Trends and Changes in Library Education in Russia,

Ukraine and Baltic States before and after the Fall of USSR/

Sonia Goldsteins

Abstract

Social, political and economical changes that occurred during the glasnost

period in the USSR reached the culmination point after the USSR collapse and

after the Soviet regime came to the end. The independent republics, which

constituted the FSU, went through a dramatic transformation from communist,

totalitarian and centralized society to a free and decentralized society based on the

principles of democracy and liberalism, providing to its people political freedom

and human rights, freedom of the speech and the press. Moreover, the existing

economy was replaced by free market economies and relationships with the

Western world were established, modern technologies have been implemented and

the people have experienced the revival of national culture, literature and

language, in particular in those republics subjected to in the past to suppression of

the communist regime.

These changes resulted in a different attitude to the library and the librarian in

the society. Hence the object of the present study is to examine the impact of the

above changes on the studies of library science in the institutes of higher

education in the USSR during the glasnost period and lately in the Russian

Federation, Ukraine and the Baltic States.

The study is based on the analysis of information, such as the Library and

Information Science curricula of the institutes of higher education in Ukraine

(Kharkov State Academy of Culture and Rovno State Institute of Culture), the

Baltic states (Tallin Pedagogical University, Vilnius University and University of

Latvia) and in the Russian Federation (Kazan State Institute of Arts and Culture);

The appendices to the diplomas of the graduates of library sciences schools issued

in the USSR, the Russian Federation and independent Ukraine are different and so

are the national standards for the higher education in library science and

bibliography established by the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Culture in the Russian Federation.

The study objectives of the study are as follows:

- To find out the characteristic features of the Library Science and Information studies during the glasnost period (1985-1991).
- To find out the characteristic features of the Library and Information
 Science studies after the collapse of the USSR and till now.
- To find out possible differences in the Library and Information Science curricula of the institutes of higher education in the Russian Federation, Ukraine and the Baltic States today.
- To find out what were the changes in the concept of the library and information science studies prior to, during glasnost and in the postglasnost period.

The main findings of the study are as follows:

In concordance with the assumption the Library and Information Science studies curricula during the glasnost period (1985-1991) were quite uniform; a variety of new general education and special courses in Information Sciences reflected the changes characteristic for the period of glasnost, such as openness, establishment of foreign relationships, freedom of information, changed attitude to religion, the need in specialists in management of libraries and automation of libraries, comparative library sciences and specific subjects reflecting the differences in national and cultural character of the republics of the USSR. Moreover, general courses and courses related to the Soviet regime constituted above a half of the curriculum, and the most of the special courses were related to Knowledge organization and reference services (overwhelming majority related to bibliography). The other special courses (on a much smaller scale) were (in descending order): "History and theory of library science, libraries and books", "Management", "Information sciences". The only unconfirmed hypothesis in this connection was that the courses related to the Soviet regime were completely excluded from the curriculum towards the end of the period of glasnost.

As regards the characteristics of the Library and Information Sciences studies in the post-glasnost period in the USSR and till now, according to the findings which support the hypothesis, along with certain uniformity in the general and special courses, the curriculum contained a vast variety of new subjects (which were included mainly occasionally), such as freedom of information, information management, information users, national book's culture, target populations and different types of libraries, business information, different aspects of management (economical aspects, personnel management, international relationships etc.), review of readers and reading habits and scientific terminology. In addition courses in book science can be mentioned, in particular in the curricula of institutes in Vilnius and Tallin. In general as much as 40% of the courses in the Library Science curriculum (except for Baltic States) are related to general subjects with the following predominating special courses: "Knowledge organization", "Management", "Information sciences" and "History and theory of library science, libraries and books", and the most popular courses in "Information sciences" which deal with "Information technology". Only as much as a half of the BA degree curriculum in the "Knowledge organization and reference services" category deals especially with bibliography. The second bulky subject is "Catalogues, cataloging systems, classification, patents and standards".

In regards with the differences in the recent curricula in Library and Information Sciences for the BA degree of the institutes of higher education in Russia, Ukraine and Baltic States reviewed in the study, the findings support the hypothesis that the subject of national book's culture dominating in the Baltic States is given less weight in Russia and Ukraine. Indeed, according to the findings the weight of the courses in Book Sciences curriculum (including publishing and copyright) in the category "History and theory of library science, libraries and books" in Vilnius and Tallin is bigger than in other Library Science Schools.

However, opposing the hypothesis that the institutes in the Baltic States (in particular in Estonia) and in Russia would pay more attention to information technologies in their curricula than in Ukraine, it was found that in the Library Science Schools in Ukraine the "Information technology" courses constitute as much as 75% of the entire scope of subjects in "Information sciences" in comparison with 50% in Kazan, Tallin and Vilnius and 25% in Latvia.

According to another finding, in Ukraine (Kharkov and Rovno) the average number of general courses is about twice as big as the average in the Baltic States; the standard for the number of general courses in the Russian Federation is almost identical to that applied in two Library Science Schools in Ukraine; on average, the weight of the main special categories: "Knowledge organization", "Information sciences" and "History and theory of library science, libraries and books" in the curricula of the Baltic States is much bigger than that in Ukraine; the average weight of the category "Archiving and documentation" and Bibliography is much higher in Kazan (The Russian Federation) and in two Library Sciences Schools in Ukraine than in the Baltic States.

In the MA curricula of Kharkov (Ukraine) and Latvia an accent is made on different subjects: In Kharkov "Management" is the major subject followed by "Information sciences", and in Latvia "Knowledge organization" is followed by "Information sciences" and the "History and theory of library science, libraries and books".

As for the changes occurred in the concept of Library and Information Science studies prior to, during the glasnost and the post-glasnost periods, the findings support the assumption that during the glasnost period the share of courses in history and in particular in literature was much lower than before the glasnost period, moreover this tendency has been observed till now. With time the trend has been towards extended studies of Management and Information sciences; during glasnost the average number of courses in Counseling Services and Library Orientation in comparison with the preglasnost period. The group of subjects related to the Soviet regime, which was the third biggest among all the courses during the Soviet era was completely deleted from the curriculum after the collapse of the Soviet Union; at the same time courses specific for every republic that had occasionally appeared in the certificates starting from the 70ies of the XX century and during the glasnost period, became the symbol of the national history of the independent states after their establishment and till now.

According to another finding, in all times courses in Knowledge Organization have normally formed the group of the mainly special courses with bibliography being the major component, even though a certain decline and more attention given to "Catalogues, cataloging systems, classification, patents and standards". Although during the Soviet era "History and theory of library science, libraries and books" was the second biggest special category (with a significant gap between them) and the gap was somewhat decreased during the glasnost period, its relative share in the post-Soviet period and till now has been significantly reduced.

In general the result of the study is that in fact the trends and changes occurred

in the study of library science in the USSR during the years of glasnost and in the

post-Soviet period in the Russian Federation, Ukraine and Baltic States reflected to a

great extent the cultural, economical and political changes and transformations

occurred in these states along with technological progress and establishment of

relationships with the Western world, as well as the drastic changes occurred in the

librarian status in the society.

The study is the first of its kind in the field and the question whether these

trends are reflected also in the library science curricula in other institutes of higher

education in the Russian Federation and other states of the FSU is yet to be answered.

Moreover, the comparison of the Library and Information Science curricula in the

institutes of higher education in the states of the FSU and the Western countries are

the subject of much current interest.

System No.

0549744