

THE ACTIVITY OF THE NATIONAL SZÉCHÉNYI LIBRARY IN THE YEARS 1994–1998

The Hungarian national library lived through one of its most difficult periods in the last five years. The rigours of the economic environment considerably added to the library's problems. The steady inflation and consequently the inadequacy of budget funds – which caused especially big losses in the field of acquisitions – the expectation that the number of employees be reduced, and at the same time the necessity for modernization and development all faced the library with a big task.

State support received on an ad hoc basis, grants, donations and the understanding attitude of our partners made it possible to overcome the difficulties and maintain continuous operation. Despite the circumstances, while maintaining continuous operation the library achieved substantial results in a number of areas but elsewhere suffered irreplaceable losses.

The work of rescuing the institution was assisted by a body composed of the heads of departments and a number of special (scientific, collection development) committees, the NEKTÁR and the DOBIS/LIBIS application council. The most important task of the Administrative Department, in addition to drawing up the annual work plans and reports, was to ensure operation. In addition to its usual tasks, the Personnel Department faced the big work of introducing a new remuneration system and the bitter task of handling the technical side of the reduction of the workforce due to economic constraints. Between the end of 1994 and the end of 1998 the library shed 232 workers, bringing the total number employed down from 885 to 647. The most difficult task naturally fell on the Financial Department.

The library carried out a number of official tasks entrusted to it by the state. These included providing protection for books of value in Hungary, preventing them from being taken out of the country, in the case of items put up for auction and individual export. It also had the task of providing methodological assistance for the work of ecclesiastical libraries, of protecting their holdings through the work of the national library's specialized departments, and editing a series of publications serving to present the values of the ecclesiastical libraries. It also represented Hungarian library interests at the Russian–Hungarian restitution negotiations.

Developing the collection, building up the holdings

Extraordinary tasks:

Besides the increasingly difficult task of ensuring daily operation, it also had to cope with two extraordinary tasks: transforming the library's structure to meet modern requirements (1), and organizing the first revision of holdings since the move to the new building and carrying out this revision in as much of the holdings as possible (2).

(1) The preparations for restructuring began in 1996 with the help of English experts and were given final form in 1998 with the contribution of an internal committee of experts. The deadline for introduction was July 1, 1998. The aim was to group all related work within a general department, to bring together all work related to periodicals in the frame of a department, to create network links for the computer system, and with all this, to bring the library up to the level of international professional requirements.

The preparatory work for revision of the holdings (2) took a year; this was followed by revision of the special collections, the auxiliary libraries and the books kept in the large stores. The work was carried out with the most exacting standards and utmost precision, aiming not only to make an inventory of the material in the collections, but also to correct any errors that had been made in processing, ranging from determining the number of copies to recording the place of storage. All this was processed by computer, creating full harmony between the stores and the catalogues.

The sections in charge of acquisitions were hardest hit by the steady deterioration of the economic situation. The sum available for this purpose declined or stagnated, while the price of documents rose and despite all the economies made, these conflicting trends created an almost insoluble problem. A great part of the subscriptions to foreign periodicals had to be cancelled and it was impossible to ensure adequate funds even for the purchase of the most essential books. Library staff were unable to attend auctions and the purchase of numerous *Hungarica* items had to be renounced.

The fact that the library's holdings further increased was due, apart from the occasional ad hoc state support, to a large extent to those who enriched the various collections of the national library with their gifts and legacies.

Besides the lack of funds already mentioned, the uncertainty in supply of legal deposit copies also made the acquisitions situation more difficult: because of the price rises, publishers and printing houses sent their publications in fewer copies than required (if they sent any at all) which meant that some of the new Hungarian titles as well as works requested for international exchange had to be purchased from the limited acquisitions budget. The new Legal Deposit Act introduced in 1998 entirely deprived the national library of the two copies it had used for exchange purposes, further aggravating the acquisitions situation.

The library succeeded in obtaining foreign books mainly through the international exchange service which has good contacts. The Western partners were very helpful: not only did they meet their obligations, but they also helped the library to develop its collections by donating their own surplus copies and collecting material of Hungarian interest. Some of them adopted the practice of ordering the material they required through the Széchenyi Library, giving not only purchase but also conveyance orders, thereby ensuring a modest profit for the library. The help received from Hungarians living in the West was also very important.

There was a very substantial decline in exchanges based on reciprocity with Eastern partners since they too were coping with financial difficulties. Western relations were generally maintained and some new ones were even created.

Support for Hungarian schools and institutions in the neighbouring countries must naturally be maintained, not only to give them access to publications in Hungarian but also because in exchange they sent printed materials, books and periodicals which we would not have been able to obtain otherwise.

We succeeded in solving the problem of keeping records of deposit copies by the end of 1998. As a result, we are able to submit claims for works not received and purchase the necessary additional copies with state support. This represents an improvement. The acquisitions sections continue to work with great dedication, but we still have to count on the help of foreign institutions too.

An outstanding contribution to enriching the special collections was the Hungarian records of Radio Free Europe placed at the library's disposal for copying. All of the special collections obtained numerous legacies and gifts thanks to the state, Hungarian and foreign benefactors. Mention must also be made of the interviews and films given to the Video Collection, enriching the holdings with very important, interesting and novel documents.

Processing, catalogues, bibliographic and documentary work

In the processing work special emphasis was placed on computerizing the different work processes, creating a uniform network and linking up to the local, national and even world network. Thanks to funds obtained from various sources and grants we were able to purchase the required equipment and carry out the plans through intensive work. As the work progressed we were able to close most of the card catalogues and it became possible to generate the living card catalogues (mainly those of special collections) through the centralized automatic copying of cards. From that point on, all current bibliographic publications are the product of the new technology, whether they appear as booklets or books, on disc or CD-ROM. The library has achieved big results in this area.

In 1988 the processing of books meeting the new requirements was done on two conveyor belts in the department: on one the current incoming deposit copies were processed to meet the requirements of the automated system and in a form suitable for the various current bibliographies. This work continued smoothly from 1997 and by the end of 1998 both the current material and the material processed in a preliminary way between 1988 and 1992 had been entered into the NEKTÁR.

A change was made on the conveyor belt for foreign books too in that year. A switch had to be made from processing based on old standards to the application of new standards in KATAL, keeping abreast of the material despite the time spent on training and the few computers available.

With the introduction in the near future of the AMICUS system, it will be possible to carry out the processing tasks that have been temporarily suspended (e.g. the processing of Hungarica sub-documents.)

Periodicals are processed in the department of the library which was placed in the most critical situation where they made the right decision when they decided to place the emphasis on ensuring the through-put capacity of the current store. However, all aspects of their work could only be of a crisis management nature. Another obstacle they faced in carrying out their tasks was that, due to the technical limitations, they could not link up to the library's computer network. Under these circumstances, the department was unable to carry out its work and in the course of the restructuring in 1998 it was placed in the big organizational unit which grouped all work related to periodicals, with the exception of cataloguing old newspapers.

The new department began operating in mid-1998 under the name of Periodicals Processing Department comprising five groups. The first is the Arrivals group, the second the Hungarian National ISSN Centre, the third the Cataloguing group which carries out the traditional processing, the fourth is the Periodicals Bibliography Editorial Office and Updating group where processing is computerized, and the fifth the section dealing with information technology development.

They began work with great enthusiasm and achieved good results within six months.

Although activity on processing the special collections was impeded by the revision of holdings and related work, there were no serious hold-ups. The possibility of computerized processing and the automatic production of cards for the special catalogues were a great help here. During the five years a total of 248,057 documents of various kinds were processed in the two departments and there was no backlog anywhere.

Since the computerized processing made it possible to produce cards automatically, it was only the special card catalogues for the special collections that had to be copied centrally, using a base card produced on a word processor in the stores. As a result, the group dealing with this was also able to undertake other tasks, in particular helping in the revision of holdings.

Naturally, the majority of the earlier card catalogues could gradually be closed down by then and new work was done only in the special collections. The service catalogue of periodicals was taken over by the unified Periodicals Processing Department which carried on the work.

The work related to the recording of foreign Hungarica material, and bibliographic activity continued as usual. There was no change in the content of the task: the ongoing work needed to build the databases (HUN = Hungarica Information) and the information and bibliographic service based on them as a national library task had to be ensured. Expansion of the HUNG database, that is the Hungarica Biographical Index, was completed, and the data collected on foreign libraries preserving Hungarica material was published. Part of this record, under the name of Hungarica WWW, as a model of the virtual Patriotic library, as well as the HUN and HUNG databases, are now on the Internet. This gives us greater publicity, and at the same time has also added to the information tasks.

The *Hungarian National Bibliography. Hungarica Published Abroad* has been completed and its publication is expected in early 1999. Three new volumes of directories of foreign libraries preserving Hungarica material have appeared: 5. Scandinavian countries, 7. France and 13. Canada.

The Hungarica documentation and bibliographic activity is able to give increasing assistance to researchers and enquirers anywhere in the world dealing with this field.

Current and retrospective national bibliography, catalogue publications

The task of the editorial office of the *Hungarian National Bibliography. Bibliography of Periodicals* is to build and develop the IKB-Hungarian Periodical Database functioning since 1989, and to issue various publications based on the database.

Building the database involves entering bibliographic and classification items for new periodical publications belonging within the collecting scope of the Hungarian national bibliography, and keeping a record of changes in bibliographic and classification data of already existing publications on the basis of the first issues for the year. The database is now accessible on the Internet and with this the library has provided public access to national bibliographic data for periodicals too. A surface suitable for searching the database has also been created on all workstations concerned within the library. The database is able to replace the readers catalogues and in part also the service catalogue.

Computerized processing has brought a big change in the work of the *Hungarian National Bibliography. Repertory of Serials*. Following the technical difficulties of the first years, the IKER database was completed in 1996. This contains all the items that appeared in earlier fascicles from 1993. The database is accessible on the National Széchényi Library's internal network and so in the future it will offer the catalogue of journal articles built up by the Reading Service since 1946. The number of items in the IKER database has risen to 78,989.

Within the frame of activity related to catalogue publications and special bibliographies, work has continued on modern Latin manuscripts, although progress is unfortunately very slow in the absence of a suitably trained expert. Work was carried out on the second volume (Land sketch plans) of *Manuscript Maps in the Map Collection of the National Széchényi Library*, and is now approaching completion.

The last completed volume of the *Bibliography of Hungarian Literature and Literary Studies* was that of 1989, but due to financial reasons it has not yet been published. The material for subsequent years is available and talks are being held on the possibility of continuing the series. It is a big result that the 1966–1970 volume containing the years missing from the series was published in 1996.

Within the frame of the *Catalogues of 16th century materials in collections in Hungary* work continued on processing the printed materials on loan from the Episcopal Library of Székesfehérvár. Under the professional guidance of the editorial office, work is well advanced on processing the material of this period in four Budapest libraries too.

Among the Retrospective national and Hungarica bibliographies, volume III of *Early Printings from Hungary* has been completed. It contains the bibliographic description and brief contents of close to a thousand printed works that appeared in Hungary and in the territory of historical Hungary between 1636 and 1655. It is expected to appear in 2000.

In 1996 volume III of Károly Szabo's Old Hungarian Library appeared, together with the *Index* covering the four fascicles of *Supplements*.

Work continued on locating and recording unknown copies of Hungarica material prior to 1801. Data were collected in the territory of Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Ukraine and Romania (Transylvania). The researchers found a great number of books.

Work began in 1997 on locating works published abroad by Hungarian authors in foreign languages between 1712 and 1801, since there has not yet been a separate bibliography covering this area. Continuous work was done on data collection and editing the existing aids.

The second volume of *Hungarian Press Bibliography 1705–1849. Bibliography of Newspapers and Periodicals Published in Hungary in Hungarian and in Foreign Languages, and of Foreign Hungarica* by Margit Busa, a work that fills a long-felt gap, appeared in 1997.

After the appearance of the seven basic volumes, work on the retrospective national bibliography *Hungarian Bibliography 1921–1944* continued with editing of the items containing the alphabetical index, using the database created for this purpose. Items (approx. 4000) not included in the seven basic volumes have also been collected for a supplement. Corrections (approx. 3000 items) have also been made to the titles already published.

In 1998 volume III/A *Primary and Secondary School Textbooks* appeared as a supplement to volume III of *Hungarian Bibliography 1921–1944*, edited and published jointly with the National Library and Museum of Pedagogy.

Circulation desk, Information

Drawing on the experiences gained in the ten years since the move to the new building, the central reading service sections continued their work in the interest of readers. They increased the number of reading room places, created better conditions for researchers and attempted to improve their own work too.

Around 200,000 people a year visit the big reading rooms where the books, periodicals and microfilms are available.

A classification of readers show that the library was used mainly by university students, in steadily growing numbers. Humanities students are justified in favouring the national library because it is here that they find all the documents they need, but the presence of students from other faculties is not justified since they can find the material they require in the special libraries.

One of the factors attracting them here is the well selected reference library of 70,000–80,000 volumes kept up to date and available on the open shelves. This is very convenient for the students but it increases crowding – especially during the examination periods – and disturbs the researchers who want silence and calm and so prefer to use other libraries. These proportions must definitely be changed in the future, keeping in sight the scholarly nature of the library.

While there was an increase in the use of material that could be shown (the volume of requests for documents from the stores), in many cases the use of material on the open shelves made this unnecessary.

The Special Collections had a large number of readers, despite the revision of holdings. This was due in part to the fact that there were many exhibitions in the library and elsewhere during this period (e.g. on 1848/49), creating an increased demand in the Manuscripts Collection and the Collection of Graphics and Small Prints. Other collections also received numerous enquirers and researchers. During the five years they recorded close to 41,000 users and the number of units used exceeded one million.

The central information service received 550–600 written requests a year, although this was fewer than in the previous three years. However, within this total there was a considerable increase in the number of requests received from abroad which rose to 40–60%. In many cases entire bibliographies had to be compiled to meet the requests and in other cases a comprehensive collection of material and data was needed.

This work was increasingly assisted by the group formed at the end of 1993 with the aim of collecting and using documents electronically. Its tasks included carrying out information activity based on electronic documents which, thanks to the network link and the appropriate documents greatly accelerated and developed the work done with traditional aids.

The special collections also carried out extensive information activity. They all received numerous requests relating to their particular fields. This was due not only to the special nature of their collections, but also to their experts who are equal partners of Hungarian and foreign researchers in the different fields. Some of the special collections gave written information in 150–200 cases a year and the others also handled a comparable volume. In all collections there were many cases of information provided in person.

Storage

By the end of 1998 the stores were entirely filled. Emergency measures were required to place new material, e.g. foreign unbound newspapers are placed in temporary store in the vicinity of Budapest, and various other arrangements have been made.

Most of the special collections are also full, so the library's storage problems could only be solved by obtaining or building new stores. The preparatory work for this is already underway.

Preservation and conservation

Preservation of the holdings was carried out in all fields systematically, efficiently and on a high standard, through the collective work of a number of departments and based on a survey conducted in 1994. Besides binding unbound newspapers and periodicals in the stores, the library's bindery repaired and restored books damaged through use and replaced bindings. The newspaper restorers repaired and restored old material before transfer to microfilm and also repaired damaged documents from the special collections. The department also carries out research work so that it is able to perform its task on the highest level.

Microfilming has been carried out for decades now, mainly so that the original series of old newspapers can be withdrawn from use. In addition, staff members travelling abroad make microfilm copies of Hungarica not in the collection of the national library. The preservation and conservation sections worked in close co-operation. Their normal work schedule has been interrupted in the past two years by the microfilming of the Hungarian material of Radio Free Europe, but arranging and preserving this material was more important than anything else.

CENTRAL SERVICES

Duplicate Copies Centre and Storage Library

In recent years the Duplicate Copies Centre and Storage Library operated in three places: two basements in Budapest and in a locality in the vicinity of Budapest.

In the two local stores documents temporarily not needed by the national library were preserved in crates, while the more remote store was used to preserve and temporarily store the surplus copies of several libraries. Library staff carried out active work in this latter store. Their task was to place the incoming material and organize the sale of surplus copies.

Lists of surplus copies, generally classified by subject, stating the prices were drawn up and these were sent out to other libraries, antiquarians and institutions. In 1997 an auction was also held.

Up to the end of 1998 a free list was also issued: these items of lesser value were given free of charge to anyone requesting them.

The books known to have been the property of the churches were returned to them (approx. 10,000 volumes over the five years), and they also helped to meet requests received through the international exchange service.

Interlibrary loans and information on location

Interlibrary lending began its work in 1994 still using the old methods: meeting requests received from abroad wherever possible and forwarding abroad requests made in Hungary. The number of requests received from abroad fell steadily and could be met from the holdings of the special libraries and the national library.

Half of the requests made in Hungary could also be met from locations inside the country.

In 1994 it became clear that there was a demand for American documents and so the library joined the OCLC/PRISM interlibrary loan system. From the following years, the German, Scandinavian, Dutch and British systems also became available, so that by 1998 all the 3872 requests addressed abroad were met, with the original document or a copy. The greatest number of documents came from Germany (50%), the second biggest partner was Great Britain, while the USA, Switzerland, Sweden and others also met Hungarian requests.

There was a conflict between reports and requirements in the section handling the Union Catalogue of Books. At the same time, while libraries acquired fewer and fewer foreign works due to lack of funds, research demands increased. While in 1993 155,942 cards were sent from 179 libraries, in 1998 106 libraries sent 100,000 reports on cards or disc. Material was received on electronic media from 1995 and the Card Duplication Group undertook to produce the cards to be placed in the catalogue. In this way, earlier reports could also be included in the records.

It is interesting to note that from 1996 there was also a decline in requests for information on locations, from 20,000 to around 16,700.

From 1998 the purchase of two new machines enabled the section to access the machines of libraries not able to report on cards; it also became possible to receive location requests by e-mail.

The Union Catalogue of Foreign Periodicals was still working in the frame of two organizational units in 1994. In that same year the National Periodicals Database was moved from an external institution into the library building where in place of the previous offline system, an online data entry system was created. In addition to the online processing, the same search surface as that of the CD-ROM is used for verifying in the local network of the National Periodicals Database. While the number of reports steadily declined due to the reduced orders, new reports counterbalanced the loss. As a result, around 40,000–45,000 location codes a year were entered into the database. There was a decline in the number of requests for information due to the fact that it became easy to search the database on the internet web surface. From an initial annual volume of 10,000 current and 1600 retrospective requests, by 1998 only 5313 current and 918 retrospective requests were received through various channels.

The National Periodicals Database and the Retrospective Editorial Office of the Union Catalogue of Foreign Periodicals continued their activity within the frame of a single department in 1995.

Publication in print of Foreign Periodicals in Hungarian Libraries from the 17th Century was suspended and instead the material conditions for automation were ensured with a grant obtained. In this way, from 1996 it became possible to process retrospectively the inventory of periodicals existing in the National Periodicals Database, to convert the bibliographic records to HUNMARC format and provide an Internet service. By 1998 the inventory of all periodicals figuring in the National Periodicals Database was complete.

From 1998 the online search system of the National Periodicals Database has operated on the central computer of the NIIF. Since then, the National Periodicals Database loaded into the BRS/Search database handler appears on a web surface.

Information technology development

Application of the DOBIS/LIBIS integrated library software introduced in 1992 further expanded in the period concerned, with information technology procedures supporting the processing and acquisitions activities. As a result of the library preparatory and regulation work, from 1995 the collecting scope of the database extended to audio-visual documents and their bibliographic records. The Library of the Centre of Library Science and Methodology also joined the users of DOBIS/LIBIS as an independent user and member library.

Digital services based on modern technology appeared from 1994. Firstly, the Hungarian National Bibliography. Books, 1976–1991 ensured the adoption of standard bibliographic data (ISO 2709) in HUNMARC format. The modern bibliographic service in HUNMARC bibliographic data exchange format, appearing periodically on the basis of the Hungarian National Bibliography. Bibliography of Books was launched in 1995 and assists the processing work of numerous Hungarian university, special and public libraries.

Work is carried out systematically on language glossaries for information search within the national library. In 1994 the HUNMARC national bibliographic data exchange format appeared in Hungarian and English. An expanded version covering all library document types, and the HUNMARC classification records data exchange format were completed by the end of the cycle. From 1997 preparations began for introduction of AMICUS, the new integrated library program system.

Public relations

The library has made every effort to maintain relations between the institution and the general public by organizing exhibitions and presenting the library in various ways.

Among the exhibitions special mention must be made of one which causes special pleasure to old and new staff members of the National Széchényi Library, Hungarian and foreign librarians and others, namely the permanent exhibition titled The nations library – Workshop of service opened in 1996 as the library's museum and reviving the 200-year-old past of the library with the help of old furniture, pictures and other documents. In 1996 and 1997 the travelling exhibition The Hungarian National Library Budapest was shown in many countries. In Hungary exhibitions attracting various degrees of public interest were held mainly in conjunction with anniversaries.

Many Hungarian and foreign groups with around 34,000–37,000 participants a year, visited the library. The historic library at Zirc near Lake Balaton attracts 34,000–41,000 visitors a year, many of them foreigners.

Domestic and international relations

Although the worsening economic situation imposed limits on the library's domestic and foreign relations since these involved costs, it certainly did not mean that they were suspended. There was no change in its decisive role in Hungarian library affairs, it took part in the preparation of legislation, and carried out important activity in the field of standardization as a result of which previously lacking standards were created on the basis of international norms. Work done on the basis of foreign relations

in the age of globalization also prescribes other standardization obligations for libraries in Hungary. One such area, in addition to the standardization already mentioned, is computerization since we could not link up to the global networks without taking foreign developments into account.

The library represents Hungary and the national library in numerous international organizations, including the ISBN and ISSN system (the Hungarian National ISSN Centre operates within the frame of the National Széchényi Library and Hungary's ISBN permanent representative also works here). Staff members of the National Széchényi Library, often serving as president or board member, can also be found among the members of IFLA, FID, EBLIDA, LIBER, CENL, ELAG, ADLUG, ELIAS, ICSSD and ABDOS. The library has also endorsed the objectives of EROMN and has joined the IADA community.

The library has reached an agreement with the Fulbright Commission on the professional care of the collection of the American-Hungarian Foundation.

The Theatre History Collection regularly takes part in the work of SIBMAS (Société Internationale des Sources Musicales), OISTAT (Organisation Internationale des Scénographes et des Techniciens et des Architectes du Théâtre) and Thalia Germanica, while the Music Collection maintains working relations with the Association Internationale des Bibliothèques Musicales and the Répertoire de la Presse Musicale.

Among the restorers, a department head is a member of the IFLA Section on Preservation and Conservation, serving as president from 1993 to 1997. A number of colleagues participate in the work of the ECPA (European Commission on Preservation and Access).

Travel by colleagues, getting to know each others work and gaining experience also helps to maintain international relations.

A number of research trips were also made, mainly in order to control Hungarica items found abroad.

The library also took part in numerous joint projects. For years colleagues of the two libraries worked on processing the Hungarica material in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France. With the completion of the work the catalogue can be used in both libraries. Its publication depends on the outcome of further negotiations. The National Széchényi Library regularly meets the obligations it has undertaken in the Library of Congress NPAC program: it continuously supplied the relevant material for the *Annual Bibliography of the History of Printed Books and Libraries*, but due to lack of personnel it was able to supply the RISM (Répertoire des Sources Musicales) with the processed material of Hungarian collections only up to 1997.

The library provided the venue for, organized or participated in a number of national congresses and conferences.

The library as a scholarly research centre

The library continued its research activity in the usual way. In certain sections, depending on the nature of their activities, this work was also carried out during working hours: staff members with candidate degrees were entitled to a day and a half for research work each week while the majority were given authorization by the director general for one research day a week on approved themes. Most of the themes were in the areas of Hungarian literature, history, Hungarica, press and library history and the history of printing. It would be desirable to see greater interest in research on library history.

The library's staff members were able to present the results of their scholarly work at national and international conferences, as well as at seminars and sessions held in the library and the Széchényi memorial session held each year and in the related Keresztury competition. The library's publications continued to provide an opportunity for publication, although this caused considerable difficulties and in cases the number of copies had to be reduced. In addition to the *Yearbook of the National Széchényi Library*, over the five years seven volumes appeared in the series of *National Széchényi Library booklets*, and three larger works appeared in *Publications of the National Széchényi Library, New Series*.

Unfortunately, the number of copies had to be reduced for some publications, but in the given situation we must be pleased to see that the library is able to publish works containing new results.

Activity of the Library Science and Methodology Centre, 1994–1998

While the volume of tasks grew in 1994–1998, the staff of the Centre was reduced by 40.8%. A report on the professional audit of the Centre was completed in November 1994 with the participation of outside experts. This marked the beginning of a process aimed at the creation of a modern new organization adapted to the external and internal conditions. The 1997 Act provides for the creation of the Library Institute but in this period only theoretical preparations and professional debates took place.

One of our biggest projects, which we now know is also successful, was the HUSLONET co-operation created with the help of the Mellon Foundation linking the university libraries of Kosice, Miskolc and Debrecen in a computer system. We distributed some 500,000 books as gifts of the Elsevir, Brothers, Sabre and International Book Bank foundations, to university and special libraries, school collections and large public libraries who submitted requests based on an itemized list,

We organized and held the 4th World Gathering of Hungarian Librarians, on August 7–10, 1996 in Debrecen.

In 1994 we organized *New Books*, an acquisitions advisory publication into a computer database and since then we also handle the preprint work for the publication, issuing 26 printed numbers a year. This is the most comprehensive book information periodical in Hungary today.

In our training activity we placed emphasis on training for book and paper restorers and training in the use of computer systems, as well as training for library assistants. Our further training courses were related to bibliographic description of the sub-documents of periodicals, and methods of dealing with disadvantaged readers.

The Library Standardization Office was set up, as well as the ETO Office, both operating in very modest circumstances.

The 9th edition of the Library Storage Tables was prepared and sent to libraries ordering copies.

During the period concerned close to 100 library technology recommendations were drawn up on questions of library architecture and installations.

Our reading service research dealt with the reading habits of Hungarian secondary school students in the neighbouring countries, the reading culture of prospective teachers, the relations between books and the economy, and the social function of libraries. Our research findings were published in the form of articles and books.

The Library Science Library is the only library of its kind in Hungary. It is open to users 52 hours a week (58 hours during examination periods).

Expansion of the library's holdings was largely based on exchanges and gifts. Subscriptions to periodicals consumed a great part of our budget.

We published the *Librarians Pocketbook* and the *Library Minerva* with the financial support of the National Cultural Fund.

Our periodical, *Library Monitor* appears quarterly. Twice a year we issue our *Hungarian Library and Information Science Abstract*. The *Bibliography of Hungarian Library Literature* is published four times a year.

The MANCI database provides continuous information on Hungarian and international articles. The KALAUZ database covers the service system of Hungarian libraries. The KRONOL (Chronology of Hungarian Library History) covers Hungarian events in library affairs, while the KIKI database serves as a biographical lexicon and who's who of Hungarian librarians.