

## THE ACTIVITY OF THE NATIONAL SZÉCHÉNYI LIBRARY IN 1981

Although it was not marked by spectacular events, 1981 was a successful year in the National Széchényi Library. No doubt, we were compelled to reduce our services radically, especially, by way of the temporary reduction of our readers services, but there are numerous evidences to prove that a considerable advance took place especially due to our development activities. The results of these processes commenced now will exert a positive influence on the whole Hungarian library system and strengthen the leading role of the national library. Our efforts are in keeping with international trends and are related to major international programs (UBC, UAP).

The construction of the new building of the library, having been under way for more than 20 years, is nearing completion. In accordance with the decision of December 1981 of the State Council of Planning, construction activities shall have to be completed by December 31, 1983. Thereafter, the following year or two will be the period of furnishing and moving. In order to promote this, we have accelerated the respective library activities as of this year. This applies, in the first place, to the establishment of a reference library of 60–70,000 volumes. (As it is well known, the new residence of the national library will be in the Buda Castle, the former royal residence, in the neighbouring wing of the Budapest Historical Museum and the Hungarian National Gallery.) The unexpected delay in construction was due to the unforeseen difficulties stemming in the restoration of a historical complex.

### *Acquisition*

In the year 1981, the holdings of the library have been increased by 26,192 volumes of books, 5,926 volumes of periodicals, 13,531 manuscript items and 72,701 units of other documents (music notes, maps, small prints, microfilms, LP records), i.e. altogether 118,350 library units. Apart from acquiring all documents published inside Hungary we have continued making efforts to obtain the Hungarian language and Hungary-related literature published abroad. In view of the fact that in the neighbouring countries — especially in Rumania, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia — there lives a considerable Hungarian national minority, and ethnic Hungarians too can be found in West Europe as well as in the USA, this activity requires wide-scale bibliographical information together with active commercial and exchange relationships. Parallel to current *Hungarica* acquisition, a retrospective gap-filling activity is also necessary. When original copies are unavailable, we try to obtain them in mimeographed forms, i.e. in xerox and in microfilm.

Apart from *Hungarica*, our fundamental field of acquisition, we have purchased works only in the field of social science, viz. linguistics, literary science and history, moreover reference works.

### *Processing and Cataloguing*

New acquisitions—except manuscripts—have been currently processed in all collections. The large-scale re-cataloguing of the periodicals begun in 1976/1977 has been going on. The reconstruction of the UDC Catalogue which is under way since long is nearing completion. Several catalogues of our special collections are being prepared for publishing (the catalogue of 16th century books, Latin codices, 18–19th century theatre documents, etc.).

Efforts have been made to elaborate the principles of a new catalogue based on ISBD together with closing the old one. We have also regulated the processing and the usage of the microdocuments.

### *Bibliographical activity*

The numbers of the Hungarian National Bibliography registering the books, notes and the papers published in periodicals together with two quarterlies registering Hungarian books published abroad and foreign references to Hungary have been

continuously published. Maps are included as an Appendix of the bibliography of books. The database of the *Hungarian National Bibliography: Bibliography of Books* computerized since 1978 has been increased by 22,560 records in 1981, thus the total database is now over 90,000.

The integrated processing of the books published in Hungary has been brought about this year. Both *Hungarian National Bibliography* and *Új könyvek* ("New Books"), an annotated current bibliography made for the use of public libraries) are being prepared by the help of these modified Hungarian National Bibliography records.

This year we have narrowed the profile of the *Hungarian National Bibliography: Repertory of Periodicals*. Therein only the "general" articles in the field of social and natural sciences are being processed from 1981 on. We have excluded technical, medical and agricultural articles in order to terminate parallelisms with other special bibliographies. Moreover, the amount of the articles has been growing considerably in these branches as science differentiated.

The 1977 and 1978 volumes of the current press bibliography were published this year. The annual cumulation of the Hungarian National Bibliography, *Magyar Könyvészet* has been completed up to 1979.

This year the volume "Linguistics and Literature" of the 10 volume cumulative bibliography *Hungarian Bibliography 1921-1944* was published. Volume 3 of the bibliography *Early Hungarian Printings* (for the period 1636-1660) is under way. In the course of the bibliographical processing of 18th century books, 15,000 new data have been registered. Thus, at present ca. 140,000 copies are known of this category in Hungary and abroad.

The annual *Bibliography of Hungarian Literature and Literary Science* is under way (the forthcoming volume, i.e. the 1978 issue has not been published up to the end of this year).

We continued taking part in those international bibliographical enterprises and information systems which we furnish regularly with Hungarian data (RISM, ISDS, ASPRI, IBHD).

#### *Readers' and Information Service*

This year the library has been forced to reduce radically its readers services. In accordance with this, its holdings can only be used by research workers. (Exceptions to this regulation are those cases when the document in question can be found only in our library.) Parallel to this, service hours have been diminished by the half. Taking this measure was necessary for reasons of holdings preservation on the one hand, and to concentrate the necessary labour force for the preparation of the moving to the new building, on the other. Regarding the fact that a considerable part of our collections are already stored in our future residence, we had to prevent further deterioration of the holdings by its transportation from one place to another.

The reduction in the accessibility to reference usage has increased information services and, consequently, the amount of the mimeographed copies requested.

As a result of the above-mentioned reducing measures the present number of the registered readers—as compared to the previous years—is only the one-fifth. Public relations work was limited to occasional library guidance. Instead of organizing own exhibitions, we have lent our documents to exhibitions arranged inside and outside Hungary.

The two historical libraries supervised by our library were called upon by 85,000 visitors (they are: the library of the former Cistercian Abbey at Zirc and that of the former Franciscan Monastery in Gyöngyös).

#### *Holdings Preservation*

We have concentrated considerable labour capacities, sometimes those of outside entrepreneurs as well, for binding. (Almost 17,000 volumes have been bound.)

In the field of restoring there is a considerable advance in research work. We started to gain foreign experiences in codex restoration by way of systematic postal

correspondence as well as field trips abroad. This year we have visited libraries in Leningrad, in Paris and in the GDR.

In the frame of our newspaper preservation program 1,3 mn pages have been microfilmed. Approximately 260,000 frames have been produced from the documents of our special collections, such as manuscripts, early printings, theatre documents and music documents, etc. Colour frames were made from graphic posters of historical or artistic value.

As a priced service, we have produced 610,000 microfilm frames for other Hungarian libraries to fill gaps in their holdings.

### *Interlibrary (Central) Services*

Of the 1,2 mn legal deposit copies supplied by Hungarian printing offices, we have distributed approx. 1 mn among libraries in accordance with their profile of acquisition. The Hungarian ISBN and ISSN Office issued 8,532 and 605 new codes respectively. This year the Hungarian ISSN Office has begun issuing international code numbers to periodicals of the so-called "second category".

In the Union Catalogue of Foreign Books 177,000 new data received from 139 Hungarian libraries have been registered. We have provided location information in 18,500 cases. The two numbers of the semiannual location index of foreign handbooks in the humanities, *Külföldi Társadalomtudományi Kézikönyvek* have been published.

The Union Catalogue of Foreign Periodicals has registered 80,000 new data and has given information in about 14,000 cases. The location index of the current foreign periodicals, *Külföldi Folyóiratok a Magyar Könyvtárakban 1978/79* was published this year. The compilation of a retrospective location index (Foreign Periodicals in Hungarian Libraries from the 17th century to 1970) has been going on.

The number of the data sheets returned to the Central Registration Bureau of Hungarian Libraries amounts to 2,795, i.e. we have detailed information about as many libraries as that. We started to register ecclesiastical libraries as well.

It is characteristic of our interlibrary loan services that the number of the requests forwarded abroad (11,815) well supercedes that of the requests directed to us (1,744). Since our dependence on foreign special literature is so strong and postage expenses as well as lending expenses are steadily growing, it means a considerable burden on our hard currency budget. That is exactly why we cannot but appreciate the fact that 49 per cent of the mimeographed copies have been sent free of charge, especially from the FRG. We have interlibrary relations with 500 libraries in about 40 countries.

This year the new departmental order re-regulating interlibrary lending has appeared.

The growing economic difficulties have already affected international exchange, as a result of which the number of the publications obtained via exchange has been considerably diminished. For the moment the amount of the publications we supplied to other countries has been only slightly diminished.

The Centre for Duplicate and Surplus Copies kept an approximate balance as to the items received and distributed. Of the approx. 24,000 volumes, 21,000 have been re-distributed to Hungarian libraries and about 3,000 volumes have been disposed of via exchange or via commerce. The holdings of the new storing library have been increased by 12,000 volumes.

### *Research Activities. Computation*

Research activities have undergone further development regarding both the holdings of the library and our central services. As to the former one, case studies have been devoted to the construction of our future catalogue system, to the experiments with the catalogues based on new standards and to theoretical problems of restoration and preservation. As regards central services, the most important result was the integrated processing of the current Hungarian books. Preparations have been made as to the central card-supply and the introduction of CIP (Cataloguing

in Publication) in Hungary. A crucial step forward in applying computation in the library was the installation of a terminal purchased in 1980 and its in-line connection with the computer of our co-partner, the Computation Co-ordination Institute (SZÁM-KI). Preparations are made for computerizing the union catalogue of current foreign periodicals.

It was a remarkable event in 1981 that a departmental order declared our library an institution directly subordinated to the Minister of Culture and sponsored by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

In accordance with this, an account was rendered and accepted of our research activities in the past five years together with the draft plan for the forthcoming five years (1981—1985).

An outstanding achievement of this year was the publication of the history of the National Széchényi Library from its foundation in 1802 to 1867 by Jenő Berlász.

#### *International Relations. Participation in International Information Systems*

We have been in close contact with the national libraries of the socialist countries similarly to the previous years. We have taken part in the Moscow Conference of Acquisition Experts (Lidia Ferenczy, Zoltán Havasi), in the 6th conference of the national bibliographies' experts held also in Moscow (Jolán Fügedi, Péter Zöldi). Deputy director-general Péter Zircz represented our library at the Warsaw meeting of the directors of the national libraries. We have also participated in the scientific research program "The Tasks of the Socialist National Library" and we have joined the committee concerning holdings preservation.

We have continued our active participation in the International Scientific and Technical Information system of the socialist countries, especially in the registration system of periodicals (ASPRI) and in standardizing activities (Judit Szilvássy, Jolán Fügedi, Erzsébet Szűcs, Péter Sonnevend). Péter Sonnevend represented our library at the Moscow conference of Interinformkultura, an organization of the socialist countries for exchanging information on culture and art.

We have renewed and signed our inter-institutional agreements with the Lenin Library in Moscow and with the Saltykov-Shchedrin Library in Leningrad. We have carried on direct negotiations with dr. Joseph Zessner-Spitzberg, director of the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek in Vienna. M. Rosenbaum, director of the ISDS Centre of Paris, also came to Budapest for negotiations.

Our library actively participated in the ISDS-system. Mrs. Judit Szilvássy was elected president of the Board of Directors of the ISDS in April 1980 for two years. In this quality she has attended or chaired several sessions and conferences.

A number of our colleagues attended the 47th general assembly of the IFLA held in Leipzig. With the support of the IFLA Section of Serial Publication, the IFLA/UBC Office has invited Mrs Judit Szilvássy to the presidency of the ISBD/S Review Group.—Since the AIBM congress was held in Budapest on account of the Bartók memorial year, many of our colleagues could attend it.—We had connections, on information level, with other systems such as IADA, IASA and SIBMAS.

In the frame of the Library of Congress Shared Cataloguing Program, we continued supplying information about Hungarian publications.

An important event of the year was the 5th Joint Hungarian-Soviet Colloquium of Librarianship.

In 1981, 65 of our colleagues visited institutions of foreign socialist countries for exchange of working methods or attended conferences there. We received 35 librarians from the socialist countries who spent altogether 226 days, i.e. an average of 6.4 days in our country.

25 of our colleagues visited capitalist countries of whom 11 attended conferences. An outstanding event of this kind was the Anglo-Hungarian Joint Colloquium of Library Science organized by the Great Britain East Europe Centre in London. The proof of a growing esteem towards our library is that our colleagues receive an increasing number of invitations to conferences abroad for participation as well as for lectures.