



July 19, 2012

Judith Deutsch Kornblatt
President, ASEES
Professor and Chair, Dept. of Slavic Languages and Literature
University of Wisconsin-Madison
455 North Park Street
Madison, WI 53706

Dear Professor Kornblatt:

Thank you for your thoughtful letter of June 7th to NYPL President Anthony Marx and for your comments about the importance of our Slavic and East European holdings and about the perennial imperative to ensure their availability to scholars, both through on-site access and by means of curatorial expertise. Your letter was shared with me and several of my colleagues, and I write to respond to your concerns.

First and foremost, I can assure you that our commitment to Slavic and East European studies remains strong. Indeed, NYPL continues to invest more in this field—in terms of significant funds for acquisitions, staffing, cataloging, and preservation—than do the majority of academic research libraries in our country.

In order to give you a more specific sense of our commitment, please allow me to share with you the following facts:

- **Acquisitions**
 - Our current yearly expenditure for the purchase of Slavic and East European materials is approximately \$165,000.
 - We are closely coordinating future acquisitions in Polish and Czech languages with Columbia and Princeton Universities in order to ensure the broadest coverage of published literature among collections that provide shared access.
- **Staffing**
 - We have a Ph.D. subject specialist, Stephen Corrsin, in the library full time. Though he also serves as our subject specialist for Jewish studies, he is available every weekday to give personalized attention to any and all researchers using our Slavic and East European collections.



- Our librarian and Slavic specialist Hee-Gwone Yoo is now available full time to provide public service to users. You undoubtedly know Mr. Yoo, who worked closely with Edward Kasinec for many years. He also responds to e-mail reference inquiries regarding the Slavic and East European collections of the Library.
- **Cataloging/discoverability**
 - We have a team of two professional librarians and four library assistants tackling backlogged Slavic and East European material. More particularly,
 - for those items still lacking online records, we are making steady and good progress on the project to convert manual records compiled in the “red book catalog.”
 - We are completing barcoding of the entire Slavic and East European stack collection. This means that a barcode—a unique identifier—will be attached to every book’s cataloging record so that items in Cyrillic (or other non-Western alphabets) are more easily retrievable by our student workers.
 - We have a credentialed librarian with an M.A. in Slavic literature who is our primary specialist in cataloging rare Slavic and East European materials.
- **Conservation/digitization**
 - We are among the leaders nationally in digitizing our Slavic and East European holdings. We have already digitized more than 3,000 books from our collections and are planning to digitize more.
 - We have one of the top library conservation labs in the country and, although there are many claims on its resources, we regularly direct its attention to our Slavic and East European holdings.
- **Additional services to scholars**
 - In the last two years, the Library has been hosting short-term research fellowships, including in the area of Slavic and East European studies. These small travel stipends enable early career scholars to visit the collections and work with NYPL specialists on their particular research topics.
 - In the Fall of 2012, we expect to re-open at least one of the rooms on the 2nd floor central corridor of the Stephen A. Schwarzman Building to accommodate additional researchers and writers who need access to the collections, with a preference given to those who are in area studies fields.

In sum, all of us at the New York Public Library sympathize with your concerns and are devoted to maintaining our collections and enhancing access to them. Even in these



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times of diminished funding, we are striving to build our Slavic and East European holdings and to meet the needs of scholars like you and your colleagues in ASEES.

Sincerely,

Ann D. Thornton

Ann D. Thornton
Andrew W. Mellon Director of The New York Public Libraries

cc: Stephen Corrsin
Anthony Marx
Victoria Steele