

History of the Central Statistical Library

The Library of the Central Statistical Office of Poland in the period from 1918 to 1968

The Library was established at the same time at which the Central Statistical Office (CSO) of Poland was being organised, that is in November 1918, as a scientific base necessary for the functioning of the Office. In August 1915, Russian authorities responsible for the partition of Poland were leaving Warsaw and evacuating the office of the Warsaw Statistical Committee to Saint Petersburg. Fortunately, the collection of library books and archive materials they left behind was intact. These books and materials were the beginning of the future Library of the Central Statistical Office. This collection was entrusted to the custody of an outstanding Polish scientist, economist and statistician, Professor Ludwik Krzywicki from the Committee of the Citizens of Warsaw, who later participated in the organisation of the Central Statistical Office and the Institute of Social Economy. The collection that Ludwik Krzywicki saved from dispersion and robbery amounted to about 3,000 volumes.¹

In 1919, the first head of the CSO, Professor Józef Buzek, a well-known economist, statistician and Galician politician, recognised how important it was to establish a proper scientific base for the Office and brought to Poland the heritage of the Lviv National Division that was conducting scientific research for the region of Galicia as a part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Those books included multivolume Austrian statistical series *Österreichische Statistics, Roczniki statystyki Galicji* (from 1873), statistics prepared by Cracow and Lviv statistical offices (among others, *Wiadomości Statystyczne miasta Lwowa*), multivolume Prussian statistical series: *Statistik des Deutschen Reichs* (together with the results of German census taken in 1871, 1880, 1890, 1900...), *Preussische Statistik, Statistisches Jahrbuch für den Preussischen Staat* and full series of statistical periodicals entitled *Monatshefte* and *Vierteljahreshefte*).

The collections were promptly catalogued and made available to the readers – at first only to employees of the Office, but as of the beginning of 1920, also to

¹ B. Łazowska, *90 lat Bibliotek GUS w służbie statystyk polskiej – misja, ludzie, zadania*, Warszawa 2009.

other users from outside the CSO. Józef Buzek notified the government of the Second Republic of Poland of this fact in his letter dated 18 February 1920, in which he stated that on 1 March 1920 a scientific reading room was to be opened at the Office's library; the reading room was to be available every day from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. on business days, and on Sundays and public holidays from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. In the above-mentioned letter, Buzek described the thematic scope of the CSO's Library collection as "works in the field of statistics, law, in particular administrative law and fiscal law, the economy and related fields". With the assistance of the first head of the CSO, the Library contacted numerous domestic and foreign institutions which made the exchange of publications with, to list a few, the British Museum in London, the Library of Congress, and the Bureau of the Census in Washington possible. Those contacts allowed the library's collection to rapidly grow in the interwar period and in 1939 it reached 60,000 volumes.

In 1919, Professor Józef Buzek entrusted the task of managing the Library to an energetic young statistician, Stefan Szulc, who after a few years of work in the Library was promoted to the position of the head of the CSO's Publishing Department, and later to the position of the chief editor of the CSO. Szulc quickly developed numerous contacts with domestic and foreign institutions, which led to the fast development of the book collection, especially in terms of international statistical publications. Moreover, thanks to the above-mentioned contacts, the Central Statistical Office was able to conduct research in international statistics, including, among others, the preparation of international comparisons for *Rocznik statystyki Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej* (1921–1930), and the issuing of the monthly, and later quarterly, review *Handel zagraniczny* as of 1924, and *Rocznik Handlu Zagranicznego Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej* as of 1927 were facilitated.²

In 1939, the collection of books reached 60 000 volumes with yearly acquisitions of 3 000 books.

It was also in the interwar period when the Library commenced its publishing activities with the publishing of lists of acquired titles grouped by subject in 1937. This significantly facilitated the search for statistical information. Research works

² B. Łazowska, „Szulc Stefan Aleksander (1881-1956)”, [in:] *Statystycy polscy*, Warsaw 2012, pp. 336–339.

were started and supervised by Irena Morsztynkiewicz, a young and extremely ambitious member of the Association of Polish Librarians, who managed the works of the CSO's Library as of 1928 under the guidance of Stefan Szulc. Apart from managing the Library for 30 years, Irena Morsztynkiewicz volunteered in library organisations in Poland and in the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA). She had already joined the Polish Librarians' Union in 1925 in Vilnius, and as of 1946 she worked in the reactivated Association of Polish Librarians, where she subsequently served as the president of Warsaw's Branch of the Association of Polish Librarians, a member of the Central Management Board, Deputy President of the Central Management Board, and, in 1953–1956, the Secretary-General of the Central Management Board of the Association of Polish Librarians. During the Second World War, the mission of the employees of the CSO was to protect the collections from destruction and robbery, which they successfully achieved. After the occupying German authorities entered Warsaw in 1939, they transported the entire collection of books from the CSO's Library to Cracow to the Collegium Novum of the Jagiellonian University, which housed the German statistical office. Following the evacuation of the German statistical office of the General Government from Cracow in 1944, the CSO's book collection was left behind in Collegium Novum, which was taken by the Wehrmacht. The employees of the Library started working at the Wehrmacht's kitchen. Stefania Zdrodowska, who was not formally employed by the Library, had keys to the Collegium Novum building and took care of the collection. In 1948 Stefania Zdrodowska was awarded the Golden Cross of Merit for protecting the CSO Library's collection.

At the end of February 1945, the Library's collection and staff that was guarding it were provisionally looked after by the Cracow Voivodeship Office, and after the Central Statistical Office was reactivated in 1945, the re-evacuation of the books commenced. At that time, the head of the CSO was Stefan Szulc, who personally managed the transport of (among others) the Library's books to the capital city for several months. In recognition of the outstanding service of Stefan Szulc to the Library, in 1989 the head of the CSO, Franciszek Kubiczek, named the institution after Stefan Szulc.

The estimation of losses caused by the war in 1945 showed that the library collection did not suffer much. The first post-war stock-taking (inventory) indicated a loss of about 5,000 volumes.

In 1953, when the new headquarters of the Library (designed by Professor Romuald Gutt's studio to meet the Library's needs) at the CSO building were commissioned, the scientific works were taken up, and works on preparing central catalogues of foreign acquisitions of the National Library and the Central Planning and Statistics School (today the Warsaw School of Economics) were commenced. The so-called alerting service for articles published in important domestic and foreign periodicals was activated, the form of bibliographic information on new acquisitions was improved (*Biuletyn Nabytków* quarterly), and inter-library lending was implemented.³

The CSO owes the reconstruction of the Library's work after the war and the domestic status of the central research library within the scope of statistics and demographics to the long-term head of the Library, Irena Morsztynkiewiczowa PhD, a known activist of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), an author of numerous scientific and popular science works in the field of bibliography and library science.

The Central Statistical Library in 1968–1996

On 10 December 1968, by order no. 75 of the President of the CSO, Professor Wincent Kawalec, the Library received a new charter, which transformed the library of the Office into the Central Statistical Library that served as the main Library in Poland in the fields of statistical theory and practice, demographics, mathematical statistics, statistical technique and related fields. The rank of the Library was raised, as it was incorporated into the national library network, and, under resolution no. 269 of the Council of Ministers of 20 August 1968 on making a list of research libraries, the library was entrusted with the execution of scientific and research tasks for the development of science and satisfaction of scientific needs.⁴

³ I. Morsztynkiewicz, "Biblioteka GUS", *Wiadomości Statystyczne* 1964 no. 3 pp. 25–26.

⁴ *Monitor Polski* No. 36 of 1968, item 253.

The head of the Library at that time, Andrzej Jopkiewicz, who was managing the Library for over 25 years, established the bibliography division and the statistical information division which started working on a multivolume series entitled “Bibliografia Wydawnictw GUS”, “Bibliografia piśmiennictwa demograficznego” and “Bibliografia Piśmiennictwa Statystycznego (bez wydawnictw GUS)”.⁵

The Library periodically published *Biuletyn Nabytków CBS*, issues of *Zestawienia Bibliograficzne* (including, among others: “Bibliografia prac prof. dr Stefana Szulca, Ludwika Krzywickiego – bibliografia prac z zakresu statystyki i ekonomii”, “Spisy powszechne w Polsce”, “Wykaz bibliograficzny roczników i czasopism Organizacji Narodów Zjednoczonych oraz innych organizacji międzynarodowych w zbiorach Centralnej Biblioteki Statystycznej im. S. Szulca”, “Bibliografia prac Ireny Morsztynkiewicz, Bibliografia dydaktyki statystyki”, “Bibliografia prac prof. dr Jerzego Neymana”, “Bibliografia prac prof. dr Kazimierza Romaniuka” and many other studies by Joanna Górską, Maria Korczyńska, Anna Łabęda and Bożena Łazowska).

Directories entitled *Roczniki statystyczne świata w zbiorach CBS* were periodically prepared and published in the Library. Furthermore, several articles were published in scientific periodicals on the book collections and work of the S. Szulc Central Statistical Library.⁶

In the 1970s and 1980s, the nationwide statistical competition organised by the Library to promote statistics in secondary schools gained popularity. For many years, the competition was organised by Zygmunt Peuker, a distinguished long-term employee of the CSO, head of department, author of several hundred publications on teaching statistics, a member of the Polish Statistics Association, and the author of questions for the competition questionnaire, together with Andrzej Jopkiewicz,

⁵ A. Jopkiewicz, “Centralna Biblioteka Statystyczna. Dzieje. Zbiory. Zadania”, *Wiadomości Statystyczne* 1976 no. 2 pp. 44–46.

⁶ For example: A. Łabęda, “Katalogi Centralnej Biblioteki Statystycznej”, *Wiadomości Statystyczne* 1980 no. 1 pp. 45–46; idem, “Opracowanie serii wydawniczych GUS w katalogach Centralnej Biblioteki Statystycznej”, *Wiadomości Statystyczne* 1982 no. 12 pp. 43–44; Z. Peuker, “Zasoby specjalistyczne w zbiorach Centralnej Biblioteki Statystycznej” *Wiadomości Statystyczne* 1983 no. 2 pp. 39–42; St. Turkowiak, “Zbiory kartograficzne w Centralnej Bibliotece Statystycznej” [in:] *Problemy map społeczno-gospodarczych*, Lublin 1978.

head of the CSL, member of the Polish Statistics Association and the Associations of Polish Librarians, and chairman of the jury at the competition. The first edition of the competition was organised in 1968 under the auspices of the President of the Central Statistical Office, Professor Wincenty Kawalec. The goal of the competition was (and still is) the development of youth's skills and knowledge of statistics gained at school during lessons on statistics, mathematics, geography, etc. based on the *Concise Statistical Yearbook of Poland* [*Mały Rocznik Statystyczny Polski*].

In 1968–1972 and 1977–2004, the competition questionnaire contained questions about data published in the *Concise Statistical Yearbook of Poland*. In 2004, the board of the CSO decided to change the form of the competition to make it more attractive to students, and promote, alongside knowledge, skills such as creativity and independent thinking. Currently, the competition task involves writing an essay on one of three listed subjects on the basis of information published in the *Concise Statistical Yearbook of Poland*. The essays are evaluated according to such criteria as originality of subject interpretation, content layout, analytical skills, ability to synthesise source knowledge and degree to which the *Concise Statistical Yearbook of Poland* is used. Considering that large numbers of secondary school students have been taking part in the competition for many years, we see the Nationwide Statistical Competition as a great form of promoting statistics that has been organised by Library for over 35 years.⁷ The predominant objective of the competition is to educate society on the topic of statistics, which is of considerable cognitive, didactic, and educational value. The competition is one of the greatest undertakings of the Central Statistical Library organised to promote statistics, alongside exhibitions, lectures, speeches, presentations of the library system for secondary school and university students, business trips abroad, etc.

In the 1990s, the Central Statistical Library undertook the difficult task of ordering, cataloguing and preparing scientific descriptions of an extensive collection of books that had not been made available to the general public until 1989 as it was covered by a confidentiality clause.

⁷ A. Jopkiewicz, Z. Peuker, *30 konkursów ze znajomości Małego Rocznika Statystycznego*, Warsaw 2002.

It was now possible due to a decision by the President of the CSO at that time, Franciszek Kubiczek, PhD, in 1989 to declassify the collection of over 20,000 publications of the CSO from the period from 1950 to 1988 that had been labelled as “confidential”, “official use only”, or “for internal use”.⁸ The importance of making this until-then unavailable collection accessible was critical from the point of view of a regular user conducting economic or statistical research, especially comparative research concerning longer periods of time. In 1997, the Library started ordering an entire nationally unique collection of books and issued the missing link in the bibliography chain containing the Office’s publications still unknown to a wide group of recipients. The works were completed with the publication of two-volume “Bibliografia wydawnictw poufnych i służbowych GUS 1950–1988”.⁹ From now on, the Library’s entire main collection and information thereon has been available to all readers.

The CSL’s achievements in the area of gathering and describing collections of books and making them available to the public were recognised on the national level. In 1998, by a decision of the Minister of Culture and National Heritage, the CSL was accepted to the elite group of libraries that make up the National Library Resources.

Automation of the CLS in the period from 1997–2004

In October 1996, the CSO decided to modernise the Stefan Szulc Central Statistical Library, which, combined with assignment of PHARE funds by the European Union, made it possible to computerise the Library's activities.

The modernisation was intended to incorporate the CSL into the domestic and international system of exchanging information via the Internet, facilitate the librarians’ work and increase the efficiency of user service. This objective was achieved. The framework modernisation programme was developed with the assistance of an expert, Mr Guido Badalamenti, who is the head of the University

⁸ “Order no. 26 of 10 April 1989 on waiving certain clauses that limit access to statistical information” and “Order no. 40 of 31 May 1989 on limiting the type of statistical information which constitutes an official or state secret”.

⁹ B. Łazowska, *Bibliografia wydawnictw poufnych i służbowych GUS 1950-1988*, vol. I-II-Warsaw, GUS. CBS, 1998-2000.

Library in Siena and, for a few years, served as the president of the International Consortium of ALEPH Users (ICAU).¹⁰

In a document prepared in May 1997, Guido Badalamenti presented the new mission of the Library, outlined the conditions of good work that had to be organised differently due to the automation of the CSL, and set the main task of the Library, which was to open it to its users' needs. The PHARE expert defined the CSL's mission as follows: "The Library's doors must be open to all." The Library should not be an office nor a warehouse, but a modern institution open to the needs of its users with a full information service on its collections and the collections of other libraries. Following expert advice, the Library was restructured and the model of work was changed. The Department of Information was combined with the Department of Bibliography, and a specialised position of a system librarian and two positions of a library ALEPH system administrator were created.

The first technical and modernisation actions were conducted in the Library in 1996–1997 and included the purchase of a large capacity server, 23 computer stations, 12 printers, a CD-ROM server, bar code readers, presentation equipment and furniture that allowed the installation of the purchased equipment.¹¹ In 1997, the CSL activated the software, installed its operating system and conducted comprehensive staff training. In May 1997, the training of professional staff in the Automated Library Expandable Program ALEPH was completed. In October 1997, the implementation of procedures was commenced and particular system modules were put to use in relation to current works. As of 01 January 1998, the cataloguing of the current collections has been automatic. The ALEPH computer catalogue database was made available to the users on 12 January 1998. It could be accessed not only from a computer in the CSL's network, but from any computer with an Internet connection. [12](#)

The Library modernisation works were managed by statistician and editor Janina Pawlik, head of the Library at that time, with the assistance of an employee

¹⁰ G. Badalamenti, *Library automation implementation in the Central Statistical Library*, CSO, Warsaw 1997.

¹¹ PHARE Programme PL 9302 Upgrading of the Statistics Information System POLSTAT. Data Processing, Publishing, Training and Library computerization equipment and related software / Central Statistical Office, CSO, Warsaw 1997.

of the Centre for Statistical Computing, Andrzej Styczyński, coordinator of automation delegated to work in the Library for a few years, who supported Janina Pawlik in the scope of the implementation and use of the ALEPH system. At the first stage of the automation process, a small team led by Professor Eugeniusz Ścibor from the Institute of Research and Technical Operation proved to be of assistance as well. They established the principles of developing the information language in the Central Statistical Library. The team of Professor Eugeniusz Ścibor included (among others) Katarzyna Ślaska (currently the Deputy Director of the National Library of Poland) and Anna Sadoch (at present the Head of the Cataloguing Division of the Sejm Library). The persons responsible for the implementation of the ALEPH system at the Library, including the retrospective conversion of collections and preparation of the online catalogue database were two custodians and department heads at the same time, i.e. Bożena Łazowska and Barbara Świącicka.

After putting the CSL online, the Library and its readers were able to use the databases available within this system in Polish and foreign libraries, as well as statistical databases located on foreign servers. The computerisation of works allows effective, fast and easy preparation of bibliographical sets and directories, and contributes to the development of domestic and international cooperation with libraries as well as documentation and information centres.

The modernisation conducted at that time made it possible for the CSL to participate in the International Conference of Aleph Users (ICAU), and later in the International Group of Ex Libris Users (IGeLU) with its registered office in Siena.

Establishment of the digital statistical library in 2004–2018

The mission of the Stefan Szulc Central Statistical Library which Bożena Łazowska, head of the Library, undertook in 2004 is the digitalisation of catalogues and collections, and organisation of a digital library in a virtual environment that serves the purpose of building a knowledge-based information society. The Library's development strategy which was created at that time is still being implemented.

In 2004–2005 the Central Statistical Library digitalised the traditional, alphabetical card catalogue of the Library covering the Library's collections from 1918–1997 and the database on internal CSO publications from 1950–1988. Thanks to

these efforts, the Library could make its traditional and OPAC catalogue available online (<http://statlibr.stat.gov.pl>), which significantly facilitated our users' work.

In 2005 the Library became a member of the International Group of Ex Libris Users (IGeLU), which aided the Library in developing and enhancing its organisational and technical system. Since then, CSL representatives take part in annual international conferences organised by the IGeLU to gain the broad knowledge and skills needed in the changing IT and technology environment. After every conference, a report summarising the conclusion on how to improve the work of the CSL is drawn up.

As of 2004, representatives of the CSL systematically take part in national scientific conferences organised by the Institutes of Information and Library Science of the Jagiellonian University and the University of Warsaw, which resulted in the writing of popular science articles and studies, mostly published in "Wiadomości Statystyczne", and series of post-conference publications on the on-going activities of the Library, its history, development plans and international cooperation. *Bibliografia Wydawnictw Głównego Urzędu Statystycznego* and thematic bibliographies were still published.

In 2004, the Central Statistical Library modernised the form of the Competition in the knowledge of the *Concise Statistical Yearbook of Poland* organised since 1968. As of that year, the competition is known as the Nationwide Statistical Competition intended to broaden the knowledge and develop the skills gained by upper secondary school students during maths, fundamentals of entrepreneurship, geography and computer science classes in the scope of statistics. The new form of the Competition is more focused on individual achievements of students and rewards independent thinking and creativity. In 2004, in addition to book prizes, we have introduced attractive prizes (computers, laptops, netbooks, DVDs, albums and lexicons), which encourages a few hundred students from all over Poland to take part in the Nationwide Statistical Competition every year.

On 12 March 2007, the Central Management Board of the Association of Polish Librarians awarded the Central Statistical Library the "Bibliotheca Magna-Perennisque" medal for its general activity conducted to the benefit of Polish library

science and popularisation of reading, including the excellent performance of duties of the central public statistical library and public research library.

In 2009, the CSL opened the digital statistical library, which currently encompasses as many as several thousand volumes. The digital library offers all annals and statistical publications published by the CSO in 1919–1939 that were digitalised in 2004–2015, including the results of the First General Census of the Republic of Poland (1921), the Second General Census of the Republic of Poland (1931), the most valuable rare statistical and economic prints from the CSL's collection from the 19th and 20th century, and some items from the cartographic collection from the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century,

Since 2010, the Library files and makes electronic publications of the CSO available to readers exclusively on the websites of the Office and 16 statistical offices in voivodeships.

To popularise statistics, the Central Statistical Library organises exhibitions about its collections both in the CSO building (two exhibitions a year) and in other locations. The exhibitions accompany scientific conferences organised in the CSO and Statistical Offices in memory of outstanding, deceased Polish statisticians or anniversary celebrations.

In 2011, the Library subscribed to the electronic librarian database (at first to the databases of the World Public Library and IBUK, and since 2014 to the OECD iLibrary). This decidedly increased the scope in which the Library's readers are using the electronic publications that could be accessed remotely.

In 2015, the Central Statistical Library was undergoing modernisation works related to the implementation of the "Information System of Public Statistics 2" (ISPS-2) project. The purpose of the introduced alterations was to increase the availability of information resources and services provided to Library users. As a part of the conducted activities, the Library purchased equipment required to create the digital statistical library and store digitalised library resources. A new library server, disc array and new computers were acquired. What is more, the Central Statistical Library got a new website. In order to expand the Digital Library that was established in 2009, collections that were a part of the National Library Resources were digitalised. The digitalised resources of the Central Statistical Library were

made available on the Digital Library Federation's website, which allows the exchange of information and access to e-library collections created by scientific and public institutions throughout Poland. Moreover, the data are transferred to similar international websites, including the Europeana digital library, which facilitates online access resources for foreign readers.

The ISPS-2 project also included the modernisation and replacement of equipment in the CSL's premises to increase comfort and expand the possibilities of using the publications in the printed as well as digital form under free access. The entire reading room and adjacent premises underwent general renovation. New fixed and cantilever shelves, including specialised shelves for electronic collections and work stations with freely available collections, were installed to store the collection of books and make it available to people. The reading room was redesigned for ergonomic reasons. We separated functional spaces for work with various types of documents: an area for periodicals available directly in the reading room, tables for work with large-format publications, a place where the Censuses may be accessed, and tables for work with reading-room publications or volumes ordered from the depository, which is located in the central part of the hall. We also created a space dedicated to work with digital documents. Twelve computer stations were installed in the room to allow the users to access online resources and services of public statistics and the library collection, including the resources published on the website of the Digital Library and OECD iLibrary databases. One screen and one projector were purchased for computer presentations.

Development plans of the CSL for the years to come

At the meeting of the Statistics Council held in the CSO on 22 February 2016, chaired by Professor Franciszek Kubiczek, the following plans for library development were discussed:

- digitalisation of all National Library Resources from our collection, i.e. about 12 000 volumes;
- scanning of all statistical annals of the CSO and Statistical Offices that have been unavailable in an electronic version (i.e. mainly from 1974–2002);

- making all bibliographies of the CSO's publications and topical bibliographies available in the form of online databases;
- cataloguing all collections currently available in traditional catalogues in the ALEPH system and making them available online (before 1996);
- publishing Internet versions of exhibitions, both temporary and permanent, held at the Library.

The Library will be facilitating its works in cooperation with the National Universal Central Catalogue (NUKAT) and the International Users of Ex Libris Group (IGeLU), to which the CSL belongs. The building of the virtual library in the world of Internet generation requires digital records produced in the CSL to be available in numerous research search tools, such as the Digital Book Index.

The Central Statistical Library plans to expand the scope in which the electronic resources and on-line databases are made available using the technology of modules developed by Ex Libris (e.g. PRIMO), which allows the parallel search of numerous library catalogues operating using different systems, electronic databases (subscribed to and available free of charge), and electronic periodicals made available to a given institution, and presents the user with a combined list of results, as well as providing further services, including allowing access to full texts.

The objective and the most important challenge that defines the future of the Central Statistical Library is the construction of a knowledge-based information society.