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National Library of Lithuania

Annual Report 1995

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Library in Politics

A significant milestone in Lithuanian library development was the introduction of the new Law on Libraries which was passed on 6 June 1995. In comparison with the previous Law on Public Libraries of 1936, which was in force until the Soviet occupation in 1940, the new law expands its jurisdiction to research libraries and to the National Library. Concerning the latter, the law states that "the National Library of Lithuania is the main public scientific library, national press archive, and also the depository for Lithuanian publications, as well as for the most significant scientific and general publications of foreign countries, and a co-ordination centre for national bibliography, state registration of Lithuanian publications, information, scientific research work and methodological activity". The law determines library system, network, financing and other aspects of library activities in Lithuania.

To some extent, the passing of the new law influenced the establishment of the Library Science Centre within the National Library. Besides its scientific activities, it will function, as the guiding and co-ordinating research centre of Lithuanian libraries.

A change in financing the library occurred. Now the National Library is granted not by the Ministry of Culture, but directly by the Ministry of Finance. However, the inadequate financing, especially as a severe banking crisis struck Lithuania at the end of the year, remains the main obstacle in library activity.

Legislation

An acute problem of recent years was to secure as full as possible the set of Legal Deposit in the National Library. With the emergence of numerous new publishers and periodicals after the collapse of the communism, many of them not bothering with the delivery legal deposit copies to libraries: therefore, over 85% of published production obtained by the National Library in 1995 must be considered as success. The Government, anxious to improve the situation, in August 1995 has established the Mass Media Board which is responsible to exert influence upon publishers and printers in legal deposit issues, thus certain progress should be expected in this field.

At the end of the year the National Library appealed to the Government with request to expand legal deposit to all kinds of microforms, audiovisual recordings, sound records, CDs and software.

New Building

In spite of strained budget the work for 4,624,000 Lt on the library annex, the counteraction of which started in 1992, was executed. With the framework of the building completed, work on installation of electricity and water supply, communication, fire precaution and security systems began.

At Sapiega Palace (17th century building), another site of library's construction activities, a heating supply based on Danish technology was installed. However, a planned restoration work on

this valuable building was postponed, because no financing was provided for this purpose.

Automation

During 1995 the library was attached to Internet with 15 PCs connected to it. Constant maintenance of a computer network goes on. Home page of the library was created in which additional and updated information about current library activities and events are continuously provided. A WWW server was installed in the library, enabling global information search in WWW system. Computer hardware for 38,000 Lt was acquired.

The most important databases serving library users were: ES - database of European Union documents, SUVKAT - database of foreign serials Union Catalogue, SUTART - database of international agreements, BKC - database of analytical bibliographic descriptions. To provide publications with international standard number for books and serials databases are being created: ISBD - for books, ISMN - for musical publications, ISSN - for serials. Subject headings database was converted into UNIMARC/Authorities format. The creation of names file database in UNIMARC/Authorities format is in progress.

The Lithuanian Integral Library Information System (LIBIS) was established officially by a decree of the Minister of Culture (25 September 1995). The formation of LIBIS Board, under the chairmanship of library's director Vladas Bulavas, and the approval of Board's regulations followed.

A public tender for the LIBIS project design was announced on 30 September 1995. It was won by the Kaunas University of Technology Computing Centre group, who has prepared specifications and draft project.

Conservation

The event of the year in the conservation realm was the obtaining and launching into operation a leaf casting machine and mechanical conservation equipment produced in Denmark by Mr. Per Laursen. This fact is of special significance, as such equipment is unique in Lithuania. On this occasion, an appropriate workshop guided by Mr. Laursen was held in October.

The main trend in the collection preservation was the preventive conservation. The work in this direction resulted in cleaning 3.687 linear meters of shelving in the main depository and biological examination of pollution in the Lituanica collection.

Among the proposals submitted to the Lithuanian National Committee of UNESCO was the point of library's future involvement in the "Memory of the World" Programme.

After rather smooth arrangements and intensive preparatory work, a preservation programme which will have a tremendous effect on Lithuanian printed heritage, especially old periodicals, as well as written documents, has materialized. On 7 February 1995 a protocol of agreement between the National Library of Lithuania and the Library of Congress about the joint project of microfilming rare and fragile Lithuanian materials was signed. The Library of Congress agreed to provide the National Library with microfilm cameras, other necessary equipment and supplies for fulfilling the project. The official inauguration took place in May. The project actually covers all Lithuanian serials from the 19th century to the present as well as other valuable publications, including rich Judaica holdings stored at the library. This long-term assignment should solve the question of preserving the above-mentioned materials.

Public Relations

A total of 190 exhibitions were staged at the National Library in 1995. A number of exhibitions were arranged at other Lithuanian public libraries and abroad (in Estonia and Latvia). Performances by a chamber choir, several ensembles and the Christmas concert were among highly rated musical events. Presentations of newly released books enjoyed great popularity with library users and friends. In October, in cooperation with Lithuanian publishers association Knygu Centras, a book fair was launched at the library. It attracted considerable public and media interest.

Berniukas Zirniukas, the library puppet theatre, traditionally remained a highlight of culture activities and the centre of attention especially among children. The theatre who celebrated its 30th anniversary in 1995, gave 39 performances as well as charity concerts to disabled children.

International Cooperation

As limited financing did not allow the purchase to become the main source of foreign acquisition, the Library to a large extent continued to rely on exchanges and donations. The former source, however, was hampered by constant price rising of local publications. Nevertheless, a slight upward tendency in international book exchange is being felt lately.

1995 was the start of actual cooperation with NORDINFO. The National Library, together with other Lithuanian major research libraries, submitted proposals on the NORDINFO support programme. Activities in this area are gaining momentum.

The library participated in the preparation of *Handbuch der historischen Buchbestände* (general editor Prof. Bernhard Fabian of the Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität, Münster) providing

research materials on historical collections (14th century to the present) in Lithuanian libraries.

In 1995 the National Library became member of FID and EIA.