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UNC SILS Prague Seminar
Research paper
February 14, 2007

The Battle for Books and Truth: Cold War Librarianship in the United States and Czechoslovakia

From 1949 to 1953, libraries in the United States and Czechoslovakia became battlegrounds in the Cold War between Democratic and Communist forms of government. As Communist governments posed an increasing threat to Democracy, the U.S. ramped up its efforts to spread propaganda in Eastern Europe, while Communist regimes employed censorship, police intimidation, and an attempt at forced marriage in order to shield citizens from capitalist influences. In *Libricide*, Rebecca Knuth (2003) provides a framework for analyzing libraries and their role within societies: "Because libraries provide access to various worldviews and beliefs, they have broad functional roles in supporting or attacking major belief systems" (p. 33-34). Knuth (2003) writes, "The destruction of a library involves not only loss or damage to its material contents, but curtailment of its ability to serve personal, sociocultural, and political functions" (p. xi). In the case of the U.S. and Czechoslovakia during the Cold War, their libraries and library collections were indicative of each society's ideology or major belief system. When the Czechoslovakian government succeeded in closing a U.S. embassy library in Prague, it also succeeded in driving out information that challenged Communism, the reigning political, social, and economic system.

The battle over a U.S. embassy library in Prague, along with an examination of library selection and censorship policies in the U.S. and Czechoslovakia, is representative of how both countries enforced or asserted their political principles through their

libraries. This paper provides an overview of Czech librarianship under the Communist regime; compares the Czech national library system and the U.S. overseas libraries; provides a detailed account of the conflict between U.S. and Czechoslovakia in 1949 and 1950; and shows how, by limiting access to certain texts and by providing access and encouraging reading of select texts, the U.S. and Czechoslovakia both used libraries in their attempts to advance different ideologies.

Background

There is little literature available in English about libraries and librarianship in Czechoslovakia in the period following World War II. Much of the English language library history literature examines and compares Czechoslovakian libraries with libraries and library policy in the U.S.S.R. According to Pamela Spence Richards (2001), in the Soviet Union, literacy was key to the formation and rise of the socialist state, but "not all reading was seen as good and library workers had to be vigilant lest bourgeois or religious books crop up in their collections" (p. 194). Libraries in Czechoslovakia in the mid-twentieth century were, like many other government agencies, influenced by Soviet policy and doctrine. Censorship, or policies that worked to limit access to reading materials that contradicted Communist doctrine, was common in the U.S.S.R. and other Eastern European states. The Soviet model of a centralized, government controlled library system was also prevalent in other Communist-ruled countries in Eastern Europe.

Libraries were a central institution in the education and indoctrination of citizens in Communist states and were therefore heavily regulated by government policies. According to Mathilde Verner's account of a six-week study tour of libraries in various eastern European countries in 1966, libraries in Communist countries during the Cold

War had particular ideological goals. Verner (1966) writes that Lenin's philosophy dictated how libraries operated within socialist society. Libraries were to serve two major functions: (1) they were "instruments of indoctrination which must assist in the formation of public opinion and exert influence upon the political and cultural life of society;" and (2) they were to serve in the "education of the masses and the fight against illiteracy—which constitutes the second stage in the cultural revolution, the first being the conversion of the masses to the socialist ideals" (p. 73). Because of Lenin's emphasis on how reading materials influenced politics, culture, and education, libraries in Communist countries played a major role in the Marxist-Leninist economic model. According to Verner (1966), "Libraries share the responsibility of improving scientific knowledge and technical expertise with formal educational agencies" (p. 73-74). Libraries in the U.S.S.R. and other Communist countries in Eastern Europe expanded their scientific and technical collections and made them a priority in order to support industry and scientific research.

While the U.S.S.R. served as a model for librarianship in Eastern bloc countries, each country's library system had unique elements. Verner's tour included visits to the Strahov Library and the Prague University Library, which were major institutions in the Czechoslovakian library system. Verner (1966) notes that, at the time, "the public catalogs in socialist countries have an additional function of recommending material" (p. 77-78). Catalog records in the Prague libraries were blatantly political and were arranged to guide users to recommended or approved reading materials. Verner describes the Prague University Library system for classifying and recommending certain works in its collections: "the ideological viewpoint of a work is expressed by a symbol on each

catalog card; MB stands for Marxist criticism of bourgeois theories. In the classed public catalog these cards are arranged by these symbols within each field of knowledge; recommended literature precedes other material" (p. 78). Verner (1966) also noted the prevalence of closed stacks in libraries throughout Eastern Europe: "it was pointed out that free access to the shelves would bypass the cultural and advisory function of the librarian, and could, therefore, not be reconciled with professional responsibilities" (p. 78). The closed stacks and the notion of librarians as guardians and arbiters of knowledge exemplified the Soviet style of librarianship. Collection and classification policies, combined with strict control over access to the physical books all worked to ensure that readers could not encounter materials that challenged the reigning political, cultural, and economic paradigms.

Library use was monitored by the Czechoslovakian government, so it is possible that the ideological categorization was also used in circulation records. In Edward Taborsky's (1961) evaluation of Czechoslovakia immediately after the Communist takeover in 1948, he writes about how Czech refugees described their library use under the Communist government: "As borne out by information gathered from many escapees, people frequently check out Marxist-Leninist literature from public libraries merely for the sake of establishing a verifiable record of having borrowed it" (p. 571). The possibility of government monitoring could also have deterred citizens from borrowing controversial materials.

When the Communist Party of Czechoslovak (KSČ) gained power in 1948, it almost immediately instituted policies that dealt with libraries and publishing. The publishing industry, libraries, and the way in which both institutions disseminated

information were deemed a threat to the new political structure, and so the new ruling party barred "publication of translations from Western literature deemed prejudicial from the communist viewpoint" (Taborsky, 1961, p. 481). An article in the *Chicago Daily Tribune* in June, 1948, described how Czechoslovakian libraries were beginning to be purged of "books devoid of literary worth." Many libraries were forced to close, leaving only state operated libraries accessible to the public, which was a change in policy modeled after Russian librarianship ("Czechoslovakia to purge", 1948, p. 23). The *Chicago Daily Tribune* article compared the change in policy to the Russian model of librarianship and likened the Czechoslovakian government's actions to Germany's purge of "kitsch" from its libraries in World War II. At a press conference related to a librarians' meeting in Prague, Jaroslav Frey issued a statement that included the assertion that "a library should be an instrument of cultural and political education" ("Czechoslovakia to purge", 1948, p. 23). Frey's comments, along with the policy of a state-run library system, paralleled the Soviet library system and policies regarding libraries and librarianship.

After the takeover, the Communist party issued lists of *libri prohibiti*, or banned books, to public libraries (Smejkalova, 2001). Officials were highly strategic in their selection of prohibited books and books that were allowed to remain on library shelves. While many Western authors were banned, The KSČ did allow Western books that depicted the evils of capitalism, such as novels by Charles Dickens, to be published and distributed in bookstores and libraries (Taborsky, 1961, p. 481-482). Taborsky (1961) writes that, "it was hoped that such books might aid Communist indoctrination by leaving a suitably distorted impression in the mind of a reader unaware of present conditions in

the Western world" (p. 482). According to Jirina Smejkalova (2001), "the 1948 government action was created in order to prevent freedom of creative expression" (p. 94). Smejkalova's (2001) analysis resists the simplistic notion that the Communist government intended to brainwash its citizens, rather "there was an attempt to 'democratize' the access to a text, that is, to increase the number of persons who can actually read a particular text. On the other hand, such a policy, by actually limiting the variety of texts to which a reader could gain access, limited the possibilities for individual selection" (p. 95). Reading and educational materials were readily available to citizens in Czechoslovakia, although options were scant. The Soviet model that was imposed on Czechoslovakian librarianship, along with the Czechoslovakian government's own library policies, strictly limited book choice while encouraging Czech citizens to read and expand their knowledge—as long as that knowledge was in line with Communist ideology.

Government control of libraries, library collections, and book publishing ran directly counter to the U.S. public library model. Socialist regimes viewed Western librarianship as "reactionary," a term that Verner (1966) defines as "attempting to preserve and defend the capitalist order of classes" (p. 73). The KSČ used "progressive" to describe its own library policies, a term that was synonymous with Communist or Marxist, while the term "reactionary" was used to describe anything contrary to Communism ("Czechoslovakia to purge", 1948, p. 23). In her account of the Eastern European library tour almost two decades after the Communist government took power in Czechoslovakia, Verner notes that the library was a prominent Socialist institutions, but she that "by Western standards the price paid for this prominence is high, since the

profession has been made an instrument of the state, and the individual deprived of his full freedom to read" (Verner, 1966, p. 78). Here, Verner pinpoints the main difference between libraries in Democratic and Communist countries during the Cold War.

Individual freedom to choose and read materials from libraries in Democratic countries differed greatly from those in Communist countries. Pamela Spence Richards (2001) analyzes library activities in the U.S. and Soviet Union during the Cold War, noting that control of public library systems was mostly left up to individual state governments (p. 194). Library collections in the U.S. were not rigidly controlled, at least in the early mid-century. Also, in the U.S., "public libraries were conceived of as forums of intellectual diversity" (Richards, 2001, p. 194). Censorship was not rampant; the government was not threatened by wide-ranging library collections. Richards (2001) writes, "Both the general public and most government leaders tended to perceive all reading as a good thing. The underlying assumption of America's library founders was that if citizens would just read widely enough, the republic would be saved from misrule" (p. 194). Differences between U.S. libraries and libraries in Communist countries were vast, mostly because libraries in the Soviet states were centrally run and influenced by the regime in Moscow, while U.S. libraries were not under the direct control of any one bureaucratic power.

The one aspect of U.S. librarianship that was comparable to Communist-run libraries was its U.S. Information Service libraries, according to Richards (2001, p. 194). Richards (2001) writes, "Only in the arena of federally run overseas libraries is it possible to speak of their total subordination to government policy aims" (p. 194). Richards (2001) examines how Communist countries and Western countries used their libraries to

support political ideas: “During this Cold War, as the world’s nations divided into two hostile camps, the superpowers used their libraries to tout their own economic and cultural superiority at home and to win the allegiance of the populations of other countries” (p. 193-194). The USIS operated approximately 160 libraries in different overseas countries, providing access to educational and technical materials as well as leisure reading in English and in translation (Dizard, 1961, 137-138). The libraries existed with the express purpose of exporting American culture to people around the world.

Communist countries issued draconian policies regarding library collections, whereas USIS library collections, in general, were left to the discretion of the librarians. Dizard (1961) describes the U.S. government’s interest in how USIS library materials were managed: “Selection of books and periodicals is usually made by the American library officer on the scene…The United Stated government is under no obligation to provide every variety of book. It serves its own interests, however, as well as those of the library patrons when it hews to the American tradition of liberality in supplying the broadest range of titles that it reasonably can” (p. 139). The diversity of materials and the Democratic, or capitalist, nature of the information available in the USIS libraries posed a threat to governments in Communist countries where USIS libraries were located.

Conflict

The USIS Library in Prague became a contested space during a charged political climate in 1949. The Czechoslovakia government conducted raids, arresting Czech citizens who opposed the Communist regime, and confiscated firearms from private citizens. As the raids were conducted in Prague, the Czechoslovak-Soviet Friendship

Society posted cartoons in glass-enclosed bulletin boards just outside of the U.S. Information Service Library in Prague ("Czech police", 1949, p. 29). The Communist cartoons were critical of the U.S., depicting a caricature of President Truman being "pounded" by figures representing a crisis on Wall Street ("Czech police", 1949, p. 29). According to a *Los Angeles Times* (1949) article, "the library does not control the bulletin boards, which previously had been used for union posters and tailoring displays" ("Czech police", 1949, p. 29). The critical cartoons were posted, in part, to protest the library's distribution of a U.S.-issued Czech language bulletin that the Communist party considered to be untruthful and critical of its government ("Czech police", 1949, p. 29). The cartoons mark the first point at which the library was singled out and attacked or criticized by the dominant political power in Czechoslovakia.

Because the USIS Library did not directly control the bulletin boards, the agency could not change the display's contents. The posting of the political cartoons "prompted an American protest to the Czechoslovak government" ("Czech police", 1949, p. 29). According to the same article (1949), "to fight back…the library is setting posters of Donald Duck and Mickey Mouse in its windows pointing to the bulletin boards and saying: 'To answer your question, these cartoons are not ours'" (p. 29). The Disney-themed retaliation on the part of the USIS Library staff was representative of how propaganda was used by the U.S. in Eastern Europe; the Disney characters were a seemingly innocuous image—cartoons answering cartoons—but at the same time, they represented Western capitalism and culture.

The KSČ continued its control of information in the country and, later that year, the Czechoslovakia Health Ministry purged its libraries of "'pseudo-scientific books and

unhealthy philosophical idealism'" while the government issued a statement that announced "'Czechoslovak science must hew to the Soviet line'" ("Health Ministry", 1949, p. 5). Communist domination of information and information production was not limited to within the borders of Czechoslovakia. In November of 1949, the Czechoslovakia government forced a Yugoslavian agency to close in Prague and shortly afterwards closed its own propaganda library in Belgrade, Yugoslavia ("Czechs close", 1949, p. 6). Meanwhile, the literature purge within the country's libraries continued, as the KSČ announced in February, 1950, that the Jablonec municipal library, along with thirty-four other libraries, would be purged of "'worthless literature'" ("Czechs to purge", 1950, p. 13).

Soviet-style librarianship continued to influence the Czechoslovakian library system when the KSČ instituted the Library Act of 1950 and began a massive literature purge across the country (Taborsky, 1961, 564). Taborsky (1961) estimates that between 1950 and 1955, around fourteen million books were made into scrap paper, transferred out of the country, or stored in inaccessible places (p. 564). Taborsky (1961) describes how the government razed library collections across the entire country:

> Detailed lists of books considered objectionable from the Communist point of view were sent to bookstores and libraries with orders that they not be sold or lent. Squads of censors descended on hundreds of private libraries located in many of Czechoslovakia's castles, convents, and other individual collections and went through them with an ideological fine-tooth comb. Volumes passed by the censor were distributed to public libraries and those which were condemned were

> either disposed of as scrap paper, or stored in special places, or sold abroad. (p. 563-564).

Although the country-wide weeding project decimated some collections, the government ensured that the nation's libraries—which were integral to the enforcement of Communist ideology—remained viable. The new Library Act law created a national library system that was controlled by a central government agency (Taborsky, 1961, p. 563). The system included 12,000 "factory libraries" and 1,200 libraries "attached to colleges, universities, and scientific institutes" (Taborsky, 1961, p. 570). The government even had a small fleet of "bibliobuses"—like American bookmobiles—which were used to "bring communist culture even to the vagrant gypsies" (Taborsky, 1961, p. 570).

Later that year, the USIS Library in Prague clashed with the KSČ again. The Czechoslovakia Foreign Office ordered the USIS in Prague and Bratislava to close with a deadline of noon on Saturday, April 22, 1950; the office also called for the U.S. embassy's press attaché, Joseph Kolarek, to leave the country immediately ("Prague orders", 1950, p. 1). Kolarek was charged with distributing uncensored information, using the library's employees for espionage, and gathering false information for the USIS's Voice of America radio service ("Prague orders", 1950, p. 1). Six Czech library employees were arrested at the same time and were all later tried for treason and espionage against the Czechoslovakian government ("Prague orders", 1950, p. 1). It is possible that the Czechoslovakia government, in its zealous literature purge along with its new policy to strengthen and nationalize the library system, viewed the American-run library in Prague as a distinct threat in the production and dissemination of information.

According to an article in the *Los Angeles Times* (1950), the Czech police had used intimidation tactics, such as questioning, to deter Czech citizens from visiting the U.S. library in the months prior to ordering the agency's closure ("Czech Reds", 1950, p. 20).

The forced closing of the USIS library was not merely symbolic—the library actually distributed information to a large number of Czech citizens. In a *New York Times* (1950) article about the events and orders in Prague, the director of the Prague and Bratislava libraries, Katherine Kosmak, was interviewed about both of the USIS libraries' services ("Prague orders", 1950, p. 1). Kosmak stated that the libraries had high circulation figures, serving up to 10,000 patrons per month ("Prague orders", 1950, p. 1). It is unclear what specific information was circulated from the library in Prague, although Czechoslovakia's foreign offices mainly objected that Kolarek had added uncensored pages to an embassy bulletin and distributed contraband information at the library ("Prague orders", 1950, p. 1).

Although the U.S. had a "stated policy of encouraging the exchange of information between the two countries," it reacted to the Prague library closure by retaliating in kind. The State Department issued statements that indicated the U.S. government was considering closing Czechoslovakia information services in the U.S. and limiting the distribution of Czechoslovakian publications ("U.S. studies", 1950, p. 3). According to the State Department's spokesperson, the Czechoslovakia government's actions were made in "fear of the expression regarding the United States and the free world" ("U.S. studies", 1950, p. 3). The U.S. at the time maintained information offices throughout Eastern Europe in Poland, Hungary, Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union,

although the Bulgarian and Romanian governments had also forced the USIS offices in their countries to close ("U.S. studies", 1950, p. 3).

Before the library in Prague closed, its employees posted a sign in its window announcing free publications (Schmidt, 1950, p. 14). On April 20, 1950, around 5,000 Czech citizens "thronged" the USIS library in Prague, taking away "300 old books and 10,000 popular magazines, educational and technical manuals, medical symposiums and State Department brochures in Czech, English, Russian and French" (Schmidt, 1950, p. 14). Descriptions in the *New York Times* make the library's last day of service sound chaotic: "In the melee, some books, even including copies of the Congressional Record were taken from the shelves. Tables and chairs were overturned" (Schmidt, 1950, p. 14). Schmidt (1950) depicts the Czech citizens as frantically carting away information of any kind (p. 14). It is unclear why Czech citizens were so desperate to take even the most banal materials from the library's shelves. They may have been motivated by the country-wide literature purge, which may have created a dearth of reading and educational materials. It is also possible that the intimidation tactics used by Czech police made the library's collections seem irresistibly appealing, or perhaps possession of the contraband information was a relatively safe way of protesting the Communist government.

At the same time the USIS in Prague closed its doors, two Czech employees resigned from the British Information Service library, which was located close to the U.S. library in Prague. The employees issued a statement: "they did not agree with the British Information Service's 'distortion' of life in capitalist countries and colonial areas and concluded that it was 'unthinkable that we continue in the service of the capitalists'"

("Czechs throng", 1950, p. 3). It is difficult to determine whether the Czech employees were acting independently and actually renouncing their British employer, or whether they were coerced into issuing their criticism of the British Information Service because of pressure by their own government.

Shortly after the USIS closed in Prague, the U.S. government made good on its threat to close similar Czech agencies. In direct retaliation to the closure of its libraries in Prague and Bratislava, the U.S. ordered Czechoslovakia to close its consulate in Chicago by May 1, 1950 ("Washington orders", 1950, 1). According to an article in the *New York Times* (1950), the Czechoslovak Consulate in Chicago was used by the United States Communist party as "a headquarters for their espionage operations" ("Office called", 1950, p. 3). Other Czechoslovakian consulates in New York, Cleveland, Philadelphia and Pittsburgh were allowed to remain open, although the Czechoslovak Consul had been recalled from the New York consulate in October, 1949 ("Other consulates", 1950, p. 3).

U.S. Secretary of State Dean Acheson addressed the conflict over the closures in Prague and the U.S. government's retaliatory efforts by employing rhetoric about how the U.S. viewed information as key to the democratic process:

> the function of the Information Service and the Voice of America was to 'serve only as channels through which the American people and their Government speak to the peoples in that area…if free information becomes dangerous to a totalitarian regime, it is not the fault of the United States nor the USIS, but of the regime itself. The quarrel of the Czechoslovak Government, therefore, is not with the Voice of America nor with the USIS. Its quarrel is with the truth' ("Washington orders", 1950, p. 1)

The U.S. government also issued a formal statement about the decision to close the Czechoslovak Consulate: "The Czechoslovak Government had no basis whatever to ask the United States through the closing of its libraries to eliminate those normal cultural functions of the diplomatic representatives of one country to another. The Czechoslovak Government thereby revealed not only its fear of truth and of contacts with the free world, but also its unwillingness or inability to maintain normal relations with the United States" ("U.S. statement", 1950, p. 30). The 'truth' alluded to by the U.S. statement and by Secretary Acheson was entirely subjective, depending upon which ideology one subscribed to. The USIS, along with Voice of America radio broadcasts, had been established overseas to export a cultural program and its primary purpose was to spread propaganda in an effort to combat the spread of Communism (Hixson, 1997, p. 8). The Czechoslovakia government, as a Communist power, was indeed justified in its attempt to drive out the U.S. form of the 'truth,' which was an attempt to disseminate anti-Communist and pro-democratic information.

After the U.S. closed the Czechoslovakia consulate in Chicago, the U.S. State Department delivered an official protest to the Czechoslovak government in Prague in response to actions against USIS employee and embassy library director, Katherine Kosmak ("Washington orders", 1950, p. 1). In addition to charges that the USIS had distributed contraband information, its employees had been under attack by the Czechoslovak government for illicit or taboo relationships. According to an article in the *Chicago Daily Tribune* (1950), Kosmak had a relationship with an embassy employee, Ivan Elbl, who was also a Czech citizen ("U.S. woman", 1950, p. 3). Kosmak was forty-one years old at the time and Elbl was twenty-five years old. Elbl asked Kosmak to

marry him, but then he quit his job at the library and was arrested on April 6, 1950. On April 11, he "publicly accused USIS of being a 'base for anti-state propaganda,'" but then in a private telephone call, he alerted her to the statement and again mentioned marriage ("U.S. woman", 1950, p. 3). According to Kosmak, two Czech government agents tried to bully her into agreeing to marry Elbl in an attempt to make her stay in the country and renounce her U.S. citizenship and to prevent him from ever leaving Czechoslovakia legally ("U.S. woman", 1950, p. 3). The intimidation tactics seem to be an attempt to silence Elbl, who must have been deemed a threat to the KSČ, possibly after all of his contact with Americans and the USIS propaganda.

The battle over information and foreign offices in the U.S. and Czechoslovakia continued with more bickering over foreign offices. On April 28, a week after the U.S. demanded that the Chicago Czech consulate close, the Czechoslovakia government demanded that U.S. staff in Czechoslovakia, which included seventy-one employees in Prague and six employees in Bratislava be cut by two-thirds (Waggoner, 1950, p. 1). In May, 1950, the U.S. government ordered the Czechoslovakia government to close its Cleveland and Pittsburgh consulates and to reduce its staff in the U.S. by two-thirds (Waggoner, 1950, p. 1). At the same time, there were thirty-three Czech government officials working in the U.S.; U.S. demands decreased that number to about eleven officials (Waggoner, 1950, p. 1). Again, the U.S. issued an official statement about its decision to cut staff and close Czechoslovakia consulates: "It is all too apparent that such actions of the Czechoslovak Government are not dictated by the interests of the Czechoslovak people or for that matter by the interests of the present regime in

Czechoslovakia. They follow a set course which appears to have been prescribed for the states of Eastern Europe" ("U.S. statement", 1950, p. 30).

The U.S. statement on Czechoslovakia indicates that the U.S. viewed the Czechoslovakia government as acting under the influence of the Soviet Union and was threatened by the Communist bloc of countries in Eastern Europe, just as the Czechoslovakia government was threatened by U.S. agencies, their employees, and potentially corrupting information. The skirmish over the information and diplomatic agencies was definitely a battle of ideologies, as evidenced by the U.S. government's repeated emphasis on the 'truth.' Throughout the conflict, while the U.S. referred to its own agencies and its own aims as 'democratic,' the Czechoslovakia government referred to the U.S. as 'capitalist.'

Aftermath

USIS overseas libraries were transferred to a new government unit, the U.S. Information Agency (USIA), in 1953 when President Eisenhower formed the new agency (Richards, 2001, p. 199). The USIA created a new selection policy for books and other materials in the overseas libraries, which stated that the collections should represent "'a balanced collection of American thought'" (Morgan, 2003, p. 436). The "balanced collections" included books by Communist writers (Morgan, 2003, 436). The USIA libraries distributed information about the U.S., democracy, and capitalism, through their liberal collection policies and diverse range of materials. Ironically, the overseas libraries were attacked throughout Senator Joseph McCarthy's congressional investigations in 1953 (Dizard, 1961, p. 140). McCarthy, in his hunt to expose Communist sympathizers in the U.S. government, objected to the overseas libraries selection policies and the fact

that the policy did not censor materials about Communism or materials written by Communist authors (Dizard, 1961, p. 140). McCarthy's hearings were interrupted for over two weeks so that two of McCarthy's staffers, Roy Cohn and David Schine, could tour overseas libraries in Europe to "hunt down" books by Communist authors (Morgan, 2003, p. 442-443).

During the McCarthy hearings, the USIA book selection policy was in limbo, so the State Department sent lists of books that were approved for the overseas libraries to include in their collections (Morgan, 2003, p. 446). Afterwards, "the USIA instituted an elaborate, politically safe method of book acquisition by its Bibliographic Division, which was required to prepare annual reviews of some six to eight thousand books for possible acquisition by the USIS libraries. Books were approved on the basis of four criteria: (1) how well the book supported U.S. policy; (2) congressional or domestic reaction to the book; (3) the book's acceptability to other cultures; and (4) whether the book was comprehensible to a foreign audience" (Richards, 2001, 199-200). In another ironic twist, the USIA's selection policy was not unlike the Czechoslovakia government's vetting of books in its national library system. Although the ideologies were different, McCarthyism in the U.S. and censorship in Czechoslovakia used the same methods, working towards the same broad goal of silencing the enemy or preventing alternative viewpoints from being disseminated. Ultimately, McCarthy did not succeed in closing the overseas libraries, although Ted Morgan (2003) writes that, "The main result of the hearings was to erode much of the goodwill that had been created abroad by the libraries" (Morgan, p. 447).

McCarthy's attack of the USIA libraries may have been detrimental to the libraries' mission overseas; however, McCarthy's censorship attempts had the opposite affect on librarianship in the U.S. The overseas library controversy greatly influenced American librarianship and its policies regarding intellectual freedom and censorship, attitudes and values that still define the profession in the twenty-first century. According to Louise Robbins (2001), the American Library Association's Intellectual Freedom Committee (IFC) and the American Book Publishers Council (ABPC) held a conference on intellectual freedom in Westchester, MA, in 1953 to counteract McCarthy's actions (Robbins, 2001, p. 32). The outcomes from the Intellectual Freedom Conference spilled over into the ALA annual conference in 1953 (Robbins, 2001, p. 34). The ALA passed an Overseas Library Statement resolution and endorsed *The Freedom to Read*, a statement that had resulted from the Westchester Conference on intellectual freedom (Robbins, 2001, p. 32). According to Robbins (2001), the ALA was highly strategic in its efforts, gaining the support of the press and changing the public's perception of U.S. libraries and librarians (p. 36). Robbins (2001) writes that, "The confrontation with McCarthy gave librarians and publishers a high profile as defenders of an essential freedom, the freedom to read" (p. 36). The Cold War and McCarthy's Red Scare worked to strengthen and define librarianship in the U.S., giving the ALA and the profession's leaders an opportunity to formulate a strong stance on intellectual freedom.

Meanwhile, around the same time of the McCarthy hearings, book production and information distribution in Czechoslovakia took an opposite turn. Smejkalova (2001) writes, "The first decision was made at the governmental level to establish an explicit censorship office called the Main Board for Publishing Control (HSTD) with a generous

budget and an ambitious staff development plan" (p. 94). Greater government oversight over book publishing, combined with library selection and classification policies no doubt further limited reading material options for Czech library users.

U.S. and Czech librarianship during the early years of the Cold War can be seen as a microcosm of Democratic and Communist ideology. While the profession in the U.S. emancipated itself from would-be censors and adopted a liberal intellectual freedom policy, libraries in Czechoslovakia grew to be rigid, restricted, and bureaucratic, just as Democracy and capitalism flourished while Soviet-style communism eventually collapsed. In the particular case of the USIS library in Prague, its forced closure on the part of the Czechoslovakia government, and then the retaliatory closures of Czech agencies by the U.S. government, the conflict demonstrates how the two major political systems clashed during the Cold War. On one hand, the conflict was purely ideological—the Czechoslovakia government opposed the "reactionary" materials in the Prague library, while the U.S. opposed the so-called "Communist headquarters" at the Czech Consul in Chicago. On another level, the library and other government agencies were a benign space in which to act out the Cold War conflicts. By bickering over books, not bombs, the two countries asserted political power without using military force.

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