



In Honor of Sandra Levy

festschrift

In Honor of Sandra Levy

festschrift

Edited by
Susan J. Martin

This work is licensed under a
[Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/)



Publication Notes

TITLE

In Honor of Sandra Levy

EDITOR

Susan J. Martin

COLLABORATORS

Megan Browndorf, Maura Byrne, Pat Sayre-McCoy, and Nancy Spiegel

PUBLISHER

University of Chicago Library

PRODUCTION DESIGN

Alissa Miller

Text composed with Georgia and Calibri typefaces. Published in Web (PDF) and paper book formats.

COVER PHOTO

University of Chicago Photographic Archive, [apf2-03096], Hanna Holborn Gray Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library.

IDENTIFIER

<https://openjournals.lib.uchicago.edu/index.php/slevy>

KEYWORDS

festschrift, Slavic librarianship

DATE OF PUBLICATION

June 2, 2021

COPYRIGHT

©2021 by the author(s)

This publication is covered by the following Creative Commons License:

Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International

To view a copy of the license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>

SUGGESTION CITATION

Martin, Susan J., ed. *In Honor of Sandra Levy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Library, 2021.

Table of Contents

Forward iv
Susan J. Martin

Tabula Gratulatoria v

Scholarly Expression

Anxiety in the Twilight Zone: Or, How a 60-year-old show can still unsettle a modern viewer 1 - 7
Maura Byrne

Procopius Neuzil and the Bohemian Benedictine Press: A Vignette from the History of Czech-American Print Culture in Chicago 8 - 26
Thomas M. Dousa

Seeing the Future in Muscovy in 1584 27 - 36
Dr. Charles J. Halperin

A Recipe for Bread 37 - 43
Eve Levin

"Belarusians are kitties" how a verbal meme became a national symbol 44 - 70
Anna Rakityanskaya

Belarusian émigré and diaspora printed publications in the British Library collections: a brief overview 71 - 78
Dr. Ekaterina Rogatchevskaia

H. A. Krüss: National Socialist Commissar and Compromised Internationalist 79 - 92
Sem C. Sutter

Creative Expression

Harper Library Coloring Sheet 93 - 94
Gabriel Akagawa

<i>A uuy</i> Dr. Michael Erdman	95 - 96
<i>Southside Chicago</i> Sheheryar Hasnain	97 - 98
<i>Small Exile</i> Laura Ring	99
<i>The Case of the Three Union Stewards</i> Ernest Isaiah West and Susan J. Martin	100 - 107

Forward

Susan J. Martin, *Middle Tennessee State University*

It has been a pleasure and honor to facilitate the creation of this festschrift, *In Honor of Sandra Levy*.

When Sandra retired from the University of Chicago Library in 2019, I could not think of an appropriate gift that was worthy to celebrate her long career. Instead, I simply contributed to the collective gift and signed the card. However, as time passed, I still wanted to give a more personal gift as Sandra was both a colleague and friend. It took a year, but finally inspiration came in the form of a Facebook posting from another Chicago colleague. The post recapped a conversation about festschriften and their inclusion or exclusion as part of approval plans. Yes, a festschrift! A festschrift was the perfect gift checking all of the metaphorical boxes. I could afford it. I knew she didn't already have one. And it could be adjusted to fit, encompassing not only her library career, but her other interests. I knew that this was not a solo project. I needed and wanted assistance. It was not difficult to find a small group of co-conspirators to join me and off we went.

Together we created a vision for our festschrift. We wanted it to truly reflect the person of honor and to accomplish that we decided to be open to various formats of scholarship and creative expression. We put out the calls, and the results were wonderful. Academic essays sit alongside, poetry, comics, and photographs. The submissions are written in Russian and English.

I would like to thank my fellow collaborators: Megan Browndorf, Maura Byrne, Pat Sayre-McCoy, and Nancy Spiegel. I would also like to thank the University of Chicago Library for allowing this work to be published as an Open Access journal on their platform. Specifically, I would like to thank Stacie Williams, Division Chief, Archives and Special Collections, Chicago Public Library and former UChicago Library Director, Center of Digital Scholarship; Elisabeth Long, Associate University Librarian for Information Technology and Digital Scholarship, University of Chicago Library; and Alissa Miller, Digital Scholarship Librarian at the James E. Walker Library, Middle Tennessee State University for her expert advice and production work for the full issue. Finally, I would like to thank the authors of the pieces presented in this work. Without their contributions, we would not have a festschrift.

© 2021 Martin

This open access article is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/).

Martin, Susan J. "Forward." *In Honor of Sandra Levy*, edited by Susan J. Martin. Chicago: University of Chicago Library, 2021, 97-104. <https://openjournals.lib.uchicago.edu/index.php/slevy>

Tabula Gratulatoria

Sincere congratulations and very best wishes! I fondly recall working together.
Sebastian Hierl, American Academy in Rome.

Congratulations, Sandra, on a long career that most certainly made a difference! Enjoy your retirement.
Karen Rondestvedt, Stanford University (retired)

Thank you Sandra Levy for discussing Slavic-Related Librarianship with me! Enjoy your retirement.
Sarah Burns Gilchrist, Reference and Instruction Librarian, University of Baltimore

Warmest congratulations on your long career and best wishes for a happy retirement!
Christine Jacobson

I first met Sandra in 1989 when I gave her a tour of the John Crerar Library where I was then working. Sandra was interviewing for the position of Assistant Slavic Librarian and the tour was arranged to demonstrate that the science and medical library was a part of UChicago's centralized library system and not a separate library administratively. The tour was also a time to talk about the importance of the University Library system to faculty and students, as well as the University being an excellent place to pursue a career as a librarian. I was extremely pleased when Sandra accepted the position and joined the Library. We worked together for 27 years as members of the Library staff (I retired in October 2016). Congratulations, Sandra, on your many accomplishments at the University Library! With affection and every best wish.
Jim Vaughan (until October 2016, Associate University Librarian for Research and Learning)

I miss seeing your friendly smile in the Library! Happy retirement!
Ayako Yoshimura

© 2021

This open access article is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/).

"Tabula Gratulatoria ." *In Honor of Sandra Levy*, edited by Susan J. Martin. Chicago: University of Chicago Library, 2021, v. <https://openjournals.lib.uchicago.edu/index.php/slevy>

Scholarly Expression

Anxiety in The Twilight Zone

Or, How a 60-year-old show can still unsettle a modern viewer

Maura Byrne, *University of Chicago Library*

Abstract

The original version of *The Twilight Zone* stands the test of time, when other shows of its era do not, because it continually addresses anxieties that were common in 1960 and continue to be common today. After watching the first season, I noticed six anxieties that came up repeatedly. They were: You are alone; You will die one day; Your fate is not in your hands; You will be the agent of your own destruction; You do not belong here; and You are part of a society, and that society is insane.

Keywords: Television, Anxiety, *Twilight Zone* (1959-1964), Rod Serling

Introduction

It has been many years since I stopped trying to suppress my tendency to analyze television shows in terms of structure, writing, characterization, and theme. Nobody else may care, but I can't turn off that analysis when I find myself disappointed by a show, or if a show turned into a treasured appointment every week. Every time, I would end up asking myself, "Why don't I like this show?" or, conversely, "What did they do right?"

Television shows often belong to specific eras, and certain tropes don't necessarily update to later eras well. *My Little Margie* or *I Married Joan* were sitcoms that were about a middle-aged man and a dizzy woman in his life; *Ozzy and Harriet* and *Father Knows Best* have middle-aged couples teaching valuable lessons to their teenaged children. All of these sitcoms belong in the 1950s. The 1960s had sitcoms where a young man discovers that someone in his life has a fantastical quality that he has to keep hidden - like *Bewitched*, *My Favorite Martian*, or *I Dream of Jeannie*. None of these tropes makes for a viable show decades later, and a viewer would have to understand the era in which it was made if they wanted to enjoy it. There are still other shows which, despite changes in setting and social attitudes, continue to be entertaining beyond their context. They are the classic shows that most viewers are familiar with.

The Twilight Zone is one of these classic shows. As an anthology series with horror overtones, it also stands as a show that ought to be able to be updated to reflect more modern storytelling. It's been rebooted three times, and the results have been spotty. (Full disclosure: I have not watched the most recent reboot, because I don't have room for yet another streaming service.) The original series does a better job of telling its stories, and directly capture a viewer's anxiety, than the newer versions do. I believe that the main problem has to do with the later series' focus on the sudden, ironic twist. The real success of the original show comes from the anxiety it

draws on. It's the anxieties that make the original version of *The Twilight Zone* current, even decades later. These anxieties are still part of our lives.

Naturally, I made a list of the anxieties, after giving the first season a close watch. The anxieties being played upon are:

1. You are alone.
2. You will die one day, and you won't be able to prevent it.
3. Your fate is not in your hands.
4. You will be the agent of your own destruction.
5. You do not belong here.
6. You are part of a society that is insane.

Individual episodes might employ repeated tropes, and combine with one or more of these anxieties. Not all of them work very well, but those that don't work usually don't work very directly on the anxiety it's trying to address. But the ones we remember all have a pretty direct connection to one of these six things we're afraid of.

The narrative tropes often have their own anxieties built into the stories. Finding yourself in a strange place, being different, being given the opportunity to use great power, or discovering that you no longer have the advantages of youth - all of these can combine with one of the anxieties above in different ways. And they provide great story hooks as well. The people in these episodes are incredibly human, capable of pettiness or greed or cruelty, which makes them their own worst enemy. All any of these characters has to do is to not listen to the better angels of their nature in order to condemn themselves to a terrible fate. Submitted for your approval are a few examples.

You are alone

We are all unique individuals, and that is a good thing. It's an essential part of our psyche. But that also means that you will encounter an experience that no one can go through with you. It may even be that, ultimately, your entire life will be something that you can't really share - no one can go through it with you, because they aren't you.

The pilot episode¹ of the show is from the point of view of a man who finds himself in an empty town, with evidence of people - food burning on a stove, for instance - but no people. Other episodes follow suit. A woman drives at night, refusing to stop, because she sees the same man every time she stops, but no one else does.² Three astronauts crash-land on an asteroid, and have to keep themselves alive long enough to be rescued, balancing their desire to stick together against the suspicion that none will survive if they try to make sure all three do.³ These are all episodes that work on the very basic fear that we are alone, and that it becomes clear when facing a crisis. In each case, the protagonists need to figure out how to address the fact of their aloneness in order to survive the crisis. It's rare that any episode starts with a protagonist that

doesn't wish for human connection, but one of the most memorable of these episodes is "Time Enough at Last."⁴

Burgess Meredith plays a bank teller who would much rather read than to anything else in the world. That includes doing his job, socializing with friends, or being a good husband to his wife. His wife would like to talk with someone at dinner, but he is hiding a book in his lap under the table. He can't cash a check for someone at the bank, because he's reading. There is no reasonable compromise here - he wants to read, and doesn't want to interact with humans. One day, while sneaking a book into the vault during his lunch break - as so often happens - nuclear Armageddon wipes out all human life except him. The buildings are intact, and there's plenty of food to keep him alive. He realizes that this means he can, at last, do nothing but read. And with the terrible, ironic twist at the end, the books are no good to him. Human extinction looked like the perfect solution to his problem, but I don't think there was a show on television in that era that would have allowed him to benefit from the apocalypse.

You will die one day

You, being a unique individual, live in a finite stretch of time. There is a large part of human history where you were not present, and there will be a large stretch of time that will exist after you're gone. Sometimes, it's easy to fixate on the fact that there will be a time where you will cease to be alive.

There are so many episodes harping on this anxiety in the first season. It's often combined with other anxieties for extra flavor, but it's clear that this is a major anxiety for this show. A combat officer in the Pacific can see something on the face of his comrades that tells him that they will die soon.⁵ A man is afraid to go to sleep, because he believes that a woman in his dreams is going to kill him.⁶ A pilot from World War I gets lost in the clouds and lands at a present-day air base, escaping certain death.⁷ A washed-up trumpet player steps in front of a truck and finds himself in a strange place where nobody sees him.⁸ These are all episodes where people have to deal with the immediate certainty of their own death. The ones that end happily are the ones where the protagonist makes peace with this certainty. One of my favorites in this category is "A Pitch for the Angels."⁹

An old peddler, having given up the idea of living well years ago, lives in a tiny room in New York City somewhere. He pitches trinkets and gadgets from a case, and every year fewer people stop to listen. The Angel of Death comes to see him, for obvious reasons. The Angel tells him that the only way to put off the moment of death is to fulfill an ambition or a goal that had eluded him in life. The peddler comes up with the only thing he can think of - a pitch so good that the angels themselves would line up to buy. It's a dodge, of course. If he quits peddling, he can live forever. There is a catch, however, and unintended consequence. The Angel of Death has to return with someone before midnight, and a beloved little girl has taken ill. The peddler realizes that he has to correct his mistake, and spends hours delaying the Angel by the only means at his disposal - he pulls out his case and pitches one thing after another, dazzling the Angel of Death until the clock strikes twelve. He's achieved his stated ambition, and the Angel takes him away. The peddler's story has a happy ending, because he has embraced the fact that he will die, and he can't change it.

Your fate is not in your hands

A lot of American mythology is founded in the idea that, no matter what disadvantages you may have, you can find a way to overcome them and make a life for yourself that will satisfy your needs and ambitions. Somehow, we all will prosper. And if we do not prosper, it must follow that our own lack of industry, creativity, or chutzpah is to blame. Any of us who do not have everything we'd hoped for can only look at themselves for the reason why. A person who doesn't turn out to be financially comfortable, doing work that has meaning, and with an emotionally satisfying family life? That person must possess some flaw that has turned them into a failure. It's all hokey, of course. We're talking about the American Myth here - it simply isn't true. It's possible that one can make a good life for themselves, but often there are too many disadvantages that are too great to achieve that goal. Not to mention the fact that it's impossible for everyone to be a world champion boxer, or the boss of a company, or a peddler who can afford a two-room apartment with a window. Rod Serling has a certain fascination with the American failure - a man (usually a man) past his prime, with most of his opportunities in his past, poor, directionless, and friendless. In episodes featuring a failure, he usually finds himself presented with one last, unexpected, long-shot opportunity to finally be a success. The episode that gives us the best view of this is "The Big, Tall Wish."¹⁰

An over-the-hill boxer has one last chance to win a championship. A boy in the building where he lives tells him that he will make a big, tall wish to make sure the boxer wins. Against all odds, and despite being outclassed by his opponent, he wins. When he comes home, the boy tells the boxer that the victory was the result of his big, tall wish. The boxer won't have it - he succeeded on his own merits alone. The boy tearfully begs the boxer to believe in the wish and acknowledge that someone else had a hand in his victory. But the boxer can't believe in a benevolent twist of fate - he had to have done it completely on his own. The wish then falls apart, and he realizes that he didn't overcome the disadvantages he had, and that the other fighter knocked him out. He had to believe in the wish in order for it to take hold, but he refused to allow the thought that he didn't make it on his own. His fate is tragic, because he had to believe that his individual effort was all he needed - not luck, not a boy's wish, not access to better resources. Since he insisted on relying solely on his own effort, he lost the fight. The tendency, often attributed to the American character, to go it alone and depend on our rugged individualism, is a powerful notion. But we often overlook the fact that, aside from certain decisions we make, our lives are the result of a lot of factors outside of our control. It's a notion that's very hard to let go of, even if it harms us.

You will be the agent of your own destruction

We are told that we have agency, free will, the power of choice - whatever we call it, it's the ability we have to make decisions that benefit us. This anxiety is the opposite of that. This anxiety is the one that comes across most strongly in Twilight Zone episodes. It's usually the subject of the ironic twists that define the show. The reboots try to include the twist, but those twists never actually include the unintended consequence of a previous decision that causes so much pain. This anxiety is present in episodes like "The Chaser,"¹¹ or "What you need."¹² It's even flipped, where a woman gains agency in "Nightmare as a Child."¹³ But the one that stands out for me is "The Fever."¹⁴

Franklin, a self-righteous killjoy, shames his wife for winning a Las Vegas getaway - not that it stops him from going - and with the slightest exposure to the rewards of gambling, he can't stop trying to win the jackpot at a slot machine. It's a dynamite depiction of addiction, especially since Franklin is aware that, even though he wins every so often, it's never as much as he's put in up to that point. Before long, he needs to win the \$10,000 jackpot just to return home with a fraction of the money he started with. It wasn't the slot machine that really got him - it was his inability to admit that he'd been had. By the end of the episode, Franklin is blaming everyone and everything around him, which is why it doesn't seem so strange for him to hear the slot machine calling to him. He steps out of his room, and the slot machine is there. It follows him around. Sure, because that's what slot machines do. Franklin has assigned agency to an inanimate object, and he can't stop thinking about it, so naturally it will pursue him until he falls out a window. Franklin, having warned his wife about the insidious nature of gambling, wound up succumbing to it himself, and became the thing that he hated. That pretty much sums up a lot of "The Twilight Zone."

You do not belong here

This one shows up surprisingly often. It's present in a character ("A Stop at Willoughby"¹⁵), it's a theme ("And When the Sky Was Opened")¹⁶, and it's present every time there's a mid-life crisis. It's all over the place. A lot of characters find themselves in ordinary lives that they find unbearable. Sometimes, they find a way to make their lives livable. More often, if they mean to survive, they find a different reality that has room for them. There are so many to choose from with this anxiety, but the one I've chosen is "The Sixteen-millimeter Shrine."¹⁷

Somewhere in the Hollywood Hills, there is a large house, containing one woman who ruled the Silent Screen. Then it all came to a sudden end. Some would say that she got old. It's more accurate to say that she stopped looking like she could be 24, and the roles dried up. (This is a real thing - I did some reading once upon a time about 19th-Century actors, and it was common for a woman to play Ophelia and Juliet, then disappear from the stage to bear and raise children, and return to play Mrs. Capulet and Lady Macbeth. There were no roles for a woman between 25 and 50.) Almost overnight, the industry that she helped create turned its back on her. She, in return, has turned her back on it, choosing instead to play her old movies in a room in her house. She can't bear the modern world, not for its noise or speed, but because she couldn't make the transition from being the center of attention to being no one. So, she spends her time reliving her glory days, and refusing to admit that she's gotten older. Well-meaning enablers try to force her to acknowledge reality, but she's spent too many years wrapped up in the illusion. She disappears one day, and her enablers run her projector. The film shows all of the characters from all of her films come into her house to meet her. They all adjourn to another room, off screen. The man who had been trying to get her back to reality calls to her, and the woman on the screen stops to look directly at him. She blows him a kiss, drops a scarf, and walks away. When he leaves the projection room, the scarf is just where she dropped it. She is never heard from again. It's a tragedy, it's a horror. And it's the natural consequence of the life she'd chosen for herself.

You are part of a society that is insane

There's really only one thing worse than not belonging to the society you're in. We'd all like to believe that we are part of a rational society, capable of making decisions in our collective self-interest. The only problem with that is that there is plenty of evidence to the contrary. We might make a collective decision out of fear, bigotry, or a basic misunderstanding of the facts. We might even decide that our society possesses a quality that makes no sense, but individual members will refuse to try to change it. Sometimes you don't want to stand out, even if your society is crazy. The obvious first-seasons episode that evokes this anxiety is "The Monsters are Due on Maple Street."¹⁸

One lovely summer day, a neighborhood of comfortable, middle-class people find the power cut and no way to get information about what's happening. As day turns into night, and neither electricity nor information is forthcoming, frustration turns into tension. The good neighbors give in to petty grudges and paranoia. Before long, any person on the street might be the focus of unwelcome attention from their friends and acquaintances, and will throw suspicion on anyone else to make sure that they are not the odd one out when the mass hysteria requires a scapegoat. In the end, aliens view the chaos from a hilltop - this same hysteria is happening everywhere. The aliens won't have to go to war to destroy the humans. All they have to do is create tension, and humans will destroy themselves.

Conclusion

After watching a season, I notice that the anxieties at work are the flip sides of some of the happy truths we tell ourselves. "You are alone" is just the dark flip side of "You are unique." The acknowledgement of the fact that you are alive right now automatically acknowledges the fact that one day you will die. The fear that "Your fate is not in your hands" is a direct contradiction to what we like to believe about ourselves - we like to believe that we control our fate. A belief that we can act in our own informed self-interest, plus the law of unintended consequences, means we could easily be the agent of our own destruction. We like to think of our society as tolerant and welcoming, but there could always be a way in which you are different enough that "You do not belong here." And, of course, being part of a group of like-minded individuals that believes we can act in concert to allow everyone to prosper can be completely undercut if that society is insane. It all boils down to the worry that if human endeavor is the solution, human behavior must be the problem. We can undo ourselves in no time, if we let it happen. There are many happy endings in *The Twilight Zone*, and all of them are stories of people defeating the anxieties here. But even the happy endings are cautionary tales, meant to remind us to know ourselves, refuse to be blind to our faults, act with empathy, and always strive to be the person we imagine ourselves to be.

References

- ¹ *The Twilight Zone*, season 1, episode 1, “Where is everybody?” directed by Robert Stevens, written by Rod Serling, aired 2 October 1959 on CBS.
- ² *The Twilight Zone*, season 1, episode 16, “The Hitch-Hiker,” directed by Alvin Ganzer, written by Rod Serling (based on a radio play by Lucille Fletcher), aired 22 January 1960 on CBS.
- ³ *The Twilight Zone*, season 1, episode 16, “I shot an arrow into the air,” directed by Stuart Rosenberg, written by Rod Serling (based on a story by Madelon Champion), aired 15 January 1960 on CBS.
- ⁴ *The Twilight Zone*, season 1, episode 8, “Time enough at last,” directed by John Brahm, written by Rod Serling (based on a story by Lynn Venable), aired 20 November 1959 on CBS.
- ⁵ *The Twilight Zone*, season 1, episode 19, “The Purple Testament,” directed by Richard L. Bare, written by Rod Serling, aired 12 February 1960 on CBS.
- ⁶ *The Twilight Zone*, season 1, episode 9, “Perchance to Dream,” directed by Robert Florey, written by Charles Beaumont, aired 27 November 1959 on CBS.
- ⁷ *The Twilight Zone*, season 1, episode 18, “The Last Flight,” directed by William F. Claxton, written by Richard Matheson, aired 5 February 1960 on CBS.
- ⁸ *The Twilight Zone*, season 1, episode 32, “Passage for Trumpet,” directed by Don Medford, written by Rod Serling, aired 20 May 1960 on CBS.
- ⁹ *The Twilight Zone*, season 1, episode 2, “One for the Angels,” directed by Robert Parrish, written by Rod Serling, aired 9 October 1959 on CBS.
- ¹⁰ *The Twilight Zone*, season 1, episode 27, “The Big Tall Wish,” directed by Ron Winston, written by Rod Serling, aired 8 April 1960 on CBS.
- ¹¹ *The Twilight Zone*, season 1, episode 31, “The Chaser,” directed by Douglas Heyes, written by Robert Presnell Jr. (Based on a short story by John Collier), aired 13 May 1960 on CBS.
- ¹² *The Twilight Zone*, season 1, episode 12, “What You Need,” directed by Alvin Ganzer, written by Rod Serling (based on the short story Henry Kutter and C. L. Moore), aired 25 December 1959 on CBS.
- ¹³ *The Twilight Zone*, season 1, episode 29, “Nightmare as a Child,” directed by Alvin Ganzer, written by Rod Serling, aired 29 April 1960 on CBS.
- ¹⁴ *The Twilight Zone*, season 1, episode 17, “The Fever,” directed by Robert Florey, written by Rod Serling, aired 29 January 1960 on CBS.
- ¹⁵ *The Twilight Zone*, season 1, episode 30, “A Stop at Willoughby,” directed by Robert Parrish, written by Rod Serling, aired 6 May 1960 on CBS.
- ¹⁶ *The Twilight Zone*, season 1, episode 11, “And When the Sky Was Opened,” directed by Douglas Heyes, written by Rod Serling (Based on a short story by Richard Matheson), aired 11 December 1959 on CBS.
- ¹⁷ *The Twilight Zone*, season 1, episode 4, “The Sixteen-Millimeter Shrine,” directed by Mitchell Leisen, written by Rod Serling, aired 23 October 1959 on CBS.

¹⁸ *The Twilight Zone*, season 1, episode 22, “The Monsters are Due on Maple Street,” directed by Ron Winston, written by Rod Serling, aired 4 March 1960 on CBS.

Procopius Neuzil and the Bohemian Benedictine Press

A Vignette from the History of Czech-American Print Culture in Chicago

Thomas M. Dousa, *University of Chicago Library*

Keywords: American Catholic History, Bohemian Benedictine Press, Chicago History, Czech-American History, Czech-American Print Culture, Immigrant History, Rev. Procopius Neuzil, O.S.B.

Those of us at the University of Chicago Library who know Sandra Levy can count ourselves fortunate, for she is undoubtedly one of the sweetest, friendliest, and most humane people to have worked at our institution. Especially fortunate are those who have had the happy experience of traveling with her in her automobile. Whether braving the busy streets of Chicago or coursing along the secluded stretch of a highway, Sandra is truly in her element when behind the wheel and her passengers cannot but admire her consummate skill as a driver. Yet, more importantly, trips with Sandra provide the occasion for conversation, another art at which she excels. In the course of conversations on the road, Sandra relishes speaking about the many things that interest her and bring her joy: her background as the descendent of Galician Jewish immigrants who settled on the North Side of Chicago; her experiences as a student of Russian history and, afterwards, a Slavic librarian; her peregrinations along her favorite highways, especially the storied Route 66; and her favorite reading material – science fiction literature – as well as the science fiction conventions that she enjoys attending. In my own experience, such conversations have revealed her to be someone who is both remarkably open to the world and, at the same time, has a firm sense of who she is and what she stands for – a truly felicitous combination of traits for a single individual to have.

In this paper, I wish to discuss a theme that I first encountered while cataloging monographic materials for the Archives of Czechs and Slovaks Abroad (ACASA), one of the premier collections in the world of documents relating to Czech emigrant history and print culture: the story of the beginnings of the leading Czech-American Catholic publishing house – the Bohemian Benedictine Press [in Czech: Tiskárna českých benediktinů], which was based in the Pilsen neighborhood of Chicago – and the man who founded it, Rev. Procopius Charles Neuzil, O.S.B. (Figure 1). To my mind, this theme is an appropriate one to broach here for two reasons. First, the ACASA collection has been a primary point of professional connection between Sandra and me, especially after she took over the curatorship of the collection following the untimely passing of June Pachuta Farris in 2018. Second, the story of the Bohemian Benedictine Press and its founder is one in which a number of different histories converge – the history of Chicago, the

history of Slavic (in particular, Czech) immigration, and the history of Slavic print culture in the United States. It is my hope that this little study will be of interest to Sandra as a native Chicagoan who loves her city, as a Slavist with a strong historical orientation, and as a librarian who has devoted her career to making the fruits of Slavic print culture accessible to students and scholars. I dedicate it to her with affection, admiration, and all best wishes.

From Bechyně to Chicago: Becoming Procopius Neuzil

Our story begins in the town of Bechyně, located some 12 miles to the southwest of the city of Tábor in Southern Bohemia, where Karel Neuzil was born on 3 November 1861.¹ He was the fourth of five children born to Jan Neuzil, a stonemason (*zedník*), and his wife Kateřina.² When Karel was five years old, his family moved to the nearby village of Srlín. These were years of considerable economic hardship for the Neuzil family: Jan worked as a seasonal laborer in Vienna, living with his family only during the winter months, and Kateřina generally had to manage the household on a meager budget.³ In 1874, like many other impoverished families from the region, the Neuzils decided to seek their fortunes abroad and emigrated to the United States. There, they purchased land near Spillville, a small town in northeastern Iowa, and established a farm.⁴ Their decision to settle near Spillville was doubtless conditioned by the fact that it and its hinterlands had a sizeable Czech population: they would thus be living in fairly familiar cultural and linguistic surroundings. Another factor, though, may have been the religious profile of the Czech community there: it was strongly Roman Catholic in orientation and this may have appealed to the Neuzils, who were, by all accounts, a deeply religious family.⁵

The first few years in Spillville were difficult ones for the Neuzil family, as they sought to keep their new farm in operation. They were especially challenging for young Karel Neuzil – now, Charles Neuzil – who had a thirst for learning and had by now discerned the vocation to become a priest. Although he was able to attend the local parochial school between the harvesting and planting seasons, his family could not afford to finance the higher studies

¹ A. Plachtová, “Prokop Neuzil”, Oficiální Stránky Města Bechyně. Accessed February 10, 2021, <https://www.mestobechyne.cz/cs/mesto-bechyne/osobnosti/prokop-neuzil.html>.

² Rebecca Neuzil, “Neuzil, Jan and Katerina (Jaros)”, in *Winneshiek County, Iowa: Biographies – 1996: A Genealogical Record* (Decorah, Iowa: Decorah Genealogy Association, [1996]), N19; “Ndp. Prokop Neuzil, O.S.B., opat kláštera sv. Prokopa v Lisle, Ill. zemřel”, *Katolík: Česko-Americký kalendář*, 54 (1948): 177.

³ “Ndp. Prokop Neuzil, O.S.B.”: 177.

⁴ F. Mikolášek, V. Šindelář, & J. Kadlec, *Srlín: Dějiny obce a hasičského sboru* (Milevisko: Agentura Porthos, 1998), [11].

⁵ A. Plachtová, “Prokop Neuzil”; Rebecca Neuzil, “Neuzil, Jan and Katerina (Jaros)”, N19. On Czech settlement in Spillville and its Catholic ambience in the 19th century, see Jan Habenicht, *Dějiny Čechův amerických* (St. Louis: Hlas, 1910), 354-359.

needed to enter the priesthood.⁶ In his late teenage years, Charles made repeated efforts to gain admittance to seminary but was repeatedly rejected by clergy and church officials who did not believe that an unprepossessing young man from a poor background was a good candidate for a clerical career.⁷ Nevertheless, his belief in his vocation and his drive for further study did not abate. Funding himself by working for nine months as a field hand for a Swedish farmer near Madison, Wisconsin, he was able to undertake studies at a Teachers' Institute in Decorah, Iowa, and, upon graduation in 1880, began to teach at a school in the hamlet of Calmar near Spillville.⁸

Charles Neuzil would not, however, remain a country schoolmaster for long. In March 1881, an article published in the Czech-American Catholic newspaper *Hlas* announced that Rev. Boniface Wimmer, O.S.B., the abbot of the Benedictine Abbey of St. Vincent in Latrobe, Pennsylvania, was inviting Czech men to join the order and train for the priesthood, in the hopes of establishing a monastery that would provide missionary priests for Czech-Americans in the United States.⁹ Alerted to this opportunity by his parish priest, Charles immediately submitted an application for this program and was accepted. Thus, in September 1881, at the age of twenty, he began scholastic studies at St. Vincent College.¹⁰ Upon finishing his scholastic in 1884, Charles entered the novitiate at St. Vincent Abbey, professing his simple vows as a Benedictine monk a year later on 11 July 1885.¹¹ He took "Procopius" as his name in religion in honor of St. Procopius (ca. 970-1053), the founding abbot of the Benedictine abbey at Sázava, located some 16 miles to the south of Prague. This choice of name was significant, for St. Procopius was a Czech national saint renowned for having cultivated the Old Church Slavonic liturgy at Sázava and so having kept alive a distinctly Slavic form of Christianity at a time when the Czech lands had, under German ecclesiastical influence, adopted a Latin form of Christianity.¹² To take the name "Procopius" as one's own was thus not only to proclaim

⁶ On Charles Neuzil's elementary studies, see Cyril and Rebecca Neuzil, "Neuzil, (Charles) The Rt. Rev. Procopius" in *Winneshiek County, Iowa: Biographies – 1996: A Genealogical Record* (Decorah, Iowa : Decorah Genealogy Association, [1996]), N14; "Ndp. Prokop Neuzil": 177.

⁷ For lively, though slightly divergent, accounts of Charles's attempts at admittance to seminary, see A. Plachtová, "Prokop Neuzil"; Cyril and Rebecca Neuzil, "Neuzil, (Charles) The Rt. Rev. Procopius", N14; "Ndp. Prokop Neuzil, O.S.B.": 177; Vitus Buresh, *The Procopian Chronicle: St. Procopius Abbey, 1885-1985* (Lisle, Illinois: St. Procopius Abbey, 1985), 25.

⁸ "Ndp. Prokop Neuzil, O.S.B.": 177; Daniel D. Droba (ed.), *Czech and Slovak Leaders in Metropolitan Chicago: A Biographical Study of 300 Prominent Men and Women of Czech and Slovak Descent* (Chicago: Slavonic Club of the University of Chicago, 1934), 142.

⁹ See Buresh, *The Procopian Chronicle*, 15.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 15. In Roman Catholic priestly education, scholastic studies are preparatory general studies undertaken prior to commencing more specialized theological studies proper. It is worth noting that, at that time, St. Vincent College, in conformity with Rev. Wimmer's program of training up a cadre of priests to serve the Czech-American community, was offering classes in Czech language – the only institution of higher learning in the United States to do so in the early 1880s. See Peter Mizera, *Czech Benedictines in America: 1877-1901* (Lisle, Illinois : St. Procopius College, Center for Slav Culture, 1969), 24; George R. Noyes, "The Beginnings of Slavic Instruction in the United States", *Bulletin of the American Association of Teachers of Slavic and East European Languages*, 7, no. 2 (December 15, 1949), 26;

¹¹ Cyril and Rebecca Neuzil, "Neuzil, (Charles) The Rt. Rev. Procopius", N14.

¹² On St. Procopius, see Jaroslav Kadlec, "Svatý Prokop" in *Bohemia Sancta: Životopisy českých světců a přátel Božích*, ed. by Jaroslav Kadlec (Praha: Česká katolická charita, 1989), 126-139; *Saint Procopius, Abbot of Sazava* (Chicago: Benedictine Abbey Press, 1961).

allegiance to the Benedictine order within a distinctly Czech context but to signal commitment to the preservation of Slavic language, culture, and tradition.

After the profession of his vows, Procopius Neuzil continued more advanced theological studies for the priesthood at St. Vincent Abbey. These, however, lasted only a year, for he began experiencing health problems and so, in September 1886, he was sent to Chicago to undergo medical treatment.¹³ There he was assigned to stay at St. Procopius Church, located at the corner of West 18th and South Allport streets in the Pilsen neighborhood on the Lower West Side of the city. One year earlier, this large Czech-American parish, which had been founded in 1875 and was the third oldest Czech parish in the city, had been placed under the superintendence of the Benedictine order with the understanding that it would become the home of the new monastery of Czech Benedictine missionary priests that the abbot of St. Vincent Abbey had planned for so long.¹⁴ When Procopius arrived there, the Benedictine priory, at that time canonically dependent on St. Vincent Abbey, consisted of three priests, who took charge of his further training as he regained his health.¹⁵ The little community that he had joined would develop quickly: in May 1888, when St. Procopius Priory became an independent priory, it counted eight founding members.¹⁶ It was as a member of this priory that Procopius Neuzil professed his solemn vows on 15 June 1888 and, six months later, was ordained to the priesthood on 22 December.¹⁷

Catholics and Freethinkers: Religious and Cultural Conflict in Czech Chicago

The Czech-American urban community in Chicago where Rev. Procopius Neuzil found himself in the late 1880s was vibrant and variegated. In the final three decades of the 19th century, Chicago was home to the largest Czech-American enclave in the United States and would soon constitute one of the largest urban concentrations of Czechs in the world.¹⁸ Living primarily in the Pilsen and

¹³ “Ndp. Prokop Neuzil, O.S.B.”: 179; Cyril and Rebecca Neuzil, “Neuzil, (Charles) The Rt. Rev. Procopius”, N14; Buresh, *The Procopian Chronicle*, 25.

¹⁴ On the early history of St. Procopius Church, see Habenicht, *Dějiny Čechův amerických*, 623-628.

¹⁵ On the background to, and beginnings of, the Benedictine presence at St. Procopius, see Buresh, *The Procopian Chronicle*, 18-24; Peter Mizera, *Czech Benedictines*, 90-100.

¹⁶ Buresh, *the Procopian Chronicle*, 27; Mizera, *Czech Benedictines*, 106-108. Actually, papal approval for the granting St. Procopius priory independent status had been granted in August 1887, but because of delays in communication, became only effective in May of the following year.

¹⁷ “Ndp. Prokop Neuzil, O.S.B.”: 179; Buresh, *the Procopian Chronicle*, 27; Habenicht, *Dějiny Čechův amerických*, 628.

¹⁸ On the ascendance of Chicago as the largest urban Czech-American community in the United States in the 1870s and 1880s, see Marek Vlha, *Mezi starou vlastí a Amerikou: Počátky české krajanské komunity v USA 19. století* (Brno: Matice Moravská, 2015), 157-158. By the first decade of the 20th century, Chicago was considered to have the third-largest Czech urban community in the world, after Prague and Vienna; see Jaroslav E. S. Vojan, “České Chicago”, in *Adresář a almanach českého obyvatelstva v Chicagu = Directory and Almanac of the Bohemian Population of Chicago* (Chicago: Spolek pro postavení Česko-Americké Nemocnice, 1915), 29; J. E. Salaba Vojan, “Česká Amerika”, in *Česká čítanka* (Praha: Sbor zástupců České svobodomyšlné školy, 1912), 416.

Lawndale neighborhoods on the West Side of Chicago, members of the Czech community shared a common language and a strong sense of ethnic identity that manifested itself in a rich and vigorous associational life.¹⁹ However, there also existed a significant social cleavage among the Czechs of Chicago, one that reflected a division found in Czech-American communities throughout the United States. The source of this division lay in different attitudes to religious belief. With regard to religion, American Czechs generally belonged to one of three broad groups: Catholics, Protestants, or Freethinkers.²⁰ The two most numerous of these were Freethinkers and Catholics and it was among these two camps that social tensions and hostility ran particularly deep.

Most Czech immigrants to the United States had been members of the Catholic Church in their homeland, for Catholicism was the state religion of the Austro-Hungarian empire and had formed part of the socio-cultural *koine* of the Czech lands since the 17th century.²¹ Many continued to hold to their faith in the New World: however, many more came to abandon their allegiance to the Church.²² The majority of those who left the Catholic fold came to align themselves with an ideology known as *svobodomyslnost*, or Freethought. Espoused by members of a nationalistic, politically liberal intelligentsia informed by Enlightenment thought and inflamed by opposition to Habsburg rule, Czech-American Freethought embodied a common set of attitudes about religion, society, and political life.²³ With regard to religion, “[F]reethinkers generally believed in

¹⁹ For general surveys of Czech Chicago in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, see, e.g., Vojan, “České Chicago”, 37-68; Martin Nekola, *České Chicago* (Praha: NLN, 2017); Jaroslav Kříž & Lenka Křížová, *Střípky z českého Chicaga: Edice dokumentů k dějinám Čechů v americkém Chicagu v letech 1848-1918* (Praha: Academia, 2017), 22-52. On Czech-American organizations in Chicago, see also Jaroslav Kříž, “České spolky v Chicagu”, in *České, slovenské a československé dějiny 20. století X*, ed. by Pavel Horák, Pavel Boštík, & Jaromír Karpíšek (Hradec Králové: Univerzita Hradec Králové, 2015), 139-147.

²⁰ Krasimira Marholeva, “Chicagští katolíci a svobodomyslní Češi v druhé polovině XIX. století”, *Studia Historica Brunensia*, 61, no. 2 (2014): 73; see also Marek Vlha, “Poslední služba zesnulým ve svobodomyslné Americe a Český národní hřbitov v Chicagu: sonda do náboženského milieu česko-amerického svobodomyslného hnutí”, in Miloš Havelka a kol., *Víra, kultura a společnost: náboženské kultury v českých zemích 19. a 20. století*. (Červený Kostelec: Pavel Mervart, 2012), 330-331. A sense of the relative proportions between the three religious groups can be gained from conditions in 1910, when “freethinkers ... constituted slightly over half of the Czech-speaking American population ..., Catholics at least forty percent, and Protestants no more than five percent”; Bruce M. Garver, “Czech-American Protestants: A Minority within a Minority”, *Nebraska History*, 74(3-4), 1993: 150. Though comparable statistics are lacking for the last decades of the 19th century, it is unlikely that the low proportion of Protestants relative to Freethinkers and Catholics would have differed much from that in 1910.

²¹ According to one commentator, under Austrian rule in the early 20th century, approximately 96% of the people in the Czech lands were Catholics; 2%, Protestants; 1%, Jews, and the rest, Old Catholics, without confession, or mixed; see Thomas Čapek, *The Czechs (Bohemians) in America: A Study of their National, Cultural, Political, Social, Economic, and Religious Life* (Boston/New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1920), 119.

²² A comparison of the proportions of Czech religious affiliations in the Czech lands and in the United States cited in nn. 20 and 21 above underscores how precipitous this process of decatholicization was: the number of Czech Catholics dropped from 96% in the Old World to about 40% in the New, while the number of unchurched Czechs rose from less than 1% in the Czech to over 50% in the United States.

²³ For general discussions of Czech-American Freethought, see Karel D. Bicha, “Settling Accounts with an Old Adversary: The Decatholicization of Czech immigrants in America”, *Histoire Sociale/Social History*, 8 (1971): 45-60; Vlha, *Mezi starou vlastí a Amerikou*, 252-271; Marek Vlha, “Česká komunita ve Spojených státech a náboženský konflikt”, in *Variety české religiosity v “dlouhém” 19. století (1780-1918)*, ed. by Zdeněk R. Nešpor & Kristina Kaiserová (Ústí nad Labem: Kristina Kaiserová, albis international, 2010), 407-410.

human progress and expected reason and scientific inquiry to supplant belief in a supreme being,” while, as regards social and political life, they espoused the “extension of civil liberties, absolute separation of church and state, universal suffrage, and gradual emancipation of women.”²⁴ There was little unanimity among Freethinkers in matters of personal belief. Some were militant rationalists and atheists who embraced philosophical materialism and eschewed religious sentiment entirely; others took a secular humanist position that invested human-derived ethics and morality with ultimate, indeed quasi-religious, meaning; some were agnostic or simply indifferent to religion; while yet others believed in a deity but had little use for organized religion.²⁵ What united the different kinds of Czech-American Freethinkers was, above all, an anticlerical sensibility and antipathy towards Catholicism.

The emergence of Freethought as an alternative to Catholicism divided the Czech-American community into two rival ideological camps, each of which carved out its own institutional and associational sphere within the community. In late 19th-century Chicago, Freethinkers and Catholics tended to join different fraternal societies and find social and cultural sustenance and solidarity in different organizations.²⁶ Each side established its own schools to educate the next generation in accordance with its worldview.²⁷ These divisions could even continue beyond the grave: in 1877, Chicago’s Bohemian National Cemetery was established as a burial ground for Freethinkers, allegedly because a local priest refused to permit the burial of a non-observant member of his parish in a Catholic cemetery.²⁸ To be sure, Freethinkers and Catholics managed to co-exist cheek by jowl in the Pilsen neighborhood and other Czech-American enclaves in the city. Nevertheless, there, as elsewhere, the tense, and often inimical, relationship between the two camps “gave an unusual dimension to Czech-American life and determined the development of most of the primary Czech-American institutions.”²⁹ This social tension would gradually lose its intensity after World War I, though the institutional divisions between the two sides would persist well into the 20th century.³⁰

One of the important factors in the rise and maintenance of the division between Freethinkers and Catholics was the Czech-American press. Czech immigrants to the United States had a very high rate of literacy and sought inexpensive reading matter in their native language.³¹ Czech-language periodicals – in particular, newspapers – thus became an important channel of

²⁴ See Bruce M. Garver, “Czech-American Freethinkers on the Great Plains, 1871-1941”, in *Ethnicity on the High Plains*, ed. by Frederick C. Luebke (Lincoln/London: University of Nebraska Press, 1980), 149.

²⁵ On the variety of religious attitudes within Czech-American Freethought, see Malynne Sternstein, *Czechs of Chicagoland* (Charleston, S.C.: Arcadia Publishing, 2008), 8; Vlha, “Poslední služba”, 332-333.

²⁶ See Habenicht, *Dějiny Čechův amerických*, 595-599 (Freethought organizations), 622, 635-636, 639, 650-651, 658, 664 (Czech organizations). Cf. Vlha, “Česká komunita ve Spojených státech”, 414.

²⁷ Marholeva, “Chicagští katolíci a svobodomyšlní Češi”: 76-78.

²⁸ Nekola, *České Chicago*, 74-75; Vlha, *Mezi starou vlastí a Amerikou*, 264-265

²⁹ Karel Bicha, *The Czechs in Oklahoma* (Norman: The University of Oklahoma Press, 1980), 32.

³⁰ See Buresh, *The Procopian Chronicle*, 43; Ivan Dubovický, “Češi v USA - otázka identity (1848-1938)”, *Český lid*, 83, no. 3 (1996): 242; Joseph Slabey Roucek, “The Passing of American Czechoslovaks”, *American Journal of Sociology*, 39, no. 5 (1934): 618, 620-622.

³¹ According to a report of the United States Commissioner General of Immigration, the literacy rate for Czech immigrants entering the United States between 1899 and 1909 was approximately 98%; see Thomas Čapek, *Slavs in the United States Census, 1850-1940, with Special Reference to Czechoslovaks* (Chicago: The Czechoslovak National Council of America, 1943), 6. See also Petr Esterka, “Stoleté působení českých otců benediktinů v USA”, *Studie (Křesťanská akademie)*, čís. 108 (1986): 409.

communication, a means of maintaining ethnic identity, and a prime vehicle for the shaping of public opinion among Czech Americans.³² Freethinkers and Catholics alike sought to make use of the printed word to propagate their views within the Czech-American community. It was the Freethinkers who proved to be especially successful in establishing a strong – indeed, well-nigh hegemonic – presence in the Czech-language press in the United States. In the formative decades between 1860 and 1890, about 90% of Czech-American newspapers espoused Freethought attitudes:³³ preeminent among these was the Chicago-based daily *Svornost* [“Concord”], founded in 1875 and brought out by August Geringer, a bookbinder and -seller turned publisher who would preside, for the next fifty-five years, over a newspaper and book publishing empire that made Chicago a center of Czech-American Freethinking and disseminated Freethought opinion to Czech-Americans throughout the United States.³⁴ By contrast, Catholics had little representation in the Czech-American press in the 1870s and 1880s. Although there were several short-lived attempts to publish Catholic newspapers in Chicago,³⁵ they came to naught and the only Catholic newspaper to establish a lasting presence on the market was the St. Louis-based biweekly *Hlas* [“The Voice”], which was founded by Msgr. Josef Hessoun in 1872, but only reached stability, after a false start, in 1874.³⁶ By the late 1880s, then, Freethought had come to dominate Czech-American print culture and, thereby, to set the tone for thought and sensibility in the Czech-American community.

³² On Czech immigrants’ preference for newspapers as reading material, see Kenneth D. Miller *The Czecho-Slovaks in America* (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1922), 94; cf. Tomáš Čapek, *Padesát let českého tisku v Americe od vydání “Slowana Amerikánského v Racine, dne 1. ledna 1860 do 1. ledna 1910. S doplňky do začátku 1911* (New York: Správní Radové “Bank of Europe” v New Yorku, 1911), 51-53. On Czech-American periodicals as markers of ethnic and ideological identity, see Marholeva, “Chicagští katoličtí a svobodomyšlní Češi”: 74-75.

³³ Of 122 Czech-American newspapers founded during that period, 110 were secular (primarily Freethought) in orientation, 8 were Catholic, and 4 were Protestant. Figures derived from Čapek, *Padesát let českého tisku v Americe*, 57-58, 82-140; cf. also Bicha, “Settling Accounts”: 48-50; Esterka, “Stoleté působení českých otců”: 409-410.

³⁴ For overviews of Geringer’s life and activities, see Lenka Procházková & Jaroslav Kříž, “The American Dream in “Czech” Chicago: August Geringer’s Publishing Activities”, *Comenius: Journal of Euro-American Civilization*, 2016, no. 1: 81-95; Miloslav Rechcigl, Jr., *Postavy naší Ameriky: poučné a zábavné čtení ze života zahraničních Čechů*. Praha: Pražská edice, 2000, 145-147.

³⁵ Most notably, the *Katolické noviny* [“Catholic News”] a weekly newspaper founded by Rev. Josef Molitor in September 1867 which lasted only for nine months, and the *Jednota* [“Union”], a daily newspaper founded by Rev. František Příbyl, which appeared between May and August 1888. The most successful early Catholic newspaper in Chicago was the *Čechoslovan* [“Czech Slav”] a weekly newspaper founded by August Geringer’s brother Jan and Viktorin Keclík in 1883 that, despite some periods of interruption in publishing lasted for twelve years. See Čapek, *Padesát let českého tisku v Americe*, 106-107, 128, 137; Mizera, *Czech Benedictines*, 114. Buresh, *The Procopian Chronicle*, 1985, 34; Esterka, “Stoleté působení českých otců”: 409; Rechcigl, Jr., *Postavy naší Ameriky*, 66.

³⁶ Čapek, *Padesát let českého tisku v Americe*, 110-111. On Msgr. Josef Hessoun, a leading figure in the St. Louis Czech community and in Czech-American Catholicism generally in the latter half of the 19th century, see Hynek Dostál, “Msgr. Josef Hessoun”, in *Třetí čítanka pro české katolické školy v Americe*, ed. by Sestra M. Víta, O.S.F. (Chicago: Národní svaz českých katolíků, 1934), 413-416; Rechcigl, Jr., *Postavy naší Ameriky*, 65-67.

Rev. Procopius Neuzil and the Early Years of the Bohemian Benedictine Press (1889-1897)

Such were the cultural headwinds facing the newly ordained Rev. Procopius Neuzil and other Czech-American Catholic clergy in Chicago in the late 1880s. His first years at St. Procopius priory were busy ones. Shortly after his arrival there and a year-and-a-half before ordination, the former schoolmaster proposed that the priory establish a high school to educate poor Czech-American boys and, having received approval from the prior, began teaching a class of two students in March 1887.³⁷ By September of that year, the school had grown to twenty pupils and now had a faculty of four and, by the spring of 1888, forty-seven students had enrolled.³⁸ Rev. Neuzil served as both a teacher in, and the principal of, the school, a position that he would hold until 1894.³⁹ Moreover, in the Lenten season of the year following his ordination, he also undertook parochial missions to parishes in St. Paul and New Prague, Minnesota.⁴⁰ Such mission trips to Czech-American parishes around the United States would become part of the rhythm of life for him and his confrères in the coming years.⁴¹

Fittingly, educational concerns provided the initial impetus for what would become the Bohemian Benedictine Press. While still a seminary student, Rev. Neuzil had become acquainted with a weekly Czech children's magazine published in Milwaukee entitled *Besídka dětská* ["Children's bower"].⁴² He generally liked the magazine: edited by a schoolmaster, it "included contributions written by children, and ... [gave] them an opportunity to express themselves in the Czech language".⁴³ However, its secular orientation troubled him, for he thought that Catholic children should have reading material that nurtured and affirmed their religious belief. Rev. Neuzil tried to convince Rev. Josef Hessoun, at that time the publisher of the only major Czech-American Catholic newspaper, to establish a comparable magazine for Czech-American children. Rev. Hessoun, however, suggested that Rev. Neuzil undertake this task itself. After obtaining permission from his prior and making necessary arrangements for supplies and obtaining lists of

³⁷ See Mizera, *Czech Benedictines*, 145-146.

³⁸ Buresh, *the Procopian Chronicle*, 25-26.

³⁹ *The American Catholic Who's Who: Volume 7, 1946-1947* (Grosse Pointe, Michigan: Walter Romig, [1947], 330.

⁴⁰ Prokop Neuzil, *Pět a dvacet let práce: zpráva o činnosti českých benediktinů v klášteře sv. Prokopa, Chicago, Ill. od jejich příchodu do Chicaga r. 1885 do r. 1910* (Chicago: [Tiskárna českých benediktinů], [1910]), 12.

⁴¹ Prokop Neuzil, *Pět a dvacet let práce*, 22; Buresh, *The Procopian Chronicle*, 46; Mizera, *Czech Benedictines*, 112-113.

⁴² Buresh, *The Procopian Chronicle*, 36. In a speech commemorating the 50th anniversary of the founding of *Přítel dětí* quoted in extenso in translation by Buresh, Neuzil gave the name as *Dětská besídka* and identified the place of publication as St. Paul. However, the only Czech children's journal with a comparable name published in the 1880s was *Besídka dětská*, published Milwaukee between 1884 and 1886; see Čapek, *Padesát let českého tisku v Americe*, 129. The chief editor of the *Besídka dětská* was Antonín Jurka, a Czech-American schoolteacher living in St. Paul: it thus appears that Neuzil (wrongly) took the home of the editor to be the place of publication. On Jurka, see Esther Jerabek, "Antonin Jurka, a Pioneer Czech Schoolmaster in Minnesota", *Minnesota History*, 13, No. 3 (1932): 269-276.

⁴³ Jerabek, "Antonin Jurka": 274.

potential subscribers, Rev. Neuzil set to work and, on 21 December 1889, the first issue of the *Přítel dítek* [*“Children’s Friend”*] saw the light of day.⁴⁴

The *Přítel dítek* was an 8-page – soon expanded to 16-page – weekly magazine containing short articles on the basic elements of the Catholic faith, stories, language lessons, riddles, puzzles, and letters to the editor, whose nom de plume was “Uncle” (*Strýček*) (Figure 2).⁴⁵ Its production posed no little challenge to Rev. Neuzil, for he was responsible for writing and editing the contents, reviewing corrections, and overseeing the administrative aspects of publication⁴⁶ – all work that had to be done in addition to his teaching duties at St. Procopius high school and performing his daily priestly and monastic religious obligations. All of the printing had to be done at an external printing press, for the priory did not possess any printing equipment of its own.⁴⁷ This meant that hand setting and composition had to be done at the priory and the finished formes then conveyed to the printer’s establishment – a strenuous process that involved the lifting of heavy frames containing rows of type tied together, which, if dropped, would require resetting all the type anew.⁴⁸ Yet, in spite of all the difficulties that work on the *Přítel dítek* entailed, Rev. Neuzil persisted with the enterprise and the young periodical was warmly received by members of the Czech-American reading public: indeed, it gained adult as well as child readers.⁴⁹

For three-and-a-half years, the Czech Benedictines concentrated their publishing activities on the *Přítel dítek* alone. However, adult readers of the magazine kept asking that a supplement be added with content more suitable for them. Although Rev. Neuzil did not think that such an innovation would fit the spirit or original intent of the magazine, he nevertheless printed one issue with a supplement for adult readers. The response was sufficiently positive that Rev. Neuzil decided to turn the supplement into an independent newspaper, and, in short order, the first issue of *Katolík* [*“The Catholic”*] was published in early July 1893.⁵⁰ In terms of contents, the new publication included news from the United States, reports about developments in the Czech-American community and the activities of Czech-American Catholic organizations, as well as works of serialized popular fiction.⁵¹ Originally issued as a weekly, *Katolík* found such an enthusiastic reception that, within a matter of weeks, it was

⁴⁴ Mizera, *Czech Benedictines*, 115.

⁴⁵ Mizera, *Czech Benedictines*, 115; Esterka, “Stoleté působení českých otců”, 410.

⁴⁶ “Ndp. Prokop Neuzil, O.S.B.”: 179.

⁴⁷ Mizera, *Czech Benedictines*, 120; Buresh, *The Procopian Chronicle*, 36. The printing press used was that of Viktorin Keclík and Jan Geringer, publishers of the Catholic weekly newspaper *Čechoslovan*, at 223 West 12th Street (cf. n. 35 above).

⁴⁸ Mizera, *Czech Benedictines*, 120.

⁴⁹ Mizera, *Czech Benedictines*, 115; Buresh, *The Procopian Chronicle*, 37.

⁵⁰ Neuzil, *Pět a dvacet let práce*, 14; Mizera, *Czech Benedictines*, 115; Buresh, *The Procopian Chronicle*, 37; Lucie Formanová, Jiří Gruntorád, & Michal Přibáň. *Exilová periodika: Katalog periodik českého a slovenského exilu a krajanových tisků vydávaných po roce 1945*. (Praha: Libri prohibiti ; Ježek, 1999), 273, entry 577. These sources differ on the exact date of the first issue: Mizera gives it as 2 July 1893, Buresh as 1 July 1893, and Formanová et al. as 4 July 1893.

⁵¹ Formanová, Gruntorád, & Přibáň, *Exilová periodika*, 273, entry 577.

converted to a biweekly and, after a few months, became a triweekly, a rate of appearance that would continue into the following year.⁵²

The year 1894 brought several significant changes to the Benedictine community at St. Procopius Church. In late February, St. Procopius Priory was raised to the status of an abbey and its founding prior, Rev. Nepomucene Jaeger, O.S.B., was named the first abbot of the newly established St. Procopius Abbey: he would be ceremonially installed on 4 July 1894.⁵³ Earlier in February, the Czech Benedictines took a momentous step in their publishing venture by launching a new daily newspaper. The circumstances that led them to this were the following. By early 1894, the Czech Benedictines had acquired their own press equipment and set up their own printing shop in one of the rooms of an old school building in their parish complex.⁵⁴ Now the Panic of 1893 had brought about a general economic downturn in the United States and unemployment in Chicago was high.⁵⁵ As word of the new printing shop began to spread, jobless typesetters and printers began to present themselves to the Czech Benedictines, begging for work. In order to accommodate these requests, the Bohemian Benedictine Press took on workers to typeset *Přítel dítek* and *Katolík*, and, moreover, began publishing small books on religious themes, thus creating more opportunities for typesetting work. When this proved insufficient, the decision was made to begin publishing a daily newspaper, while reverting *Katolík* to a biweekly mode of issuance.⁵⁶ Although the desire to alleviate unemployment among Czech-American typesetters may have served as the proximate cause for the expansion of the Bohemian Benedictine Press's publishing program, it is likely that another, more general factor played a role as well: namely, the desire to add a counterweight to the continuing dominance of Freethought in Czech-American journalism in Chicago.

On February 8, 1894, the first issue of the daily newspaper *Národ* [*"The Nation"*] was published.⁵⁷ The new daily was intended primarily for local circulation in Chicago and, while it shared much of the same content with *Katolík*, it also featured editorials offering sharp, polemical critiques of local Freethought cultural politics and apologetic responses to Freethinkers' attacks upon the Catholic faith.⁵⁸ Although an early labor dispute with newly hired typesetters and a concerted effort by Freethought editorial boards to discredit the new newspaper by publicly questioning its economic viability threatened to bring the venture to a rapid end, it survived these initial challenges.⁵⁹ To be sure, the finances of the Bohemian Benedictine Press continued to be

⁵² Neužil, *Pět a dvacet let práce*, 14; Mizera, *Czech Benedictines*, 115; Buresh, *The Procopian Chronicle*, 37; Esterka, "Stoleté působení českých otců": 410.

⁵³ Mizera, *Czech Benedictines*, 123-124; Neužil, *Pět a dvacet let práce*, 14; Buresh, *The Procopian Chronicle*, 28.

⁵⁴ Buresh, *The Procopian Chronicle*, 37.

⁵⁵ On the economic situation in Chicago following the Panic of 1893, see Ernest Ludlow Bogart & John Mabry Mathews, *The Modern Commonwealth, 1893-1918* (The Centennial History of Illinois, vol. 5) (Springfield: Illinois Centennial Commission, 1920), 394-403.

⁵⁶ On all the above, see Neužil, *Pět a dvacet let práce*, 15; Mizera, *Czech Benedictines*, 116; Buresh, *The Procopian Chronicle*, 37.

⁵⁷ Formanová, Gruntorád, & Přibáň, *Exilová periodika*, 278, entry 591.

⁵⁸ For a lively and often amusing sample of some of the polemical wrangling between Catholics and Freethinkers reflected in the editorial pages of the *Národ*, see Buresh, *The Procopian Chronicle*, 38-42.

⁵⁹ Neužil, *Pět a dvacet let práce*, 14; Mizera, *Czech Benedictines*, 116.

precarious and the editorials of its periodical publications frequently reminded readers of its need for support.⁶⁰ This did not stop the Press from inaugurating, in the following year, yet another periodical, an annual almanac featuring a calendar, a potpourri of popular fiction, jokes, and articles on church history, a chronicle summarizing of the previous year's news pertaining to developments in the Czech-American Catholic community, and a directory of Czech-American Catholic parishes and priests in the United States (and, in time, Canada).⁶¹ Entitled *Katolík, českoamerický kalendář* [*The Catholic: A Czech-American Calendar*], this publication not only neatly complemented the Press's newspapers, from which it drew much of its material, but also became, so to speak, an annual *summa* of Czech-American Catholic life.

In 1897, Rev. Procopius Neuzil was named pastor of St. Procopius Parish and so stepped down from his position as director of the Bohemian Benedictine Press, which he had guided since its humble beginnings as a one-man operation in the winter of 1889.⁶² His achievement in this position was considerable: he had founded four periodicals that would endure over a number of years, overseen the establishment of a printing works at St. Procopius Priory, and overcome with panache the many administrative challenges associated with establishing and operating a small religious press. His vision, diligence, and perseverance laid the first foundations for what the Czech Benedictines would come to call their "Apostolate of the Press".⁶³

The Bohemian Benedictine Press: Further Developments

Subsequent years saw a further consolidation and expansion of the Bohemian Benedictine Press and its activities. In 1901, St. Procopius Abbey authorized the purchase of two new linotype machines and, two years later, it purchased an additional Miehle press.⁶⁴ With these additions, the Press was outgrowing its space in the school building and so, in May and June of 1904, the Abbey purchased lots directly to the north of St. Procopius church on which to build a new printing plant.⁶⁵ Construction on the plant began in May of following year and the new printery, located at 696 (later: 1637) Allport Street, commenced its operations in the autumn of 1905.⁶⁶ By 1910, the printing, publishing, and distributing operations of the Bohemian Benedictine Press had taken on a considerable amplitude: its director, one of the priests of St. Procopius Abbey, oversaw a workforce that included six lay brothers of the Abbey,⁶⁷ and a number of laymen, namely five

⁶⁰ Buresh, *The Procopian Chronicle*, 38-39.

⁶¹ Mizera, *Czech Benedictines*, 117; Buresh, *The Procopian Chronicle*, 40.

⁶² Droba, *Czech and Slovak Leaders*, 142; Buresh, *The Procopian Chronicle*, 43; Habenicht, *Dějiny Čechův amerických*, 628.

⁶³ Mizera, *Czech Benedictines*, 114, 118; Buresh, *The Procopian Chronicle*, 31.

⁶⁴ Mizera, *Czech Benedictines*, 114; Buresh, *The Procopian Chronicle*, 43. For a description and illustration of the Miehle press, which had been invented by a Chicago pressman, Robert Miehle in the early 1880s, see "The Miehle, Two Revolution Cylinder Machine", Press Gallery, Letterpress Printing in the 1960's. Accessed February 14, 2021 at: <http://letterpressprinting.com.au/page24.htm>.

⁶⁵ Neuzil, *Pět a dvacet let práce*, 14; Mizera, *Czech Benedictines*, 120.

⁶⁶ Mizera, *Czech Benedictines*, 121.

⁶⁷ Lay brothers were members of the Abbey who had professed religious vows but had not been ordained as priests. Following monastic tradition, they typically took on practical tasks, often involving manual labor,

editors, four clerks and accountants, six machine typesetters, two hand typesetters, one foreman for the typesetters, two printers at the printing press, six other handyman assistants, and twelve newspaper distributors.⁶⁸

This material expansion reflected an increase in the Bohemian Benedictine Press's printing and publishing activities. For one thing, the Press continued to add to its repertoire of periodicals. In 1898, it began publishing *Hospodářské noviny* [*"The Husbandman's News"*], a biweekly magazine that sought to present agricultural news shorn free of Freethought editorializing, which would continue in existence until 1930.⁶⁹ The press also began publishing periodicals of a more explicitly religious character. In 1901, it published the inaugural issue of *Apoštolát modlitby* [*"The Apostolate of Prayer"*], the Czech-language edition of the monthly organ of the Apostolate of Prayer, a Jesuit-sponsored devotional organization.⁷⁰ This small magazine would continue to appear for a quarter of a century until, in 1926, it was absorbed into a new monthly entitled *Vůdce* [*"The Leader"*], which would continue in print until 1966.⁷¹ A shorter-lived venture was the quarterly *Vezmi a čti* [*"Take and Read"*], which likewise sought to provide inspirational spiritual reading to the layman. Begun in 1914, it lapsed in 1918, though elements of its contents were reintroduced in *Vůdce*.⁷² There were, to be sure, limits to expansion: 1926, the year in which *Vůdce* was launched, also saw an abortive attempt to create a new monthly entitled *Český povídkář* [*"The Czech Storyteller"*], a "conspicuously nonreligious" magazine aimed at a Czech-American audience extending beyond Catholics that lasted only five issues.⁷³ Even as the Press expanded its publishing profile, the four original publications founded by Rev. Neuzil – *Přítel dětí*, *Katolík*, *Národ*, and *Katolík, česko-americký kalendář* – continued to form the core of its periodical publishing.

In addition to its periodicals, the Bohemian Benedictine Press developed a substantial program of book and pamphlet publishing. Already in the 1890s, it had begun to publish educational literature for Catholic Czech-language schools, such as catechisms and school textbooks.⁷⁴ By the first decades of the twentieth century, it had expanded its remit to cover "Czech-language devotional leaflets and pamphlets, hymnals and catechisms, readers and grammars."⁷⁵ By the late 1920s and early 1930s, The Press had even begun to venture into limited publication of English-language texts.⁷⁶ A "full book catalog" (*úplný seznam knih*) issued by the Press in 1928 bears eloquent witness to the range of materials that it was

that would provide for the upkeep of the Abbey. For a profile of the lay brothers at St. Procopius and their activities over the years, see Prokop Neuzil, *Bratři laikové v řádu sv. Benedikta* (Chicago: Tiskárna českých benediktinů, 1926); James Flint, "The Builders of the Community: The Lay Brother Vocation at St. Procopius Abbey", *The American Benedictine Review*, 55, no. 4 (2004): 395-441.

⁶⁸ Neuzil, *Pět a dvacet let práce*, 31; Buresh, *The Procopian Chronicle*, 43.

⁶⁹ Neuzil, *Pět a dvacet let práce*, 16; Mizera, *Czech Benedictines*, 116-117. According to Mizera, the initiative for the foundation of this magazine came from Rev. Neuzil, whose own past experiences as an agricultural laborer presumably made him sensitive to the needs of farmers.

⁷⁰ Formanová, Gruntorád, & Přibáň, *Exilová periodika*, 309, entry 663; Mizera, *Czech Benedictines*, 117.

⁷¹ Buresh, *The Procopian Chronicle*, 74; Mizera, *Czech Benedictines*, 117. Mizera incorrectly gives 1921 as the date of the inaugural issue of *Vůdce*.

⁷² Buresh, *The Procopian Chronicle*, 74.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 75.

⁷⁴ Mizera, *Czech Benedictines*, 117-118.

⁷⁵ Buresh, *The Procopian Chronicle*, 43.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 75.

publishing at the time.⁷⁷ Covering no fewer than 95 pages, it lists Czech-language prayer books, religious literature (*nábožné spisy*), devotional booklets, apologetic works and tracts for the times (*apologetické spisy a časové úvahy*), novels and short stories, children's books, schoolbooks, musical scores and song books, literature for the household and the farm (*spisy pro domácnost a hospodářství*), and dramatic works, as well as a modest assortment of English-language prayer books, textbooks, and novels. This variegated book publishing program was an important complement to the Bohemian Benedictine Press's core mission of periodical publication and assured its position as the single most important American provider of Czech-language religious literature for Czech-American Catholics in the early twentieth century – a position that it would continue to hold long after the cultural squabbles between Freethinkers and Catholics had become a dead letter in Czech-American society.

Procopius Neuzil's Further Contributions to Catholic Czech-American Print Culture

The years following Rev. Procopius Neuzil's departure from the directorship of the Bohemian Benedictine Press brought new and demanding tasks for him and his community. In addition to taking on the pastoral administration of St. Procopius Church in 1897, which he would hold until 1914, Rev. Neuzil was named prior of St. Procopius Abbey in 1899, a position in which he would serve for twenty years.⁷⁸ He played a leading role in planning for the move of the high school that he had founded at St. Procopius Parish – now known as St. Procopius College – to a new campus in Lisle, Illinois, some twenty-five miles to the west of Chicago, as well as in establishing a new charitable institution, St. Joseph's Orphanage, also located in Lisle.⁷⁹ In 1901, St. Procopius College was moved to Lisle and, in 1914, the Abbey was transferred there as well, though the Czech Benedictine priests serving St. Procopius Parish and the lay brothers working at the Press continued to live on the original monastic premises on South Allport Street.⁸⁰ After finishing his term as pastor of St. Procopius Church, Rev. Neuzil assumed teaching and administrative duties at St. Procopius College in Lisle, where he also oversaw a seminary associated with the college.⁸¹ In 1919 and 1920, he led a nine-month long mission to the newly formed state of Czechoslovakia organized by the Chicago-based National Alliance of Czech Catholics and, in the early 1920s, raised funds for the construction of a new seminary in Rome for Czech priests, the Nepomucenum, an activity for which he would be awarded the *Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice* medal by Pope Pius XI in

⁷⁷ *Tiskárny českých benediktinů úplný seznam knih obsahující modlitební knížky, knihy obsahu náboženského, romány povídky, knihy apologetické, učebnice, školní knihy, hudebniny atd.* (Chicago: Bohemian Benedictine Press, 1928).

⁷⁸ *The American Catholic Who's Who: Volume 7, 1946-1947*, 330.

⁷⁹ For accounts of the transfer of St. Procopius College from Chicago to Lisle, see Mizera, *Czech Benedictines*, 148-150; Buresh, *The Procopian Chronicle*, 47-50. This educational institution would, in time, develop into what is today Benedictine University. On St. Joseph Orphanage, which commenced operation in 1899 and continued to function until 1956, see Mizera, *Czech Benedictines*, 151-157; Buresh, *The Procopian Chronicle*, 48-49.

⁸⁰ Buresh, *The Procopian Chronicle*, 56.

⁸¹ *The American Catholic Who's Who: Volume 7, 1946-1947*, 330.

1928.⁸² In 1927, Rev. Neuzil was named prior for a second time and, ten years later, on 31 March 1937, was elected third Abbot of St. Procopius Abbey, a position that he would hold from his installation on 5 July 1937 until his death on 2 December 1946.⁸³

Despite the manifold pastoral and administrative activities claiming his attention, Rev. Neuzil continued to contribute to Czech-American print culture in various ways over the final half-century of his life. He continued to publish articles in *Katolík* and *Národ* and, in the 1930s, resumed limited editorial duties for the *Přítel dětí* and *Národ*.⁸⁴ Moreover, he authored a number of books published by the Benedictine Bohemian Press. Given his background as a schoolteacher, it is unsurprising that the earliest of these appears to have been a *Mluvnice pro české školy v Americe* [*Grammar for Czech Schools in America*], most probably published in the late 1890s or the very first years of the twentieth century.⁸⁵ Another volume was devoted to chronicling the history of St. Procopius Abbey. Published in 1910, *Pět a dvacet let práce: zpráva o činnosti českých benediktinů v klášteře sv. Prokopa, Chicago, Ill. od jejich příchodu do Chicaga r. 1885 do r. 1910* [*Twenty-Five Years of Work: A Report on the Activities of the Czech Benedictines in St. Procopius Monastery, Chicago, Illinois, from their Arrival in Chicago in 1885 until 1910*] gives a year-by-year account of the origins and early history of the Czech Benedictine order, culminating in a minute description of its twenty-fifth anniversary celebrations.⁸⁶ Similarly, Rev. Neuzil chronicled the activities of St. Procopius Church, while serving as pastor there, in several yearbooks issued between 1906 and 1912.⁸⁷ Other volumes, written to recruit new members for the Abbey, featured vignettes of the lives of the community's lay brothers: *Bratři laikové v řádu sv. Benedikta* [*Lay Brothers in the Order of St. Benedict*], which appeared in 1926, and *Řeholní bratři a naše doba* [*Monastic Brothers and Our Times*], published in 1932.⁸⁸ Finally, one should not pass over his religious books, which included a biography of the founder of his order, St. Benedict of Nursia, also published in 1932 (Figure 3),⁸⁹ and various religious pamphlets of a devotional nature, one of which, *Devítidenní pobožnost ku svaté Terezii od dítky Ježíše a nejsv. obličejě Páně* [*Nine-day Devotion to St. Theresa of the Child Jesus and the Most Holy Face of the Lord*], went through no fewer than three editions in 1927 and 1928.⁹⁰ The various subjects of these books

⁸² *Třetí čítanka pro české katolické školy v Americe*, 396-398, 439.

⁸³ *The American Catholic Who's Who: Volume 7, 1946-1947*, 330; Buresh, *The Procopian Chronicle*, 88. "Třetí opat kláštera sv. Prokopa, Jeho Milost nejdůst. P. Prokop Neuzil", *Katolík: Česko-Americký kalendář*, 44 (1948): 201, 204.

⁸⁴ So Droba, *Czech and Slovak Leaders*, 142: "Since 1930 he [sci., Rev. Neuzil] has been in charge of the Editorial Department in the Sunday edition of the "Národ" and of the "Přítel Dětek" since 1931."

⁸⁵ Esther Jerabek, *Czechs and Slovaks in North America: A Bibliography* (New York/Chicago: Czechoslovak Society of Arts & Sciences in America, Inc./Czechoslovak National Council of America, 1976), 122, entry 2238. This volume, which contains elementary grammatical lore and a number of exercises, is undated but its typeface and the lack of a street address for the Bohemian Benedictine Press, a regular feature of its post-1905 imprints, strongly suggest an early date. Jerabek tentatively dates it in the 1890s.

⁸⁶ Jerabek, *Czechs and Slovaks*, 279, entry 5659.

⁸⁷ Jerabek, *Czechs and Slovaks*, 279, entry 5658.

⁸⁸ Jerabek, *Czechs and Slovaks*, 279, entries 5656, 5660.

⁸⁹ Title: *Svatý Benedikt: učitel, apoštol a vůdce* [*Saint Benedict: Teacher, Apostle, and Leader*]; see Jerabek, *Czechs and Slovaks*, 279, entry 5662.

⁹⁰ Jerabek, *Czechs and Slovaks*, 279, entries 5657, 5661.

neatly mirror Rev. Neuzil's experience as an educator, a missionary, and a committed member of a religious community.

In the 1930s, Rev. Neuzil turned his writing and editorial skills to a new field of endeavor. From the time of the Russian Revolution, he had been interested in the possibility of preparing priests for missionary work in Russia and, to this end, had undertaken the study of the Russian language.⁹¹ This interest proved prescient for, in 1924, Pope Pius XI issued an appeal to the Benedictine order to "prepare themselves for missions in Russia".⁹² Three years later, after all due deliberation, St. Procopius Abbey chose to commit itself to working for missions in Russia and fostering church unity among Roman Catholics, Eastern Rite Catholics, and Russian Orthodox believers, and Rev. Neuzil was appointed by his abbot to direct this work.⁹³ For the next nineteen years, he oversaw a number of initiatives to prepare members of the Abbey for the promotion of ecumenical rapprochement between Western and Eastern rite Christians. Here, again, he did not fail to make use of publication as a means of furthering his program.⁹⁴ In April 1936, Rev. Neuzil commenced publishing a new monthly journal in Russian and English entitled *Tserkovnyi Golos, or, Voice of the Church*, to promote the cause of church unity, serving as its editor until it suspended publication a month before his death in 1946.⁹⁵ He also prepared a small bilingual Russian-English catechism that was published in 1937,⁹⁶ which one contemporary reviewer described as "in substance [the] Baltimore Catholic Catechism with such changes as were absolutely necessary in order to adapt the truths taught by the Baltimore Catechism to the concept and manner of expression of the Eastern Rite."⁹⁷ Funded by the Catholic Church Extension, this slight booklet was to be distributed to Russian Orthodox children free of charge. In his ecumenical activities, as in so much else, Rev. Neuzil relied on the printed word to propagate the messages that he wished to send.

⁹¹ Mizera, *Czech Benedictines*, 224; Buresh, *The Procopian Chronicle*, 85.

⁹² Mizera, *Czech Benedictines*, 225; Buresh, *The Procopian Chronicle*, 86.

⁹³ Mizera, *Czech Benedictines*, 225-226; Buresh, *The Procopian Chronicle*, 86.

⁹⁴ For an overview of these, see Klaud Viktorka, "Unionistická práce opatství sv. Prokopa", in *První unionistický sjezd ve Spojených státech konaný ve dnech 28. až září L.P. 1956 v opatství sv. Prokopa v Lisle, Illinois* (Chicago: Tiskárna českých benediktinů, 1957), 16-23; Mizera, *Czech Benedictines*, 223-231; Buresh, *The Procopian Chronicle*, 85-93.

⁹⁵ Mizera, *Czech Benedictines*, 230; Buresh, *The Procopian Chronicle*, 89; *The American Catholic Who's Who: Volume 7, 1946-1947*, 330. Viktorka, "Unionistická práce", incorrectly gives the inaugural date as 1935 and the date of cessation as 1949. *Tserkovnii Golos* would later be revived in 1957 as a newsletter and would definitively cease publication in December 1965. It should be noted that this periodical was printed not at the Bohemian Benedictine Press's facilities on South Allport Street in Chicago but in a smaller auxiliary printing shop which had been set up at St. Procopius Abbey in Lisle and continued in operation until 1945; see Buresh, *The Procopian Chronicle*, 109.

⁹⁶ Procopius Neuzil, *A Short Russian-English Catechism of Christian Doctrine = Kratkii russko-angliiskii katikjizis' khristianskago ucheniia*. ([Chicago]: Catholic Church Extension Society of the United States of America, 1937); cf. Buresh, *The Procopian Chronicle*, 89.

⁹⁷ "Book Notes", in *The Ecclesiastical Review* 49, no. 2 (1938), 93.

Epilogue: An Enduring Legacy

The Bohemian Benedictine Press had never been money-making proposition for St. Procopius Abbey and, even during its heyday, its finances were insecure at best.⁹⁸ From the late 1920s on, as new immigration restrictions reduced the flow of newcomers from Czechoslovakia and the younger generations of Czech-Americans increasingly followed the path of linguistic assimilation and Americanization, the market for Czech-language publications in the United States began to contract. This, of course, led to financial difficulties for Czech-American presses, and the Bohemian Benedictine Press proved to be no exception. As subscriptions slipped, the Press sought various means to retain readers. One solution was to incorporate English text into the publications: in 1934, the Sunday edition of *Národ* began to be issued with a one-page English supplement, the *Catholic Worker Page*, which was expanded five years later into a twelve-page tabloid with the title *Národ: Sunday English Section*.⁹⁹ Another was to stop publishing periodicals that had lost a critical mass of subscribers: at the end of 1947, a year after Rev. Neuzil's death, one of the four core publications, *Přítel dětí* was discontinued, with some of its features being transferred to a new children's section in *Katolík*.¹⁰⁰ The pace of publication of other flagship journals also slowed down: in 1954, the *Katolík*, formerly a semiweekly newspaper, became a weekly and the *Národ*, formerly a daily, became a semiweekly.¹⁰¹ In the late 1960s, as subscriptions continued to drop and other means of making up the Press's budgetary shortfalls failed, the decision was gradually made to wind down the press.¹⁰² The final issue of the annual almanac, which had been renamed *Národ* in 1950,¹⁰³ was for the year 1974; the two remaining newspapers, *Katolík* and *Národ*, published their final issues on 19 December and 20 December 1975, respectively, some eighteen years after their former Freethought rival, *Svornost*, had ceased publication.¹⁰⁴

This, however, is not quite yet the end of the story. After the shuttering of the Bohemian Benedictine Press in 1975, another Czech Benedictine missionary, Rev. Vojtěch Vít, O.S.B., resolved to continue the tradition of Catholic Czech-language publishing in Chicago inaugurated by Rev. Procopius Neuzil eighty-six years previously.¹⁰⁵ On 3 January 1976, he began publishing

⁹⁸ Buresh, *The Procopian Chronicle*, 74.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 75.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 109.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 110. See, however, Formanová, Gruntorád, & Příbáň, *Exilová periodika*, 273, entry 577 & 278, entry 591, who claim that *Katolík* was still a semiweekly in 1961. They also state that *Národ* joined *Katolík* as a weekly publication in 1960.

¹⁰² Buresh, *The Procopian Chronicle*, 110.

¹⁰³ Mizera, *Czech Benedictines*, 117.

¹⁰⁴ Formanová, Gruntorád, & Příbáň, *Exilová periodika*, 301-302, entry 643.

¹⁰⁵ Dušan Hladík, "Přežije Hlas národa rok 2000?", *Hlasý Národa*, 2000, no. 0: 3. On the life of Fr. Vít, see "Vojtěch Jaroslav Vít OSB", Město Police nad Metují [website], accessed May 14, 2021 at: <https://www.police.cz/zivot-ve-meste/historie-mesta/vyznamne-osobnosti-police-a-policka/vojtech-jaroslav-vit-osb/>. According to Formanová, Gruntorád, & Příbáň, *Exilová periodika*, 273, entry 577 & 278, entry 591, Rev. Vít was involved in the production of *Katolík* and *Národ* during the final years of their existence.

a new weekly newspaper under the aegis of the Czech-American Heritage Center Velehrad.¹⁰⁶ The new periodical's name – *Hlas národa* [*“Voice of the Nation”*] – ingeniously evoked the past of Czech-American Catholic publishing by invoking the names of two of the most successful newspapers that had emerged from that milieu – the St.-Louis-based *Hlas* and the Chicago-based *Národ*. Like its predecessors, it presented news from the United States and the world, though with greater emphasis on Czechoslovak affairs, reports about life in the Czech-American community, religious and historical articles, and letters to the editor: however, it was somewhat more linguistically diverse, with contributions in Czech, Slovak, and English.¹⁰⁷ Converted into a biweekly in 1993, *Hlas národa* continued in operation until the turn of the millennium, when a convergence of financial and administrative crises caused it to cease publication.¹⁰⁸ Yet even so, the tradition did not lapse, for another Czech-American priest, Rev. Dušan Hladík, director of the Czech Catholic Mission in Chicago, stepped into the breach and began publishing a new biweekly under the title *Hlasy národa*, or, *Voices of the Nation*, in the fall of 2000, with articles in Czech and English.¹⁰⁹ This magazine, which has since become a monthly, is still in existence today: as of mid-May 2021, it is the only Czech-language periodical still published in the United States. In this lone survivor of the once abundant Czech-American ethnic press, the legacy of the dedicated and indefatigable Rev. Procopius Neuzil lives on, even if in indirect and attenuated form.

Acknowledgements

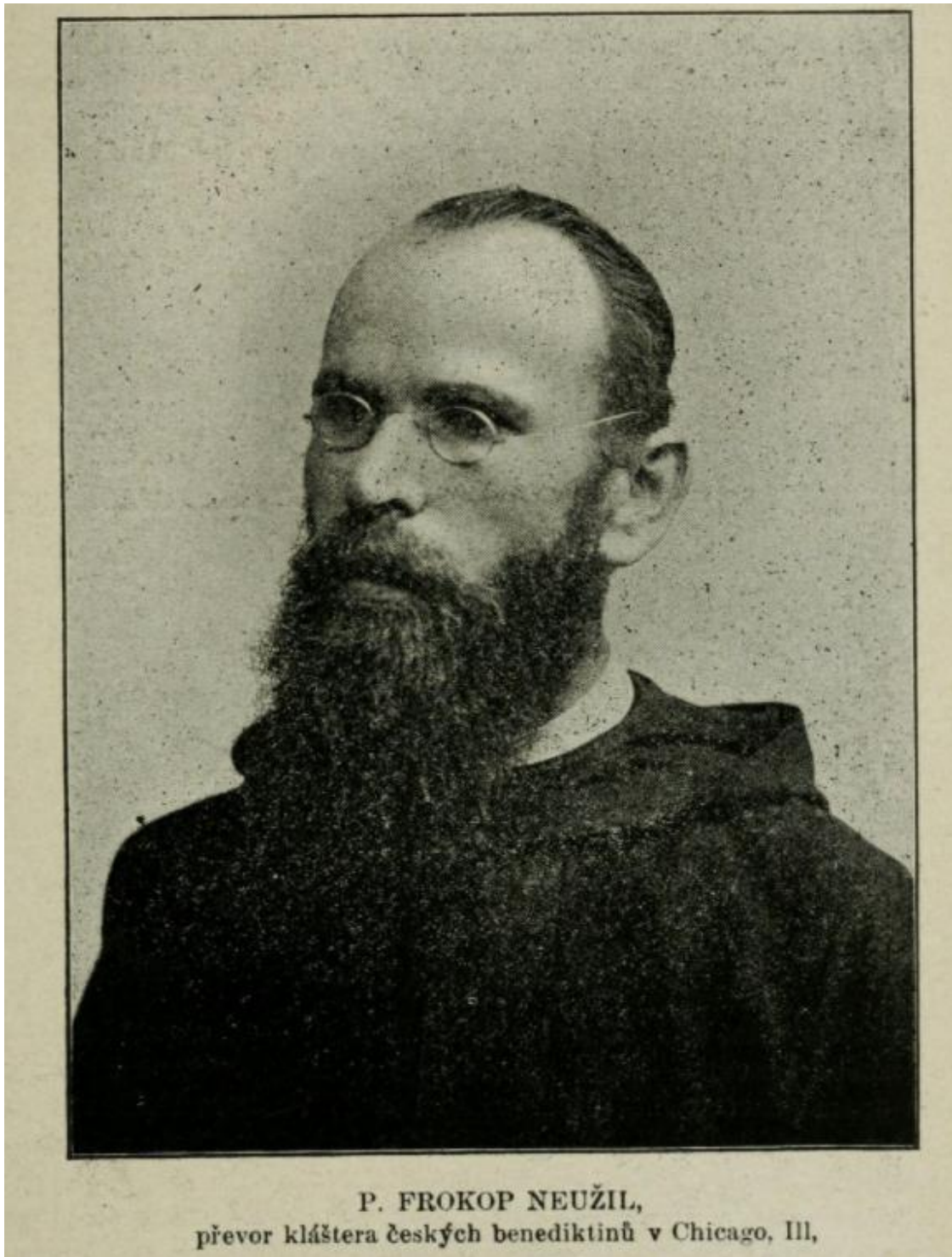
I am grateful to Catherine Uecker of the Special Collections Resource Center (SCRC) at the University of Chicago Library for smoothing the path for me to visit the SCRC and consult relevant ACASA materials there during a time of pandemic-induced restricted access.

¹⁰⁶ Formanová, Gruntorád, & Příbáň, *Exilová periodika*, 267, entry 562, *pace* “Vojtěch Jaroslav Vít OSB”, whose anonymous author inaccurately assumes that Rev. Vít's newspaper was still published by the Bohemian Benedictine Press. *Hlas národa* continued to be published in Chicago until late 1988, when Velehrad moved its base of operations to Cicero.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ Hladík, “Přežije Hlas národa rok 2000?": 3.

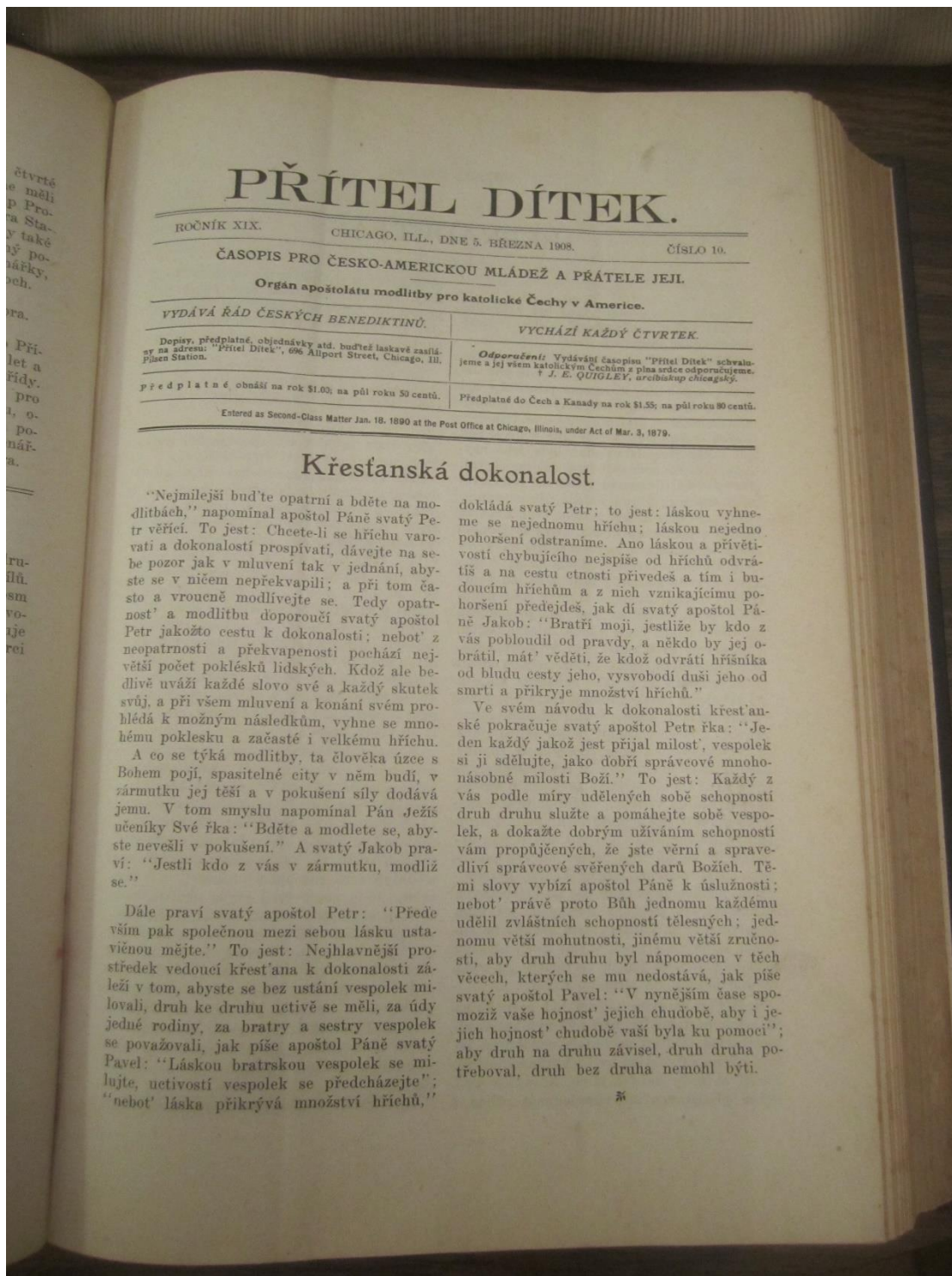
¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*



Rev. Procopius Neuzil, O.S.B. (1861-1947), Founder of the Bohemian Benedictine Press

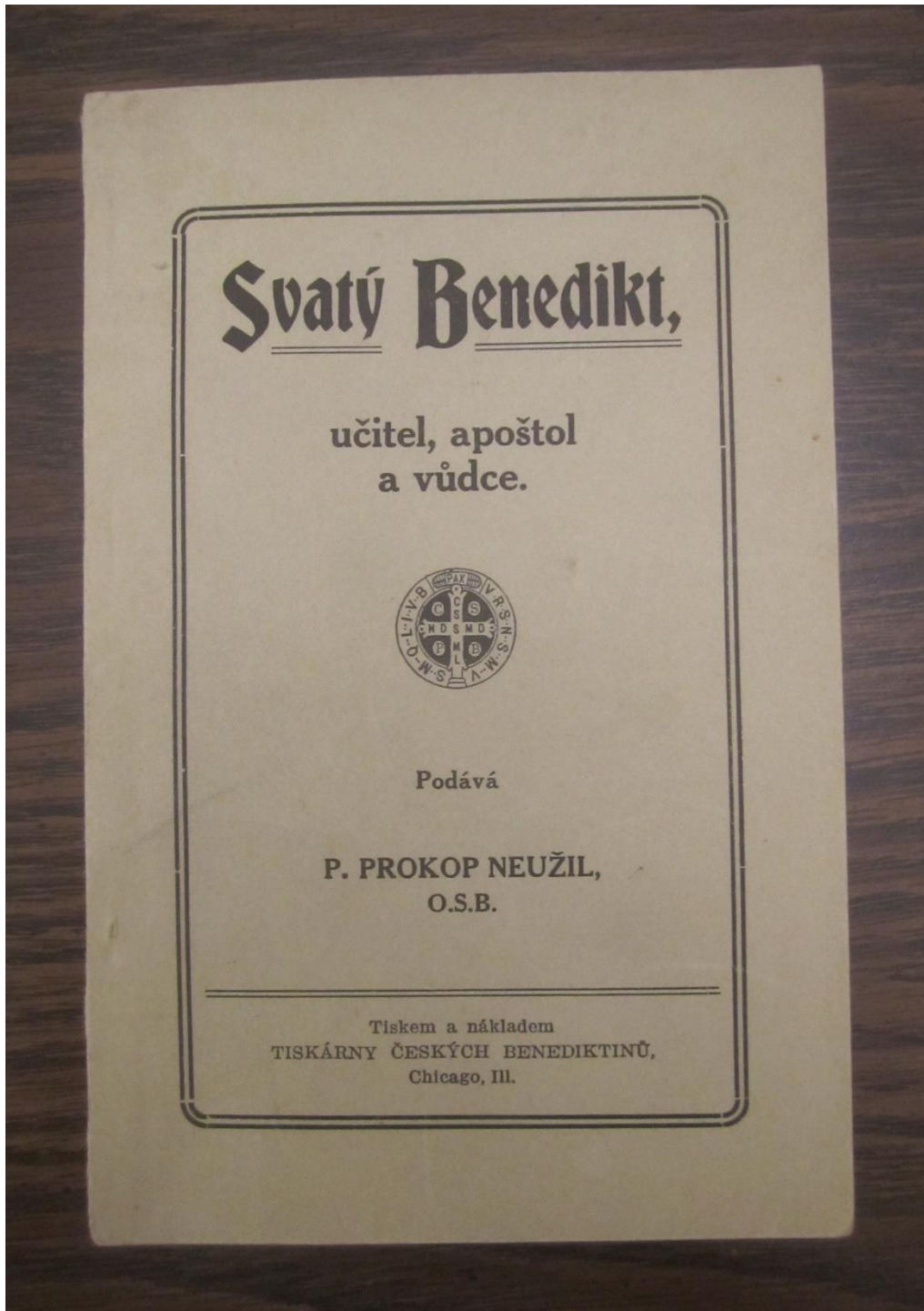
(Source: Jan Habenicht, *Dějiny Čechův amerických* [St. Louis: Hlas, 1910], 628,

via <https://archive.org/details/dejinycechuvameroohabe>)



Přítel dítek: First page of Vol. 19, No. 10 (5 March 1908)

(Source: Thomas M. Dousa, Personal Collection)



Procopius Neuzil, *Svatý Benedikt: učitel, apoštol a vůdce*
(Chicago: Tiskárna českých benediktinů, 1926), Front cover
(Source: Thomas M. Dousa, Personal Collection)

Seeing the Future in Muscovy in 1584

Dr. Charles J. Halperin, *Independent Scholar*

Keywords: Muscovy. Ivan IV (Ivan the Terrible). Time of Troubles. Romanov dynasty. Historical continuity.

On March 28, 1584, following the death of Ivan the Terrible, what would a hypothetical well-informed member of the Muscovite elite have expected to happen in Muscovy from 1584 to 1689? Which developments would have surprised our Observer, as I shall call him, and which would he have fully expected.

Fedor Ivanovich, Ivan IV's older surviving son, succeeded his father without incident. In 1584 Tsar Fedor's inability to sire sons might not yet have been suspected. Tsar Fedor had married in 1580. It was nearly twelve years later that his wife gave birth to her only child, a daughter, who died at age two. Even anticipating that Fedor would not leave a male heir would not necessarily have entailed the end of the dynasty. Ivan IV was also survived by a younger son, Tsarevich Dmitrii Ivanovich. Whether his health problems had become obvious (he was supposedly epileptic) is not clear from the sources, but regardless his perhaps unnatural death in 1591 would surely not have been predicted by our Observer. Given Ivan IV's repeated emphasis upon his actual descent from St. Volodimer of Kyiv (rather than his fictitious descent from Prus, relative of Augustus Caesar, via the equally legendary Riurik), it might very well have been assumed that if the Daniilovichi became extinct their successor would be of princely origin. Volodimerovichi had ruled Rus' for nearly six hundred years. Despite Boris Godunov's ambition and boyar status no one would have predicted that he would ascend the throne, even less that after the inglorious tenure as tsar of an eligible prince, Prince Vasili Shuiskii, that the next dynasty, albeit of boyar origin, would be the non-princely Romanovs.

Given the political role played, however briefly, by Ivan IV's widowed mother Grand Princess Elena during his minority, our Observer would not have been surprised at Tsarevna Sofia Alekseevna's political influence as regent for her younger brothers on the death of her father, Tsar Alexei Mikhailovich, in 1682.

Anyone who had survived Ivan IV's reign would not have been surprised that he became a negative role model for his successors. No seventeenth-century tsar emulated the *oprichnina* or the Simeon Bekbulatovich episode. It might very well not have been a surprise that when the Time of Troubles gave them the opportunity to do so, in 1606 and 1610 boyars attempted to limit the arbitrariness of the ruler.

It would not have been surprising that the post-Ivan IV Muscovite governments never invoked the theory of Moscow-the Third Rome. The piety of the ruler continued to dominate Muscovite political ideology through the seventeenth century. The appearance of the counter-

myth of Holy Rus' would have been unexpected. There had never been a counter-myth to that of the ruler in Muscovy.

Despite the presence of major social tensions in Muscovy during the sixteenth century our Observer could never have prophesied the Time of Troubles. The First False Dmitrii was the first Muscovite pretender. King Stefan Bathory had gotten no further into the Muscovite heartland than Pskov, and he had failed to take that city. That a Polish army would or could occupy Moscow was unthinkable. During Ivan IV's reign the Zaporozhian and Don Cossacks remained peripheral to Muscovite politics. That Cossacks would participate in electing a tsar would not have crossed our Observer's mind.

The increasing articulation of Court offices and status in the seventeenth century was a natural development. We know much more about the daily life of the ruler and the Court in the seventeenth century, but nothing that would contradict what we know about the sixteenth-century Court. However, the growing impersonalization of government, the distancing of the ruler from his subjects in the seventeenth century, the loss of the right to petition the tsar directly, would have struck a chord in someone used to much more intimate ruler-subject contact.

The major expansion of the number of central Muscovite bureaus and the growth in the size of their staffs would have occasioned no surprise. Not so a key development in the relationship between the boyar elite and the bureaucracy. At most during Ivan's reign one bureau, on banditry, was sometimes headed by a boyar. Beginning at the end of the sixteenth century gradually boyars took over leadership of individual bureaus from the bureaucrats who had run them, excepting the Ambassadorial Bureau and the Military Registry Bureau formally headed by the tsar. Seventeenth-century administrative paper cannot tell us if such boyars actually ran the bureaus they accumulated rather than serving as pro forma heads who derived status, influence and income from bureaucratic empire-building.

When Ivan IV summoned the first and only Assembly of the Land of his reign in 1566 to consult on foreign policy, neither he nor our Observer could have anticipated the major role it would play in choosing a ruler in 1613 or in setting policy for the first half of the seventeenth century. Ivan IV believed in hereditary monarchy. He would have been appalled at the participation of any of his subjects in royal succession. Indeed, he might have considered the Assembly of the Land, which did not even have a name at the time, an event rather than an institution.

The replacement of the 1550 Law Code by the 1649 Conciliar Law Code would not have been surprising. The 1550 code had replaced the 1497 code. However, the 1550 Law Code had only that one domestic antecedent, while the 1649 Law Code derived in part from Lithuanian, Byzantine and perhaps even Habsburg legislation. Byzantine legal influence would not have created any dismay, but why legislators in autocratic Muscovy would borrow anything from Lithuania's szlachta democracy or the elected Holy Roman Emperor would have seemed strange to our Observer.

Sixteenth-century Muscovy did experience some political violence, namely the Moscow riot of 1547. Therefore our Observer would definitely have been struck by the significant

increase of violent political unrest in the seventeenth century that derived from the model of armed popular mobilization during the Time of Troubles, including the Bolotnikov uprising. The Moscow riots in 1649, the copper coinage riots, revolts in Siberia, and the Don Cossack Razin uprising were par for the course in the violent European seventeenth century. The greatest violence in sixteenth-century Muscovy was state violence, the *oprichnina*, which, it would appear, met with relatively little and certainly no organized violent opposition. Seventeenth-century state violence on the other hand repressed actual, not fictitious, rebels and rioters.

Our Observer would have been surprised as the evolution of society during the late sixteenth and seventeenth century. The Forbidden Years during which peasants lost their freedom of movement, if they began before Ivan IV died, were explicitly temporary emergency measures. Even if our Observer were familiar with the emergence of serfdom in East Central Europe he could not have anticipated that the Forbidden Years would evolve into the Allotted Years, the statute of limitations on the recovery of runaway peasants, and then into serfdom. Turning peasants into serfs was part and parcel of a broader social transformation of the traditional society of sixteenth-century Muscovy which retained a toleration of a certain degree of upward and downward social mobility into a caste society which froze the status of peasants and artisans as serfs.

Other social changes accompanying the imposition of a caste society would also have struck our Observer as innovations. The transformation of two sixteenth-century professions into seventeenth-century hereditary classes reflected the increasing rigidity of Muscovite society. The musketeers were created in the second half of the sixteenth century, so by definition the first musketeers came from non-musketeer families. A century later musketeer status was hereditary. The same holds true for bureaucrats. Although multi-generation bureaucratic families appeared in the second half of the sixteenth century, the need to staff the expanding administrative apparatus resulted in the recruitment of many additional first-generation scribes from the gentry, clergy, merchants, and even peasants. At the time scribal families could not generate enough recruits to staff the bureaucracy. Noble-born gentry, members of a social class, outranked non-noble-born secretaries, whose social identity derived from their profession. Gentry and scribes belonging to the same family created a social anomaly in the sixteenth century exacerbated when men moved back and forth between gentry and bureaucratic statuses. Bureaucratic origin or social ties did not dishonor sixteenth-century gentry. By the seventeenth century bureaucrats intermarried with other bureaucratic families and bureaucratic origin was the social kiss of death for honor-conscious gentry just as priestly origin had become degrading to bureaucrats. Sixteenth-century priests did not come exclusively from priestly families, but by the seventeenth century the priestly caste was also overwhelmingly endogenous.

Our Observer would have taken note of the existence of sixteenth-century accused heretics, from the Judaizers at the turn of the century through the mid sixteenth-century heretics Bashkin and Kosoi, but could have derived his understanding of their views only via hostile Church sources. He would not have anticipated that in the seventeenth century “heretical” sources managed to circulate, namely Old Believer texts like Avvakum’s autobiography and epistles. Our Observer would have interpreted such toleration of heretical sources negatively.

Anti-heretical writers habitually exaggerated the numbers of heretics and the threat they posed to society. If our Observer judged the extent of a support enjoyed by a heresy from the number of its adherents punished by the church and the state, he would have concluded that sixteenth-century heresies were no more than marginal, if, occasionally, supported by influential individuals. The scope of seventeenth-century religious dissent would have struck the Observer as much more extensive and the consequences for society unprecedented. The spread of the Kapitonschina and the Old Belief far exceeded that of sixteenth-century heretics. The violent opposition of Solovetskii Monastery monks to government control was unprecedented.

The degree of popular involvement in the church might not have been new in the seventeenth century. The expulsion of priests like Avvakum by the parish laity in the seventeenth century and peasants petitioning for the construction of a church in their neighborhood testify to broader lay participation in parish life than we can find in sixteenth-century Muscovy.

Among other changes in Muscovy in ecclesiastical and religious affairs that our Observer could not have anticipated was the shift in elite religious consciousness to more personal and individualistic faith in the second half of the seventeenth century. Ivan IV could never have imagined creating the Monastery Bureau giving Tsar Alexei Mikhailovich far more control over monasteries than Ivan IV had exercised. Tsar Alexei was just as pious as Ivan IV but proved much more “secular” in his policies toward the institutional church. Our Observer realized that in the give-and-take of relations between the ruler and the head of the Russian Orthodox Church things changed. Metropolitan Makarii was a major player in Muscovy during Ivan IV’s minority through the 1550s but Ivan IV probably selected Filipp to be Metropolitan during the *oprichnina* and definitely bore responsibility for his removal and assassination. Neither the prominence of Patriarch Filaret, Tsar Mikhail Romanov’s father, nor Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich’s deposition of Patriarch Nikon in the seventeenth century would have been surprising.

Sixteenth-century Muscovy was already multi-ethnic and multi-confessional. Our Observer would not have been surprised by government policy toward non-Orthodox Christians in the seventeenth century. Sixteenth-century Muscovites tilted slightly in favor of Catholics over “heretical” Protestants, but the Polish role in the Time of Troubles changed that. Muscovy was far more anti-Catholic in the seventeenth century. Moscow did not change its goal in acquiring eastern territories of Christianizing the land but not the people. Kazan’ became Christian but no mass conversion campaign assaulted Tatar Muslims. The same applied to animists and Muslims in Siberia. The policies Moscow employed for dealing with Muslim Tatars in the sixteenth century did not require change when applied to Buddhist Kalmyks in the seventeenth century. The mechanisms of government control over steppe nomads remained the same too.

Except for the 1580s when the depression forced Ivan IV to extort donations from monasteries and contributions from foreigners, the sixteenth-century government did not suffer shortfall in revenue. Whether that continued under Tsar Fedor Ivanovich remains unclear, but the government’s ability to regain some territory from Sweden and to sponsor a building program suggests adequate income. Our Observer would not have predicted that in the seventeenth century Moscow would be chronically short of funds, as proven by the experiment

with copper coinage. Demographically Muscovy overcame the debilitating effects of the Time of Troubles, despite seventeenth-century epidemics, but revenue short-fall became a constant problem requiring frequent “extraordinary” levies. Our Observer was unlikely to have predicted the degree to which the seventeenth-century government relied on Siberian furs for income.

Economically seventeenth-century mercantilist practice - there was never any mercantilist theory in Muscovy - would not have been seen as an innovation by our Observer, because during the Livonian War Ivan IV insisted upon reciprocal free trade between Muscovy and its commercial partners. Nevertheless the establishment of a national trade statute in the seventeenth century compared to regional trading statutes of the sixteenth century suggests increased emphasis upon foreign trade. Sixteenth-century Muscovy possessed an outlet on the Baltic, Narva, only temporarily during the Livonian War, a deficiency not corrected in seventeenth-century Muscovy.

Militarily our Observer might have perceived great change. Ivan IV’s use of foreign mercenaries and sappers has been exaggerated. The number of mostly captured foreign mercenaries who entered Ivan IV’s service was small. However the creation of the new-style infantry regiments in the seventeenth century was unprecedented. Tatar, including Muslim Chingissids were often assigned to high command posts in field armies under Ivan IV, but they were relative few in numbers and those appointments may have been more symbolic than real. The use of Catholic and Protestant foreign officers in command of Orthodox Muscovite troops in the seventeenth century was far greater in scope and import, and far more disorienting to Muscovites who thought Orthodox Christianity superior to all other Christian denominations.

Our Observer appreciated that Muscovy needed all its military resources, gentry cavalry and gunpowder infantry and artillery, on both its eastern/southern and western/northern fronts, and that victory in war was neither assured nor precluded on either front. Muscovy had conquered Kazan’ and Astrakhan’ but in 1571 the Crimeans burned Moscow, only to be defeated in 1582 at Molodi. Early victories in the Livonian War were undone but Pskov defended itself against Batory. He would not have been surprised at the mixed picture in the seventeenth-century warfare. Muscovy recovered Smolensk and acquired part of Ukraine but could still suffer defeats as at Chihirin in 1678. Muscovy extended its defensive line into the steppe but its armies had just as little ability to conquer Crimea in the seventeenth century as during the sixteenth.

However, Muscovite ambition for territorial expansion became more mixed in the seventeenth than in the sixteenth century. Muscovy faced no serious opposition eastward in Siberia until it reached China. To the south, government reluctance to back the Don Cossacks in Azov against the Ottoman Empire might be seen as a continuation of sixteenth-century Muscovite apprehension at antagonizing the most powerful state in Europe. Muscovite reluctance to intrude into Ukraine to the southwest was another matter entirely. Whether this timidity resulted from a realization of the costs to the strained revenue supply cannot be determined. Muscovy willingly expanded into Belarus and Lithuania, so the problem might not have been Poland-Lithuania as an enemy, but the Ukrainian Cossacks as an ally.

Culturally our Observer could not help but be surprised and perhaps even dismayed that in the second half of the seventeenth century Muscovite culture turned increasingly to the west,

via Ukrainian and Belarusian intermediaries. However transient some aspects of this change, such as theater, or confined to the elite, nevertheless this was a major and unforeseen discontinuity with sixteenth-century Muscovy. Literary genres of Western origin unknown in sixteenth-century Muscovy rose to the fore in late seventeenth-century Muscovy. There is no surprise that the expansion of printing was dedicated mostly to religious works, although the printing of a law code and military textbook were harbingers of the future government utilization of printing for its own secular purposes. Employment of isolated foreign doctors by Muscovite grand princes and tsars in the sixteenth century became institutionalized by the establishment of the Apothecary Bureau in the seventeenth century.

If our Observer had tried to formulate an overall conclusion as to whether Muscovite history after Ivan IV's death confirmed his expectations he would probably have said "yes and no." Both continuities and discontinuities abounded in different spheres of Muscovite life after 1584 just as they had during Ivan IV's reign. Our Observer would not have expected uniformity of developments. Neither should historians.

References

Halperin, Charles J., "Ivan IV and Muscovite Political Culture," in Valerie A. Kivelson, Michael Flier, Daniel Rowland, and Erika Monahan Downs, ed., *Seeing Muscovy Anew: Politics - Institutions - Culture, In Honor of Nancy Shields Kollmann* (Bloomington, IN: Slavica Publishers, Inc., 2017), 49-65

_____, *Ivan IV: Free to Reward and Free to Punish* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2019).

Modernizing Muscovy: Reform and Social Change in Seventeenth-Century Russia, ed. Jarmo Kotilaine and Marshall Poe (London: Routledge Curzon, 2004).

The Cambridge History of Russia, volume I, *From Early Rus' to 1689*, ed. Maureen Perrie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 211-617.

A Recipe for Bread

Eve Levin, *University of Kansas*

Keywords: Bread. Baking. Food history. Russia--History. Friendship.

Sandra Levy and I became friends 45 years ago, in 1975, when we were both graduate students in Russian history at Indiana University. Two years later we decided to get an apartment together, and for the next four years we were roommates, sometimes with a third person to share the costs. Our friendship continued after we left Bloomington. We were professional colleagues, Sandra as a librarian and I as a professor, and we met up most years at the ASEES conference. She functioned as my “on-call” Slavic librarian, tracking down obscure publications for me on short notice. In addition, she and I visited back and forth, sometimes celebrating holidays together along with our families. On several occasions, we vacationed together. In this essay, I am trying to plait together the many strands of our relationship.

Recipes

On our excursions to local museums and country markets, Sandra frequently picked up cookbooks as souvenirs. She liked the cookbooks that described simple home-style dishes, laced with folklore, rather than the gourmet variety. I’m not sure how often she tried out recipes from these books. But certainly she appreciated cookbooks as a genre of literature. And so with this essay, which I present for reading enjoyment more so than for utilization in the kitchen.

In graduate school, both Sandra and I focused on premodern Russian women’s history. That led us inevitably to curiosity about the meals those Old Russian women might have cooked. Evidence existed, we discovered, but it was limited. Foreign travelers described the typical diet of Muscovites and their style of feasts.¹ It was Sandra who first introduced me to *Domostroi*, a sixteenth-century book of household management; as I recall, she wrote a paper about it. *Domostroi* was intended for prosperous but non-noble families and it contains many chapters describing types of foods and when to serve them.² It also contains some specific recipes in Chapter 65, primarily for different kinds of mildly alcoholic drinks, as well as two versions of a turnip pudding, one domestic and one from Constantinople. Chapter 66 describes how to make

¹ For example, see the accounts of Richard Chancellor and of Giles Fletcher, published in Lloyd E. Berry and Robert O. Crummey, *Rude and Barbarous Kingdom: Russia in the Accounts of Sixteenth-Century English Voyagers* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1968), pp. 36-38; 237-239.

² Carolyn Johnston Pouncy, ed., *The Domostroi: Rules for Russian Household in the Time of Ivan the Terrible* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), Chapters 11, 29, 42-58, 64-66, pp. 80-85, 124-127, 147-170, 190-204. The Russian publication numbers the chapters differently: V. V. Kolesov and V. V. Rozhdestvenskaia, eds. *Domostroi* (St. Petersburg: Nauka, 2000), Chapters 15, 33, 45-58, 64-66, pp. 22-25, 40-41, 51-60, 64-72.

spiced watermelon pickles, as well as other sorts of preserved fruit.³ None of these recipes include any information about the proportions of ingredients; the Muscovite cooks presumably figured it out on their own.

The author of *Domostroi* was concerned with the economic aspects of feeding a household, as well as issues of piety and propriety—serving the right foods to each class of person appropriate to the Orthodox season. Another text of that period, the *Secret of Secrets*, also contains substantial attention to food, but with a different focus—on health and libido. The *Secret of Secrets* was a medieval pseudo-Aristotelian text, incorporating ancient dietary advice filtered through the Islamic world. The East Slavic version of the text appeared in the late 15th century as a substantially emended translation from the Hebrew.⁴ Mostly this text presents types of food and methods of preparation that are healthy (or not, under some circumstances), but without specific proportions. However, one section, an interpolation from Moses Maimonides' treatise "On Coitus," provides specific amounts:

And thus also Avensina (Avicenna) has prescribed an omelet for the strengthening of that thing... One should take sparrow's brains and dove's brains, fifty of each, and twenty sparrow's egg-yolks and twelve yolks of young chicken's eggs, and having boiled some mutton finely chopped, some of the liquid only and $\frac{3}{8}$ of a grivenka of onion juice and $\frac{5}{8}$ of a grivenka of carrot juice and salt as much as is necessary of those (above-mentioned) herbs [long pepper, galangal, ginger, cloves, muscat flower, and nutmeg] and five zolotniks of cows' butter, one should fry all this and eat it and wash it down with a wine with a good aroma and not too sweet.⁵

This recipe comes close to the precision of modern recipes, although many of the ingredients would be difficult to obtain.

Other texts from the Muscovite period are rarely as precise. Archbishop Afanasii of Kholmogory sometimes includes specific amounts in his recipes for medicinal vodkas, oils, and ointments, but not uniformly. His recipe for an absinthe vodka directs:

Take two pounds of anise and three-fourths of a pound of absinthe and pour it into a bucket of wine [meaning vodka] and let it stand for two days, then redistill it.

But the recipe for the absinthe oil, which follows immediately afterwards, contains little information about proportions of ingredients, but it does elaborate intricate instructions their preparation:

Take ripe absinthe, which would be [judged] from a very ripe color, and dry it a little. Once dried, cut the leaves from the twigs, place in tub so that it can be heated a little.

³ Pouncy, pp. 196-200; Kolesov and Rozhdestvenskaia, pp. 67-70.

⁴ W. F. Ryan and Moshe Taube, *The Secret of Secrets: The East Slavic Version* (London: Warburg Institute, 2019). For information on the provenance and dating, see the Introduction, pp. 1-59. For examples of the dietary advice, see pp. 246-291, 333-347.

⁵ Ryan and Taube, p. 273. The translation is theirs.

And after that, pour in warm vodka and let it soak for a week or more, then add a lot of salt to it. And when it is infused, put it in a boiler and distill it into a glass vessel, and pour in warm tree [olive] oil, and let it stand for two days. And when it has stood, take Rhenish vinegar and pour in the oil with the herbs onto a griddle and cook over a fire until the liquid has boiled away.

But note the moisture in it on the ladle, and put it on the fire, and when it boils and begins to crackle, remove it from the fire at that time. And filter that oil through a cloth, and once again add fresh herbs to it, and boil as before three times. And then it will be absinthe oil.⁶

In order to replicate Archbishop Afanasiï's recipes in the format of our day, the preparer would need to experiment quite a bit to determine measurements and cooking times.

Later Russian cookbooks, such as the famous Imperial era volume by Elena Molokhovets, provide recipes that resemble our own. The weights and measures in her recipes could be a hurdle to reproducing them now, but for translator Joyce Toomre's handy conversion tables.⁷

Mentions of bread are fewer in dietary and health texts than we might expect, given how ubiquitous it was in Muscovites' diets. Yet one healing book (lechebnik) starts with a discussion of bread, thus testifying to its importance:

About Rye Bread:

Rye bread in substance is warmer than barley, and it is appropriate for healthy people to eat it, and it gives them strength. It is appropriate for sick people to eat wheat bread, which is better for nutrition.

But if in some people the stomach does not digest substances, it is not good to eat rye bread because gastric disease cannot be overcome, but only with great distress can it be eliminated. Each person ought to avoid underbaked bread, because great and serious illness arises from it. Also we don't eat hot or too soft bread; but let it sit overnight.

There are three common types of bread. A large one has within it much softness, but its crust is hard and it does not nourish the body. It is not quickly expelled, but is retained in the belly, and thick crumbs inflate the body, giving rise to a harmful moisture.

A bread that is fine and not large, from it the heat will pass through and dampness is drawn from it. That bread is digested in the belly and passes out of it.

⁶ T. V. Panich, *Literaturnoe tvorchestvo Afanasiia Kholmogorskogo* (Novosibirsk: Sibirskii khronograf, 1996), pp. 194-195.

⁷ Joyce Toomre, *Classic Russian Cooking: Elena Molokhovets' A Gift to Young Housewives* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992). For the tables of weights and measures, see Appendix B, pp. 96-97.

The middle bread is one that is not over fermented and not over salted; it is the most healthy of all. It feeds the body and causes the growth of good blood, and strengthens people's substance. But we understand that it is not good to be soft or stale, as explained above.

Bread that is mixed and baked with cherry juice, and is placed near the coals of the fire, so that it is soft from them, should be discarded.

Bread that is baked with slashes on it quickly decays and is not nourishing to the human body.

Eat rye pudding after an illness for care of the heart.⁸

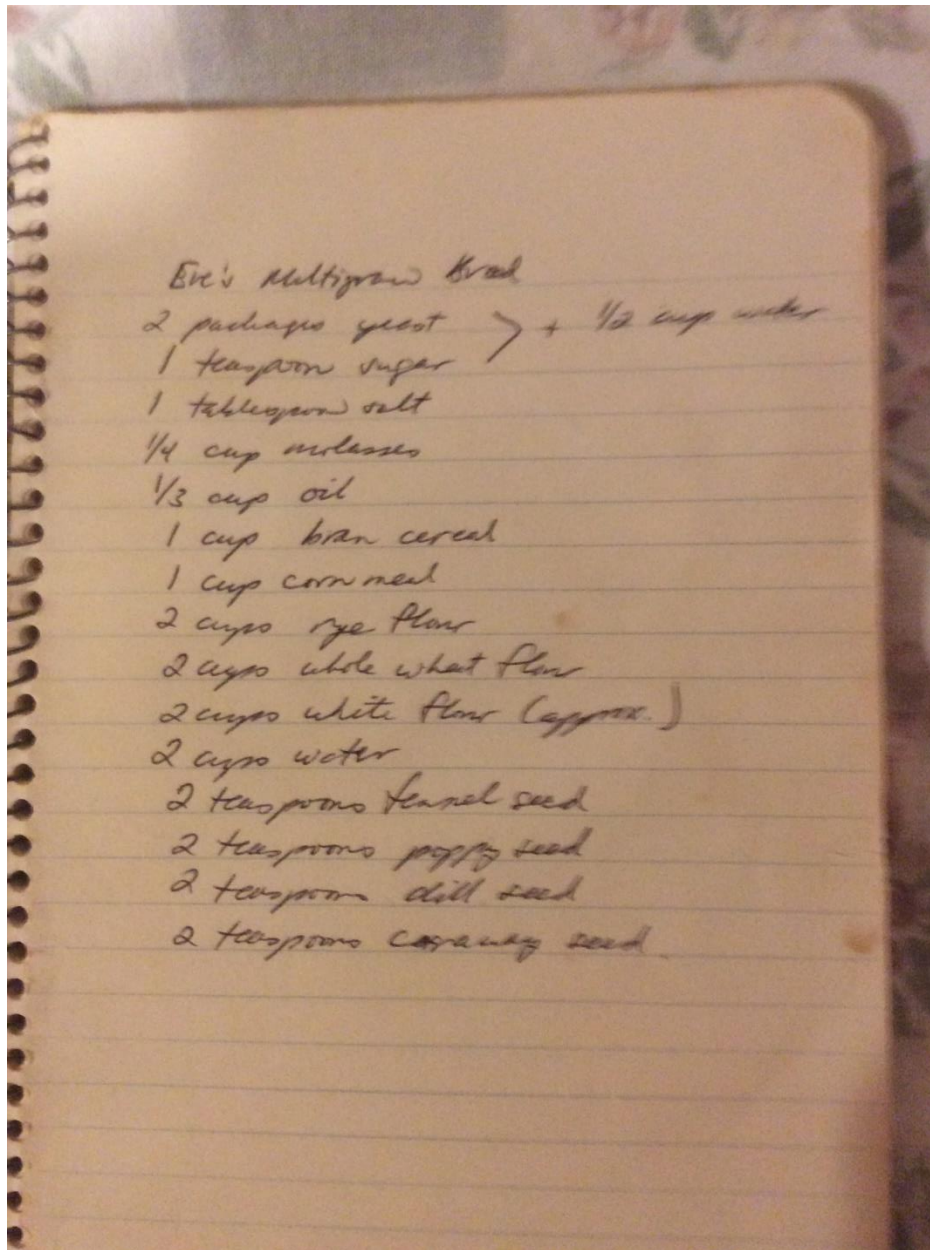
Some of the advice in this passage seems sensible to me, such as that to avoid eating undercooked bread. But I have frequently eaten bread fresh from the oven, and bread that is moist on the inside and crusty on the outside, never with ill effects. I also find it hard to believe that putting decorative slashes on the top of a loaf would make it unsuitable for human consumption. I'm intrigued by the idea of adding cherry juice to rye bread dough, but I haven't tried it. I wonder why, among all the liquids that can be used to moisten bread flour, the author of this text singled out cherry juice, and declared it to be problematical.

“Eve’s Multigrain Bread”

In the Levin/Levy household, Sandra became the chief pie-maker, and I became the chief bread-baker. We both enjoyed good baked goods, but our modest budget did not suffice to cover the cost of bakery products. We could afford store-brand versions of Wonder bread, but we didn't like it. Consequently, I baked bread every week. Baking time was Sunday morning, when the university library was closed (we were supposed to go to church, we guessed) and the TV station ran a double feature of Star Trek reruns.

I experimented with recipes, occasionally inventing my own. Not all of my experiments were successful. An attempt at a rye-flour honey cake turned out to be so heavy and peculiar-tasting that we didn't finish it. The multigrain recipe here comes from that time, although I have no memory of it. Instead, I stumbled across the recipe recently, recorded in my own handwriting. It was on one of the blank pages at the back of a notebook of favorite family recipes that my mother and my sister Anne copied for me.

⁸ “Lechebnik,” *Pamiatniki literatury drevnei Rusi: konets XVI-nachalo XVII vekov* (Moscow: Khudozhevstvennaia literature, 1987), p. 502. My translation departs from the modern Russian translation provided on p. 503.



Eve's Multi-Grain Bread Recipe. Photograph provided by the author.

The recipe has only a list of ingredients, with measurements but no instructions on mixing or baking. It was designed to produce two loaves—that is, enough for Sandra and me from Sunday to Sunday.

Because the covid pandemic has made visits to stores inadvisable, I have returned to my graduate-school practice of baking my own bread. And having rediscovered this old recipe, I

decided to try it. However, I needed to make some adjustments. First, I halved the recipe, because I now live alone. In addition, I had to make some substitutions. I ran out of molasses some months ago, but I had found that the sorghum syrup languishing on the pantry shelf made a reasonable alternative. Lacking poppy seed and dill seed, I substituted sesame seed and dill weed, respectively. Because I am more health-conscious now than I was in my 20s, I reduced the amount of salt and the amount of oil. I also reduced the amount of fennel seed; once I ruined a loaf of bread by adding too much. In the process of mixing the dough, I discovered that the amount of white flour called for in the original recipe was about 4 times what was actually needed. Maybe the difference lies in the very dry drought conditions here in Kansas in 2020 compared with the humidity of Indiana in the late 1970s.

Here is the updated recipe, with the addition of instructions:

Mix together in a large bowl:

- 1 package dry yeast
- 1/2 teaspoon sugar
- 1/4 cup warm water

Let sit for 15 minutes. Meanwhile, in a separate heat-proof bowl, place:

- 1/2 cup corn meal

Pour over the corn meal:

- 1 cup boiling water

Stir the corn meal and water together, and let it cool until it is warm, but not hot. Add the corn meal/water mixture to the yeast/sugar mixture, and stir until blended.

Add:

- 1 teaspoon salt
- 2 tablespoons oil
- 2 tablespoons sorghum syrup
- 1/2 teaspoon fennel seed, crushed
- 1 teaspoon sesame seed
- 1/2 teaspoon dill weed
- 1 teaspoon caraway seed

Mix thoroughly. Then add:

- 1/2 cup bran cereal (straws, not flakes)
- 1 cup rye flour

1 cup whole wheat flour

Blend well. The dough will be thick. Measure out:

1/2 cup white flour

Sprinkle about 1/4 cup of this white flour on a kneading board. Turn out the dough from the bowl onto the kneading board. Knead for 20 minutes, adding more white flour as necessary to keep the dough from sticking.

After kneading, form the dough into a ball and place it in a greased bowl. Turn the dough to grease it on all sides. Cover the bowl with a cloth, and place it to rise in a warm, dark place. (An oven heated to 125 degrees and then turned off is ideal.)

Let the dough rise for 1 1/2 hours. Then sprinkle the kneading board with more white flour, and turn out the dough onto it. Knead the dough for 10 minutes.

Shape the dough into a half sphere, and place it on a greased pan. Cover the loaf with a cloth, and let rise for 1 1/4 hours.

Bake the bread at 350 degrees for 45-50 minutes.

The bread is dense and fine-grained, not very crusty. When it is cool, it can be sliced quite thin. The flavor is reminiscent of Russian dark rye, slightly aromatic because of the seeds.



Eve's Multi-Grain Bread. Photograph provided by the author.

“Belarusians are kitties”

how a verbal meme became a national symbol¹

Anna Rakityanskaya, Harvard Library

Keywords: Belarusian protest, Social media, Cats in culture, Memes, National identity, Internet and society

Introduction

The protests in Belarus that followed the contested Presidential election held on August 9, 2020, produced an unprecedented amount of creative output in the form of posters, artwork, verbal and visual memes, internet posts and many other formats.

While the bulk of the protest narrative was critical in nature and directed at president Aliaksandar Lukashenka² or his security forces and state officials, there was also a steady stream of positive narrative in which the protesters themselves were the subject (“Belarusians are incredible,” “Belarusians, I love you,” etc.). In this wave of self-affirmation one image kept reemerging - that of kitties. To be fair, the Belarusian protest bestiary is quite extensive and includes a cockroach, dogs, roosters, bison, sheep, rats, pandas, cuckoo, goose, etc., but only cats (or kitties, to be precise) were given the honor of directly representing the Belarusians in their own eyes.

Verbally this is realized in the humorous phrase in a catchy trochaic meter that has three language variants: *Belarusy – kotsiki* (Belarusian) / *Belorusy – kotiki* (Russian) / *Belarusy - kotiki* (Russo-Belarusian). The literal meaning of this phrase is “Belarusians are kitties,” which stands for “Belarusians are nice,” but also for an even stronger sentiment “Belarusians are lovable.” At the start of the protest it began gaining popularity first only as a verbal meme. For example, a photograph of protesters published by the Telegram channel Chai z Malinavym Varennem is captioned : “Belarusians are basking in the sun - more proof that they are kitties”

¹ With gratitude to Curt Woolhiser for his encouragement and wisdom.

² Transliteration in this article follows the Library of Congress transliteration rules, with the exception of some personal names for which we use the established transliteration or the transliteration from the persons’ own social media accounts. When more than one variant exists we chose the standard transliteration from Belarusian.

(Belorusy greiutsia na solntse — eshche odno podtverzhdenie, chto oni kotiki).¹ A young couple engaged in a domino game on the ground during a quiet moment of an early protest are “more proof that Belarusians are kitties” (Eshche odno dokazatel'stvo chto belorusy — kotiki)²

Gradually the verbal meme started materializing in various forms. A video published by the Telegram channel Vot Tak TV on September 2 shows a picket line of 14 women in cat masks and ears, meowing and holding posters that identify each of them as an opposition newsmaker or news media outlet. In front of them we see a kitty litter box filled with cards containing names of pro-government news media.³

The Belarusian artist Olha Yakubovskaya developed this metaphor even further. Since August 2020 she has been painting protesting kitties who represent not only Belarusians in general, but often specific protest leaders, like Nina Bahinskaia, Maria Kalesnikava and Viktor Babaryka or social groups like musicians, bloggers, athletes, IT creatives, industrial workers on strike, retirees, people with disabilities and even fallen heroes who have become angels.⁴

In the ultimate realization of the metaphor, the word “kotik” completely replaces the nation’s name, as in this comment under a video showing some protesters saving an actual kitten caught in traffic : “Kitties saved the kitty” (Kotiki spasli kotika).⁵

Clearly, the “Belarusians are kitties” meme has grown extraordinarily powerful and has risen from being a cute saying to a de-facto expression of national identity. In this paper we will explore the cultural aspects of this phenomenon and its connection to protest activities, as well as how it relates to the process of Belarusians’ spontaneous self-discovery and conscious identity-seeking during the post-election protests of 2020.

Methods and materials

The Belarus protest movement is deeply connected to the Internet, being organized, described and partially conducted online, primarily through Telegram channels and chats as well as various online news media and web sites.⁶ Because of this we chose to use data from social media as source material for our study.

We were interested in protest-inspired content that supports the notion that Belarusians identify themselves with kitties. At the same time, we were also looking for general instances of Belarusians describing themselves in the same protest-related context.

This study is based on two formats of source material: textual and pictorial (mostly static images). We used Twitter as a source for the former and Instagram for both.

We used December 31, 2020 as a cutoff date for all internet publications that we reviewed.

Textual evidence

Twitter posts

In scanning Twitter for instances of “Belarusians are kitties” we discovered that none of the expected hashtags #беларусыкоцікі, #белорусыкотики or #беларусыкотики is known to Twitter. However, the actual phrase search produced results. We used the following 3 renditions of it (the Belarusian, the Russian, and the Russo-Belarusian):

- Беларусы коцікі
- Белорусы котики
- Беларусы котики

The numbers of hits for each phrase are presented in this table:

Year	Беларусы котики	Белорусы котики	Беларусы коцікі	All
2013	0	2	0	2
2014	2	4	0	6
2015	1	3	0	4
2016	0	5	0	5
2017	5	7	0	12
2018	2	8	0	10
2019	2	3	0	5
2020	126	96	2	224

We learned that the formula “Belarusians are kitties” existed well before the protests. The earliest tweet with that statement was in Russian and published on May 8 2013⁷.

We see a drastic jump in the use of the phrase in 2020 with 126 hits (up from 2 in 2019). The following table shows the 2020 posts distribution by month:

Month, 2020	Беларусы котікі	Белорусы котікі	Беларусы коцікі	Total # of tweets
Jan	0	1	0	1
Feb	0	0	0	0
Mar	0	1	0	1
Apr	0	0	0	0
May	4	5	0	9
Jun	2	3	0	5
Jul	0	0	0	0
Aug	65	42	1	108
Sep	25	21	0	46
Oct	11	6	1	18
Nov	9	10	0	19
Dec	10	7	0	17

It is clear that in August the number of tweets about Belarusians as kitties was the highest, followed by a decline in September and then another in October, after which the number of hits remained flat through the end of the year.

Instagram hashtags

Instagram hashtags in general are applied inconsistently and do not always reflect the visual

content they are attached to, so the presence of the “Belarusians are kitties”-themed tag does not presume a protest post, often it simply accompanies pictures of cute people, but the very existence of this tag testifies to the popularity of a certain cultural myth.

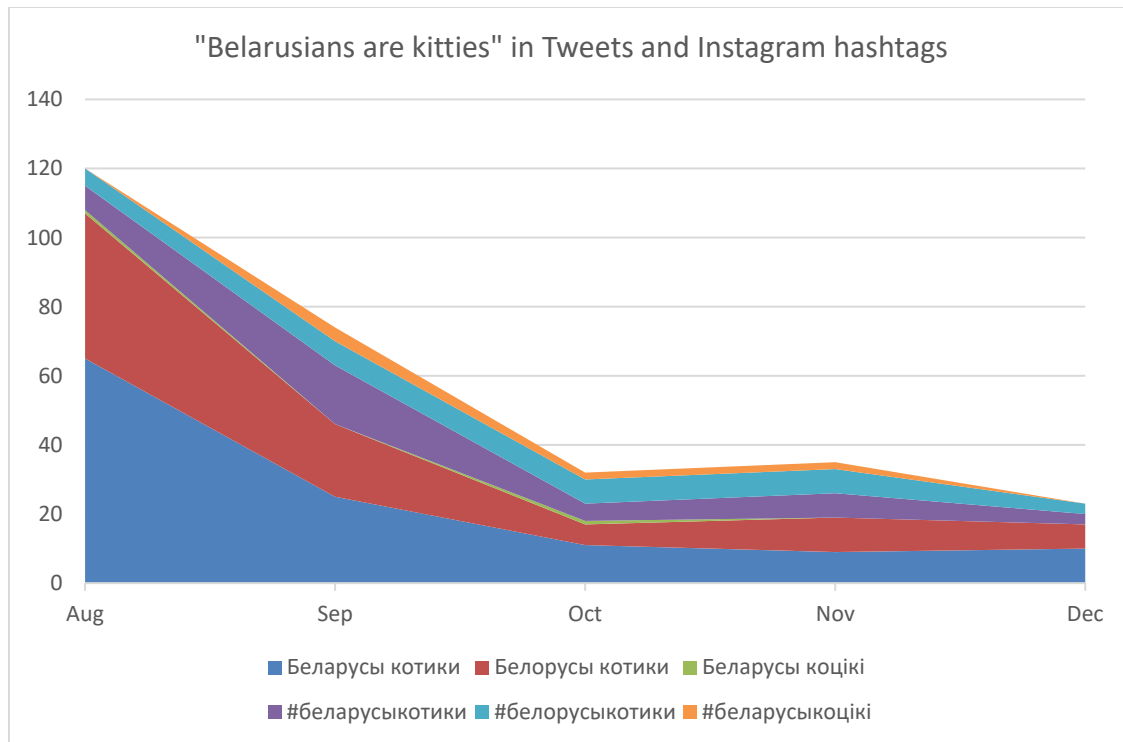
We searched all Instagram for these three hashtags, based on the three language versions of “Belarusians are kitties” phrase:

- #беларусыкоцікі
- #белорусыкотікі
- #беларусыкотікі

We found that posts with these hashtags started appearing in August 2020. Their chronological distribution is presented in the following table:

Month	#беларусыкотікі	#белорусыкотікі	#беларусыкоцікі	Total # of posts
Aug	7	5	0	12
Sep	17	7	4	28
Oct	5	7	2	14
Nov	7	7	2	16
Dec	3	3	0	6

As we can see from both Twitter and Instagram textual data combined in a graph below, the popularity of the “Belarusians are kitties” meme peaked in August and September. Out of the 3 language renditions the Russo-Belarusian one (*Беларусы котікі*) is clearly preferred over the other two, and the Belarusian one (*Беларусы коцікі*) is the least preferred one.



Pictorial Evidence

We based our pictorial content study on images published by the Instagram account Chai z Malinavym Varennem (@godofbelarus). It is a very active account with 43.7 thousand followers (as of February 2021). It was launched on March 21, 2018, but prior to August 9, 2020 it had published only 100 posts with nature photos and some political humor. From August 9 the account grew exponentially and by the end of December 2020 it had published over 4,500 posts, all dedicated to the post-election protest movement, focusing on photographs from the protest actions.

We scanned the visual content of the posts only, ignoring captions or comments, looking for the theme of self-identification with kitties, while making the following exclusions:

- Images of cats in which they appear next to the white-red-white “historical” Belarusian flag, because these images do not convey a clear association between the animal and all Belarusians.
- “Recycled” generic cat memes unless they were transformed in a way that implied that the cat(s) in the meme are Belarusians.
- Any instances of a discourse that draws a line between cats and people, such as “Kitties are with the people” (Kotiki s narodom), “Even kitties are for...” (Dazhe kotiki za ...), or “Even kitties understand...” (Dazhe kotiki ponimaiut...) We were interested only in the images in which cats are not WITH the people but ARE the people.

As a result, we identified 44 relevant posts, with the following distribution by publication date:

August – 13

September– 14

October – 14

November – 4

The subjects of these photographs vary: most of them (22) contain images of protest posters, 9 feature murals, 9 are artwork (including drawings, photo- and video art), there are also photos of cats with posters and individual posts featuring elevator art, a sticker and a cake decoration.

The content falls into the following groups:

1. **Belarusians are kitties** (11). Here we see mostly rally posters that declare in a plain and simple way “Belarusians are kitties”, or “We are kitties”, a variation on protest materials mentioning the “pawsies and clawsies”⁸ that kitties have.
2. **Kitties in action** (12). Here the kitties are actively participating in protest activities: they hunt a certain fat rat with a crowned head, hold white-red-white opposition flags, fight the OMON/AMAP (the Belarusian special forces police), hide from it, go on strikes, engage in municipal self-government and even sing the opposition songs.
3. **Cat memes** (11). Here familiar memes are politically reimaged, based on the assumption that the viewer is familiar with both the original visual meme and the “Belarusians are kitties” verbal meme. For example there is a new take on the popular Runet meme “Natasha,” which features a band of cats leaning over their sleeping owner (Natasha) and trying to persuade her to wake up and feed them: this time the cats are addressing “Sasha” and they are telling him that they “knocked the country down,” “there are lots of us, no end to us,” “we will knock you down too,” “so better run, Sasha”⁹; the content and the red-and-white palette used in redrawing the originally photographed meme leave no doubt as to the symbolic meaning of the cats who “knocked the country down.” Another example: a poster: “Sasha, kill yourself, we only have pawsies” (Sasha, ubei sebja sam, u nas lapki)¹⁰ – a political take on a cat meme featuring a cat who refuses to perform a task on account of it having only pawsies, i. e. not the hands necessary for doing it.
4. **Bitie-bitie for Belarus’** (Kus’ za Belarus’) (11). This laconic verbal meme implies that the speaker is a cat fighting for a better Belarus. Curiously, in the comments section of an Instagram post we witness a dialog between two users who both claim to be the creators of this verbal meme, while both agree that the meme was born in August 2020.¹¹

While it is unclear whether the phrase “Belarusians are kitties’ itself was coined in Belarus or outside, it is obvious that it has been willingly adopted by the Belarusians. Even though *kotik* as a positive characteristic of a person is widely used in both Russia and Belarus, it is only in

Belarus that we see the term applied to the whole nation. We will now attempt to assemble a more precise inventory of traits that Belarusian protesters assign to *kotiki*.

Kotiki and the Internet

In trying to deconstruct the image of a Belarusian *kotik* it is important to recognize the deep connection between the rise of the cat narrative and Internet culture. According to M. Thibault and G. Marino, cats are the “totemic animal” of the Internet (the free, playful, anonymous and humoristic segment of the Web, as opposed to its other segment, the Social Web which positions itself as an extension of real life).¹² When it comes to the Russian-language Internet, the situation is no different, with the omnipresence of cats in virtual dwellings ranging from popular memes and cute pictures to elitist and obscure internet communities and individual blogs¹³.

M. Thibault and G. Marino point out the following cat features that secured them this role: being anthropomorphic (or easily “anthropomorphizable”), cats’ “derpness” (silly, contradictory or inexplicable behavior), being “fluffy and kawaii” and their ability to also be “haughty and contemptuous” (appealing to the elitist Internet subcultures).¹⁴

Because of all these qualities cats came to represent a free, odd, non-standard, anti-authority and intrinsically right attitude, which makes them excellent candidates for a symbol of political resistance. And indeed, cat images have played a major role in a number of political or social campaigns (in addition to #Gattinisalvini and Cats against Brexit described by M. Thibault and G. Marino, one could mention “Kotiki protiv narkotikov” campaign in Saint-Petersburg (when the artist Petr Levin painted cats over the ads by drug dealers on building walls¹⁵).

It is highly likely that the staple feline softness and gentleness, in combination with the aptitude for quiet resistance of Internet cats, contributed to the Belarusian kitty mythologeme as it developed in the context of a protest carried out mostly by digital natives.

Kotiki and National Identity

It is clear to us that the verbal meme “Belarusians are kitties” uttered by protesters contains a positive albeit concise appraisal of their compatriots. In order to fully understand its meaning it is important to study the general self-image of the protesting Belarusians. To that end in our research of pictorial material from Instagram account Chai z Malinavym Varennem, we identified 33 posts that reflected feelings of Belarusians towards themselves. These images include protest posters (23), photos and videos of protesters at rallies (6), artworks (2), a craft work and a flier. The date distribution of these posts shows that August was the peak month for self-assessment:

August – 20

September– 8

October – 2

November – 1

Dec – 2

The sentiments expressed in those posts fall into several groups:

- Illustration of various specific admirable character traits perceived by the authors as “Belarusian,” which include good manners (like taking shoes off before stepping on a street bench or cleaning up trash after a rally), peacefulness, uncompromising nature, courage, intelligence, kindness, etc. - 11
- General declaration of love for Belarusians - 5
- Discovery of one’s wonderful fellow countrymen and women – often expressed through a line from a song by the Russian band Splin “My ne znali drug druga do etogo leta” (We didn’t know each other until this summer)¹⁶– 4
- Awakening of political consciousness, expressed in another poetic reference, a line from a song by the Belarusian group Tor Band “My ne bydlo” (We are not cattle)¹⁷ - 4
- Belarusians are incredible (using Maria Kalesnikava’s signature word¹⁸) – 3
- Belarusians are heroes – 2
- Solidarity – 2
- Unity – 1
- An opaque message “Belarusians are Jesuses” (Belarusy – Iisusy) - 1

Based on these samples the following positive personal characteristics appear to be perceived by protesters as Belarusian:

- Kindness
- Intelligence
- Good manners
- Peacefulness (even in protest)
- Solidarity (helping those who have been prosecuted)
- Ability to self-organize
- Ability to heroically withstand pressure

When we compare these traits with those associated with kitties we see that some of these qualities (kindness and peacefulness) easily overlap. However when it comes to solidarity and self-organization, these qualities are hardly feline, and yet they seem to be standard for Belarusian protest “kotiki.” On August 16 Chai z Malinavym Varennem published a photograph of a truck full of water bottles brought by volunteers with the caption: “Who are the kitties we have here? Belarusians!” (Kto u nas kotiki? Belorusy!)¹⁹ A story from September 10 about a man who lost his job because of his loyalty to the protesters and was immediately helped with finding a new place to live and a job, ends with a poignant “Because Belarusians are kitties!” (Potomu

chto belorusy - kotiki!)²⁰ Clearly, “kotik” stands for as an essentially good and highly ethical human being.

If we follow the official discourse used by the leaders of the Belarusian protest, we find them reaffirming all the aforementioned qualities as essentially Belarusian. They consistently create a charismatic image of a peaceful Belarusian, a quiet and honest individual who is fighting against an evil foe. For example Svetlana Tikhanovskaia in her August 17 videorecorded speech in her new role as an exiled national leader praises Belarusians for their peaceful protest, heroism, solidarity and mutual assistance (here and subsequently the highlights are mine):

Belarusians today show **miracles of heroism, solidarity, and decency**. Time after time we demonstrate to the whole world our **dedication to the ideas of non-violent resistance**, And by this we prove that Truth is not on the side of force and arms, Truth is on the side of **fortitude, honesty, decency and courage**. ... Belarusians are people who **do not accept violence**, Belarusians are **generous and fair**. ... We are Belarusians ... We **support each other, showing mutual assistance and solidarity, not abandoning each other when we are in trouble**.²¹

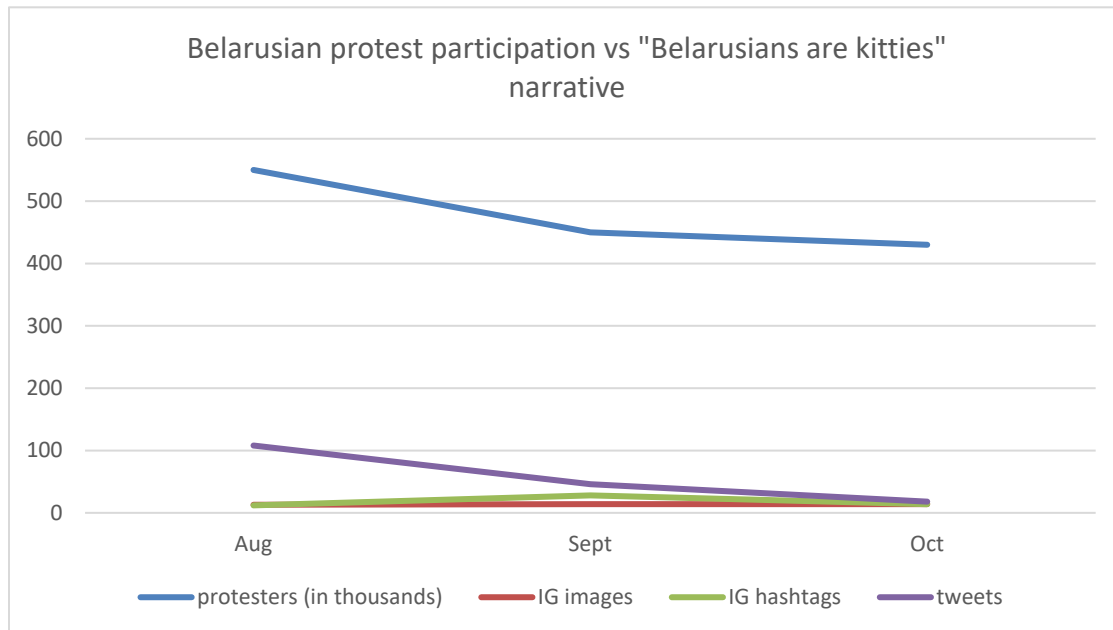
We find additional nuances in the portrait of a Belarusian protester in Maria Kalesnikava’s acceptance speech for the European Parliament’s Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought awarded to her and other leaders of the democratic opposition in Belarus. The imprisoned Kalesnikava wrote on December 15:

... Look at the Belarusians ... Those **talented and courageous** people ... So **touchingly** and so **honestly** every day Belarusians fight for what belongs to them by birthright.²²

In drawing this vivid image Kalesnikava remarkably uses the word “touchingly” which is evocative of the image of kitties from Belarusian protest narrative – fragile, fluffy, cute, peaceful, domestic and at the same time – proud, firm and unbending.

This image of a Belarusian is not new, it is built on the traditional Belarusian autostereotypes reflected for example in V. Karatkevich’s *Ziarniia pad belymi krylamy*, where love of freedom, perseverance, generosity, quiet bravery (*спакойная смеласць*) and willingness to help are celebrated as essentially “Belarusian” traits.²³ As for commitment to peace, it is even proclaimed in the opening line of the official Belarusian anthem :“We the Belarusians are peaceful people”.²⁴ It is obvious that the protest “kotiki” fit into this frame naturally.

In order to better understand the relationship between the kitties narrative and the actual protest we decided to compare their dynamics. We used the August-October protest participation data published by Radyio Svaboda.²⁵ In November the protest actions changed format, because of the repressions and the colder season. Mass demonstrations gave way to the tactics of dispersed, local actions, and because of that there are no estimated participation statistics for November and December.



It is easy to notice the decline in both protest numbers and in the popularity of the Belarusians as kitties narrative. We see at least two reasons for that:

1. The aforementioned changes in the protest strategies. The protest formats became much more discreet, and the mood more somber. The mass rallies with their atmosphere of summer festivals ended and took with them the proliferation of the creative and light-hearted rally posters.
2. The dynamics of the “Belarusians are kitties” verbal meme reflects the self-discovery process of Belarusian protesters. Repeatedly they admitted that they had been underestimating their own strength prior to the post-election protests. In Tikhanovskaia’s words, “This is the realization that we have lacked for many years”²⁶. As any newly found idea, this self-affirmation needed to be repeated, and this is why the statement *Belarusy-kotiki* enjoyed such popularity in August and September, at the early stages of the protest when many previously politically inactive people joined the action. However, self-discovery is a finite process and it was basically complete by October, and no longer needed frequent expression.

Despite the subsiding of the kitty narrative, kitties appear to remain part of the national identity. One of the latest examples is poster art published on January 20 by the social campaign *Hodna* to advertise the festival of Belarusian language *MovaFest*. It features a white cat with a red eye band (an unmistakable nod to the protest movement) and a word *Belaruskamiauny* (a pun on *Belaruskamouny*, i. e. “Belarusian speaker” or rather “Belarusian meower”).²⁷

In other words, Belarusians are still kitties.

Conclusion

In the months that followed the Presidential election in Belarus, especially in August and September, we observed not only the contemporary history of the Belarusian protest of the second half of 2020, but also mythologization of this history, the creation of the self-image of a small quiet, kind and deeply good individual standing up to a powerful evil, the “Belarusian kitty.”

The formula “Belarusians are kitties” existed well before the protests, but gained an extraordinary popularity in August and September 2020.

It appears that this image stems as much from the national cultural mythology as from the contemporary Internet culture in which cats occupy a prominent place and symbolize freedom, humor and quiet resistance. Belarusians added several unique characteristics to the cultural mythologeme, such as aptitude for solidarity and mutual help, and made the kitty a truly national symbol that is in sync with the national autostereotypes reflected in the opposition leadership narrative of Belarusians as peaceful, ethical, heroic and overall “incredible” people. For the Belarusian protesters (“the kitties”) the political confrontation is perceived first and foremost as a moral one, i. e. it is good vs. evil. In Maria Kalesnikava’s words, “The fight against evil continues, the Belarusians have not yet proved that good always wins, but they have already proved that good exists”.²⁸

Illustrations



Kitties fighting OMON. Artist: catpurrrs.



Kus' za Belarus'. Artist: Olga Sobenina.



Olga Sobenina's *Kus' za Belarus'* as a mural in Minsk. Photo by Kira Korshun.



A protester in August 2020 holding a poster “Belarusians are kitties, we have pawsies and clawsies”. Photo by Pavel Belavus.



This is our city! By Olga Yakubouskaya.



Poster featuring a cat wearing the Belarusian historic white-red-white flag as a cape and holding a rat in his mouth, with a small crown lying to the side. Photographer wishes to remain anonymous.

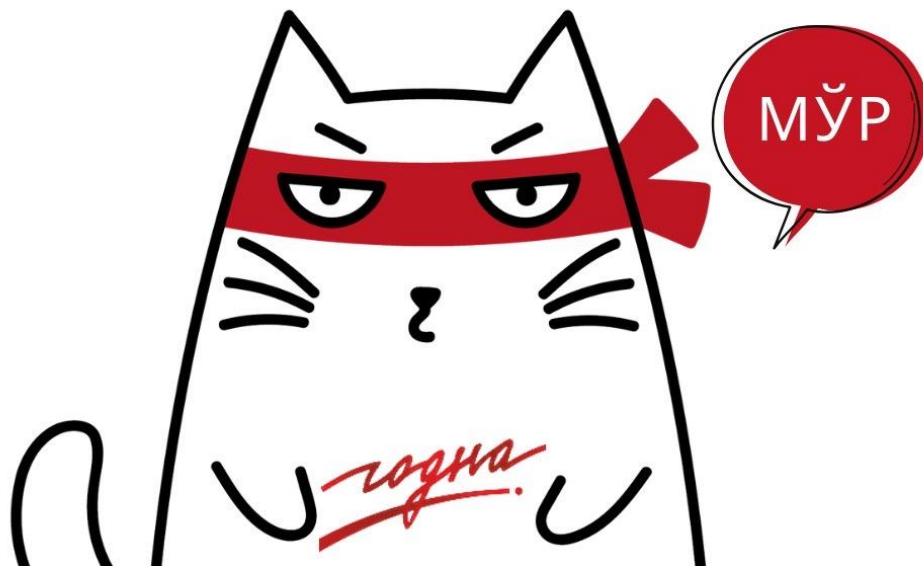


Poster reads: “We will win because kitties are stronger than rats.” Photographer wishes to remain anonymous.



Kitties as DJs of Change (Didzhei Peremen). This paper “mural” follows the iconography of the act of defiance by sound engineers (later nicknamed DJs of Change) Ulad Sakalouski and Kiryl Halanau raising their hands in the “we can” and “we will win” signs immediately after they turned on the protest-themed song *Change!* by Viktor Tsoi during an official event on August 6, 2020.²⁹ The installation is one of the many versions of the iconic image persisting in one of the Minsk courtyards, nicknamed Change Square. Photograph by an anonymous donor to the Facebook account Ploshchad’ Peremen. Minsk (@ploshchaPeramen).

БЕЛАРУСКА МЯЎНЫ



Belaruskamiauny (“Belarusian meower”). Artist wishes to remain anonymous.

References

- ¹ Chai z Malinavym Varennem . 2020. “Belorusy greiutsia na solntse — eshche odno podtverzhdienie, chto oni kotiki.” Telegram, December 6, 2020. <https://t.me/belteanews/17167>.
- ² Chai z Malinavym Varennem . 2020. “Eshche odno dokazatel’stvo, chto belorusy – kotiki.” Telegram, August 18, 2020. <https://t.me/belteanews/11896>.
- ³ Vot Tak TV. 2020. “Belorusy kotiki! Aktsiia solidarnosti vozle Dvortsia Sporta v Minske segodnia.” Telegram, September 2, 2020. <https://t.me/vottaktv/3218>.
- ⁴ Olga Yakubouskaya (@yakubouskayaolga). Accessed February 10, 2021. <https://www.instagram.com/yakubouskayaolga/>
- ⁵ Chai z Malinavym Varennem . 2020. “Devushki, stoiavshie v tsepochnke pamiaty, spasli kotenka.” Telegram, November 13, 2020. <https://t.me/belteanews/16514>.
- ⁶ Ivy Plus Libraries Confederation. 2020- .Belarusian Politics and Society Web Archive. Accessed February 10, 2021. <https://archive-it.org/collections/15042>.
- ⁷ Unexpected relations (@juzeffa_). “Belorusy – te eshche kotiki.” Twitter, May 8, 2013. https://twitter.com/juzeffa_/status/332269952067305472.
- ⁸ Chai z Malinavym Varennem (@godofbelarus). 2020. Instagram photo, September 12, 2020. <https://www.instagram.com/p/CFCE2Q4niRN/>.
- ⁹ Chai z Malinavym Varennem (@godofbelarus). 2020. Instagram photo, September 13, 2020. <https://www.instagram.com/p/CFFp4gQHwXh/>.
- ¹⁰ Chai z Malinavym Varennem (@godofbelarus). 2020. Instagram photo, August 21, 2020. <https://www.instagram.com/p/CEJfARCHJE1/>.
- ¹¹ Chai z Malinavym Varennem (@godofbelarus). 2020. Instagram photo, August 31, 2020. <https://www.instagram.com/p/CEjAGExHBwJ/>.
- ¹² Thibault, Mattia, and Marino, Gabriele, “Who Run the World? Cats: Cat Lovers, Cat Memes, and Cat Languages Across the Web, *International Journal for the Semiotics of Law = Revue Internationale De Sémiotique Juridique* 31, no. 3 (2018): 473–490.
- ¹³ Sukhanova Tat’iana Nikolaevna, “Setevye koty” mezhdru skazkoi, romanticheskoi prozoi, lubkom i komiksom, ili kak sozdaetsia virtual’nyi obraz-maska v internete?” in *Lichnost’ v kul’turnoi traditsii : sbornik nauchnykh statei*, ed. Fadeeva, L. V., and Gosudarstvennyi institut iskusstvoznaniia Ministerstva kul’tury Rossiiskoi Federatsii (Moskva: GII, 2014), 386-418.

-
- ¹⁴ Thibault, “Who Run the World?”, 487.
- ¹⁵ Kotiki protiv narkotikov v Peterburge, BBC News Russkaia sluzhba, <https://www.bbc.com/russian/media-47659323>
- ¹⁶ Splin – Moe Serdtse, discogs.com, [https://www.discogs.com/ СПЛИН – Мое Сердце/release/2549670](https://www.discogs.com/СПЛИН – Мое Сердце/release/2549670)
- ¹⁷ TOR BAND - My - ne "narodets"!, <https://youtu.be/Rai9tQCrRsQ>, accessed 1/25/2021.
- ¹⁸ Mariia Kolesnikova. Spasibo! My — neveroiatnye!, <https://babariko.vision/news/mariya-kolesnikova-spasibo-my-neveroyatnye>, accessed on 1/25/2020
- ¹⁹ Chai z Malinavym Varennem . 2020. « Kto u nas kotiki? Belorusy!” Telegram, August 16, 2020. <https://t.me/belteanews/11550>
- ²⁰ Chai z Malinavym Varennem . 2020. Spasateliiu, kotorogo uvolili za to chto preduprezhdal minchan o snimal'shchikakh flagov, za sutki nashli novoe zhil'ë i predlozhili desiatki variantov novoi raboty. Potomu chto belorusy - kotiki!” Telegram, September 10, 2020. <https://t.me/belteanews/13586>.
- ²¹ I am ready to become a national leader. Svetlana Tihanovskaya, Strana dlia zhizni, <https://youtu.be/UPATUpqAIDE>, accessed on 12/17/2020.
- ²² Maria Kalesnikava. “Vchera ia, Tatsiana Khomich, sestra Marii Kolesnikovoi...” Facebook, December 15, 2020. <https://www.facebook.com/637031961/posts/10157461462921962/>.
- ²³ Karatkevich, Uladimir, “Ziamlia pad belymi krylami,” in *Zbor tvorau: u vas'mi tamakh* (Minsk: Mastatskaia litaratura, 1987), 8: 383-569.
- ²⁴ Gosudarstvennaia simvolika, Prezident Respubliki Belarus', http://president.gov.by/pda/ru/simvolika_ru/
- ²⁵ 100 dzion belaruskai revaliutsyi. Lichby, Radyio Svaboda , <https://www.svaboda.org/a/30951541.html>.
- ²⁶ I am ready to become a national leader. Svetlana Tihanovskaya, Strana dlia zhizni, <https://youtu.be/UPATUpqAIDE>, accessed on 12/17/2020.
- ²⁷ Hodna (@hodnaby). « Kali vy chakali znak, kab peraistsi na belaruskuiu, to heta ion!” Instagram, January 20, 2021. <https://www.instagram.com/p/CKQ2sJRIqVR/>.
- ²⁸ Maria Kalesnikava, “Vchera ia”, 2020.
- ²⁹ "U liudei otkrylis' glaza". Interv'iu s didzheiami, vkluchivshimi "Peremen!", Radio Svoboda, <https://www.svoboda.org/a/30789759.html>

Belarusian émigré and diaspora printed publications in the British Library collections

a brief overview

Dr. Ekaterina Rogatchevskaia, *British Library*

Keywords: Emigre and diaspora publishing, libraries, metadata, Belarus

This article had been researched and written mostly before August 2020, when Belarusian people became one of the world's major newsmakers by opposing a long-standing authoritarian regime in their country. As suggested by Buhr, Shadurski and Hoffman (2011, 425), Belarusian identity has been “demonstrating more civic aspects than ethnic ones”, and Belarusians' incredibly creative struggle supports this conclusion nine years after it was made. The processes happening in Belarus today highlighted the role of the Belarusian media operating outside of the national state borders. The Telegram channel NEXTA took centre stage (Hurska 2020; Article 19, 23 October 2020), although there are fifty three online resources worldwide that have been archived so far by the University of California Berkeley (Belarus Crisis: Fall 2020). Such collections, on the one hand, continue the traditional trends of preserving émigré and diaspora publications and, on the other, provide a look at the material from a new angle, where approach to collecting becomes holistic and the place of publication loses its relevance.

At the same time, studies of historical print collections can both help researchers identify specific primary sources and contribute to our understanding of diaspora and migration process in general. As stated by Alexander (2017, 1553), “the field of diaspora studies is <...> in process, reflecting and shaping new forms of migration and settlement, emergent forms of belonging and the precarities of ongoing global inequalities, dislocation and violence”. Print and digital publishing activities of diasporas and émigré communities constitute an important part of their identities, even though they are very rarely examined by social scientists when theoretical frameworks of the relevant disciplines are debated. However, I would argue that reconstruction of cultural institutions in host countries, including the press, is one of the most important elements in the establishing and functioning of diasporas. Information professionals and historians regularly give their perspective on the subject of diaspora publications and collections of such publications. This overview is an attempt to link such efforts and suggest ways of incorporating observations and findings into a broader picture of social sciences disciplines.

Belarusian émigrés and diaspora formed in the XX-XXI centuries received some academic coverage, mainly in the works of researchers in Belarus and within the diaspora itself.

Despite the fact that a systematic and objective study of the problem began only at the end of the last century, a great deal has already been done. According to the researcher of the Belarusian Diaspora O.V. Koval, “the greatest contribution to the study of the trends of the Belarusian diaspora was made by modern Belarusian historians V. Snapkovsky [Snapkouski 1995] and G. Sergeeva [Sargeeva 1993]”, whose research “laid the foundation for the creation of the history of the Belarusian diaspora” [Koval 2010, 9]. In the last decade, Koval has published extensively on various aspects of the Belarusian diaspora, such as its connections with the Ukrainian Diaspora, chronology and characteristic features of different periods in the history of the Belarusian Diaspora, its relationship with the host countries and its place in them, as well as the diaspora’s homeland connections [Koval 2008, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2012a, 2015]. Simultaneously, publications of the previously unknown printed and archival documents appeared in the series Biblioteka Bats’kaushchyny (Fatherland’s Library), initiated by the Belarusian Institute of Sciences and Arts, “which, in addition to books by Belarusian authors on the activities of Belarusians abroad, presents works of art, memoirs and popular science literature created by representatives of the Belarusian emigration” (Kal’ko 2012, 110): see, for example: Skobla, Mikhas’ (ed.) 2004; Rahulia 2006; IUrevich 2005 and IUrevich 2005a. This series, in turn, continues the tradition of studying culture of the diaspora, presented in the works published by the Belarusian Institute of Sciences and Arts in New York [e.g.: Maksimiuk 1994]. An interesting critique of professional historians within Belarusian diaspora was presented by Supruniuk (2015) and [Łatyszonek](#) (2015). The Belarusian diaspora literature was thoroughly examined by McMillin (2002). Unique and important bibliographic work that had started by M. Pan’kou [1952] was continued by Vitaut and Zora Kipel’ [1993, 2003, 2006], and Garbiński (2009).

The British Library holds numerically significant and otherwise important collections on the cultures of various diasporas, settled in Britain as well as in other countries. Strengthening the historical European, Americas & Oceania Collections, diaspora publications remain a focus of the contemporary content strategy, as it is stated in the latest document *Enabling access for everyone: The British Library’s content strategy 2020-2023* (13-14). Identifying the gaps in the collections and studying these collections still remains an important task. The existing bibliographical publications and tools helped me to find in the British Library catalogue more than a hundred titles of books, brochures and periodicals produced by Belarusians abroad. The main objective of this work is to make Belarusian materials more accessible for researchers by improving and enhancing metadata for bibliographical and holding records. As it was recently stated by Kemp, Dean & Chodacki, John (2018, 208),

The audience raised two longstanding issues as key obstacles: legacy data and indexing. First, the recognition that legacy data is difficult for the community to address. There was an understanding that adding more and better metadata to new content going forward is possible, but that enriching existing metadata records can be difficult and time-consuming. By the same token, the more content producers provide, the more useful it is likely to be. Second, indexing is key to the discussion of metadata quality and librarianship. Indexing is the other side of the metadata coin and must be included in discussions of how to make improvements.

Despite the fact that bibliographical records for all printed publications have long been transferred from cards into electronic format, finding these records still presents a challenge.

Until 1975, all British Library catalogue cards for foreign publications were first, quite understandably, written by hand to be then transferred into a print catalogue published in multiple volumes (there was no general card catalogue in the British Library). Thus, there were always several catalogue volumes being edited for the next reprint. Publication titles and places were entered into the catalogue in the original languages and alphabets. The names of the authors, on the contrary, were transliterated according to the internal rules developed in the Library, which currently differs from the standard (for the Anglo-American library community) transliteration rules. For the Ukrainian and Belarusian languages, names were often Russified, but this was also not a standardized practice, so the same names may appear in different forms. Similarly, places of publication can be written in Belarusian (most often) and Russian or in English (to reflect the cataloguer's assumption, not supported by information on the title page). There are frequent cases of typos and errors in names that were made in the process of converting entries from print to digital form.

Moreover, periodical issues recorded on cards were not consistently transferred to the electronic catalogue either, which means that in order to enhance the records, all periodicals must be checked *de visu* before making changes to the catalogue. Ephemera publications, such as brochures, tracts and leaflets, were not catalogued separately and many of them might still be hiding under 'collection level' entries for several publications bound together, such as "a collection of postcards," "a collection of brochures," or "a collection of leaflets and posters." Thus, bibliographical information for all the publications found in the catalogue must be updated in accordance with modern standards which include full transliterated titles, added titles in the original languages and scripts, controlled names, added language and country codes, names of editors and contributors, checked and confirmed years of publication and, often complex and confusing, verified publication patterns for journals, magazines and series. In addition, it might be beneficial to unite these publications, so that they could be presented in one file or set of search results publications in order for researchers to be able to find an entire collection by single request. A subject index might help but will not solve the problem overall. Although the subject categories developed by the Library of Congress are quite flexible, this task presents a certain difficulty, since they did not initially imply a research request to identify all the diasporic publishing activities.

In the process of re-discovering diaspora publications, issues concerning the physical state of these materials may also be identified. Most of such publications were produced in the first half of the twentieth century on cheap paper, the quality of which left much to be desired. The format of many publication, such as brochures, leaflets, ephemera, newspapers and newsheets, also implied that they were short-lived and were not meant for collecting and safeguarding. Document preservation can take a long time, so the print materials in poor physical state need to be prioritized. As a result of re-discovery of diaspora publications, some Belarusian editions, such as for example the newspaper "Shlyakh Moladzi / Ślach Moładzi" (Vilnia: Belarusian Drukarnia im Fr. Skaryny, 1928-1939), have recently been restored and are now available to readers. In it also worth noting that some "Shlyakh Moladzi" issues bear stamps of the Polish post with the address: "England, Ukrainian Bureau, London". The links between the Ukrainian Bureau in London and the Library of the British Museum are still to be examined, although a detailed study of the Ukrainian Bureau in London has been published not so long ago

(Zięba 2010) and more documents concerning the activists behind this organisation have been found and examined (Prymak 2019).

If possible, findings of such research should be reflected in the catalogue records. Put together with the results of the projects that aim to unveil other ‘hidden’ diaspora publications collections, enhanced metadata based on research will help to incorporate studies on printing and media produced by émigrés and diasporas into mainstream diaspora and migration studies.

References

Alexander, Claire. 2017. “Beyond the “The ‘diaspora’ diaspora”: a response to Rogers Brubaker”. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 40:9, 1544-1555. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2017.1300302>

Article 19. 2020. “Belarus: Authorities designate Telegram channel NEXTA as “extremist” in further crackdown on independent media”, 23 October. Accessed 29 December 2020. <https://www.article19.org/resources/belarus-nexta-crackdown/>

Belarus Crisis: Fall 2020. University of California Berkeley. Accessed 29 December 2020. <https://archive-it.org/collections/14892>

Buhr, Renee L., Shadurski, Victor & Hoffman, Steven. 2011. “Belarus: an emerging civic nation?”, *Nationalities Papers*, 39:3, 425-440. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00905992.2011.565319>
Enabling access for everyone: The British Library’s content strategy 2020-2023, https://www.bl.uk/about-us/governance/policies/content-strategy?_ga=2.112253252.157556403.1622663234-1835315353.1622663234#. Accessed 29 December 2020.

Garbiński, Jerzy. 2009. *Belaruski rėlihiiny druk na Zakhadze: peryiodyka, hrafichnyia druki (1945-2005) = Belarusian religious publishing in the West: periodicals and graphic prints (1945-2005)*. New York, Warsaw: Belaruski instytut navuki i mastatstva.

Hurska, Alla. 2020. "What Is Belarusian Telegram Channel NEXTA?". *Eurasia Daily Monitor Volume*, 17 Issue: 132. The Jamestown Foundation. Accessed 29 December 2020.
<https://jamestown.org/program/what-is-belarusian-telegram-channel-nexta/>

IUrevich, Liavon (ed.). 2005. *Ekvivalent: zbornik emihratsyinaï historychnai prozy*. Minsk : Belaruskii knihazbor.

IUrevich, Liavon (ed.). 2005a. *Mémuary na émihratsyi: krynitsaznaŭchae das'ledavan'ne*. Minsk : Belaruskii knihazbor.

Kal'ko, V.N. 2012. "Osobennosti izucheniia belorusovedeniia vo Frantsii (istoriograficheskii aspekt i istochnikovaia baza)." *Lingvistika i metodika v vysshei shkole, vyp. 4: sbornik nauchnykh statei: 80-letiiu Viktora Aleksandrovicha Khoreva posviashchaetsia*, 99-103. Grodno: Tipografiia Zebra.

Kemp, Jennifer, Dean, Clare & Chodacki, John. 2018. "Can Richer Metadata Rescue Research?". *The Serials Librarian*, 74:1-4, 207-211, DOI: 10.1080/0361526X.2018.1428483

Kipel', Vitaut. 1993. *Belarusy u ZShA*. Minsk.

Kipel', Z., Kipel', V. 2003. *Belaruskii i belarusavedny druk na Zakhadze. Asobnyia vydanni: bibliiagrafiia*. New York, Minsk.

Kipel', Z., Kipel', V. 2006. *Belaruskii druk na Zakhadze: bibliiagrafiia*. New York, Warsaw.

Koval, V. U. 2015. "Asablivasti uplyvu ukrainskai dyiaspary na belaruskuiu emihratsyiu u mizhvaennai Chekhaslavakii." *Zhurnal mezhdunarodnogo prava i mezhdunarodnykh otnoshenii*, 2, 36-41.

Koval', V. U. 2008. *Peryiadychnyia vydanni belaruskai dyiaspary iak historychnaia krynitsa (1939-1960 gg.)*. Minsk: RIVSHP.

Koval', B.U. 2012. "Uzamasuviazi belaruskai i ukrainskai dyiaspar u mizhvaenny peryiad." Minsk: RIVSHP.

Rogatchevskaia, Ekaterina. "Belarusian émigré and diaspora printed publications in the British Library collections." *In Honor of Sandra Levy*, edited by Susan J. Martin. Chicago: University of Chicago Library, 2021, 67-73.
<https://openjournals.lib.uchicago.edu/index.php/slevy>

Koval', O.V. 2011. "Organizatsiia emigratsionnogo dvizheniia belarusov i ukraintsev iz Vtoroi Rechi Pospolitoi v 1920–1930-e gg.: pol'skie vlasti i moreplavatel'nye kompanii." *Vestnik Rossiiskogo universiteta Druzhy narodov*, 2, 86-95

Koval', O.B. 2010 "Sviazi belorusskoi i ukrainskoi emigratsii." *Vestnik Polesskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta, Serii obshchestvennykh i gumanitarnykh nauk*, 2, 9-14. <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/svyazi-belorusskoy-i-ukrainskoy-emigratsii>, accessed 12.12.2020.

Kowal, O. 2012a. "Rola osobistych kontaktów między emigrantami w kształtowaniu się współpracy diaspory Białoruskiej i Ukraińskiej w okresie międzywojennym". *Biuletyn Historii Pogranicza*, Nr. 12, 27–35. Białystok.

[Łatyszczek](#), Oleg. 2015. „[Belarusian Historians in Exile: New Circumstances, Old Problems.](#)” In *East and Central European history writing in exile 1939-1989* edited by Maria Zadencka, Andrej Plakans and Andreas Lawaty. Leiden: Brill Rodopi. 120–130

Maksimiuik, Ian. 1994. *Belaruskaia himnaziia imia Ianki Kupaly u Zakhodniai Niamechchynе 1945-1950*. New York, Białystok.

McMillin, Arnold. 2002. *Belarusian Literature of the Diaspora*. Birmingham Slavonic Monographs. N 34. Birmingham.

Pan'kou, M. (ed.). 1952. *Pakaz'nik belaruskikh vydan'niau na chuzhyne za 1945-50 gg.* New York.

Prymak, Thomas M. 2019. "Vladimir-Kaye-Kysilewskyj in Europe, Canada, and Britain". The Holodomor Research and Education Consortium (HREC), June 20, https://holodomor.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Vladimir_Kaye_Kysilewskyj_in_Europe_Cana.pdf. Accessed 30 December 2020.

Rahulia, Barys. 2006. *Belaruskae studentstva na chuzhyne*. Minsk: Belaruski knihazbor.

Siargeeva G. 1993. "Belaruskaia dyiaspara." *Kryzhovy shliakh. Dapamozhnik dlia vyvuchaiuchykh historyiu Belarusi*, 209-239. Minsk: Zgoda.

Skobla, Mikhas' (ed.). 2004. *Mestsya vydan'nia--Paryzh: vybranyia staronki chasopisa "Moladz'" (1948-1954)*. Minsk: Belaruski knihazbor.

Snapkouski, U. 1995. "Emihratsyia. Farmiravanne i dzeinasts' arhanizatsyi belaruskaia emihratsyi. Satsyial'napalitychnyia plyni (1918–1939 gg.)." *Polymia*, 11, 196–221.

Supruniuk, Mirosław A. 2015. "Fr. prof. Walerian Meysztowicz and the Polish historical institute in Rome." In *East and Central European history writing in exile 1939-1989* edited by Maria Zadencka, Andrej Plakans and Andreas Lawaty. Leiden: Brill Rodopi. 131–155

Zięba, Andrzej. 2010. *Lobbing dla Ukrainy w Europie międzywojennej: Ukraińskie Biuro Prasowe w Londynie oraz jego konkurenci polityczni (do roku 1932)*. Kraków : Księgarnia Akademicka.

H. A. Krüss

National Socialist Commissar and Compromised Internationalist¹

Sem C. Sutter, University of Chicago Library (retired)

Keywords: International librarianship; International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA); Library spoliation; Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg; World War II

In 1939 Hugo Andres Krüss stood at the height of his career and as a leading figure in German librarianship. Entering his fifteenth year as head of the Prussian State Library (Preussische Staatsbibliothek, hereafter Staatsbibliothek), he enjoyed international recognition. Within a year he had assumed an official role administering libraries in the occupied Western territories. This paper contrasts his career as an internationalist with the complex mixture of professional ideals, political convictions, national imperatives, and opportunism represented in his wartime actions.

Early Career

Born in Hamburg in 1879, H. A. Krüss studied physics, chemistry and mathematics and then began a career in public service as a member of the German commission at the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair.² Forty years later he wrote, "This year spent abroad in my youth was determinative for my future life in many ways."³ Shortly after his return to Germany Krüss began working in the Ministry of Culture. After a brief term in the Ministry of the Interior, in 1920 he moved to the Ministry for Science, Art and Education where he rose in rank and responsibility. He

¹ An earlier version of this paper was presented in Strasbourg, France, at the conference "Livres et bibliothèques scientifiques dans les territoires occupés et annexés par l'Allemagne nationale-socialiste," 21 November 2008.

Note that quotations in German and French appear in the author's translations in the text with the original in italics in the corresponding footnote.

² Sources for the basic facts of Krüss's life and career are: Alexandra Habermann, Rainer Klemmt, and Frauke Siefkes, *Lexikon Deutscher wissenschaftlicher Bibliothekare 1925-1980* (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1985), 175-76; Hermann Fuchs, "In memoriam H. A. Krüss," *Zeitschrift für Bibliothekswesen und Bibliographie*, 1 (1954): 110-23; and the personal information form that Krüss completed on 3 June 1940, a copy of which is in the manuscript collection of the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin [hereafter SBB], Acta PrStB I 3³ (Krüss), Bd. 2: Folder "1928-1933"

³ "Dieses, in jugendlichem Alter im Ausland verbrachte Jahr ist für mein weiteres Leben in vieler Hinsicht bestimmend gewesen."

Cited by Werner Schochow, "Hugo Andres Krüss und die Preußische Staatsbibliothek," *Bibliothek: Forschung und Praxis*, 19 (1995): 8.

participated in founding the Notgemeinschaft der deutschen Wissenschaft (Emergency Organization for German Science)⁴ and he became a trustee of the Amerika-Institut in Berlin.⁵ He married Anna Doty of Chicago.

While his responsibilities in the ministry had acquainted Krüss to some extent with library issues, it surprised many in 1925 when he was named Generaldirektor of the Staatsbibliothek. At his installation Krüss highlighted the international significance of libraries, lamenting that it had not yet been possible to knit back together

the threads of international scholarly cooperation torn apart by the war....[The libraries] are also in a broader sense one of the most important sources from which a profound influence on these issues should proceed. No understanding of the other without knowledge of the other.⁶

This strong commitment to internationalism and consummate skills as an administrator came to typify Krüss's career. He traveled widely, becoming for many the face of German librarianship. At the American Library Association's fiftieth anniversary conference in 1926 he spoke about the Staatsbibliothek and about German interest in international cooperation, amplifying his remarks in a Chicago radio address: "[International cooperation] should be based on the peculiar efficiency and power of initiative of each individual nation that has something valuable to offer the community of nations."⁷ Before the Hungarian Academy of Sciences the following year, Krüss spoke of the global potential for enriching knowledge:

However different the ways may be in which new scholarly knowledge is gained, it enters the whole body of knowledge which cannot be divided nationally, but is the common property of all humanity.⁸

⁴ Kurt Zierold, *Forschungsförderung in drei Epochen* (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1968), 16-19.

⁵ Folder "Amerika-Institut," 1921-1925, SBB, Acta PrStB: Archiv A-16.

⁶ "die durch den Krieg abgerissenen Fäden internationaler wissenschaftlicher Zusammenarbeit....[Die Bibliotheken] sind auch im weiteren Sinne eine der wichtigsten Stellen, von denen eine tiefgehende Einwirkung auf diese Dinge ausgehen soll. Kein Verstehen des Andern ohne Wissen vom Andern." "Umschau und neue Nachrichten," *Zentralblatt für Bibliothekswesen*, 42 (1925): 581.

⁷ Krüss, "Bericht über meine Tätigkeit an der 50-Jahrfeier der 'American Library Association' in Atlantic City vom 4. bis 8. October und an der von der Association für die ausländischen Delegierten veranstalteten Studienreise vom 9. bis 22. October 1926," SBB, Acta PrStB I 3³ (Krüss), Bd. 1: Folder "1925-1927," fol. 95. Also see a published version of the Atlantic City address: Krüss, "The Prussian State Library," *Library Journal*, 51 (1926): 1005-10.

⁸ "Wie verschiedenartig aber auch die Wege sein mögen, auf denen eine neue wissenschaftliche Erkenntnis gewonnen ist, sie geht ein in den Gesamtbau der Wissenschaft, der nicht national aufgeteilt werden kann, sondern Gemeingut der gesamten Menschheit ist." Krüss, *Deutschland und die internationale wissenschaftliche Zusammenarbeit* (Budapest: Königlich Ungarische Universitätsdruckerei, 1928), 5.

He was among the founders of the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) in 1927—indeed, at that meeting he and Carl Milam of the American Library Association are credited as the “two outstanding personalities [who] had distinguished themselves by their exceptional tact and skillful negotiating.”⁹

Krüss also contributed to an active German presence in another arena, the International Committee on Intellectual Co-operation created by the League of Nations in 1922. In 1926 he became an associate member of its Sub-Committee for Bibliography, whose members also included Marie Curie and Albert Einstein,¹⁰ and later joined other working groups. Implicit in Krüss’s internationalism, particularly in his work with the League of Nations, was a nationalist’s pride in regaining a German place at the table in international scientific and cultural affairs.

The Third Reich

For H.A. Krüss, the ambassador for German librarianship, the events of 1933 brought increasingly trying international encounters. While many of his colleagues were early members of the NSDAP, Krüss joined the party quite late, in April 1940.¹¹ In the autumn of 1933 he attended the American Library Association annual conference and an IFLA council meeting in the United States. The level of press attention to his visit took him by surprise. Reporters met his arrival in New York with questions about book burnings. According to *The New York Times*:

Professor Kruess said that he was eager “to spike the rumor” that the library or any other important library had lost valuable works in the “burning of Jewish books.”

“At the time of the burning of the books, as it was called,” he said, “a decree was issued that no books in any of the principal libraries were to be molested. That decree has been meticulously observed. I told my chief aide, who is a Social Democrat, that if any one came to the library to get any books the offenders were to be kicked on the shins and put out.”¹²

Krüss soon found it necessary to claim that he had been misquoted.¹³

⁹ Joachim Wieder, “An Outline of IFLA’s History,” in Willem R. H. Koops and Joachim Wieder, eds., *IFLA’s First Fifty Years* (München: Verlag Dokumentation, 1977), 14.

¹⁰ International Committee on Intellectual Co-operation, *Minutes of the Seventh Session* (Geneva: League of Nations, 1926), 4.

¹¹ Personal information form (Note 2).

¹² “Denies Nazis Rename Mendelssohn Room,” *The New York Times*, 7 October 1933, 13.

¹³ Krüss letters to *The New York Times*, 8 October 1933, and *The New York Herald Tribune*, 7 October 1933, both in SBB, Acta PrStB, Handakte Krüss, Nr. 62, VI. The *Times* dutifully printed a correction under the headline “Dr. Kruess Denies Order,” *The New York Times*, 10 October 1933, 12.

Encountering questions everywhere, Krüss drafted several position statements. One argued that “drastic measures” had to be taken to reduce Jewish influence in Germany to correspond to their proportion of the population because “certain professions were just overcrowded by Jews.” Yet, he claimed, “we do not lack feeling for the tragedy of many individual cases affected by such measures.”¹⁴

The fine line between nationalist and international perspectives that Krüss attempted to walk grew even thinner. On his voyage home he received a cable from the Foreign Office: “would be grateful if upon arrival you conferred with the foreign office before any further journey because of consequences of Germany’s withdrawal from League of Nations”¹⁵ Krüss was dictated language for letters of resignation from all League of Nations bodies. But on the same day, without carbon copies to the Foreign Office, he also wrote private letters to the presidents of the Committee on Intellectual Cooperation and the International Educational Cinematographic Institute, expressing the hope that his friendships with committee members would continue. In turn he received letters of regret from committee colleagues and others in international library circles. In a typical response he assured William W. Bishop, director of the University of Michigan Library and IFLA president, “in the library sphere there remains the broadest scope for continued collaboration, even outside the League of Nations, and so my relations with you and the other friends in America remain completely unaffected by the events in Geneva.” And he found occasions to remain in contact, sending the Committee a letter of condolence when Madame Curie died in 1934.¹⁶

Krüss remained active in international library activities throughout the 1930’s. He attended the second IFLA congress in Spain in 1935 and general council meetings through 1939. Krüss’s report on the 1935 meeting mentioned with pride that Germany’s “meticulously prepared draft” for international interlibrary loan guidelines formed the basis for the principles adopted.¹⁷

Krüss served as an advisory editor of The University of Chicago’s *Library Quarterly* from its inaugural issue in January 1931 until January 1943 when his name disappeared without comment.¹⁸ And he continued to be a popular speaker at international conferences. He

¹⁴ SBB, Acta PrStB, Handakte Krüss, Nr. 62, VI.

¹⁵ “wäre dankbar wenn sie nach ankunft vor etwaiger weiterreise wegen der sich aus austritt deutschlands aus völkerbund ergebenen folgen im auswärtigen amt vorsprechen wollten.” SBB, Acta PrStB, Handakte Krüss, Nr. 62, VI, folder, “Völkerbund Internat. Arbeit 1933/34”

¹⁶ “auf dem Interessengebiet der Bibliotheken bleibt ja der weiteste Spielraum für weitere Zusammenarbeit auch ausserhalb des Völkerbundes, und so werden meine Beziehungen zu Ihnen und den übrigen Freunden in Amerika durch die Vorgänge in Genf ganz unberührt bleiben.” SBB, Acta PrStB, Teilnachlass Krüss, Archiv A-16.

¹⁷ “sorgfältig bereitete Entwurf”

Krüss, “Bericht über den zweiten Internationalen Kongress für Bibliothekswesen und Bibliographie in Madrid und Barcelona,” 22 June 1935, SBB, Acta PrStB I 3³ (Krüss), Bd. 2a: Folder “1934-1939,” 79, p. 5.

¹⁸ *The Library Quarterly*, 13 (1943), No. 1.

addressed the 1937 World Congress of Universal Documentation in Paris on “The Mastery of Knowledge,” ranging eloquently across Western intellectual history with facile quotations in French and English and urging both national responsibility and international cooperation.¹⁹

One senses the conflicted position of Krüss the internationalist at the July 1939 IFLA general council meeting. President Marcel Godet of Switzerland spoke bluntly about ideologies dividing the library world. German and Italian delegates were said to have stiffened as he declared that “subordination of intellectual activities to political goals introduces an element of disunity into a world of disinterested research.” In response Krüss quoted British colleague and IFLA co-founder Arundell Esdaile who said the organization had “done a great work in bringing the profession into a fellowship—a fellowship which, I may say, is a haven of peace in a stormy world.”²⁰

War

The outbreak of war brought significant new challenges for German libraries. In an interview with the *Völkische Beobachter* in November 1939 Krüss spoke of the need to protect the library by moving treasures to safekeeping and preparing the reading room for blackouts, but he also addressed issues with international dimensions. He lamented the decrease in international interlibrary loan and he warned that acquisitions of foreign material must not be curtailed as in the First World War: “That is a warning to us to apply all necessary means to prevent such scholarly isolation today.”²¹

Meanwhile on 15 May, as the Dutch army surrendered, Krüss wrote to the Education Ministry (Reichsministerium für Wissenschaft, Erziehung und Volksbildung, hereafter RMWEV) recommending creation of a unit headed by Dr. Adolf Jürgens of the Staatsbibliothek to oversee libraries in Belgium and the Netherlands: “Supervision of the libraries in the occupied area by a library office [is] an absolute necessity for the preservation and safeguarding of the cultural property in question, for which Germany has assumed responsibility in the occupation.”²²

¹⁹ Krüss, “Die Beherrschung des Wissens,” in *Congrès Mondial de la documentation universelle. Compte rendu des travaux* (Paris: Secrétariat, [1937]), 31-33.

²⁰ “subordination des activités intellectuelles aux buts politiques ... introduit dans un monde de recherches désintéressées ...un élément de désunion” *Actes du Comité international des bibliothèques, 12^{me} Session, La Haye-Amsterdam, 10-12 juillet 1939* (La Haye: Nijhoff, 1940), 12, 17.

²¹ “Das ist eine Mahnung an uns, heute einer derartigen wissenschaftlichen Isolierung mit allen Mitteln vorzubeugen,” “Bibliothekswesen im Krieg,” *Völkische Beobachter*, 26 November 1939. Copy in SBB, Acta PrStB, Teilnachlass Krüss, Archiv A-16.

²² “Die Überwachung der Bibliotheken im besetzten Gebiet durch eine bibliothekarische Stelle [ist] eine unbedingte Notwendigkeit zur Bewahrung und Sicherung der in Frage stehende Kulturwerte, für die

But Krüss soon intertwined a less benign purpose in his proposal—the return to Germany of library collections removed to France and Belgium through spoliation in earlier wars. After German troops had entered Paris he learned that Staatsarchiv director Ernst Zipfel had been appointed “Commissar for Archival Protection in the Western Theater.” Zipfel informed Krüss of his intentions:

It is obvious that as far as possible I must endeavor to take advantage of the military situation for the advantage of German archives. I am therefore resolved to press ahead vigorously with the demands that the German side must make of the archives of these countries.²³

Beyond surveying German archives for documentation of legal claims, he would inquire “which acquisitions beyond that they consider desirable for political, scholarly, or archival reasons.”²⁴ On 19 June Krüss asked the RMWEV to grant him parallel responsibility for libraries.²⁵

By 2 July when he was appointed “Commissar for Securing Libraries and Administering Book Stock in the Western Theater”²⁶ Krüss had prepared himself for action. He had already met with one of Zipfel’s deputies on 22 June to learn more about the twin aims of the archival protection unit, to assure him that a library protection unit would cooperate closely, and to inform him of preparatory work underway in the Staatsbibliothek for repatriation of library collections. In his first ten days as Commissar Krüss’s diary records that he consulted with staff about securing libraries and met with retired manuscript librarian Hermann Degering “about the return of manuscripts from Belgium and France.”²⁷

In this same period he chose Dr. Ernst Wermke of the Breslau city library as his liaison officer with the military occupation in Paris.²⁸ And he sent a form letter to 150 German libraries asking

Deutschland mit der Besetzung die Verantwortung übernommen hat,”

Krüss to RMWEV, 15 May 1940, Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfelde [hereafter BArch], R4901/13701, fol. 4.

²³ *“Es liegt auf der Hand, daß ich dabei bestrebt sein muß, die Gunst der militärischen Lage soweit wie möglich für die Belange des deutschen Archivwesens auszunutzen. Ich bin deshalb entschlossen, die Forderungen, die von deutscher Seite an die Archive jener Länder zu stellen sind, mit allem Nachdruck zu betreiben.”*

Zipfel to Krüss, 17 June 1940, BArch, R4901/13701, fol. 5a.

²⁴ *“welche Erwerbungen sie darüber hinaus aus politischen, wissenschaftlichen oder archivalischen Gründen für wünschenswert halten,”*

ibid.

²⁵ Krüss to RMWEV, 19 June 1940, BArch, R4901/13701, fol. 6.

²⁶ Rudolf Kummer to Krüss, 2 July 1940, BArch, R4901/13701, fol. 11.

²⁷ *“über Rückgabe von Handschriften aus Belgien u. Frankreich,”*

2 July 1940 – 11 July 1940 in: “Daily News 1940,” SBB, Nachlass Krüss, Erg. 2, Kasten 2.

²⁸ Krüss to Oberkommando der Wehrmacht, 11 June 1940, BArch, R4901/13701, fol. 45.

for help in identifying two categories of books and manuscripts in France and Belgium: German library property illegally removed in the past which might be reclaimed; and valuable items that had been acquired legally, but which might be desirable as reparations in a peace treaty.²⁹ Krüss seemed to perceive no conflict between protecting libraries and contemplating removing treasures from them. In a letter to the RMWEV at the end of July he indicated that with the survey underway he could turn to the second part of his responsibility, learning the condition of French and Belgian libraries and the measures necessary to secure them. He planned a fact-finding trip to the occupied territories, accompanied by Joseph Becker and Ernst Fuchs of the Staatsbibliothek staff.³⁰

Krüss also regarded Jewish and Masonic collections very differently from state and public libraries. Just before his appointment he accepted for the Staatsbibliothek some 4,000 volumes in Hebrew and Yiddish seized from the rabbi in Jędrzejów, Poland, and offered by the Generalgouvernement occupation authorities. In late July he confirmed receipt of the shipment: “with sincere thanks.”³¹

Krüss’s schizophrenic position is evident in his early contacts with Reichsleiter Alfred Rosenberg, propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels, and their staffs. On 24 July he met with Herbert Gerigk whom Rosenberg had sent to clarify their respective roles. Gerigk informed him that Hitler had authorized Rosenberg to secure in western archives material that was desirable for Germany and to seize politically undesirable literature in Masonic lodges and elsewhere. He claimed it was expressly Hitler’s will “that no illegal actions be taken with respect to the enemies’ cultural property, and that Reichsleiter Rosenberg’s units followed this principle.”³²

By Krüss’s account, in his August meeting with Rosenberg the Reichsleiter emphasized that there was no conflict between their assignments since he was primarily interested in confiscating libraries of Freemasons, Jews, and “certain private libraries of undesirable persons” to develop the libraries of his Institute for Study of the Jewish Question in Frankfurt and other institutes. His interest in French public libraries, he assured Krüss, was only very general.³³

²⁹ Krüss, 10 July 1940, BArch, R4901/13701, fol. 26.

³⁰ Krüss to RMWEV, 31 July 1940, BArch, R4901/13701, fol. 42-44.

³¹ Dr. Drescher to Staatsbibliothek, 25 June 1940; Krüss to Amt des Generalgouverneurs, 1 July 1940; and Krüss to Drescher, 27 July 1940, all in SBB, Acta PrStB VII 1^m. For details of the Staatsbibliothek’s recent efforts to identify in its collections these books, as well as others taken from Jewish owners, see Barbara Schneider-Kempf, “Preußische Staatsbibliothek, Reichstauschstelle und Raubgut,” in Regine Dehnel, ed., *Jüdischer Buchbesitz als Raubgut* (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 2006), 333-34.

³² “*dass gegenüber dem feindlichen Kulturbesitz keinerlei illegale Handlungen vorgenommen wurden und dass nach diesem Grundsatz auch von der Dienststellen des Reichsleiters Rosenberg verfahren werde,*”

Krüss, note, 24 July 1940, SBB, Acta PrStB VII 1^m.

³³ “*gewisse Privatbibliotheken unerwünschter Personen,*”

Krüss, note, 7 August 1940, SBB, Acta PrStB VII 1^m.

However, Rosenberg's own notes reveal a less accommodating position: "I am having lists compiled in Paris of state and private libraries that are in dispute to submit to the Führer for decisions whether or not they are to be confiscated by order now, or through peace treaty, etc."³⁴

Krüss, Fuchs, and Becker visited Paris together from 23 August through 2 September. They met with German military and foreign service officials including Ambassador Otto Abetz and with Dr. Karl Epting who headed the Deutsches Institut. They toured the Bibliothèque Nationale and the Sorbonne and conferred with their librarians as well as meeting with French "documentalists" whom Krüss knew.³⁵ Together with the army high command they framed a Bibliotheksschutz (archival protection unit) as part of the Schule und Kultur division of the military government. Immediately on his return to Berlin Krüss named ten librarians to become counselors in the military administrations in Paris and Brussels. These included Dr. Wermke, who would serve as leader, and Dr. Fuchs who had stayed on in Paris.³⁶ The unit began its work on 1 October.³⁷

A week after returning to Berlin Krüss reported to the RMWEV regarding the compilation of lists of German books and manuscripts in French and Belgian libraries. Initial research had concentrated on material taken during the Wars of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Era, beginning with lists from the World War, now verified, corrected, and expanded on the basis of his survey. After meeting with Goebbels in August he had expanded the project's scope to include works destroyed or removed from Germany since 1500. He had also developed a new scheme of three categories—extraordinarily valuable, less valuable, and limited to local importance—each subdivided by the strength of Germany's legal claim. He remarked that by now some of these titles were in libraries overseas, especially in America, "where they are beyond our reach," and noted that a review of English catalogs would only yield titles to which Germany had no legal claim. The newly-established Bibliotheksschutz was poised to conduct further research onsite in occupied territory.³⁸

Krüss met with Goebbels again in mid-September to report on the Paris trip and the survey, now being amplified through onsite research by Bibliotheksschutz staff. Goebbels supported Krüss's

³⁴ "ich lasse in Paris Aufstellungen über strittige staatl- u. private Bibliotheken machen, um dem Führer zur Entscheidung vorzulegen, ob sie durch Anordnung jetzt, durch Friedensvertrag usw. zu beschlagnahmen sind, oder nicht."

Alfred Rosenberg, manuscript notes, August 1940, Archives du Centre de Documentation Juive Contemporaine, Paris, CXLIV-394.

³⁵ 21 August 1940 – 4 September 1940 in: "Daily News 1940," SBB, Nachlass Krüss, Erg. 2, Kasten 2.

³⁶ Krüss to Oberkommando der Heeres, Berlin, 9 September 1940, BArch, R21/10647, fols. 98-99.

³⁷ "Die öffentlichen wissenschaftlichen Bibliotheken Frankreichs mit besonderer Berücksichtigung des besetzten Gebietes," [ca. April 1941], p. 38, SBB, Acta PrStB, Handakte Krüss, Nr. 49.

³⁸ "wo sie sich unserem Zugriff entziehen,"

Krüss, "Vorläufiger Bericht über den Stand der Vorarbeiten für die Rückforderung deutschen Bibliotheksgutes," 9 September 1940, SBB, Acta PrStB VII 1^m.

view “that I could not consider it right to demand unlimited return of German cultural property beyond the obvious recovery of illegally removed property.” Krüss argued that exemplars of German culture fulfilled a useful function abroad and that French state and public libraries should increase their German holdings. While he believed the book confiscations already carried out in Paris represented the justifiable seizure of intellectual weapons from Freemasons, Jews, and emigrants who were making war on Germany, to proceed similarly in state libraries, especially the Bibliothèque Nationale, would be impermissible.³⁹

At this early date Krüss was clearly well-informed regarding the nature of confiscations that the Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg (Reichsleiter Rosenberg Taskforce, hereafter ERR) had already undertaken in Paris. On 16 September ERR staff member Dr. Wilhelm Grau reported to the military administration the confiscation of material from fifteen locations since 22 July, including three Jewish organizations, three Masonic lodges, the Theosophical Society, six properties of the Rothschild family, and two bookstores owned or managed by Jews.⁴⁰

Krüss was also well aware that in June the ERR had seized the Bibliothèque Polonaise with its 130,000 volumes. As Commissar and as head of the Staatsbibliothek he was in the midst of wrangling over its disposition. At the request of the military administration the secret field police had sealed the library and halted the ERR’s packing activity pending adjudication of ownership among claimants that included the publication department of the Foreign Office, the Staatsbibliothek, the Secret State Archives, the Ostinstitut in Kraków, and the ERR. Krüss and Legationsrat Paul Roth of the Foreign Office corresponded and telephoned back and forth through September and October, each upholding his institution’s claim and insisting that the other bore responsibility for resolving the issue. They finally agreed to propose administering the Polish library jointly, only to find that Hitler himself had awarded it to the ERR.⁴¹

The Germans made bold propaganda claims for the constructive work of the Bibliotheksschutz unit. A February 1941 article in *Pariser Zeitung*, the newspaper published by the occupation forces, maintained:

³⁹ “dass ich es nicht für richtig halten könne, das deutsche Kulturgut über die selbstverständliche Rückforderung unrechtmässig entführten Kulturguts hinaus unbegrenzt zurückzuverlangen,” Krüss, “Aufzeichnung über die Besprechung mit Herrn Reichsminister Dr. Goebbels,” 18 September 1940, SBB, Acta PrStB VII 1^m.

⁴⁰ Patricia Kennedy Grimsted located copies of this document, “Beschlagnahme von Bibliotheken und Archiven,” in the BArch, B 323/261, fols. 268-69 and in the United States National Archives, College Park, RG 260, Records of the Munich Central Collecting Point, Restitution Research Records, Box 452. The latter is reproduced in Patricia Kennedy Grimsted, F.J. Hoogewoud, and Eric Ketelaar, *Returned from Russia: Nazi Archival Plunder in Western Europe and Recent Restitution Issues* (Builth Wells, United Kingdom: Institute of Art and Law, 2007), 138.

⁴¹ Krüss letters of 21 September, and 11 and 15 October; Roth letters of 10 and 19 September, and 25 October, SBB, Acta PrStB VII 1^m

In the library sphere loyal collaboration between the German and French [cultural property protection] services has been manifest. The librarians confidently report their concerns to the German protection service which is always there to help where it can and where needed. This is the case with respect to reopening libraries, the protection of these buildings from seizure, providing fuel for heat, furloughs for interned librarians, the exchange of scholarly collections and the return of books and manuscripts loaned before the war, passes for librarians who must travel to the unoccupied zones, etc.⁴²

An internal German document on the state of French research libraries confirms that during its first six months the Bibliotheksschutz visited ninety-nine libraries and ten evacuation sites to survey the state of collections, buildings, and operations under wartime conditions. While expressing considerable sympathy for French colleagues and their efforts, the report betrays less benign activity as well:

Insofar as evacuated books were needed for the work of the Bibliotheksschutz unit or German scholars and there were no misgivings regarding repatriation they were at least brought back to their original locations from the evacuation sites in the occupied territories.⁴³

A report on the first year of operations by the smaller Bibliotheksschutz unit for Belgium and northern territory France described similar activities, albeit on a more modest scale and hampered by fuel shortages. Dr. Heinrich Schreiber noted the activities of the ERR, “which employed considerable force against libraries that were Jewish or enemies of the people, whereby encroachments in the protection of scholarly libraries became unavoidable.” After the Bibliotheksschutz washed its hands of protective oversight by agreeing that such interventions could proceed if approved by the military administration, “the department [could] carry out its actual program fairly independently.”⁴⁴

⁴² *“Une collaboration loyale s’est manifestée dans ce domaine des bibliothèques entre les services allemands et français. Les bibliothécaires exposent leurs soucis en toute confiance au service de protection allemand, et celui-ci ne manque pas d’apporter son aide là où il le peut et lorsque cela est nécessaire. Il en est ainsi dans la question de la recouverture des bibliothèques, de la protection de ces édifices contre les saisies, de la fourniture des moyens de chauffage, des congés aux bibliothécaires prisonniers, de l’échange de collections scientifiques du retour des manuscrits et des livres prêtés avant la guerre, des laissez-passer pour les bibliothécaires qui ont à se rendre en zone non occupée, etc.”* “L’Allemagne protégé les œuvres culturelles en France occupée,” *Pariser Zeitung*, 12 February 1941 (copy in SBB, Acta PrStB VII 1^m).

⁴³ *“Soweit das geflüchtete Buchgut für die Arbeiten des Referates Bibliotheksschutz oder deutscher Gelehrter benötigt würde und seiner Rückführung keine Bedenken entgegenstanden, ist es wenigstens aus den Flüchtlingsdepots des besetzten Gebietes an den ursprünglichen Ort zurückgebracht worden.”* “Die öffentlichen wissenschaftlichen Bibliotheken Frankreichs mit besonderer Berücksichtigung des besetzten Gebietes,” [ca. April 1941], p. 39, SBB, Acta PrStB, Handakte Krüss, Nr. 49.

⁴⁴ *“der unter Einsatz erheblicher Machtmittel gegen Bibliotheken jüdischem und volksfeindlichen Charakters vorgingen, wobei Eingriffe in das Gebiet der wissenschaftlichen Bibliothekspflege nicht zu vermeiden waren.”* “das Referat [konnte] sein eigentliches Programm ziemlich selbstständig durchführen.”

Krüss received personal expressions of thanks from his colleagues for French books distributed to German university libraries. Dr. Josef Rest, director in Freiburg, wrote to Krüss with gratitude “that we have received so many of the books confiscated in Paris” and with appreciation for Fuchs “who has undertaken the trouble of sorting and allocating for us in Paris.”⁴⁵

Rather than take a stand himself, Krüss sometimes passed responsibility to others on the basis of competence. Thus he directed to Rosenberg’s staff a query from the head of the army archive in the Netherlands, “since it is a library confiscated from a Jew...and the matter falls within your sphere.”⁴⁶ And when the RMWEV forwarded him an inquiry from the Reichsstatthalter in Vienna, Baldur von Schirach, about returning Mozart manuscripts from the West, Krüss responded that the matter should be handled by Dr. Gerigk of Rosenberg’s staff whom the Propaganda Ministry had put in charge of music.⁴⁷

In November 1941 Krüss traveled to Strasbourg with a delegation from the RMWEV for the formal opening of the “Reichsuniversität Straßburg.” Immediately after his return to Berlin he spoke with Dr. Wermke about efforts to reduce or dissolve the Bibliotheksschutz.⁴⁸ Krüss appealed to the army command to permit the unit to continue for at least a year its work on lists of books to return to Germany, as well as preparing photocopies for German scholars and for the war effort, “since the necessary access to French property would never have been possible at other times and will largely be difficult after the occupation of French territory ends.” The Generalquartiermeister responded that the military administration was undergoing general reductions in personnel and that for the present the librarians’ “scholarly research and surveys” must be deferred so that they could assist with supervision of French archives. Krüss sent a copy to Wermke, asking to be informed of any direct effort to merge the Bibliotheksschutz into the Archivschutz so that he could “protest energetically.”⁴⁹

Schreiber to Krüss, 28 February 1942, “Bericht über die Tätigkeit de Referats Bibliotheksschutz beim Militärbefehlshaber in Belgien und Nord-Frankreich vom 1. Oktober 1940 – 6. September 1941,” SBB, Acta PrStB VII 1^m.

⁴⁵ “*daß wir von den in Paris beschlagnahmten Büchern so viele erhalten haben*”
“*der sich in Paris für uns der Mühe des Aussonderns und Zuteilens unterzogen hat.*”
Rest to Krüss, 4 March 1941, SBB, Acta PrStB VII 1^m.

⁴⁶ “*da es sich um eine bei einem Juden beschlagnahmte Bibliothek handelt und die Angelegenheit...in Ihrem Bereich fällt.*”
Krüss to Stabsleiter Urban, 22 February 1941, SBB, Acta PrStB VII 1^m.

⁴⁷ Krüss to RMWEV, 17 February 1941, SBB, Acta PrStB VII 1^m.

⁴⁸ Entries for 21 November 1941—29 November 1941 in: “Daily News 1941,” SBB, Nachlass Krüss, Erg. 2, Kasten 2.

⁴⁹ “*da die notwendige Zugänglichkeit des französischen Besitzes zu anderer Zeit nie hat ermöglicht werden können und auch nach Abschluß der Besetzung des französischen Gebietes weitgehend erschwert sein wird.*”

The Bibliotheksschutz staff in Paris and Brussels continued to refine and expand its documentation of library materials whose repatriation Germany might demand. The archives of the Staatsbibliothek hold a bound, typescript volume of 91 pages entitled “Looted books for which to search in the libraries of France and Belgium.” The undated list is arranged alphabetically by city.⁵⁰ In the autumn of 1943 Fuchs became concerned when he heard indirectly that the Archivschutz had already finalized its list of archival materials for potential return and submitted it to the Foreign Office and the embassy in Paris for comment and possible action.⁵¹ Krüss assured him that the issue of politically significant archives was completely separate and might have few implications for the eventual return of library materials. At the same time Krüss sought and received confirmation from the Foreign Office that evaluation of the archival list had not proceeded beyond the earliest stages.⁵² Krüss never forwarded the list of nearly 2,500 books and manuscripts, chiefly from the Bibliothèque Nationale, delivered to him in January 1942.⁵³

Early in 1944 when the military administration, amid further personnel cuts, again proposed closing the Bibliotheksschutz in France Krüss defended its continued existence with schizophrenic logic. His first argument was the importance of gathering French book stock for rebuilding German libraries. “Dr. Fuchs is entrusted with buying whatever is somehow available in the French book market.” Fuchs could not do this as effectively as a civilian because “in all previous experience his position as a military administrator and his uniform have been decisive.” Only secondarily did Krüss mention the ostensibly prime purpose of protecting French libraries which he said would become increasingly critical with the likelihood of renewed fighting on French soil.⁵⁴

Krüss to Generalquartiermeister, Oberkommando des Heeres, 6 December 1941; Generalquartiermeister Eduard Wagner to Krüss, 14 December 1941; and Krüss to Wermke, 19 December 1941; all in SBB, Acta PrStB VII 1^m.

⁵⁰ “Entführtes Buchgut das in den Bibliotheken von Frankreich und Belgien zu suchen ist / Verschollenes und deutschem Zugriff entzogenes Buchgut,” SBB, Acta PrStB VII 1^m.

⁵¹ Fuchs to Krüss, 20 October 1943, SBB, Acta PrStB VII 1^m.

⁵² Krüss to Fuchs, 26 October 1943; Krüss to Legationsrat Roth, 26 October 1943; and Gesandter Werner von Barga to Krüss, 10 November 1943; all in SBB, Acta PrStB VII 1^m.

⁵³ See Fuchs, “Bericht über Tätigkeit des Referates Bibliotheksschutz in der Militärverwaltung Frankreich, 1940-1944,” p. 13 and Anlage 2, BArch, R4901/13727.

⁵⁴ “Dr. Fuchs ist damit betraut, auf dem französischen Büchermarkt das zu kaufen, was irgendwie greifbar ist.”

“nach allen bisher gemachten Erfahrungen sein Stelle als Militärverwaltungsrat und die Uniform dabei entscheidend sind.”

Krüss to Militärverwaltungschef Dr. Franz Albrecht Medicus, 17 January 1944, SBB, Acta PrStB VII 1^m.

The Bibliotheksschutz was dissolved de facto when it ceased operations on 21 August 1944 just before the liberation of Paris.⁵⁵ Fuchs's final report to Krüss, dated 20 September, detailed the full range of the unit's activities including protection and supervision of French libraries, the compilation of the list of books for potential repatriation, and ambitious book acquisitions on behalf of the Staatsbibliothek and the Reich library exchange office. Buried deep within the 28-page report is a claim that, in the face of repeated charges in the foreign press of library looting by the Wehrmacht one could counter "that thanks to the activities of the Bibliotheksschutz unit not a single book, not a single page of a manuscript was confiscated in French libraries and brought to Germany"⁵⁶

In transmitting the report to the Ministry Krüss emphasized this as a particularly significant accomplishment, but he added a telling qualification: "from the libraries looked after by the unit."⁵⁷ And in a statement written soon thereafter for the national radio network it became "from the state libraries looked after by the unit,"⁵⁸ and in the copy Krüss kept for his own files the word "state" is underlined, for he knew full well that the protected collections did not, of course, include the many Jewish and Masonic libraries where he had given Rosenberg a free hand from the outset, nor the Bibliothèque Polonaise that Rosenberg's staff removed to Germany.⁵⁹

One remarkable story stands in contrast to Krüss's mixed record as a protector of libraries.⁶⁰ He employed twenty-three French librarians and archivists held as prisoners of war. They worked in the Staatsbibliothek's bindery, cataloged its ex libris collection, and assisted with the international incunabula catalog, *Gesamtkatalog der Wiegendrucke*. Krüss took a highly personal interest in these men and they ultimately attained status as civil employees. In

⁵⁵ Fuchs to Krüss, 21 August 1944, SBB, Acta PrStB VII 1^m.

⁵⁶ "dass dank der Tätigkeit des Referates Bibliotheksschutz nicht ein Buch, nicht eine Seite einer Handschrift in den französischen Bibliotheken beschlagnahmt und nach Deutschland verbracht worden wäre."
"Bericht über Tätigkeit des Referates Bibliotheksschutz," p. 13, BArch, R4901/13727.

⁵⁷ "aus den vom Referat betreuten Bibliotheken"
Krüss to RMWEV, 9 October 1944, BArch, R4901/13727.

⁵⁸ "aus dem von ihm betreuten staatlichen Bibliotheken"
Krüss statement for "Prof. Karg vom Reichsrundfunk," 17 October 1944, SBB, Nachlass Krüss, Erg. 1, Folder "Lebenslauf."

⁵⁹ See the accounts by Sem C. Sutter, "Polish Books in Exile. Cultural Booty across Two Continents, through Two Wars," in Jonathan Rose, ed., *The Holocaust and the Book: Destruction and Preservation* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2001), 143-61; and Michael Burleigh, *Germany Turns Eastwards: A Study of Ostforschung in the Third Reich* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 227-35.

⁶⁰ See the very thorough history, Ulrike Hollender, *Un havre de paix. Die kriegsgefangenen französischen Offiziere an der Preußischen Staatsbibliothek in Berlin 1941-1945* (Berlin: Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin Preußischer Kulturbesitz, 2002).

assessing his motives some have pointed to his need to staff the library and the desire of German Francophiles to convince the French of German cultural superiority.⁶¹ But if one has followed Krüss through his earlier career, his abiding commitment to international librarianship is also unmistakable here.

In Conclusion

How are we to evaluate the final phase of the career of this German internationalist? Krüss did not speak directly for himself on this subject during the war and did not commit personal thoughts to the diaries that he titled “Daily News,” a headline record of his activities. He had no opportunity after the war to justify himself. At the end of April 1945 Krüss poisoned himself in the basement of the Staatsbibliothek. While he may have expressed some self judgment in this act, fear of facing another overwhelming change as a lonely widower in ill health was also part of the equation.

Werner Schochow has noted that “the immediate post-war period—without adequate sources and uncertain in the evaluation—simply ignored Krüss....Even later—until recently—people preferred to avoid this man.”⁶² One exception was Krüss’s subordinate Hermann Fuchs in his 1954 memorial tribute, (obviously with strong self-interest in portraying the Bibliotheksschutz in the best light). He described Krüss as a heroic figure. “His greatest concern was to banish the dangers to libraries and librarians arising from the course of the war and from the undisguised tendencies of National Socialism and not to allow the connection to the librarians of these countries to be severed.”⁶³ Fuchs’s tone prompted Emil Gratzl of the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek to write to Georg Leyh, retired director of the Tübingen University Library, “I read the obituary for Krüss, I will confess to you, with some discomfort. The hagiographic tone—what you call froth—and, additionally, its purpose provoked and greatly disturbed me.”⁶⁴

⁶¹ See, for example, Christian Hänger and Andrea Süchting-Hänger’s review of Hollender’s book in *Bibliothek: Forschung und Praxis*, 27 (2003): 242-43.

⁶² “die unmittelbare Nachkriegszeit, ohne hinreichende Quellengrundlage und unsicher in der Wertung, hat Krüss schlicht ignoriert....Auch später, bis in die jüngste Zeit, hat man Lieber einen Bogen um diesen Mann gemacht.”
Werner Schochow, *Die Berliner Staatsbibliothek und ihr Umfeld* (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 2005), 214.

⁶³ “Es [war] seine größte Sorge, die den Bibliotheken und Bibliothekaren aus dem Gang des Krieges und den unverhüllten Tendenzen des Nationalsozialismus erwachsenden Gefahren zu bannen und die Verbindung mit den Bibliothekaren dieser Länder nicht abreißen zu lassen.”
Fuchs, “In memoriam,” (Note 2), 120-21.

⁶⁴ “Den Nachruf auf Krüss habe ich gelesen, wie ich Ihnen gestehen will, mit einigem Mißbehagen. Mich hat der hagiographische Ton, das was Sie das Schaumige nennen, und zu dem sein Ende, wie ich zugebe, herausfordert, doch stark gestört.”
Gratzl to Leyh, 7 October 1954, SBB, Nachlaß Leyh, K. XXXIV; published in Schochow, *Die Preußische Staatsbibliothek, 1918-1945* (Köln & Wien: Böhlau, 1989), 119-21.

While much source material from the war years still requires closer reading, it is clear that Krüss's wartime behavior deserves a split judgment. That the career of this internationally minded librarian ended in a mixture of successes, futile gestures, and shameful compromises is another of the countless library tragedies of the Nazi period.

Creative Expression

Harper Library Coloring Sheet

Gabriel Akagawa, *Independent artist and Director of Foundry Tree*

Keywords: University of Chicago Library, Acquisitions department, Coloring sheet, Library history



Я ищущу

Dr. Michael Erdman, *British Library*

Keywords: Comics. Cats. Humor. Library. Russian.



Erdman, Michael. "Я ищущу." In *Honor of Sandra Levy*, edited by Susan J. Martin. Chicago: University of Chicago Library, 2021, 92-93. <https://openjournals.lib.uchicago.edu/index.php/slevy>

Southside Chicago

Sheheryar Hasnain

Keywords: South Side, Chicago, Landscape photography, Film photography, Lake Michigan



The Case of the Three Union Stewards

Ernest Isaiah West

Susan J. Martin, *Middle Tennessee State University*

Keywords: Libraries, Mysteries, Chicago, Fiction

It was a short train ride from the McCormick Center to Hyde Park, but Leslie nevertheless enjoyed the gentle sway of the electric as it wound its way through a handful of stops. She was visiting Chicago for her annual library conference, and on the second day had carved out some free time to visit old friends and colleagues at the University in Hyde Park. She would have time for perhaps one chapter of the book in front of her, *Logan's Run*, and then it would be off to hurrying down 57th Street to get to the University library. She could already see she would arrive at the station at the same time she was supposed to meet her friends, and so she would have to run a gauntlet of temptations from bookstores, a Greek restaurant, and the lure of donuts in the local bike shop. She was excited to be outside of Texas, free from her husband (whom she adored), and ready for whatever mischief old friends and a few drinks could make.

Leslie considered herself fashionable but compensated for that with cultivating a stereotype of loving books, cats, and rules. Her friendships were lifelong. When she reached the library there was no excessive hugging on the second floor in technical services, yet Rita and Samantha greeted her triumphantly, and together in determined procession made their way to the Harissa, a Middle Eastern restaurant large enough to accommodate a good time for three. So happy the company, so fast the talk that they did not realize they overordered until plates of chicken and lamb shawarma, Tagin, Mo Jadara, and kifta filled the table. Laughing and lifting their glasses to first world problems, they tucked in to solving them.

Leslie brought the girls up to date on her husband Lesley, and their three boys Denton, Dallas, and Austin. Lesley was an almost retired cemetery superintendent. He had been somewhat of a rascal in his youth but had grown bookish over the years with several hobbies. Presently all his adventures tended to be in either funeral services or stamps. The boys were thriving with their respective colleges and girlfriends. Leslie now desperately wanted to hear all the shop talk Rita and Sam could dish out.

“Well, Crystal didn’t show up for work today, no call, no show” Rita started, “I can’t remember her ever missing a day of work” She gulped the rest of her drink and ordered another. “I dunno about this. And she is a union steward too!”

Sam explained. “Crystal only took over as union steward seven months ago because the former steward, Jessica, went missing. She was last seen at the Sand Dunes in Indiana, and then poof!

Gone! And to make the matter more macabre still, Dolores disappeared a year and a half ago, and she was union steward before Jessica!”

“Some union”, piped Leslie.

“Right”, said Sam, “You’ll probably remember that the Teamsters pulled out from the University after they failed to unionize the campus’ different robotic systems. The union that filled the gap- The Fur Trapper’s Guild of the Upper Peninsula -is not anywhere near as professional as the Teamster’s. They literally go back as far as the Hudson Bay Trading Company, but for all their pedigree they are still a bunch of crooks. Contract negotiations were a mess. Nobody could tell what was going on. The University held secret meetings, and in the end even management joined the union. Everything about this seems to be shady, and the stewards have taken a lot of flak. Dolores was an older and tougher cookie, and gave out as much as she took, but Jessica was a sweetheart and was miserable filling in, and so is Crystal.”

“I dunno, “Rita repeated, “sure hope Crystal shows up at work tomorrow!”

The reunion went on for a couple more hours, and then Leslie found herself alone in her hotel room with time to finish her novel. She had room service deliver tea, and after a short call to her husband, settled in. She really did not care for science fiction and fell asleep as Logan 3 strove for sanctuary in a crazy world.

Day three of the conference dawned, and Leslie was set to give her presentation *The Mendoza line: How to Manage (and improve!) Underachievers*. When she arrived, the Center was a-buzz with the news that Crystal was seen diving off Promontory Point the evening before last. She was a strong and accomplished swimmer, but no body had been found. Her apartment on Kimbark was unlocked, and her handbag and cell phone were on the kitchen table. She did not show up for work, neither did she call in. Naturally, the consensus quickly became that there was a serial killer abroad dedicated to murdering librarians. What he did with the bodies was anybody’s guess. Several time that day Leslie received texts from Samantha detailing every fact and fantasy she had heard on the matter. Rita sent no texts and merely responded to one by saying simply she did not understand what was going on.

Two more days passed, Lake Michigan had been searched by divers, and there were no leads on Crystal’s disappearance. The conference ended, and Leslie called her husband to tell him she was going to spend a few more days in Chicago to be with her friends during this time.

“That’s fine honey, that’ll give me time to read my new treasure!” he practically sang in reply.

“What’s that?”

“I took your advice and got off eBay and found website for a lovely bookstore in Pierceton, Indiana that had a copy of Stephen G Rich’s *Philately of the Anglo-Boer War 1899-1902!*”

“Oh”

“They expressed mailed it to me, and even enclosed a beautifully handwritten thank you note. Here, I’ll send you a picture of it”

“That’s fine dear, I’ll call you tonight!”

“love you.”

“love you, too.’

She seriously loved her husband, but she had to laugh at how different they were as a couple. They met and talked initially when they found out they shared the same first name. But she could hardly date him because his last name was Quackenbush- Lesley Paul Quackenbush, born of hippie parents with four brothers and two sisters. Leslie was an only child, and when she did agree to marry him, she kept her maiden name. Leslie Lynn Cabot could trace her lineage fourteen generations back down most of her lines. Her college roommate swears to this day that Leslie can *recite* her lineage.

But twenty years of marriage had shown that what they did have in common was quite strong. They were both insatiable readers, even competitive. They constantly made bets on silly things, and the loser would have to read a book of the winner’s choice. That was how Leslie came to be reading a William Nolan novel. Her only consolation was that she normally won such bets, and that is how Mr. Quackenbush came to read all the Brontë’s, much of Laura Ingalls Wilder, and the screenplay *To Sir with Love*. Leslie herself could not stand the Brontë’s, but all is fair in love and war.

The weekend was here for Samantha and Rita, and they chose ice cream over booze for this meeting. There was a darling hand-crafted Ice cream parlor over by the tobacco shop near 53rd Street, and so they joined up there. Rita had already ordered and was halfway through an enormous banana split by the time Leslie showed up. Her two friends were as different from each other as she was with her husband. Rita talked little and never judged anything or anyone, so she had time to eat much, and she worked in circulation. Samantha lived to talk and judged everything, and therefore had only the smallest scoop of ice cream that was already beginning to melt. She was a serials cataloger.

“The police came and took everything connected to Crystal’s desk. Her computer, her files, even her trash. I wonder why they didn’t just take the desk as well.”

“Oh Sam, they have to do that kind of thing. And I hope YOU haven’t given up on finding Crystal alive. There is no evidence that she is dead. And hope costs so little” Leslie said, perhaps a little more condescending than she meant. But the friend in Sam didn’t even notice.

“You know me, I’m an expert at worrying. But who would want to hurt Crystal? And it has got to be the same people who took Jessica and Dolores. It’s all connected.”

“There is something that doesn’t make any sense to me. Everyone hates the new union, but everyone loved the union stewards, well at least Jessica and Crystal were loved. The snatchings are presumably over the way the union treats its members, so why remove persons who make a bad experience better?” Leslie stopped short as Rita reached across the table and took Sam’s untouched ice cream.”

“What? You weren’t going to eat it anyway.”

They moved the party from the shoppe to Rita's apartment in Woodlawn, a lovely brick 1920's building calling itself *La Floresta*. Rita was well stocked with comfortable furniture and snacks and wine, and the stress level just seemed to drop. The conversation took a turn when Leslie asked about a handwritten set of rules labeled *Conduct in the Library* and dated March 12, 1970 that was hanging in a simple frame on the wall. It caught Leslie's eye because it was written in flawless library script, a long-forgotten art of library yesteryear.

"Dolores gave that to me. She made it when she first came out of Library school. She kept using that script even though no one else did. It was kinda her thing."

The night ended and the girls agreed to meet at the University Chapel for Sunday services the next morning. Back at her hotel, Leslie once again ordered tea, and looked out her window where she could see Soldier Field. "Ah Chicago" she thought to herself, "so beautiful and so dangerous. You could spend a lifetime here and not know it all, and every time I leave you there is something I miss."

Her mind was so full she could not continue with her novel. She would never cheat, that is, not read what she lost in a bet, but she had no heart for it now. She would finish the tiring little bit of science fiction on the plane ride home. Picking up her phone she noticed an unread text from her husband and opened it to see the picture he had sent of his book with the note. She froze in disbelief. A quick call to her husband, and then a call to Samantha.

"Hold on, girl, we are NOT going to church tomorrow!" Leslie went to bed with the wonderful peace of mind that occurs the soul thinks its put all its problems behind.

The next morning Leslie encountered the single strangest person she had ever laid eyes on. A woman was sitting in the hotel lobby looking like something that had walked out of a novel. She was wearing a shapka with a large peacock feather sticking out, and about eleven pounds of jewelry; rings on every finger, and four or five necklaces. When she stood up, she towered over everyone in the room. She simply stared at Leslie as she crossed to the desk to check out. Leslie made arrangements to have her luggage stored in the lobby until she returned for it later on in the day, left the building with just a tote bag and turned towards the train station. She could hear the clip-clop of something that sounded rather like a horse, and when she turned, she could see the peacock feather following her in the crowd some thirty feet away.

Reason chided her not to lead this half metal, half fur oddity to the girls, so Leslie shot a text as she walked, rapidly thinking of her next move. At the crosswalk she stared at the red hand flashing. At that moment instinct kicked in.

Run!

She shot across the street just as the traffic started moving, and vaguely headed toward Lake Michigan. She had to veer north when the way became crowded, and after she stopped moaning about wearing the- wrong- shoes- for -this -kind- of- crap she realized she was at the Old St. Mary's Church. A small girl leaned against the outer wall and looked up at her with big eyes.

“You in trouble, Ma’am?”, she asked.

“You know, I think I am. I need a place to hide. Do *you* know a good hiding place?” The girl nodded and skipped to the left. Round the back they came upon a perfect row of trash cans running along a functional alley, and among them Leslie squatted. In less than a minute she saw a peacock feather moving along the sidewalk in front of the Church. When the feather disappeared, Leslie could hear the heavy shoes walking back and forth as the wearer thought of her next move. Wasting no time, Leslie shot the opposite direction, once again heading for the Lake. Soon the Field Museum was in sight, and behind that the Shedd Aquarium. As there was no line, Leslie paid the price of admission and went inside, if for nothing else then to get a chance to breathe, sit down, and think.

And once again, not getting five minutes rest, she glimpsed her hunter storm into the Aquarium. The seeming impossibility of it all frightened her deeply. What fresh hell was this? Leslie in summer garb was sweating profusely, but this creature in hat and fur looked positively cold- like blue steel, inhumanly cold. A killer? She could well believe it was a robot.

She stayed just ahead of her assailant, close enough to see her through the various fish tanks, but far enough to make a break for it as soon as she was near an exit. Waiting just long enough for an extra few minutes of breath, she shot out of the Aquarium and leaped onto the nearby metro, which had just pulled up. It was time to put some serious distance between herself and the *thing* that was chasing her. She rode to Millennium Station, ran up to the surface and crossed the street, then hopped on the 151 bus to Lincoln Park, and practically flew into the crowded zoo. And after thirty minutes she relaxed. No one could have followed her; she was now confident of it. She went up to one of the food kiosks, ordered a cold drink, and dialed Samantha on her cell phone.

“Sam, you won’t believe what’s happened to me!”

“Well, from your text I figured it was *something* odd. What’s up?”

“I was being chased by.....” and she hung up her phone, and then silenced it as well. Standing not two feet in front of her loomed the tall monster with her back to Leslie. She was mechanically scanning the crowd. Leslie could smell her heavy scent of musk. And now she was terrified. The woman’s physique was far more impressive than she had realized—a formidable match in any fight. Her Episcopalian upbringing kicked in, and before she knew it, she was praying. The giantess moved away, and Leslie slinked round the back of the beverage hut and ran into the Penguin House. It was only a matter of time before she would be caught, so she did something she rarely ever did. She broke the rules. She went *into* the penguin exhibit. The birds were very friendly, but she scampered out of the public’s sight behind a small decorative igloo. And there it got cold very quickly. She never knew if her tracker went into the exhibit or not, for she hunkered down there making herself small. In a librarian’s tote bag can be guaranteed many items, and a cardigan sweater is one of them. Leslie was cold but not frozen as she stepped out into the warmth.

Without incident she hopped back on the 151 bus to Michigan Avenue, and then lost herself in the crowd as she made her way to Grant Park. As she approached Ida B Wells Drive, she caught

sight of the Bowman and the Spearman, and the large Peacock feather in the crowd that was crossing between the Indians. And whether it was because she was tired or because she was desperate, Leslie stopped running, and became angry. This was going to end, now. Making her way to the statue of Abraham Lincoln, she put down her tote bag, leaned against the statue and waited.

She did not expect that she would have to wait long. She was out in the open, unmoving, and begging for a fight. Ten minutes passed, then twenty, and Leslie had to work on keeping her anger alive. Since she was under the statue of Lincoln, she thought of how thoroughly Yankee she was, how proud she was of the union. She even indulged in fantasy and imagined the annoying peacock feather hat of the giantess transformed to that infamous hat of calvary officer J.E.B. Stuart, one of the more audacious officers of the Confederate victory at Fredericksburg.

But her waiting continued. Was she being watched? Why the delay? Realizing that her anger was gone, but that she could walk as bravely as she could wait, she made her way out of the Park, turned her cellphone back on, and in a few minutes was at the Harold Washington Library. She used the bathroom, mixed with the patrons, relaxed on the ninth floor, and generally got hold of her nerves. Could she call the police? After all, besides being odd, what had her pursuer done? She had not spoken, had not threatened, and when a confrontation could have happened, it simply did not. Suddenly she was embarrassed for having hid in a penguin pen. She had let an odd and unfamiliar person give her xenophobic worries.

On Sundays, the Harold Washington closes early, and although she could not help herself looking around for a peacock feather, all she saw was a billboard with Homer Simpson eating a donut. With today's plans shot, she decided to go back to the hotel and see if there was a vacancy for another night. And donuts sounded good.

With the library conference over, there were plenty of rooms available at the hotel. Leslie grabbed her luggage from the lobby storage and headed to a third-floor room with a decent view. After a bath, meal from room service, and an irritating phone call to her husband (who could not stop laughing about her day), She called Sam to ask if it was possible for her to take the day off.

"I can do anything for an old friend," she had answered, "What do you have in mind?"

"A day trip to Indiana, of course! And get Rita to come."

Sam showed up the next morning for her day off sporting a Pittsburg Steeler tee shirt. Leslie threw her luggage into the trunk and off they drove to pick up Rita. At about the third traffic light the impossible happened. The car doors were not locked, and so the monster returned easily, opening the door, and climbing in the back seat behind the girls.

When the screaming stopped, a voice in a perfect midwestern accent demanded to be driven to Navy Pier. Samantha made the appropriate turn at the next intersection while Leslie fumbled for her cell phone. With the Ferris wheel in sight, on East Illinois Street, Samantha yanked the car to the side of the road and both girls jumped out and ran in opposite directions. It was by accident that ten minutes later they were both on Navy Pier looking for a policeman.

But all the policemen were busy. Remarkably busy. It seems there was a fight down at the Pier entrance. Following the flow of the curious crowd, they saw the giantess swinging her purse effectively as a weapon, and each time it hit an officer he would go sprawling. Later they would learn that a bored cop has merely stopped her for jaywalking (a remarkable thing in itself at the Pier), but she had punched him in the nose as a reply.

“That’s the President of the Trapper’s union,” stated Sam, “I’m positive. That’s Janis du Charn!”

And at that moment Janis caught sight of the girls and started struggling towards them despite what was now a band of policemen. “You know where they *are!* I will hunt you *all* down. Nobody escapes the contact!” Such was the strength of her hoarse voice that the girls feared she would break free.

Leaving the scene and retreating to the car, Sam and Leslie drove the rest of the way to Rita’s apartment. In forty minutes, they were driving Interstate 94 to Indiana route 30. Leslie told the girls all she had been through and discovered.

A couple of hours later they arrived at a quaint shop, *Sanctuary Books*, and they were open. A young man stood by the register, and Leslie wasted no time.

“Tell the girls I want to speak with them” she demanded.

“What girls?” stuttered the surprised clerk.

“Never mind”, and Leslie simply stormed through the shop to the back room. There, fixing labels and weighing books and writing notes were all three refugees from the University in Hyde Park. Dolores, Jessica, and Crystal looked well for being thought dead.

Leslie had planned to say something commanding like, “I believe you have some explaining to do?”, but there was no time, as Rita and Sam bear- hugged their lost comrades. All five were in tears.

The explanation came less than ten minutes later.

The Union contracts were indeed so badly conceived that they required even retired workers to give two percent of their pensions (plus social security) to the Fur Traders. The contracts were iron clad, and only death or running away could provide escape. The girls all willingly agreed to keep their secret, and friendships were renewed.

“But how did you find us in Indiana?”

“The thank you note you wrote to my husband for that silly stamp book of his was in perfect library script. I simply used the address off the card! Now, how exactly did you make your escape to here?”

Dolores admitted, “It was quite haphazard, really, and I’m surprised it’s worked this far. I was alone in the beginning, and I just sorta slunked off by myself. I packed a bag, rented a Divvy bike, rode it out to a train stop I never use, and made my way to Indiana. As you know, Indiana is one of the best kept secrets that each Chicagoan must find for herself. I’ve rented this space under a pseudonym for almost three years, now.”

“That’s where I come in, “added Jessica. “I serendipitously came to her bookstore a couple of years ago, and once we found each other it wasn’t long before I faked my own disappearance in the Sand Dunes.”

“And I swam to freedom after getting a letter from Jessica, “piped Crystal, “and now that you have found us, perhaps we ought to tighten down our security a bit. Seriously, I think we would have to leave the planet to be totally hidden, but Indiana will do!”

As the girls prepared to leave, Dolores approached Leslie with two books. “Your husband thought you’d like the rest of the Logan’s Run trilogy, and since I had them in stock, you’ll have them for your return trip home!” Outside Leslie smiled a winsome smile of gratitude, but inside she groaned.

In Honor of Sandra Levy

festschrift

