

Regeneration of the Lithuanian Emigrant Press: Fifteen Years' Experience

Jolanta Budriūnienė

Martynas Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania

Political conditions determined by the powerful states in the summer of 1944 forced the major part of Lithuanian intellectuals to choose the voluntary exile rather than to become the victims of the Soviet dictatorship. It is supposed that approx. 70,000 Lithuanians retreated from their country at that time. Like other emigrants from the Baltic countries, they settled first in German displaced persons camps (as many as 113 of 269 German displaced persons camps of that time were resided by Lithuanians), and since 1948, with the beginning of extensive emigration, they chose America, Western Europe and Australia.

According to the statistical data, the major part of emigration flow spread to the U.S., Canada, Australia, Great Britain and Italy.

Bearing in mind the intellectual power of Lithuanian emigrants (retreated two thirds of writers, almost half of musicians, plenty of various artists, scientists, priests, students of higher education, etc.), it is hardly surprising that we speak about the large-scale publication of books and periodicals at that time. According to different types of calculations, the written heritage of Lithuanian emigrants during fifty years (1945–2000) includes over 7,000 titles of books written in Lithuanian and over 2,000 titles of books in foreign languages. Following the statistical data, an array of periodical press comprises over 1,000 titles of newspapers and journals published for shorter or longer periods of time. It is obvious that the extent of press publication largely varied between different countries and periods of time. Hereby, we shall overview various extents of publication of the largest sources of Lithuanian emigration.

Germany. According to the conclusions by Dr. Remigijus Misiūnas deeply involved in the analysis of DP publishing, provided in his monographs “Books of Barrack Culture: Lithuanian DP Publishing in 1945–1952” (Misiūnas 2004; 393), “Bibliography of Lithuanian Exile Press. T.1. Books in Lithuanian” (Vėlavičienė 2002; 683) and “Bibliography of Lithuanian Exile Press. T.2. Books in foreign languages” (Budriūnienė 2005; 213), one could state that during the said period of time, there were published approx. 1,000 books in Lithuanian and approx. 200 books in foreign languages. Major part of them concerned the arts – fiction, manuals, works dedicated to visual arts, music, history and religious books. The extent of periodical publications of that time is represented by a book compiled by Jonas Pranas Palukaitis “Lithuanian Periodical Publications in Western Europe in 1944–1952” (Palukaitis 1993; 282-285). There were over 400 titles of newspapers, journals, information bulletins issued at that time. This number also includes approx. 10 newspapers and information bulletins that were being co-published by the representatives from other countries, providing also topical information from Lithuania (“DP Express”, “DP Journal”, “Im Ausland”, “Our life”, etc.)

As it was mentioned above, with the beginning of the large-scale emigration, and spread of Lithuanians in various countries, approx. 10,000 Lithuanian emigrants who failed or were unwilling to emigrate due to various reasons (disease, elderly persons, persons of German origin, etc.) remained in Germany. According to Dr. Vincas Bartusevičius (Bartusevičius 1993; 39), who was investigating the conditions of Lithuanian DP of German period, in 1964 there were more than 3,000 Lithuanians unified into 50 neighbourhoods recorded in Germany. The main unifying organization was and still is the German Lithuanian

Community. The bulletin, entitled “German Lithuanian Community Board Information”, has been published until now. A single Lithuanian 16th of February Gymnasium preserved by the efforts of all Lithuanians is still operating in Germany. The Lithuanian Cultural Institute was established in 1981 with its main goals as follows: preservation of Lithuanian cultural heritage in Germany (purposefully, the Lithuanian Archive was established in order to store the archive material of Lithuanian organizations and of single persons), maintaining the Central *Lituanica* Library, organization of scientific conferences. This Institute is considered the main source of publishing until nowadays. The “Lithuanian Institute Convention Works” published annually on the basis of the conference material should be mentioned as well.

Great Britain. This country was one of the first which accepted refugees from the DP camps after the Second World War, among them – Lithuanians as well. Actually, a large amount of Lithuanians later chose other countries of destination due to various reasons. On the initiative of the Chief Lithuanian Liberation Committee (CLLC), the Great Britain Lithuanians Union was established in 1952. Lithuanian press was launched as well – publication of “Foreign and Home News Bulletin” was initiated, which was later transformed to “Lithuanians in Britain”, and after that – reorganized to “Lithuanians in Europe”. In order to facilitate publishing conditions, the “Nida” printing-house was established, which was later extended to “Nida” book-club, printing not merely newspapers, but also editing over one hundred books, ten literary almanacs, entitled “Pradalge” (“Swath”). After terminating its activity in 1991, the publications of “Nida” book-club were transferred to Lithuania. In total, more than 200 books in Lithuanian and approx. 50 books in foreign languages were published in Great Britain during the period of 1945–2000.

Striving to preserve Lithuanian identity, the idea of establishment of Lithuanian Centre containing the library, publishing company, club and other cultural establishments was developed. Such a Centre became “Lithuanian House”, later the “Lithuanian Homestead”.

Italy. Approx. 1,500 Lithuanians were in Italy after the Second World War. In 1952 there was the Lithuanian Community of Italy established. The Community was mainly influenced by the Lithuanian St. Casimier College of Vatican, established in Rome in 1945. It provided an opportunity to continue theological studies for the Lithuanian ordinands having emigrated to the West. The College students and lecturers were deeply involved in the Community activity and were considered the guardians of Lithuanian culture. Moreover, they largely contributed to Lithuanian publishing. Through their efforts, ELTA news bulletin was being published in Italian for 30 years, “The Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania” was published, reporting the persecution of Catholics and repressions in the occupied Lithuania and disseminating this kind of information to the whole free world. The large-scale publication of religious books should be mentioned as well. The Lithuanian Catholic Academy of Science (LCAS), having acted in the Independent Lithuania, was re-established in Rome in 1955. It summoned scientists of catholic orientation who had emigrated abroad. Through the efforts of its members, 11 conventions published in separate volumes of the LCAS Convention Works were issued. Six volumes of LCAS yearbooks, five parts of biographic manual “Unfading Lights”, volumes of Lithuanian literary studies, as well as writings of single authors may serve as a proof of publishing activity of the Academy. Totally, the LCAS owns approx. 60 grand works and widely published excerpts from the works of single authors. The noteworthy and weighty contribution of the printing-house of the Salesian monks was made in the publishing of Lithuanian children and youth literature. Thanks to them, approx. two tenths of publications of the high polygraph quality series of “Youth Library”, striving to “...service the emigration youth of Lithuania...” (Youth Library 1959; 29-30) were published. Total extent of publishing in Italy compounds approx. 400 books in Lithuanian and approx. 50 in foreign languages.

Australia. Approx. 10,000 Lithuanians emigrated to Australia during 1947–1951. As early as in 1929, Lithuanian fellowship of Australia was reorganized into Lithuanian Community of Australia. This flow of emigration is also linked to the beginning of a wide-range cultural activity. This certainly relates to Lithuanian press as well. In 1948, the first Lithuanian newspaper, named “Lithuanian of Australia” was published. Later, over ten periodical publications can be counted. The publishing-house “Lithuanians in Australia” was engaged in the activity of book publishing, later conducted by the printing-house “Mintis” (“Thought”), “Tėviškės aidai” (“Echoes of Motherland”), “Gintaras” (“Amber”), “Mūsų pastogė” (“Our Shelter”) still publishing the newspaper.

The Lithuanian museum-archive of Adelaide was established in Australia in order to ensure the preservation of cultural heritage of the Community. It is worth to mention the Lithuanian “Sambūris” (“Assembly”) established in Tasmania. Its cultural activity encompasses issues related to preservation of Lithuanian education, publishing and culture. Over 150 books in Lithuanian and approx. 50 books in foreign languages were published in Australia during the said period.

Canada. During the period of 1946–1966, the territory of Canada was populated with more than 20,000 Lithuanians replenishing theretofore large Lithuanian community. However, it should be noted that newcomers found only two Lithuanian newspapers published among the Lithuanian community. Thus, generally speaking, the cultural rise related to book and periodical publishing was determined by DP Lithuanians. Thanks to them, the publishing of more than ten new newspapers and journals was launched; book publishing-houses were established. It is assumed that over 300 books in Lithuanian and approx. 100 books in foreign languages were published in Canada during the period of 1945–2000.

The museum-archive of Lithuanians in Canada, established in 1989, maintains and stores the documents, visual data of Lithuanians in Canada, as well as the library. In 1977 there was Lithuanian Folk Art Institute established in order to collect, store and investigate the ancient folk art, as well as to develop and maintain the new one. The pride of this Institute is a series of publications on Lithuanian folk art (Lithuanian National Costume, 1979; Lithuanian Easter Eggs, 1982; Lithuanian Sashes, 1988). Published in 1967, the book “Lithuanians in Canada” is included in the series “Canada ethnica”.

U.S. The most numerous communities of Lithuanians, connecting both Lithuanians of the large emigration flow and those emigrated from the DP camps of post-war Germany. According to various calculations, it is assumed that the number of Lithuanian emigrants reached 30,000–40,000 at that time. Established in 1951, Lithuanian community in U.S. incorporated Lithuanians of different States of America into 76 Lithuanian neighbourhoods of 12 counties. Moreover, the Lithuanians were establishing various public, professional, political organizations; they were forming the artistic and cultural assemblies. Wide range of activity decided also the wide extent of publishing. According to “Bibliography of Lithuanian Exile Press. T.1. Books in Lithuanian” (Vėlavičienė 2002; 683) and “Bibliography of Lithuanian Exile Press. T.2. Books in foreign languages” (Budriūnienė 2005; 213), approx. 5,000 books in Lithuanian and over 1,500 books in foreign languages were published in U.S. during the period of 1945–2000. Actually, such a striking extent of publishing in this country was reached due to the numerous Lithuanian publishing-houses the number of which is assumed to be nearly one hundred. Separate Lithuanian parishes were famous for their large-scale publishing of community books on the occasion of jubilees and anniversaries; a numerous amount of press of different organizations, parties and movements. Among the variety of publishing-houses, one could discern the Lithuanian photo-archive, established on the initiative of the photo-artist A. Kezis, which was rearranged into “American Lithuanians Library Publishing-house” in 1976. Thanks to him, a series of Lithuanian Ethnical Encyclopedia came into the world, presenting the events which are crucial for Lithuanian

nation and preservation of its historical memory (“Lithuania by Pennsylvanian Mineworkers”, 1977; “Emigrated from the homeland: Lithuanian Cemetery of St. Casimier in Chicago”, 1976; “Lithuanians in Siberia”, 1981; “Lithuanian Customs and Traditions”, 1978, 1985). More detailed information about this publishing-house was provided in a special edition of the journal “Among the Books” (Budriūnienė 2003; 30-32). The extensive contribution to dissemination of Lithuanian literature was definitely made by Stepas Zobarskas publishing-house “Manyland books”. Approx. 50 English translations of Lithuanian fictional works were published by this printing-house. All relevant information may be found in the complex publication compiled by the team of authors and organizers, entitled “Encyclopedia Lituanica”, 35 volumes of which (plus two volumes of appendixes) are printed in Lithuanian and 6 volumes (“Encyclopedia Lituanica”) – in English.

Today, it is hard to provide an explicit number of periodical editions published in U.S. It should emerge after compilation of the third volume of the bibliography of Lithuanian Exile Press, entitled “Serial editions”.

To preserve the rich cultural heritage, the community was concerned about establishing museums, archives, libraries. The American Lithuanians Cultural Archive (ALCA) containing approx. 50,000 books, over 50 funds of personal and organizational manuscripts, storing the unique exhibits is considered the highly important guardian of Lithuanian emigrants’ cultural heritage.

One of largest cultural sources – Lithuanian Research and Studies Centre in Chicago (LRSC) – may be proud of its diverse activities. This Centre consists of the following units: World Lithuanians Archive containing over 100 thousand books and collection of over 2 thousand serial editions, numerous heritage of personal and organizational manuscripts, Žilevičius-Kreivėnas Musicology Archive, Lithuanian Medicine Museum and Archive, S. Budrys Photo-archive of Lithuanians, Library and Archive of historian Jonas Dainauskas, Art Archive, Video/audio Unit, Lithuanian Genocide Research Centre in America, Freedom Fight Museum of Ramovėnai, Museum of Lithuanians.

The LRSC strives not merely to collect and to maintain heritage of Lithuanian nation, but also to analyse it – by using the available documents to announce articles, books, to arrange exhibitions, to coordinate diverse scientific activities. The funds of the National Library contain a few tenths of books compiled and published by this Centre.

The Balzekas Museum of Lithuanian Culture established on the personal initiative is also striving to preserve Lithuanian culture.

Latin America. The number of Lithuanian emigrants is quite small if compared to the above described Lithuanian communities. Approx. 5,000 Lithuanians emigrated to Argentina, Brazil, Columbia, Uruguay and Venezuela after the Second World War. Though almost every country (except Venezuela) had Lithuanian communities already established by former emigrants, however, publishing activity was at its initial stage during both the period of former emigrants and after associating the newcomers. Each community had only one or two Lithuanian newspapers. Totally, there were one hundred books published in 1945–2000 (in Lithuanian and foreign languages). Among those countries one could discern Brazil, where “The Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania” was being published in Portuguese, and the Lithuanian-Portuguese journal “Our Lithuania” distinguished for its high polygraphic quality is available even today.

Being obstructed from accessing Lithuania for whole decades and collected in the archives of sundry organizations, as well as private collections of Lithuanians living abroad, after re-institution of independence of the Republic of Lithuania, the press of Lithuanian emigrants has found its place in libraries, collections of academic establishments of the country. A crucial role in this regeneration process took the action called “Books for Lithuania”. During this action, approx. 1 million print items of edition were collected and

brought to Lithuania, mainly the editions of Lithuanian emigrants. In 1990 the primal initiative acquired a new level due to the cooperation agreement signed between V. Bulavas, the then director of Martynas Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania, and J. Račkauskas, the director of Lithuanian Research and Studies Centre in Chicago. One of the major benefits of this Agreement was 10 large-sized book placers collected and transferred to Lithuania by our partners in Chicago. The National Library has collaborated and still maintains relations with Lithuanian Cultural Institute in Germany, American Lithuanians Cultural Archive, Catholic Religious Relief Fund and other numerous organizations and private persons. Therefore, we could be fairly proud of the largest fund of press of Lithuanian emigrants. According to the present bibliographies, it could be stated that the library has approx. 95 % of emigration books and a major part of periodical press, the fund of which is supplemented, to the delight of everyone, by new editions ever still. We are grateful for a present from LRSC received in 2004 – a fund of microfilms of the daily newspaper “Darbininkas” (*Worker*) of 1915–1950.

It should be noted that the National Library exercises not merely the functions of a guardian of the emigration press, but also that of a disseminator – surplus of books and periodical press is provided to the local urban, regional, rural and school libraries. In such way, the written heritage of emigrants is slowly regenerating and occupies a proper place among the whole press of the country.

One could be willing to have a glance at the bibliographic works of Lithuanian emigrants’ press. After the Second World War, works of registration of emigration editions were published in the periodical edition “Bookshelf” in Germany, which was later transferred to U.S., repeatedly changing its titles and periodicity. However, the systematic bibliographic process of emigration press was terminated in 1966, after the death of A. Ružancovas, the main authors of this edition. The subsequent bibliographic works (“Bibliography of Press of Lithuanian Emigrants”, 1970-1974; 1975-1979 /compiled by P. Gaučys; A Lithuanian bibliography / Adam a. Filomena Kantautai, 1975) were unable to cover the whole array of published press. After Lithuania had acquired its independence, and emigration publications had reached the audience of Lithuania, a particular attention was paid to systematization of press contents. Even at the Soviet time (1989), the Lituanica section of Bibliographic News No 6 published by the National Library contained records from Lithuanian emigration press. Lithuania was the pioneer among the countries of the Soviet Union, engaged in bibliography of exodus press. Even now the bibliographies of the current periodical publications and books of emigration are compiled in the Bibliographic news series book “Lituanica” separately published and compiled by the Lituanica Department and stored in the National Library database. The bibliographic indexes of such famous journals as the “Metmenys” (*Outlines*) and “Aidai” (*Echoes*) were prepared and published by the efforts of the then Lituanica Department of the National Library. In 2002 the “Bibliography of Lithuanian Exile Press. T.1. Books in Lithuanian” came into the world thanks to the persistent and long-term activity of the employees of the above-mentioned Unit. Recently, the second volume called “Books in Foreign Languages” was published. Foundations have been laid down even for the third volume called “Serial Editions”. It is likely that these bibliographic publications will largely contribute to the activity of various scientists investigating in the multifaceted history of emigration; they will facilitate analysis of all necessary information and new evidence, and will help to evaluate the emigrational contribution into Lithuanian culture embedment, science, development and dissemination process.

References

Misiūnas, Remigijus (2004). Books of Barrack Culture: Lithuanian DP Publishing in 1945–1952. Vilnius : Versus Aureus, p. 393

Vėlavičienė, Silvija (2002). Bibliography of Lithuanian Exile Press. T.1. Books in Lithuanian. Vilnius : Lietuvos nacionalinė Martyno Mažvydo biblioteka, p. 683

Budriūnienė, Jolanta (2005). Bibliography of Lithuanian Exile Press. T.2. Books in foreign languages. Vilnius : Martynas Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania, p. 213, 328

Palukaitis, Jonas Pranas (1993). Lithuanian Periodical Publications in the Western Europe in 1944–1952. Vilnius :

Bartusevicius, Vincas (1993). Lithuanian Exiles in Germany 1944-1950. Lampertheim, 1993

Youth Library // Voice of Salesians, 1959, No. 2, p. 29-30

Lithuanians in Canada (1967). Ottawa, Toronto

Budriūnienė, Jolanta. Printing-house of American Lithuanians Library: first knowledge // Among the Books, 2003, No. 11, p. 30-32

Journal of Portuguese Lithuanian community "Our Lithuania"