

THE ACTIVITY OF THE NATIONAL SZÉCHÉNYI LIBRARY IN THE YEARS 1984–1985

Moving to the new premises of the Library

The reconstruction of the southern wing of the former Royal Palace of the Buda Castle for the purposes of the National Library was completed in 1984. The destroyed medieval castle was replaced by the renaissance palace of king Matthias Corvinus in the 15th century, also destroyed in the following centuries. On its place a Baroque palace was erected in the 18th century which became considerably enlarged in the next century in neobaroque style. This latter one was nearly totally destroyed during World War II. After the war the royal palace has been rebuilt as a cultural centre, no more as a governmental residence. The Hungarian National Gallery, the Budapest History Museum and the Museum of Labour Movement had already been transferred here earlier. The southern wing was the last to be reconstructed and it became the home of the National Széchényi Library.

The moving to the new building ment the beginning of a new era in the life of the Library. The holdings of the special collections that had been kept in different places because of lack of storage could at last be united. The small reading rooms were replaced by a large reading area with a reference library of ca. 70,000 volumes with free access, with specialized reading rooms and nearly 600 seats for the readers. (In the old library, there were 180 readers' seats.) Precious materials – marble and bronze – had amply been applied in the interior architecture supplying a representative frame to the treasures of the National Library. The building is suitable for the organization of exhibitions, lectures, cultural programs. A new era began in the life of the Library, among others, owing to the fact that up till now the Library had to share its headquarters with the National Museum in the house built in 1846, although this house proved small for the two institutions as early as at the turn of the century.

In 1984–85 the Library's activity was fundamentally determined by the preparations of the moving into the new premises. The staff of the Library was increased by more than 100 new employees of the readers' service and, first of all, of the technical, cleaning and security staff. Some 6 million library units had to be transported together with the furniture, machines and other equipments. The transportation began on October 3, 1984 and was accomplished by March 20, 1985.

The formal opening of the Library took place on April 2, 1985. The opening festivities were attended by the directors of 11 European national libraries and 2 university libraries. On this occasion the bronze bust of count Ferenc Széchényi (1754–1820), founder of the Library, was unveiled. Vice Prime Minister Judit Cschák pointed out in her opening speech that the National Library opens its new doors in the same palace of Buda Castle where the famous library of king Matthias Corvinus, the Bibliotheca Corviniana, had been kept in the late fifteenth century.

Some remarkable data of the building: Its gross capacity is 249 thousand m³. The total basic area is 44,300 m², of which 6,350 m² are technical areas, 4,900 m² are running areas (staircases, corridors), 33,050 m² are functional areas. 43,9% of this latter are stacks, 26,9% is public service, 18,6% offices, 7,3% workshops, 3,3% conveniences etc. The furniture (including bookshelves) was made in Swedish-Hungarian co-operation on the Swedish Almedia licence. The books are transported by the West German Telelift equipment comprising 100 rolling carriages that can be programmed to the required place in the whole building.

A guide of the Library was published in five languages together with other brochures, colour slides and post cards. The opening exhibition "Collectors and patrons" has commemorated those prominent persons who made considerable contributions to the holdings of the National Library.

The Library opened its doors for the reading public on April 9, 1985.

Changes in staff and organization

Director General Dr. Ferenc Molnár has retired on December 15, 1984. Practically, he did not take part in the management of the Library since February 23. From this time on, Deputy Director-General Dr. Zoltán Havasi has been put in charge of the direction.

The relations of the Library with the public increased, so a new department had to be set up, the Department of International Relations and Public Culture. Besides the international personal relations (travels, etc.), this Department is charged with maintaining public relations, i.e. organization of exhibitions, programs, reception of visiting groups, generally speaking, propaganda of the cultural values of the Library for the widest possible publicity. A Security Department, too, was established.

Acquisition

In 1984-85, the holdings of the Library were increased by 50,675 volumes of books, 12,489 volumes of periodical publications, 35,763 manuscripts, 102,960 other documents (scores, discs, maps, microfilms, posters, prints), totally, by 201,887 library units. On December 31, 1985 the holdings of the Library consisted of 6,285,093 library units.

The Hungarian publications were acquired from legal deposit copies. Foreign acquisition by purchase and exchange is traditionally oriented on Hungarica publications and, in the second place, on history, literary history and reference books.

In 1984 new possibilities of purchase by hard currency presented themselves. György Soros, a businessman of Hungarian origin in New York made a foundation in support of Hungarian science, culture and art. His remarkable foundation enabled Hungarian libraries to purchase Western publications for Hungarian currency. In this way, the Széchényi Library has purchased books in a sum of \$ 4,000 in 1985.

The greatest sensation was the acquisition of a fragment of a German codex of three leaves found in a codex bought from a private collector. Songs of Minnesänger poets are written on the parchment leaves, among others, poems of the famous medieval poet Der von Kurenberg. Till now, the text of these poems was known only from one manuscript and our fragments present new variants of these verses. In addition, our manuscript is some hundred years older than the earliest one known up till now. The lectures and publications of András Vizkelety, discoverer of this find, attracted great attention in German-speaking countries.

Processing. Catalogues

On the whole, processing kept pace with acquisition. Difficulty arose first of all in multiplying of catalogue cards. Our old *adrema* machines can no more meet the needs. In 1985, a xerox multiplier of *Sharp* type was bought and we hope to overtake arrears of work by this new equipment.

New tasks of cataloguing appeared with the Library's moving into the new premises. Many catalogues had to be duplicated and alphabetical, decimal and signature catalogues of the reference library of 70,000 volumes had to be set up. The reconstruction of the catalogue of serial publications and the recataloguing of periodicals were continued. The planned closing of the alphabetical catalogue of books, demanded by the introduction of new cataloguing standards, could not be accomplished.

In the special collections, besides current processing, retrospective disclosing of the holdings went on, as a rule aiming at publication (in the Manuscript Department, Department of Early Printings, Theater History Collection, Map Collection, Music Department).

Bibliography

Books, musicals, maps, periodicals published in Hungary were currently disclosed in the Hungarian National Bibliography system together with articles on social sciences issued in periodicals. 13 thousand bibliographic and 37 thousand analytical records were entered in the data base of the Hungarian National Bibliography in 1984-85. It was an important achievement in 1984 that the *Magyar nemzeti bibliográfia. Könyvek bibliográfiája* (Hungarian National Bibliography, Bibliography of Books) was printed with light setting with magnetic tape input from vol. 39, No. 17. The source base of the *Magyar nemzeti bibliográfia. Időszaki kiadványok repertórium* (Hungarian National Bibliography, Repertory of Periodicals) was considerably enlarged. 1,065 journals were processed which is nearly twice more than it was a few years ago.

The years 1982 and 1983 and the cumulative volume of 1976-1980 of the annual Hungarian press bibliography *Magyar Nemzeti Bibliográfia. Időszaki kiadványok bibliográfiája* (Hungarian National Bibliography, Bibliography of Periodical Publications) were published. (Index volumes of titles and publishing bodies.)

Hungarica publications abroad were disclosed in two quarterly: *Külföldi Magyar Nyelvű Kiadványok* (Books Published Abroad in Hungarian) and *Hungarika Irodalmi Szemle* (Hungarica Literary Review).

The annual cumulations for 1982 and 1983 of *Magyar Könyvészet* (Hungarian Bibliography) were published.

Volumes 1 and 2 of the retrospective national bibliography *Magyar Könyvészet 1921-1944* (Hungarian Bibliography 1921-1944) appeared and vol. 3 is in press. Data collection for the bibliographies of eighteenth century printings and for press bibliography 1921-1944 was continued. Volume 1980 of *A magyar irodalom és irodalomtudomány bibliográfiája* (Bibliography of Hungarian Literature and Literary History) is in press.

We have supplied data from Hungary for many international bibliographic enterprises (RISM, IBIB). Negotiations began concerning our joining the computer program of the international theatre bibliography. We intend to process the source material concerning the Hungarian National Theatre first.

Readers' and reference service

The restriction of readers' service introduced in 1981 was valid till December 22, 1984. During this time, the Library was open only to research workers. Thus, the number of readers decreased considerably. In 1984 there were only 1,931 registered readers and 660 persons with a daily ticket. The number of readers' visits was 21,600 and 290 thousand library units were used.

The new National Library opened to the readers on April 9, 1985. On the seventh storey of the building there is a large reading space with a general and a special (history, literature) reading room and separate reference, periodical and microfilm reading rooms. Each special collection has its separate reading room on the sixth and fifth stories. The reference library with free access comprises about 70 thousand volumes. There are no restrictions in registration any more: all Hungarian citizens over 18 years of age are entitled to use the Library and foreign citizens can register with their passports. Restrictions of using the holdings refer only to original copies of newspapers and unique copies of documents of musical value.

13,800 readers registered in 1985, the number of uses was 32 thousand. Nearly half million library units were used but this number does not include the use of the volumes of the reference library. Responses to inquiries were written on 525 occasions in 1984 and 846 in 1985.

Exhibitions. Public relations. Historical libraries

Public relations that had been stagnant for many years rapidly developed in the new premises of the National Library. An enormous interest in the new home of the Library became manifest. In the period from April to December, 434 Hungarian and 47 foreign groups of visitors came to see the Library. Similarly, tourists, too, are interested in coming sightseeing for in the neighbourhood of the Library there are a number of museums. By the end of the year library shows with lectures became regular.

The above mentioned opening exhibition "Collectors and patrons" was followed by the exhibition "Illustrated Italian scientific books in the 15th-19th centuries" on the occasion of Italian cultural days in June 1985. The exhibition "Codices in medieval Hungary" presented the records of early Hungarian written literature. It was opened on November 12 in honour of the European Cultural Forum held in Budapest. It was in 1882 when a similar representative presentation of our medieval cultural heritage took place for the last time. In 1985 beside several Hungarian secular and church collections 19 foreign libraries lent us their medieval documents of Hungarian origin. The greatest number was lent by the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek in Vienna and twelve other Austrian institutions. We received materials also from the Federative German Republic (München, Wolfenbüttel), Poland (Cracow, Torun), Czechoslovakia (Prague, Olomouc). The National Széchényi Library would like to express its sincere gratitude to the lending libraries. Regrettably Slovakia, Rumania and Yugoslavia refused to fulfil our requests for lending their Hungarian materials. A catalogue of the exhibition contains the description of each exhibited item accompanied by four studies on the given topics. Fourteen representatives of the lending foreign libraries were present.

Since the Library was in the focus of public interest in 1985, our contacts with the Radio, TV and different press organs became more close. We consider the up-to-date orientation of the mass media an important part of our activity.

The Széchényi Library is in charge of two provincial historical libraries. The library of the former Cistercian Abbey in Zirc has more than 80 thousand visitors each year. In Gyöngyös, the medieval library of the Franciscan order receive 5-6 thousand visitors yearly. The reconstruction of the former Franciscan monastery was accomplished in 1984. It gives home also to the municipal library. At present, the transfer of the management of the Historical Library to the Municipal Library is in progress. However, the ownership of the Historical Library will be retained by the Széchényi Library.

Conservation. Reprography

In the Library's book binding workshop and in external binderies 21 thousand items were bound in 1984-85. 1,500 items of the special collections were restored by individual restoration. The so-called Corvina program aiming at the restoration of some damaged Corvina codices was continued. This work, in its present stage, consists of experimenting, preparations and summing up the experiences gained by visits abroad.

The problems of conservation came into prominence also on a national level, partly owing to the activity of the experts of the Széchényi Library. This is reflected by the establishment of a Conservation Committee in the frame of the National Library Council. The Committee started its activity with the preparation of a national survey of the conservation library holdings. It is the experts of the Széchényi Library who are entrusted with the direction of this Committee. The Library takes an active part in the training of book binders and restorers. Advices of conservation are being given regularly to other libraries, too. The principles of conservation planning of the Széchényi Library on a long run were elaborated in 1985. These principles stress for the first time the importance of prevention besides restauration.

About 1,5 million pages of newspapers were microfilmed in 1984–85 in the program of protective microfilming of Hungarian newspapers that has been going on for 15 years. 980 microfilm slides were made from journals of special importance. 73 thousand microfilm squares were made from the documents of the special collections.

Our microfilm supplying service concentrated on filling the gaps in Hungarian libraries. About 1,3 million positive reading film squares were made. Besides, requests of interlibrary loan and international exchange were fulfilled.

A considerable improvement of the reprographical services was brought about by buying three RANK xerox 1025 and one Minolta EP 650 copying machines and one Canon NP 580 readerprinter. All this could be purchased through the Soros-foundation. Claims of the readers for copying have rapidly increased. Beside xerox copies, photo-reproductions and photo-enlargements were also ordered (nearly 40 thousand in two years). In 1984 a laboratory for colour copying was set up.

The Reprographical Workshop has acquired a Romayor 314 printing press. The machine park of the workshop is in need of general improvement for its capacity became insufficient for the production of the Library's publications. Its enlarging to a printing office is planned.

Central Library Services

Our Legal Deposit Copy Service receives about 1,2 million units of printed material yearly. The Service is in charge of distributing the copies left after meeting the claims of the National Library (2 copies). Five complete sets are sent to the central regional libraries while special libraries receive their share of deposit copies according to their profiles.

In 1984, 9,152 and in 1985, 10,609 publications underlying ISBN numeration were issued, so approximately this amount of ISBN numbers was assigned to recent publications. This number includes the publications of both professional and non-professional publishers and of publishers with so-called collective number, i.e. occasional issuers of publications. There is a trend increase of the activity of non-professional publishers. In 1985, 91% of the professional publishers' publications appeared with an ISBN number. In 1984–85, 833 new ISSN numbers were assigned to new periodical publications.

In 1985 a departmental order was issued on the obligatory reporting of the Hungarian libraries' holdings to the Union Catalogues of the Széchényi Library. It refers to all foreign publications and to Hungarian ones printed before 1952, both to books and periodicals, including copies. Though most Hungarian libraries have regularly reported their foreign accessions, it is hoped that the departmental order will add to the regularity.

The Union Catalogue of Foreign Books received 395 thousand records in 1984–85. 19,200 and 16,600 inquiries were answered, respectively. The semiannual publication *Külföldi társadalomtudományi kézikönyvek* (Foreign Reference Books on Social Sciences) registers the accessions in Hungarian libraries.

The Union Catalogue of Foreign Periodicals registered nearly 96 thousand new entries in 1984–85. Information was given on 30 thousand instances. Volume 4 of the inventory *Kürens külföldi időszaki kiadványok a magyar könyvtárakban* (Current Foreign Periodicals in Hungarian Libraries) was published. It contains supplements for the years 1980–82. The edition of *Külföldi időszaki kiadványok a magyar könyvtárakban a XVII. századtól 1970-ig, – Union catalogue of foreign serials in Hungarian libraries from the 17th century to 1970* was in progress.

Beside the traditional catalogue card processing and the editorial work, preparations of the automated National Periodicals Data Base went on (see under *Research and Development*).

There is an increasing demand on interlibrary lending owing to the fact that the growing prices of foreign books and periodicals reduce the book import. In 1984, 26,900 and in 1985, 27,500 loan requests were received. Only 4,5% of these came from abroad, the rest was requested by Hungarian libraries. Our requests sent abroad were fulfilled (in this order) by the Federative German Republic, Great Britain, The Netherlands, The Soviet Union, Japon, Switzerland, France, Sweden. Unfortunately the prices of the great Western supply centres (e.g., British Library Document Supply Centre) keep rising.

The international exchange of publications tends to decrease everywhere because of the general financial difficulties. This refers to our Library as well. In 1984, we have sent abroad 33,700 volumes of books, in 1985, 25,000 volumes. We have received 20,800 volumes in exchange in these two years. The

number of periodicals sent and received did not change essentially (4,300 and 2,100 items, respectively). We make maximal efforts in selecting and supplying all patriotic publications from Hungary to our exchange partners interested in obtaining them. Unfortunately we do not always see the same carefulness on the side of our partners. Especially the neighbouring socialist countries are inclined to a quantitative adjusting of our exchange balance instead of supplying the Hungarian publications collected by the Széchenyi Library. – We have 705 exchange partners, 282 in socialist countries, 423 in other countries.

In 1984, a Depository Library of the National Széchenyi Library was established near Budapest. It stores reserve copies of duplicates discarded by Hungarian libraries. The starting holdings of the Depository Library were 120,000 volumes. This number was increased by 19,600 volumes. It supplies copies for interlibrary loan.

The Centre for Duplicates and Surplus Copies collects and redistributes the duplicates of other libraries and partly disposes of them in book trade. In these two years, it supplied 59 thousand volumes to Hungarian libraries and sold 20,900 volumes in home and foreign trade. Of this latter amount, 16,700 volumes were sold in the second-hand bookshop kept jointly by the Széchenyi Library and the Book Trade Company.

Research and development

The organizational frames of the research work and development carried out in the Library are constituted by the Section for Research Management and the Section for Development.

The Section for Research Management is supposed to organize individual and central research work in the Library, to determine the research program of the National Library and to coordinate it with the general research programs of the country. Accordingly, the research work carried out in the Széchenyi Library is based on the holdings of the Library, aiming at processing, disclosing and publication of this material, and at organizing and carrying out Hungarica research work, on the one hand, and it corresponds to the central role of the Széchenyi Library in the library network of the country, on the other (development of central library services, automation of libraries and institutions of information). The task of the Section for Development is the preparation of the computerization program of the Library. At the same time, it plays also an advisory role and exercises organisatory activity on a country-wide level.

Since 1981 the Széchenyi Library is a scientific research centre under the leadership of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. In accordance with this, its relations with the institutional system of research work of the country considerably developed in the last years. The individual and institutional scientific achievements of the Library's staff are organically embedded in the national research program. It could well be seen in the research account of the five years' period of 1981–85 and in the research planning for the next five years (1986–1990).

The most outstanding results among the development tasks of 1984–85 were achieved through the establishing of the computerized National Periodical Data Base. The filling up of the Data Base goes on continuously. Partly, the data of the Hungarian periodicals and partly, those of foreign periodicals kept in Hungarian libraries are processed. Ca. 60% of the latter we take over directly from the magnetic tapes of the ISDS International Centre. A great advantage of the National Periodical Data Base is its compatibility with the ISDS system. At present, the Data Base functions as a system producing publications. It produces lists from computers or magnetic tapes. In the future, it will work in on-line system, too. Another achievement is that the data of Hungarian periodicals are regularly conveyed to the ISDS International Centre on magnetic tape. The information is given to the ASPRI system of the CMEA countries on data sheets.

The Library has developed a classification system of its own named OSTAURUS for the classification of the periodicals registered in the Data Base. It is a classification in natural language suitable for automated processing. Another important achievement was the TUDOR-C program system adapted to COMMODORE-64 personal computer. It makes it possible to process, ask and diffuse informations of small library holdings with a built-in SDI system. This type-software serves to promote instructions of computer technique in small libraries.

A new service: the Hungarica Information was introduced in 1985 in order to assist Hungarica research work. This service gives information in two ways by the analytical processing of foreign periodicals: it registers the publications dealing with the cultural and scientific activity of Hungarians living abroad and the foreign reception of the scientific, cultural and artistic achievements of the country. Computerized indexes make a multisided checking up of the analytical descriptions possible.

We try to assure the possibility of publication to the staff of the Library. Beside the Yearbook of the National Széchenyi Library (*Az Országos Széchenyi Könyvtár évkönyve*), the publication of the series *Az Országos Széchenyi Könyvtár kiadványai* (Publications of the National Széchenyi Library) was resumed and the first volume of the new series has been published. A microcard publication is in work, too.

International relations. Contacts with international information organizations

Continuity and increasing international interest in the new home of the Library were characteristic of our international relations.

In the frame of the cooperation of the national libraries of socialist countries we regularly attended the meetings of experts (conferences on national bibliography, acquisition, union catalogues, interlibrary loan). At the leaders' conference in 1985 in Prague Hungary was represented by the Head of Library Department of the Ministry of Culture Jenő Juhász and Director-General in charge Dr. Zoltán Havasi. The sixth Hungarian-Soviet library seminar was held in 1984 in Moscow. Representatives of our Library delivered lectures on readers' services.

In the frame of the common scientific and technical information system of the CMEA countries our representatives were present at three conferences on standardization and at the 9th system council meeting of ASPRI. Representatives were sent to the meeting of the Committee of Deputy Representatives of the International Scientific and Technical Information System of CMEA countries (Moscow, May 16-17, 1985). We continued our participation in the cultural and artistic information system of socialist countries (INTERINFORMKULTURA) and attended the meeting of this organization in Prague in 1984. We attended the meetings of the Working Group N^o 1 of CMEA cooperation (Material and technical base of the culture, its scientific information supply) and of the Working Group N^o 9 (Technique and technology of libraries) in 1985.

A working agreement was concluded between the National Széchényi Library and the Centre of International Serials Data System (ISDS, Paris) in 1984. We attended the sessions of this organization regularly.

In 1984-85, no representatives of the Széchényi Library were present at the General Assemblies of the IFLA but we maintained an uninterrupted correspondence with the particular sections of IFLA. Our financial contribution to IFLA programs was the printing of an IFLA publication in 500 copies. The Section on Library Building and Equipment of the IFLA held its seminar in Hungary on 3-7 June, 1985. The first day's program was organized in the new home of the Széchényi Library.

Our representatives attended the AIBM congress in Berlin in 1985 and the Hungarian-Austrian-Czechoslovakian RISM meeting in Vienna in December 1984.

The solemn session on the 90th anniversary of the foundation of FID took place in our Library on September 19, 1985 together with the subsequent conference of the FID Program Committee.

Among other Hungarian institutions, our Library participated in the organization of the international conference on the Hungarian diaspora held in Budapest in August 1984.

The Second Scientific Meeting of Hungarian Librarians was held in our Library in a joint organization with the World Federation of Hungarians and the Association of Hungarian Librarians on August 26-27, 1985. 40 foreign and 11 Hungarian official participants and 85 Hungarian guests were present. 30 lectures were delivered in the plenary session and in the panels of three sections.

In the NPAC program of the Library of Congress informations on Hungarian publications and bibliographic description were supplied.

We attended the conference of the Restoration Committee of ICOM in Copenhagen in 1984.

Our relations with developing countries were deepened by the participation of one of our colleagues as UNESCO expert in the organization of the Centre of Information in Laos.

We received several directors and librarians of European national libraries at the opening festivities and on the exhibition "Codices in medieval Hungary". A visit in the Library and reception was organized for librarians and museum workers participating in the European Cultural Forum.

Our colleagues went abroad to study tours, conferences or exchange of experiences 80 times in 1984, 85 times in 1985. 120 visits were made to socialist countries, 45 to other countries. With socialist countries, the visits took place on the basis of the well-proved exchange of personnel fixed in mutual agreements or intergovernmental cultural plans. As to capitalist countries, intergovernmental cultural agreements provide direct relations with partner libraries in Italy and Spain.