

Matveeva Irina,
National library of Russia,
Sant-Petersburg,
Russia

International Congress "100.German Bibliothekartag".

Section "Preservation of the cultural heritage"

367 „German-Russian Library Dialog“

Berlin 7.Juni 2011-10.Juni 2011

The motto of the congress was - "Libraries for the Future - Future for the Libraries". The focuses of the congress were: the modern trend of library development, the prospects and opportunities of libraries international cooperation, the role of libraries in the dissemination of knowledge, preservation and providing open access to the library collections. More than 4 200 librarians from different countries took part in the Congress activity. Many thanks BI-International for the grant which makes possible my participation in the Congress activity.

The Congress occupied three full days and one half-day. The program of my trip was rich of cultural events.

Grand opening of the congress was held on Tuesday, 7 June 2011 in the Concert Hall of Berlin. Greetings to participants of the Congress have been told by Susanne Riedel – The Chairman of German Professional Association of Libraries, Claudia Zinke – The State Secretary of Education, Youth and Family Services of Germany , Ellen Tise – The President of the International Federation of Library Associations and other officials. Very popular German actress Gayle Tufts was invited to the ceremony and her sparkling humor was unforgettable.

8 June 2011, I visited the exhibition, organized within the framework of the Congress. It was the excellent opportunity for me reviewed the latest advances and innovations, to tap into the exhibitors' knowledge and expertise and gain from hands-on product demonstrations.

Later the same day I took part in the reception on the occasion of the German Library Congress and hosted by Ingeborg Junge-Reyer , the Mayor of Berlin. The reception was held in a magnificent Hall of Pillars of the Berlin Town Hall in Berlin-Mitte.

On the same day in Berlin was held the "Night of the Libraries". I visited the old and at the same time absolutely new building (reconstruction of which is still unfinished) of the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin. I was showed the new reading rooms, a special hall for the Museum of the Libraries, new staff rooms.

The main purpose of my trip was participation in a section „German-Russian Library Dialog“. The meeting took place on Friday, 10 June 2011. The organizer of the section was the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Dr. Barbara Schneider-Kempf , director of the library , chaired the section.

My report and presentation were on the topic «Preparing a Consolidated Catalogue of Cultural Treasures Stolen or Lost during World War II, Volume 11("Lost Books of Value")».

I presented some results of the National library of Russia activity over the past ten years. Participants of the meeting were very interested to learn about _the catalogue *Book Losses in Russia during World War II* in the National Library of Russia. I was asked questions concerning with the some details of the preparation of volumes of the catalogue *Book Losses in Russia during World War II* in the National Library of Russia. Exchange of views was held in a constructive and high level professional manner. Approximately 100 people took part in the meeting. It was really good professional experience for me.

Participation in the Congress has allowed me to share experiences with the colleagues, that Our concerted efforts towards library rehabilitation may provide the basis for the prevention of subsequent similar disasters.

Below I attach the text of my report.

Dear colleagues,

First of all let me congratulate you with the anniversary conference and wish you personally and the libraries you are representing here prosperity and successful development.

Many thanks to colleagues from the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, staff of the organizing Committee for the invitation and organizing of this panel.

Many thanks BI-International for the travel grant which makes possible my participation in the Congress activity.

Preparation by the Department of a libraries history by the National Library of Russia a volumes of the catalogue *Book Losses in Russia during World War II*.

The State Commission for the Restitution of Cultural Treasures, appointed in December 1992 by the Government of the Russian Federation, decided at its very first meeting that work on a comprehensive catalogue of Russian cultural treasures lost in the last war should be its top priority, and that the primary goal was to draw together information about all losses suffered by museums in Russia. This decision resulted in the multi-volume *Union Catalogue of Cultural Treasures Stolen or Lost during World War II*, which began publication in 1998. Then a little who assumed, as far as this problem will be difficult. Among the damaged cultural values in occupied areas were multiple libraries; the country's integral book stock suffered irrecoverable damage. A segment of national culture has gone never to return, replaced or compensate; never to be published in the form of a mere listing, let alone cataloguing.

In post-war time during drawing up of initial lists of losses and searches stolen the part of the stolen cultural values of the Soviet origin, was found out and returned from Europe. After that in the USSR practically were not engaged in regular and purposeful studying of problems lost, stolen, returned, not returned and received as indemnification for put to establishments of culture damage of values. Moreover, during 1955—1970 during unprecedented on scale of returning of cultural values of GDR were taken steps to removal from the account the subjects of culture lost during World War II. It is necessary to recognize, that till now a number of establishments of culture of our country does not know the present volume and structure of the military losses. In post-war years archival documents on this subjects were secret; raw and unsystematized, they were accessible to only narrow circle of archivists.

On the other hand, discussion of Russian books losses seems rather unpopular outside Russia. Particular interest is only expressed in the German books discovered in Russia and attempts to use any means to prove their illegal displacement and the need for one-sided recovery. This kind of approach can be hardly recognized as research-based or leading to constructive dialogue.

Some European countries have already compiled the catalogues representing their book losses resulting from World War II. Their main ambition is to win international recognition of the very fact of theft or loss of the book treasures, and to recover the lost printed works. Having no comprehensive register of Russian book losses, there is no question of purposeful search and recovery of Russian losses in the period of Hitlerite ravages. With the register lacking, no civilized and justified dialogue with other countries is possible to solve the question of further fates for displaced book collections.

In 2000 the National Library of Russia, at the behest of the Ministry of Culture, began preparing a volume describing losses of Russian book collections. It is a task it was charged to a Department of a history of libraries. It became immediately obvious that this volume would need to be published over time, in several parts, as and when relevant material could be gathered and prepared, and that the first step was to attempt to provide at least a general analysis of Russian book losses, by examining the wealth of existing data, and to make generally available previously classified or uncatalogued archival material.

So, what provisional book losses of the USSR within the World War II?

From the very beginning of the War Nazi high command conducted massed air raids of peaceful Soviet towns. Among the victims were numerous Russian depositaries; firebombs were dropped on Russian State Library, Union Book Chamber (destroying 14 thousand volumes), Academy of Sciences Library, Rostov-on-the-Don Regional Research Library (destroying 250 thousand volumes). Fascist invaders destroyed library buildings in occupied areas: Voronezh University Library (holding over half a million books) was plundered and the house then blown up,

Smolensk Regional Library was destroyed by a landmine; Voronezh City Public Library was set on fire.

Many library buildings in occupied areas were commandeered by military or economic bodies. Collections of Local History Museum Library in Voronezh were destroyed and the house used for stables. Nazi soldiers paved their stables with books from Agricultural College Library in Maikop. The cottage of Pushkin's nanny, Arina Rodionovna, in Mikhailovskoe was taken to pieces for dugouts. Books were thrown out everywhere and used for road paving or firewood. Book collections of Teachers' Training Institute in Krasnodar were discarded in the basement as waste paper.

In addition to physical annihilation of book values, there was unparalleled pillage of cultural values. Well-considered and large-scale displacement of Russian values was organized with characteristic German accuracy. No funds, transportation or labor were spared in loss-free delivery of confiscated values to the Reich.

What were our library conditions after Nazi expulsion?

Russia's oldest cities, Pskov, Novgorod and Smolensk, became the field of extensive "activity" of German secret services and divisions engaging in the exportation of cultural values. Book depositaries, regional research libraries, museums and archives in particular, represented major cultural and historical values.

The Pskov Museum lost 94 per cent of precious collections comprising 80 thousand volumes including printed books in Cyrillic script. Among them were: the Bible printed by F. Scorina in 1517, a 1508 Litourgicon, a 1618 Octoechos, and other valuable manuscript- and old-printed books.

Novgorod was equally victimized, losing 75 600 volumes. St Sophia's Cathedral was destroyed by artillery fire, fragments of its illustrious Bible collection and 10 tho volumes from the old archiepiscopal library lying among the ruins. As many as 33 892 rare volumes, including 1263 printed Cyrillic books, were taken out of Novgorod History Museum.

Smolensk Region had significant cultural potentials before the War: 8 higher schools, 48 colleges and specialized schools, 5 theatres, 15 museums. The 26-month occupation caused irretrievable losses of cultural values. Among them were collections of the Regional Library (1 500 000 volumes), Teachers' Training Institute (525 tho volumes including unique 16th- to 18th-century manuscripts like charters, decrees written by Peter I, handwritten Gospel copies of 1496, 1566, 1640), and destroyed children's library collections totaling 100 tho volumes. Severe damage was caused to Smolensk Museum deprived of 15 tho volumes including 1612 manuscripts and old-printed books.

Book collections were totally destroyed in Stalingrad and ten regional districts. Among the 181 library buildings destroyed was V. Gorky Regional Library with 250 tho volumes.

Most of the book collections in Rostov-on-the-Don did not survive. Burned down were 600 tho books in Rostov University Library and almost 500 tho volumes in the Regional Library.

In Orel Region, 115 libraries were destroyed or damaged. The Regional Library lost 55 tho volumes. Most of the 837 pre-war libraries holding 1 160 000 volumes were destroyed.

Moscow Region lost more than 200 libraries holding over 600 tho volumes.

Substantial damage was caused to occupied areas in Kaluga Region, with more than 150 tho volumes lost.

Kalinin (Tver) Regional Library with 200 tho volumes was totally destroyed. Fascist invaders plundered or destroyed more than 30 tho books in the University Library. Manuscripts in Local History Museum collections were burned down, including unique 16th- and 17th-century volumes. Altogether 150 libraries with total million and a half volumes were lost in the region.

Bryansk Central Municipal library lost almost 30 tho volumes.

In Kursk Region, 122 public libraries were destroyed with over 3 200 000 books lost. In Belgorod Region, 259 libraries with more than 500 volumes were destroyed.

Considerable damage was caused to libraries in Leningrad Region.

Pavlovsk Palace lost 4439 volumes of 18th-century French and German encyclopedias, dictionaries and travel notes. Among the more valued are *Arithmetics* by Magnitsky, and *Outlines of the voyages ... made by Pavel Petrovich and ... Maria Feodorovna under the name of Count and Countess Severny*.

The whereabouts of 18 tho books plundered in Gatchina Museum are yet unknown. All Catherine's Palace collections were plundered in Pushkin town.

Among the irretrievable losses are Tikhvin library collections, including 4695 volumes destroyed in Local History Museum and 45 tho in Municipal Library when both houses were set on fire. Library buildings were damaged in Oredezh, Luga and Schlisselburg.

In Voronezh Region, 37 libraries were destroyed. Among the more valued collections were those of University Library (800 tho volumes). Book collections were destroyed or withdrawn from the Regional Library (600 tho volumes), Fine Arts Museum, I. S. Nikitin Museum. All in all 700 tho books were removed, including 7500 old-printed.

Libraries suffered losses in North Caucasus. Maikop Local History Museum Library was confiscated; 22 tho volumes were withdrawn from Krasnodar Municipal Library; Krasnodar Area Library lost 60 per cent of their collections; 600 tho volumes were lost in Adygei. German occupational troops in Stavropol Area destroyed 1700 tho volumes: regional libraries were destroyed in Cherkessk and Alagir.

In 1941 Ribbentrop initiated the appointment of the special "Künsberg Group" attached to the German Foreign Ministry, subsequently reorganized as an SS *Sonderkommmando* (special-purpose battalion). It was led by SS-Sturmbannführer Eberhard Freiherr von Künsberg and consisted of about 303 men, divided into four companies, each attached to a major army unit for the purpose of plundering diplomatic archives, museums, libraries and art treasures. The Second and Fourth Companies particularly "distinguished themselves" on the Eastern Front, while it was the specialists from the Second Company who selected valuable books from the palace collections outside Leningrad. The Fourth Company was active in the Southern Sector. Its diverse interests were demonstrated in its senior staff list: Hauptsturmführer Krallert, Foreign Ministry cartographer; Sonderführer Paulsen, Slavic scholar; Sonderführer Lieben, economist.

The books which were looted on a vast scale from occupied areas were intended for the collections of the "Ostbucherei" (Eastern Library) in Berlin, a deposit library for material in support of research into the Eastern provinces. Selection policies encompassed pre-1917 publications on Marxism, philosophy, freemasonry, the Jewish question, and books on Russian geography, history and art. Of special interest were post-1917 publications supporting Soviet studies. Also selected for the Eastern Library were translations of 'significant works in the humanities containing Bolshevik introductions. Some books were earmarked for the library of the National Socialist Party (NSDAP) Higher School, the elite "party university", and publications on appropriate subjects were given to the Imperial Security Service (Reichssicherheitshauptamt), the German Foreign Ministry's Geographical Office, and the Economic Library.

The Künsberg battalion was given special instructions for dealing with library collections: publications of a propagandistic nature were to be destroyed or referred to the propaganda department; economic publications were to be passed to the intelligence agencies; early printed books, manuscripts, books of unique character and research value were to be dispatched to Germany. Active-service battalion staff operated in the field. As soon as a particular area had been captured, books were surveyed along with other cultural objects. After appropriate inspection, the most valuable items were removed to Germany.

However, the main book streams westwards were channeled by the Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg or ERR (the Rosenberg Special Command)¹⁴ in the charge of Alfred Rosenberg, who became in 1941 Minister of the Reich for Occupied Eastern Territories. Among the 350 professional specialists in the Rosenberg Staff were experts in art and book studies, and archivists. A special support group was assigned to each. Their work involved careful selection, registration and classification of confiscated property. Special emphasis was placed on the inspection of library collections in captured urban areas. The ERR catalogued (both by author/name and subject) books

which had been selected. Up to eight cards were provided for each book. Some of the cards were sent to Berlin and Kiev, others were used as local catalogues. In this way records were provided for each book confiscated. Large-scale cataloguing was undertaken by one of the ERR's bases, in Riga, where records were made for the collections destined for the Ostbucherei. Presumably, at this initial stage, these collections were concentrated in Kiev, Riga and Berlin.

In fact, there were tensions between the ERR and the Künsberg Group since, although the Künsberg's Group's main task was to remove from Leningrad, Moscow and other towns documents of a political nature, Künsberg himself was inclined towards a broader understanding of his mission.

So long as the situation at the front remained more or less stable for Germany, book displacement was comparatively limited. Massive displacement was initiated in the period when the situation at the front changed dramatically for the worse. Then almost anything removable was sent to Germany, the rest destroyed.

The War caused irreplaceable losses in the country's cultural life. Along with printed books and manuscripts, library catalogues were burned down or otherwise destroyed. This is why we cannot yet say with certainty how many books we lost in World War II. While historians may differ about precise calculations, 200 million units of storage is the absolute bottom limit.

This is not the question of destroyed cultural heritage of the former Soviet Union alone. Among the volumes exported by fascist invaders from our libraries were books (Cyrillic in particular) omitted in world bibliographic indexes to date and thus lost to all nations of the world.

An irreplaceable, irrecoverable stratum of national culture was lost flying to the winds.

Let's tell now some words about preparation volumes of the catalogue *Book Losses in Russia during World War II* in the National Library of Russia.

For present time by employees of the Department of a history it is prepared 9 volumes of book losses in Russian (the tenth book makes ready for the press) and 8 in English. Under the contents they share as follows: Summary volume on losses of the Russian regions (Voronezh, Kursk, North Caucasus, Pskov, Smolensk, Rostov), Gatchina, Peterhoff, Novgorod, Novgorod region: 18th-century books, 19th and 20th-century books, Kalinin (Tver), Voronezh State University Area Research Library (Books XVI — first half XIX centuries; Foreign books of the second half of 19th century; Russian books of 19th century —1914; Russian books after 1914 and Russian periodical press, etc.).

The structure of catalogues is appreciably defined by character of the submitted material. After the foreword describing as a whole of loss of libraries of this or that region and based on printed and archival sources, and the foreword from the editor and composers, the list of the lost editions follows. Descriptions in all volumes are grouped chronologically and by author with each year.

Data on book losses for this volumes were obtained from captured German archives, mainly of the Rechtsleiter Rosenberg Operations Staff, provided for the compilers by the Department for Cultural Treasures at Russian Federation Culture Ministry in due course. Initial lists at our disposal were fragmentary, with multiple errors and misprints, often with Russian translation for foreign titles and misspelled authors.

In all volumes initial lists required checking and refining. The National Library of Russia undertook laborious and complicated research for bibliographical identification and specification of lost collections in Voronezh University Library. Our research involved the whole range of available reference aids and publications including the printed and card catalogues and collections of the National Library of Russia; national bibliographies, industrial and departmental reference and bibliographical publications. Worldwide Internet searching covered all library databases with substantial information obtained, in particular, from Consortium catalogues for major European libraries.

The complicated bibliographical research allowed identification for most of the lost publications. The compilers are aware of potential inaccuracies in the lists. Informed decisions on inclusion in the line of losses always required in-depth analyses and consultations with leading book scientists and historians.

At the final stage of the project, the enhanced and classified records were delivered to the appropriate regions and libraries. Decisions on inclusion in this Catalogue were only made on checking *in situ* and confirmation of loss in the Great Patriotic War for each item in question.

Each record represents every detail of each specific lost item: marks, stamps, inventory numbers, binding characteristics. The details are indispensable for precise identification of a specific lost copy.

The lists are accompanied with illustrations of some lost copies. The illustrations were produced by the National Library of Russia from rare editions in the Library collections, with the assumption of total identity with lost collections. We are unable to demonstrate all the items here, however, not only for reasons of space. In fact, even the very rich collections of the National Library of Russia lack many of the editions lost by other Russian libraries, thus providing an additional evidence of significant and irrecoverable book losses in Russia.

As a matter fact, investigation of book losses in our country is taking a new course with radically new approaches – from summarized data to specific lost copies.

Hopefully, this Catalogue would attract the attention of libraries in different Russian regions, whether robbed of their book treasures or never occupied. They could provide information on investigated losses or duplicates of Voronezh University Library collections. Reproduction copies, electronic versions or CDs would be equally useful. We would also like to invite our foreign colleagues to constructive dialog. It is only our mutual support in recovering library losses that will relieve the devastating effects of war invariably victimizing book treasures. Who knows but our concerted action for library rehabilitation may provide the prerequisite for preventing future war disasters.