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## Welcome

*"Hence if **the library is**, as Borges wishes it to be, **a model of the universe**, we attempt to make it into a universe at the level of a man, and I remind you that the library at the level of a man also means a joyful library, (...) and thus a library that one visits eagerly and which transforms itself gradually into a great machine of spending free time, such as the Museum of Modern Art, where one can go to a cinema, stroll around the garden, watch sculptures and eat a two-course meal. I know that UNESCO agrees with me: 'A library (...) should be easily accessible, and its gates open to all members of the community, who can make use of it freely, regardless of race, skin colour, nationality, age, gender, faith, language, marital status and level of education' ".*

Umberto Eco

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## History

The oldest traces of librarianship in the region of Gorlice date from 1870. At the Society of Friends of Education in Gorlice existed a reading room which had 1500 works. The Circle of the Society of the People's School in Gorlice was the driving force behind the educational activity between 1893 - 1939. One of the more important libraries acting before the first World War was the Library of the Military Society (Biblioteka Towarzystwa Kasynowego). This library used to be in the building "Sokół" (nowadays the cinema "Wiarus"). In the year 1925 the Library of the Union of Craftsmen and Dealers was founded. It was active during the occupation and after the liberation it functioned until 1947. In the period between the wars yet other libraries existed, e.g. the Library of Jewish Women and the Lending Establishment of Julia Kankoferowna. Within the grounds of Glinik Mariampolski two libraries were active: The Library of the Army Clericals and the Library of Societies of the Universities of Labour. A part of the collections of these libraries was burnt down by the Germans and the remainder was taken over by the Municipal Public Library in Gorlice.

The basis for the foundation of the city library was the Decree concerning Libraries and the Maintenance of Library Collections from 1946. With the resolution of the National Council library committees were established. Another outcome of this resolution was the formation of the District Library committee, which consisted of 5 people with Władysław Cebulski as chairman.

The District Library started its own activity by establishing a network of libraries in its administrative district. Thanks to the help of national councils, educational authorities and library committees, this activity proceeded quickly. The festive opening of the libraries of the Gorlice region took place in 1949. 12 institutions were spread over this network (1 District Library, 2 Municipal Libraries, 9 Communal Libraries and 52 library points). The Library in Gorlice was registered on the 27th of February 1948 under the name of "Municipal and District Public Library in Gorlice, as a separate institution".

On the 1st of September 1945 Stanisław Gabryel, MSc was appointed the Director of the District Library.

The first period of activity of the library between, 1945 and 1948, was devoted to the improvement of the accessibility of the library collections to the public. Large contributions were made by the first librarians: Wilhelmina Stachnik, Maria Muszyńska, MSc, Stanisław Gabryel, MSc and Maria Wojtasiewicz.

In 1955 both libraries merged and ever since acted as one single District and Municipal Public Library in Gorlice.

In 1973, with the establishment of municipalities as administrative units, there was a necessity of a change of names and character of the libraries. Communal libraries and library branches were founded. The number of institutions was 35, with the following division: 1 District and Municipal Public Library in Gorlice, 1 Municipal and

Communal Library in Biecz, 11 Communal Libraries and 20 library branches and 50 library points. From the 1st of June 1975, as a result of administrative reform, the institute in Gorlice was renamed the Municipal Public Library.

From the 1st of June 1999 the library in Gorlice has been the first in Region of Małopolska to function as a District Library.

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