New Statesman and Society, an effort which has constituted a serious attack on freedom of the press; and be it further

RESOLVED, that PLG/SRRT supports the New Statesman and Society Defence Fund set up to pay legal fees and the indemnities on damages won by Major and his co-litigant Clare Latimer, and which is fighting to change the British libel laws so that the threat of lawsuits is not used to squelch the free press and stamp out what little dissidence and diversity there is in the media; and be it further

RESOLVED, that PLG/SRRT opposes reported British library censorship of the January 29, 1993 issue of New Statesman and Society even if done in anticipation of possible legal action; and be it further

RESOLVED, that PLG/SRRT calls on the ALA membership, Council and appropriate committees to join with us in endorsing the above resolution and in expressing solidarity with New Statesman and Society, on this their eightieth anniversary, in their campaign to protect the rights to free press and dissent.

Passed by Progressive Librarians Guild and ALA Social Responsibilities Round Table and tabled by ALA Council during ALA Annual Conference in New Orleans, June/July 1993.

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MANIFESTO OF AVANT-GARDE LIBRARIANSHIP

1.

Shake in your shoes bureaucrats! The time has come for a realization of the theory-death of the librarian, embodied in the revolutionary struggle for liberation from this odious society.

2.

The weapons of contestation at our disposal have so far been exposed as inadequate. We must forge new tools from extreme sources.

3.

The revolutionary theory developed by the various avant-garde tendencies of this century has had no influence within our miserable milieu. We must resuscitate ourselves before we die of boredom.

4.

The poverty of library theory is everywhere apparent. Are we to be just another branch of the bureaucratic management of coffee-table knowledge? Are we the soft police of social consciousness?

5.

As usual it has been left to those outside our so called “profession” to open our eyes. Our rationales are fragmenting on the road to ruin. What should we do? Celebrate!

6.

The librarian is the narrator of a story that has lost its authority, the complacent host of a canon now exploded.

7.

The classifications we invented now reinvent us daily, we are losing control as control leads us, inevitably, to more control. Our rules have been turned upon us and we have been sentenced to an eternity of silence.
Paradigmatic shifts in the fields of knowledge and information have left us with little to call our own. We are seduced and abandoned in a sea of data with no shore.

The media image of the librarian is a travesty. The real situation is ten times worse. We must exorcise those who wish to see more of the shame as we leave the 20th century.

We must recruit those who have no investment in things as they are, the future will be for those who will create change without loving it; those who perceive the joy of creation behind every destruction.

In the field of the cultural we live in a lie of autonomy. Publishing is an area as sullied as any other in a world dictated by the commodity and exchange-value. The file of information is a commodity like anything else, a can of beans on the supermarket/library shelf. The library is now a shopping mall full of boring, aimless academics.

We must determine new relationships for ourselves in order to give the greatest gift of all, the gift of liberation from the past for a new situation really worth living.

Movement for an Avant-garde Librarianship, London, 23/1/93