

# THE TRANSLATION SCENE IN LATVIA DURING THE GERMAN OCCUPATION

---

ANDREJS VEISBERGS

University of Latvia, Latvia

**Abstract.** The German occupation period in Latvia followed the twenty years of Latvian independence and a year of the Soviet occupation. The shifts in the translation policies at these critical junctions were incredibly fast. The independence period saw a developed translation industry. The source language variety was growing; the variety of literature translated and the quality of translations was broad. The communist system quickly nationalized the publishers, ideologised the system and reshaped the translation pattern. Russian was made the main source language and other languages minimized. The share of ideological literature grew exponentially.

Soon after the German invasion the publishers regained their printing houses and publishing was renewed. During the German occupation around 1500 books were published. Another reorientation occurred, with German literature taking around 70 per cent of the source texts. Most of the other source texts were Nordic. No pulp literature was produced. Translation quality was generally high. The focus was on literary classics, travel literature and biographies (many German musicians). There are few ideologically motivated translations.

The official policies of the regime as regards publishing in Latvia appear to be uncoordinated and vague, with occasional decisions taken by ‘gate-keepers’ in *Ostministerium* and other authorities according to their own preferences. There was a nominal pre-censorship, but the publishers were expected to know and sense what was acceptable. In their turn the latter played safe sticking to classical and quality translations. Yet the statistics of what was published reflects the general drift. Some high class translations into German of Latvian classics were published.

**Key words:** translation, policies, occupation, publishers, German, Soviet, ideology, censorship

## INTRODUCTION

Translation policies under totalitarian regimes have in general constituted an unexplored area in studies of both fascism and translatology. The collection *Translation under Fascism* (Rundle, 2010) started plugging this gap by comparing four fascist states and aspects of their often diverging and contradictory translation policies. However, next to nothing exists on policies in occupied territories, where the situation is even more complex as they involve extra players and changing political interests, both those of occupiers and the locals. These issues fall under the sociological aspect of translation studies: translations

actively intervene in the textual and political world of the receiving language because there are multiple agents with various interests (Wolf, 2007), and reality both quantitatively and qualitatively testifies to this.

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

The German occupation of Latvia followed twenty years of Latvian independence and the first Soviet occupation lasting one year. The translation scene must be seen in this changing political context, as well as in the context of the political prescripts of the ruling powers. Translation policies changed extremely fast at these critical junctures. This paper also makes some comparisons with the similar situation and processes in Estonia.

## INDEPENDENCE PERIOD

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

## SOVIET PERIOD

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, VAPP, was

set up and publishing became a state monopoly (Briedis, 2010: 49). A total of 134 publishers were nationalised (Zelmenis, 2007: 21). On 10 August LGLP, a Latvian version of the Soviet censor *Glavlit*, was established (Valdības, 1940), the USSR censorship (precensorship) was introduced on 3 September (Strods, 2010: 11). There was eliminatory censorship at three levels: manuscript, typesetting, and release for sale (Tēviņa, 22, 1941). Around 90 publishers, authors and translators were deported to Siberia or killed (Unāms, 1969: 22).

The proscription and destruction of ideologically unacceptable books started. Religious books were removed from 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: 33–34; Strods, 2010: 180). A newspaper from the German period provides the following figures: 740,954 titles are documented as banned, but the real figure is around 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 (Tēviņa, 21, 1941). 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: 23). Books about Marxism-Leninism 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: 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 1940–45). Print runs for political literature were huge: the History of the Communist Party (*VKP(b) vēsture*) ran to 50,000 copies. New schoolbooks were introduced for geography and history, translated from Russian.

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

German was almost completely ousted: only Goethe's *Faust* was republished (in 1941, by VAPP), mostly as a homage to the greatest Latvian poet and translator Rainis, whom the Communists now branded 'the great proletarian writer'. This is 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: Barbusse's *Under Fire*, Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath* and Voynich's *The Gadfly* were published in 1941. All in all, the Russian year (mid-1940 to mid-1941) saw approximately 1100 titles published, about two thirds of the previous

level. The average print run was 7250 (Karulis, 1967: 195), more than double the average for the independence period. This was mostly due to the huge number of schoolbooks and political books.

## GERMAN PERIOD

### 1 POLITICAL CURRENTS

The Nazi occupation came swiftly; 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. A radical reversal of feelings had thus taken place. Though there was terror, a holocaust against the Jewish population and (less severe) oppression of Communist sympathisers, the German occupation was generally seen as more benevolent and certainly more predictable and civilised than the Soviets' Year of Terror. However, early aspirations and hopes of renewed independence were 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. The best known (very much talked about by the Soviet authorities in the post-war period, as it was the most racist) was the 'Generalplan Ost' devised by the SS. Though the plan itself has not actually survived, its elements are known. It envisaged a fairly radical Germanisation of the Baltic area, with the forced eastward resettlement of around 50 per cent of the racially less qualitative population, to occupy the middle ranks of the German government system there, and Germanising the rest. This would not have boded well for local languages and cultures. Other plans existed, for example, Alfred Rosenberg, Reich Minister for the Occupied Eastern Territories, suggested cultural autonomy, a Baltic federation, etc. The attribution of racial quality seems to have been haphazard and easily changed. For example, the Lithuanians, who had been top of the quality scale, went down while the Estonians rose to the top, with the Latvians following (images of brutal Latvian Communists in Russia and anti-German riots in Latvia at the beginning of the century were not forgotten). The realities of war led to adaptations to the theories and, with the worsening situation in the East, the radical solutions were watered down to a certain extent. The plans were secret, and Latvian population generally expected to achieve some sort of national status after the war. The formation of the Latvian legion, the demands of the Latvian civilian authorities and the bargaining games between occupiers and locals led to a rise in Latvia's status in 1943–44 (Kangeris, 1999: 39). The Balts came to be viewed as pro-German, and of high racial quality together with the Dutch and other Germanic nations, deserving national existence:

Being aware of its commonality and closeness to the Estonian and Latvian nations in race, culture, history and especially the present struggle against the Bolshevism, the Greater German Reich recognises that the Estonian and Latvian people's nationhood (*Volkstum*), culture, language, customs, beliefs and bond with the land (*Bodenständigkeit*) will remain their inalienable property (Erlass des Führers über die Errichtung der Länder Estland und Lettland. Bundesarchiv: R. 90/2.).

The Dutch, Norwegians, Flemings, Danes and Swedes are racially related representatives of neighbouring nations. Walloons, Latvians and Estonians should be treated as racially related (Anweisung zur Verfügung *Heirat ausländischer Freiwilliger*, Bundesarchiv: R 6/130).

However, the occupying authorities kept a strong grip on the processes. At first there was military government, the Wehrmacht. It was taken over by German civilian occupying authorities (*Deutsche Zivilverwaltung*), of which there were many. Among the more prominent were the Reich Ministry for the Occupied Eastern Territories, the National Education and Propaganda Ministry, the Security Services, the Reich Foreign Ministry and the Nazi Party Press Office. Conflicts and rivalries developed between the various agencies and organisations. The Ministry for the Occupied Eastern Territories, the *Ostministerium*, was so notorious for its internal divisions over its Baltic policies 'that it became known as *Chaostministerium*' (Bassler, 2003: 79). There were some understanding Baltic German repatriates as regards the local wishes, others bore ancient grudges and were more anti-Latvian than the Germans proper (Marnitz, 1991). This could be seen in the chaotic re-establishment of the University of Latvia/Riga University (Biezais, 1986), where the pro-Latvian former Head of the Herder Institute, Wilhelm Klumberg, who was serving under the army, initially pursued a different course from Karl von Stritzky, who was Head of the Cultural Department at the General Commissariat. The German central authorities were aware of the problems and tried to limit the influx of Balts into the administration over the years (Kangeris, 2007: 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: 110–113). Some local bigwigs had positively mediaeval aspirations incompatible with official Nazi ideas (Marnitz, 1991).

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: 117). This Self-administration both collaborated with the Nazis (Biezais, 1992) and resisted them. The parallel structures controlling educational and cultural issues and the multitude of German agencies naturally led to rivalries, chaos, ignorance and incompetence (Myllyniemi, 1973). The Latvian Self-administration soon learned to play the agencies off against one



another (Unāms, 1969: 72). As the war proceeded, the Latvian authorities gradually gained more power in cultural matters, and also some leeway in nationhood issues. A litmus test was the Latvian National Independence Day on 18 November, which went from being banned in 1941 to being widely and officially celebrated in 1943. The German authorities recognised that ‘in Latvia more than elsewhere in *Ostland*, the *Generalkommissariat* had largely lost control to the semiautonomous Latvian Self-administration’ (Bassler, 2003: 82).

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

The official holiday list was changed again, to include some Nazi holidays and several Riga ‘liberation’ days. The Germans tried to limit the attributive use of the words *Latvia*, *Latvian*, *national* and *state*, preferring instead a calque of *Land* (ridiculous in Latvian), *Riga* and other attributes. Stritzky entered into a prolonged discussion about the spelling and translation of German names (such as *Ostland*) with the leading Latvian linguist Endzelins (Biezais, 1987). Stritzky had studied at the University of Latvia, knew Latvian and must have been torn by the variety of directives, ideas and norms of Latvian.

Some of Riga’s main thoroughfares were renamed to suit Nazi preferences. This petty humiliation caused resentment (and the more thoughtful German officials were themselves critical of it), especially as the changes were arbitrary and haphazard, for example, *Auseklis Street* (named after a poet of the Awakening) was changed to *Purvītis Street* (a patriarch of Latvian painting then still alive), apparently because Purvītis had taught Rosenberg in Tallinn.

Like the Soviet authorities, the German regime started purging the libraries of unwelcome books. These included first and foremost the books that had been banned in Germany itself: Jewish authors, Communist literature, Western left-wing and liberal literature (apart from the classics), works of Latvian nationalism, etc. 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: 134). Around 750,000 books were destroyed (the Soviets later destroyed more than 16 million) (Strods, 2010: 180). Schoolbooks had to be rewritten, with the Soviet-era books replaced by new ones. While the Soviets had used translations from Russian, the new books were written by Latvians.

The Germans insisted on abandoning the traditional Latvian system of transcribing foreign proper names, instead using the original spelling and adding Latvian endings after an apostrophe. This caused great alienation as it defied Latvian grammar. A similar process occurred in Estonia, as Hjalmar Mäe, Director of the Estonian Self-administration, relates in his memoirs. A German deputy commissar had noticed a streetname reading *Hitleri*. Mäe was told that Hitler was a great historical person and his name was indeclinable, 'even in Italy there was no 'Via Adolfo Hitlero', but 'Via Adolf Hitler'. A hyphen separating the ending was suggested to resolve this very serious breach (Mäe, 1993: 206–207). Towards the end of the war, however, there was a growing sympathy for Latvian cultural aspirations, and the Latvian spelling came back.

In many other cultural fields there was relative freedom compared with the Soviet year. For example, the Germans did not interfere in the theatre: Communist plays were, of course, forbidden, but no play with any Nazi elements was ever staged, the general drift was towards classical works both Latvian and foreign. In fact, there was quite a renaissance in the theatre (Kalna, 2014: 93). The proportion of German plays among the imported ones rose, but works of Shakespeare, Molière, Ibsen, Shaw (who was critical of the UK) and other foreign playwrights, even Russian classics, were regularly staged. In addition, the Latvian fine arts flourished in this atmosphere of relative tolerance, occasionally making concessions to the ruling regime (Kalnačs, 2005: 54). Thus, in contrast to some other fields, there was a 'relatively tolerant cultural policy' (Lumans, 2006: 201). The emphasis was on European culture, which was presumed to be first and foremost German culture (Kalnačs, 2005: 49).

## 2 PUBLISHING

Soon after occupying the area, the Germans set about denationalising Soviet nationalised enterprises, the largest being requisitioned for the German army and industry. As part of this process, publishers regained their printing works and resumed printing. After some weeks, discussions started as regards the publishing houses themselves.

A description of it is found in the memoirs of Helmars Rudzītis, one of the largest Latvian publishers, who had miraculously escaped the deportation to Siberia inflicted on many other publishers in 1941. Rudzītis relates that the printing works were denationalised soon after the German army arrived, but the fate of the publishing houses was unclear. The Latvians themselves seemed unable to decide whether to go back to the old ones or keep the single one created by the Soviets. Bureaucratic and personal squabbles were rife. As Rudzītis says, 'it took a German to sort it out' (Rudzītis, 1997: 155). This German happened to be the *Verantwortlicher für das Verlagswesen im Ostministerium*, Steinert (Garke-Rothbart 2009: 161), who organised an exhibition and a meeting with publishers. The Latvian publishers paraded their pre-war accomplishments, and so did

Rudzītis, presenting his many translations from German (although carefully avoiding Remarque) and duly impressing Steinert (Rudzītis, 1997: 155). Soon after this, publishers started receiving licences. Rudzītis characterises Steinert as a rich man, who had a plant in Germany producing decorative transfers (*Abziehbilder*) for porcelain (Rudzītis, 1997: 56). Although Steinert was a Nazi party member, Rudzītis had never noticed any signs of ideological fervour from him. Moreover, Steinert's right-hand man was his friend Rausch, a total anti-Nazi, whose bold statements made even Rudzītis fearful.

Thus, several publishers restarted activities in autumn, among them *Latvju Grāmata*, specialising in schoolbooks and publishing a total of 260 titles (Zanders, 2013: 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: 115; 2013: 342). Similar uncertainty seems to have existed in Estonia, where only two major publishers were established (Möldre, 1999: 157), though in the course of time 19 licences were handed out. Publishing was a very profitable business.

During the German occupation, around 1500 titles were published (Zanders, 2013: 342). This was a reduction of 60 per cent in comparison with the pre-war years, due to wartime austerity. A similar reduction occurred in Estonia (Tomingas, 1997) where around 1000 titles were printed. While the majority of fiction texts were those of national literature (again similar to Estonia (Möldre, 2003: 125)), translation also restarted. Print runs were generally larger than during the independence period (perhaps because there were fewer titles), some books had huge print runs, such as telephone directories (100,000 copies), hymnbooks, textbooks, dictionaries and picture books. Books with propaganda value also had large print runs, thus a visually impressive account of the Soviet year called the *Year of Horror* was published in 20,000 copies in 1942 (*Baigais gads*. Paula Kovaļevska redakcijā. Rīga: Zelta ābele 1942), and was reprinted in 1943 and translated into German. Another book on the USSR (Iksens Andrejs. *Padomijas postaža* (*Soviet Desolation*) Rīga: Latvju grāmata) ran to 10,000 copies, double the usual fiction print rate. A children's book by Milda Grīnfelde *Tētis karavīrs* (*Daddy the Soldier*), was published by Zelta Ābele in 1943 in 50,000 copies. The real author was the prominent Latvian poet Aleksands Čaks, whom the German authorities considered untrustworthy because of his Soviet-period publications. Many pre-war reprints were published.

Books in German were produced for soldiers, officials and the general public, as was Latvian fiction translated into German. It should be noted that much of the Latvian population could read German.

The official policies of the regime as regards publishing in Latvia seem to have been uncoordinated and unclear, with decisions often taken by individuals in power according to their own personal views (Handrack, 1981: 82). As in Nazi Germany, censorship was implemented or attempted by a whole range of agents



and was neither fully formalised nor very coherent (Sturge, 2002). Strange as it may seem, rivalries within the German bureaucracy delayed the collected works of Goethe, of all things, and it never got published. First-hand sources suggest that the occupying authorities were relatively liberal as regards what was to be published. There was nominal pre-censorship, but the authorities relied on editors and publishers to know what was good and acceptable. They in turn played safe, sticking to classical and neutral translations. The verbal guidelines were that 'books should not spoil the good relationship between Germans and Latvians, should not contradict Germany's war aims and should not discredit the German people,' as pointed out by Žanis Unāms, Director of the Latvian Self-administration's Art and Social Affairs Department (Unāms, 1969: 130). After the year of Soviet rule 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).

Two thirds of the titles published in Latvian were originals written in Latvian. Apart from the books in Latvian, books in German were also published, both for the army (occasionally huge print runs) and for entertainment. Thus, in the early period of 1 July–31 December 1941, 157 titles were printed, 80 of them in Latvian and 77 in German (Zemes, 1941: 4). Later the proportion of books in Latvian rose.

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, 2005:13).

Censorship, however, existed. Thus, a classical Latvian book comprising a hundred childhood observations in its full original edition appeared in two different censored editions (Jānis Jaunsudrabiņš *Baltā grāmata. Simts tēlojumi vārdos un līnijās* (*The White Book. A Hundred Sketches in Words and Lines*)). The 1942 edition has six stories deleted, the 1944 edition five. The reason is obvious: these chapters describe Jews in a benevolent, interesting way. Deleting the stories did not render the book *judenfrei*, but its occasional references to Jews elsewhere are largely negative. Interestingly, the 1957 Soviet edition omitted ten stories, including most of the ones that Germans had removed. Both regimes modified the title, the Germans omitting the word *hundred*, the Soviets removing the extended title altogether, thus hiding the fact of deletion from the uninformed (Reinsch, 2003: 276).

The percentage of overtly ideological books was small. Ideological currents were much more visible in the daily press, cinema and posters; anti-Semitism was dominated by original productions (perhaps covert translations and compilations). A new publisher, *Kontinents*, was set up by Latvians in 1943 and proposed to the German authorities a broad programme of propaganda books

and brochures in collaboration with the Propaganda Ministry and other agencies (Zellis, 2012: 141–142). This was only partially done, but apart from some original works the range included two anti-British and anti-American translations (Amery and Halter, see below). There was a distinct emphasis on art books, and also on artistic design, quality pictures and drawings. Albums had large print runs (8000 copies), illustrated books even larger (10,000–15,000 copies) (Kalnačs, 2005: 68, 229).

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

### 3 TRANSLATIONS: GENERAL TRENDS

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 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 only one from English: Cronin's *The Stars Look Down* came out in July 1944, when the war was nearly over, shortly before the Russians returned. Cronin was considered anticapitalist, and was published in Germany even in wartime. Amazingly, the same book was published again shortly after the Soviet takeover of Riga.

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.

An interesting case is that of the Finnish Frans Eemil Sillanpää. He was popular in Latvia before the war (three translations) and received the Nobel prize, partly to give the Finns a boost while they were fighting the Soviets. He was also popular in Germany. As global political tension increased, Sillanpää wrote an article in 1938 'Joulukirje diktaattoreille' ('Christmas letter to the dictators'),

published in the SPD newspaper *Suomen Sosialidemokraatti*, directly addressing Hitler, Stalin and Mussolini. This led, amongst other things, to his German translations being taken off the market. His book was, however, reprinted in Latvian in 1943. Interestingly, this author was banned in Latvia after the war until the 1980s. Some Scandinavian books were also translated via German, though this was more the exception than the rule.

Most translated literature, like native publications, was fairly apolitical. This is similar to Estonia (Möldre, 2005: 13). It is notable that, in contrast to Soviet practices, none of Hitler's writings were published in book form. There is one semi-biography: Philipp Bouhler's *Adolf Hitler. Das Werden einer Volksbewegung 1932* (Bouhler's Philipp's. *Adolf's Hitler's*. Tautas kustības tapšana. Rīga, 1942). This must have been the result of unofficial policy, since a similar reticence could be observed in Estonia:

There was no Hitler-cult and books dedicated to the Führer were scarce. When the head of the Estonian Publishing Board J. Libe wanted to name his brochure on the formation of the Greater Germany 'Adolf Hitler', it was recommended to him by the German authorities to give it a more neutral name. (Möldre, 1999: 158)

There are 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.

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 *Nujorkas polips: Tamani Hola [Tammany Hall] vēsture: Pēc faktiem un dokumentiem atstāstīta demokrātiskās Amerikas korupciju un noziegumu vēsture*. 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: 36–37). Rundle also notes that this was the case while the state felt itself to be in a position of strength (Rundle, 2011: 40) and, when the war began, limitations set in. Latvian publishing statistics show quite a different situation: while the proportion of ideological translations is indeed remarkably small in comparison with the Soviet period, the distribution of source languages and the topics covered suggest considerable self-restraint on the part of editors, if not unwritten advice or orders.

As for the general ranges of topics 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.

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

#### 4 MICRO ISSUES

As pointed out above, 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. Soviet translators were usually not identified by name, especially for political texts, although editors or editorial organisations often were. A couple of years after the renewed Soviet occupation, translators' names again tended often 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). The translator thus enjoyed a high degree of paratextual visibility under the Germans (Veisbergs, 2014a: 109). Some books had introductions by experts or translators.

Translations are 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.

## CONCLUSIONS

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

## REFERENCES

- Bassler, G. P. (2000) *Alfred Valdmanis and the Politics of Survival*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Bassler, G. P. (2003) The collaborationist agenda in Latvia 1941–1943. In *The Baltic Countries under Occupation, Soviet and Nazi Rule 1939–1991*. *Acta Universitatis Stockholmiensis, Studia Baltica Stockholmiensia* 23 (pp. 77–84). Stockholm: Stockholm University.
- Biezais, H. (1986) Sarežģījumi Rīgas universitātē (LU) 1941.–1944. g. *Akadēmiskā dzīve*, 28 (24.–32. lpp.).
- Biezais, H. (1987) Profesora J. Endzelina sarakste ar vācu okupācijas iestādēm (17.–23. lpp.). *Akadēmiskā dzīve*, 29.
- Biezais, H. (1992) *Latvija kāškrusta varā: sveši kungi – pašu ļaudis*. East Lansing, Michigan: Gauja.
- Blank, M. (1991) *Nationalsozialistische Hochschulpolitik in Riga (1941 bis 1944): Konzeption und Realität eines Bereiches deutscher Besatzungspolitik*. Lüneburg: Verl. nordostdeutsches Kulturwerk.
- Briedis, R. (2010) *Teksta cenzūras īsais kurss: prozas teksts un cenzūra padomju gados Latvijā*. Rīga: LULFMI.
- Garke-Rothbart, T. (2009) *Für unseren Betrieb lebensnotwendig ... : Georg von Holtzbrinck als Verlagsunternehmer im Dritten Reich*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.
- Handrack, Hans-Dieter (1981) *Das Reichskommissariat Ostland: die Kulturpolitik der deutschen Verwaltung zwischen Autonomie und Gleichschaltung 1941–1944*. Hannover-Münden: Gauke Verlag.
- Kalna, B. (2014) *Teātris totalitārisma laika mākslas kontekstā (1940–1945)*. Rīga: LU Literatūras, folkloras un mākslas institūts.
- Kalnačs, J. (2005) *Tēlotājas mākslas dzīve nacistiskās Vācijas okupētajā Latvijā, 1941–1945*. Rīga: Neputns.
- Kangeris, K. (1999) Nacionālsociālistiskas Vācijas plāni Baltijā un to izpausme Latvijas ģenerālapgabala kultūrpolitikā. *Bibliotēka, Grāmatniecība, Ideoloģija Otrā Pasaules kara laikā (1939–1945): Starptautiskā konference. Materiālu krājums* (24.–46. lpp.). Rīga: Latvijas Nacionālā bibliotēka.



- Kangeris, K. (2007) Baltvācieši Latvijas ģenerālapgabalā (1941–1945): labi okupācijas varas ‘kalpi’ vai Latvijā nevēlamas vācu tautības grupas piederīgie? *Latvijas vēsture 20. gadsimta 40.–90. gados. Latvijas vēsturnieku komisijas raksti*. 21. sēj. (84.–121. lpp.). Rīga: Latvijas vēstures institūta apgāds.
- Karulis, K. (1967) *Grāmata gadsimtu gaitā*. Rīga: Liesma.
- Liste des aus den lettischen Volksbuechereien un Antiquariaten zurueckstellenden Schrifttums.* (1941) *No latviešu tautas bibliotēkām un antikvariātiem izņemamo grāmatu saraksts*. Sast.: Mākslas un kultūras lietu direkcijas Bibliotēku nodaļa. Rīga.
- Lumans, V. O. (2006) *Latvia in World War II*. City: Fordham University Press.
- Mäe, H. (1993) *Kuidas koik teostus*. Minu mälestusi. Stockholm: Välis-Eesti & EMP.
- Marnitz, H. (1991) *Nordlicht über der Düna. Kritische Betrachtungen und Erinnerungen an die deutsche Besatzungszeit in Lettland 1941–1943*. Michelstadt: Neuthor-Verlag.
- Möldre, A. (1999) Book publishing system in Estonia during the German occupation 1941–1944. *Bibliotēka, Grāmatniecība, Ideoloģija Otrā Pasaules kara laikā (1939–1945): Starptautiskā konference. Materiālu krājums* (156.–161. lpp.). Rīga: Latvijas Nacionālā bibliotēka.
- Möldre, A. (2003) The role and character of book publishing under occupant takeovers 1940–1944. *The Baltic Countries under Occupation, Soviet and Nazi Rule 1939–1991*. Acta Universitatis Stockholmiensis, Studia Baltica Stockholmiensia 23 (pp. 121–128). Stockholm: Stockholm University.
- Möldre, A. (2005) *Publishing and book distribution in Estonia in 1940–2000*. Abstract. Tallinn: TLU Kirjastus.
- Monticelli, D. (2011) ‘Totalitarian translation’ as a means of forced cultural change: the case of postwar Soviet Estonia. In A. Chalvin, A. Lange and D. Monticelli (eds.) *Between Cultures and Texts. Itineraries in Translation History*. (pp. 187–200). Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang.
- Myllyniemi, S. (1973) *Die Neuordnung der Baltischen Länder, 1941–1944; zum nationalsozialistischen Inhalt der deutschen Besatzungspolitik*. Helsinki.
- Reichelt, K. (2004) The role of Latvia’s Independence Day, 18th November, in Nazi occupation policy, 1941–1943. *Latvija nacistiskās Vācijas okupācijas varā. Latvijas vēsturnieku komisijas raksti*. 11. sēj. (177.–187. lpp.). Rīga: Latvijas vēstures institūta apgāds.
- Reinsch, A. (2003) Adaptation of a Latvian classic – *Baltā grāmata* during the Nazi and Soviet occupations. In *The Baltic Countries under Occupation, Soviet and Nazi Rule 1939–1991*. Acta Universitatis Stockholmiensis, Studia Baltica Stockholmiensia 23 (pp. 269–277). Stockholm: Stockholm University.
- Rudzītis, H. (1997) *Manas dzīves dēkas*. Rīga: Zinātne.
- Rundle, C. and Sturge, K. (2010) *Translation under Fascism*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Rundle, C. (2011) History through a translation perspective. In A. Chalvin, A. Lange and D. Monticelli (eds.) *Between Cultures and Texts. Itineraries in Translation History* (pp. 33–43). Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang.
- Schaefer, H. D. (1981) *Das gespaltene Bewußtsein. Deutsche Kultur und Lebenswirklichkeit 1933–1945*. Munich and Vienna: Carl Hanser.
- Strods, H. (2010) *PSRS politiskā cenzūra Latvijā 1940–1990*. Rīga: Jumava.
- Sturge, K. (2002). Censorship of translated fiction in Nazi Germany. In Denise Merkle (ed.) *TTR: Études sur le texte et ses transformations, Special Issue: Censorship and Translation in the Modern World XV* (pp. 153–169).
- Tēvija*, Nr. 21, 24 (jūlijs 1941) Latviešu literatūras moku gads.
- Tēvija*, Nr. 22, 25 (jūlijs 1941) Latviešu literatūras moku gads.

- Tomingas, J. (1997) *Eesti raamat 1941–1944*. Tallinn: Eesti Rahvusraamatukogu.
- Unāms, Ž. (1969) *Karogs vējā*. Latvju grāmata.
- Valdības Vēstnesis*, 10.8.1940.
- Veisbergs, A. (2014a) Translation quality, translator visibility, paratexts. In G. Ločmele and A. Veisbergs (eds.) *Translation, Quality, Costs* (pp. 97–117). Rīga: The University of Latvia Press.
- Veisbergs, A. (2014b) The nation born in translation (Latvian translation scene). *Baltic Journal of English Language, Literature and Culture*, 4: 102–121.
- Wolf, M. (2007) The emergence of a sociology of translation (pp. 1–36). In M. Wolf and A. Fukari (eds.) *Constructing a Sociology of Translation*. Amsterdam: Benjamins.
- Zanders, V. (1999) Latviešu grāmatniecība nacistu okupācijas laikā. *Bibliotēka, Grāmatniecība, Ideoloģija Otrā Pasaules kara laikā (1939–1945): Starptautiskā konference. Materiālu krājums* (113.–120. lpp.). Rīga: Latvijas Nacionālā bibliotēka.
- Zanders, V. (2013) Nacionālā grāmatniecība gadsimtu ritumā. *Latvieši un Latvija*, 4. sēj. (331.–354. lpp.). Rīga: LZA..
- Zellis, K. (2012) *Ilūziju un baiļu mašīnērija*. Rīga: Mansards.
- Zelmenis, G. (2007) Kultūras pārraudzība un cenzūra Latvijā padomju okupācijas apstākļos 1940.–1941. gadā. *Latvijas vēsture 20. gadsimta 40.–90. gados. Latvijas vēsturnieku komisijas raksti*, 21. sēj. (15.–44. lpp.). Rīga: Latvijas vēstures institūta apgāds.
- Zemes bibliotēkas biļetens 1941. g. (1942) 4. burtnīca*. Rīga: Zemes bibliotēkas izdevums.

**Andrejs Veisbergs** (Prof., Dr. Habil. Philol.) works at the University of Latvia. He is a Consultant of Oxford English Dictionaries and an accredited European Union interpreter. His research interests include lexicography, idioms, language contacts, translation and interpreting. Email: [anveis@lanet.lv](mailto:anveis@lanet.lv)