

The National Library Annual Report for CENL

1998/1999

Biblioteka Narodowa

1. Legal Status. Management of the Library

The organizational structure of the National Library was changed in 1998. The Minister of Culture and Art granted the National Library with the new Statute, introducing a 4-year term of the National Librarian, and several other changes, resulting from the regulations of the new Library Law, that had been passed in 1997. Among others, they were the rules governing the appointment and the authorities of the Scientific Council of the National Library. Michał Jagiełło³³, new National Librarian, was appointed by the Minister of Culture and Art on June 1 1998. New Director introduced several organizational changes. Among others, since October 1 the number of deputy directors was diminished to three (instead of previously - five). Though, two plenipotentiaries of the National Librarian were appointed - one, responsible for the contacts with public libraries, and the other one, responsible for library automation issues.

2. Finance and Funding

The National Library is financed by the Minister of Culture and Art with the budgetary funds. In 1998 its own income, consisting of the sale of publications, databases and services, constituted some 8 per cent of the total budget allocated by the State for the statutory activity. Almost 60 per cent of the budget was spent for covering the cost of the staff employment. In 1999 the National Library shall be allocated less funds than in 1998. It means the necessity of economic expenditures, not undertaking any new expensive goals, and also more extensive applications for grants at domestic and foreign institutions for fulfilling statutory goals.

3. Legal Deposit of Materials. Collections

The National Library added to its collections in 1998 116,854 volumes, 93,927 of which had been acquired as legal deposit copies. National Library collections, as of December 31, 1998, included:

Main collections

(published since 1801): 4,514,307 volumes/units plus 1,606,021 duplicates

- monographs 1,970,674 volumes plus 666,393 duplicates
- serials 694,462 volumes plus 933,466 duplicates
- documents of social life 1,696,357 units plus 6,162 duplicates
- library and information science collection 152,803 units

Special collections: 1,061,445 volumes/units plus 78,267 duplicates

- manuscripts 23,472 units
- early printed books 160,482 volumes
- printed music 101,190 units
- sound recordings 45,307 units plus 5,898 duplicates
- graphics 375,928 units plus 18,937 duplicates
- cartography 75,432 units plus 53,432 duplicates

- microforms 192,764 units
 - collection of graphic negatives 86,870 units
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Total 5,575,752 volumes/units plus 1,684,288 duplicates

Grand total (collections and duplicates) 7,260,040 volumes/units

4. Conservation and Preservation

As in the previous years, the National Library undertook many actions in the field of the conservation and preservation of library collections. The National Library organized in October 1998, together with the Polish Librarian's Association, the nation-wide conference devoted to the most important issues of library collection conservation and preservation. Among others, the following topics were touched upon: massive conservation of 19th and 20th century collections, preventive actions in the case of flood (on the example of the experience gained during the flood in southern Poland in 1997), fire, and other endangers, microfilming and digitalization of the collections. In 1998 the National Library has started the conservation of early sound recordings through their re-recording on compact discs.

5. Access

The number of the National Library users was also significantly increased, as well as the use of library materials in reading rooms. Altogether, 41,336 patrons were registered in 1998, 210,643 readers visited reading rooms, and they used 698,965 volumes of books and serials.

6. Role of the National Library within the National Library Network

By the terms of the Library Law, passed in 1997, the National Library ex officio participates in nation-wide library endeavors. In Autumn 1998 the Minister of Culture and Art appointed the National Library Council (Krajowa Rada Biblioteczna) - the consultative and advisory body - the chairman of which is the Director of the National Library. In Spring 1999 the Council of the Nation-wide Library Resources was also appointed - chaired also by the National Librarian - the activity of which covers consultations and advises in the field of any issues linked with the preservation of the national cultural heritage housed in libraries, and also includes the provision of reference services on the resources. Those two councils have just started their activities, and it is hard to foresee their efficiency. However, what is already characteristic, is the strengthening of the role of the National Library within the national scope and duties.

In 1998 one has noticed the animation of the working contacts of the National Library with the public library network, and also with research libraries. The first one is linked with the change of the organization of public libraries, resulting from the administrative reform of the State and the methods of public libraries' financing with the budgets of local communities. The National Library is undertaking relevant studies, both, in the field of the change of the situation of public libraries in Poland, and also the formulating of model solutions for public libraries performance.

In 1998 the National Library has coordinated two nation-wide library projects. One of them relates to the national union catalog, based on the cooperative cataloging, called NUKat. This project is at the moment under final consultations, and is likely to be implemented in 2000. The other nation-wide initiative refers to the preparation of the strategic, multi-year project of the State program of preserving books, serials, and archival documents created in the 19th and 20th century and published on so-called acid paper. This project has been initially approved by the highest authorities of the State of Poland, and by the Committee of Scientific Research.

7. Information Technology

Among National Library successes in 1998, one has to submit the progress in library automation. Since January 1998 current national bibliography of monographs data - "Przewodnik Bibliograficzny" - were entered into the database with the use of the new implemented integrated library system INNOPAC. Since April 1998 all new additions of Polish and foreign monographs were cataloged in the INNOPAC system. The first stage of the implementation of the new system was this way completed. By the end of 1998 the INNOPAC database included 227,853 records of monographs' titles with 432,986 item records, however, together with the other databases of monographs, temporarily maintained in the local system, called MAK, the number of records of monographs' titles counted 269,774 records. Similar progress was registered with relation to the other types of documents: serials, special collections, "Index to Periodicals", and union catalogs of books and serials.

8. Research and Publishing

The National Library acts as the significant research institution. In 1998 it carried on 82 topics of research and documentation works in the field of library and information science, book science, history of the book and libraries, reading habits, and preservation and conservation of library collections. Research activity of the National Library gave fruits in numerous publications, papers, and active participation in national and international scientific conferences. The majority of the topics is linked with the scientific edition of holdings and collections, as well as with the history of the book and libraries, and reading habits. Recently, some new topics are carried on by the National Library, as the history of the cultural patronage in Poland, or also the standpoint of the Russian censorship towards circulation of Polish book in the 19th century, i.e., during the period of Poland's partition. Changes in the political and economic rule in Poland have resulted in that the National Library has undertaken research works on new social phenomena affecting the situation of book in Poland and the scope of its interactions, as well as the situation of the public library science in local communities. The National Library published in 1998 altogether 26 titles of serials and 25 titles of monographs.

9. Cultural Activity Exhibitions

1998 was a significant year for the National Library history. On February 24 it celebrated the 70th anniversary of its foundation in 1928, i.e., 10 years after Poland had regained its independence.

Large exhibition, entitled "Biblioteka Za³uskich. Corona Urbis et Orbis", added splendor to the celebrations of this jubilee. It presented to a broad Polish audience the 18th century forerunner of the National Library, that had been founded by Za³uski brothers, and opened to the public in 1747. Za³uski Library's grandeur had been tragically broken by Poland's loss of independence in 1795. This exhibit was housed in the exhibition space exceeding 1,000 square meters of the new premises of the National Library. The opening of new exhibition halls and a show-conference room for 264 seats, completed the over 20-years's lasting construction of the new premises of the National Library in Warsaw.

Similarly to the other European national libraries - the National Library in Warsaw is becoming significant center of cultural life in Poland. A broad audience more and more actively takes part in exhibitions, discussions, and cultural events. The National Library premises hosted a number of events and smaller exhibits. Apart from the above mentioned exhibition "Biblioteka Za³uskich", the other exhibition - "O polski dach i polsk¹ broń" (For Polish Roof and Polish Arms) - was very popular. It was prepared under the patronage of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Poland, on the occasion of the 80th anniversary of the restitution of the independence of Poland. The exhibitions were also a good excuse for the broadening of the international cooperation. In 1998 the National Library presented abroad two own exhibitions, in France - "80 lat komiksu w Polsce" (80 Years of Comics in Poland), and in the National Library in Prague - "Muzyczne bohemica ze zbiorów Biblioteki Narodowej w Warszawie" (Music Bohemica from the Collections of National Library in

Warsaw). At the National Library premises two exhibitions were opened to the public, "100 plakatów meksykańskich" (100 Mexican Posters), and "Katechizm Martynasa Mazvydasa - pierwsza księga litewska" (Martynas Mazvydas Praybook - the First Lithuanian Book). In 1998 the National Library has introduced new public events in the series "Rozmowy o książce" (Conversations About Book). They are realized in two manners: "Salon Wydawców" (Publishers Parlour) - where the most important publishing offices active in Poland are presented, and "Salon Pisarzy" (Writers Parlour) - i.e., meetings with outstanding persons from the literary Polish scene. Both events have proved very needful, and have attracted a broad audience, as well as mass media.

10. International Cooperation

Similarly to previous years, the National Library maintained broad international contacts. 79 staff members took part in international conference, meetings, workshops and study trips. The National Library is a member of many international associations, among them IFLA, LIBER, CENL, IASA, ASLIB, FID, ELAG. Within the frames of international cooperation it exchanges books with 200 foreign partners, this way acquiring monographs and serials for its collections.

Closing Remarks

In 1998 the National Library was active in four areas - as the national library, large public library, scientific institution, and a significant cultural center. In all those areas the National Library has encountered considerable successes, and some characteristic features of that period were: broadening of the research and cultural offer of the National Library, reinforcement of its role in public and research library scene, and the intensification of services offered by the National Library.