

## *Ten Years of the István Gombocz Scholarship*

by

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The untimely death of István Gombocz on April 10, 1973 deprived both Hungarian and international librarianship of a respected leader. Son of the well-known botanist Endre Gombocz, István Gombocz was born in 1921. From 1940 to 1944, he studied law at the University of Budapest. In the immediate post-war years (1946-1950), he worked for the Foreign Ministry, spending six months at the International Court in The Hague and one year at the Hungarian Embassy in Bucharest. His career at the National Széchényi Library began in 1952. In 1955, he was transferred to the new Department for International Exchange of Publications, of which he soon became the head and where he developed a worldwide exchange program. Active in professional organizations, he served as secretary of the Association of Hungarian Librarians (AHL) and on the Hungarian UNESCO Committee. Internationally, he soon became active in the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), serving from 1966 to 1969 as secretary of the Committee on Exchange of Publications. Topics featured in his many writings included international activities of the National Széchényi Library and the Association of Hungarian Librarians, Hungarian activities in UNESCO, and the international exchange of publications. He played a prominent part in the European Conference on the International Exchange of Publications in Vienna in April 1972 and in the IFLA Conference in Budapest later that year.<sup>1</sup>

Dr. Guy A. Marco, then dean of the Kent State University School of Library Science, attended the Budapest Conference of IFLA in 1972 and was greatly impressed by the many contributions made by Dr. Gombocz. Upon learning of his untimely death, Dr. Marco sought a suitable method of honoring the memory of this distinguished librarian who had contributed so notably to international library activities. After a series of informal consultations, Dr. Marco sent a letter to Dr. Sándor Székely, president of the AHL, offering to establish the István Gombocz Scholarship and seeking AHL endorsement. After consulting with the necessary officials, Dr. Székely

1. For additional information about his activities and publications, cf. "In Memoriam István Gombocz" *Zentralblatt für Bibliothekswesen* 87, nr. 9 (1973): 546-7.

announced acceptance and AHL set about choosing the first recipient in 1974.<sup>2</sup>

In the early years, Kent State University offered a specialized kind of full-time graduate assistantship which covered fees and a living allowance, in exchange for twenty hours of work per week with a faculty member in the School. Since 1979, the U.S. International Communication Agency has also participated. Presently, there is a three-way partnership:

— The Association of Hungarian Librarians selects a candidate each year, after a national competition, and the Hungarian Government provides transportation to and from the United States;

— The U.S. International Communication Agency (through the Institute of International Education) provides a maintenance allowance which covers room, board, books and, if the student is frugal, a few modest extras, like visits to American libraries or general travel;

— The Kent State University School of Library Science provides a quarter-time graduate assistantship. In exchange for five hours of work per week in the Center for the Study of Ethnic Publications, the student's instructional and general fees are covered.<sup>3</sup>

Since the inauguration of the István Gombocz Scholarship nearly a decade ago, ten Hungarian librarians have studied (or are studying) at Kent State University. Several have received promotions since their return to Hungary. Most have given talks or written articles about their American experiences. While at Kent, they have enriched the life of the School of Library Science through their international perspectives. Brief mention of the recipients (past and present) will support these generalizations. Ilona Kovács, now head of the Cataloging Department, Széchényi National Library, was the first recipient, arriving in Kent in September 1974 and graduating with the M.L.S. degree in August 1975. András Jablonkay, then librarian of the Central Library of the Medical University of Debrecen, received the Certificate of Advanced Studies in August 1976. Péter Szántó, now head of the Coordination Department, National Technical Information Centre and Library, received the M.L.S. in 1977. Dr. Tamás Rónai, Deputy Head, Department of Information Services, Library of the Hungarian Parliament, received the Certificate of Advanced Studies in 1978. Péter Hegedüs, from the Library of Karl Marx University, Budapest, came in January 1979 and graduated in December. Árpád Kiss, of the Central Library of the Technical University for Heavy Industry, Miskolc, included visits to the University of Chicago and the University of Illinois Chicago Circle while studying U.S. library networking and received the Certificate of Advanced Studies in August 1980. Gábor Stiegrad, of the Centre for Library Science and Methodology, concentrated on computer applications

2. For more details, cf. "Five Years of the Gombocz Scholarship: Hungarian Students at the Kent State University School of Library Science," by Guy A. Marco and A. Robert Rogers, *Leads* 20 (Winter 1979): 1-3.

3. A. Robert Rogers, "Glimpses of Some Hungarian Libraries and Library Schools," *International Library Review* 15 (July 1983): 307.

during his studies in 1980/81. Sándor Szabó, of AGROINFORM, Budapest, included research on information gathering patterns of agricultural scientists at the Ohio State University as part of his program leading to the Certificate of Advanced Studies in August 1982. Mihály Pálvölgyi, recently promoted to associate professor in the Library Science Department at the Teachers' Training College in Szombathely, concentrated on pedagogical research (including visits to the library schools of the University of Chicago and the University of Toronto) and received the Certificate of Advanced Studies in August 1983. It is very fitting that the tenth recipient of the Scholarship is none other than István Gombocz, Jr., who is pursuing his studies at Kent during 1983/84.\*

July of 1982 was a joyous occasion when a gracious invitation from the AHL made it possible for me to visit Hungary to renew friendships with former students, to make new friends in the AHL and to visit some Hungarian libraries and library schools. I hope these activities, and the ongoing results of awarding the Scholarship, will do something to stimulate the flow of information about libraries across national and linguistic boundaries and contribute to increased international understanding and goodwill.

\* Changes in positions of former students since the manuscript was submitted

Árpád Kiss, Librarian, Hungarian Geological Institute, Budapest; Dr. Ilona Kovács, Head, Research Management, National Széchenyi Library; Dr. Tamás Rónai, Library Consultant, Centre for Library Science and Methodology; Gábor Stiegrad, Head, Programming Department, National Technical Information Centre and Library; (Ed.)