

The Glasnost' Collection Exhibition November 29th 2007 – April 30th 2008
The Slavonic Library of the Finnish National Library, Unioninkatu 36
<http://www.nationallibrary.fi/index.html>

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The Glasnost collection of the Slavonic library consists of 944 titles: magazines, newspapers, flyers and pamphlets.

The collection originates from the so-called "new press" which means the printed materials published by unofficial movements, organizations, discussion groups and co-operations during perestroika.

The collection includes virtually no material from the early years of perestroika, from 1985 to 1986. Only 10% of the material (87 titles) is from the years of "directed perestroika" 1987 to 1989. 90% of the material (874 titles) is from the liberal and radical period of perestroika, the years from 1990 to 1992.

The collection covers a broad geographical area from Murmansk to Novosibirsk, but the core of it are the newspapers and flyers published in Leningrad, Moscow and the Baltic states. Both the employees of the Slavonic library and the staff of Helsinki University have contributed towards the collection.

In the Slavonic library people still remember the huge suitcases, with which the library's manager at the time, Jarmo Suonsyrjä, went to Leningrad, where he had co-operatives in different libraries of the city. These aides collected published evidence about glasnost and perestroika for Finland.

Suonsyrjä knew the places in Leningrad where people sold unofficial prints. One of the places was on the Nevsky Prospect next to Gostinyi Dvor department store, where Suonsyrjä regularly kept watch. Since Suonsyrjä could speak Russian, he could go to the meetings of the unofficial movements and associations. In these events he acquired many newspapers and flyers that are very rare these days. The unofficial newspapers were printed on a bad-quality paper and were copied using the offset-method on a photocopier, but despite of that the quantities were small and prices were high. This made the newspapers too expensive even for several Russian people. For example the radical newspaper "Mercury" that was published by Leningrad's democratic cultural movement, was written on a typewriter and it cost five roubles. This newspaper that is in these days considered a great rarity is included in the Slavonic library's Glasnost collection. However, the newspapers printed in the Baltic countries, such as the Atmoda –newspaper published by Latvian National Front, were quite easily and affordably available both in Leningrad and in Moscow. The circulation of Atmoda was 30 000 copies and it was printed in the press of the Latvian Communist Party's Central Committee.

The unofficial materials were brought from Russia to the library by Jukka Mallinen, Timo Vihavainen and Pekka Kauppala, amongst others. Because of their enthusiasm the library's Glasnost –collection has such rare "new press" publications as an informative newspaper "Glasnost", published in Moscow by Sergey Grigoryantsyn in 1987 – 1988; "Grazhdanskoe dostoinstvo" published in Moscow by Aleksandr Verhovsky in the same years; the Lithuanian perestroika movement's pamphlet "Vozrozhdenye" and a rare publication "Pamjat" from Novosibirsk.

How many unofficial publications were published? Russian bibliographs collected 300 titles in the 1990's, but even the Slavonic library's Glasnost –collection has over 900 different titles. Collecting

this material that had small circulation and that was not included in the Russian Federation's bibliographies was not easy. Free copies were issued neither to book chambers nor The Russian National Library. Therefore the Glasnost collection is a very important source of information for researchers who are interested in the communal history of the 1990's. An exhibition presenting the Glasnost collection will be organized in the Slavonic library at the end of November. The purpose of the exhibition is to make the Perestroika era's rare publications available to the audiences.

A list of the collection is available in this web address:

<http://www.kansalliskirjasto.fi/kokoelmatjapalvelut/kokoelmat/slaavilaisenkirjastonkokoelmaluettelo.html>