



Margarita
Rudomino
All-Russia State
Library
for Foreign
Literature (LFL)

Moscow 2006



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IN THE COURSE OF 80 ODD YEARS OF ITS HISTORY THE LFL HAS TRANSFORMED FROM a tiny library unit attached to the Neophilological Institute (which has never came to be) with the stock of some 100 books in three main European languages, English, German and French, into a state collection of documents in various forms comprising 4,5 million units in 144 live and dead languages. The LFL, from the very day of its coming into being, has performed the double function: that of a public library rendering its users the full set of traditional library services and building up its collections in the humanities, arts and literature – and that of a sort of centre for obtaining all kind of



information on foreign countries, of a meeting-place, or a forum, where different cultures of the world come together and exchange their spiritual, human and scientific values. From the end of 1980s this mode of the LFL activities has become markedly broadened and enriched.

The Library which in 1990 was named after Margarita Rudomino, its founder and permanent Director

for 50 odd years, had changed its location many times. In October of 1967 it settled at last in the new building designed for it by V.A. Sitnov, a well-known Moscow architect, in Nikoloyamskaya street. The Library has two more buildings on the opposite side of the street which house several departments of the LFL and its bookshop, and construction of its linguistic and

conference centre in the vicinity of Moscow is in its final stage, but the Sitnov building remains the basis of its activities.

THE LIBRARY AND ITS READERS

LIBRARY SERVICE IS BASED IN THE LFL ON THREE MAIN PRINCIPLES: FREE OF charge usage of its stock, free and indiscriminate access to collections and information for



THE FAMOUS OVAL HALL
IS IN THE BUILDING ON THE LEFT
(THE HOUSE WAS BUILT IN THE
BEGINNING OF THE XIX CENTURY)



every user, specialized approach. At the same time the Library renders certain services requiring payment, such as making copies of the documents in its collections, giving certain materials from its basic collections out on loan, courses of foreign languages, search and selection of documents on order, restoration and binding, and some others.

As far back as the end of the 1980s the LFL was one of the first (if not the first one) among Soviet libraries to liquidate the institution of spec-keep and to give every user a free access to its stock. In was also in that time that the system of reading rooms came under revision. As a result all of them, with the excep-

tion of General Reading Room, have a specialized character determined by concrete spheres of interest of their users and by types of documents they have on the shelves of their subsidiary collections.

THE READER AND THE LIBRARY

THE LFL READERS GET INSIDE ITS MAIN BUILDING BY THE FRONT



ENTRANCE, so they have to cross the inner court of the Library decorated with busts presented as gifts to the City of Moscow or to the LFL itself. Today the inner court is overshadowed by the presences (in bronze and in stone) of great persons. These are archpriest Aleksander Men', spiritual preceptor of the LFL in the times of

perestroika, and Raoul Wallenberg who saved victims of the Nazis in World War II; champions of liberation Abraham Lincoln and Mahatma Gandhi; painter and composer Mikaelas Churlionis; classics of world literature Ferdowski, Niccolo Machiavelli, Heinrich Heine, Charles Dickens, Maurice Maeterlinck, Attila József and









Gabriela Mistral; traveller and geographer Ziga Herberstein who discovered Moscovia for Europe. An apt introduction to the Library's atmosphere, one may say. Registration desk and checkpoint for users, loan desks of editions from the basic collection and of books from the loan-stock, and the bookstall are on the ground floor. The readers' area proper begins on the first floor with the spacious foyer. Doors on the left lead to the computer terminals and card-indexes of alphabetic catalogue which exists in both electronic and card forms. Crossing this room one gets to Department of Children's Literature and its read-



ing room, to Canadian Educational Center and to Linguistic Centre of the LFL which is equipped with audio- and video-devices to help those who study foreign languages by themselves. There are cabinets in the Centre for holding language courses. The doors on the right lead to classified catalogues room and then to the Reference Reading Room of the

LFL Information Centre and to the reading room of the Visual Arts Department. Centre of Oriental Cultures with its reading room for orientalists and africanists is situated on the same first floor but is reached via the right wing of the building.

On the second floor users turning to the right find themselves in

American Center of the Library which includes the reading room, the loan desk and the reading room for materials on the higher education in the USA provided by the International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX). The reading room for literary studies and the reading room of the Rare Books Department



BEAUX-ARTS

SCIENCES

ACTUALITES

CINEMA

MUSIQUE

FILMS DE FICTION

EN

VIDEO



MULTIMEDIA

ESPACE MULTIMEDIA





are behind the Center. The doors on the left from the foyer lead to the General Reading Room. On the other side of it are the reading room for linguistic studies, the reception desk of the photocopying service, and French Cultural Centre with its book loan service and a rich mediateque. The foyer on the third hall is occupied by the re-transmitting stand of BBC World Service. On the left of it there is the reading room of the Information Department of the Embassy of Japan. Through the doors on the



right one gets to the Periodicals Reading Room and then to the reading room of Religious and Russian Emigre Literature Centre. The library of Nikolay Zernov, a Russian philosopher and historian of the Church and Professor in Oxford, donated to the LFL by his widow is kept in the Centre as well as sets of pub-

lications by IMCA-PRESS, Ardis and other emigre publishing houses. The topmost area of the readers' zone is the double-deck reading room of the Centre of Information on Law; one gets there by the separate stairway from the third floor. The Centre places an impressive set of foreign and Russian law resources







at its users' disposal. The French and Canadian Centres and the British Council (its library is housed in the left wing of the LFL building while English language courses occupy rooms in the right one) are functioning under the roof of the Library they closely cooperate with. They serve its readers but they represent their

own countries.
THE LIBRARY AND REINFORCING DIALOGUES BETWEEN CULTURES
ACTIVITIES OF THE LFL AS A FORUM OF WORLD CULTURES ARE TWO-folded: it brings cultural and spiritual treasures of other countries and peoples within reach of its users,

and it propagates cultural wealth of the Russian Federation abroad. The LFL carries on extensive external activities, receives exhibitions on its premises and shows exhibitions in other cities, towns and countries. It holds actions of all sort – lectures, readings, evenings, literary drawing-rooms and musical chairs, as well as conferences, round tables, seminars



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and other meetings of scientific character. Towards this end the LFL makes use of its three halls: Big Hall (the second floor) which can seat 270 people and is equipped with up-to-date technological devices, Small Hall (the third floor, entrance by the right wing) and Oval Hall at No 6 in Nikoloyamskaya Street, opposite the main building. Its walls heard and remember voices of archpriest Alexander Men', Andrey Sinyavsky, Elena Bonner, Jorge Amado, Nathalie Sarraute, Nikita Struve, academicians Vyacheslav Vs. Ivanov, Dmitry Likhachev and Sergey Averintsev, Irina Illovayskaya-Alberti, Irina Posnova, Savva Kulish, Rezo Gabriadze, Yury Davydov...



Exhibition grounds of the LFL include

foyers on the first and second floors, the marble foyer of the Big Hall and the foyer of the Oval Hall. This allows the Library to arrange large-scale exhibitions, like the one devoted to frescoes by Giotto in Cappella degli Scrovegni in Padua which was held on two floors.

Compiling bibliographic indexes and editing anthologies of texts on the "life" of foreign authors in Russian

culture and language and on contacts and ties of Russians with other peoples and countries are a special form of the LFL contribution to development of cross-cultural dialogues. International Information and Documentation Centre on the Problems of Displaced Cultural Valuables, Centre for Foreign Librarianship which includes regional

IFLA Clearing House and prepares the annual "Libraries Abroad" for publication, Centre of Information on UNESCO and Rudomino Publishers function as structural units of the Library.

Information on cultural, scientific and educational actions of the Library is to be looked for on its web-site in Internet: www.libfl.ru.





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