilms and digital copies are now prepared from newspapers, which are available on the web site of National Library of Estonia.

Key words: collection of expatriate Estonian publications, digital collection of expatriate Estonian literature, databases of expatriate Estonian persons and publications, bibliography of expatriate Estonian publications

Each and every nation is responsible for the accumulation and preservation of its cultural heritage as well as making it available to future generations. The formation of a network of memory institutions to

incorporate archives, museums and libraries, which are fulfilling this mission at a national level, has been achieved in Estonia over a longer period of time. When Estonia finally regained its independence, notably

wider attention than ever before was attributed to the cultural heritage originated by the Estonians in exile, which had been practically inaccessible in their native country throughout the Soviet regime.

The Compatriots Programme was launched in Estonia under the joint supervision of the Ministry of Education and Research and the Programme Board in 2006. The objectives of the programme are to harmonize the activities of all the institutions and societies involved in the accumulation and preservation as well as provision of access to Estonian cultural heritage within and outside Estonia.

Published literature is the most durable form of cultural heritage. For that reason the literary works, which were produced by the Estonians in exile have survived in considerably great number of copies and are available to us up to the present time. Over 4000 works of significant impact for Estonian culture have been published in the free world by the Estonian community in exile, followed up by more than 600 titles of periodicals. The memory of Estonians pertaining to their history would have certainly been cut off without those publications. But the works of Estonian authors published abroad were strictly locked away from the Estonians in their native country for nearly half a century, throughout the Soviet occupation during 1944–1991.

According to the words of Eduard Tubin, a famous Estonian composer in exile, “Any nation would disappear and be perished without believing in the strength

of its culture”. That particular strength of the culture was superbly recognized by the Estonians in exile, otherwise they would not have diligently recorded in hard copy all the facts and issues that were considered of special importance in regard of Estonian history and culture.

The Centre of Estonian Exile Literature at Academic Library of Tallinn University has developed into the leading and most comprehensive centre of Estonian Expatriate Literature by today. Systematic acquisition of expatriate Estonian publications is performed on the basis of *desiderata* lists, rare specimens are preserved and restored, analytical survey of periodicals is regularly conducted with the following application of the output in the composition of databases and compilation of the bibliography of Estonian books published outside Estonia. The employees of the Sector communicate information about their activities to other interested at seminars and conferences, through the press and advertising booklets.

HISTORICAL SURVEY

Attempts were made to deliver the publications of exile to the native country by the official postal service, but in most of the cases those consignments did not reach the receivers. Book packages were confiscated already at the postal service. Still, those books in some way or other managed to infiltrate through the iron curtain and got around to their readers in firmly limited dissident and culturally minded circles.

In the beginning of the seventies it was devised by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the ESSR that it would be expedient to give confiscated publications over to a larger library. It is suspected that the originator of the idea was Felix Kauba [1], the Director of the Library of the Academy of Sciences of that time, who was a renowned connoisseur and lover of books. A considerable amount of the printed matter, published by the Estonians in exile, had been assembled at various public offices of the Estonian SSR, such as the Propaganda Office of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, the Security Committee and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and their maintenance became troublesome. The concept of accumulating the publications of exile into a library was definitely an outstanding idea, since their preservation was secured by this means. A considerable part of the invaluable printed heritage might have been lost otherwise. First and foremost it holds true for periodicals. It was decided in consequence of negotiations, held among the functionaries of the communist party, the Board of the Academy of Sciences and the Director of the Library of the Academy of Sciences of that time that the books would be given over to the library of the Academy of the Sciences and a respective department of restricted access would be established in the structure of the library. A certain small assemblage of the printed matter of exile was held at the library previously as well, since books that had been sent to the members

and employees of the Academy of Sciences from abroad, but were not delivered to receivers on account of their forbidden content, had been handed over to the library.

A certain decisive factor turned out to be the location of the library. It was situated directly opposite the headquarters of the Communist Party (the present building of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs) and the further accessibility of the publications would be uncomplicated. Instructions for the storage conditions were received from Moscow – the rooms had to be placed behind iron doors and under alarm system and their windows had to be provided with bars. The depository had to be isolated from the reading room. However, it was managed to back out of the bars on the windows, as the room was located on the second floor.

In 1972 it was determined to form a department of special custody at the Library of the Academy of Sciences, which constituted the basis for the present Collection of Estonian Literature in Exile held by Academic Library of Tallinn University [2]. Publications were assembled in the collection during 1973 and library services were started in 1974. Access to the publications of exile held by the Archival Collections Sector, was provided exclusively on the strength of special permits and observance of the precept was strictly examined by the local censorship authorities and once a year by the functionaries from Moscow. It was not permitted to hold reference tools of any kind, yet the leaders of the Communist Party steadily requested for infor-

mation, which called for the availability of card indices. For that reason, the employees of the department started to compile a card file for persons of interest from the political point of view, which comprised additionally to biographical particulars about persons also data about published works related to that person. Special attention was dedicated to their anti-Soviet activities. The card file has been preserved in the present Reading Room of Estonian Literature in Exile to this day. Although the department of special custody was a structural unit of the library, its functions and work were not reflected in the reports of the library.

On their arrival into the library, publications were tagged by censorship authorities as follows: a triangle for books permitted to be held in the General Collection – reprints of the works of Estonian classic authors, published in exile and lots of translations of foreign authors, issued by the publishing house Orto as well as books by a few Estonian authors; a hexagon for forbidden literature and a double hexagon for extremely forbidden books. Flaws occurred in the work of the censorship authorities now and then – separate copies of books have been tagged differently: copies of one and the same title had been tagged with a triangle, a hexagon and even with double hexagon over time.

Wherefrom did those publications come to the library? Plenty of the books derived in all probability from confiscated postal packets. Torn title pages of books refer to dedications, which can never be es-

tablished any longer and give evidence of works that were sent to many compatriots from abroad, yet never beheld by receivers. We may assume that part of the publications was acquired from foreign embassies and there were books that had been sent to libraries by Estonian publishing houses and authors in exile. Annual volumes of newspapers were obtained from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the Central Committee of the Communist Party and the Security Committee.

Deregulation of the special collections of restricted access was started in 1988, upon receipt of the earliest corresponding signals from Moscow. A letter, pertaining to the transfer of publications to the General Collection arrived on March 24, 1988. It was not a directive of the Minister of Culture of the USSR, but a relatively unpretentious letter of the First Deputy Minister N. P. Silkova. Pursuant to that letter, a couple of corresponding directives of the Ministry of Culture were issued in Estonia – to bring out of the special collections of restricted access in libraries the books, published during the period of capitalism and occupation (April 4, 1988) and the periodicals of the mentioned periods (June 8, 1988). Naturally, the order was thereat referring to the German occupation.

A regulation of the State Cultural Affairs Committee of the ESSR, concerning the bringing out of the special collections of restricted access of the whole production of printed matter in Estonia during the period of capitalism and occupation, was is-

sued on November 29, 1988. The literature in exile was tackled on December 2, 1988. The literature of exile was exempted from restrictions on use by a regulation. Among others open access was provided to the department of special custody of the Library of the Academy of Sciences, including the sector of the archival collection, which was kept under particularly rigid supervision, encompassing among other things the requirement for the authorization of the Central Committee of the ESSR prior to getting access to its holdings.

ACQUISITION OF EXPATRIATE ESTONIAN COLLECTIONS

In 1989, public interest towards Estonian literature in exile had reached its peak. The collection of literature started to build up with brisk speed. Books and periodicals arrived from foreign libraries, organizations, archives, as well as from private persons. While in 1989 the Collection of Expatriate Estonian Literature comprised approx. 2000 titles of books in about 8000 copies, the overall size of the Collection as for now is over 31 000 copies, whereof over 5000 titles of books. The set of the annual volumes of Estonian periodicals of exile, amounting to over 600 titles, is considered to be of special importance and it is heavily used as well. For the moment the Collection of Expatriate Estonian Literature, held by Academic Library of Tallinn University has been acknowledged as the leading collection of this field in Estonia concerning its completeness and systematization level.

Although expatriate Estonian literature is assembled and maintained by other larger Estonian libraries as well, the only other keeper of Estonian expatriate literature as a separate collection is Tartu City Library. I dare say that the same holds true within the scope of the whole world by virtue of accumulating publications that have been issued in all the host countries of the Estonians and incorporating especially scarce publications of the refugee camps and other rare publications. But the *desiderata* list of the expatriate Estonian literature up to the present time comprises considerably more than a thousand titles. The missing publications do not belong to the production of large publishing houses, but are constituted of books that were published in refugee camps in small number of copies during the first years of exile as well as books of authors in exile in foreign languages, treatises, books published by individuals, publications of organisations, etc. Their attainability becomes increasingly more complicated year by year as quite many of the publications are no longer extant. On the other hand, the provision of hundreds of significant books and periodicals has been accomplished within the recent years by addressing the authors and book lovers outside Estonia (the lists of missing books and periodicals have been published in the newspapers of the Estonians in various foreign countries).

In order to secure the preservation of rare publications, held in the collections of Estonian literature from outside Estonia

for the following generations, microfilming of the most significant Estonian newspapers from outside Estonia from the point of view of national culture was started in the framework of the project "Preservation of Estonian Cultural Heritage", which was launched in 1998 as a joint project of larger Estonian archives and libraries. Issues of Estonian newspapers starting from 1766, held by larger libraries of Estonia are planned to be digitized within this project. Seven exile Estonian newspaper titles (Välis-Eesti, Teataja, Eesti Post, Võitleja, Meie Kodu, Eesti Päevaleht, Stockholms Tidningen Eestlastele) have been recorded on microfilm for back-up copies up to the present moment. Preparation of digital copies of those newspapers by means of scanning the microfilm copies was started in 2005. Four titles from 1944 up to 2002 altogether 133 annual sets are available on the Internet by now www.nlib.ee/dea. To save rare publications issued in refugee camps, also rare journals and small-format newspapers have been microfilmed.

BIBLIOGRAPHIC WORK AND DATABASES

At the present time the functions of the Sector of Expatriate Estonian Literature are not confined to the acquisition, storage and lending of library publications, but they also include an extensive reference work in accordance with everyday requirements. Biographical data of the Estonians living outside Estonia are most heavily demanded, owing to the reason that Estonian reference

works have provided absolutely no information about them for a long time already. At the beginning, information was obtained from the afore-mentioned *personalia* card file of Estonian politicians and cultural figures living outside Estonia, which was further complemented with biographical data of other persons. The card file of outstanding Estonians living outside Estonia comprises approx. 10 000 cards and it enables to reply to numerous enquiries by other libraries, museums, publishers and individuals. Material assistance has been granted to compilers of various reference books and biographical lexicons in particular. Enquiries from abroad have become regular as well. Data requests are primarily related to biographical data particulars, but publications and other particulars as well. Data input to the electronic database VEPER was started in July 2004 and it is available for public on the Internet since May 2005. More than ten thousand individuals living outside Estonia for the moment, who are prominent in the Estonian-cultural sphere or their specialty of work, have been included in the ontogenetic database.

Analytical bibliographies of the periodicals and compendiums, published outside Estonia, are compiled since 1990. The content of received newspapers is reflected consecutively, a respective bibliography has been prepared on Eesti Päevaleht (1959–1971), which is published in Sweden. Since 2003 the articles of received periodicals, authored by the Estonians living abroad, have been entered into the database

VEART, which comprises more than 8000 entries of articles from 13 titles of Estonian periodicals, published in various countries outside Estonia.

The database VEILU contains foreign language titles of fictional literature by Estonian authors living outside Estonia, which have been published abroad starting from 1944. The database includes over 400 entries. The compilation of VETEADUS, the database of the scholarly publications of Estonians living outside Estonia, was started in 2005 and over 500 records have been entered for the moment. The referred databases are available at the web site of Academic Library of Tallinn University at www.tlulib.ee/originaalandmebaasid.

The Collection of Expatriate Estonian Literature of Academic Library of TLU along with its databases are unique in the context of Estonia as well as the whole world as there is no other memory institution in Estonia or Estonian archive outside Estonia that would hold collections and databases to cover expatriate Estonian printed works that have been published in all the countries of residence of the Estonians outside their native country. Lively interest towards the literature of exile lead to the compilation of several bibliographies, among them a selected list of Estonian authors outside Estonia *Väliseesti kirjanikke*, a selected list of memoirs by Estonians living outside Estonia *Mälestusteraamatuid väliseestlastelt*, *personal bibliographies of Kalju Lepik, August Mälk, Karl Ristikivi, Marie Under and the personal bibliography of Gustav Suits*

jointly with the Estonian Literary Museum. A two-volume monograph *Väliseestlaste kirjastustegevus välismaal 1944–2000* [3] was completed in 2003 as the Doctor's thesis of Anne Valmas. The second volume of the publication is constituted of the list of titles, published in various countries by Estonian publishing houses, organizations and individuals, living or operating outside Estonia. The literary legacy of Estonian scientists, scholars and cultural figures living outside Estonia has been displayed on exhibitions. Estonian books and periodicals, published in various countries outside Estonia, have been presented through public activities. Exhibitions have also been organized to celebrate the anniversaries of renowned Estonian cultural figures and institutions outside Estonia as well as other notable dates and events.

The spirited activities of the Estonian refugees extended over half a century. They aspired after preservation of their nation and culture at any cost and their aspiration was manifested by the highly enthusiastic foundation and operation of publishing houses, schools, archives and lots of other organizations. The printed heritage is a unique cultural property, whereby every researcher is afforded to acquire information on the culture in exile. The activities of the employees of the Centre of Estonian Exile Literature are dedicated to the establishment of the basis, which would enable those studies – formation of as complete collection of Estonian literature from outside Estonia as possible, compilation of

databases, digitalization of the collections. The firm readership and steadily growing number of enquiries prove that our efforts have not been wasted.

The matter concerning the right location of the Estonian archives from outside Estonia has been discoursed ever and again. Should they be maintained in the host countries of the Estonians or in Estonia? There is no indubitable answer to the question. Only holders of the archives are in the position to determine where the mental riches that they have accumulated should be maintained. The existence of the archives of external Estonian communities is of great impact for Estonian culture, therefore it is of material importance that they have good preservation conditions and that

they are kept in order on a regular basis. Quite a few Estonian memory institutions are prepared for taking that consequential part of national cultural heritage under their custody in case the maintenance of collections should evolve problems and so far it has already been happened on several occasions. At the same time, the opportunity to preserve our cultural properties at different locations of the world is highly praiseworthy considering the dangerous situation of our world.

The majority of the examiners of the heritage of the Estonian communities outside Estonia are inevitably living in Estonia, but the open world is exerting no restrictions to the use of the archives outside the home country.

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ESTŪ IŠEIVIJOS SPAUDOS PAVELDAS: TALINO UNIVERSITETO AKADEMINĖS BIBLIOTEKOS ESTŪ IŠEIVIJOS LITERATŪROS CENTRAS

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Santrauka

Beveik pusę amžiaus dalies estų, gyvenančių užsienyje, kūriniai buvo nežinomi ir neprieinami tėvynėje. Emigrantų literatūra, kuri pasiekdavo Estiją įvairiais kanalais, buvo saugoma specialiuose bibliotekų fonduose. 1972 m. nuspręsta sukurti fondą tuometėje Mokslų akademijos bibliotekoje. Nuo 1974 m. juo galėjo naudotis tik

tie skaitytojai, kurie turėjo specialius leidimus. Nors fondas priklausė bibliotekai, jam negaliojo įprastos bibliotekos naudojimo taisyklės.

Padėtis pasikeitė 1988–1989 m., kai nustota varžyti naudojimąsi specialiaisiais fondais. Nuo tada šie fondai greitai augo, nes užsienio estai dovanojo daug medžiagos. Talino universiteto

akademinės bibliotekos pastangomis estų emigrantų literatūros kolekcija yra pati išsamiausia Estijoje ir apima 5000 knygų bei 600 žurnalų. Kolekcija aprėpia per 31 000 spaudos vienetų, tarp jų labai retų pabėgėlių stovyklų leidinių.

Trūkstamos knygos ir žurnalai komplektuojami pasitelkiant *desiderata* sąrašus. Jie spausdinami Estijos emigrantų laikraščiuose. Entuziastingi estų kultūros rėmėjai yra atsiuntę kolekcijai šimtus vertingų leidinių. Informacinis darbas apie estų literatūrą užsienyje vyksta atliekant paiešką duomenų bazėse, kurios teikia informaciją apie kolekcijų turinį. Užklausas pateikia

vietiniai ir užsienio vartotojai. VEPER duomenų bazė teikia informaciją apie estus užsienyje. Joje yra per 10 000 vardų. VEART duomenų bazę sudaro estiškų žurnalų užsienyje straipsnių bibliografija. VEILU duomenų bazė apima estų literatūros kūrinius, parašytus užsienio kalbomis. VETEADUS duomenų bazėje galima rasti užsienio estų mokslinių publikacijų.

Bendradarbiavimas su užsienio estų archyvais ir bibliotekomis yra labai svarbus siekiant išsaugoti ir pateikti vartotojams sukauptą kultūrinį palikimą.

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