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!

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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 Blair’s 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


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 information 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.

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**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-