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Silencing Sex Education in Soviet Latvia in the early 1980s: the Case of the Destruction of the Book *Mīlestības vārdā* by Jānis Zālītis¹

Abstract

Through the case study of the publishing and banning of the second edition of the book *Mīlestības vārdā* (1982, *In the Name of Love*) by the Latvian physician Jānis Zālītis (1933–2007), the article aims to analyse the changed understanding among medical educators and officials of the Latvian Communist Party on limits of what could be promoted in a handbook on sex education in the early 1980s. The author of the handbook and the publishing house were convinced that the degree of explicitness of the content of the sex education books already published was sufficient to risk expanding it with drawings of sex positions, despite the fact that the message of the illustrations did not correspond to the thesis of the conservative sexual agenda prevailing in the Soviet Union that sexual intercourse should take place only within marriage. Drawings by Edgars Ozoliņš clearly conveyed the message of pleasure and enjoyment, but they did not explicitly state that the woman and man enjoying penetrative sex were in a marital relationship as husband and wife. The article will argue that the decision to destroy the book was enforced by the decision of the Bureau of the Central Committee of the Latvian Communist Party of August 17, 1982, and promoted by its First Secretary (1966–1984) Augusts Voss, who

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called the book pornographic and influenced by Western ideology and harmful to Soviet ideology. The paper will establish that the destruction of the book *Mīlestības vārdā* shows that not only Zālītis' ideas about what was and was not permissible in promoting sexual knowledge differed from the Soviet conservative sexual agenda, but that there was also a diversity of opinions within the Soviet Latvian nomenklatura.

Keywords: sex education handbook, the Central Committee of the Latvian Communist Party (LCP CC), Jānis Zālītis, *Mīlestības vārdā*, homosexuality, pornography, publishing house “Zvaigzne”.

Introduction

In 1988, the Latvian magazine *Veselība* (Health) stated that its publications had long encouraged readers to perceive sex without prejudice, admitting that there still were “readers not sufficiently mature for such a conversation”². This statement came as a response to an influx of readers' letters of complaint on photographer Valdis Brauns' nudes illustrating articles about sexual ethics, claiming they undermined public morality. The editorial office explained that the photographs merely fulfilled the function of sex education. However, illustrations were not seen as a tool for sex education, but as sex propaganda, which was interpreted as pornography propaganda and portrayed by Soviet ideology as a negation typical of capitalist countries.³ For example, in 1985, Natan Elshtein, Chief therapist of the Ministry of Health of the Estonian SSR, in an article about sexual culture and sex education in the magazine *Veselība* applied the term “sex propaganda” to the advertising of pornographic publications in capitalist countries. He named the choice of the Soviet Union to base sexual

² Adriāns Ābeltiņš, “Laiks neliekuļot!”, *Veselība*, No. 5 (1988): 30–31.

³ On prostitution and fighting STDs in Soviet Latvia see: Ineta Lipša, “Inbetween Frivolous Women and Prostitutes: Legal Framework and Reality of Prostitution in the Soviet Latvia in the Context of Soviet Family Politics, the 1950–1980s”, *Nordost-Archiv. Zeitschrift für Regionalgeschichte* 28 (2019): 234–254; Ineta Lipša, “Categorized Soviet Citizens in the context of the Policy of Fighting Venereal Disease in the Soviet Latvia from Khrushchev to Gorbachev (1955–1985)”, *Acta Medico-Historica Rigensia* 12 (2019): 92–122, [doi:10.25143/amhr.2019.XII.04](https://doi.org/10.25143/amhr.2019.XII.04); Hearne Siobhán, “Sanitising Sex in the USSR: State Approaches to Sexual Health in the Brezhnev Era”, *Europe-Asia Studies* (2022), [doi:10.1080/09668136.2022.2032607](https://doi.org/10.1080/09668136.2022.2032607).

culture on “science-based education and parenting” to be the opposite of the sex propaganda. He implied that in the USSR “science-based education and parenting” are introduced into daily life by the responsible field specialists, but more efforts should be made as “there seem to be no books on the shelves of bookstores on sexology although the demand for them is high enough, and not just among young people.”⁴

Nevertheless, only a few years before Elshtein’s call to publish literature on sexology, the second edition of Jānis Zālītis’ popular science book *Mīlestības vārdā* printed in July 1982 by the publishing house of the LCP CC, was withdrawn from circulation in the Latvian SSR and destroyed (the LCP had taken over the printing of all newspapers, magazines and partly also books since 1965). The book published in 1981, was the first original work written by a Latvian physician on sex education, marriage, and family in Soviet Latvia after the Second World War. It was sold out in a few days. The text of the re-issue had not been changed, but it included 23 drawings of sexual poses by artist Edgars Ozoliņš (1930–1987). Because of the pictures and “the descriptions of intimate details and other details” (which were apparently overlooked in the first edition), after the August 17 session of the LCP CC, the Bureau ordered to have the book removed from circulation and to have it destroyed as well as to imposed reprimands to the heads of the four institutions responsible for publishing the book. Besides, several high-ranking party officials, including the ideological secretary of the LCP CC, were instructed to prepare proposals to improve the sex education of youth in the republic. After this scandal, the text was effectively also considered ideologically harmful, and the book was never published again in the Latvian SSR.

The Aspect of Pornography

It is unclear who started the scandal. The LCP CC could have taken action, for example, on the basis of complaints from people to the LCP CC or to its propaganda newspaper *Cīņa* (*Fight*). One story says that the scandal started in a unit of the army where the book was passed on to soldiers. An officer caught them admiring the illustrations and reported them to his army unit’s primary organisation of the Party. In the LCP CC, the case

⁴ Natans Elšteins, “Seksuālā kultūra un dzimumaudzināšana”, *Veselība*, No. 4 (1985): 25–26.

was taken up by the Second Secretary of the CC (1981–1986), Valentin Ivanovich Dmitriev⁵. The Second Secretaries in the Baltic republics were supervisors sent from Moscow, who usually did not speak the local language.⁶ This was also the case with the Russian Dmitriev, who was outraged by the drawings of sex positions.⁷

The other story says that the first signal to the LCP CC came from the Party Control Commission at LCP CC, which consisted of non-staff members – personal pensioners or so-called Old Bolsheviks.⁸ Such commissions also existed in the city and regional committees. Signals could also have come from this lower level. However, it should be remembered that it was easy to shift the responsibility onto the pensioners and the Second Secretary; perhaps the real initiator of the scandal was a member of the Bureau of the CC or another person who did not want to expose himself.

The Second Secretary was a convenient scapegoat because he was a CC supervisor sent from Moscow whom the local Party nomenclature had to tolerate. The Old Bolsheviks, on the other hand, represented an outdated value system, including Stalinist puritanism, expressed in dress, demands on life, and also in private life. For such an ideal type of communist, sex manuals, not to mention drawings of sex positions, were something unthinkable. Thus, talk in nomenclature circles that the scandal was initiated by the Second Secretary or personal pensioners could be interpreted as a reference by the more modern-minded Party members to those they considered to be old-fashioned stagnates. Some of them saw the destruction of Zālītis' book as even ridiculous.

A political scientist Paul W. Goldschmidt, who has studied pornography legislation in Soviet Russia, points out that conservative idealism is based on three assumptions. They are: “ideal and corrupt forms exist”, “both forms have important relationships to the individual soul or psyche”, and

⁵ Valentin Ivanovich Dmitriev (1927–2020), started his Party career in Magnitogorsk in 1959, later in Chelyabinsk, was appointed instructor of the CPSU Central Committee in 1979 (1979–1980) and the following year was sent from Moscow to the Latvian SSR where he was elected Second Secretary of the LCP CC (1980–1986). In 1986, he was appointed the USSR envoy to Ethiopia.

⁶ *Saulius Grybkauskas*, *Governing the Soviet Unions National Republics: The Second Secretaries of the Communist Party* (London: Routledge, 2020).

⁷ Ārija Iklāva, *Ir visādi gājis* (Rīga: Zvaigzne ABC, 2013), 184–185.

⁸ Jānis Bluka, the former director of the Publishing House “Zvaigzne”. Interview, 11 October, 2022.

“the welfare of the state relies upon the welfare” of the spiritual purity of its people.⁹ Therefore the state “has the right and the duty to educate and legislate its citizens to strive for and cultivate the ideal forms”. Studying the history of the pornography indictment article of the Soviet Russian Criminal Code¹⁰, Goldschmidt deconstructs its conservative idealist tendency.

From 1960 to the late 1980s, the authors of the Criminal Code commentaries defined pornographic works as “rudely naturalistic, obscene, cynical portrayals of sexual life that attempt as their goal the unhealthy stimulation of sexual feelings” (in 1980, the phrase “sexual feelings” was replaced by “sexual instincts”).¹¹ Goldschmidt’s conclusions also apply to the Criminal Code of the Latvian SSR, which was adopted by the Latvian SSR Supreme Soviet Presidium in 1961, using the Soviet Russian Criminal Code as a model. He says that the word “naturalistic” implies “that realistic portrayals (i. e. naturalistic ones) can be taken to excess” because “it would be a destruction of the ideal by turning love into a physiological function”. Meanwhile, something is evaluated as cynical “because it degrades beauty and destroys the spirituality of love that gives life beauty”.

P. W. Goldschmidt writes:

“Finally, there is the statement that pornography creates ‘the unhealthy stimulation of sexual feelings’ (or instincts). The implied point here is that there is such a thing as ‘healthy stimulation’. Although no explanation is provided, it is not too difficult to guess what this phrase means: the ‘legitimate’ relation of sex (with the aim of procreation) between husband and wife. The concern, then, would be with preventing any ‘stirring’ of sexual desire outside the traditional family structure. ‘Healthy stimulation’ is the norm. By making the preservation of this norm into a law, the state is operating under the assumption that it is obliged to protect the ‘health’ of its citizens. This health, however, is moral, not physical. The fiction of the conservative idealist approach thus is very much alive – the individual must be ‘protected’ from him or herself for the good of him or herself without any regard for agency.”¹²

⁹ Paul W. Goldschmidt, *Legislation on pornography in Russia*, *Europe Asia Studies* 47, No. 6 (1995): 910, doi:10.1080/09668139508412297.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 911–913.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 914.

¹² *Ibid.*, 914.

The statement of Soviet jurisprudence that linked the stimulation of sexual feelings (outside the marriage) with pornography and declared it to be a criminal offense determined the attitude of the LCP CC members towards the drawings of sexual positions in the book by Zālītis. They viewed the drawings as a matter that should be censored. However, the text also came to the attention of the CC, and it was only in the second edition that the shortcomings were identified. At the meeting of the Bureau of the CC, both speakers referred to the drawings as pornographic,¹³ but the minutes of the meeting use a different wording – that they bordered on pornography.¹⁴ The caution in the wording is due to the fact that in Soviet Latvia, the production, distribution, or advertising of pornographic items, as well as dealing in them or possessing them for the purpose of sale or distribution, was subject to criminal liability, which could result in the accused being deprived of liberty for up to one year (up to three years in Soviet Russia) or a fine of up to one hundred roubles.¹⁵

The LCP CC did not consider the offense to be that extreme and therefore did not incriminate the distribution of pornography to members of the Party nomenclature. The detractors of the book based their attitudes on the ideas of conservative idealism which were at the heart of the conservative sexual agenda promoted and imposed by the Communist Party

¹³ Jānis Bluka, the former director of the Publishing House “Zvaigzne”. Interview, 11 October, 2022.

¹⁴ The existing historiography shows that studies have not analysed the empirical material for the period 1960–1980, nor have they examined the cases that were tried in the People’s courts, which would allow us to judge the perception of pornography in less politicised circumstances than the KGB investigations. The shortcoming of the historiography to date is that it is based on only five Latvian SSR KGB cases from the late 1950s, when the KGB incriminated pornography in addition to charges of anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda. An unpublished article by Jānis Ķeruss and Aldis Upmalis shows that, in general, the investigators labelled as pornographic any depiction of a naked human body, as well as pre-Soviet drawings by artists, which in some cases could only be described as erotically veiled. The KGB of the Latvian SSR has brought only one case for the sole charge of production, distribution, advertising, sale or possession of pornography. Sk.: Jānis Keruss, Aldis Upmalis, “LPSR VDK vēršanās pret Latvijas radošo inteliģenci 20. gs. 50. gadu beigās: 1957. gada Rīgas mākslinieku procesa piemērs” (forthcoming); Jessica Werneke, “Photography, pornography, and the criminal case of Joseph A. Schneider: a case study in Soviet anti-pornography legislation and enforcement in the late 1950s”, *Journal of Baltic Studies* 52, No. 4 (2021): 585–612, [doi:10.1080/01629778.2021.1970598](https://doi.org/10.1080/01629778.2021.1970598).

¹⁵ The Article 209. See: S. Ozoliņa (ed.), *Latvijas Padomju Sociālistiskās Republikas kriminālkodekss (Rīga: Latvijas PSR Augstākās Padomes Prezidija izdevums, 1961)*, 68.

of the Soviet Union. In general, conservatives could conclude that Zālītis' book focused on the physiology of sexual intercourse through the drawings, thus undermining the ideal of love. Moreover, the drawings failed to send a clear message that legitimate sex is only between husband and wife.

Already, in the mid-1950s, following Stalin's death, Soviet society saw the beginnings of the process of "privatisation." Historian Vladimir Shlapentokh has explained that it manifested as the emergence of various "totally private institutions" run by family and friends as well as the increase of "unofficial public life" among civil society.

Consequently, in the 1960s and onwards, the gap between official ideology and private behaviour grew ever wider. The private sphere (household management, family, lifestyle) started gradually evolving into a legitimate subject of debate in the press, all the while love and sex were equated with the married family, the fundamental group unit of socialist society.¹⁶ Simultaneously, there were changes in sexual practices taking place that helped withdraw sexuality from the framework of marriage and reproductive behaviour.¹⁷ The inclusion of drawings of sex poses in the book showed that in the Latvian SSR already in the 1970s there was an intimacy revolution at the level of privacy of intimacy, while the West experienced a sexual revolution in the public space.¹⁸ The 1960–1970s saw a revolution of intimacy, and towards the end of the 1970s, many Soviet citizens lived their lives as if the sexual revolution had already happened, bypassing the formation of public sexuality in the Soviet Union that came about only in the late 1980s. In Soviet Latvia, from the early 1970s, it was promoted by the magazine *Veselība* publishing translations of works by sexologists from

¹⁶ Anna Temkina, "Polovaia zhizn' v pozdnesovetskom brake", in *Semeinye uzy: Modeli dlia sborki*, red. Sergei Ushakin (Moskva: Novoe Literaturnoe obozrenie, 2004), 516–517; Rustam, Alexander, *Regulating Homosexuality in Soviet Russia: A Different History (1956–1991)* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2021), 51–132; Rustam, Alexander, "Sex Education and the Depiction of Homosexuality Under Khrushchev", in *The Palgrave Handbook of Women and Gender in Twentieth-Century Russia and the Soviet Union*, ed. Melanie Ilic (Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 349–364; Vita Zelče, "Dažas 60. gadu (re)konstrukcijas", *Latvijas Arhīvi* 3 (2003): 106–124.

¹⁷ On realities in the USSR generally see: Dan Healey, "The Sexual Revolution in the USSR: Dynamics Beneath the Ice", in *Sexual Revolutions*, eds. Gert Hekma and Alain Giami (Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 236–248.

¹⁸ Yulia Gradszkova, Alexander Kondakov, Maryna Shevtsova, "Post-socialist Revolutions of Intimacy: An Introduction", *Sexuality & Culture* (2020), <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12119-020-09706-8>.

the Warsaw Pact countries – the GDR (Rudolf Neubert), Czechoslovakia (Jaroslava *Pondělíčková-Mašlová*), and Poland (Kazimierz Imieliński) – which appeared in many installments in Latvian.¹⁹

Context of Socialist and Capitalist Countries

While in the Soviet Union the institutional development of sexology began only in 1965 with the founding of the Department of Sexopathology at the Moscow Research Institute of Psychiatry²⁰, the United States made fundamental discoveries in sexology soon after the Second World War. These were based on the research of sexologist Alfred Kinsey and his collaborators, known as the Kinsey Reports, published in 1948 and 1953.²¹ For the first time, scientists recorded the sexual habits of a population through a nationwide survey. After analysing 12,000 surveys, they concluded that the widespread prevalence of homosexual and extramarital sex and masturbation was evidence that they were natural behaviours.²²

The next breakthrough in sexology came from gynaecologist William Masters and his assistant Virginia Johnson who measured different parameters while volunteers performed various sexual activities in a laboratory. Their first publication, based on data from experiments with 694 volunteers, appeared in 1966. The second study, with data from 790 volunteers, was published in 1970.²³ Masters and Johnson proposed a so-called linear model of sexual response, which included four successive phases: excitement, plateau, orgasm, and resolution. This scheme continued to dominate sexology for years.²⁴ Later, they slightly modified the model of female sexuality by adding

¹⁹ Ineta Lipša, “Documenting the Queer Self: Kaspars Aleksandrs Irbe (1906–1996) inbetween Unofficial Sexual Knowledge and Medical-Legal Regulation in Soviet Latvia”, *Cahiers du monde Russe* 62/2, No. 3 (2021): 430–431.

²⁰ Alexander Rustam, *Regulating Homosexuality in Soviet Russia*, 87.

²¹ Alfred C. Kinsey, Wardell B. Pomeroy, and Clyde E. Martin, *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male*, 7th print (London, Philadelphia: Sounders Co, 1948); Alfred C. Kinsey, Wardell B. Pomeroy, Clyde E. Martin, and Paul H. Gebhard, *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female* (W. B. Sounders, 1953).

²² Agnieszka Kościńska, *Gender, Pleasure, and Violence. The Construction of Expert Knowledge of Sexuality in Poland* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2020), 25.

²³ William Masters and Virginia Johnson, *Human Sexual Response* (1966); William Masters and Virginia Johnson, *Human Sexual Inadequacy* (1970).

²⁴ Agnieszka Kościńska, *Gender, Pleasure, and Violence*, 26–27.

a phase of desire before the excitement phase. Anthropologist Agnieszka Koscińska writes that Masters and Johnson stressed the sexual similarity between women and men since the epitome of sex is orgasm; like Kinsey, they recognised orgasms achieved through clitoral stimulation and introduced the concept of women's multiple orgasms; masturbation was considered healthy and desirable.²⁵ Crucially, however, they believed that sex belongs in marriage, as did medical scientists in the Soviet Union and the socialist countries of the Warsaw Pact. These countries were undergoing processes²⁶ that overturn the conventional truth about communists as asexual hypocrites who would have repressed the natural flourishing and diversity of human sexuality.

After the Cold War, many academics interpreted the communist sexual prudery as yet another indicator of the underdevelopment of socialist countries, ignoring research showing that in the German Democratic Republic, for example, changes in the understanding of sexuality had already begun in the late 1960s and 1970s. In 1969, a handbook by the sexologist Siegfried Schnabl, *Mann und Frau Intim*, became the best-selling book in German history. The sexologist spoke out against the “foolish ideology of procreation” and advocated sex “for pleasure and enjoyment”, instructing couples on how to stimulate a woman to orgasm, and describing how to achieve pleasure without intercourse.²⁷ Meanwhile, the research by the sociologist Kateřina Lišková shows that as early as the 1950s, Czechoslovakia was undergoing liberalising changes in the understanding of sexuality that were unthinkable in the so-called West at the time. Thus, at the end of the 1950s, Czechoslovak sexologists already stressed the importance of women's sexual satisfaction (in 1952, they conducted the first nationwide study on female orgasm), interpreting it also as a manifestation of gender equality. By the 1970s, sexologists were already focusing on techniques for achieving female orgasms.²⁸ It was as a result of the development of sexology that Czechoslovakia decriminalised homosexuality as early as 1962 (the GDR did so in 1968). However, after 1968, when Soviet troops invaded Czechoslovakia, the so-called normalisation period began, when sexologists began to base the ideal marriage on the gender hierarchy.

²⁵ Agnieszka Kościńska, *Gender, Pleasure, and Violence*, 27–31.

²⁶ *Kateřina Lišková, Sexual Liberation, Socialist Style. Communist Czechoslovakia and the Science of Desire, 1945–1989* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 23–49.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 3.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 132–156.

Development of Polish sexology began in the 1960s and entered its golden age in the 1970s–1980s (homosexuality was not criminalised in Poland). Polish sexologists promoted a holistic approach to sexuality, emphasising its relationship to culture and society, not just bodily reactions.²⁹ Agnieszka Koscianska writes that this approach was fundamentally different from the biomedical model that was developing rapidly in the United States after the publication of Masters and Johnson in 1966.³⁰ In their work, Polish sexologists deconstructed common stereotypes, promoting the opposite – that masturbation is not a pathological act, that clitoral orgasm is normal. However, as in Czechoslovakia, sexologists in Poland stressed that women’s sexual satisfaction is dependent on a hierarchical relationship with their husbands, which meant that the requirement for sexual liberation did not imply women’s equality. The visual aspect of sex education publications in socialist countries was limited to anatomical drawings of the body. The illustration of sexual positions was not allowed by censorship.

A Sincere Conversation: The 1973 Auxiliary Material for Lecturers

The impetus to release Soviet advice literature was provided by the 1973 statistics on the spread of sexually transmitted diseases.³¹ In order to implement “antivenereal propaganda” and educate the youth on “matters of sexual upbringing,” during the second half of 1973, the Council of Ministers of the Latvian SSR authorised the use of mass information channels (state television, radio, newspapers, and magazines). The Latvian SSR State Committee for Publishing, Printing, and Bookselling made plans for the release of educational literature on hygiene between 1973 and 1975. At the end of 1973, the brochure-guide *Atklāta saruna starp vīrieti un sievieti* (A Sincere Conversation between a Man and a Woman), developed by Jānis Zālītis, the oncologist, lecturer of the Latvian SSR Knowledge Society,

²⁹ Agnieszka Koscianska, “Beyond Viagra: Sex Therapy in Poland”, *Sociologický časopis/Czech Sociological Review* 50, no 6 (2014): 920; Agnieszka Kościńska, *Gender, Pleasure, and Violence*.

³⁰ Agnieszka Koscianska, “Beyond Viagra”, 919.

³¹ Ineta Lipša, “Categorized Soviet Citizens in the context of the Policy of Fighting Venereal Disease in the Soviet Latvia from Khrushchev to Gorbachev (1955–1985)”, 112; Siobhán Hearne, “Sanitising Sex in the USSR: State Approaches to Sexual Health in the Brezhnev Era”.

the republican branch of the All-Union propaganda organisation “Znanie”, was published. The brochure was approved by the Scientific Methodological Council of Medical Knowledge Propaganda of the Latvian SSR Knowledge Society. The target audience was the lecturers of the Knowledge Society to help them prepare their guest lectures on sexual education. Zālītis would use the brochure as a basis for the first original work of a Latvian physician on sexual education, marriage, and family in Soviet Latvia *Mīlestības vārdā* published in 1981.³²

Jānis Zālītis founded his statements on data accumulated during six years of work (1963–1968) and surveys from over 10,000 women in relation to his research on mastopathy and breast cancer in the brochure and later in the book.³³ In the list of recommended reading for Latvian audiences, he gave 18 books, eight of which were translations of Western European sexologist works issued in Latvian before World War II. For the Russian-reading audience, he listed 33 books, all issued after World War II, starting with 1959. This demonstrates that there was at least three times the amount of advice literature published in Russian than in Latvian.

In the text, Zālītis mostly uses such terms as “partners”, “man”, and “woman”, with “husband”, “wife”, and “spouse” used rarely. This means his text was ideologised only to a minimum, with the occasional reminder that the sexual relations between man and woman take place in marriage.

In the brochure, Zālītis points out that the lecturers’ task is to instill in the audience a sense of reverence towards sexual intimacy and reminds readers of the impropriety to popularise pleasure-seeking alone as is done by “bourgeois sex advertisers who justify prostitution and depravity”³⁴. He asserts lecturers are not to become involved in sex propaganda, and their task is to inform listeners of views on sexology, the science of sex, and relate them to events such as the wedding night and the honeymoon (and giving specific advice, for example, on how deep penetration should be). Zālītis describes ways to stimulate a woman’s erogenous zones, paying attention to clitoral erection, giving insights on achieving simultaneous

³² Jānis Zālītis, *Mīlestības vārdā* (Rīga: Zvaigzne, 1981).

³³ He also published the table of statistical data expressed in percentages in the book “*Mīlestības vārdā*” in 1981. See: Jānis Zālītis, *Atklāta saruna ar vīrieti un sievieti (Palīgmateriāls lektoriem)* (Rīga: Latvijas PSR Zinību biedrība, 1973), 36–37; Jānis Zālītis, *Mīlestības vārdā*, 222–223. In his lectures, he polled the audience in writing.

³⁴ Jānis Zālītis, *Atklāta saruna ar vīrieti un sievieti*, 5.

orgasms, and revealing that there is a proportion of women capable of having multiple orgasms.³⁵ The main takeaway of the chapter is that a man should never leave the woman unsatisfied and that he needs to achieve that the woman experiences orgasm.

Zālītis also gives a word of warning to fellow lecturers, saying that in nearly every lecture the audience will ask questions about sex positions and suggests the lecturers explain that “the only methods allowed in sex are the ones that don’t humiliate or repel either of the partners.”³⁶ In another section, the longest of the brochure, he recommends that the man and woman should alternate between taking the lead role during intercourse. Zālītis devoted most pages to this chapter and based it on the works of the Soviet psychiatrist, and sexologist Abram Sviadoshch (1914–1999) on neuroses and their treatment and women’s sex pathology. He did not write about masturbation in his methodical guide to lecturers. However, the brochure was never available for purchase; it was only available to members of the Latvian SSR Knowledge Society for preparing public lectures. However, in his lectures, Zālītis himself openly educated the audience about the topic of orgasm.

Kaspars Aleksandrs Irbe, who attended his lectures in the early 1970s, recounts what he heard in his diary in 1976³⁷:

“Zālītis’s lecture for men about the intercourse questions was interesting as usual. He addressed important matters. He showed what severe consequences women can have, if they don’t reach orgasm – the state of stress is not terminated. Zālītis recommended achieving it with the help of fingers and even with fellatio – that is, tongue! It is the French method.”³⁸

Zālītis had been working on the book at least up to 1977. At the time, he was already popular as a lecturer at the Latvian SSR Knowledge Society. In an early 1977 interview for the newspaper *Padomju Students* (Soviet Student), he revealed he had intended to put out *Mīlestības vārdā* in 1978.³⁹

³⁵ Jānis Zālītis, *Atklāta saruna ar vīrieti un sievieti*, 15–25.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 23.

³⁷ On Kaspars Irbe and his diary, see: Ineta Lipša, *Documenting the Queer Self*, 415–442.

³⁸ Kaspars Aleksandrs Irbe. *Dienasgrāmata*, 05.04.1976. Archives of Latvian Folklore, Autobiography Collection, No. LFK Ak [47], <http://garamantas.lv/en/collection/1197727/Diaries-of-Kaspars-Irbe>.

³⁹ “Viņas augstība mīlestība”, *Padomju Students*, January 13, 1977, 4.

The minutes of the *Zvaigzne* (Star) administration proceedings, however, show that the writing process had not been as fast as one might have hoped – in the summer of 1980, *Zvaigzne* was forced to postpone the release date.⁴⁰

Commissioned by the Communist Party in 1980

In light of the above, one might assume that the book by Jānis Zālītis, the hypnotherapy practicing oncologist, was being prepared for a rather educated audience as might have been demanded by LCP that had to deal with the tasks set by a congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Indeed it was the Party that made it possible to issue the first original work on sexuality by a Latvian author; specifically, the 1980 decree of the LCP CC and the Council of Ministers of the Latvian SSR on Measures for Improvement of the Demographic Situation and for Stimulation of the Natural Increase of Population in the Latvian SSR.⁴¹ This resulted in a series of assignments for several agencies, including the Latvian SSR State Committee for Publishing, Printing, and Bookselling. The decree stipulated that starting from 1980, the publishing committee has to organise the issue of area-specific literature on marriage and family and implementation of an active demographic policy, and ensure that each bookstore of every district centre of the Republic is supplied with sections on marriage, family, paedagogy, hygiene, etc.

In the midst of such an ideological atmosphere, on 29 September 1980, publishing house *Zvaigzne* promoted Zālītis' manuscript for layout, and the censors – the Main Directorate for the Protection of State Secrets in the Press (*Glavlit*) under the Council of Ministers of the Latvian SSR – signed it off for printing on 21 January 1981. The reviewers of the book were sexopathologist Alfrēds Rozenbergs and Candidate of Philosophical Sciences Augusts Milts. The book was illustrated with images by photographer Jānis Gleizds, showing only a woman (not a couple) whose nudity was only hinted at.

The book was printed at the printery of the LCP CC publishing house with an initial print run of 99,000 copies that was completely sold out in just a few days. In the annotation of the book, the publisher indicated

⁴⁰ LNA LVA, 1886-13-291, p. 27. Minutes of meetings of the directorate of “Zvaigzne” publishing house, May 1, 1980.

⁴¹ LNA LVA, 938-6-2031, p. 17–18. The draft of the supplement of the decision.

the professional self-identification of Zālītis as a psychotherapist. On 5 May 1981, *Zvaigzne* administrative office reported that the book *Mīlestības vārdā* had been officially released.⁴²

In the 1981 report of the publishing house's Natural Sciences Department, it is noted that *Zvaigzne* had published several long-anticipated books, one of them being "the first substantial original work on sex education in Latvian" which very quickly became a bibliographical rarity.⁴³ What's more, the publishing house received requests "from all over the Soviet Union" to publish the book in Russian, Estonian and Lithuanian.

The Book *Mīlestības vārdā*: Explicit Discussion of (Homo)sexuality

As to how Zālītis' work fits with the existing historiography, he founded his work on Soviet science achievements and front-running research from the Eastern Bloc and the West, all of which he disclosed in his list of bibliography. In his narrative, Zālītis incorporated mandatory allusions to works of founders of the Marxist-Leninist ideology, research insights from the early 20th century (Auguste Forel), postwar US and Finland, socialist GDR, Poland, and Czechoslovakia, as well as studies of Soviet authors on human development and psychology.

In his work, Zālītis does not preoccupy himself with theoretical issues. Historian Rasa Navickaite assesses it as follows:

"On the one hand, indeed, *Mīlestības vārdā* was quite unique in both Latvia and Lithuania because of its explicit discussion of sexuality, intercourse and pleasure. It conceptualised pleasure as a positive thing, compatible with the Soviet lifestyle (only when it takes place in a marital heterosexual intercourse) [...]. On the other hand, the book probably did more damage than it provided benefit in terms of promoting a healthy and progressive view of sexuality, especially everything that went outside the boundaries of heteronormative marital sex and very strict gender roles. First of all, *Mīlestības vārdā* reiterated and, through its pseudo-scientific discourse, entrenched deeply patriarchal and misogynistic views with regards to women's

⁴² LNA LVA, 1886-13-291, p. 74. Minutes of meetings of the directorate of "Zvaigzne" publishing house, May 5, 1981.

⁴³ LNA LVA, 1886-13-353, p. 3. The 1981 Review of the work by the Editorial board of natural science literature of "Zvaigzne" publishing house.

sexuality and vilified women's emancipation. Secondly, in line with the official Soviet policy, it claimed homosexuality to be a dangerous and socially detrimental perversion. Finally, the book warned against extra-marital and premarital sex, as well as masturbation, depicting them as psychologically damaging."⁴⁴

Historians Valdemaras Klumbys and Tomas Vaiseta make a conclusion that Soviet public culture of sexuality could be defined as the dictatorship of love⁴⁵ and Zālītis provided just one of the versions. He popularised the philosophy of love that was based on a mix of marxism-leninism, pavlovism, and evolution theory.⁴⁶

In describing literature on human intercourse, Zālītis divides the historiography into three stages of the sexual revolution. He places Freud as the founder of the first stage, Kinsey in the second, and Masters and Johnson in the third.⁴⁷ He cites the authors selectively, depending on how much they support his own theory. For example, Zālītis fully ignores Kinsey and his team's conclusion that the prevalence of homosexual intercourse, adultery, and masturbation prove them to be natural (see below for overview of Zālītis' attitudes towards homosexuality). After presenting a general overview of the laboratory experiments conducted by Masters and Johnson, Zālītis concludes that it is impossible to ignite feelings of love in a laboratory setting, for which reason the two American researchers were erroneously led to conclude that the most powerful orgasm is achieved via masturbation. Zālītis further interprets this conclusion as the main difference between a capitalist and socialist society: "To this effect, the West turned to the improvement of intercourse and sexual techniques, resulting in an extreme of the so-called sexual revolution – pornography."⁴⁸ Writing about "sex education in the age of the so-called sexual revolution", he leads the reader to believe that the sexual revolution in the West threatens to take

⁴⁴ Navickaitė Rasa, "In the Name of Love? Sexuality, Gender, and Soviet Morality in the Late Soviet Baltic States", *Themenportal Europäische Geschichte* (forthcoming). For a detailed analysis of Zālītis' book, see article by Navickaite.

⁴⁵ Valdemaras Klumbys and Tomas Vaiseta, *Mažasis o: seksualumo kultūra sovietų Lietuvoje* (Vilnius: Baltos lankos, 2022).

⁴⁶ Tomas Vaiseta, "Miegančių Šunų Žadinimas": Ar Sovietų Lietuvoje Vyko Tylioji Seksualizacija? ["Waking the Sleeping Dogs": Was There a Quiet Sexualisation of Culture in Soviet Lithuania?]. *Acta Academiae Artium Vilmensis* 95 (2019): 229–253.

⁴⁷ Jānis Zālītis, *Mīlestības vārdā*, 175.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*.

over the minds of the young people in the Soviet Union therefore sex education is crucial.

The statistical data referred to by Zālītis cannot be verified, and some of it is misinterpreted. For example, upon a survey of 10,000 women diagnosed with mastopathy and breast cancer, Zālītis concludes that more than 60–65% of women (6,600 out of 10,000) in the Latvian SSR are sexually frigid.⁴⁹ A more appropriate interpretation would have been that 60–65% of women with mastopathy and breast cancer are also sexually frigid. As a result, the statistics he provides are not applicable to society as a whole. Basing his claims on the results of a study of 10,000 questionnaires, Zālītis may have been trying to match the scale of the study with the work of the American sexologist Kinsey, who based his study on 12,000 questionnaires. This meant that in Soviet Latvia, whose population was 100 times smaller than in the USA (200 million in 1968), the doctor managed to survey almost as many people as Kinsey.

Zālītis denounced homosexuality.⁵⁰ Zālītis' statements are scientifically unsound, for example, he writes that homosexuality “is related to the mind and subject to upbringing” because it does not occur in the animal kingdom.⁵¹ He makes claims about certain statistics revealing that “homosexual urges develop in cases where boys grow up in families without men, and girls grow up in families without women”, yet does not provide any reference to specific statistical data.⁵² Zālītis argues:

“If a prospective mother has used hormones to terminate pregnancy, smoked, or consumed alcohol, the offspring may be prone to homosexuality or other perversions. They may also occur if the child's father has been a heavy smoker, alcoholic, or drug addict.”⁵³

Zālītis classifies homosexuals as criminals and a danger to society, stressing that homosexuality is damaging to the community because it reduces the birth rate, promotes depravity, and causes crime as well as other negative outcomes. So zealous was Zālītis to refute Kinsey's scientific findings about the widespread prevalence of homosexual behaviour and the inference of its naturalness that it makes one conclude that Zālītis

⁴⁹ Jānis Zālītis, *Mīlestības vārdā*, 186.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 77–82.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 80.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 82.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 82.

simply hated homosexuals. Not even Soviet ideology demanded such enthusiastic denunciation on his part; it is not clear by what empirical data analysis Zālītis could have obtained them.

Popularity of Zālītis' book can be explained by the fact that he created the book answering questions that the audience had asked in his lectures. The content was therefore of interest to various groups of the population. It is very likely that not all readers read the book cover to cover but rather focused on a particular chapter.

In order to determine the impact of sexual knowledge discourse on the population, the reading habits of popular medical literature should be studied. It is likely that the young person who flicked through the pages on sexual positions did not read the chapters on the philosophy of love or homosexuality at all. However fashionable the notions promoted in them, they may have had no influence on a young person's views.

Destruction of Second Edition and Punishment of Officials

It is possible that the success of Zālītis' book was one of the reasons for establishing a new editorial section alongside the Natural Sciences Department – the department for the issue of medical literature, founded on 17 September 1981. In May 1982, the publishing house was already working on the second edition of *Mīlestības vārdā*.⁵⁴

On 20 June, the newspaper *Padomju Jaunatne* (Soviet Youth) published an interview with Jānis Zālītis. Its introduction accurately describes his place in the cultural space of the time.

The journalist Aīda Prēdele wrote:

“If someone were to make a list of the most popular people in the republic, half seriously, half-jokingly, I think one would not have to look far to find the name of Jānis Zālītis. But wait? Which Jānis Zālītis do you mean? The popular lecturer of the republican Knowledge Society, whose lectures are heard by more than 300,000 people a year and by millions in five years? Perhaps you mean the author of the book *Mīlestības vārdā*, a book which has now become a bibliographical curiosity and can safely be considered one of the most widely read books in our republic? Perhaps you mean the founder of the club

⁵⁴ LNA LVA, 1886-13-380, p. 29. Minutes of meetings of the Main Editorial Board of “Zvaigzne” publishing house, May 3, 1982.

of psycho-hygiene and psycho-prophylaxis? Maybe the publicist and authority on love, respected not just in our republic? Perhaps the co-author of several popular science films? Or perhaps you're thinking of the highly qualified oncologist, the attending physician of the 4th unit of the Republican Oncological Dispensary?"⁵⁵

Zālītis did not have an academic degree, but he had passed the examinations for Candidate of Sciences, which was a prerequisite for defending his thesis. In interviews, he has told that he turned to sexual issues to help women at least partially protect themselves against breast cancer (his surveys in the early 1960s had shown that women who had difficulty with sex were more likely to suffer from breast cancer).⁵⁶

He explained:

"At first they didn't understand me. Even now, some people don't understand, but at the very beginning, many people didn't understand, because sexual issues are also, in a way, ideological issues. At the time, hippies appeared in the West, preaching sexual revolution, and sexual freedom. My attempts at sex education were also described by some as being 'hippie-oriented'. Religious people were particularly unhappy."⁵⁷

In the interview, the journalist mentioned that *Mīlestības vārdā* will soon be reprinted in an enlarged edition and that it will also be published in Russian.

It was released in early July. However, during a 17 August meeting of the Bureau of the LCP CC, the politicians decided to destroy the print run and punished the officials responsible for making the book release possible. On the agenda, the question was worded as follows: "On the gross misstep of publishing house *Zvaigzne* to release J. Zālītis' book *Mīlestības vārdā*."⁵⁸

The Bureau noted:

"In the preparation of the second edition, additional drawings have been included, illustrating the intimate side of intercourse that border on pornography. In addition, the text of both editions has allowed for

⁵⁵ Aīda Prēdele, "Gribu būt sentimentāls...", Padomju Jaunatne, 20. jūnijs, 1982, 4.

⁵⁶ Ārija Klimkāne, "Nozīmība – tā ir mīlestība," Cīņa, 26. novembris, 1989, 3.

⁵⁷ Aīda Prēdele. "Gribu būt sentimentāls...".

⁵⁸ LNA LVA, PA-101-49-17, p. 11–12. Minutes of the meeting of the Bureau of LCP CC, August, 1982.

descriptions of intimate details and other details that were not to be published (Rus., *kotorye ne podlezhali publikatsii*). At the fault of the publishing house *Zvaigzne* staff, the second edition of the book had been approved for release, bypassing the organs of *Glavlit*.⁵⁹

The Bureau decided upon a number of things. First, to remove the book from libraries, bookstores, and other organisations. Second, to impose a severe reprimand to *Zvaigzne* director (1977–1987) Jānis Bluka and register it in his Party member registration card. Third, impose the same penalty on Aigars Misāns, Head of the Press, Radio, and Television Sector of the LCP CC Propaganda and Agitation Department, for activities contributing to the release of the book. Fourth, impose the same penalty on the head of *Glavlit* (1981–1989), Ernests Upmalis, for not having supervised the release of the first edition of the book. Fifth, acknowledge the lack of judgment (Rus., *netrebovatel'nost'*) displayed by Irēna Reimane, Chairwoman of the Latvian SSR State Committee for Publishing, Printing, and Bookselling (1978–1988) during the publishing process. Sixth, give comrades Imants Andersons (Secretary for Ideology of the LCP CC, 1975–1985), Jānis Vagris (First Secretary of the Riga City Committee of the Communist Party, 1978–1985), Boriss Pugo (Chairman of the Committee for State Security of the Latvian SSR, 1980–1984), Leonīds Freibergs (Head of the LCP CC Propaganda and Agitation Department, 1972–1988), Mirdza Kārklīņa (Minister of Education, 1969–1984, member of the Soviet Women's Committee), Edgars Linde (Minister of Higher and Secondary Specialised Education, 1975–1988), Vilhelms Kaņeps (Minister of Health Protection, 1962–1989) a month's time to analyse the consequences of *Mīlestības vārdā* by Jānis Zālītis and the condition in the republic regarding young families and sex education, offer their suggestions for improvement, and ensure that the book is removed from circulation.

The rapid pace of events meant that the case was not discussed, as was customary, first in the lower Party structure, which would have been the *Zvaigzne* publishing house primary organisation of the Party, then in the Riga City Proletarian District Committee, and only then in the LCP CC office. For this reason, the documents on the hearing of the case are kept only in the LCP CC fund. Only a summary record of the Bureau meeting has been preserved, which does not contain a transcript of the discussion but

⁵⁹ LNA LVA, PA-101-49-17, p. 11–12. Minutes of the meeting of the Bureau of LCP CC, August, 1982.

includes the decision on the penalties imposed. Additional information is usually obtained from the material used to prepare the item for consideration at the Bureau meeting. For unknown reasons, the materials used in the discussion of the book by Zālītis, translated extracts from the book, and reviews of the book, have not made it into the archives. The absence of archival documents can be offset by an oral history interview recorded on 11 October 2022 with the director of the *Zvaigzne* publishing house, Jānis Bluka.⁶⁰

Bluka recalls that he received the summons to the LCP CC Bureau meeting a few days before it took place. He tried to ensure that he had references from public figures who would justify that the book was not pornography and was not ideologically harmful. The artist Gunāris Krollis and Jānis Stradiņš, a full member of the Academy of Sciences of the LSSR, professor at the Latvian State University, chemist, and also a noted historian of science and a major authority on cultural history, wrote reviews.

However, it turns out that the director of the publishing house had coordinated the layout of the book with Imants Andersons, Secretary for Ideology of the LCP CC, who was responsible for the launching the politics and solving the demographic problem. As part of the task of the 25th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (1976) to develop an effective demographic policy, a sociological survey was carried out in the republic under Andersons' supervision. In 1979, publishing the results of the survey, Andersons called on the population to have a third child in the family.⁶¹ However, Andersons remained silent at the Bureau meeting, and Bluka did not mention his informal approval of the book. At the Bureau's meeting, Freibergs reported on the issue, interpreting the book as pornographic and detrimental to Soviet ideology. The meeting was held in Russian. Illustrations were mentioned, but Voss mostly quoted Russian translations of passages from Zālītis' book.

According to Jānis Bluka,

“Voss read them out loud in front of everyone, savouring the passages. It looked and sounded strange. Voss quoted passages about an aroused woman, about the importance of the clitoris and so on. From time to time he complained that such a book had appeared

⁶⁰ Jānis Bluka, the former director of the Publishing House “Zvaigzne”. Interview, 11 October, 2022.

⁶¹ Imants Andersons, *Trešais bērns: jautājumā par demogrāfisko stāvokli un iedzīvotāju dabiskā pieauguma stimulēšanu Latvijas PSR (Rīga: Liesma, 1979)*.

under the influence of the West and of foreign countries, that the publishing house was bringing grist to the American mill with it, undermining our ideology and morals of the young.”

The Bureau of the CC did not discuss the possible responsibility of the book reviewers, probably because one of the reviewers, sexologist Alfrēds Rozenbergs, was dead at the time of the second printing of the book. On the other hand, the fact that the Party’s penalty was not given to Austra Lucēviča, head of the Directorate for the Protection of State Secrets in the Press (1971–1981), during whose time *Glavlit* authorised the publication of the first edition of the book, but was given to the sitting head of *Glavlit*, who had not seen the manuscript (*Glavlit* censored the second edition after the publishing), indicates that the punishment was intended more to warn the sitting heads of the institutions. It should be noted that in the late 1950s, the perception of pornography in Soviet Latvia had already undergone “the interpretive shift in regarding pornography as a moral, rather than strictly criminal, transgression”.⁶²

In the scope of the present research, it has not been possible to determine which was phrases deemed “descriptions of intimate details and other details [not] to be published.” Indeed, there has been no success in finding a document that deals specifically with the content of the book in terms of its inadequacy. It is possible that inappropriate content was mentioned to justify the need to punish officials. Such wording somewhat obscured what was meant.

The images, however, are commented upon in the Upmalis’ case as follows:

“In June 1982, publishing house *Zvaigzne* issued the second edition of the book *Mīlestības vārdā*, which, compared with the first edition, was supplemented with drawings, pages 200–208. The *Zvaigzne* administration signed off the mock-up of the book for print without the permission of *Glavlit*, violating Article 4, Paragraph 2 of the “Uniform Rules” (*Edīnye pravīla*).”⁶³

Nevertheless, who encouraged Zālītis and the publishing house to illustrate the second edition of the book with sexually suggestive drawings that had never been seen in the public space before? It seems to Jānis Bluka that the idea of adding illustrations to the second edition came from Zālītis.

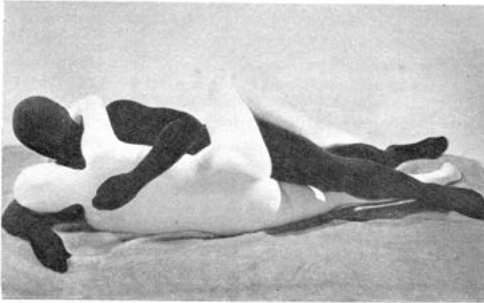
⁶² Jessica Werneke, “Photography, pornography, and the criminal case of Joseph A. Schneider”, 585, 605.

⁶³ LNA LVA, PA-2160-45-22, p. 4. Extract from the minutes No. 11 of the meeting of the party primary organization of the Directorate for the Protection of State Secrets in the Press at the Council of Ministers of the Latvian SSR. 11, July 12, 1983.



Obr. 17 : Poloha v sedě proti sobě.

Obr. 18 : Poloha na boku tvář v tvář.



99

Photographs by Jiří Mellan from the book
Jiří Mellan and Iva Šípová, Mladé manželství
(Praha: Avicenum, Zdravotnické Nakladatelství, 1970, 99)

According to Bluka:

“Zālītis brought some foreign editions to the publishing house, but the pictures were very naturalistic. We knew that they wouldn’t go through here. We thought for a long time. We also had our own doubts about how the images would be received by the Central Committee and the readers, because nothing like that had been seen, at least on this side of the ‘curtain’. It was true

that at the Moscow international book fairs it was possible to buy from foreigners editions for translations into Latvian. There, we sometimes saw similar illustrative material in books from mostly democratic countries, including West Germany and Finland. It didn't occur to us that we could use it, but we knew that it was happening. So there are precedents somewhere. After studying Zālītis' proposals, we gradually decided with the artists and the editor-in-chief that if we were going to do something, we should do something schematic."⁶⁴

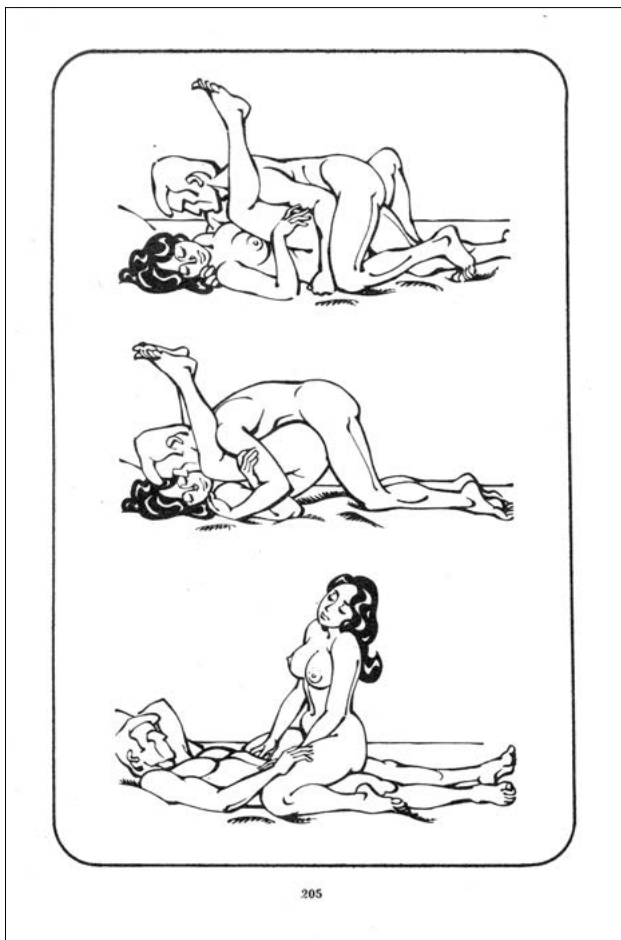
Perhaps Zālītis knew that in Czechoslovakia in 1970 the popular guide *Mladé manželství* (Eng., *Young Marriage*) by sexologist and psychiatrist Jiří Mellan (1931–2010) and psychologist Iva Šípová was illustrated by 22 photographs by Mellan, showing a man and a woman whose bodies were fully clothed, including faces, hands, and feet, in leotards and whose figures resembled dolls demonstrated sex positions. Although the drawings did not lead to the book being banned, 1972, 1974, and 1978 editions no longer included them.⁶⁵ Perhaps Zālītis and the publishing house did not know that the photographs were no longer included in subsequent editions of the book. The fact that one of the sources of inspiration for the artist's drawings could have been the Czech book is suggested by the recollection of Edgars Ozoliņš' relative Armīns Ozoliņš that the artist was looking for models and asked a couple of friends to pose for him in leotards. However, the friends did not agree and the artist drew without models. This might explain the similarity of Mellan's photographs with Ozoliņš' drawings – 22 similar poses; the Latvian edition has one more (23), also showing sex in water. However, the drawings by Ozoliņš and photos by Mellan differed significantly – the woman and man drawn by Ozoliņš looked sexually suggestive, while the models in Mellan's photographs resembled rather androgynous beings.

Ārija Iklāva (1932–2019), Head of the Office of Registry of Acts of Civil Status of the Latvian SSR (1965–2011) writes that the office was provided with 75,000 copies of the book with an order to have them immediately distributed, free of charge, to newlyweds upon marriage registration.

⁶⁴ LNA LVA, PA-2160-45-22, p. 4. Extract from the minutes No. 11 of the meeting of the party primary organization of the Directorate for the Protection of State Secrets in the Press at the Council of Ministers of the Latvian SSR. 11, July 12, 1983.

⁶⁵ Kateřina Lišková, "Sex under socialism: From emancipation of women to normalized families in Czechoslovakia," *Sexualities* 19, No. 1/2 (2016): 216.

Within a week, the office distributed the copies among their departments. Less than two weeks later, the office received a new order to immediately return all the books and have them destroyed. Iklāva suggests that the order was initiated by the Second Secretary of the LCP CC who did not speak Latvian and had not read the text, but had seen the illustrations concluding that the book was “harmful pornographic literature.”



Drawings by Edgars Ozoliņš from the book
Jānis Zālītis, Mīlestības vārdā
(Rīga: Zvaigzne, 1982, 205)

However, her statement contradicts the above-mentioned resolution of the Bureau of the LCP CC. The head of the office instructed all departments to bring the book to the administration. In her memoirs, Iklāva recalls, “all the departments were amused by the order and many confirmed in writing that all books had been distributed among soon-to-be and existing families and cannot be recovered.”⁶⁶ It is unknown who wrote off the printing costs of the book and how. The remainder of the print run was not allowed to be put on the market and was either burned or turned into waste paper. However, many copies remained in use.

In his memoirs, Jānis Zālītis writes that Kaņeps, the Minister of Health Protection, had told him that in light of the incident, Zālītis would be denied the opportunity to write the thesis he had intended and would no longer be able to publish his writings in neither books nor the press.⁶⁷

Unfortunately, the description of a certain entry in the Latvian State archive’s collection reveals that *Zvaigzne* Natural Sciences Department 1982 report, which might have included accounts of the scandal surrounding the second edition of *Mīlestības vārdā*, has been destroyed. In 1983, *Zvaigzne* primary organisation of the Party discussed the request made by publishing house director Bluka, to withdraw the reprimand. The then-senior scientific editor J. Goldbergs asserted that the publishing house had improved its editing practices by being more diligent with the manuscripts and more careful in selecting the reviewers.⁶⁸ The deputy chief editor L. Vizbulis pointed out that difficulties usually arose for financial reasons (to decrease the number of government grants), by including non-core publications in the publishing house’s thematic plans. One such non-core publication had been Zālītis’ book, and they were no longer to be included in any of the future thematic plans.

Destruction of the second edition of Zālītis’ book had no effect on the impact of the first. Zālītis’ work differed from the socialist sexologists’ writings offered in *Veselība* only in terms of illustrations and the scandalous fate of the second edition, which is why the book has remained in collective memory.⁶⁹ In Lithuania, the translation (Janis Zalytis, *Meilēs vardu*)

⁶⁶ Ārija Iklāva, *Ir visādi gājis*, 184.–185. lpp.

⁶⁷ Jānis Zālītis, *Sestā simfonija. Dzīvesstāsts*, red. Aldis Vēvers (Rīga: Zvaigzne ABC, 2006), 313–314.

⁶⁸ LNA LVA, PA-2160-45-4, p. 8. Extract from the minutes of the meeting of the party primary organization of the “Zvaigzne” publishing house, July 12, 1983.

⁶⁹ Rita Ruduša, *Forced Underground: Homosexuals in Soviet Latvia* (Riga: Mansards, 2014).

was released twice, in 1984 and 1985. A comparative analysis of the Latvian and Lithuanian texts would show whether the book has been translated into Lithuanian without abbreviations or corrections. If the text has been edited, it might be possible to find out exactly which descriptions of sex the First Secretary of the LCP CC had considered pornographic (wording it more cautiously in the minutes of the Bureau meeting as bordering on pornography). If the Lithuanian text was not edited, one wonders what the institutions involved in the publication of the book in the Lithuanian SSR either knew or did not know about the decision of the LCP CC and why they decided to publish an unedited book in Lithuanian. However, the planned Russian translation in the 1980s was never published.

Conclusions

In the mid-1970s, a turning point for the release of sex education manuals advocating pleasure and ways to achieve it in marriage was the 1973 and 1980 decrees issued by the LCP CC and Council of Ministers of the Latvian SSR on the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases and population increase in the republic. In this sociopolitical context, in 1981, the publisher of the LCP CC released the first original work written by a Latvian physician on sex education, marriage, and family in Soviet Latvia – *Mīlestības vārdā* by Jānis Zālītis.

Zālītis turned to the field of sex education in the early 1970s as a lecturer at the Latvian SSR Knowledge Society responsible for the popularisation of political and academic research. In 1973, the Knowledge Society released Zālītis' brochure on sex education, a methodical resource for public lecturers. Zālītis continued working as a Society lecturer until 1980, and he used the materials from his well-received, well-attended public lectures as a basis for a more profound body of work. This work proved to be a significant book due to its explicit discussion of sexuality, intercourse, and pleasure, but one of its shortcomings was its pseudo-scientific discourse.

The second edition of Zālītis book is evidence that the dominating part of Party nomenclature saw visualisation of sex and descriptions of “trifles and details of an intimate nature” as sex propaganda which was unacceptable by the Communist party. Since the late 1950s, in Soviet Latvia, pornography was perceived by the police and judiciary as a moral rather than strictly criminal offence. The Conservative sexual agenda, which determined the views

of the so-called ideal communists, sent the message that a focus on the physiology of sexual intercourse undermined the ideal of love, but the drawings failed to send an unambiguous message to readers that legitimate sex (in the Party's understanding) was only sex between spouses. The LCP CC ordered to have the book removed from circulation and have it destroyed on account of the 23 illustrations of sex positions as well as imposed reprimands on the heads of the institutions responsible for publishing the book.

Thus, in 1982, the most influential group of the Party nomenclature, the members of the Central Committee, gave in to the conservative viewpoint, which considered the publishing house *Zvaigzne* attempt to illustrate a sex education book with drawings of sex positions to be ideologically wrong. However, members of the Central Committee held different views. For example, the publication of the book had been informally agreed with Imants Andersons, the ideology secretary of the LCP CC, who, however, kept silent about it at the meeting. The tacit disagreement with the Bureau's decision was evidenced by the moral support of Irēna Reimane, Chairwoman of the Latvian SSR State Committee for Publishing, Printing, and Bookselling, for the publishing house director, who did not lose his position. Finally, the Bureau's task to the heads of seven state institutions (including the head of the Latvian SSR KGB) to report to the Bureau within a month on the consequences of Zālītis' book for their sectors was not fulfilled. No such meeting was held. This suggests that, for reasons that remain unclear, the advocates of the conservative sexual agenda have themselves avoided discussing the issue further with the Central Committee of the Latvian Communist Party, despite the Bureau's decision requiring it. Destruction of the book *Milestības vārdā* shows that not only Zālītis' ideas about what was and was not permissible in promoting sexual knowledge differed from the conservative sexual agenda, but that there was also a diversity of opinions within the Soviet Latvian nomenclature.

Destruction of the second edition of Zālītis' book and the punishment faced by the heads of the responsible institutions had disciplinary after-effects on the publishing house involved in the case of Zālītis book. From 1982 to 1985, when policies on publishing were changed by Mikhail Gorbachev's perestroika and glasnost, sexual education books were no longer published due to self-censorship of the editorial offices in Soviet Latvia.

Seksuālās izglītošanas apklusināšana padomju Latvijā 20. gadsimta 80. gadu sākumā: Jāņa Zālīša grāmatas “Mīlestības vārdā” iznīcināšana

Kopsavilkums

Raksta mērķis ir pierādīt, ka 20. gadsimta 80. gadu sākumā medicīnas popularizētāju aprindās un daļā partijas nomenklatūras bija mainījusies izpratne par to, ko drīkst un ko nedrīkst popularizēt grāmatā par seksuālo audzināšanu. Gadījuma pētījumā tika analizēta ārsta Jāņa Zālīša grāmatas “Mīlestības vārdā” otrā izdevuma izdošana un aizliegšana 1982. gadā. Grāmatas autoram un izdevniecības “Zvaigzne” vadībai bija pārliecība, ka padomju Latvijā jau iepriekš izdoto seksuālās audzināšanas grāmatu satura atklātības pakāpe ir pietiekama, lai riskētu to paplašināt ar seksa pozu zīmējumiem. Tomēr ilustrāciju vēstījums neatbilda Padomju Savienībā dominējušās konservatīvās seksuālās agendās tēzei, ka dzimumakti drīkst notikt tikai laulībā. Mākslinieka Edgara Ozoliņa zīmējumi nepārprotami vēstīja par prieku un baudu, bet tajos nebija skaidras norādes, ka sievietes un vīrietis, kuri bauda penetrējošo seksu, atrodas laulības attiecībās kā vīrs un sieva. Rakstā konstatēts, ka Latvijas Komunistiskās partijas Centrālās komitejas biroja 1982. gada 17. augusta lēmumu par grāmatas iznīcināšanu Centrālajā komitejā panāca tās pirmais sekretārs (1966–1984) Augusts Voss, nosaucot grāmatu par pornogrāfisku un tādu, kas tapusi Rietumu ideoloģijas iespaidā, un tāpēc ir kaitīga padomju ideoloģijai. Rakstā pierādīts, ka seksa pozu zīmējumu iekļaušana grāmatā liecināja, ka Latvijas PSR jau pagājušā gadsimta 70. gados intimitātes privātuma līmenī risinājās intimitātes revolūcija; tad pat, kad Rietumi piedzīvoja seksuālo revolūciju publiskajā telpā.

Atslēgvārdi: seksuālā izglītošana, dzimumaudzināšana, rokasgrāmatas, Latvijas Komunistiskās partijas Centrālā komiteja, Jānis Zālītis, “Mīlestības vārdā”, homoseksualitāte, pornogrāfija, izdevniecība “Zvaigzne”.

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