

Bank. A tour of a refugee camp in Gaza was an experience I will not easily forget. I did learn more about the Medical Library in Gaza, and I hope we can follow-up on our proposed aid project. It was quite a trip.

Al Kagan
August 27, 2000

Circle of Studies about Political Librarianship MEXICO

Founders: Filipe Meneses Tello, Julia González Valencia, Celso Martínez Muciño; Martin Vera Cabañas (mvera69@yahoo.com)

Mission: In Mexico, libraries and information centers are generally institutions which have been created and developed without a national tradition and they primarily imitate library practices from First World countries. Regretfully libraries have been used only for political purposes or to promote political campaigns. Because of this Mexican libraries don't have an appropriate plan of development.

We are conscious that libraries and information centers are often created without a clear commitment to the social classes they must serve. We also think that libraries have become one of the principle sources that globalization has used to reinforce its power.

Since library education in Mexico is based on a technical and managerial model, Mexican librarians don't realize the importance of linking librarianship with major fields like politics and sociology among others. Their participation and resistance against unilateral decisions is scarcely visible.

Recognizing that democratic libraries and information centers contribute to the change of social structures, our group is founded to promote a real participation of the Mexican library community in political and social scenes of librarianship as well as to support social movements and non-governmental groups that fight for a Mexico with justice and social equality.

Program for International Progressive Librarianship

by Mark Rosenzweig

- 1** We shall work towards an international agenda as the basis of common action of librarians everywhere actively committed, as librarians, to social justice, equality, human welfare, and the development of cultural democracy.
- 2** We will unite librarians and information workers in opposition to the marketization of public goods, to privatization of social resources and to outsourcing of services and will oppose international treaties and institutions which advance destructive neo-liberal policies.
- 3** We insist on the equality of access to and inclusiveness of information services, especially extending such services to the poor, marginalized and discriminated against, including the active solidarity-based provision of information assistance to these groups and their advocates in their struggles.
- 4** We shall encourage the exploration of alternative models of human services; promote and disseminate critical analysis of information technology's impact on libraries and societies; and support the democratization of existing institutions of education, culture, communications.
- 5** We shall undertake joint, interdisciplinary research into fundamental library issues (e.g. into the political economy of information in the age of neo-liberalism and corporate globalization) in order to lay the basis for effective action in our spheres of work.
- 6** We will support cooperative collection, organization and preservation of the documents of people's struggles and the making available of alternative materials representing a wide range of progressive viewpoints often excluded as resources from the debates of our times.
- 7** We will investigate and organize efforts to make the library-as-workplace more democratic and encourage resistance to the managerialism of the present library culture.
- 8** We will lead in promoting international solidarity among librarians and cooperation between libraries across borders on the basis of our joint commitment to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and related covenants which create a democratic framework for constructive cooperative endeavors.
- 9** We will organize in common with other cultural and educational progressives, to help put issues of social responsibility on the agendas of international bodies such as IFLA and UNESCO.
- 10** We shall oppose corporate globalization which, despite its claims, reinforces existing social, economic, cultural inequalities, and insist on a democratic globalism and internationalism which respects and cultivates cultural plurality, which recognizes the sovereignty of peoples, which acknowledges the obligations of society to the individual and communities, prioritizing human values and needs over profits.