

PROGRESSIVE LIBRARIAN

A Journal for Critical Studies & Progressive Politics in Librarianship

Issue #15

Winter 1998/1999



**The Social Responsibilities Debate
Librarianship & Resistance
SRRT/ALA Conference Proceedings
Book Reviews
Cuba Poster Project
Racism, International Relations & Librarianship
Protest Letters**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Progressive Librarian #15, Winter 1998/99

Articles

- A Few Gates: An Examination of the Social Responsibilities Debate in the Early 1970s and '90s.
by Steven Joyce 1
- Librarianship and Resistance
by Sandy Iverson 14
- Conference Proceedings: SRRT-ALA Program on International Social Responsibilities & Librarianship**
- LIWO: Local Touch and Global Networking in South Africa
by Johnny Jacobs 20
- From Student Revolt to Working Librarians: The Formation of BiS, Sweden
by Lennart Wettmark 27
- AKRIBIE: Arbeitskreis Kritischer Bibliothekarinnen / Working Group of Critical Librarians, Germany
by Frauke Mährt-Thomsen 31
- KRIBIBI: Public Libraries and the "Working Pool of Critical Librarians" in Austria
by Renate Obadalek 37
- Radical Librarianship, UK: Something of an Overview from the UK
by Martyn Lowe 41

Added Entries

- The Cuba Poster Project
by Lincoln Cushing 51

Book Reviews

- Librarianship and Legitimacy: The Ideology of the Public
Library Inquiry* by Douglas Raber
reviewed by Patti Clayton 54

- McLibel: Burger Culture on Trial* by John Vidal
reviewed by Martyn Lowe 59

Documents

- Remarks on Racism, International Relations & Librarianship
by E. J. Josey 62

- Letter Against Bombing of Iraq, 12/16/98 65

- World Bank Protest Letter, 6/29/98 67

- Notes on Contributors 68

- PLG Statement of Purpose 70

A FEW GATES: An Examination of the Social Responsibilities Debate in the Early 1970s & '90s

by Steven Joyce

Social responsibility will someday become once again a burning issue for libraries. Others will come together with new hope, new Congresses for Change, new challenges to make the tired and sterile professional mind whirl about in confusion and anger. (Armitage 1973, 41)

He who defines the terms wins the argument. (Josey 1973, 32)

The July/August 1992 cover photo of *American Libraries (AL)* depicts a nondescript group of people standing behind a banner that reads, "Gay and Lesbian Task Force: American Library Association" (since renamed the Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Task Force). Readership reaction to this cover was swift and surprisingly virulent and homophobic.

I was very displeased by the front cover displaying gay and lesbian librarians marching down Market Street. . . as a matter of fact I wanted to puke! I have already been called on the carpet by library board members who feel the American Library Association is a "lunatic fringe" association. (Witt 1992, 625)

I still find it reprehensible that an association I am a member of chooses to glorify homosexuals. The vast majority of the American people do not support such a lifestyle that flies in the face of sound family values and a healthy physical and mental wellbeing. (Hartwell 1992, 843)

When I saw how ALA is not a professional organization, but a left wing political group, I vowed that it would never receive a penny from me again. . . . We think homosexuality is WRONG – W-R-O-N-G. It is against God's laws. . . . I propose that all God-fearing librarians start up an alternative library organization [at the time of this writing, a right-wing organization called Family Friendly Libraries is in the process of development] . (Michell 1992, 843)

Tom Gaughan, *AL's* editor at the time, pointed out that

just 24 hours after the advance copies. . . of *AL* reached our offices, I began to get educated by readers who were irate over the cover photo. . . .

The first call was from a man so livid he had difficulty speaking. . . he “didn't care what people do behind closed doors” but it didn't belong on the cover of his professional association's magazine. He also said he “lived in a nice neighborhood” and didn't want anyone to see something like *AL's* cover in his mailbox. . . . I was startled at the depth of the fear and anger in his voice. . . . What are they seeing on the cover, I wondered – a group of people standing behind a banner, or sex acts?

The second caller made an analogy between gays and murderers. . . . Several callers criticized the “very poor taste” and the “very poor editorial decision” of selecting the offending cover photo. . . . Another complained that as a school librarian she didn't want her students to see it. . . . The fear and loathing apparent in their voices was more eloquent than their words. (1992, 612)

Interlaced within the virulent reactions were the calm “well-reasoned” yet logically questionable arguments against such a cover photo.

I'm probably as firm an advocate of Afro-American – Native-American – Gay and lesbian rights as anyone, but I'd like to see the library profession cease its endless advocacy of social issues and return to the difficult issues of operating information agencies. (Brace 1992, 738)

When an organization espouses extreme views it runs a strong risk of losing credibility and effectiveness in its primary function. The question is not whether gays and

lesbians are discriminated against, but whether this is an appropriate or relevant issue for ALA. (Rasmus 1992, 625)

Whether *AL's* cover photo, in fact, advocates social issues or espouses extreme views is debatable, but it did have the effect of polarizing various factions within the library community. It became the catalyst through which the still festering social responsibilities debate of the early 1970s was reopened and reexamined.

One view, which allies itself primarily with the Library Bill of Rights (see Appendix), has it that ALA involvement with social issues must be limited and directly related to librarianship (Uricchio 1994, 574). The arguments for such a view are fairly simple and straightforward. Librarians should remain neutral and focus only on equitable access to as many points of view as possible. Further, librarians have enough to do in terms of fulfilling basic institutional goals and objectives without spending time and resources on causes that only marginally involve the profession.

Another view, not necessarily antithetical to the Library Bill of Rights, has it that social issues must be investigated. The arguments for this view are somewhat more complex than the neutralist view. Buschman, Rosenzweig, and Harger (1994) argue that “calls for ALA to purge social issues from its substantial and varied agenda are unhealthy for the profession, destructive of internal democracy, fundamentally hypocritical, and intellectually unsound” (575). They argue this for several reasons. First, librarians must become actively engaged in the society that they serve. Librarianship is concerned with literacy, intellectual freedom, and equity of information access. By holding such values, how can librarians ignore issues concerning basic human dignity and the social conditions in which human culture develops? Second, rather than eliminating debate on social issues, such debate should be seen as a sign of a healthy intellectual community. Third, who is to decide what is and is not of primary concern to librarianship? Not every political and social issue is a library one, but it is the job of the Social Responsibilities Round Table (SRRT) to raise such issues so that their implications for librarianship can be discussed (1994, 576). Further, in some areas (such as Colorado) where librarians can lose their jobs on the basis of a nonconforming sexual orientation, gay rights, as a social issue, becomes directly relevant within the context of librarianship. Thus, it is both unrealistic and naive to think that librarians and librarianship can be

divorced from the social context within which they operate. The present social responsibilities debate, however, is not particularly new, and many of the arguments used today, both for and against, were first employed over 25 years ago.

In 1969, ALA created the SRRT. Its stated purposes were to:

- 1) provide a forum for the discussion of the responsibilities of libraries in relation to the important problems of social change which face institutions and librarians;
 - 2) provide for exchange of information among all ALA units about library activities with the goal of increasing understanding of current social problems;
 - 3) act as a stimulus to the Association and its various units in making libraries more responsive to current social needs; and,
 - 4) present programs, arrange exhibits and carry out other appropriate activities.
- (from ALA, Social Responsibilities Round Table 1970, 5; cited from Stevens 1989, 18)

However, the concept of social responsibilities did not actually become a primary concern until 1971 when the ALA Council voted to:

Define the broad social responsibilities of ALA in terms of a) the contribution that librarianship can make in ameliorating or even solving the critical problems of society, b) support for all efforts to help inform and educate the people of the United States on these problems and to encourage them to examine the many views on, and the facts regarding, each problem, and c) the willingness of ALA to take a position on current critical issues with the relationship to libraries and library service clearly set forth in the position statement. (cited from DeJohn 1973, 38)

The SRRT has since attempted to turn the words of its stated purposes into actions by establishing a number of task forces focusing on such issues as feminism, homosexuality, human rights, and homelessness. Some librarians, however, felt that the concept of social responsibilities was antithetical to the principles embodied within the Library Bill of Rights and that the acceptance of one would, by definition, negate the acceptance of the other. The loudest proponent of this antithesis, and the one whose voice still echoes throughout the library literature of today, was David K.

Berninghausen, director of the now defunct University of Minnesota Library School.

Berninghausen was also the chair of the ALA's Committee on Intellectual Freedom from 1948 to 1952, and from 1967 to 1972. During the early 1970s, he published a series of articles which culminated in a book entitled *The Flight from Reason* (1975). His first article, "The Librarian's Commitment to the Library Bill of Rights" (1970), examined the history of both the Library Bill of Rights and the Committee on Intellectual Freedom from their inception and creation in 1939 and 1940 respectively through to the late 1960s. Berninghausen also looked to the future, and he warned librarians to be aware of those on the radical left and on the reactionary right who are prepared to further their causes by any possible means:

Probably no group, under or over thirty, black or white, religious or anti-religious, of the political left or the political right, is without a few members who are so extreme, so rigid, so intransigent that they sincerely believe that anyone who does not view the world precisely as they do should be forced to conform or cease to exist. (35)

Such a statement points up the fact that, for Berninghausen, librarians must stand vigilantly on guard for intellectual freedom and remain neutral on all non-library issues. He goes on to point out that social responsibilities, as newly defined by the Subcommittee on Social Responsibility of the Action Committee on New Directions for ALA (ACONDA), are "the relationships that librarians and libraries have to non-library problems that relate to the social welfare of our society" (36). Berninghausen links the concept of extremism to the concept of social responsibilities and, according to his interpretation of the subcommittee's definition, the old conservative neutralist position of librarianship as espoused by the Library Bill of Rights is no longer viable. Librarians are now encouraged to embrace a new form of advocacy or partisan librarianship. Indeed, for Berninghausen, the concept of intellectual freedom and the concept of social responsibilities are antithetical, but this is not surprising when one considers the implicit syllogism he has set up: 1) those who hold intensely dogmatic beliefs are censorial; 2) advocates of the new definition of social responsibilities hold intensely dogmatic beliefs; 3) advocates of the new definition of social responsibilities are censorial and must, therefore, renounce the tenets of intellectual

freedom. It is with this simplistic and somewhat misleading view that Berninghausen will proceed in his writings.

In his second article, "Social Responsibility vs. the Library Bill of Rights" (1972), Berninghausen begins by stating that the *raison d'être* of ALA is not, among other things, any of the following:

1. To eradicate racial injustice and inequities and to promote human brotherhood.
2. To stop the pollution of air, earth, and sea.
3. To build a United Nations capable of preventing all wars. (3675)

"Vital as these issues are, it is not the purpose of ALA to take positions as to how men [sic] must resolve them" (3675). This statement constitutes his first major premise; and yet, he fails to examine the actual purpose or mission of ALA. Further, such a statement begs the question: if it is not the purpose of ALA to take a stand on the above issues, then just whose purpose is it? As Betty-Carol Sellen explains, "If librarians decide that the issues vital to society are irrelevant to librarians as librarians, then society may find that librarians are irrelevant to it" (1973, 27).

Berninghausen also points out that it is not the purpose of ALA "to promote homosexualism as a life-style" (1972, 3675). Such a statement shows perfectly his inability to understand a socially responsible activity and its relevance to librarianship. The Gay Liberation Task force of the SRRT was created in order to help improve services to homosexuals and to help improve access to homosexual resources. At the time of Berninghausen's writing, homosexuals received little or no library service, libraries did not collect homosexual literature unless the content was clinical or disapproving, and LC subject headings were insulting and couched between various less savory headings. Consider the memories of Barbara Gittings:

Today when I speak to gay groups and mention "the lies in the libraries," listeners over 35 know instantly what I mean. Most gays have at some point gone to books in an effort to understand about being gay or to get some help in living as gay. In my time, what we found was strange to us (they're writing about me but I'm not like that!) and cruelly clinical (there's nothing about love) and always bad (being this way seems grim and hopeless). (1990, 2)

The real issue then is not the promotion of a life-style, as Berninghausen would have it, but rather a lack of access to useful and relevant resources for a marginalized group within society. Thus, he raises an issue of which he is ignorant and that is, in fact, directly relevant to librarianship; and in *The Flight from Reason* (1975), the reader will note the irony when Berninghausen states that "The objective of strengthening library services to the disadvantaged is clearly a responsibility of libraries, librarians, and the ALA" (111). In terms of library services and information access, homosexuals are at a disadvantage.

Perhaps one ought to give Berninghausen the benefit of the doubt: could it be that he did not view homosexuals as a marginalized group? In "Social Responsibility" (1972), he states that librarians, in the effective performance of their duties, should not find their jobs put in jeopardy because they devote their non-library hours to non-library causes (3675). Could it be that he was unaware of Michael McConnell who lost his job as a librarian because he wished, in "non-library" manner, to marry his same sex partner? This was the same Michael McConnell whose appeal was ignored by the Intellectual Freedom Committee (Gittings 1990, 4) – the very committee that Berninghausen chaired at the time.

After leaving the reader with an inaccurate and somewhat confused perception of the concept of social responsibilities, and after evading the issue that he himself raised (defining what is actually relevant to librarians), Berninghausen advances his second major premise: if ALA becomes "a political and social organization, then the principle of intellectual freedom as stated in the Library Bill of Rights will have to be discarded" (1972, 3676). He provides no proof for such a premise except in the implicit syllogism previously discussed. He does, however, attempt to make his position clearer in *The Flight from Reason* by deliberately misrepresenting the proponents of social responsibilities who, he says, believe that:

1. ALA should be politicized; that is, it should give up its professional character and its "traditional, conservative neutrality," becoming instead a partisan, advocacy organization.
2. Libraries should similarly be politicized. They should reject the Library Bill of Rights' concept of the library's professional responsibility to provide information on all

sides of all controversial issues for all citizens. And publicly supported libraries should become "libraries of opinion." (109)

Just as Berninghausen first examined the definition of social responsibilities as presented by the Subcommittee on Social Responsibility of ACONDA (1970), so too he would later make use of the same definition in order to (deliberately?) mislead the reader (DeJohn 1973). He states that according to the subcommittee, "ALA should endeavor to devise means whereby libraries can become more effective instruments of social change" (1972, 3677). He later revises the above phrase to read "instruments to effect social change" (3678). The difference between the two phrases (effective instruments and instruments to effect) is not merely semantic. The first implies that libraries and librarians will enable users to effect social change; the second implies that libraries and librarians themselves will effect social change. Berninghausen has changed the context of the original phrasing, and he carries the new context to its logical conclusion: 1) librarians will become immersed in partisan causes unrelated to librarianship; 2) librarians will reject the principle of intellectual freedom; 3) librarians will censor materials with which they do not agree; and, 4) librarians will thereby attempt to effect social change based on their own dogmatic beliefs. It is ironic that Berninghausen bases much of his argument on the minor report of a subcommittee, the contents of which were never actually accepted as presented to ACONDA. It is doubly ironic that he never actually examines the stated purposes of the SRRT. It is triply ironic that he seems to break his own rules of misrepresentation when he states that "It is only too common practice. . .to quote limited passages out of context to produce a misleading picture" (1972, 3681).

Shortly after the publication of "Social Responsibility," *Library Journal* (*LJ*) published 19 short essays in its January 1, 1973 issue in response to Berninghausen's arguments. In order to provide balance, the editors deliberately solicited responses from librarians who they knew would oppose the antithesis set forth by Berninghausen; and "The Berninghausen Debate" which incorporated both of the articles, became an *LJ* classic (1993). In 1975, Berninghausen published *The Flight from Reason* which extended his premise of antithesis. The book, however, received tepid reviews, and many ever-polite reviewers pointed out the good as well as the bad without actually making a judgment as to its value (see, for instance, Asheim 1976, Broadfield 1977, and Johannesen 1976).

By the mid-1970s, the controversies that led to and arose from the creation of the SRRT began to fade. Many librarians began to become aware of the relationships between social issues and library issues, and they adopted the spirit of the SRRT.

Roma Harris looked to feminism and examined the services provided to, among others, battered women, lesbians, and the unemployed. Cal Gough and Ellen Greenblatt looked to issues concerning gay, lesbian, and bisexual (GLB) populations, and they examined the services provided to those populations. Many other librarians examined issues focusing on nuclear disarmament, apartheid, aboriginals (New Zealand, Australian, and North American), and immigrants. These librarians became aware that many social issues were also inextricably bound up with library issues.

In 1984, Sanford Berman and James P. Danky launched *Alternative Library Literature: A Biennial Anthology*. The editors came to

realize over the past decade that there's a wealth of variously wild, useful, dynamic, funny, provocative, and socially conscious "library literature" that few of our colleagues normally see. And that doesn't make it into Katz's yearly anthology, which deliberately attempts to be "balanced." So here's the first volume. . .a biennial, deliberately unbalanced collection of material dealing with library and information issues from a critical, nontraditional, socially responsible perspective; addressing topics usually overlooked or minimized in standard library media. (1984, 1)

As it turned out, many of the articles published in *Alternative Library Literature* were also published in mainstream library literature; and the "socially responsible perspective" had become not only entrenched, but also accepted within the library profession. Indeed, it looked as though the Berninghausen view of librarianship were dead, and those who did cite him did so within an historical context with no intention of fostering debate (see, for instance, MacCann 1989 or Stevens 1989).

Unfortunately, the argument that was advanced by Berninghausen had only gone into a temporary remission. It came back full force when *AL* published its cover photo in 1992. Of course the reactions against the concept of social responsibilities were and are exactly that – reactions. The late 1960s were

heady times and conspicuous for the activism they spawned. And it must be admitted that the great unwashed and unkempt of the Radical Right and New Left were busy burning books, destroying card catalogues, and forcibly taking control of various institutions. The most extreme of these groups did attack the tenets of intellectual freedom, and what is unfortunate is that Berninghausen made the error of assuming that those librarians who advocated the concept of social responsibilities were extremist in their views. Berninghausen reacted to the times out of fear and anger.

By 1992, homosexuality permeated the air more so than it had ever done since the Stonewall Uprising of 1969. Vice President Dan Quayle stated that he felt the homosexual lifestyle was a choice, and a wrong choice at that. President Bush stated that, in his view, homosexuality was neither normal nor right (Malice 1993, 4). On November 3, 1992, Colorado's Amendment Two, which prohibited municipalities from passing ordinances to protect the rights of lesbians and gays, came into existence. Ironically, ALA's Midwinter Meeting was held in Denver at that time. In 1993, the newly elected President Clinton nominated Roberta Achtenberg, a lesbian, to the post of Assistant Secretary in the Department of Housing and Urban Development (the highest post offered to an openly homosexual person to date) (Clearances 1992, 4). Clinton also instituted a "don't ask, don't tell" policy for homosexuals serving in the U. S. military. Throughout the early-mid 1990s, court cases demonstrated that both the FBI and the CIA had anti-homosexual hiring practices, and scientific evidence indicated that homosexuality was apparently the result of genetics. Indeed, a greater awareness of homosexuality came about within society as the result of more widespread public discourse – homosexuality was in the air. Unfortunately, homosexuality is more than just marginalized by society. Because of its focus on sexuality, itself societally problematic, homosexuality is further stigmatized; and much of the reaction to *AL's* cover photo arose from that stigmatization.

It is unfortunate that librarians are now citing Berninghausen in order to advocate views which are not necessarily antithetical to the concept of social responsibilities. To cite one example, Dorothy M. Broderick uses Berninghausen in support of her argument that "the only political commitment we should make is to free access to as many points of view as are available when it comes to building collections and passing resolutions" (1993, 448). Marilyn Miller, ALA president for 1993, uses Berninghausen to support her contention that "Profoundly important library issues are

literally stacking up. . . . Let's focus on solutions to these problems – to improve our ability to empower people through libraries" (1993, 578). These librarians use Berninghausen in order to help drive home the necessity for improved user access. Ironically, Berninghausen's words do not advocate improved access. He merely showed how easy one can win an argument if one defines the terms.

Many, including Berninghausen, have argued that librarians need to remain neutral and to collect materials representing as many different points of view as possible. However, such a stance is both naive and overly simplistic. Nowhere in the Library Bill of Rights is there a statement to the effect that librarians must remain neutral. Certainly librarians must strive for objectivity, but they, like everyone else, are also the products of societal ideologies and discourses. Thus, librarians are invested with their own psychological and cultural biases, and it is reasonable to assume that they will make judgments and decisions based on those biases. Neutrality is a form of silence – "I am not for war, but then I am not for peace; I am not for sexism, but then I am not for equality; I am not for homophobia, but then I am not for tolerance. I am for neutrality, I am for nothing, I am a negation of everything." Indeed, complete neutrality is the ultimate form of surrender – surrender to a, dare I say it, Berninghausian orthodoxy that paradoxically detests the horrors perpetuated by and on humanity while, at the same time, it is quite happy to maintain those horrors. Having a voice does not imply the silencing of others as Berninghausen would suggest. Socially responsible librarians do not reject the principle of intellectual freedom; socially responsible librarians embrace it – "Those who believe in the concept of social responsibility want to add the underground press to their collections, not toss out the traditional press" (Sellen 28). Indeed, many materials contain information outside of the mainstream, but they are nowhere to be found in the standard reviewing and selecting sources. Librarians must actively seek out alternative sources and resources if they are to achieve anything that resembles a balanced collection.

As previously discussed, the real issue that the social responsibilities debate dredges up concerns of improved user access. In a society that tends to stigmatize the marginal, both publication of and access to alternative materials becomes and remains limited. To employ Berninghausen's own syllogistic style, "neutral" librarians, by virtue of their silence, do nothing to promote effective access (which would be tantamount to activism). Thus, "neutral" librarians help to perpetuate society's stigmatization of marginal-

ized populations. Thus, "neutral" librarians are, in fact, not neutral. Rather they help to maintain a status quo created by a dominant elite – an elite that, paradoxically, defines itself by the Other while, at the same time, it attempts to destroy (or at least subjugate) that Other. I am not saying that one need take a stand on every social issue, but those who sit on the fence ought to think about who built that fence. By adopting a voice, librarians can give voice to others who would not normally have one. The fence will never go away, but socially responsible librarians can help to construct a few gates.

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APPENDIX: LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS

The American Library Association affirms that all libraries are forums for information and ideas, and that the following basic policies should guide their services.

1. Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves. Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation.
2. Libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues. Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.
3. Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.
4. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.
5. A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.
6. Libraries which make exhibit spaces and meeting rooms available to the public they serve should make such facilities available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use.

Adopted June 18, 1948. Amended February 2, 1961, June 27, 1976, and January 23, 1980, by the ALA Council.

From *ALA Handbook of Organization and Membership Directory: 1995/1996*. Chicago: American Library Association, 1995. 134.6. <http://hollyhock.slis.ualberta.ca/issues/sjoyce.htm>

LIBRARIANSHIP AND RESISTANCE

by Sandy Iverson

In "The End of Innocence," Jane Flax concludes her essay by stating that "at its best, postmodernism invites us to engage in a continual process of disillusionment with the grandiose fantasies that have brought us to the brink of annihilation." (Flax, p. 460) To me, this is the hope of postmodernism and since reading Flax's article I have reflected on some of the particular "grandiose fantasies" or "metanarratives" that have structured my own life both personally and professionally.

I am trained as a librarian, and for a number of years I have focused my work in the "alternative" library sector. In this work I have been engaged in building and providing access to collections of resources not usually found in public, academic, or other mainstream libraries. Both in my training and in my work I have often felt ambivalent about librarianship and been at odds with the "library establishment." In reflecting on some of the metanarratives that underlay librarianship I begin to understand my own discomfort with the library establishment and with the practice of librarianship. I also begin to understand that I continue to accept unquestioningly too many of these metanarratives.

As our global society becomes increasingly based on the commodity of information, power becomes increasingly focused and managed by those with access to information. Those without such access remain marginalized. Librarians have been trained in the management of information. Therefore, I see their role as inherently political. Unfortunately, all too often librarians have rejected the political nature of the work they do. In these times of increased commodification of information librarians have sought to play leading roles in the new "information society." In order to do so, they have uncritically accepted the ideals of professionalization and have embraced the principles of objectivity and neutrality.

William Birdsall, a librarian at Dalhousie University, has examined this issue and he fears that by uncritically adopting the stance of objectivity

librarians might too easily perceive their role to be at the service of the knowledge elites: indeed, they could too eagerly concentrate on trying to insure for themselves a place among these elites while losing sight of their obligation to serve a broad clientele. (Birdsall, p.223)

Librarians tend to see themselves as neutral service providers, rejecting any stated political stance, and certainly their training encourages this position. As Henry Blanke maintains: "librarianship's reluctance to define its values in political terms and to cultivate a sense of social responsibility may allow it to drift into an uncritical accommodation with society's dominant political and economic powers." (Blanke, p.39)

While librarians are trained to maintain an objective or neutral stance they are also expected to make decisions regarding "good" and "bad" materials. Librarians are often seen as "experts" in determining the literature and other resources that their clientele needs. Unfortunately, they do not often recognize the inherent bias at work in making these decisions. Librarians generally regard the selection of materials as apolitical.

Donna Haraway has written a compelling critique of the "myth" of objectivity. She sees "objectivity doctrines [to be] in the service of hierarchical and positivist orderings of what can count as knowledge." (Haraway, p. 188) Certainly, librarians have served these same "hierarchical and positivist" orders in determining the "knowledge" that will be made available to their public. Haraway calls for a new feminist understanding of objectivity. "I would like a doctrine of embodied objectivity that accommodates paradoxical and critical feminist science projects: feminist objectivity means quite simply situated knowledges." (Haraway, p.188) Haraway explains that what we have accepted as "objectivity" claims to be a vision of the world from everywhere at once. "But of course that view of infinite vision is an illusion, a god trick." (Haraway, p. 189) We can not see from all perspectives at once, we each have our own particular views that are shaped by our own identities, cultures, experiences, and locations. "Feminist objectivity is about limited location and situated knowledge..." (Haraway, p. 190). I suggest that librarians could better serve the interests of all of their public by adopting Haraway's model and recognizing their own multiple, situated knowledges and those of their constituencies.

Connected to the "metanarrative" of objectivity within librarianship is the concept of intellectual freedom. Librarians have been vocal defenders of

freedom of information and freedom of speech. In many cases, librarian's anti-censorship stance has been in reaction to their being lobbied to censor or ban certain materials. This stance has been directly related to their belief in their own objectivity. They believe in their responsibility to provide access to a wide variety of information.

However, as Philip points out "the ideological framework of Western democracies has been erected upon and is supported as much by the ideology of freedom of the individual (and its offshoots) as by the ideology of racism. However, one discourse, censorship, becomes privileged; the other, racism, is silenced." (Philip, p. 210) While librarians have been avidly anti-censorship, they have not been avidly anti-racist. In fact, they do not acknowledge the inherent racism that is active within the discourse of anti-censorship.

Philip discusses the debates that have raged around the issue of white middle class writers writing from the point of view of those of differing class or racial backgrounds. In doing so, these writers make it even more difficult for writers of other cultures and races to become published as these groups have, by the "exploitive practices of capitalist economies ...[been deprived] of the ability to express themselves through writing and publishing." (Philip, p.213) Systemic racism in our society typically limits access to resources to all but the privileged white middle class, by doing so society effectively "censors" many voices. Consequently, librarians responsible for acquisitions may be recreating racist censorship in their daily practices of selecting from lists of materials produced by mainstream publishing houses and other organizations that perpetuate these patterns.

Additionally, librarians need to examine the practices of how they treat the materials that they do receive. For instance, David Lane, an American librarian has examined the practice of libraries obtaining information on South Africa from the South African consulate. Consequently, he found that many library's pamphlet file collections neglected to include any information that was critical of apartheid. While it may be useful to include overtly racist materials in a library collection, the challenge for librarians is in how these materials are categorized and filed. Librarians must be challenged to treat racist materials as racist materials. Generally, libraries adopt standard classification schemes, such as the Library of Congress, which do not encourage such treatment. Therefore, we might often find hate propaganda classified as historical documents, or literature, rather than as hate literature.

Similarly, librarians should challenge the standard resources that they use and supply to their public. Polly Thistlethwaite, an AIDS activist and librarian, examined the problem of exclusion of AIDS information in periodical indexes. Thistlethwaite found that "gay/lesbian periodicals and community-based health publications containing vital, often vanguard HIV/AIDS information are systematically excluded from mainstream indexes and database services." (Thistlethwaite, p. 35) Thistlethwaite maintains that how the decisions to ignore these materials are made "lie deeply embedded in Western politics and culture, reflected in our media, government, and religious institutions defining mainstream and alternative 'lifestyles,' normal from deviant sexual behavior, innocent from deserving people with AIDS." (Thistlethwaite, p. 35-36) In other words the exclusion of these materials from standard indexes and databases reflects the homophobia that is rampant in our society. Librarians, by their non-critical reliance on these standard sources perpetuate homophobic practices.

Free and universal access to information (like literacy and education) is often upheld as a major tenet of the democratic society. Ostensibly the Canadian system of public libraries was established on this fundamental belief. However, some would argue that the establishment of public libraries was not as connected to the professed good of the people, as it was established to counter popular movements and popular knowledge with the provision of established "good knowledge." In a study of township libraries in Canada West during the period 1846-1860, Bruce Curtis found that in establishing these libraries

even those eager to guard what they described as "our religious liberty" and "our civil and social right and natural interests" argued that well-regulated libraries were important because of the consequences of literacy upon "the favourable development of the individual character."...Many political glosses might be given to the concept of "popular intelligence," but library proponents commonly pointed to "the great importance of furnishing the working population of our country with food for the mind" as a crucial "means of raising them in the scale of moral intelligence." However much library proponents were convinced of the inherent "goodness" of public libraries, it is at least clear that libraries were conceived as alternatives to some cultural practices, and as politically potent institutions. (Curtis, p.8)

It seems that the "cultural practices" that libraries were conceived as alternatives to, was primarily the habit of public house drinking and the types of discussion and literature that was shared during these evenings of comradery and drink. Great concern was expressed by the ruling class of the day as to the idleness and public house habits of the working class. Libraries were established, at least in part, to counteract these subversive activities.

Given these less than equitable and politically oppressive beginnings, it perhaps should not surprise us that many of the underlying concepts that govern the everyday work of librarianship continues to perpetuate systems of domination in our society. However, librarians continue to be educated and to progress in their careers with the belief that their role, while crucial to a democratic society, is not in the least political. The role of information in our society becomes increasingly central and as it does many questions need to be raised. If we accept that information is connected to knowledge and knowledge to power, we must examine the connections between power and information in our postmodern society. What are the implications for increased access to information by the dominant segment of society? Librarians are trained in the expert manipulation of information by mastering the technology connected to the production, dissemination, and retrieval of information. However, what are the implications for society in not questioning what kinds of information are accessible and what kinds are not, and who has easy access?

While technology has increased access to information, at the same time we are experiencing funding cutbacks to the public library system. At the very time that universal access to information may be reachable, financial support by the state diminishes. This "coincidence" should not go unexamined. In order to continue service libraries are beginning to charge user fees for certain services. This practice contradicts the tenet of equal access to information, and may eventually result in the extinction of the public library system. In order to continue to provide career opportunities for their students, many library schools have shifted their focus to train librarians for careers in the corporate (or private) library world. Less and less attention is paid to public or community library service. I would like to call on librarians, and librarian educators, to examine their practices in light of postmodern thought. We need to question our practices, and the underlying concepts that govern these practices. I grant that during this time of "emerging national and global structures of information-capitalism"

(Jansen, p. 196) librarians do have a critical role to play. However, I would argue that their role should not be to act in "collusion with the forces which perpetuate disadvantage" (Harris, p.75) but to redefine their role to assist in the establishment of a truly equitable society. In order to do this I would urge librarians and librarian educators to begin to question the "metanarratives" that librarianship is built upon. I would urge us all to begin by following Donna Haraway's advise to adopt a position of situated knowledge and partial perspective. Adopting such a position is key to our learning to live together equitably. As Haraway pointed out:

We do not seek partiality for its own sake, but for the sake of the connections and unexpected openings situated knowledge make possible. The only way to find a larger vision is to be somewhere in particular. (Haraway, 197)

Specifically Haraway urges us to pay particular attention to those knowledges that have historically been marginalized:

"Subjugated" standpoints are preferred because they seem to promise more adequate, sustained, objective, transforming accounts of the world. (Haraway, p.191) Perhaps by following her advice, we can succeed in establishing a truly alternative library sector, one that can be instrumental in resisting the dominating influences "that have brought us to the brink of annihilation." (Flax, p. 460)

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CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

"Social Responsibility Around the World" sponsored by the Social Responsibilities Round Table of the American Library Association, Washington DC, June 28, 1998

LIWO: Local Touch and Global Networking in South Africa

by Johnny Jacobs

A Long Road To Freedom

The need to establish an "alternative" library association in South Africa was felt strongly and simultaneously in various parts of South Africa as well as from the international library fraternity. Today I salute all LIWO supporters within the ALA. I also need to pause and pay tribute to the relentless efforts of our stalwarts Philip van Zijl who emigrated to New Zealand, and Vincent Kolbe retired public librarian. Here I need to mention the name of Christian Ziervogel, the first black librarian in South Africa. This ignites yet another untouched issue, namely the re-writing of our library history in South Africa. The right thing to do is a truth and reconciliation investigation.

The establishment of the United Democratic Movement during the eighties as well as "the partial collapse of authoritarianism in civic life" created an opportune moment to launch an alternative library association. The need to oppose and "counter-balance" the South African Institute of Library and Information Science (SAILIS) as the official mouthpiece of librarianship in South Africa was critical for the democratic process of redress and transformation.

The South African Institute of Library and Information Sciences (SAILIS) collaborated with the Apartheid regime. They were silent on major issues pertaining to the free flow of information. They dutifully accepted discrimination and segregation. They also controlled and are still controlling what is published in the *South African Journal of Library and Information Science*. State funds have been utilized to support their propaganda campaign. This is also indicative of the extent to which the status quo is still maintained.

Many library and information workers in South Africa refused to be part of organized professional bodies because of rigid, elitist membership requirements.

Get Up and Be Counted

In July 1990, the Library and Information Workers Organization (LIWO) was launched in Durban. The keynote address was delivered by Barbara Masekela, the present South African Ambassador in France. LIWO aligned itself with the Mass Democratic Movement rather than to a particular political party.

In November 1990, a LIWO branch was launched in Pietermaritzburg. LIWO-Western Cape was launched in October 1991 and, in November 1994, LIWO-Gauteng was launched. Each LIWO branch existed as an independent, autonomous organization with its own constitution.

LIWO started its own quarterly newsletter "LIWOLET" to inform members about the organization as well as comment on professional issues which were under-reported. LIWO's energies were directed towards specific issues: a series of fact sheets dealing with censorship have been published, and LIWO-Pietermaritzburg conducted a survey to highlight the inequities in library service delivery, which led to the Open Libraries Project. Local authorities, within Kwa Zulu Natal, who were guilty of limiting access to libraries were confronted by LIWO-Durban and the Legal Resource Centre.

LIWO-Western Cape published an audit of library service delivery within the Greater Cape Town Area. These studies revealed the gross inequities in the provision of library facilities that existed under the apartheid regime. The involvement of LIWO members in the National Education Policy investigation regarding policy options for redressing the imbalances in library service delivery kindled the empowerment of library and informa-

tion workers to take control of their own destiny.

In 1993, LIWO campaigned vigorously for democratic selection of library and information workers to serve on the library sub-committee of the Centre for Educational Policy Development (CEPD). This was an ANC commissioned investigation into educational policy. The presence of LIWO members in the CEPD process was noteworthy. The need for further participation and consultative library research led to the launching in 1993 of Transforming Our Library and Information Services (TRANSLIS). TRANSLIS provided a platform for the first time for members of the three library associations to debate issues of mutual concern. TRANSLIS changed its status from a coalition to a forum. I believe the self interest of certain individuals, coupled with the fear of domination, led to the abortion of TRANSLIS.

LIWO National Conference 1995

This conference was financially supported by the Swedish International Development Authority (SIDA) through the intervention of Bibliotek iSamhalle (BiS). This was the beginning of our global reach and joint partnership that is presently still flourishing. The aim of the conference was to define and clarify LIWO's position with regard to its national structure, its vision and its relationship to the national library issues.

In her keynote address, Maria Farelo critiqued the organizational structure of LIWO and presented some instructive indicators as to a future action plan for LIWO. A resolution was passed to unify LIWO into one national structure in order to speak with one voice and to facilitate ease of communication and decision making within LIWO.

On the unification of the three library organizations, Colin Darch presented the following analogy: "if a shark swallows a sardine, are they united?" A clear distinction between unification and unity is needed. The latter is defined as "the holding of broadly similar social and political viewpoints by most or all of a defined population (in this case the community of LIS practitioners)" while the former is defined as "an administrative union of two or more separate organizations."

The fact that LIWO and SAILIS are politically divergent LIS organizations underscores the "disagreement over what LIS practitioners really do

(especially how they do it) and over what LIS membership associations are supposed to be like." The differences in perspective and approaches are rooted in their social and political viewpoints. Apartheid is still alive and kicking. A quick-fix process towards unity will shipwreck the process of social transformation and redress while "the process towards unity could be protracted with a fairly long-term prospect that can only enhance social goodwill and prosperity for all."

Christopher Merrett highlighted LIWO's past, its present and its future. He pointed out that "a call for unity is one way in which to stifle creative dissidence and that in the new South Africa there was still a need for creative dissidence." He concluded by saying, that "to strengthen democracy more dissenting voices are needed, rather than less." He urged LIWO to remain one of those voices.

Chantelle Wyley "gave a stimulating talk on 'people-centered' developmental information services." For a start, information should be brought to the people, the information needs of our communities should be determined, and people should be made aware of their information needs. "Information services, in relation to development will have to be considered given the resources, expertise, facilities and motivation, the way services are offered, how services are identified, implemented and assessed; because a mass of unsatisfied information needs exist at community level."

The national conference was followed, in November 1995, by a further meeting of branch representative in order to ratify the resolutions of the conference and the mission statement, as well as to elect a national coordinating committee.

Focus of LIWO Mission Statement

"The Library and Information Workers' Organization of South Africa (LIWO, S.A.) is an independent activist organization involved in social transformation. LIWO aims to provide the space for critical and constructive debate and projects, and to bring together LIS practitioners of all kinds in an organization working towards an equitable, non-discriminatory information system accessible to all the people in South Africa. It aims to provide a forum for the voiceless, the marginalized and non-conformist within a culture of human rights. In line with this progressive stance, LIWO's base is the individual commitment of its membership."

LIWO'S Local Touch

“LIWO recognizes:

- ◆ the inalienable right of every person to participate in the free flow and equal exchange of information;
- ◆ the right of library and information workers to collect, store and distribute information freely and without interference;
- ◆ that everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression and that this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media, regardless of frontiers;
- ◆ that library and information services in South Africa have been distorted by apartheid in such a way that the information needs of the majority have not been satisfied and the imbalances need to be addressed;
- ◆ that the past policy of apartheid has marginalized and continues to marginalize certain sections of the library and information sector;
- ◆ the responsibility of the state for the provision of library and information services for all

“LIWO the watchdog will endeavor to:

- ◆ defend libraries against the outsourcing of information which conflicts with a public service ethos;
- ◆ will resist any form of prejudice in the selection, presentation and distribution of information;
- ◆ develop information services in response to community needs;
- ◆ promote research of library and information services;
- ◆ develop training programs for library and information workers;
- ◆ promote the usage of democratic practice in the work-place;
- ◆ campaign to eliminate all forms of discrimination in the LIS sector;
- ◆ initiate and foster communication between LIWO members and information workers both in South Africa and beyond its borders;
- ◆ network with all relevant structures that impact on LIS.”

LIWO adopted a unitary organisational structure. It comprises of branches and a National Co-ordinating Committee. The present National Co-ordinating Committee is: Acting National Co-ordinator; Communications/Media person; Projects person; Treasurer; and one representative from each province. Branches elect its own executive committees.

LIWO's Global Reach

Strong links have been forged with progressive library and information workers' organizations worldwide. The Progressive Librarians Guild (USA); Bibliotek i Samhalle (BiS) as well as SIDA (Sweden); LIWO Support Group (UK); Information for Social Change (UK); Librarians within the Peace Movement (UK); Social Responsibility Round Table (USA); International Group of the Library Association (IGLA-UK). LIWO acknowledges all contributions made in the past and the present and we value your continued support tremendously.

LIWO members have also attended International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) conferences in their individual capacities and were able to promote LIWO and its principles in various forums. In 1990 the picketing by LIWO delegates and supporters at the IFLA Conference in Stockholm highlighted the need for support for an anti-apartheid stand by IFLA. In 1991, Joseph Reilly, a member of the Progressive Librarians Guild (USA), read a LIWO statement entitled “South African Libraries in the De Klerk Era” to the Special Political Committee of the United Nations during its hearings on apartheid.

In 1993, the five-person delegation from IFLA to South Africa met with LIWO members in Cape Town and Durban. The IFLA fact-finding report resulting from this visit was not received with enthusiasm by LIWO.

In 1994, LIWO-Pietermaritzburg met a BiS delegation and secured financial support for the 2nd LIWO National Conference, and for the BiS/LIWO Libraries for Young Learners Project. This project was initiated by Lennart Wettmark of Bibliotek i Samhalle (BiS). A draft business plan was circulated to all LIWO branches and the document was workshopped. In 1996, LIWO's National Coordinating Committee approved the project. Approval was also sought from the National Education Department. Cathy Stadler of Information Management and Communication was appointed to oversee the implementation of the project. Funding was transferred from the general LIWO account to the LIWO Libraries for Young Learners Project account. BiS also secured additional funding for the project from SIDA.

In September 1997, a group of Provincial Heads of School Library Departments and a representative from the Department of National Education undertook the first field trip to Sweden. The aim of the visit was to expose

the group to "best practices" models in Sweden in order "to stimulate ideas about what would work in South of Africa." The group also had to determine the selection criteria for the second phase of the project. This was the exchange trip to Sweden in 1998 of a group of 18 librarians. The selection criteria for this trip was further debated in South Africa to allow the various provincial education departments to nominate suitable candidates based on their specific needs. The pairing of a media advisor with a librarian from the same school circuit was considered the best option.

In February 1998, five representatives of BiS visited South Africa to interview the 18 applicants and to evaluate the project. In May 1998, the 18 librarians visited Sweden. The LIWO Libraries for Young Learners Project Committee had a tele-conference on 28 May 1998 to discuss the outcome of the recent visit and to plan the way forward.

LIWO is presently in the process of establishing another branch in the Northern Cape Province. I do have a business plan for the Northern Cape Libraries - Upington Region. The Northern Cape Province has the second highest illiteracy rate in South Africa. There is a dire need for financial support to facilitate literacy projects, as well as to purchase library material such as books, videos and CD's.

Conclusion

LIWO started as an organization with a local touch. This has empowered barefoot library and information workers. The scene has been set for a global reach. The partnership between BiS and LIWO has broadened our understanding and we have learned from each other.

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FROM STUDENT REVOLT TO WORKING LIBRARIANS: The Formation of BiS, Sweden

by Lennart Wettmark

BiS was founded in 1969 by students of the then-only library school in Sweden, and new members were added each year from new students. A very specific generation was formed in those years and has continued to be the core of BiS. You can actually say that new members and most of all new activists – on the whole – ceased coming in by the end of the 1970s. This might seem like a very sad story and it is to a certain extent. By now we have stopped asking ourselves about the new generation which is supposed to follow. Instead we're working along on basically the same concept, since that's the concept which has formed our generation's intellectual and political life. There has of course been shifts from a more rhetorical to practical approach. After all most of us have by now been working for 25 years in the system.

Socialist Platform

Some people might ask us why we're labelled "socialist." This is no longer a big problem. In 1970 it was felt that BiS had become too popular and a big majority felt that BiS should be more politically explicit. BiS accepted a socialist platform. There was a lot of discussion about that decision during the 1970s; some people would rather see a sort of united progressive front using the concept "People." But we believe that the fact that BiS actually has survived is due to the common ground of socialist values – consciously not very clearly defined, but rather of an ecumenical kind, attracting a wide range of left wing people.

The Transformation of the Library System

The formation of BiS actually took place in a period when the library system in Sweden – probably as elsewhere – was transformed from a rather

closed institution to an open one. BiS' contribution to it was quite substantial. On the one hand, because of ideas raised by BiS in our journal and as a result of endless weekend meetings. And on the other hand, by more external activities of a very creative and devoted generation of new librarians attracted by the vitality and maybe utopian ideas of BiS. A lot of them gradually left BiS for senior positions in Swedish librarianship.

Our Journal — bis

The base of BiS is our journal. We have by now released about 140 issues subscribed to by Swedish libraries and read by people interested in library matters – not necessarily people working in libraries. *bis* is our face to the world. For a long period editorial work on issues of *bis* was shared among the geographically scattered branches of BiS. Editors' work included ideological considerations, planning, contacts and the responsibility – and privilege – of delivering a camera-ready galley to the printing office. With a reduced number of activists and desktop publishing, producing *bis* has become more centralised, which is a pity, but for the moment a necessity.

There is an index of *bis* for the period 1969-90, which reveals the profile of BiS during our first 20 years. During the first ten years, articles on children, the workplace, union issues, conditions in the library, and acquisition policy were more dominant than during the ten years to follow. During the 1980s, we published more articles on the objectives of libraries and outreach programs. BiS committed itself especially to changes in the areas of children's librarianship and service to immigrants and workers. In addition, the importance of branch libraries as opposed to the dominance of the main library was stressed. I could go on mentioning other areas, but I think we actually share these ideas and concerns with progressive librarians all over the world. I believe we have very much identified with the concept of "community library" in our activities.

The 1980s

The 1980s saw a strong paradigmatic shift in librarianship, which was probably a universal experience. And that shift was too strong for BiS to fully resist. We made attempts to oppose the shift to individually fixed salaries. We basically failed. But the idea of contracting-out libraries failed

too. Not thanks to us, but rather to the vigilant and powerful resistance of the Swedish Writer's Union. The idea of introducing fees also failed and is now prohibited by the library law of 1996.

South Africa

During the 1990s BiS has put a lot of effort into supporting the development of libraries in South Africa. We have been involved in two different projects. The oldest is the Masizame Community Project in the township of Lingelihle in the Eastern Cape province. We started raising money in 1991 and have so far transferred about \$35,000 of which about \$10,000 has been raised through members' donations and the rest through fundraising. This grassroots project has faced a lot of problems and there has been a lot of discussion between BiS and Masizame, but the fact is that a well equipped resource center has been established.

Our other great commitment in South Africa is our link to LIWO. Despite the fact that BiS is a small organisation the Swedish International Development Aid Agency (Sida) has been very confident in our contacts in South Africa. So, to much surprise, two small library organisations in Sweden and South Africa have been planning and are working on a project of stimulating development of library resources to schools through out the nine provinces. After the start of the project National Department of Education has been involved too. In short, our approach is to invest in human resources through study visits and seminars in Sweden by key persons. The idea is of course not to copy Sweden, but to start a process in which several school library plans will be created to reflect a wide range of models. One starting point is to help implement the excellent South African School Library Plan issued by the National Department, and very much the work of Jenni Karlsson, LIWO activist and member of the LIWO working group project.

SAB

BiS is a very small organisation. Twenty years ago there was about 400 registered members in BiS. Now we are 140 (all paying members!). We have a fundamental lack of funds. When we have put aside money for our low budget journal, practically nothing is left. We have a wealthier big sister SAB – the corresponding organisation to ALA. During the 1990's we

have had a fairly cordial relationship, realizing that we actually are on the same side in the defence of what libraries actually have achieved. Two of our activists have received high awards, SAB has issued a book with articles written by one of our ideologists, Ingrid Atlestam, and illustrated by one of our cartoonists, Ulf Larson. We would never be able to afford such a thing. We sent the secretary general of SAB to South Africa to talk about combined libraries at a school library conference that was funded by Sida. Until last year, SAB's chairperson was actually a member of BiS. And, in the last issue of *bis* for 1997 we published a satirical (and maybe not very witty) article rejected by the editors of SAB's journal on a very important issue: the sale by SAB of the majority shares of the dominant library vendor and service company in Sweden. SAB's chairperson was the target of the article. The fact that she hasn't renewed her membership in BiS might have something to do with the article. I'll ask her some day.

Fair Libraries?

Do we put all our efforts in South Africa? I believe some members think so, but we do try to influence the Swedish library scene as well. Keywords are equity and fairness in the rapid development of the library system.

Could it be possible to make an annual award for *the* Fair Library of Sweden? This is what we have been talking about in the last year. We have had a seminar on it, we have written a manifesto and we're working on a sort of elector's system. We have plans of trying to involve one of the successful progressive publishing companies and the Swedish Confederation of Trade Unions which has been researching and campaigning on the increasing social gaps in Sweden during the 1990s. The idea is, of course, to focus on the ideological basis of Swedish libraries. By raising the question we also hope to increase the interest of looking at libraries not as a market-oriented kind of shop, but as a social and democratic resource.

And this is what social responsibility in libraries is all about isn't it?

AKRIBIE: Arbeitskreis Kritischer BibliothekarInnen / Working Group of Critical Librarians, Germany

by Frauke Mährt-Thomsen

Who We Are / What We Want / What We Do

Akribie – our abbreviation of Working Group of Critical Librarians – is also a word in the German language that means the quality of exactness or accuracy. So in using this acronym as the name of our organization we want to show with irony that we are doing nothing less than what the average, honest and diligent librarian is doing every day: working with Akribie.

Our small group has been meeting since 1988, our members work in scientific, public and all kinds of special libraries in Germany. Akribie is not a registered organization but rather a forum for candid discussion and joint action, with the goal of finding new, critical forms and possibilities for library work. For this purpose the working group is open to everyone.

We think that libraries and their employees should reflect social change, and make this the basis of their work. We favor democratic internal structures, freedom of group action, and the greatest possible strengthening of individual responsibility. We support the participation of library users in all aspects of substantive decision-making in library work.

There are two or three meetings annually for the discussion of general questions and the exchange of library news. These meetings serve the purpose of continuing education, with occasional visits or lectures by invited speakers. The venue, subject, and shape of the meetings are determined by the participants. Akribie also takes part in librarian's meetings and congresses every year offering information booths as well as forums and presentations on a wide range of topics such as:

- ♦ Books and libraries in ghettos and camps (1990)
- ♦ The honour of professionalism or voluntary labor in libraries (1995)
- ♦ Internet and the future of libraries (1996)
- ♦ Demolishing - the last act? The vanishing of the City and State Library in Dortmund (1997)
- ♦ What is happening at the main national libraries in Germany? Die Deutsche Bibliothek (The German Library) at Frankfurt and the Staatsbibliothek (State Library) at Berlin from the perspective of users? What can supporter groups and friends of the libraries do for our public libraries? (1998)

Contact with similar groups, whether in allied professions or in foreign countries, broadens our knowledge of otherwise little known problems and practices. Thus Akribie has contacts with library and information workers in Germany (AKRIBIE, Bielefeld), with colleagues in Austria (KRIBIBI), England (Information for Social Change), Sweden (Bibliotek i Samhalle = Library in Society) and USA (Progressive Librarians Guild).

For purposes of communication between meetings and for the information of quite a number of colleagues who are interested in the topics of Akribie but cannot come to our meetings, there are a newsletter and occasional reports in the magazine *Laurentius* (Hannover). Each individual member of Akribie is free to decide how much to contribute towards activities and costs.

Akribie is a circle of critical librarians and library employees that has its roots in the protest movement of 1968. In the last years or decades several of us have been engaged in union work or participated in different alternative movements like anti-atomic, disarmament, environmental or the history workshop movement.

The library profession in Germany has a very strong tradition that comes from the Prussian bureaucracy. Like David against Goliath, Akribie aims to fight against this tradition and its implications because it has prevented the democratic development of libraries both inside and outside Germany. So, for most library employees it is still more important to follow the administrative rules than to engage for the service of the users and for the public role of the library.

Although many libraries have staff representatives to ensure the rights of

their workers, there is nevertheless a feeling of subordination and even anxiety among our colleagues. We have to challenge this authoritarian tradition and to overcome the hierarchic structures even in the organization of library employees. There is one organization for each type of employee: academic librarians, librarians with diplomas for scientific or public libraries, and library assistants. After years of discussions about one library federation only the union of public librarians decided to merge with the library assistants.

Akribie has been discussing with colleagues from East German libraries the shrinking of the East German library system. Almost all company libraries have been dismissed, also a great number of public libraries in villages and provincial towns.

Many employees have been discharged or were obliged to retire early, at the Humboldt University in Berlin most of the staff of the Institute of Library Science has been replaced by West German professors. Akribie and the journal *Laurentius* became a forum for East German colleagues to discuss and publish their point of view in this process.

Another point of concern was the consequences of the reunification of East and West Germany in the library and book sector. After reunification in 1990 the greatest part of their recent book production was simply eliminated in Eastern Germany. That was not the result of a political command but was more or less executed as an act of adapting to the rules of free-market economy: empty the depots and make room for western literature. All books published in the GDR were deemed worthless.

There was no official attempt to stop this vandalism, but there were several personal initiatives. A West German clergyman, Father Martin Weskott, started to rescue more than half a million GDR books. These books were stored in a huge barn beside the church in the village of Katlenburg, not far from Gottingen. Every Sunday people from all around the world would come to buy some of these rare documents and sometimes listen to the authors of these discarded books. The money from the book sales was used to fund projects in developing countries. In 1995, Akribie offered a tour from the Bibliothekartag in Gottingen to Katlenburg and held one of its meetings in 1996 in this remarkable village.

Akribie believes that library work should not be restricted to library

management and the implementation of library technology – activities that place in the library building, but that often do not address the library's civil activities.

Akribie is concerned that a primary reason behind the introduction of modern technology by libraries and their boards is the rationalization of library work and services. We fear that libraries as places of communication will disappear behind functions like delivering materials which users in the future will be able to access from their workplaces or from home.

What concept of culture should libraries adopt, and what should they expect from the new technologies. Which technologies should be implemented for which libraries?

To answer these questions, we think it is necessary to study library history as well as library developments in other countries in order to learn from relevant experiences in former times and under different conditions. Especially in Germany there is additional reason to examine the history of libraries, because it is so closely connected to the history of Germany in this century and to the difficulties of Germans in facing this history.

In an effort to examine Germany library history, several meetings and publications of Akribie members have focused on the history of libraries and librarians under Nazi regime and the consequences of this history up to the present day (f.i.: Von faschistischer Tradition in deutschen wissenschaftlichen Bibliotheken. Auf der Suche nach einer demokratischen Bibliothek der Zukunft. 1995).

The main topic of our meeting in Bremen in the fall of 1997 was "The Restitution of Books from Two Points of View: books of Jewish emigrants unlawfully remaining in German libraries, and books as war booty." The program examined the historical and political aspects of the on-going German-Russian discussion about the restitution of books and objects of art.

This meeting gave us the most widespread and positive coverage within the German press. The very established, weekly paper *Die Zeit* wrote about Akribie as a group which "becomes more and more important for the intellectual life in Germany." And the well-known journalist Rolf Michaelis wrote – in reference to our meeting – one page about the activities of the university library of Bremen to reconstitute the Jewish books.

Agatha Haun from the German-Russian Exchange in St. Petersburg has enabled us to get special reports about the situation of NGO libraries in Russia and has offered to develop partnerships to Russian libraries. We think it will be a valuable opportunity to have contact with very diligent Russian colleagues and to encourage practical and confident cooperation with them.

It is not our position to urge the Russian and Polish people to give us back the books and pieces of art they got after the end of the Second World War. Rather, we seek to find ways that everybody who wants to can see the paintings and use the books.

In recent years, we have gained an increasingly influence within the German library profession though we don't estimate our impact as a very strong one. But quite a number of colleagues are becoming interested in the topics we raise and the articles and books we publish. At the last library congress (Bibliothekartag) in Frankfurt in the beginning of June 1998, conference goers picked up all the copies of *Laurentius* we offered, bought a great number of titles from the *Laurentius* publishing house, and came to meet with Akribie members for discussion.

Finally I want to give a short outline of what social responsibility means for us:

- ♦ free access to public libraries for everybody, free of charge
- ♦ book and media collections free of censorship and restrictions
- ♦ libraries for all citizens, especially for the socially disadvantaged and handicapped
- ♦ dedication to service for all patrons, encouragement for all citizens to become involved in their library and their community
- ♦ democratic structures within the libraries, librarians working for democratic structures in the society
- ♦ supporting the development of socially engaged library work worldwide!

Finally, let me attempt to translate a poem that Akribie places at the end of its self-description:

In other words
Criticism is not a complaint,

but a question
directed toward understanding –
the declaration of war against the
state of affairs
and resignation.

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Rafael Enriquez, 1983 OSPAAAL

KRIBIBI: Public Libraries and the “Working Pool of Critical Librarians” in Austria

by Renate Obadalek

The origins of public libraries in Austria, in the past called Volksbuchereien, go back to the 19th century with the setting up of small libraries in three different sectors of society: the parishes of the Catholic Church; Social Democratic educational organizations for workers; and bourgeois library organizations like the guild of the “Central Library” in Vienna. The state itself felt no obligation to run public libraries in favor of better education for the masses.

After World War I and the collapse of Hapsburg Monarchy, the situation basically didn't change. The First Republic was characterized by the conflict between Conservative Government and Social Democratic communal administration authorities. Even the so called “red” administration of the capital that introduced new standards in public welfare, school education and architecture for the working class, didn't realize the importance of a public library system. They sponsored the working class libraries, but as private institutions. Running public libraries didn't become part of the communal or governmental tasks.

It is a shame to admit, but Austrofascism, the dictatorial regime between 1934 and 1938, and National Socialism were the first political movements to recognize the importance of libraries for their educational policies, and they established library systems in the most important towns of the country.

For these historical reasons, the library scene after World War II has been dominated by three stakeholders: the municipalities, the Catholic Church, and the Austrian Federation of Trade Unions. Public library legislation that defines quality and training standards, as exist in other European countries,

doesn't exist in Austria. Therefore the infra-structure for a system of libraries is very minimal and it is practically not possible to build up an extensive network. Another disadvantage seems to be, that apart from the large municipal systems, almost 85% of the librarians work on a voluntary basis. They are only briefly trained and work for a few hours in the small bookrooms of parishes, villages and factories. The opportunity to attend a polytechnical university for library and information studies did not exist before 1997.

The strict separation of scientific and public libraries prevents the exchange of information and inter-library lending between them. We think that is not a friendly policy for library users and customers. There exists a third system run by civil servants employed by the state or municipalities – the school library system, which is administered by another ministry. Therefore cooperation between public libraries and school libraries only works if they are situated in the same building. Centralization and standardization seems to be necessary but it would require a change in the Austrian constitution, and we know by experience that this is not possible.

In 1982, some librarians, dissatisfied with the prevailing opinion about library work and the existing structures, joined with publishers and book-sellers in order to found a progressive lobby to promote books and all information in the form of books. The RENNER-Institut (a cultural and educational institution of the Social Democratic Party) offered help with organization and financing. But after a short time, publishers and book-sellers lost their interest in such a guild. Only librarians and some representatives of library supporting bodies remained.

In 1983, the Working Pool of Progressive Librarians (Arbeitskreis kritischer Bibliothekarinnen und Bibliothekare im Renner-Institut or KRIBIBI) was founded. After investigating the purposes and structures of organizations, KRIBIBI decided to use the model of "Future Workshop" created by Prof. Robert Jungk for the promotion of social and creative imagination. Since 1983, KRIBIBI has arranged two workshops each year in order to dispute and elaborate subjects which are under discussion not only in Austria, but all over Europe. Librarians from all Austrian provinces and also from other German-speaking countries have taken part in our workshops. They are interested in a progressive change within library work, and value the opportunity provided by the workshops for exchange of opinions and experiences.

Whether or not they are members of a political party, KRIBIBI members are committed to the principle of Social Library Work. This principle maintains that our main duty and task is to provide access to all kind of information, by means of reading books or using other media, for all parts of the population, for whom information access isn't self-evident due to social, material or cultural reasons. We intend to open libraries not only to the traditional middle- and upper-class readers, but also to the disenfranchised. KRIBIBI sees public libraries as social-cultural component of a district and its population, one which can contribute to democratization of the so-called "information society" and also to everyday life.

In the following years KRIBIBI has discussed a lot of subjects and the results have led to innovative steps in the development of the public library system in Austria. A new library development scheme was the result of a workshop on cooperation between adult education organizations. Several group-dynamics seminars have led to a new definition of our profession, which is still changing for the sake of expanding into the electronic information sector. The "Network Library Solidarity" has remained an illusion for great library systems, but smaller ones in the federal counties have built up small networks. The lack of a Library Act has often been discussed, and as a result of one such discussion the matter found its way into a parliamentary committee meeting.

Secondary alphabetism, reading behavior and attitudes towards books and other audiovisual media have been part of educational discussions not only among Austrians. Because of an influx of immigrant workers and their families, in some parts of our country a multicultural society is developing and therefore we are discussing ways to integrate them fully into the everyday life of libraries.

Additionally, for several hundred years within Austria there have also been living ethnic minorities, whose mother-tongue is not German. For example: Slovenians, Croats, Czechs and Romani. Their access to reading facilities in their respective languages is not guaranteed. During one of our workshops in Carinthia, a federal province with a language minority, KRIBIBI members became convinced of the precarious situation of the Slovenian Study Library. We organized a solidarity action and worked to help them.

Together with the libraries of the Austrian Federation of Trade Unions we set up a workshop to discuss and organize a fight against austerity programs

in enterprise and factory libraries. Our seminars examined the improvement of public relations, evaluation, marketing, library management, and the future position of public libraries in the age of the Internet. Many of these discussions have motivated us to look for better training opportunities. Only well trained librarians can meet the challenges facing us. It has taken a long time, but in the end our fight for professional training was successful. Since 1997 it's become possible to go to the Polytechnical University for Information Studies. We believe that this new educational program will improve the library situation in Austria.

Discussions concerned with the sense of cultural work, like organizing literary and musical events and exhibitions have brought about the development of a progressive cultural definition for KRIBIBI. For example, to work as a volunteer librarian means to be female. This understanding of the gender component of this work initiated a project about female history in the evolution of public libraries. "Is there or is there not an intact worldview in children's books?" was the title of a KRIBIBI seminar in which we tried to investigate, together with psychologists, historians and publishers, the treatment of topics like racism, sexism and political history in children's literature.

Additional to the activities in our seminars, KRIBIBI tries to do lobbying and information work in political organizations and cultural institutions. Our participation in the jury that awards a prize to the most important political book of the year, the so-called "Bruno Kreisky Award," is indicative of KRIBIBI's influence on a progressive book award in Austria. Our next workshop in autumn 1998 will deal with new media in public libraries. Finally we are happy to report that we will organize, in cooperation with our friends of AKRIBIE, a European meeting of progressive librarians in Vienna in 2000.

Let me now finish with a traditional, but still valid principle of the working class people in Austria: Let's go forward, but don't forget solidarity!

RADICAL LIBRARIANSHIP: Something of an Overview from the UK

by Martyn Lowe

To start off, there is a question that I would like to put to the audience: is librarianship an art or a science?

I would state that:

- (a) ALL information work is an ART.
- (b) Information work covers more than just traditional librarianship.

Yet, if I am going to elaborate on these ideas, then perhaps I should tell you something about myself and "where I am coming from." This is not so much for the sake of an autobiographical ego-trip, but because it will help to place something of what I have to tell within a particular context.

Where I Am Coming From

I have worked in libraries since 1972. Before that I spent 3 and one-half years in a theatrical costumiers. However, most of my working life has been spent within public libraries. During the period 1987-1988, I lived in Denmark and was a student at Brenderup Folkehojskole on Fyn.

This was followed by a few years temping (i.e. temporary short-term contract working). These jobs included working with *The Economist*, a school of nursing library, a couple of university libraries, and doing records management archiving at a Lloyds underwriters. I am currently working in a public library in London.

In addition, I have 30 years active involvement within the peace movement. Rather than give a long CV list of which organizations I have been involved with over the years - I'll just mention the ones that I am involved with at present.

I have been a volunteer within the War Resisters International secretariat since 1985. WRI has sections in over 30 countries in the world. The War Resisters League being the WRI section within the USA. I also am involved with the *Housmans International Peace Directory*, of which more later.

My other interests include research into the clandestine press in Europe during the Nazi occupation. I would guess that something in the region of 10,000 - 12,000 such titles existed. Very little has been written about them in English, and one has to be something of a polyglot in order to undertake such work.

Some Background on Information for Social Change (LSC) & its Origins

Librarians for Social Change (LSC) was a grassroots body and publication for activist librarians, which functioned during the late 1960s and 1970s. Rather than go into a history of LSC, it might be more informative to look at just one issue of its periodical, which gives something of the flavor of what issues LSC covered.

To quote the editorial in Issue 21 (Winter 1979) of *Librarians for Social Change* "we look at a wide range of libraries of an alternative, trade union, community-based nature." The issue also contains an article entitled: "Gay Access: New approaches in Cataloguing" by Sandy Berman. And in the "Contacts" list of this issue we find such groups as: Librarians Against Racism & Fascism; Gay Librarians Group; Library Workers Action; Trade Union Librarians Group; & Socialist Library Workers Group.

LSC published its journal and pamphlets under the imprint of John Noyce Publications. (John Noyce being one of the people active within LSC.) LSC pamphlets include such titles as: "Self Management in Libraries"; "Radical Librarianship"; and "Censorship within Public Libraries."

Librarians Within the Peace Movement (LWPM), a network that linked, librarians, peace libraries, and peace organizations, was founded during the spring of 1989. One of the ideas behind LWPM was that it should provide a network of library and information workers that might help various peace movement (and other social change bodies) with the kind of specialist information help that they might require.

LWPM also produced a periodical, *AIR (Alternative Information Record)* of

which 9 issues were published between March 1990 and May 1992. LWPM folded in March 1993. The Archives of LWPM are now held at the International Institute of Social History (IISH) in Amsterdam.

LINK

LINK is a network that intends to be an informed, experienced and realistic forum that will raise awareness of the "Third World" library issues within the information-related professions of the "North." It aims to link librarians and libraries in the "South" with colleagues worldwide, for their mutual benefit, and to provide support, briefing and continuing information to individuals who intend to do information work in developing countries. (from the *LINK information leaflet*)

LINK was started by returned librarians within Voluntary Service Overseas. As someone said about the time that LINK was established, those working within village libraries in Asia should be able to read about similar problems within village libraries in Africa, and compare their various solutions. These issues are covered within the LINK periodical *LINK-UP*. LINK also produces *The Directory of Skill Exchange*, which is now into a 2nd edition, and which "contains professional details of LINK members who are willing to share their skills & expertise."

LIWO Support Group

While *AIR* was still being published by LWPM, we happened to see a piece within the *Progressive Librarian* (Issue 2, Winter 1990/91) about LIWO. We got in touch with LIWO, and in *AIR* No. 5 (Feb/March 1991) published their statement of aims.

After reading the statement, John Pateman, who was involved within LINK at that time, got in touch with me, and after a meeting with Gill Harris (also from LINK), the LIWO Support Group (LSG) was formed. The aim of LSG was to not only give support and publicity to LIWO within Britain, but to get it recognized by the (British) Library Association and IFLA. We also managed to do some fundraising too.

Information for Social Change

Information for Social Change (ISC) operates as a campaigning and information network. To quote the ISC statement of aims:

ISC as an activist organization that examines issues of censorship, freedom and ethics amongst library and information workers. It is committed to promoting alternatives to the dominant paradigms of library and information work and publishes its own journal *Information for Social Change*.

ISC has held a couple of joint conferences with LINK. The themes covered in these conferences have included "libraries within the developing world" and "libraries, information and the dispossessed." ISC is also an organization in liaison with the Library Association (LA). Indeed, a number of ISC activists are also members of both the LA national council and its international committee. ISC also sees itself as a part of an international network of progressive library and information worker organizations, and hopes to be able to play an active part within its future development.

Below is a statement illustrating one issue ISC activists are involved with.

Information for Social Change and "Social Exclusion"

One of the biggest issues facing British society is social exclusion. In the same way that "social justice" has replaced "Socialism" in the dictionary of Blairs' New Labour-speak, so the concept of "Social Exclusion" has replaced "poverty" and "racism."

It is now safe to talk about Social Exclusion, as long as this is not in the context of class or race. Information for Social Change is involved in a number of radical and progressive projects around Social Exclusion which challenge this paradigm.

On the class front, ISC is organizing:

- ◆ an Executive briefing on the issue of Public Library Policy and Social Exclusion. This is for senior and middle public library managers. The aim is to influence policy making and

get issues of Social Exclusion incorporated into Annual Library Plans.

- ◆ an action planning conference involving community librarians and other front line staff. This will include participation by left wing MPs, the Commission for Racial Equality, and representatives from activist organizations and the alternative press.
- ◆ research sponsored by the British Library under its Value and Impact of Public Libraries Programme.

In terms of race, ISC is organizing:

- ◆ a Quality Leaders Project which will encourage Chief Librarians to support the development of Black Library Workers
- ◆ a debate on the merits of a Black Library Workers Group of the Library Association
- ◆ a workshop on organizing a local Black Workers Group
- ◆ a seminar on Public Libraries, Ethnic Diversity and Annual Library Plans.

John Pateman — ISC — June 1998.

So What is Progressive Librarianship or Radical Information Work?

Some Historical Examples

During the Nazi occupation of Europe some librarians undertook clandestine activities. These activities included saving works from destruction by the occupying powers, and collecting clandestine publications for their archives. There was, for example, an unofficial policy that made banned works available to members of the public in Oslo. While in Warsaw books about Military Science were lent out to members of the resistance. (See: Lindsey, Margot. *Librarianship in Occupied Norway*. *Assistant Librarian*, Vol. 88 no. 3, March 1995; and Lowe, Martyn. *Clandestine Press in Poland*, *Information for Social Change*, No. 3, Spring 1996.)

Operation Namibia (ON), although not strictly a radical librarians' project, ON was an important book project. ON was founded during 1976 by

various individuals around the pacifist and nonviolent movement within Britain, and the Philadelphia Nonviolent Action Group in the USA. The aims of ON were to beat a South African blockade and get books (which were also subject to South African censorship) into Namibia.

A converted North Sea fishing boat, the Golden Harvest, was used for the project. The boat left Portsmouth Harbour and eventually, after a string of disasters and near disasters, landed in Angola. The books were handed over to the UN, which eventually passed them on to the Namibians – once the country had gained independence.

N.B. The archives on this project are still being held in a flat in London. The project has never been fully written up about or become the subject of any academic research.

Book Aid is another of a number of projects to collect and distribute books within the developing world to which members of the profession donate their time.

*Working on Radical Directories, Bibliographies, Catalogues
and Key Words*

One of the major aspects of many radical librarians' work seems to be within the field of bibliography. Indeed, I am involved in some of this work also and am putting together a highly idiosyncratic bibliography on vegetarianism and its related issues.

A couple examples that indicate subject-heading work done by many catalog reformers are the acceptance of ROMANI (for Gypsies) and INUIT (for Eskimos). The term "nuclear power" should be under energy and pollution. "McDonald's" under junkfood, exploitation or poison – but never under nutrition.

It all depends on your viewpoint, but it is the job of the radical information worker to look at how we define the world – the very ART of cataloguing. Which leads us to a fundamental question: what is professionalism?

Bibliotekerarbejdslos (BAU, translated as Unemployed Librarians) is a Danish organization that was founded in 1975, and was certainly still active at the start of 1988 (although I have not heard anything about it since then).

During that period there was a surfeit of trained librarians within Denmark and unemployment was very much a major issue for them. Thus BAU worked on these and related issues, producing directories and other materials. There was even a BAU volleyball group too!

Working with Existing National Bodies to Radicalize Them

There are also a lot of individuals and groups that put a lot of time and energy into working within their existing national library associations. For example: a LINK campaign resulted in the (British) Library Association (LA) employing an International Officer, and the LIWO Support Group has campaigned to get LIWO recognized by the LA.

Others have engaged in campaigns to fight "the cuts" e.g. the Library Campaign, which is a British campaign against cuts in the provision of public libraries. There are also other bodies that try to radicalize the various national bodies and challenge professional standards – but can these organizations really be radicalized?

Many library and information workers engage in grassroots radical information work, i.e. using their library and information skills to assist efforts for social change. Here I should just like to give as an example a project that I am involved with.

The Housmans Peace Directory holds information on approximately 3,200 peace organizations within 170 countries. The directory is also contained within the *Housmans Peace Diary*, which in the 1999 (46th) edition will cover some 1,958 organizations.

If I were to give a full description of how the directory is put together, then I would need to write a very long article indeed. Instead I shall mention some of the expertise that goes into the compilation of such a work. It is not just a knowledge of peace and environmental movement organizations that one needs in order to compile the directory. One also has to know something about the various internationals, plus what kind of peace education and campaigns are currently under way. Work on the directory is really a major piece of international co-operation.

Compiling the directory also requires a great deal of knowledge about phone and postal codes throughout the world, particularly as these are

constantly being changed. For example: phone codes have changed this year within Krakow, Poland, and throughout Italy too. A working knowledge of zip & phone codes also constitutes a very different kind of information work than most librarians are used to dealing with – it's what might be called "a movable feast."

For those who are interested, the *Housmans Peace Diary 1999* is available from: Housmans, 5 Caledonian Road, London N.1. It costs £5.95 (plus £1.00 postage) ISBN 0-85283-253-2, ISSN 0957-0136.

The Activist as Archivist, or the Archivist as Activist

The academic study of radical activism might also be considered an important aspect of radical librarianship. Indeed, there are a number of archives that hold radical material that we should be both aware of and willing to work with, e.g. International Institute of Social History in Amsterdam, the Netherlands; Workers Museum in Copenhagen, Denmark; Commonweal Collection in Bradford, UK; Swarthmore College Peace Collection in the USA.

One librarian who works within this field is Holger Terp, who is a former activist within Bibliotekarer For Fred. (Librarians for Peace), which existed during the 1980s. Holger is now a co-editor of *Ikkevold* (*Nonviolence* which is the journal of Aldrig Mere Krig – Never More War – the Danish Section of WRI). Holger is also very involved in working on bibliographies about the peace movement. He has spent a lot of time in producing a biographical study of Ellen Horup (1871-1953), a Dane, who spent some time as the secretary of Mahatma Gandhi.

There have also been various peace movement librarian organizations. For example: Librarians Against Nuclear Arms in Sweden, which produces the occasional bibliographical publication. There is also in Japan the Anti-Nuclear Librarians Club, while up to a few years ago there was Librarians for Nuclear Arms Control, which was based in Pasadena, California.

So What Else Should Progressive & Radical Library and Information Workers be doing?

I do not have any manifesto for radical librarianship. I can only state that it is right and proper for us (as radical or progressive librarians and informa-

tion workers) to be active within all of the areas of activity that I have outlined above. Some other concerns that we have are:

- ◆ Information as a commodity
- ◆ The Internet and intellectual property
- ◆ The multinationals with their BOOK/FILM/COMIC BOOK/PERIODICAL / WEB-SITE tie-ups.
- ◆ REED and BOOKSELLER — publishers who provide both books and the bibliographical tools that are used within libraries. This is an issue that was first expressed as a concern by Libraries for Social Change as long ago as 1970.
- ◆ Employment agencies, such as Task Force Pro Libra. These companies are in existence to MAKE MONEY. They do not share our various concerns about Freedom of Information, or worry themselves about how our work is used.

And, these developments should come as a warning of what is to come:

- ◆ We are no longer library & information workers.
- ◆ We are the flexible workforce.
- ◆ We are now just part of a Orwellian world that makes us HUMAN RESOURCES – just another commodity like oil, gas, copper, or coal.

Within Britain over the last decade there has been a major move towards the use of temp-workers, short term contracts, etc. This raises many issues concerning employment rights, etc. There exist some half-dozen library employment agencies within the UK. Even the (British) Library Association has its own employment agency. Yet the issues around the use of temporary staff have never fully been addressed within either the profession or in any of the library press.

When I used to work as a temp, there was something which I made very clear to the agencies – I would NOT undertake any jobs that might compromise either my pacifist, ecologist, or vegetarian principles. As a result I might have lost work & damaged my career prospects, but my principles are in place.

Professionalism, Neutrality, Politics & Ethics

There is a concept of (neutral) "professional standards" among librarians. Indeed, many of the world's library associations purport to hold such ideals.

Yet what about the information worker as a conscientious objector? Should we not also be looking towards a more principled (ethical or moral) set of such standards?

I for one do *not* see my job as being one in which I should (because of some spurious set of ideas) be confused with those library and information workers within military or nuclear establishments. Likewise, I do not see any justification for using my skills to help those who would perform vivisection, or any other such totally unprincipled acts.

Clearly these are issues that we as information workers should be concerned about.

In summary, I have only here given a very brief outline of what concerns me and I hope that it will add to our debates and help develop ideas within the profession.



ADDED ENTRIES

THE CUBA POSTER PROJECT

by Lincoln Cushing

In 1991, a colleague, Dan Walsh of Liberation Graphics, asked me if I wanted to join him in a lawsuit against the U.S. Treasury Department to allow travel to Cuba for “business” related to the importation of First-Amendment materials. I couldn’t resist an offer like that, and little did I know that I would soon be documenting and cataloguing one of the most potent bodies of political visual art in the world. The Cuba Poster Project was born. I would be transported from a crank-‘em-out and put-‘em-up poster-maker to the other side of the looking glass, a conservator and archivist.

The Cuba Poster Project is dedicated to documenting and cataloguing posters produced in Cuba since the revolution. The vast majority of these were through the auspices of three agencies: Editora Politica, OSPAAAL (the Organization in Solidarity with the People of Africa, Asia and Latin America), and ICAIC (the Cuban Film Institute). Editora Politica (EP) is the official publishing department of the Cuban Communist Party, and is responsible for a wide range of domestic public information posters covering such topics as support for agricultural production, celebration of patriotic anniversaries, publicity about sporting events, and education about public health. In addition, many other agencies utilized the resources and distribution powers of EP for their own work, including FMC (the Federation of Cuban Women), the CNT (the National Confederation of Workers), and OCLAE (the Latin American Students Association). OSPAAAL is officially a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) recognized by the United Nations, based in Havana, Cuba and with a board of representatives from all over the world. It is the primary producer of international solidarity posters in Cuba. Among its many activities has been the publication of *Tricontinental* magazine since 1967. At its peak, circulation was 30,000 copies, produced in 4 different languages and mailed to 87 coun-

tries. Included in most issues were folded-up solidarity posters, thus establishing the most effective international poster-distribution system in the world. ICAIC produces posters for all films made in Cuba, and for many years also created publicity posters for foreign films shown in Cuba as well. These posters were all of identical size to fit in special kiosks throughout Havana.

Posters are a vital, expressive visual art which have historically been a medium of choice for presenting oppositional voices. Unfortunately, the timeless issues they raise are usually eclipsed by their short life-span in the public record. A variety of factors conspire to dramatically limit the number of poster images that not only survive, but are available to researchers, organizers, and the viewing public. These include physical deterioration (bad ink/paper stability, staining and tearing due to poor display techniques, fading from exposure to sunlight, infestation by bugs and rot, damage from improper storage, etc.), irreversible damage and loss (insecure storage resulting in fire and water damage, posters being thrown out as trash), and privatization (posters being bought up by collectors/dealers). Cuba is no exception. As in the rest of the world, the very agencies that produced the work had devoted little energy to preserving them. An example of this a request last year by OSPAAAL for display copies for an exhibit on Che Guevara. The agency did not have eight of the 18 different posters they had produced, and we were able to send down giant digital prints from our archive.

Because of the irreplaceable political and cultural heritage represented by this ephemeral art, I have been working with other independent poster archivists to develop an approach for documenting and cataloguing the images and information in such a way that these works will forever remain potent voices of change. Our approach seeks to empower poster-producing organizations to preserve their own visual history and allow them to breathe new life into images that were created many years ago. Because we are also concerned with preserving oppositional poster art in general, we see the documentation of "small" collections to be key pieces in the construction of a major archive of domestic and international posters. Our approach accomplishes these goals through the following objectives:

1. Capturing the graphic image with clarity, fidelity, and archival permanence as 35mm slides.
2. Duplicating the image in a format that allows tremendous control and

flexibility for collateral uses (reproductions, website displays, etc.) on CD-ROMs.

3. Cataloguing the relevant accompanying information in an electronic database that is essential for researching and image retrieval.

Although shooting high-quality slides of artwork is not new, the digitization of images and databases has only recently become affordable to smaller collections. One of the wonderful features of a digital catalog is that it is possible to build a complete "collection" without possession of the actual artifact, thus freeing producing agencies from the whole separate difficult task of poster collection and conservation. An image-rich database means that poster images can be quickly located and compared without reliance on curatorial memory or access to the actual poster. The Biblioteca Nacional Jose Marti, which is Cuba's main national library, has been very interested in our work and will be one of the recipients of the Cuban collection once it is completed.

For more information about our project, look at our website at <http://www.zpub.com/cpp>, e-mail lcushing@igc.org, or call (510) 845-7111.

BOOK REVIEWS

Librarianship and Legitimacy: The Ideology of the Public Library Inquiry by Douglas Raber. Series: Contributions in Librarianship and Information Science, no. 90. (Westport CT and London:Greenwood Press, 1997.

Reviewed by Patti Clayton

At a time when public libraries work hard to stay relevant in the eyes of funding agencies and the population in general, it is natural to carefully consider the nature and purpose, and hence legitimacy, of the institution. Douglas Raber does just that in his book *Librarianship and Legitimacy: The Ideology of the Public Library Inquiry*. Although a mainstay of American culture for almost 150 years, the public library has never been able to take its existence for granted. But sometimes the task is more urgent than others. Such was the case in the late 1940s when the country, victorious in war, was on the threshold of fulfilling and expanding upon postwar plans in all spheres of society. Business, government, and education agencies sought ways to serve – and benefit by participating in – the welcome return to peacetime life. Public libraries also sought their place in the reconfigured world.

Postwar planning for libraries had begun early and continued throughout the war. But the American Library Association (ALA) was concerned about the status of libraries following the bruising experience of World War II, when library usage dropped dramatically nationwide, despite vigorous promotional efforts, and when libraries failed to receive recognition for special war-related services in the form of federal aid. Continuing poor salaries and low social prestige added to the desire to define an appropriate role for public libraries that would bolster the status of librarianship in society. ALA leadership, and Executive Director Carl H. Milam in particular, wanted a study done by outsiders to supply an empirical basis for a redefinition of the public library. The result was the Public Library Inquiry, conducted with Carnegie support by the Survey Research Center at the University of Michigan. The study was directed by University of Chicago political scientist Robert D. Leigh and published in the late forties and early fifties in seven monographs and five supplementary reports by separate authors, including political scientist Oliver Garceau, Columbia

Library School Dean Bernard Berelson, and library educator Alice I. Bryan.

In Leigh's words (Leigh 1950, 11), the Public Library Inquiry was an "examination of the objectives, function, structure, organization, services, and personnel of public libraries." Leigh wondered about the health and relevance of the optimistic Library Faith, the guiding conviction of librarians that providing good books would produce a positive benefit to society, whose members, presumably, would read them. The conclusions of the Public Library Inquiry were not encouraging. Only one in ten adults and three in ten children used libraries, and many of them as a source of entertaining reading, not the sort of serious study that would lead to an enlightened society. The authors concluded that since they weren't achieving it anyway, librarians should abandon the ideal of serving all segments of society and concentrate their efforts on providing material of "quality and reliability" to "serious groups in the community, however small." According to the Inquiry, this approach would have a trickle-down benefit to society through its contribution to wise policy decisions affecting the communities. In the meantime, library patrons might read bestsellers for a fee and "current trashy material" could be phased out of library collections. (Leigh 1950, 234-35)

Clearly, justification for the Library Faith was challenged by these findings of actual usage, but librarians of the time were loathe to abandon their historic *raison d'être*. The study stimulated discussion that has continued to the present day; the Library History Round Table of the American Library Association devoted a program to the Inquiry at the 1992 national conference, published in 1994 as a special issue of *Libraries and Culture*. Douglas Raber was among the contributors to that issue. His book, which is based on his doctoral dissertation, is a more thorough treatment in which he proposes to "explore consistencies, contradictions, and assumptions inherent within the legitimating ideology of public librarianship expressed by the Public Library Inquiry"(6). Raber grounds his discussion in the interpretive context of the need of the library profession (or any of the "pseudo-professions") for a "legitimizing discourse" through which to seek validation (7). The Inquiry, according to Raber, was a significant part of that discourse since it described a unique role for public libraries in democratic society. Raber claims that "the philosophical and ideological arguments of the Inquiry remain strikingly vital," even though he acknowledges that the recommendations of the Inquiry seem "unforgivably elitist" (x-xi).

Raber's book is an explication of the meaning of the unique role proposed for public libraries; he intentionally does not critique the methodology of the study, nor explore areas in which the Inquiry was curiously silent, such as gender equity or children and children's services. Raber's analysis of the inherent ideology of the Inquiry is thorough and far-reaching, extending from the intellectual fine points of the nature of American democracy to more concrete considerations such as why public libraries should not try to compete with bookstores. His efforts are more explanatory than critical. Raber cautions that the "elitism" (142) of the Inquiry derives not from its preferred audience but from the edifying nature of the preferred library materials, yet the tone of his work suggests otherwise. For instance, in his critique of American culture Raber claims that the Inquiry reflected the "fear" that American political life will come to be dominated by private interest groups who "in the name of freedom" will "threaten freedom." He concludes that "the public library has a role to play in preventing this outcome, but it can be successful only if its efforts are directed to the correct audience." Raber describes this audience not as a set group of people, but instead as a dynamic construct of an "informed elite of active citizens" who "actively seek out and use knowledge" to "contribute to the production of new knowledge and the solution of social problems." It is emphatically not made up of people looking for vacation reading or children attending story hour: "That the public library might someday base its legitimacy precisely on the ability to satisfy public demand is a condition that could scarcely be imagined by the authors and supporters of the Inquiry." (96-97)

Like the Inquiry itself, Raber's book raises many questions, which is one reason why both are so germane to current discussions about the purpose of public libraries. Who were the 10 percent of adults who used the library? Were they the opinion leaders the Inquiry wanted to target? Given that most adult library users sought entertainment from the collections, how did the Inquiry propose to make "serious" material more attractive and relevant to library users and put libraries in the direct service of democracy? Raber acknowledges that "the most problematic contradiction" of the Library Faith was that "libraries simply were not used" (78) as founders and leaders had hoped, but he does not consider whether carrying through the vision of the Inquiry would result in a similar contradiction. What made the authors of the Inquiry confident that their recommendations would achieve any more success than the failed objectives that prompted the Inquiry? Is it realistic to think that self-selected library users would conform to such a specific purpose? Raber admits it is "a little disingenuous" to assume "that

the audience for public library materials will in fact be one that will use them for public purposes" (142), but that assumption forms the basis of the Inquiry's conclusions.

Raber's arguments might better be applied to an institution that is less voluntary in nature, such as public education. Ultimately one must ask if implementing the recommendations of the Inquiry even could help the profession to achieve validation. Raber accepts the assumption of the Inquiry that a unique, "legitimate" role in society would provide the profession with legitimacy, but he doesn't take into account other possible reasons for the relatively low status of the profession or other sources of legitimacy. Wayne Wiegand asserts that the structure of the profession and its lack of authority to confer "value in information products" have made librarianship "a marginal profession" (Wiegand 1996, 373). Phyllis Dain suggests that even though libraries might not have been used by all of the population, it doesn't necessarily follow that this means they have failed, asking, "What does use mean? How can the effectiveness of a library be evaluated?" Although Carl Milam, the Inquiry authors, and Douglas Raber were concerned over the lack of a clear focus for public libraries as an institution, Dain suggests that their "open-ended" nature frees libraries to serve "whatever purposes their users have in mind," and that their relative lack of power gives libraries flexibility, free from "close scrutiny." (Dain 1975, 262) Furthermore, how can any profession claim legitimacy by ignoring the interests of its clientele? The Public Library Inquiry is suffused with the elitist assumption that librarians know what is best for readers, but recent scholarship on reading suggests that trusting library users to make their own decisions about what is appropriate reading material "respects the reader's right to assign value to their reading" and "honors their ability to make reasoned decisions based on their own sociocultural circumstances." (Wiegand 1997)

Raber thoroughly examines a narrow but defining aspect of the Public Library Inquiry. His sources include correspondence between some of the principals, various ALA documents, the publications of the Inquiry, and appropriate secondary material. I noted one bit of misinformation: his claim that "World War II had witnessed the development of a service to military personnel similar to the Books for Sammys program" (28) of World War I is misleading; in the later war the military, not the ALA, assumed responsibility for establishing and maintaining military libraries (Young 1981), with the Victory Book Campaign, a joint effort of the ALA, USO, and Red

Cross, providing supplementary books to those libraries. Raber's book also contains a number of typographical errors.

Librarianship and Legitimacy provides engaging reading, with highly germane applications to contemporary discussions of politics, mass media, the meaning of democracy, and the role of public libraries in American society. But it is hampered by the weakness of its subject, the Public Library Inquiry, while attempting to provide a realistic, empirically based model of library service instead offered a wishful vision that, although claiming to serve democracy, was in some ways undemocratic. The Inquiry ignored the reality of who actually used the public library and the spectrum of legitimate reasons why.

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McLibel: Burger Culture on Trial, 2nd edition, by John Vidal (London: Pan Books, 1997)

Reviewed by Martyn Lowe

"The biggest corporate p.r. disaster in history"
— UK television news report.

In order to review anything that covers the Anti-McDonalds campaign and McLibel lawsuit requires one important notation: the date. I'm writing this review during August and September of 1998. The McLibel trial has (so far) resulted in many acres of newspaper print, a book, computer website¹, CBS "60 Minutes" slot, and a couple of movies.² Yet the most remarkable aspect of McLibel is that at ever happened at all.

Towards the end of 1984, some activists within Greenpeace (London)³ were drinking after their weekly meeting at the Rising Sun, a pub on the Euston Road. In passing it was remarked that no one had ever campaigned about McDonald's, or any other fast food outlet. The following week a leaflet "McDonald's – The Sawdust People" was produced. On a Sunday evening during January of 1985, the group held its first demonstration outside of a McDonald's outlet on the Stand.

Following the first Anti-McDonald's demonstration a campaign come into being, which involved the distribution of the "what's wrong with McDonalds" factsheet. This McDonald's took exception to (some years later), and claimed it was "libellous." Thus – McLibel !

On the surface the McLibel trial was about proving whether the information in the factsheet was true (or not). It covered human and animal rights, diet and disease, cardboard packaging, trade union rights, damage to the rain-forests, & the effects of advertising upon children. There are other are issues around the McLibel trial too. Issues concerning free speech and freedom of expression.

Before McLibel, McDonald's had always managed to silence criticism with the threat of a libel case. Within Britain there is no legal aid in libel cases. Libel is a "rich man's sport." McDonalds was always able to silence any individual, organization, newspaper, or broadcaster that made any criticism

about how they operate⁴. Libel settlements can and do run into many thousands of pounds in “damages.” McDonalds has always been a litigious corporation. Thus they silenced criticism by threatening to drive critics into bankruptcy – a more effective method than any censorship law might be!⁵

The biggest mistake the company ever made, however, was in taking on the McLibel Two.

McLibel became the longest trial within English legal history. Vidal’s book, *McLibel*, describes how two penniless Anarchists (Dave Morris and Helen Steel) took on a multinational company, while denied both legal aid and jury, in a case that started in 1990 and continued in the High Court for some 2 1/2 years. Vidal shows how the company employed spies, and infiltrated Greenpeace (London). *McLibel* is also about “how two worlds collide.”

Almost inevitably the McLibel Two lost the case on points, although it was shown that McDonald’s: exploits both children and its workforce; deceives their customers by promoting their food as “nutritious”; and is cruel to animals.

The book covers the various issues raised both within the factsheet and how the trial was conducted. McDonald’s had some 25 lawyers working on the case, and top executives were flown to London to give evidence against the defendants. Dave Morris is a single parent and former postman, while Helen Steel is a gardener. Neither Dave or Helen has ever received any formal legal training, so you will understand just why McDonald’s (with an annual turnover of \$30 billion a year) needed so many lawyers. Maybe there is something to the old saying: “If you want to know the law – ask an anarchist!” The McLibel Two conducted their own defense throughout the case, with the help of a small support group.

The book also contains a “Diary of the Trial” and an “Afterword from the McLibel Two.”

Although there is no mention of this within the book, the author (*Guardian* environmental editor, John Vidal⁶) wrote the work with the help of both defendants.

McLibel is a book for both the general reader and concerned individual. My only criticism being that there are some minor factual inaccuracies, mainly

to do with the history of London Greenpeace. As Vidal points out: “London Greenpeace was the first Greenpeace in Europe and one of the first anywhere to campaign against nuclear power.” However, he does not set out to write a history of the group, but only to give some background information so that the case might be better understood. None of these inaccuracies relate to the trial itself however.

So to return to my point about when this review was penned. The case is not over yet, for it goes to the Court of Appeal on January 12, 1999. I should imagine that there will be another revised edition of the book. And it’s interesting to see that McJob and McLibel are now in the dictionaries & the library catalogue. The struggle against one firm’s attempt to suppress criticism continues.

¹ www.McSpotlight.org

² Even these documentary movies have become controversial in themselves, with accusations of television self censorship being made about them.

³ Greenpeace (London) is an autonomous group which was founded in 1971 and has no connection with the more authoritarian Greenpeace International.

⁴ This is something of a long list which includes the *Sunday Times*, Channel 4 (television), Veggies (a group based in Nottingham), and the London listings magazine *Time Out*.

⁵ There are some major differences between English and US laws which might be noted here, but it would require a separate essay to elaborate upon them. For example, Plaintiffs have to at one point in the early stages of the case hand over documents tied up in green tape. Many other aspects of the proceedings are just as antiquated too.

⁶ Not to be confused with the former US periodical of the same name.

DOCUMENTS

Remarks on Racism, International Relations and Librarianship¹

by E. J. Josey

Madame President and officers of the American Library Association who are present, distinguished visitors, and distinguished librarians from around the world, I am honored to have been chosen for this international award for several reasons. First, I used to work for John Ames Humphrey when he was the State Librarian and Assistant Commissioner of Libraries in the state of New York. Secondly, Peter Paulson, who is now the head of the Forest Press, and I were colleagues at the New York State Library at the time of Mr. Humphrey's role as Assistant Commissioner of Libraries. Both of us served on Mr. Humphrey's management team. Thirdly, I never did think that I would be honored for my work in international relations, because so many other people are also involved in this arena and have contributed so much. Why have I been concerned about international relations? When I started out fighting racism in the American Library Association, in 1964, 34 years ago, with the ALA resolution against the four state library associations that continued to deny African American librarians membership in their organizations because of the color of their skin, I discovered that racism was pervasive in our association. Then, two years after I convened about 40 black librarians to meet in Chicago at the midwinter meeting of the American Library Association in 1970, which was the founding of the Black Caucus of the American Library Association, I discovered at the 1972 ALA midwinter meeting that racism was systemic in international relations as well. For when the American Library Association designated the parts of the world that it wanted to help with books for the 1972 celebration of International Book Year, Africa was the only continent that had been omitted. I was incensed. I was not involved in the official International Relations program in ALA at the time, but thus began my quest for information resources and recognition for my people wherever they lived in the diaspora.

Yes, racism is still alive and well in the international arena as it is in the domestic arena of our country.

It was in the 1976-77 year when I became officially involved in the international affairs of the American Library Association. When Clara Jones, the first African American President of the Association appointed me as a member of the International Relations Committee. The following year, 1977-78, Eric Moon assumed the presidency of the American Library Association and he discovered that ALA did not have a policy related to international relations. This was the case, in spite of the fact that the International Relations Committee (IRC) had been in existence since the turn of the century, and that some of the founding fathers of the association had been involved in international librarianship when they went to Great Britain to help librarians in the UK establish the Library Association in 1877, one year after the founding of ALA. Eric asked me to work with the IRC in developing policy for the Association. We held hearings for the membership, and within a year we developed the international relations policy for the Association. My odyssey in international librarianship and international relations followed my chairmanship of the IRC in 1977-78. I have worked very hard in this arena for many years. I do believe that the work we did by sensitizing our ALA membership about the terrible apartheid system, and what it had done to the majority population of South Africa, really contributed greatly to world wide condemnation and apartheid's demise.

One year ago, when Barbara J. Ford came to the International Relations Committee and informed us that she planned to focus on the international arena during her presidential year, I was thrilled. I felt that finally we were going to do something about our global interest in information and also about our concern for freedom of expression around the world. We also felt that with this thrust our Association would give a higher priority than it had given to international relations in prior years. I am very proud that the members on the IRC and the special subcommittee that I appointed to work with Barbara seized the occasion and provided great ideas and support for Barbara's year, which has been a great year in the international arena. While I do not believe that one year or two or three will do away with the problems of racism and inequality that I described earlier, I do believe that what has been accomplished will certainly help to eradicate some of the most blatant racist problems that exist around the globe. I am confident that the American Library Association via its International Relations Committee

will provide the leadership needed to help uproot racism abroad as well as at home.

Finally, we librarians who have gathered here in Washington DC from around the world must be careful that the new developments in information technology do not magnify and reinforce the divisions of class and race that exist in many countries as well as in our own country. Someone has said that "the more connected that some of us become the more disconnected most of us become." Let us use the new technology to bring the races and classes together, to make for a more perfect world providing information for all who need it to survive. Thank you for this recognition of my small efforts.

¹ Remarks given on Monday, June 29, 1998 at the ALA International Visitors Reception on the occasion of receiving the John Humphrey/OCLC/Forest Press Award, Washington, DC.

LETTER AGAINST BOMBING OF IRAQ 12/16/98

December 16, 1998

50 West 96th Street, #3D
New York NY 10025

Open Letter on the Bombing of Iraq,

The punitive air assault unleashed by the U.S. against the people of Iraq, December 16, 1998, is an appalling breach of international law, human rights and the peace of nations. As a result of years of embargo and inspection, the Iraqis clearly had no effective offensive capabilities and were also utterly defenseless.

Democratic and progressive professionals should make it known that this use of overwhelming destructive force against Iraq, which punishes a nation for its leaders' crimes, is nothing but military-technological barbarism. While it might have temporarily raised the poll ratings of a beleaguered president awaiting impeachment, it further immiserates the Iraqi people and degrades American democracy in the eyes of the world.

We progressive librarians, library workers, and library school students oppose completely the punishment meted out for non-compliance with Clinton's will. We declare our solidarity with the Iraqi civilians and civil society which will continue to suffer the consequences of this cynical exhibition of brute force.

Mark Rosenzweig, Hofstra University, NY

Jos Anemaet, Oregon State University; Bette Anton, University of California-Berkeley; Stephanie Archer, CA; L. Ball, US; Barbera Bass, US; Julie Bauer, graduate student, Catholic University of America, Washington DC; Sanford Berman, Hennepin County Library, MN; Bryan Beaugez, US; Patricia Bellamy, University of Toronto, Ontario, Canada; Herb Biblo, Long Island Library Research Council, NY; June Bourgeois, TX; Kate Bradley, Bellevue Community College, WA; Antonio M. Calvo, graduate student, San Jose State University, CA; Aimee J. Camp, Pueblo Library District, CO; Cathy Camper, MN; Tom Childs, Douglas College, British Columbia, Canada; Lisa S. Colvin, graduate student, University of California at Los Angeles; Kathryn Constant, Emporia State Univ. and Portland Community College, OR; Janet Cronbach, graduate student, US; Alison Curtis, Vancouver Public Library, British

WORLD BANK PROTEST LETTER

6/29/98

Columbia, Canada; Chris Dodge, Hennepin County Library, MN; Jim Dwyer, California State University-Chico; Mary Engle, University of California-Berkeley; Pat Ensor, TX; Sean Fitting, University of San Diego, CA; Maurice J. Freedman, Westchester County Public Library System, NY; Roberta Frye, Oakland Public Library, CA; Andrea Grimes, San Francisco Public Library, CA; Liz Gruchala-Gilbert, Buffalo NY; Anna Grundy, Leeds University, United Kingdom; Christa Gush, David Gomez & Associates; Debra Gold Hansen, CA; Elaine Harger, W. Haywood Burns School, NY; Allen Hengst, Bethesda Public Library, MD; Denny Henke, University of Memphis, TN; Jay Hoffman, University of Maine-Augusta; Ron Jacobs, University of Vermont; Nick James, University of Leicester, United Kingdom; Aly Juma, CA; Al Kagan, University of Illinois-Champaign/Urbana; Colette Lebeuf, National Film Board of Canada/Office national de film du Canada; Andrew Lee, New York University; Earl Lee, US; Kim Leith, graduate student, Wayne State University, MI; Rory Litwin, CA; Linda Lopez Otero, Stanford University, CA; Martyn Lowe, United Kingdom; S. Michael Malinconico, University of Alabama; Donna Mandel, San Jose State University, CA; Chris Mays, San Francisco State University, CA; Jon McConnel, Gates Center for Technology Access, WA; Peter McDonald, Cornell University, NY; Derek Monypeny, Librarian, Oakland CA; Dave Movahhed, US; Chuck Munson, AAAS, Washington DC; Jim Nichols, Indiana University; Solveig Nilsen, MN; Andrew Norton, US; Laura Norvig, graduate student, San Jose State University, CA; A. Ralph Papakhian, Indiana University; Joel J. Rane, Los Angeles Public Library, CA; Carolyn Riddle, graduate student, University of Arizona; Melissa Riley, San Francisco Public Library, CA; Patricia Rivers, RN, San Jose State University, CA; Katia Roberto, University of Illinois; Lea Rude, US; Mark Scheu, US; Stephanie Schmitt, Yale University, CT; Lisa Sloniowski, graduate student, University of Toronto, Ontario, Canada; Sarah Springer, graduate student, University of Pittsburgh, PA; Lisa Stage, Hearth Community Library, AZ; Hervor Svenonius, Library in Society, Sweden; Geoff Swindells, University of Missouri-Columbia; Wendy Thomas, Radcliffe College, MA; Theresa Tobin, Massachusetts Institute of Technology; Samuel E. Trosow, graduate student, University of California at Los Angeles; Dan Tsang, University of California-Irvine; Karen Venturella, NJ; Jessamyn West, Shoreline Community College, WA; Lennart Wettmark, Library in Society, Sweden; Asako Yoshida, University of North Dakota

Note: Above institutional affiliations provided for information only. Opinions expressed in this letter are those of the signers, and not necessarily their institutions.

Letter distributed for signatures on PLGnet, SRRT-AC, and ALACouncil listservs.

The following letter of opposition to an IRRT/ALA reception at the World Bank Headquarter's library was written following a SRRT/ALA meeting to discuss joint projects between U.S. and overseas library groups.

June 29, 1998
Washington DC

An Open Letter to Nancy John, Chair
International Relations Round Table

We as representatives of progressive/radical library and information groups are disappointed that the International Relations Round Table Reception for International Visitors is being held at the World Bank. We appreciate the spirit of the reception for international guests but we feel that, given the role of the World Bank in international affairs and its policy of structural adjustment, the choice of venue is inappropriate to the ALA theme of Global Reach, Local Touch.

Chris Atton, UK
Raimund Dehmlow, Arbeitskreis Kritischer Bibliothekarinnen, Germany
Elke Hirth, Arbeitskreis Kritischer Bibliothekarinnen, Germany
Johnny Jacobs, Library and Information Workers Organization, South Africa
Al Kagan, International Responsibilities Task Force, SRRT-ALA
Martyn Lowe, Information for Social Change, England
Frauke Mahrt-Thomsen, Arbeitskreis Kritischer Bibliothekarinnen, Germany
Renate Obadalek, Arbeitskreis Kritischer Bibliothekarenen, Austria
Ulrike Retschitzegger, Arbeitskreis Kritischer Bibliothekarenen, Austria
Lennart Wettmark, Bibliotek i Samhalle, Sweden

cc Barbara Ford
Robert A. Seal, IRC Chair
Library press

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Lincoln Cushing is a graphic artist and cultural organizer living in Berkeley, California. He has been working with Inkworks Press, a worker-owned and operated offset printshop, for the past 17 years.

Sandy Iverson has worked as a librarian for non-profit educational organizations for over 10 years. She holds an undergraduate degree in library studies, a Masters degree in adult education and is working hard to complete her MLIS while managing the library for the Canadian College of Naturopathic Medicine in Toronto Canada, and raising her four year old daughter. She maintains an active research interest in the role of information and information literacy in the adult education process. She is particularly concerned with the development of educational programs and policies that would facilitate the acquisition of information skills for typically marginalized populations.

Johnny Jacobs directs the Tygerburg Library District in South Africa and is a LIWO activist.

E. J. Josey is a past-president of the American Library Association, a founder of the Black Caucus of ALA, and professor emeritus of the School of Information Sciences at the University of Pittsburgh.

Steven Joyce is at the University of Alberta in Canada.

Martyn Lowe is a co-founder and editorial board member of Information for Social Change. He has been involved within the peace movement since 1968, a vegetarian since 1970, and has worked in libraries since 1972. He currently works in North East London for Waltham Forest Libraries.

Frauke Mährt-Thomsen attended Library School in Berlin from 1964 until 1967 when she began working in the Public Library System of Berlin-Kreuzberg. For many years she has been the head librarian of the Bona-Peiser-Bibliothek, a neighbourhood library in the socially deprived

district of Kreuzberg with a high degree of unemployed and welfare people. For more than 15 years she's been a member of the Berlin History Workshop and has written about the Berlin Public Library and women librarians' history. Currently she is working on a thesis on pioneer German woman librarian, Bona Peiser, at the Institute of Library Science of the Humboldt University in Berlin.

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