
reviewed by Kathleen de la Peña McCook

Gordon McShean has been characterized as “A spokesman for radical librarianship in the 1960s.”¹ He was coordinator of the Illinois Library Association Social Responsibilities Round Table, director of the National Freedom Fund for Librarians, president of the Society for Creative Political Literature, and an activist in the ALA Social Responsibilities Round Table. McShean has chronicled his bouts with censors at the Roswell, New Mexico library in his 1977 book, Running a message parlor: a librarian’s medium-rare memoir about censorship.² His papers from 1968-1978 are deposited at the American Library Association Archives.³

McShean’s latest book, Retired Terrorist, is his memoir of his early years in Scotland including his involvement with the Scottish National Party, his time in the U.S., and his eventual move to New Zealand where he now resides. Of most interest to PLG readers are McShean’s recollections of his battles with censorship in Roswell in the 1960s. He was part of the group of progressive librarians affiliated with Eric Moon.⁴ An interesting, highly personal, story of one man’s confrontation with censorship including electronic discussions. Recommended for collections on intellectual freedom.