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CENTRAL TECHNICAL LIBRARY PROPOSED FOR POLAND

There are now four basic types of technical and technical-scientific libraries in Poland:

1. Libraries at technical schools, particularly at schools of higher learning. Of these, there are the main polytechnic libraries and the special research libraries which are an integral part of various chairs, groups of chairs, and research centers and laboratories.
2. Libraries at scientific research institutes. These libraries are organizationally connected to the respective branches of scientific and technical documentation. Besides having technical literature pertaining specifically to the subject in which the institute specializes, they also contain general technical works, encyclopedias, dictionaries, etc.
3. Factory libraries. These exist in almost every production plant and may cover a broad or narrow area. They contain publications that have a direct bearing on the production of the respective plant. Such libraries assist the technical personnel at the plants in solving technical problems and help the personnel to educate themselves.
4. The NOT (Naczelna Organizacja Techniczna - Chief Technical Organization) library system in Poland. These collections are on a polytechnic level with branch libraries specializing in subjects of regional industrial interest. This system consists of the NOT Biblioteka Glowna (NOT Central Library) and 18 NOT branch libraries.

The collections of all these libraries are estimated at millions of volumes and form a good scientific basis of technical works, provided these collections are continuously and systematically augmented with the world's latest technical and scientific publications and are properly exploited.

As yet there is no central book collection point for all scientific and technical publications in Poland. Such a library would be known as the Centralna Biblioteka Techniczna (Central Technical Library), and would be patterned on similar libraries existing in Moscow, Prague, and Budapest.

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There are various alternative concepts for such a library. It could collect one copy of every scientific and technical publication available in Poland. All the scientific and technical libraries would have to forward their rare single copies to the central library. This would not be feasible in Poland, since the scientific and technical libraries located at the various scientific research institutions are essential to the research projects conducted at these institutions. It would be wrong to transfer books to a central library, with headquarters located in Warsaw, while such books are absolutely necessary for current projects in Gliwice, Lidz, or Gdansk. However, it would be proper to have at the central library microfilms of rare works located at the various libraries specializing in some field.

Technical publications, particularly highly specialized ones, are worthless after a certain period of time, generally in 15-20 years. Such publications should be disposed of. They would naturally be sent to the Central Technical Library. The central library should not be a collector of worthless publications, an archives building, or a museum. For this reason, the Central Technical Library should also get rid of outdated works after a period of time, and should place them in separate warehouses, mainly for purposes of historical research.

For the initial collection, as in similar libraries in Moscow, Prague, and Budapest, present book collections will be put together to form the Central Technical Library. Part of these collections will come from the Główny Instytut Dokumentacji Naukowo-Technicznej (Main Institute of Scientific and Technical Documentation), NOT, Instytut Urbanistyki i Architektury (Institute of City Planning and Architecture), and Publiczna Biblioteka Techniczna (Public Technical Library). Another part of the collection will include some factory libraries of scientific and technical institutes and of the central industrial administrations, etc. This initial collection will amount to at least 100,000 volumes, since it is anticipated that books and periodicals not now being used at various specialized libraries will also be forwarded to the Central Technical Library.

An annual increase of 20,000 - 25,000 volumes is anticipated, especially during the first few years while collections are being assembled. Later the annual inflow will be smaller. The annual increase was estimated in the following manner: Annual publications in Poland are estimated at about 5,000 volumes of books and about 100 titles of periodicals. Abroad, about 15,000 titles of scientific and technical periodicals, and about 20,000 scientific and technical books of some value are published annually. If the Central Technical Library should collect only one-half of these publications (the rest being inaccessible to Polish readers because of the rare language, or not needed because of duplication), the annual increment will total 20,000 - 25,000 volumes.

In 16-20 years, the library would collect about a half million volumes. Since the Central Technical Library is not to be an archives building, plans have to be made for the removal of the older bound periodicals and books. Experience abroad shows that the number of old publications which are removed from libraries amounts to about four tenths of the new acquisitions. Thus, about 8,000 or more volumes should be removed annually after the end of the first period of operation of the library, and should be placed in a special warehouse built outside the city, after being microfilmed where necessary.

The maximum estimated number at the Central Technical Library would amount to 500,000 volumes and the library stacks should be planned for such a number. Under such a plan, the number of books and bound periodicals would remain constant. The book collection would undergo constant rotation. A book would go from the Central Technical Library to the specialized field, and then would be sent to the special warehouse when outdated.

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The Central Technical Library will not limit its collections to the special fields discussed. It must also have the following: (1) books and bound periodicals dealing with technical subjects and economic subjects related to technology and documentation; (2) reference libraries consisting of encyclopedias, dictionaries, and general technical works; (3) a collection of microfilms consisting of the more important library documents not found in the original at the Central Technical Library; (4) a collection of unpublished scientific and research works, masters theses, and doctoral dissertations, etc.; (5) a collection of photographs and slides; (6) a collection of phonograph and tape recordings, etc; (7) a graphic collection of drawings, maps, atlases, etc.

The objective of the Central Technical Library is to satisfy the reading requirements of the general public and of specialized researchers. Therefore, it must contain a large general reading room for 300 readers, open at least 14 hours daily, a few smaller reading rooms for specialized reference libraries, and a few private research rooms for advanced research work.

The Central Technical Library building should be equipped with all the latest technical installations to ensure the following: (1) a minimum waiting period for books; (2) proper environment, such as adequate lighting, table space, and ventilation; (3) accessibility to extensive reference libraries.

The library staff should be assured sufficient working space and proper educational aids in the form of encyclopedias, general technical works, bibliographic works, etc.

The Central Technical Library should operate in coordination with the Główny Instytut Dokumentacji Naukowo-Technicznej (Main Institute of Scientific and Technical Documentation) from an organizational standpoint and should be located in the same group of buildings.

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