

Escaping Lenin's Library: Ideologies of Information in Soviet and Post-Soviet Ukraine

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- Ukraine – Independent since 1991
- Soviet Union
 - one of the world's best-developed library networks
 - Special role of library within ideology of Marxism-Leninism
 - Social construction of libraries in Soviet model poses challenges to post-Soviet evolution
- Literature on construction of nation state as “Imagined Community” (Anderson)
 - Print languages are important
 - Role of libraries generally ignored



Library And Reference Education In The Soviet Union

- Lenin's wife, Nadezhda Konstatinovna Krupskaya credited with the defining foundations of the content and methods of Soviet Library education
 - By Krupskaya's initiative the first Soviet Library Seminaria was opened in Moscow in 1918.
- Library education initially took place within political-educational departments of sov-part-shkola.
- The first library institute in Ukraine opened in 1934, in Kharkiv

Libraries and ideological infrastructure

“In order to provide everybody with books, we need to increase book publication hundred- or thousand–fold. Currently, given the overall collapse of the economy, this is impossible to achieve. Therefore, we have only one solution: to move from individual book ownership to collective book usage. Collective use of books is possible only with the development of the wide network of libraries” (Krupskaya, “Pravda”, 1920).



Books like agricultural land

- The Bolshevik Commissariat issued a directive to confiscate and nationalize all private book collections with more than 500 books “belonging to the citizens whose professions do not require books as proletariat require their tools” (Verzhbizkiy, 1924).



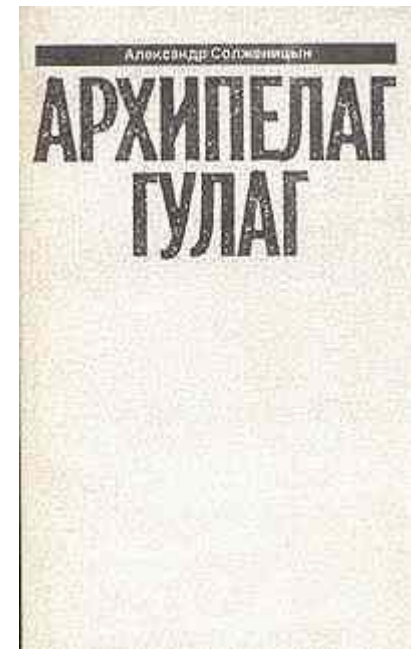
Cleaning “disorganizing” books from library collections

- The collectivization of books within library collections also facilitated Communist party control over their contents.
- In 1924 Krupskaya wrote: “There are books that organize and there are books that disorganize“



Special collections

- Throughout the Soviet period, librarians were responsible for maintaining up-to-date lists of forbidden works and removing them from public view.
- Later in the Soviet period, some books purged from libraries would resurface illicitly as Samizdat



Network of library institutes after the war

- 1964 Soviet Library Institutes merged into Institutes of Culture:
 - library education
 - Theatre
 - Dance
 - Circus
 - cinema
- Professions providing propaganda mixing culture and entertainment.
- System remains in Ukraine

President of Kiev National University of Culture →



Changes Since 1991

- Shift in library rhetoric from information control to information access, “user” focus
 - Interest in Internet: “Libraries must take it upon themselves to implement the digitization of the whole book heritage of the Ukrainian people.”
- Moves to Westernize library education
 - Masters degree introduced
- But changes
 - in practices
 - personnel and leadership very gradual

User perspective

- Given tour of the facilities at National Scientific Library
 - Returned as user
- Your target: The National Scientific Library
- Your mission: Copy 10 journal articles armed with full citations
 - You have one day



Day in the library to copy 10 articles: 1

- Arrive at 10 am. Enter library lobby
- Stand in line 1
 - to register for pass (15 minutes)
 - Present passport and proof of doctorate
- Stand in line 2
 - to receive library pass (40 mins)
- Try and fail to enter library
- Stand in line 3
 - to register laptop & receive “control ticket”
- Enter library
 - control ticket is stamped



Day in the library to copy 10 articles: 2

- Go to card catalog to retrieve call numbers
- Struggle with catalog system
- Ask for help, get shouted out
- Find call numbers for two journals



Day in the library to copy 10 articles: 3

- Obtain request form
 - issued two at a time
- Complete two duplicate forms
 - for each journal issue requested
- Obtain another
 - two forms
- Repeat (maximum 4 requests per two hours)
- Wait two hours

The image shows two library request forms from the National Library of Ukraine, named after V.I. Vernadsky. The forms are filled out with handwritten information in Ukrainian. The top form is a request form, and the bottom form is a response form (ВІДПОВІДЬ КНИГОСКОВИЩА).

Request Form (Top):

- № чит. квитка 10-135329-Ж
- Дата 4/4/2007
- ШИФРИ: ЖС 28928
- Автор
- Назва Дубасово
- 1994, 1997
- Рік вид., том, вип., № журн. 2007, № 2, 2002, № 2, 2002, № 2
- Прізвище чит. Свєртіук
- Вид. ол.
- Піліс бібліотекаря

Response Form (Bottom):

- ВІДПОВІДЬ КНИГОСКОВИЩА:
- За №
- За відділом
- ШИФРИ: ЖС 28928
- Автор
- Назва Дубасово
- 1994 (без пн)
- Рік вид., том, вип., № журн.
- Прізвище чит. Свєртіук
- Вид. ол.
- Дата 4/4/2007
- № чит. квитка 10-135329-Ж



“Current Periodicals Desk: Only people with permanent library cards will be served” (ie doctorate holders only – no day passes)

Day in the library to copy 10 articles: 5

- Accidentally met inside contact on library staff
- He reveals existence of computer catalog of call numbers
 - no more card catalog for you
- Find reading hall
 - with computers
- Librarian guarding empty computers
 - stamps control form
- Librarian challenges use of computer
 - disputes its access to call numbers
- Librarian seeks numbers
 - in card catalog
 - fails to locate



Day in the library to copy 10 articles: 6

- Use computer to retrieve call numbers for four journals,
 - write on scrap paper
- Repeatedly obtain and submit request forms
- Retrieve first two journals
- Return to basement copy room, wait in line for copies
- Wait another two hours for the next four journals (have late lunch)
- Return to claim journals

Day in the library to copy 10 articles: 7

- Discover that copy room closes at 4 pm
 - library closes at 6pm
- Sneak behind
 - a pillar in the lobby
 - Illicitly photograph the journal articles
- Leave at 6pm;
 - arrive late for library association meeting



Statistics

- Eight hours in library
- Seven journal articles retrieved
 - Only three of them legally copied
- 15 forms
- Four stamps on control ticket



Libraries in transition

- On one side
 - Ideological drive to open library collections
 - To create user focused culture and provide access to information (subscription to the electronic databases)
 - Technology to support the change
- On the other side
 - Enduring legacy of Soviet culture
 - Librarians are more obstructive than helpful
 - Control forms to enter each room
 - Stamps to monitor patron's movements
 - Logged copying of library materials

Library role and the society

- Construction of the library reflect transitions of the society as a whole
- What Ukraine will be
 - a liberal European democracy,
 - or a loyal satellite, or province of an increasingly authoritarian Russia,
 - or something different and perhaps unique.



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