postmodern analysis (beyond their commitment to the politics of inclusion) and frameworks will not yield the sort of vigorous commitment one needs for the reclamation of democratic socio-economic practices.

Lest we think that Brosio leaves us with no hope, his work is a powerful balance between critique and what Henry Giroux has called the language of possibility. Each chapter either explicitly or implicitly suggests through its critical analysis or framework possible democratic ways to act in the face of corporate capitalist ideologies. He is very sensitive to the kind of mass-movement formations needed to advance the democratic imperative. As such he is sensitive to the contributions of the liberatory politics of identity and their relationship to the issues of the larger public sphere. These are delicate negotiations to be sure! This book takes on a big project. The tough intellectual work needed to pierce the current cultural/economic status quo, and the beginnings of building a more democratic vocabulary and framework, are the stuff of Brosio’s life work. The text is not a particularly easy read, but for the most part he puts complex ideas into very intelligible language. I would suggest that, in these times of strong private visions and interests, those of us who seek more democratic roles for schools or libraries must read this book. It is comprehensive, well argued, scholarly and — above all — passionate.

Toni Samek’s is an important book that should be required reading in library school, and even as a refresher course for any librarian who needs to remember what librarianship is all about. As Sanford Berman writes in the book’s foreword, “[Samek’s] thoughtful, detailed study can well provide a basis for better understanding where — as a profession — we have been, and where we’re going.” The witty and pointed foreword, incidentally, is well-worth reading as a stand-alone essay.

The prevailing themes in this history of the activist movement in American (primarily United States) librarianship are “professional neutrality” vs. professional and personal social responsibility; access to alternative literature, as provided by libraries, librarians, and non-library radical groups; and American Library Association (ALA) service to libraries vs. to librarians, especially regarding intellectual freedom. The above and other themes introduced by Berman’s foreword, some explored more than others in the body of Samek’s text, lay out the same damned issues facing librarians today. These include [public] libraries’ typical service population, which tends to be the middle class, as evidenced by the preponderance of business materials; the commercialization of libraries and of ALA, where rooms and programs are routinely named after the vendors that sponsor them; intellectual freedom’s narrow focus on individual materials challenges; and collection development that enhances the hype created by publishers.

Samek’s introduction sketches the history of social responsibility in librarianship prior to the years indicated in the book’s title. She gives special attention to the 1930s, the “first verse” of progressive librarianship. Quoted is Jesse Shera, who says of 30s and 60s library activism, “the actors are different, but the script is much the same.” Samek cites the 1939 Library Bill of Rights, “which directed librarians to ‘fairly represent’ materials on ‘all sides of questions on which differences of opinion exist’ and ‘to oppose censorship of books and other reading matter’ because of the ‘race or nationality or the political or religious views of the writers.’” She also provides the social context of the political climate in the sixties. Unfortunately, the introductory chapter gives away too much of the developments chronicled in later chapters and thereby muddies a timeline that is already difficult to record. It is obvious from the thoroughness of the research and
the voluminous bibliography, that this work was originally written as a doctoral dissertation, yet it is tremendously readable. The only time the work's academic bent is a problem is in the somewhat formulaic introduction. However, this same formula is helpful in its revelation of Samek's research methodology, including a short list of materials examined: Activism in American Librarianship, 1962-1973 by Mary Lee Bundy and Frederick J. Stielow (Greenwood Press, 1987), ALA'S SRRT Papers, the Sanford Berman Papers, the Radical Research Center Papers, unpublished manuscripts, archival papers, published primary and secondary literature, ALA conference proceedings, and interviews and correspondence with participants.

Chapter 1, "The 1960s and the Alternative Press" supplies more history and context, which is again a bit unnecessary. Baby Boomers don't need to be told, Generation Xers are sick of being told, and Generation Y doesn't know, but doesn't care. What is more helpful is the account of the development of the sixties alternative press movement, which was established in large part by non-librarians. It was, in fact, Sylvia Price, a member of the Radical Research Center (RRC), an organization that produced the first alternative to the Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature, who was among the first to identify Library of Congress Subject Headings as inadequate for the materials in their index. Librarian Sanford Berman then stated that librarians should be using their professional skills to create a more professional and accessible tool. Some librarians, like Berman and Jackie Eubanks (to whose memory this volume is dedicated), were ashamed that the Alternative Press Index did not originate within the profession, but others did not approve of the index at all — perhaps because they, too, were jealous that the achievement had not come from them.

The second chapter, "The Ethos of Intellectual Freedom" further chronicles the history of the theme, in this case of intellectual freedom, along with a sprinkling of a more general activism. Samek introduces feminist issues in librarianship — a profession dominated by women in numbers and by men in terms of leadership. The history presented in this chapter is more useful, perhaps because it is less a part of the reader's experience. She explores how the government became overtly involved in identifying some materials as "subversive" and others as "patriotic" during World War II and how the roots of the Cold War gave rise to a greater governmental awareness of the power of mass media to influence public opinion. It was in this chapter that I began to be concerned that the book's primary focus is public libraries. This, however, may be more a function of the movement and its leaders than of any lacuna in Samek's reporting. Also in her defense, this section cites school librarians' entry into the public discourse on censorship with their stance on the NYC public schools' ban on The Nation due to its less than favorable references to the Catholic Church.

Other issues developed are of professional neutrality and the orientation of ALA toward libraries, rather than to librarians; how librarians neglect alternative selection tools in order to cut down on the paperwork created by using multiple sources for acquisitions; and on the fact that library activists are politicized on the job, not in library school.

The book really starts to get meaty with Chapter 3, "Calling for Change, 1967-1969." Topics addressed earlier get fleshed out in a way that is inspirational for the reader. It begins with late 60s librarians' premise that "the library should become an active agent for social change and the concept of intellectual freedom should incorporate the premise of social responsibility." Publisher domination of collection development and its obvious bias toward mainstream literature coupled with librarians' hesitancy to get involved in the debate is investigated, along with the sluggishness of the women's liberation movement as it was felt in this intensely female profession. It was also in this era that librarians began agitating for legal, financial, and professional support for their defense of intellectual freedom and Library Bill of Rights struggles. They further called for the support of the profession by beginning to discuss how to agitate from within ALA. So began what is today called the Social Responsibilities Rund Table (of the American Library Association). As in All the President's Men the list of names included is long and sometimes hard to follow if you didn't live the era. It is heartening to read the account of SRRT's development, and to see that many of the prime players of the 1960s and '70s movements (E.J. Josey, Patricia Glass Schuman and others) are still active leaders.

However, in those days the membership support was a lot greater, with 100 people attending SRRT's first meeting at the 1968 Annual Conference in Kansas City. Agenda items for this meeting included "more accountability from ALA elected officials, the needs of the public at large, the association's operational structure, details of recruitment, and intellectual freedom." Sound familiar?

In 1969 the ALA Council approved the formation of SRRT (I'm using the current acronym, SRRT, for consistency's sake, although the early group was known as the Round Table on Social Responsibility in Librarianship, RTSRL). Other important elements of this chapter are the development of...
other activist organizations in the profession, such as: the Congress for Change (CFC); Librarians for 321.8; and ACONDA, the Activities Committee for New Directions for ALA (a group of 6 SRRT members, and 7 others, including a chair, appointed by the ALA Executive Board). Also presented here are the cases of individual librarians (Joan H. Bodger and T. Ellis Hodgin) caught in intellectual freedom disputes. Samek relates how at one early SRRT program 800 members were in the audience and 500 more were turned away at the door — less familiar to today’s reader, but still very exciting. After seeing so many SRRT resolutions defeated by council in recent years, I was pleased to learn that it was a successful SRRT proposal that ALA election candidates make platform statements and that election results be counted and publicized. By the end of 1969, SRRT was the largest ALA Round Table with 1,013 members.

A big year in progressive librarianship is chronicled in “Intellectual Freedom and Social Responsibility, 1970.” More social and political context is provided, but here it is more intrinsically connected to the events of the chapter. For instance, the ALA Annual Conference was held in Chicago at the same time as a certain infamous trial of eight, then seven political activists. Librarians, too, faced police intervention (Samek’s word) at a program featuring a film about police riots, which also included guerilla theater performances. Other 1970 developments cited are the founding of the Black Caucus, a group that chose not to be directly associated with ALA, so that it could retain its independence. Now the idea that intellectual freedom complemented, rather than opposed, social responsibility was also in vogue. However, a budget crisis and the perceived threat to ALA’s tax status resulting from political activities caused SRRT to come under increased scrutiny. Samek also reports ably in this chapter on the beginning of what would come to be known as the Berninghausen Debate. A lot of other great and fun achievements are revealed in this and the following chapter, “The Changing of the Guard, 1971-1972” and in the epilogue, “Reaffirming Professional ‘Neutrality,’ 1973-1974.” but I have to resist giving it all away. Suffice it to say highlights include Detroit conference attendees sporting “F*ck Censorship” (asterisk not mine) badges, E.J. Josey leading 100 librarians in a walk-out from a membership meeting, a well-publicized “hug-a-homosexual” booth at a subsequent conference, and Jackie Eubanks calling for SRRT to rename itself “ALA Provisional Revolutionary Government.”

The issues and questions raised by Samek in her account of ‘30s and ‘60s progressive librarianship are still very much alive in the 21st century. I fear that the third verse of this song will not be different from the first, although at this point it is sung with less gusto. With this comprehensive and rousing work, Samek has charged today’s librarians with continuing to fight the good fight. The only criticism I would make is that, as I said earlier, the bias is tipped toward public libraries and that although Samek is presumably a Canadian (her bio places her in Alberta and as a member of the Canadian Library Association), the emphasis is on activity in the United States. Like ALA, her work is misnamed, a more accurate title for the former being the United States Library Association.